Jupiter Lights

by Constance Fenimore Woolson

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Title: Jupiter Lights

Author: Constance Fenimore Woolson

Release date: November 11, 2010 [eBook #34282] Most recently updated: May 14, 2026

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/34282

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JUPITER LIGHTS A Novel

BY CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON

AUTHOR OF “ANNE” “EAST ANGELS” “FOR THE MAJOR” ETC.

NEW YORK HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE 1889

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JUPITER LIGHTS.

I.

“IT’S extraordinary navigation, certainly,” said Miss Bruce.

“Oh, mem, if you please, isn’t it better than the hother?” answered Meadows, respectfully.

Meadows was Miss Bruce’s maid; one could have told that she was English (even if one had not heard her speak) from her fresh, rosy complexion, her smooth hair put plainly and primly back from her forehead, her stiff-backed figure with its elbows out, and her large, thick-soled boots.

“I don’t mind being ’umped-up on the bank, miss, if you please,” she went on in her sweet voice, dropping her h’s (and adding them, too) in unexpected places. “It’s those great waves we ’ad last week, mem, if you please, that seemed so horful.”

“I am sorry you will have to see them again so soon,” Miss Bruce answered, kindly.

For Meadows was to return to England immediately; she was accompanying the American lady for the journey only. Miss Bruce was not rich; in her own land she did not intend to give herself the luxury of a lady’s-maid—an indulgence more unusual in the great Republic (at least the northern half of it) than fine clothes, finer houses, or the finest diamonds.

The little steamboat which carried these travellers was aground in a green plain, a grassy, reedy prairie, which extended unbroken as far as the eye could reach on all sides save one; here there was, at some distance, a bank or shore of dark land, dark in comparison with the green. Beyond this shore—and one could easily see over it—stretched the sea, "the real sea," as Miss Bruce called it, "and not all this grass!" It was this remark of hers which had drawn out the protest of poor Meadows.

Miss Bruce had crossed from England to New York; she had then journeyed southward, also by sea, to Savannah, and from that leafy town, as fair as is its name, she had continued her voyage in this little boat, the Altamaha, by what was called the Inland Route, a queer, amusing passage, winding in and out among the sounds and bays, the lagoons and marsh channels of the coast, the ocean almost always in sight on the left side, visible over the low islands which constantly succeeded each other, and which formed the barrier that kept out the "real sea," that ravaging, ramping, rolling, disturbing surface upon whose terrific inequalities the Inland Route relied for its own patronage. There were no inequalities here, certainly, unless one counted as such the sensation which Meadows had described as "being 'umped up." The channel was very narrow, and as it wound with apparent aimlessness hither and thither in the salt-marsh, it made every now and then such a short turn, doubling upon itself, that the steamer, small as she was, could only pass it by running ashore, and then allowing her bows to be hauled round ignominiously by the crew in a row-boat; while thus ashore, one side half out of water, her passengers, sitting on that side, had the sensation which the English girl had pictured. At present the Altamaha had not run herself aground purposely, but by accident; the crew did not descend to the row-boat this time, but, coming up on deck, armed with long poles, whose ends they inserted in the near bank with an air of being accustomed to it, they shoved the little craft into deep water with a series of pushes which kept time to their chorus of

"Ger-long! Ger-long! Mo-ses!"

“I don’t see how we are to get on here at all at night,” said Miss Bruce.

But before night the marsh ended as suddenly as it had begun, and the Altamaha was gliding onward again between banks equally low and near, but made of solid earth, not reeds. The sun sank in the west, the gorgeous colors of the American sunset flamed in the sky. The returning American welcomed them. She was not happy; she was as far as possible from being what is called amiable; but for the moment she admired, forgetting her own griefs. Then the after-glow faded; Meadows brought a shawl from their tiny cabin and folded it round her mistress; it was the 23d of December, and the evening air was cool, but not cold. By-and-by in the dusky twilight a gleam shone out ahead, like an immense star.

“What is that, captain?” Miss Bruce asked, as this official happened to pass near her chair.

“That? Jupiter Light.”

“Then we must be near Warwick?” She gave to the name its English pronunciation, the only one she knew.

The captain declined to say whether they were near it or not, as it was a place he had never heard of. “The next landing is War-wick,” he announced, impersonally, pronouncing the name according to its spelling.

“So near?” said Miss Bruce, rising.

“No hurry. Ain’t there yet.”

And so it proved. A moon rose, and with it a mist. The Altamaha, ceasing her nosing progress through the little channels, turned sharply eastward, and seemed suddenly to have entered the ocean, for great waves began to toss her and knock her about with more and more violence, until at last the only steady thing in sight was the blazing star of Jupiter Light, which still shone calmly ahead. After half an hour of this rough progress a low beach presented itself through the mist, and the blazing star disappeared, its place being taken by a spectral tower, tall and white, which

stood alone at the end of a long curving tongue of sand. The steamer, with due caution, drew near a lonely little pier.

“It isn’t much of a place, then?” said Miss Bruce, as the captain, in the exigencies of making a safe landing with his cockle-shell, again paused for a moment near her chair.

“Place? Post-office and Romney; that’s all. Slacken off that line there—you hear? Slacken, I tell you!”

A moment later the traveller, having made her way with difficulty through the little boat’s dark, wet, hissing lower regions, emerged, and crossed a plank to the somewhat safer footing beyond.

“Is this Cicely?” she asked, as a small figure came to meet her.

“Yes, I am Cicely.”

Eve Bruce extended her hand. But Cicely put up her face for a warmer greeting.

“Are those your trunks? Oh, you have brought some one with you?”

“It’s only Meadows, my maid; she goes back to-morrow when the boat returns.”

“There’s room for her, if you mean that; the house is large enough for anything. I was only wondering what our people would make of her; they have never seen a white servant in their lives.”

“You didn’t bring—the baby?” asked Eve Bruce.

“Jack? Oh, no; Jack’s asleep.”

Eve quivered at the name.

“Are you cold?” said Cicely. “We’ll start as soon as that hissing boat gets off. I hope you don’t mind riding behind a mule? Oh, look!” and she seized her companion’s arm. “Uncle Abram is shocked that your maid—what did you call her—Fields?—should be carrying anything—a white lady, as he supposes; and he is trying to take the bag away from her. She’s evidently frightened; Pomp and Plato

haven’t as many clothes on as they might have, I acknowledge. Oh, do look!”

Eve, still quivering, glanced mechanically in the direction indicated.

A short negro, an old man with abnormally long arms, was endeavoring to take from Meadows’s grasp a small hand-bag which she was carrying. Again and again he tried, and the girl repulsed him. Two more negroes approached, and lifted one of the trunks which she was guarding. She followed the trunk; and now Uncle Abram, coming round on the other side, tried to get possession of a larger bag which she held in her left hand. She wrenched it from him several times desperately, and then, as he still persisted, she used it as a missile over the side of his head, and began to shriek and run.

The noise of the hissing steam prevented Miss Bruce from calling to her distracted handmaid.

Cicely laughed and laughed. “I didn’t expect anything half so funny,” she said.

The little Altamaha now backed out from the pier into rough water again, and the hissing ceased. Besides the dark heaving waves, the tall light-house, and the beach, there was now nothing to be seen but a row of white sand-hills which blocked the view towards the north.

“This is the sea-shore, isn’t it?” said Eve. As she asked her question her voice had in her own ears a horribly false sound; she was speaking merely for the sake of saying something; Cicely’s “I didn’t expect anything half so funny” had hurt her like the edge of a knife.

“Oh, no; this isn’t the sea; this is the Sound,” Cicely answered. “The sea is round on the other side. You will hear it often enough at Romney; it booms dreadfully after a storm.”

Plato and Pomp now emerged from the mist, each leading a mule; one of these animals was attached to a wagon which had two seats, and the other to a rough cart.

“Will you get in, please?” said Cicely, going towards the wagon. “I reckon your maid had better come with us.”

“Meadows! Meadows!” called Miss Bruce. “Never mind the luggage; it is quite safe. You are to come with us in this wagon.”

“Yes, mem,” responded the English voice. The girl had ceased running; but she still stood guard over the trunks. “And shall I bring the dressing-bags with me, mem?” she added.

“She is bringing them whether or no,” said her mistress; “I knew she would. She likes to pretend that one contains a gold-mounted dressing-case and the other a jewel-casket; she is accustomed to such things, and considers them the proper appendages of a lady.” Her voice still had to herself a forced sound. But Cicely noticed nothing.

The two ladies climbed into the wagon and placed themselves on the back seat; Meadows, still hugging the supposed treasures, mounted gingerly to her place beside Uncle Abram, disarmed a little by his low brows; and then, after some persuasion, the mule was induced to start, the cart with the luggage following behind, Plato and Pomp beside it. The road was deeply covered with sand; both mules could do no more than walk. At last, after passing the barrier of sand-hills, they came to firmer ground; bushes began to appear, and then low trees. The trees all slanted westward.

“The wind,” Cicely explained.

The drive lasted half an hour. “Meadows, put down those bags,” said Eve; “they are too heavy for you. But not too near Mrs. Bruce—to trouble her.”

The wagon was passing between two high gate-posts (there was no gate); it entered an avenue bordered with trees whose boughs met overhead, shutting out the moonlight. But Uncle Abram knew the way; and so did the mule, who conducted his wagon over the remaining space, and up to the porch of a large low house, in a sudden wild gallop. “Hi-yi!” said Uncle Abram, warningly; “All ri’, den, ef yer

wanter," he added, rattling the reins. "Lippity-clip!"

The visitor's eyes perceived lights, an open door, and two figures waiting within. The wagon stopped, and Meadows dismounted from her perch. But Cicely, before following her, put her face close to Eve's, and whispered: "I'd better tell you now, so that you won't call me that again—before the others: I'm not Mrs. Bruce any longer; my name is Morrison. I married Ferdinand Morrison six months ago." After this stupefying declaration she pressed Eve's hand, and, jumping lightly to the ground, called out, "Bring the steps, some of you."

There was a sudden dispersion of the group of negroes near the porch; a horse-block with a flight of steps attached was brought, and placed in position for the visitor's descent. It appeared that she needed this assistance, for she had remained motionless in the wagon, making no effort to follow Cicely's example. Now she descended, jealously aided by Meadows, who had retained but one clear idea amid all these bewilderments of night-drives with half-dressed blacks and mad mules through a desert of sand, and that was to do all in her power for the unfortunate lady whom for the moment she was serving; for what must her sufferings be—to come from Hayling Hall to this!

"Here is Eve," Cicely said, leading the visitor up the steps.

The white-haired man and the tall woman who had been waiting within, came forward.

"Grandpa," said Cicely, by way of introduction. "And Aunt Sabrina."

"My father, Judge Abercrombie," said the tall lady, correctingly. Then she put her arms round Eve and kissed her. "You are very welcome, my dear. But how cold your hands are, even through your gloves! Dilsey, make a fire."

"I am not cold," Eve answered.

But she looked so ill that the judge hastily offered her his arm.

She did not accept it. “It is nothing,” she said. Anger now came to her aid, Cicely’s announcement had stunned her. “I am perfectly well,” she went on, in a clear voice. “It has been a long voyage, and that, you know, is tiresome. But now that it is over, I shall soon be myself again, and able to continue my journey.”

“Continue! Are you going any further, then?” inquired Miss Abercrombie, mildly. “I had hoped—we have all hoped—that you would spend a long time with us.” Miss Abercrombie had a soft voice with melancholy cadences; her tones had no rising inflections; all her sentences died gently away.

“You are very kind. It will be impossible,” Miss Bruce responded, briefly.

While speaking these words they had passed down the hall and entered a large room on the right. A negro woman on her knees was hastily lighting a fire on the hearth, and, in another moment, the brilliant blaze, leaping up, made a great cheer. Cicely had disappeared. Judge Abercrombie, discomfited by the visitor’s manner, rolled forward an arm-chair vaguely, and then stood rubbing his hands by the fire, while his daughter began to untie Miss Bruce’s bonnet strings.

“Thanks; I will not take it off now. Later, when I go to my room.” And the visitor moved away from the friendly fingers. Miss Sabrina was very near-sighted. She drew her eye-glasses furtively from her pocket, and, turning her back for an instant, put them on; she wished to have a clearer view of John Bruce’s sister. She saw before her a woman of thirty (as she judged her to be; in reality Eve was twenty-eight), tall, broad-shouldered, slender, with golden hair and a very white face. The eyes were long and rather narrow; they were dark blue in color, and they were not pleasant eyes—so Miss Sabrina thought; their expression was both angry and cold. The cheeks were thin, the outline of the features bold. The mouth was distinctly ugly, the full lips prominent, the expression sullen. At this moment Cicely entered, carrying a little child, a boy of two years, attired only in his little white night-gown; his blue eyes were brilliant with excitement, his curls, rumpled by

sleep, was flattened down on one side of his head and much fluffed up on the other. The young mother came running across the slippery floor, and put him into Miss Bruce's arms. "There he is," she said—"there's your little Jack. He knows you; I have talked to him about you scores of times."

The child, half afraid, put up a dimpled hand and stroked Eve's cheek. "Auntie?" he lisped, inquiringly. Then, after inspecting her carefully, still keeping up the gentle little stroke, he announced with decision, "Ess; Aunty Eve!"

Eve drew him close, and hid her face on his bright hair. Then she rose hurriedly, holding him in her arms, and, with an involuntary motion, moved away from Cicely, looking about the room as if in search of another place, and finally taking refuge beside Miss Sabrina, drawing a low chair towards her with the same unseeing action and sinking into it, the baby held to her breast.

Tall Miss Sabrina seemed to understand; she put one arm round their guest. Cicely, thus deserted, laughed. Then she went to her grandfather, put her arm in his, and they left the room together. When the door had closed after them, Eve raised her eyes. "He is the image of Jack!" she said.

"Yes, I know it," answered Miss Sabrina. "And I knew how it would affect you, my dear. But I think it is a comfort that he does look like him; don't you? And now you must not talk any more about going away, but stay here with us and love him."

"Stay!" said Eve. She rose, and made a motion as if she were going to give the child to her companion. But little Jack put up his hand again, and stroked her cheek; he was crooning meanwhile to himself composedly a little song of his own invention; it was evident that he would never be afraid of her again. Eve kissed him. "Do you think she would give him to me?" she asked, hungrily. "She cannot care for him—not as I do."

Miss Sabrina drew herself up (in the excess of her sympathy, as well as near-sightedness, she had been leaning so far forward that her flat breast had rested

almost on her knees). “Give up her child—her own child? My niece? I think not; I certainly think not.” She took off her glasses and put them in her pocket decisively.

“Then I shall take him from her. And you must help me. What will she care in a month from now—a year? She has already forgotten his father.”

Miss Sabrina was still angry. But she herself had not liked her niece’s second marriage. “The simplest way would be to stay here for the present,” she said, temporizing.

“Stay here? Now? How can you ask it?”

Tears rose in the elder lady’s eyes; she began to wipe them away clandestinely one by one with her long taper finger. “It’s a desolate place now, I know; but it’s very peaceful. The garden is pretty. And we hoped that you wouldn’t mind. We even hoped that you would like it a little—the child being here. We would do all we could. Of course I know it isn’t much.”

These murmured words in the melancholy voice seemed to rouse in Eve Bruce an even more stormy passion than before. She went to Miss Sabrina and took hold of her shoulder. “Do you think I can stand seeing him,” she demanded—“here—in Jack’s place? If I could, I would go to-night.” Turning away, she broke into tearless sobs. “Oh Jack—Jack—”

Light dawned at last in Sabrina Abercrombie’s mind. “You mean Mr. Morrison?” she said, hurriedly rising. “You didn’t know, then? Cicely didn’t tell you?”

“She told me that she had married again; nothing more. Six months ago. She let me come here—you let me come here—without knowing it.”

“Oh, I thought you knew it,” said Miss Sabrina, in distress. “I did not like the marriage myself, Miss Bruce; I assure you I did not. I was very fond of John, and it seemed too sudden. If she had only waited the year—and two years would have been so much more appropriate. I go there very often—to John’s grave—indeed I do; it is as dear to me as the graves of my own family, and I keep the grass cut very

carefully; I will show you. You remember when I wrote you that second time? I feared it then, though I was not sure, and I tried to prepare you a little by saying that the baby was now your chief interest, naturally. And he wasn't going to be married," she added, becoming suddenly incoherent, and taking hold of her throat with little rubs of her thumb and forefinger as Eve's angry eyes met hers; "at least, not that we knew. I did not say more, because I was not sure, Miss Bruce. But after it had really happened, I supposed of course that Cicely wrote to you."

"She!"

"But Mr. Morrison is not here; he is not here, and never has been. She met him in Savannah, and married him there; it was at a cousin's. But she only stayed with him for a few months, and we fear that it is not a very happy marriage. He is in South America at present, and you know how far away that is. I haven't the least idea when he is coming back."

The door at the end of the room opened. Cicely's little figure appeared on the threshold. Miss Sabrina, who seemed to know who it was by intuition, as she could see nothing at that distance, immediately began to whisper. "Of course we don't know that it is an unhappy marriage; but as she came back to us so soon, it struck us so—it made that impression; wouldn't it have made the same upon you? She must have suffered extremely, and so we ought to be doubly kind to her." And she laid her hand with a warning pressure on Eve's arm.

"I am not likely to be unkind as long as there is the slightest hope of getting this child away from her," answered Eve. "For she is the mother, isn't she? She couldn't very well have palmed off some other baby on you, for Jack himself was here then, I know. Oh, you needn't be afraid, I shall defer to her, yield to her, grovel to her!" She bent her head and kissed the baby's curls. But her tone was so bitter that poor Miss Sabrina shrank away.

Cicely had called to them, "Supper is ready." She remained where she was at the

end of the long room, holding the door open with her hand.

II.

THE father of John and Eva Bruce was an officer in the United States army. His wife had died when Eve was born. Captain Bruce brought up his children as well as he could; he would not separate himself from them, and so he carried them about with him to the various military stations to which he was ordered. When his boy was sixteen, an opportunity presented itself to him: an old friend, Thomas Ashley, who was established, and well established, in London, offered to take the lad, finish his education, and then put him into the house, as he called it, the house being the place of business of the wealthy English-American shipping firm to which he had the good-fortune to belong.

Captain Bruce did not hesitate. Jack was sent across the seas. Eve, who was then ten years old, wept desperately over the parting. Six years later she too went to England. Her father had died, and, young as she was, her determination to go to her brother was so strong that nothing could stand against it. During the six years of separation Jack had returned to America twice to see his father and sister; the tie between the three had not been broken by absence, but only made stronger. The girl had lived a concentrated life, therefore an isolated one. She had had her own way on almost all occasions. It was said of her, “Any one can see that she has been brought up by a man!” In reality there were two men; for Jack had seemed to her a man when he was only twelve years old. Her father gone, her resolve to go to Jack was, as has been said, so strong that nothing could stand against it. But in truth there was little to oppose to it, and few to oppose her; no one, indeed, who could set up anything like the force of will which she was exhibiting on the other side. She had no near relatives; as for her father’s old friends, she rode over them.

“You’ll have to let her go; she puts out her mouth so!” said Mrs. Mason, the

colonel's wife, at last. The remark, as to its form, was incoherent; but everybody at the post understood her. At sixteen, then, Eve Bruce was sent to England. As soon as she was able she took a portion of the property which came to her from her mother, to make a comfortable home for Jack. For Jack had only his salary, and it was not a large one. He had made himself acceptable in the house, and in due time he was to have a small share of the profits; but the due time was not yet, and would not be for some years. His father's old friend, who had been his friend also, as well as his sponsor in the firm, had died. But his widow, who liked the young American—she was an American herself, though long expatriated—continued to extend to him much kindness; and, when his sister came over, she included her in the invitations. Eve did not care much for these opportunities, nor for the other opportunities that followed in their train; occasionally she went to a dinner; but she found her best pleasure in being with her brother alone. They remained in London all the year round, save for six weeks in August and September. Eve could have paid many a visit in the country during the autumn and winter; but their small, ugly house near Hans Place was more beautiful in her eyes, Jack being there, than the most picturesque cottage with a lawn and rose garden, or even than an ivy-grown mansion in a deer-haunted park.

Thus brother and sister lived on for eight years. Then one morning, early in 1864, Jack, who had chafed against his counting-house chains ever since the April of Sumter, broke them short off; he too had a determined mouth. "I can't stand it any longer, Eve; I am going home. Fortunately you are provided for, or I couldn't. I shall lose my place here, of course; but I don't care. Go I must." A week later he sailed for New York. And he was soon in the army. "Blood will tell," said his father's regimental companions—the few who were left.

Eve, in London, now began to lead that life of watching the telegraphic despatches and counting the days for letters which was the lot of American women during those dark times of war. She remained in London, because it was understood between

them that Jack was to return. But she rented their house, and lived in lodgings near by, so as to have all the more money ready for him when he should come back.

But Jack did not come back. When the war reached its end, he wrote that he was going to be married; she was a Southern girl—he was even particular as to her name and position: Cicely Abercrombie, the granddaughter of Judge Abercrombie of Abercrombie's Island. Eve scarcely read these names; she had stopped at "marry."

He did marry Cicely Abercrombie in October of that year, 1865.

He wrote long letters to his sister; he wished her to come out and join them. He had leased two of the abandoned cotton plantations—great things could be done in cotton now—and he was sure that he should make his fortune. Eve, overwhelmed with her disappointment and her grief, wrote and rewrote her brief replies before she could succeed in filling one small sheet without too much bitterness; for Jack was still Jack, and she loved him. He had never comprehended the exclusiveness, the jealousy of her affection; he had accepted her devotion and enjoyed it, but he had believed, without thinking much about it at any time, that all sisters were like that. In urging her, therefore, to join them, he did not in the least suspect that the chief obstacle lay in that very word "them," of which he was so proud. To join "them," to see some one else preferred; where she had been first, to take humbly a second place! And who could tell whether this girl was worthy of him? Perhaps the bitterest part of the suffering would be to see Jack himself befooled, belittled. The sister, wretchedly unhappy, allowed it to be supposed, without saying so—it was Jack who suggested it—that she would come later; after she had disposed of the lease of their house, and sold their furniture to advantage. In time the furniture was sold, but not to advantage. The money which she had taken from her capital to make a comfortable home for her brother was virtually lost.

Presently it was only a third place that could be offered to her, for, during the next winter, Jack wrote joyfully to announce the birth of a son. He had not made his

fortune yet; but he was sure to do so the next year. The next year he died.

Then Eve wrote, for the first time, to Cicely.

In reply she received a long letter from Cicely's aunt, Sabrina Abercrombie, giving, with real grief, the particulars of Jack's last hours. He had died of the horrible yellow-fever. Eve was ill when the letter reached her; her illness lasted many months, and kind-hearted Mrs. Ashley took her, almost by force, to her place in the country, beautiful Hayling Hall, in Warwickshire. When at last she was able to hold a pen, Eve wrote again to Cicely; only a few lines (her first epistle had not been much longer); still, a letter. The reply was again from Miss Abercrombie, and, compared with her first communication, it was short and vague. The only definite sentences were about the child; "for he is the one in whom you are most interested, naturally," she wrote, under-scoring the "he" and the "naturally" with a pale line; the whole letter, as regards ink, was very pale.

And now Eve Bruce had this child. And she determined, with all the intensity of her strong will, of her burning, jealous sorrow, that he should be hers alone. With such a mother as Cicely there was everything to hope.

III.

WHILE the meal, which Cicely had announced as supper, was going on in the dining-room, Meadows was occupying herself in her accustomed evening effort to bring her mistress's abiding-place for the night, wherever it might happen to be, into as close a resemblance to an English bedroom as was, under the circumstances, possible. The resemblance had not been striking, so far, with all her toil, there having been something fundamentally un-English both in the cabins of the Ville de Havre and in the glittering salons which served as bedrooms in the Hotel of the Universe in New York. The Savannah boat had been no better, nor the shelf with a roof over it of the little Altamaha; on the steamer of the Inland Route her struggle

had been with an apartment seven feet long; here at Romney it was with one which had six times that amount of perspective.

A fire, freshly lighted, flared on the hearth, the spicy odor of its light wood still filling the air. And there was air enough to fill, for not one of the doors nor of the row of white windows which opened to the floor fitted tightly in its casing; there were wide cracks everywhere, and Meadows furthermore discovered, to her horror, that the windows had sashes which came only part of the way down, the lower half being closed by wooden shutters only. She barred these apertures as well as she could (some of the bars were gone), and then tried to draw the curtains; but these muslin protections, when they reached the strong current of air which came through the central crack of the shutters, were blown out towards the middle of the room like so many long white ghosts. Meadows surveyed them with a sigh; with a sigh she arranged the contents of Miss Bruce's dressing-bag on the outlandish bare toilet-table; she placed the slippers by the fire and drew forward the easiest chair. But when all was done the room still remained uncomfortably large, and uncomfortably empty. Outside, the wind whistled, the near sea gave out a booming sound; within, the flame of the candle flared now here, now there, in the counter-draughts that swept the room.

"It certainly is the farawayest place!" murmured the English girl.

There came a sound at the door; not a knock, but a rub across the panels. This too was alarming. Meadows kept the door well bolted, and called fearfully, "Who's there?"

"It's ony me—Powlyne," answered a shrill voice. "I's come wid de wines; Miss S'breeny, she sont me."

The tones were unmistakably feminine; Meadows drew back the bolt and peeped out. A negro girl of twelve stood there, bearing a tray which held a decanter and wineglass; her wool was braided in little tails, which stood out like short quills; her

one garment was a calico dress, whose abbreviated skirt left her bare legs visible from the knees down-ward.

“Do you want to come in?” said Meadows. “I can take it.” And she stretched out her hand for the tray.

“Miss S’breeny she done tole me to put ‘em myse’f on de little table close ter der bed,” answered Powlyne, craning her neck to look into the room.

Meadows opened the door a little wider, and Powlyne performed her office. Seeing that she was very small and slight, the English girl recovered courage.

“I suppose you live here?” she suggested.

“Yass, ’m.”

“And when there isn’t any one else ’andy, they send you?”

“Dey sonds me when dey wanster, I’s Miss S’breeny’s maid,” answered Powlyne, digging her bare heel into the matting.

“Her maid?—for gracious sake! What can you do?”

“Tuckenoffener shoes. En stockin’s.”

“Tuckenoffener?”

“Haul’em off. Yass,’m.”

“Well, if I hever!” murmured Meadows, surveying this strange coadjutor, from the erect tails of wool to the bare black toes.

There was a loud groan in the hall outside. Meadows started.

“Unc’ Abram, I spec, totin’ up de wood,” said Powlyne.

“Is he ill?”

“Ill!” said the child, contemptuously. “He’s dat dair sassy ter-night!”

“Is he coming in here? Oh, don’t go away!” pleaded Meadows. She had a vision of another incursion of black men in bathing costumes.

But Uncle Abram was alone, and he was very polite; he bowed even before he put the wood down, and several times afterwards. “Dey’s cookin’ suppah for yer, miss,” he announced, hospitably. “Dey’ll be fried chickens en fixin’s; en hot biscuits; en jell; en coffee.”

“I should rather have tea, if it is equally convenient,” said Meadows, after a moment’s hesitation.

“Dere, now, doan yer like coffee?” inquired Uncle Abram, looking at her admiringly. For it was such an extraordinary dislike that only very distinguished people could afford to have it. “Fer my part,” he went on, gazing meditatively at the fire which he had just replenished, “I ’ain’t nebber had ’nuff in all my borned days—no, not et one time. Pints wouldn’t do me. Ner yet korts. I ’ain’t nebber had a gallion.”

Voices were now heard in the hall. Cicely entered, followed by Eve Bruce.

“All the darkies on the island will be coming to look at her to-morrow,” said Cicely, after Meadows had gone to her supper; “they’ll be immensely stirred up about her. She’s still afraid—did you see?—she kept as far away as she could from poor old Uncle Abram as she went down the hall. The field hands will be too much for her; some of the little nigs have no clothes at all.”

“She won’t see them; she goes to-morrow.”

“That’s as you please; if I were you, I would keep her. They will bring a mattress in here for her presently; perhaps she has never slept on the floor?”

“I dare say not. But she can for once.”

Cicely went to one of the windows; she opened the upper half of the shutter and looked out. “How the wind blows! Jupiter Light shines right into your room.”

“Yes, I can see it from here,” said Eve. “It’s a good companion—always awake.” She was speaking conventionally; she had spoken conventionally through the long

supper, and the effort had tired her: she was not in the least accustomed to concealing her thoughts.

“Always awake. Are you always awake?” said Cicely, returning to the fire.

“I? What an idea!”

“I don’t know; you look like it.”

“I must look very tired, then?”

“You do.”

“Fortunately you do not,” answered Eve, coldly. For there was something singularly fresh about Cicely; though she had no color, she always looked fair and perfectly rested, as though she had just risen from a refreshing sleep. “I suppose you have never felt tired, really tired, in all your life?” Eve went on.

“N—no; I don’t know that I have ever felt tired, exactly,” Cicely answered, emphasizing slightly the word “tired.”

“You have always had so many servants to do everything for you,” Eve responded, explaining herself a little.

“We haven’t many now; only four. And they help in the fields whenever they can—all except Dilsey, who stays with Jack.”

Again the name. Eve felt that she must overcome her dread of it. “Jack is very like his father,” she said, loudly and decidedly.

“Yes,” answered Cicely. Then, after a pause, “Your brother was much older than I.”

“Oh, Jack was young!”

“I don’t mean that he was really old, he hadn’t gray hair. But he was thirty-one when we were married, and I was sixteen.”

“I suppose no one forced you to marry him?” said the sister, the flash returning to her eyes.

“Oh, yes.”

“Nonsense!”

“I mean he did—Jack himself did. I thought that perhaps you would feel so.”

“Feel how?”

“Why, that we made him—that we tried, or that I tried. And so I have brought some of his letters to show you.” She took a package from her pocket and laid it on the mantelpiece. “You needn’t return them; you can burn them after reading.”

“Oh, probably,” answered Eve, incoherently. She felt choked with her anger and grief.

There was a murmuring sound in the hall, and Miss Sabrina, pushing the door open with her foot, entered apologetically, carrying a jar of dark-blue porcelain, ornamented with vague white dragons swallowing their tails. The jar was large; it extended from her knees to her chin, which rested upon its edge with a singular effect. “My dear,” she said, “I’ve brought you some po-purry; your room hasn’t been slept in for some time, though I hope it isn’t musty.”

The jar had no handles; she had difficulty in placing it upon the high chest of drawers. Eve went to her assistance. And then Miss Sabrina perceived that their guest was crying. Eve changed the jar’s position two or three times. Miss Sabrina said, each time, “Yes, yes; it is much better so.” And, furtively, she pressed Eve’s hand.

Jack Bruce’s wife, meanwhile—forgotten Jack—stood by the hearth, gazing at the fire. She was a little creature, slight and erect, with a small head, small ears, small hands and feet. Yet somehow she did not strike one as short; one thought of her as having the full height of her kind, and even as being tall for so small a person. This effect was due, no doubt, to her slender litheness; she was light and cool as the wind at dawn, untrammelled by too much womanhood. Her features were delicate; the oval of her face was perfect, her complexion a clear white without color. Her

lustreless black hair, very fine and soft, was closely braided, the plaits arranged at the back of the head as flatly as possible, like a tightly fitting cap. Her great dark eyes with long curling lashes were very beautiful. They had often an absent-minded look. Under them were bluish rings. Slight and smooth as she was—the flesh of her whole body was extraordinarily smooth, as though it had been rubbed with pumice-stone—she yet seemed in one way strong and unyielding. She was quiet in her looks, in her actions, in her tones.

Eve had now choked down her tears.

“I sent Powlyne with some cherry-bounce,” said Miss Sabrina, giving Eve’s hand, secretly, a last pressure, as they came back to the hearth. “Your maid will find it—such a nice, worthy person as she seems to be, too; so generally desirable all round. If she is really to leave you to-morrow, you must have some one else. Let me see—”

“I don’t want any one, thanks,” Eve answered. Two spots of color rose in her cheeks. “That is, I don’t want any one unless I can have Jack?” She turned to Cicely, who still stood gazing at the fire. “May Jack sleep here?”

“With Dilsey?” said Cicely, lifting her eyes with a surprised glance.

“Yes, with Dilsey. The room is large.”

“I am sure I don’t care; yes, if you like. He cries at night sometimes.”

“I hope he will,” responded Eve, and her tone was almost fierce. “Then I can comfort him.”

“Dilsey does that better than any one else; he is devoted to her; when he cries, I never interfere,” said Cicely, laughing.

Eve bit her lips to keep back the retort, “But I shall!”

“It is a sweet idea,” said Miss Sabrina, in her chanting voice. “It is sweet of Miss Bruce to wish to have him, and sweet of you, Cicely, to let him go. We can arrange a

little nursery at the other end of this room to-morrow; there's a chamber beyond, where no one sleeps, and the door could be opened through, if you like. I am sure it will be very nice all round."

Eve turned and kissed her. Cicely pushed back a burning log with her foot, and laughed again, this time merrily. "It seems so funny, your having the baby in here at night, just like a mother, when you haven't been married at all. Now I have been married twice. To be sure, I never meant to be!"

"My precious child!" Miss Sabrina remonstrated.

"No, auntie, I never did. It came about," Cicely answered, her eyes growing absent again and returning to the fire.

Meadows now came in with deferential step, and presently she was followed by her own couch, which Uncle Abram spread out, in the shape of a mattress, on the floor. The English girl looked on, amazed. But this was a house of amazements; it was like a Drury Lane pantomime.

Later, when the girl was asleep, Eve rose, and, taking the package of letters, which she had put under her pillow, she felt for a candle and matches, thrust her feet into her slippers, and, with her dressing-gown over her arm, stole to the second door; it opened probably into the unoccupied chamber of which Miss Sabrina had spoken. The door was not locked; she passed through, closing it behind her. Lighting her candle, she looked about her. The room was empty, the floor bare. She put her candle on the floor, and, kneeling down beside it, opened the letters. There were but four; apparently Cicely had thought that four would be enough to confirm what she had said. They were enough. More passionate, more determined letters man never wrote to woman; they did not plead so much as insist; they compelled by sheer force of persistent unconquerable love, which accepts anything, bears anything, to gain even tolerance.

And this was Jack, her brother Jack, who had thus prostrated himself at the feet of

that indifferent little creature, that cold, small, dark girl who already bore another name! She was angry with him. Then the anger faded away into infinite pity. “Oh, Jack, dear old Jack, to have loved her so, she caring nothing for you! And I am to burn your poor letters that you thought so much about—your poor, poor letters.” Sinking down upon the floor, she placed the open pages upon her knees, laying her cheek upon them as though they had been something human. “Some one cares for you,” she murmured.

There was now a wild gale outside. One of the shutters was open, and she could see Jupiter Light; she sat there, with her cheek on the letters, looking at it.

Suddenly everything seemed changed, she no longer wept; she felt sluggish, cold. “Don’t I care any more?” she thought, surprised. She rose and went back to her bed, glad to creep into its warmth, and leaving the letters on a chair by her bedside. Then, duly, she put them under her pillow again.

IV.

ON Christmas Day, Eve was out with little Jack and Dilsey. Dilsey was a negro woman of sixty, small and thin, with a wise, experienced face; she increased her dignity as much as she could by a high stiff white turban, but the rest of her attire was poor and old, though she was not bare-legged like Powlyne; she wore stockings and shoes. Little Jack’s wagon was a rude cart with solid wooden wheels; but the hoops of its hood had been twined with holly by the negroes, so that the child’s face was enshrined in a bower of green.

“We will go to the sea,” said Eve. “Unless it is too far for you and the wagon?”

“No, ’m; push ’em easy ’nuff.”

The narrow road, passing between unbroken thickets of glittering evergreen bushes, breast-high, went straight towards the east, like an unroofed tunnel; in twenty minutes it brought them to the shore. The beach, broad, firm, and silver white,

stretched towards the north and the south, dotted here and there with drift-wood; a breeze from the water touched their cheeks coolly; the ocean was calm, little foam-crested wavelets coming gurgling up to curl over and flatten themselves out on the wet sand. “Do you see it, Jack?” said Eve, kneeling down by the wagon. “It’s the sea, the great big sea.”

But Jack preferred to blow his whistle, and that done, he proceeded to examine it carefully, putting his little fat forefinger into all the holes. Eve sat down on the sand beside him; if he scorned the sea, for the moment she did too.

“I’s des sauntered ober, Dilsey; dey ’ain’t no hurry ‘bout comin’ back,” said a voice. “En I ’low’d miss might be tired, so I fotched a cheer.” It was old Temp’rance, the cook.

“Did you bring that chair all the way for me?” asked Eve, surprised.

“Yass, ’m. It’s sut’ny pleasant here; it sut’ny is.”

“I am much obliged; but I shall be going back soon.”

The two old women looked at each other. “Dat dere ole wrack down der beach is moughty cu’us—ef yer like ter walk dat way en see ’em?” suggested Dilsey, after a pause.

“Too far,” said Eve.

Both of the old women declared that it was very near. The wind freshened; Eve, who had little Jack in her arms, feared lest he might take cold, thinly clad as he was—far too thinly for her Northern ideas—with only one fold of linen and his little white frock over his breast. She drew the skirt of her dress over his bare knees. Then after a while she rose and put him in his wagon. “We will go back,” she said.

Again the two old women looked at each other. But they were afraid of the Northern lady; the munificent presents which she had given them that morning did not bring them any nearer to her. Old Temp’rance, therefore, shouldered her chair again,

Dilsey turned the wagon, and they entered the bush-bordered tunnel on their way home, walking as slowly as they could. In only one place was there an opening through the serried green; here a track turned off to the right. When Eve had passed its entrance the first time, there was nothing to be seen but another perspective of white sand and glittering foliage; but on their return her eyes, happening to glance that way, perceived a group of figures at the end. “Who are those people?—what are they doing?” she said, pausing.

“Oh, nutt’n,” answered Temp’rance. “Des loungjun roun’.”

As Eve still stood looking, Uncle Abram emerged from the bushes. “Shall I kyar your palasol fer yer, miss?” he asked, officiously. “‘Pears like yer mus’ be tired; been so fur.”

Eve now comprehended that the three were trying to keep something from her. “What has happened?” she said. “Tell me immediately.”

“Dey’ ain’ nutt’n happen,” answered Uncle Abram, desperately; “dey’s too brash, dem two! Miss S’breeny she ’low’d dat yer moutn’t like ter see her go a moanin’, miss; en so she tole us not ter let yer come dishyer way ef we could he’p it. But dem two—dey’s boun’ ter do some fool ting. It’s a cohesion of malice ’mong women—’tis dat!”

“Does that road lead to the cemetery, too?” said Eve. “I went by another way. Take baby home, Dilsey”—she stooped and kissed him; “I will join Miss Abercrombie.” She walked rapidly down the side track; the three blacks stood watching her, old Temp’rance with the chair poised on her turban.

The little burying-ground was surrounded by an old brick wall; its high gate-posts were square, each surmounted by a clumsy funeral urn. The rusty iron gate was open, and a procession was passing in. First came Miss Sabrina in her bonnet, an ancient structure of large size, trimmed with a black ribbon; the gentle lady, when out-of-doors, was generally seen in what she called her “flat;” the presence of the

bonnet, therefore, marked a solemn occasion. She likewise wore a long scarf, which was pinned, with two pins, low down on her sloping shoulders, its broché ends falling over her gown in front; her hands were encased in black kid gloves much too large for her, the kid wrists open and flapping. Behind her came Powlyne, Pomp, and Plato, carrying wreaths of holly. Eve drew near noiselessly, and paused outside. Miss Sabrina first knelt down, bowing her head upon her hands for a moment; then, rising, she took the wreaths one by one, and arranged them upon the graves, the three blacks following her. When she had taken the last, she signed to them to withdraw; they went out quietly, each turning at the gate to make a reverential bow, partly to her, partly to the circle of the dead. Eve now entered the enclosure, and Miss Sabrina saw her.

“Oh, my dear! I didn’t intend that you should come,” she said, distressed.

“And why not? I have been here before; and my brother is here.”

“Yes; but to-day—to-day is different.”

Eve looked at the graves; she perceived that three of them were decked with small Confederate flags.

“Our dear cousins,” said Miss Sabrina; “they died for their country, and on Memorial Day, Christmas Day, and Easter I like to pay them such small honor as I can. I am in the habit of singing a hymn before I go; don’t stay, my dear, if it jars upon you.”

“It doesn’t,” said Eve. She had seated herself on the grass beside her brother’s grave, with her arm laid over it.

Miss Sabrina turned her back and put on her glasses. Then, resuming her original position, she took a small prayer-book from her pocket, opened it, and, after an apologetic cough, began:

“Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings, Thy better portion trace.”

Eve, sitting there, looked at her. Miss Sabrina was tall and slender; she had once been pretty, but now her cheeks were wan, her eyes faded, her soft brown hair was very thin. She had but a thread of a voice.

"There is everlasting peace, Rest, enduring rest, in heaven,"

she sang in her faint, sweet tones; and when she came to the words, "There will sorrows ever cease," she raised her poor dim eyes towards the sky with such a beautiful expression of hope in them that the younger woman began to realize that there might be acute griefs even when people were so mild and acquiescent, so dimly hued and submissive, as was this meek Southern gentlewoman.

The hymn finished, Miss Sabrina put her prayer-book in her pocket, and came forward. "My mother," she said, touching one of the tombs. "My grandfather and grandmother. My brother Marmaduke, Cicely's father. Cicely's mother; she was a Northerner, and we have sometimes thought Cicely rather Northern."

"Oh, no!"

"Well, her grandmother was from Guadeloupe. So perhaps that balances it."

The older tombs were built of brick, each one covered with a heavy marble slab, upon which were inscribed, in stately old-fashioned language, and with old-fashioned arrangement of lines and capitals, the names, the virtues, and the talents of the one who lay beneath. The later graves were simple grassy mounds.

"My brother Augustus; my great-uncle William Drayton; my aunt Pamela," Miss Sabrina continued, indicating each tomb as she named its occupant, much as though she were introducing them. "My own place is already selected; it is here," she went on, tapping a spot with her slender foot. "It seems to me a good place; don't you think so? And I keep an envelope, with directions for everything, on top of my collars, where any one can find it; for I do so dislike an ill-arranged funeral. For instance, I particularly desire that there should be fresh water and glasses on the hall-table, where every one can get them without asking; so much better than hidden

in some back room, with every one whispering and hunting about after them. I trust you don't mind my saying," she concluded, looking at Eve kindly, "that I hope you may be here."

They left the cemetery together.

"I suppose it was a shock to you that your niece should marry a Union officer?" Eve said, as they took the shorter path towards the house.

"Ye-es, I cannot deny it; and to my father also. But we liked John for himself very much; and Cicely felt—"

But John's sister did not care to hear what Cicely felt! "And was it on this island that he expected to make his fortune—in cotton?"

"No; these are rice lands, and they are worthless now that the dikes are down."

"And the slaves gone."

"Yes. But we never had many slaves; we were never rich. Now we are very poor, my dear; I don't know that any one has mentioned it to you."

"And yet you keep on all these infirm old negroes—those who would be unable to get employment anywhere else."

"Oh, we should never turn away our old servants," replied Miss Sabrina, with confidence.

That evening, at the judge's suggestion, Cicely took her guitar. "What do you want me to sing, grandpa?"

"'Sweet Afton.'"

So Cicely sang it. Then the judge himself sang, to Cicely's accompaniment, "They may rail at this life." He had made a modest bowl of punch: it was Christmas night, and every one should be merry. So he sang, in his gallant old voice:

"'They may rail at this life; from the hour I began it I've found it a life full of kindness and bliss; And until they can show me some happier planet, More social,

more gay, I'll content me with this.'"

He was contented with it—this life "full of kindness and bliss," on his lonely sea-island, with its broken dikes and desolated fields, in his half-ruined old house, with its wooden walls vibrating, with more than one pane of glass gone, more than one floor whose planks were loosened so that they must walk carefully. At any rate, he trolled out his song as though he were: it was Christmas night, and every one should be merry.

There was one person who really was merry, and that was Master Jack, who sat on the lap of his Northern aunt, laughing and crowing, and demanding recognition of his important presence from each in turn, by the despotic power of his eye. In truth, it was this little child who held together the somewhat strangely assorted group, Miss Sabrina in an ancient white lace cape, with flowers in her hair; the old judge in a dress-coat and ruffled shirt, Cicely in a gay little gown of light-blue tint (taken probably, so Eve thought, from her second trousseau), and Eve herself in her heavy black crape; she alone had made no concessions to Christmas; her mourning attire was unlightened by any color, or even by white.

"'Macgregor's Gathering,'" called the judge.

Cicely sang it. After finishing the song, she began the lament a second time, changing the words:

"We're niggerless, niggerless, niggerless, Gregorlach! Niggerless, niggerless, nig-ig-ig-gerless!"

she sang. "For we're not 'landless' at all; we've got miles and miles of land. It's niggers that are lacking."

The judge laughed, patting her little dark head as she sat on a stool beside him. "Let us go out to the quarters, grandpa; they will be dancing by now. And Jack must go too."

The judge lifted his great-grandson to his shoulder. Eve had already noticed that

Cicely never took the child from her with her own hands; she let some one else do it. When the door was opened, distant sounds of the thrumming of banjoes could be heard. Seeing a possible intention on Eve's face, Cicely remarked, in her impersonal way, "Are you coming? They won't enjoy it, they are afraid of you."

"I don't see why they should be," said Eve, when she and Miss Sabrina were left alone.

"You are a stranger, my dear; it is only that. And they are all so fond of Cicely that it wouldn't be Christmas to them if she did not pay them a visit; they worship her."

"And after she has sung that song!"

"That song?"

"'Niggerless,'" quoted Eve, indignantly.

"Well, we are niggerless, or nearly so," said Miss Sabrina, mystified.

"It's the word, the term."

"Oh, you mean nigger? It is very natural to us to say so. I suppose you prefer negroes? If you like, I will try to call them so hereafter. Negroes; yes, negroes." She pronounced it "nig-roes." "I don't know whether I have told you," she went on, "how much Cicely dislikes dreams?"

"Well she may!" was the thought of Jack Bruce's sister. What she said, with a short laugh, was, "You had better tell her to be careful about eating hot breads."

"Would you have her eat cold bread?" said Miss Sabina, in surprise. "I didn't mean that her nights were disturbed; I only meant that she dislikes the telling of dreams—a habit so common at breakfast, you know. I thought I would just mention it."

Eve gave another abrupt laugh. "Do you fear I am going to tell her mine? She would not find them all of sugar."

"I did not mean yours especially. She has such a curious way of shutting her teeth

when people begin—such pretty little white teeth as they are, too, dear child! And she doesn't like reading aloud either."

"That must be a deprivation to you," said Eve, her tone more kindly.

"It is. I have always been extremely fond of it. Are you familiar with Milton? His 'Comus'?"

"'Sabrina fair, listen where thou art sitting?" quoted Eve, smiling.

"Yes.

"'Sabrina fair, listen where thou art sitting, Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave, In twisted braids of lilies knitting—'"

said the Southern lady in her murmurous voice. "You don't know what a pleasure it has always been to me that I am named Sabrina. The English originated 'Comus;' I like the English, they are so cultivated."

"Do you see many of them here?"

"Not many. I am sorry to say my father does not like them; he thinks them affected."

"That is the last thing I should call them."

"Well, those who come here really do say 'serpents' and 'crocodiles.'"

"Do you mean as an oath?" said Eve, thinking vaguely of "Donner und blitzen."

"As an oath? I have never heard it used in that way," answered Miss Sabrina, astonished. "I mean that they call the snakes serpents, and the alligators crocodiles; my father thinks that so very affected."

Thus the wan-cheeked mistress of Romney endeavored to entertain their guest.

That night Eve was sitting by her fire. The mattress of Meadows was no longer on the floor; the English girl had started on her return journey the day before, escorted to the pier by all the blacks of the island, respectful and wondering. The presence of little Jack asleep in his crib behind a screen, with Dilsey on her pallet beside him, made the large wind-swept chamber less lonely; still its occupant felt overwhelmed

with gloom. There was a light tap at the door, and Cicely entered; she had taken off her gay blue frock, and wore a white dressing-gown. “I thought I’d see if you were up.” She went across and looked at Jack for a moment; then she came back to the fire. “You haven’t touched your hair, nor unbuttoned a button; are you always like that?”

“Like what?”

“Trim and taut, like a person going out on horse-back. I should love to see you with your hair down; I should love to see you run and shriek!”

“I fear you are not likely to see either.”

Cicely brought her little teeth together with a click. “I’ve got to get something over in the north wing; will you come? The wind blows so, it’s splendid!”

“I will go if you wish,” said Eve.

They went down the corridor and turned into another, both of them lighted by the streaks of moonlight which came through the half-closed or broken shutters; the moon was nearly at its full, and very brilliant; a high wind was careering by outside—it cried at the corner of the house like a banshee. At the end of the second hall Cicely led the way through a labyrinth of small dark chambers, now up a step, now down a step, hither and thither; finally opening a door, she ushered Eve into a long, high room, lighted on both sides by a double row of windows, one above the other. Here there were no shutters, and the moonlight poured in, making the empty space, with its white walls and white floor, as light as day. “It’s the old ballroom,” said Cicely. “Wait here; I will be back in a moment.” She was off like a flash, disappearing through a far door.

Eve waited, perforce. If she had felt sure that she could find her way back to her room, she would have gone; but she did not feel sure. As to leaving Cicely alone in that remote and disused part of the house, at that late hour of the night, she cared nothing for that; Eve was hard with people she did not like; she did not realize

herself how hard she was. She went to one of the windows and looked out.

These lower windows opened on a long veranda. The veranda was only a foot above the ground; any one, Eve reflected, could cross its uneven surface and look in; she almost expected to see some one cross, and peer in at her, his face opposite hers on the other side of the pane. The moonlight shone on the swaying evergreens; within sight were the waters of the Sound. Presently she became conscious of a current of wind blowing through the room, and turned to see what caused it. There had been no sound of an opening door, or any other sound, but a figure was approaching, coming down the moonlit space rapidly with a waving motion. It was covered with something transparent that glittered and shone; its outlines were vague. It came nearer and nearer, without a sound. Then a mass of silvery gauze was thrown back, revealing Cicely attired in an old-fashioned ball dress made of lace interwoven with silver threads and decked with little silvery stars; there was a silver belt high up under her arms, and a wreath of the silvery stars shone in her hair. She stood a moment; then snatching up the gauze which had fallen at her feet, she held one end of it, and let the other blow out on the strong cold wind which now filled the room. With this cloudy streamer in her hand, she began lightly and noiselessly to dance, moving over the moonlit floor, now with the gauze blowing out in front of her, now waving behind her as she flew along. Suddenly she let it drop, and, coming to Eve, put her arms round her waist and forced her forward. Eve resisted. But Cicely's hands were strong, her hold tenacious; she drew her sister-in-law down the room in a wild gallopade. In the midst of it, giving a little jump, she seized Eve's comb. Eve's hair, already loosened, fell down on her shoulders. Cicely clapped her hands, and began to take little dancing steps to the tune of "Niggerless, niggerless, nig-ig-ig-gerless!" chanted in a silvery voice. When she came to "less," she held out her gleaming skirt, and dipped down in a wild little courtesy.

Eve picked up her comb and turned back towards the door.

Cicely danced on ahead, humming her song; they passed through the labyrinth of dark little rooms, the glimmering dress acting as guide through the dimness. Cicely went as far as the second hall; here she stopped.

“It’s the wind, you know,” she said, in her usual voice; “when it blows like this, I always have to do something; sometimes I call out and shout. But I don’t care for it, really; I don’t care for anything!” Her face, as she spoke, looked set and melancholy. She opened a door and disappeared.

The next day there was nothing in her expression to indicate that there had been another dance at Romney the night before, besides the one at the negro quarters.

Eve was puzzled. She had thought her so unimaginative and quiet; “a passionless, practical little creature, cool and unimpulsive, whose miniature beauty led poor Jack astray, and made him believe that she had a soul!” This had been her estimate. She was alone with the baby; she took him to the window and looked at him earnestly. The little man smiled back at her, playing with the crape of her dress. No, there was nothing of Cicely here; the blue eyes, golden hair, and frank smile—all were his father over again.

“We’ll make that Mr. Morrison come back, baby; and then you and I will go away together,” she whispered, stroking his curls.

“Meh Kiss’m,” said Jack. It was as near as he could come to “Merry Christmas.”

“Before another Christmas I’ll get you away from her forever!” murmured the aunt, passionately.

V.

“OUT rowing? If you are doing it to entertain me—” said Eve.

“I should never think of that; there’s only one thing here that entertains you, and that’s baby,” Cicely answered. She spoke without insistence; her eyes had their

absent-minded expression.

“Cicely, give him to me,” Eve began. She must put her wish into words some time. “If I could only make you feel how much I long for it! I will devote my life to him; and it will be a pleasure to me, a charity, because I am so alone in the world. You are not alone; you have other ties. Listen, Cicely, I will make any arrangement you like; you shall always have the first authority, but let me have him to live with me; let me take him away when I go. I will even acknowledge everything you have said: my brother was much older than you were; it’s natural that those months with him should seem to you now but an episode—something that happened at the beginning of your life, but which need not go on to its close.”

“I was young,” said Cicely, musingly.

“Young to marry—yes.”

“No; I mean young to have everything ended.”

“But that is what I am telling you, it must not be ended; Mr. Morrison must come back to you.”

“He may,” answered Cicely, looking at her companion for a moment with almost a solemn expression.

“Then give baby to me now, and let me go away—before he comes.”

Cicely glanced off over the water; they were standing on the low bank above the Sound. “He could not go north now, in the middle of the winter,” she answered, after a moment.

“In the early spring, then?”

“I don’t know; perhaps.”

Eve’s heart gave a bound. She was going to gain her point.

Having been brought up by a man, she had learned to do without the explanations, the details, which are dear to most feminine minds; so all she said was, “That’s

agreed, then." She was so happy that a bright flush rose in her cheeks, and her smile, as she spoke these last few words, was very sweet; those lips, which Miss Sabrina had thought so sullen, had other expressions.

Cicely looked at her. "You may marry too."

Eve laughed. "There is no danger. To show you, to make you feel as secure as I do, I will tell you that there have been one or two—friends of Jack's over there. Apparently I am not made of inflammable material."

"When you are sullen—perhaps not. But when you are as you are now?"

"I shall always be sullen to that sort of thing. But we needn't be troubled; there won't be an army! To begin with, I am twenty-eight; and to end with, every one will know that I have willed my property to baby; and that makes an immense difference."

"How does it make a difference?"

"In opportunities for marrying, if not also—as I really believe—for falling in love."

"I don't see what difference it makes."

"True, you do not," Eve replied; "you are the most extraordinary people in the world, you Southerners; I have been here nearly a month, and I am still constantly struck by it—you never think of money at all. And the strangest point is, that although you never think of it, you don't in the least know how to get on without it; you cannot improve anything, you can only endure."

"If you will tell Dilsey to get baby ready, I will see to the boat," answered Cicely. She was never interested in general questions.

Presently they were afloat. They were in a large row-boat, with Pomp, Plato, Uncle Abram, and a field hand at the oars; Cicely steered; Eve and little Jack were the passengers. The home-island was four miles long, washed by the ocean on one side, the Sound on the other; on the north, Singleton Island lay very near; but on the south

there was a broad opening, the next island being six miles distant. Here stood Jupiter Light; this channel was a sea-entrance not only to the line of Sounds, but also to towns far inland, for here opened on the west a great river-mouth, through which flowed to the sea a broad, slow stream coming from the cotton country. They were all good sailors, as they had need to be for such excursions, the Sounds being often rough. The bright winter air, too, was sharp; but Eve was strong, and did not mind it, and the ladies of Romney, like true Southerners, never believed that it was really cold, cold as it is at the North. The voyages in the row-boat had been many; they had helped to fill the days, and the sisters-in-law had had not much else with which to fill them; they had remained as widely apart as in the beginning, Eve absorbed in her own plans, Cicely in her own indifference. Little Jack was always of the party, as his presence made dialogue easy. They had floated many times through the salt marshes between the rattling reeds, they had landed upon other islands, whose fields, like those of Romney, had once been fertile, but which now showed submerged expanses behind the broken dikes, with here and there an abandoned rice-mill. Sometimes they went inland up the river, rowing slowly against the current; sometimes, when it was calm, they went out to sea. To-day they crossed to the other side of the Sound.

“What a long house Romney is!” said Eve, looking back. She did not add, “And if you drop anything on the floor at one end it shakes the other.”

“Yes, it’s large,” Cicely answered. She perceived no fault in it.

“And the name; you know there’s a Romney in Kent?”

“Is there?”

“And your post-office, too; when I think of your Warwick, with its one wooden house, those spectral white sand-hills, the wind, and the tall light-house, and then when I recall the English Warwick, with its small, closely built streets, and the great castle looking down into the river Avon, I wonder if the first-comers here didn’t feel lost sometimes. All the rivers in central England, put together, would be drowned

out of sight in that great yellow stream of yours over there."

But Cicely's imagination took no flight towards the first-comers, nor towards the English rivers; and, in another moment, Eve's had come hastily homeward, for little Jack coughed. "He is taking cold!" she exclaimed. "Let us go back."

"It's a splendid day; he will take no cold," Cicely answered. "But we will go back if you wish." She watched Eve fold a shawl round the little boy. "You ought to have a child of your own, Eve," she said, with her odd little laugh.

"And you ought never to have had one," Eve responded.

As they drew near the landing, they perceived Miss Sabrina on the bank. "She has on her bonnet! Where can she be going?" said Cicely. "Oh, I know; she will ask you to row to Singleton Island, to return Mrs. Singleton's call."

"But Jack looks so pale—"

"You're too funny, Eve! How do you suppose we have taken care of him all this time—before you came?" Eve's tone was often abrupt, but Cicely's was never that; the worst you could say of it was that its sweetness was sometimes mocking.

When they reached the landing, Miss Sabrina proposed her visit; "that is, if you care to go, my dear. Dilsey told me that she saw you coming back, so I put on my bonnet on the chance."

"Eve is going," remarked Cicely, stepping from the boat; "she wants to see Rupert, he is such a sweet little boy."

Dilsey took Jack, and presently Miss Sabrina and her guest were floating northward. Eve longed to put her triumph into words: "The baby is mine! In the spring I am to have him." But she refrained. "When does your spring begin?" she asked. "In February?"

"In March, rather," answered Miss Sabrina. "Before that it is dangerous to make changes; I myself have never been one to put on thin dresses with the pinguiculas."

“What are pinguiculas?—Birds?”

“They are flowers,” responded Miss Sabrina, mildly.

“It will be six weeks, then; to-day is the fifteenth.”

“Six weeks to what?”

“To March; to spring.”

“I don’t know that it begins on the very first day,” remarked Miss Sabrina.

“Mine shall!” thought Eve.

Romney was near the northern end of the home-island; the voyage, therefore, was a short one. The chimneys of Singleton House came into view; but the boat passed on, still going northward. “Isn’t that the house?” Eve asked.

“Yes, but the landing is farther on; we always go to the landing, and then walk back through the avenue.”

But when the facade appeared at the end of the neglected road—a walk of fifteen minutes—there seemed to Eve hardly occasion for so much ceremony; the old mansion was in a worse condition than Romney; it sidled and leaned, and one of its wings was a roofless ruin, with the planking of the floor half tilted up, half fallen into the cellar. Miss Sabrina betrayed no perception of the effect of this upon a stranger; she crossed the veranda with her lady-like step, and said to a solemn little negro boy who was standing in the doorway: “Is Mrs. Singleton at home this evening, Boliver? Can she see us?—Miss Bruce and Miss Abercrombie.”

An old negro woman came round the corner of the house, and, cuffing the boy for standing there, ushered the visitors into a room on the right of the broad hall. The afternoon had grown colder, but the doors and windows all stood open; a negro girl, who bore a strong resemblance to Powlyne, entered, and chased out a chicken who was prowling about over the matted floor; then she knelt down, with her long thin black legs stretched out behind, and tried to light a fire on the hearth. But the wind

was evidently in the wrong direction for the requirements of that chimney; white smoke puffed into the room in clouds.

“Let us go out on the veranda,” suggested Eve, half choked.

“Oh, but surely— When they have ushered us in here?” responded Miss Sabrina, remonstratingly, though she too was nearly strangled. “It will blow away in a few minutes, I assure you.”

Much of it still remained when Mrs. Singleton entered. She paid no more attention to it than Miss Sabrina had done; she welcomed her guests warmly, kissing Eve on both cheeks, although she had never seen her before. “I have been so much interested in hearing that you are from England, Miss Bruce,” she said, taking a seat beside her. “We always think of England as our old home; I reckon you will see much down here to remind you of it.”

Eve looked about her—at the puffing smoke, at the wandering chicken, who still peered through one of the windows. “I am not English,” she said.

“But you have lived there so long; ever since you were a child; surely it is the same thing,” interposed Miss Sabrina. A faint color rose in her cheeks for a moment. Eve perceived that she preferred to present an English rather than a Northern guest.

“We are all English, if you come to that,” said Mrs. Singleton, confidently. She was small, white-haired, with a sweet face, and a sweet voice that drawled a little.

“Eve is much interested in our nig-roes,” pursued Miss Sabrina; “you know to her they are a novelty.”

“Ah dear, yes, our poor, poor people! When I think of them, Miss Bruce, scattered and astray, with no one to advise them, it makes my heart bleed. For they must be suffering in so many ways; take the one instance of the poor women in their confinements; we used to go to them, and be with them to cheer their time of trial. But now, separated from us, from our care and oversight, what can they do? If the people who have been so rash in freeing them had only thought of even that one

thing! But I suppose they did not think of it, and naturally, because the abolitionist societies, we are told, were composed principally of old maids."

Eve laughed. "Why can't they have nurses, as other people do?"

"You don't mean regular monthly nurses, of course?"

"Why not?—if they can afford to pay for them. They might club together to supply them."

"Oh, I don't think that would be at all appropriate, really. And Eve does not mean it, I assure you," said Miss Sabrina, coming to the rescue; "her views are perfectly reasonable, dear Mrs. Singleton; you would be surprised."

"You would indeed!" Eve thought.

But they talked no more of the nig-roes.

"How is Miss Hillsborough?" Miss Sabrina asked.

"Right well, I am glad to say. My dear Aunt Peggy, Miss Bruce; and what she is to me I can hardly tell you! You know I am something of a talker"—here Mrs. Singleton laughed softly. "And we are so much alone here now, that, were it not for Aunt Peggy, I should fairly have to talk to the chickens!" (One at least would be ready, Eve thought.) "Don't you know that there are ever so many little things each day that we want to say to somebody?" Mrs. Singleton went on. "Thinking them is not enough. And these dear people, like Aunt Peggy, who sit still and listen;—it isn't what they answer that's of consequence; in fact they seldom say much; it's just the chance they give us of putting our own thought into words and seeing how it looks. It does make such a difference."

"You are fortunate," Eve answered. "And then you have your little boy, too; Cicely has told me about him—Rupert; she says he is a dear little fellow."

"Dear heart!" exclaimed Miss Sabrina, distressed. "Cicely is sometimes—yes—"

But Mrs. Singleton laughed merrily. "I will show him to you presently," she said.

“Mr. Singleton is so extraordinarily agreeable!” said Miss Sabrina, with unwonted animation.

“Oh yes, he is wonderful; and he is a statesman too, a second Patrick Henry. But then as regards the little things of each day, you know, we don’t go to our husbands with those.”

“What do you do, then?—I mean with the husbands,” Eve asked.

“I think we admire them,” answered Mrs. Singleton, simply.

Lucasta, the negro girl, now appeared with a tray. “Pray take some Madeira,” said their hostess, filling the tiny glasses. “And plum-cake.”

Eve declined. But Miss Sabrina accepted both refreshments, and Mrs. Singleton bore her company. The wine was unspeakably bad, it would have been difficult to say what had entered into its composition; but Madeira had formed part of the old-time hospitality of the house, and something that was sold under that name (at a small country store on the mainland opposite) was still kept in the cut-glass decanter, to be served upon occasion.

Presently a very tall, very portly, and very handsome old man (he well merited three verys) came in, leaning on a cane. “Miss Bruce—little Rupert; our dear little boy,” said Mrs. Singleton, introducing him. She had intended to laugh, but she forgot it; she gazed at him admiringly.

The master of the house put aside his cane, and looked about for a chair. As he stood there, helpless for an instant, he seemed gigantic.

Eve laughed.

Miss Sabrina murmured, “Pleasantry, dear Mr. Singleton;—our foolish pleasantry.”

After the old gentleman had found his chair and seated himself, and had drawn a breath or two, he gave a broad slow smile. “Nanny, are you in the habit of introducing me to your young lady friends as your dear little Rupert?—your little

Rupe?”

“Rupe? Never!” answered Mrs. Singleton, indignantly.

“Only our foolish pleasantry,” sighed Miss Sabrina, apologetically.

“It was Cicely,” Eve explained.

“If it was Cicely, it was perfect,” the lame colossus answered, gallantly. “Cicely is heavenly. Upon my word, she is the most engaging young person I have ever seen in my life.”

He then ate some plum-cake, and paid Eve compliments even more handsome than these.

After a while he imparted the news; he had been down to the landing to meet the afternoon steamer, which brought tidings from the outside world. “Melton is dead,” he said. “You know whom I mean? Melton, the great stockbroker; one of the richest men living, I suppose.”

“Oh! where is his soul now?” said Mrs. Singleton. Her emotion was real, her sweet face grew pallid.

“Why, I have never heard that he was a bad man, especially,” remarked Eve, surprised.

“He was sure to be—making all that money; it could not be otherwise. Oh, what is his agony at this very moment!”

But Rupert did not sympathize with this mournfulness; when three ladies were present, conversation should be light, poetical. “Miss Bruce,” he said, turning towards Eve—he was so broad that that in itself made a landscape—“have you ever noticed the appropriateness of ‘County Guy’ to this neighborhood of ours?”

“No,” Eve answered. But the words brought her father to her mind with a rush: how often, when she was a child, had he beguiled a dull walk with a chant, half song, half declamation:

“Oh, County Guy, the hour is nigh, The sun has left the lea.”

She looked at her host, but she did not hear him; a mist gathered in her eyes.

“‘Oh, County Guy, the hour is nigh,’”

began the colossus, placing his plum-cake on his knee provisionally.

“‘The sun has left the lea; The orange flower perfumes the bower, The breeze is on the sea. The lark his lay who trilled all day Sits hushed his partner nigh. Breeze, bird, and flower confess the hour; But where is County Guy? ’

“The orange flower perfumes the bower; here we have the orange flower and the lea, the bower and the sea; and it’s very rarely that you find all four together. ‘The lark his lay who trilled all day’—what music it is! There’s no one like Scott.”

His lameness prevented him from accompanying his guests on their walk back to the boat; he stood in the doorway leaning on his cane and waving a courtly farewell, while the chicken, with slowly considering steps, crossed the veranda and entered the drawing-room again.

“Miss Sabrina, please tell me what you know of Ferdinand Morrison,” Eve began, as soon as a turn in the road hid the old house from their view.

Miss Sabrina had expected to talk about the Singletons. “Oh, Mr. Morrison? we did not see him ourselves, you know.”

“But you must have heard.”

“Certainly, we heard. The Singletons are delightful people, are they not? So cultivated! Their house has always been one of the most agreeable on the Sound.”

“I dare say. But about Ferdinand Morrison?” Eve went on. For it was not often that she had so good an opportunity; at Romney, if there was no one else present, there were always the servants, who came in and out like members of the family. “Cicely met him first in Savannah, didn’t she?”

“Yes,” answered Miss Sabrina (but giving up the Singletons with regret); “she went

to pay a visit to our cousin Emmeline; and there she met him. From the very beginning he appeared to be much in love with her, Cousin Emmeline wrote. And Cicely too—so we heard—appeared to care for him from the first day. At least Cousin Emmeline received that impression; Cicely, of course, did not take her into her confidence."

"Why of course?"

"At that early stage? But don't you think that those first sweet uncertainties are always private? Mr. Morrison used to come every day, and take her out for a drive; I have been in Savannah myself, and I have often thought that probably they went to Bonaventure—so delightful! At last, one evening, Cicely told Cousin Emmeline that she was engaged. And the next day she wrote to us. She did not come home; they were married there at Emmeline's."

"And none of you went to the wedding?"

"There were only father and I to go; we have not always been able to do as we wished," replied Miss Sabrina, gently.

"Mr. Morrison had money, I suppose?"

"I think not; we have never been told so."

"Didn't you ask?"

"That was for Cicely, wasn't it? I dare say she knows. We could only hope, father and I, that she would be happy; but I fear that she has not been, ah no." And Miss Sabrina sighed.

"But we must not give it up so, she is still so young. Why don't you write to Mr. Morrison yourself, and tell him, command him, to come back?" suggested Eve, boldly.

"But—but I don't know where he is," answered Miss Sabrina, bewildered by this sudden attack.

“You said South America.”

“But I couldn’t write, ‘Ferdinand Morrison, Esquire, South America.’”

“Some one must know. His relatives.”

“Yes, there is his brother, and a most devoted brother, we are told,” responded Miss Sabrina, speaking more fluently now that she had launched upon family affection. “Yes, indeed—from all we have heard of Paul Tennant, we are inclined to think him a most excellent young man. He may not have Ferdinand’s beauty (we are told that Ferdinand is remarkably handsome); and it is probable, too, that he has not Ferdinand’s cultivation, for he is a business man, and has always lived at the North.—I beg your pardon, my dear, I am sure,” said the Southern lady, interrupting herself in confusion.

“It doesn’t matter; the North won’t die of it. If you know where this brother is— But why has he a different name?”

“The mother, Mrs. Tennant, who was a widow with this one boy, Paul, married one of the Maryland Morrisons—I reckon you know the family. Ferdinand is the child of this second marriage. His father and mother are dead; his only near relative is this half-brother, Paul.”

“Write to Paul, then, and find out where Ferdinand is.”

“This is a plot, isn’t it?” answered Miss Sabrina, smiling. “But I like it; it’s so sweet of you to plan for our poor Cicely’s happiness.”

“You needn’t thank me! Then you will write?”

“But I don’t know where Mr. Tennant is either.—I dare say Cicely knows.”

“But if you ask her, she will suspect something. And if I ask her, it will be worse still! Doesn’t anybody in the world know where this Paul Tennant is?” said Eve, irritably.

“I think we heard that it was some place where it is very cold—I remember that. It

might have been Canada," suggested Sabrina, reflectively.

"Canada and South America—what a family!" said Eve, in despair.

The wind had risen, the homeward voyage was rough. They reached Romney to find little Jack ill; before morning he was struggling with an attack of croup.

VI.

"CICELY, what did you say to those people, that they stared at us so when they passed?"

"Oh, they asked me if you were the man who went round with the panorama—to explain it, you know. So I told them that you were the celebrated Jessamine family—you and Miss Leontine; and that you were going to give a concert in Gary Hundred to-night; I advised them to go."

"Bless my soul!—the celebrated Jessamine family? What possessed you?"

"Well, they saw the wagon, and they thought it looked like a panorama. They seemed to want something, so I told them that."

Eve broke into a laugh.

But the judge put on his spectacles, and walked round the wagon with indignant step. "It is an infernal color," he declared, angrily.

"Our good Dickson had that paint on hand—he told me about it," explained Miss Leontine. "It was left over"—here she paused. "I don't know what you will think, but I believe it really was left over after a circus—or was it a menagerie? At any rate, the last thing that was exhibited here before the war."

The vehicle in question was a long-bodied, two seated wagon, with a square box behind, which opened at the back like the box of a carrier's cart; its hue was the liveliest pea green.

"Dickson had no business to give it to us; it was a damned impertinence!" said the

judge, with a snort.

“Don’t spoil your voice, when you’ve got to sing to-night, grandpa,” remarked Cicely. “And you will have to lead out Miss Leontine—who will sing ‘Waiting.’”

The judge glanced at Miss Leontine. He could not repress a grin.

But tall Miss Leontine remained amiable, she had never heard of “Waiting.” In any case she seldom penetrated jokes; they seemed to her insufficiently explained; often, indeed, abstruse. She was fifty-two, and very maidenly; her bearing, her voice, her expression, were all timidly virginal, as were also the tints of her attire, pale blues and lavenders, and faint green. Her face bore a strong resemblance to the face of a camel; give a camel a pink-and-white complexion, blue eyes, and light-brown hair coming down in flat bands on each side of its long face, and you have Miss Leontine. She was extraordinarily tall—she attained a stature of nearly six feet. Her step, as if conscious of this, was apologetic; her long narrow back leaned forward as though she were trying to reduce her height in front as she came towards one. She wore no crinoline; her head was decked with a large gypsy hat, from which floated a blue tissue veil.

The little party of four—Eve, Cicely, the judge, and Miss Leontine—with Master Jack, had driven from Gary Hundred to Bellington; their hostess, Cousin Sarah Cray, had an old horse, and this wagon had been borrowed from Dickson, the village grainer (who had so mistakenly saved the circus paint); it would be a pleasant excursion in itself, and it would be good for Jack—which last was the principal point with them all.

For the much longer excursion from Abercrombie Island to this inland South Carolina village had been taken on Jack’s account; the attack of croup had left him with a harassing cough, a baby’s little cough, which is so distressing to the ears of those who love him. Eve had walked about, day and night, carrying him in her arms, his languid head on her shoulder; she could not bear to see how large his eyes

looked in his little white face; she did not sleep; she could scarcely speak.

“We might go to Cousin Sarah Cray’s for a while, away from the coast,” Cicely suggested. She was always present when Eve walked restlessly to and fro; but she did not interfere, she let Eve have the child.

Eve had no idea who or where was Cousin Sarah Cray, but she agreed to anything that would take Jack away from the coast. It was very cold now at Romney; the Sound was dark and rough all the time, the sea boomed, the winds were bitter. They had therefore journeyed inland, Jack and Eve, Cicely and her grandfather, leaving Miss Sabrina to guard the island-home alone.

When they reached Gary Hundred and the softer air, Jack began to revive; Eve too revived, she came back to daily life again. One of the first things she said was: “I ought not to be staying here, Cicely; you must let me go to the hotel; your cousin is not my cousin.”

“She’s Jack’s.”

“Do you mean by that that Jack must stay, and if he does, I shall? But it isn’t decent; here we have all descended upon her at a moment’s notice, and filled up her house, and tramped to and fro. She doesn’t appear to be rich.”

“We are all as poor as crows, but we always go and stay with each other just the same. As for Cousin Sarah Cray, she loves it. Of course we take her as we find her.”

“We do indeed!” was Eve’s thought. “It is all very well for you,” she went on, aloud. “But I am a stranger.”

“Cousin Sarah Cray doesn’t think so; she thinks you very near—a sister of her cousin.”

“If you count in that way, what families you must have! But why shouldn’t we all go to the hotel, and take her with us? There’s an idea.”

“For one reason, there’s no hotel to go to,” responded Cicely, laughing.

They continued, therefore, to stay with Cousin Sarah Cray; they had been there ten days, and Jack was so much better that Eve gladly accepted her obligations, for the present. She accepted, too, the makeshifts of the rambling housekeeping. But if the housekeeping was of a wandering order, the welcome did not wander—it remained fixed; there was something beautiful in the boundless affection and hospitality of poverty-stricken Cousin Sarah Cray.

Bellington was a ruin. In the old days it had been the custom of the people of Gary Hundred, and the neighboring plantations, to drive thither now and then to spend an afternoon; the terraces and fish-ponds were still to be seen, together with the remains of the Dutch flower-garden, and the great underground kitchens of the house, which had been built of bricks imported from Holland a hundred and twenty years before. In the corner of one of the fields bordering the river were the earthworks of a Revolutionary fort; in a jungle a quarter of a mile distant there was a deserted church, with high pews, mouldering funeral hatchments, and even the insignia of George the Third in faded gilt over the organ-loft. Bellington House had been destroyed by fire, accidentally, in 1790. Now, when there were in the same neighborhood other houses which had been destroyed by fire, not accidentally, there was less interest in the older ruin. But it still served as an excuse for a drive, and drives were excellent for the young autocrat of the party, to whom all, including Miss Leontine, were shamelessly devoted.

The judge did his duty as guide; he had visited Bellington more times than he could count, but he again led the way (with appropriate discourse) from the fish-ponds to the fort, and from the fort to the church, Miss Leontine, in her floating veil, ambling beside him.

When the sun began to decline they returned to their pea-green wagon. The judge walked round it afresh. Then he turned away, put his head over a bush, and muttered on the other side of it.

“What is he saying?” Eve asked.

“I am afraid ‘cuss words,’ as the darkies call them,” answered Cicely, composedly. “He is without doubt a very desperate old man.”

Miss Leontine looked distressed, she made a pretext of gathering some leaves from a bush at a little distance; as she walked away, her skirt caught itself behind at each step upon the tops of her prunella boots, which were of the pattern called “Congress,” with their white straps visible.

“She is miserable because I called him that,” said Cicely; “she thinks him perfect. Grandpa, I have just called you a desperate old man.”

But the judge had resumed his grand manner; he assisted the ladies in climbing to their high seats, and then, mounting to his own place, he guided the horse down the uneven avenue and into the broad road again. The cotton plantations of this neighborhood had suffered almost as much as the rice fields of Romney: they had been flooded so often that much of the land was now worthless, disintegrated and overgrown with lespedeza. They crossed the river (which had done the damage) on—or rather in—a long shaking wooden bridge, covered and nearly dark, and guarding in its dusky recesses a strong odor of the stable. Beyond it the judge had an inspiration: he would go across the fields by one of the old cotton-tracks, thus shortening the distance by more than two miles.

“Because you’re ashamed of

‘Our pea-green wagon, our wagon of green, Lillibulero, bullen-a-la,’”

chanted Cicely on the back seat.

“Cecilia!” said the judge, with dignity.

Eve sat beside him; courteously he entertained her. “Have you ever reflected, Miss Bruce, upon the very uninteresting condition of the world at present? Everything is known. Where can a gentleman travel now, with the element of the unexpected as a

companion? There are positively no lands left unvulgarized save the neighborhood of the Poles."

"Central Africa," Eve suggested.

"Africa? I think I said for gentlemen."

"You turbulent old despot, curb yourself," said Cicely, sotto voce.

"In the old days, Miss Bruce," the judge went on, "we had Arabia, we had Thibet, we had Cham-Tartary; we could arrive on camels at Erzerum. Hey! what are you about there, boy? Turn out!"

"Turn out yourself."

The track had passed down into a winding hollow between sloping banks about six feet high; on the other side of a curve they had come suddenly upon an empty hay-cart which was approaching from the opposite direction, drawn by two mules; the driver, an athletic young negro with an insolent face, was walking beside his team. His broad cart filled every inch of the track; it was impossible to pass it without climbing the bank. The judge, with his heavy wagon and one horse, could not do this; but it would have been easy for the mules to take their light cart up the slope, and thus leave room for the wagon.

The old planter could not believe that he had heard aright. "Turn out, boy!" he repeated, with the imperious manner which only a lifetime of absolute authority can give.

The negro brought his mules up until their noses touched the nose of the horse; then, putting his hands in his pockets, he planted himself, and called out, "W'at yer gwine ter do 'bout it?"

In an instant the judge was on his feet, whip in hand. But Cicely touched him. "You are not going to fight with him, grandpa?" she said, in a low tone. "For he will fight; he isn't in the least afraid of you."

The judge had now reached the ground. In his rage he was white, with his eyes blazing. Eve, greatly alarmed, clasped little Jack closer.

Cicely jumped lightly down. “Grandpa,” she said, under her breath, “he is a great deal stronger than you are, and after he has struck you down we shall be here alone with him—think of that. We will all get out, and then you can lead the horse up the bank, and go by him. Dear grandpa, it is the only way; this isn’t the island, this is South Carolina.”

Eve, seeing the speechless passion of the old man, had not believed that Cicely would prevail; she had closed her eyes with a shuddering, horrible vision of the forward rush, the wrested whip, and the silver-haired head in the dust. But, with a mighty effort, trembling like a leaf with his repressed rage, the judge put up his hand to help her in her descent. She accepted his aid hurriedly, giving Jack to Cicely; Miss Leontine had climbed down alone, the tears dropping on her cheeks behind her veil. The judge then led the horse up the bank and past the wagon, the negro keeping his position beside his mules; the ladies followed the wagon, and mounted to their places again when it had reached the track, Cicely taking the seat by the side of her grandfather. Then they drove off, followed by the negro’s jeering laughter.

The old planter remained perfectly silent. Eve believed that, after he had deposited them safely at home, he would go back in search of that negro without fail. She and Cicely tried to keep up a conversation; Miss Leontine joined them whenever she was able, but the tears constantly succeeded each other on her long face, and she was as constantly putting her handkerchief to her eyes in order to repress them, the gesture much involved with her blue veil. On the borders of the village they passed the little railway station. By the side of the station-house there was a new shop, which had a broad show-window filled with wooden wash-tubs.

“This is the shop of Thomas Scotts, the tar-and-turpentine man who is in love with Matilda Debbs,” said Cicely. “How is that coming on now, Miss Leontine?”

Miss Leontine took down her handkerchief. “The family do not consent.”

“But there’s nothing against the man, is there?”

Miss Leontine took down the handkerchief again—she had already replaced it. “As regards his character, n-nothing. But he is a manufacturer of tubs. It appears that it is the business of the family; his father also manufactures them. In Connecticut.”

“If Thomas Scotts should make a beautiful new tub for each of the Misses Debbs, it wouldn’t be a bad idea; there are twelve or fourteen of them, aren’t there?”

“Ner-nine,” replied the afflicted maiden lady, with almost a convulsion of grief. “But two of them are yer-young yet.”

“And seven are not. Now seven new tubs.”

“Cecilia, let us have no more of this,” said the judge.

It was the first time he had spoken; Cicely put her hand behind her and furtively pinched Eve’s knee in token of triumph.

They came into the main street of Gary Hundred. It was a broad avenue, wandering vaguely onward amid four rows of trees; there was no pavement; the roadway was deeply covered with yellow sand; the spacious sidewalks which bordered it were equally in a state of nature. The houses, at some distance back from the street, were surrounded by large straggling gardens. Farther down were the shops, each with its row of hitching-posts across the front.

They left Miss Leontine at her own door, and went on towards the residence of Cousin Sarah Cray.

“Here comes Miss Polly’s bread-cart, on the way back from Mellons,” said Cicely. “Grandpa, wouldn’t it be a good idea to buy some little cakes?”

The judge stopped the horse; Cicely beckoned to the old negro who was wheeling the covered hand-cart along the sandy road. “Uncle Dan, have you any cakes left?”

Uncle Dan touched his hat, and opened the lid of the cart; there, reposing on snowy

napkins, were biscuit and bread, and little cakes of inviting aspect. While Cicely made her selection, Eve bent down and took one of the circulars which were lying, neatly piled, in a corner. It announced, not in print, but in delicate hand-writing, that at the private bakery, number ten Queen Street, Gary Hundred, fresh bread, biscuits, and rolls could be obtained daily; muffins, crumpets, and plum-cake to order. The circular was signed “Mary Clementina Diana Wingfield.”

“They have names enough, those sisters,” Eve commented. “Miss Leontine’s is Clotilda Leontine Elizabeth; I saw it in her prayer-book.”

Cousin Sarah Cray’s residence was a large white house, with verandas encircling it both up stairs and down; the palings of the fence were half gone, the whole place looked pillaged and open. The judge drove up to the door and helped Cicely to descend; and then Eve, who had little Jack, fast asleep, in her arms. Cicely motioned to Eve to go into the house; she herself followed her grandfather as he led the horse round to the stables. Eve went in, carrying Jack and the cakes. Cousin Sarah Cray, hurrying down the stairs to meet her, took the child affectionately. “Dear little fellow, he begins to look right rosy.” She was delighted with the cakes. “They will help out the tea be-u-tifully; we’ve only got waffles.”

Instead of going to her room, Eve took a seat at the window; she was anxious about the judge.

“Miss Polly’s cakes are always so light,” pursued Cousin Sarah Cray, looking at them; “she never makes a mistake, there’s never the tinetiest streak of heaviness in her little pounds! And her breads are elegant, too; when one sees her beautiful hands, one wonders how she can do all the kneading.”

“Does she do it herself?”

“Every single bit; their old Susannah only heats the oven. It was a courageous idea, Miss Bruce, from the beginning; you know they are among our best people, and, after the war, they found themselves left with nothing in the world but their house.

They could have kept school in it, of course, for they are accomplished beyond everything; Miss Leontine paints sweetly—she was educated in France. But there was no one to come to the school; the girls, of course, could not afford to go away."

"You mean pupils?—to leave their homes and come here?"

"No, I mean the girls, Polly and Leontine; they could not open a school anywhere else—in Charleston, for instance; they had not money enough."

"I beg your pardon—it was only that I did not recognize them as 'the girls.'"

"Well, I suppose they really are not quite girls any longer," responded Cousin Sarah Cray, thoughtfully. "Polly is forty-four and Leontine fifty-two; but I reckon they will always be 'the girls' to us, even if they're eighty," she added, laughing. "Well, Polly had this idea. And she has been so successful—you can't think! Her bread-cart goes over to Mellons every day of your life, as regularly as the clock. And they buy a great deal."

"It's the camp, isn't it?—Camp Mellons?"

"No; it has always been Mellons, Mellons Post-office. The camp is near there, and it has some Yankee name or other, I believe; but of course you know, my dear, that we never go there."

"You only sell them bread. I am glad, at least, that they buy Miss Polly's. And does Miss Leontine help?"

"I fancy not. Dear Miss Leontine is not as practical as Miss Polly; she has a soft poetical nature, and she makes beautiful afghans. But the judge prefers Miss Polly."

"Does he really admire her?" said Eve, with a sudden inspiration.

"Beyond everything," answered Cousin Sarah Cray, clasping her plump hands.

"Then will you please go out and tell him that she is coming here to tea, that she will be here immediately?"

"Mercy! But she won't."

“Yes, she will; I will go and ask her. Do please make haste, Mrs. Cray; we are so afraid, Cicely and I, that he will try to whip a negro.”

“Mercy!” said Cousin Sarah Cray again, this time in alarm; stout as she was, she ran swiftly through the hall and across the veranda, her cap strings flying, and disappeared on the way to the stables.

Eve carried little Jack up-stairs, and gave him to Deely, the house-maid; then, retracing her steps, she went out through the side-gate, and up the street to the home of the Misses Wingfield. The door stood open, Miss Polly was in the hall. She was a handsome woman, vigorous, erect, with clear blue eyes, and thick sandy hair closely braided round her well-shaped head. Eve explained her errand. “But perhaps Miss Leontine told you?” she added.

“No, Lonny told me nothing; she went straight to her room. I noticed that she had been crying; but she is so sweet that she cries rather easily. Whip, indeed! I’d rather shoot.”

“We must keep the judge from being whipped,” Eve answered.

“Yes, I suppose so; he is an old man, though he doesn’t look it. I will go with you, of course. Or rather I will follow you in a few moments.”

The post-office of Gary Hundred was opposite the Wingfield house; as Eve crossed the broad street on her way back, the postmaster appeared at his door, and beckoned to her mysteriously. He was a small elderly negro, with a dignified manner; he wore blue goggles; Eve knew him slightly, she had paid several visits to the office, and had been treated with deferential attention. When she reached the sidewalk, therefore, she paused.

“Would yer min’ droppin’ in fer one brief momen’, miss? ’Portant marter.”

Eve stepped over the low sill of the small building—it was hardly more than a shed, though smartly whitewashed, and adorned with bright green blinds—and the postmaster immediately closed the door. He then cautiously took from his desk a

letter.

“Dere’s sump’n’ rudder quare ’bout dishyer letter, miss,” he said, glancing towards the window to see that no one was looking in. “Carn’t be too pertikler w’en it’s guv’ment business; en so we ’lowed to ax de favior ef you’d sorter glimpse yer eye ober it fer us.”

“Read a letter?” said Eve. “Whose letter?”

“Not de letter, but him outside, miss. Whoms is it? Dat’s de p’int. En I wouldn’t have you s’pose we ’ain’t guv it our bes’ cornsideration. We knows de looks ob mos’ ob ’em w’at comes yere; but dishyer one’s diffunt. Fuddermo’, de stamp’s diffunt too.”

The postmaster’s wife, a little yellow woman, was looking anxiously at them from the small window in the partition of the real post-office, a space six feet by three.

Eve took the letter. “It’s an English stamp. And the name is plainly written, ‘Henry Barker, Esquire; Gary Hundred.’”

“No sech pusson yere. Dat’s w’at I tol’ Mister Cotesworth,” said the yellow woman, triumphantly.

“Do you mean to tell me that you cannot read?” said Eve, surveying “Mister Cotesworth,” with astonishment.

The government official had, for the moment, an abashed look. “We ’lowed,” he began, “dat as you’s fum de Norf—”

But his wife interrupted him. “He reads better’n mos’, miss, Mister Cotesworth does. But his eyes done got so bad lately—dat’s w’at. Take de letter, Mister Cotesworth, and doan’ trouble de lady no mo’. Fine wedder, miss.” She came round and opened the door officiously; “seem lak we ’ain’t nebber see finer.”

Miss Polly arrived at Cousin Sarah Cray’s; she walked with apparent carelessness round towards the stables, where the judge was superintending the rubbing down

and the feeding of the horse. A saddle had been brought out, and was hanging on the fence; Cousin Sarah hovered anxiously near.

“Grandpa is going out for a ride,” explained Cicely. “But I told him that the poor horse must be fed first, in common charity; he has been so far already—to Bellington and back.”

“Oh, but the judge is not going, now that I have come,” said Miss Polly; “he wouldn’t be so uncivil.” She went up to him; smiling winningly, she put out her beautiful hand.

The judge was always gallant; he took the fair hand, and, bending his head, deposited upon it a salute.

Miss Polly smiled still more graciously. “And is a stable-yard a place for such courtesies, judge?” she said, in her rich voice, with her luscious, indolent, Southern pronunciation. “Oh, surely not—surely not. Let us go to Cousin Sarah Cray’s parlor; I have something to tell you; in fact, I came especially to see you.” Looking very handsome and very straight, she took his arm with a caressing touch.

The judge admired Miss Polly deeply.

And Miss Polly kept a firm hold upon his arm.

The judge yielded.

VII.

“SEA-BEACHES,” said Eve,—“the minds of such people; you can trace the line of their last high tide, that is, the year when they stopped reading. Along the judge’s line, one finds, for instance, Rogers; he really has no idea that there have been any new poets since then.”

“Dear me! We have always thought Horatio remarkably literary,” protested Cousin Sarah Cray. “That’s his step now, I think.”

The judge came in, little Jack on his shoulder. “I believe he has dropped some—some portions of his clothing on the stairs,” he said, helplessly. “It’s astonishing—the facility he has.”

“And he has pulled off his shoes,” added Eve, taking the little reprobate and kissing him. “Naughty Jack. Tacks!”

“Esss, tacks!” repeated Jack, in high glee. “Dey gets in Jack’s foots.” That was all he cared for her warning legend.

The judge sat down and wiped his forehead. “I have received a shock,” he said.

“Pity’s sake!—what?” asked Cousin Sarah Cray, in alarm. Poor Cousin Sarah dealt in interjections. But it might be added that she had lived through times that were exclamatory.

“Our old friend, Roland Pettigru, is dead, Sarah; the news comes to us in this—this Sheet, which, I am told, is published here.” He drew a small newspaper from his pocket. “With your permission, ladies, I will read to you the opening sentence of an obituary notice which this—this Sheet—has prepared for the occasion.” He put on his spectacles, and, holding the paper off at a distance, read aloud, with slow, indignant enunciation, as follows: “‘The Great Reaper has descended amongst us. And this time he has carried back with him sadly brilliant sheaves; for his arrows have been shot at a shining mark’ (arrows for a reaper!” commented the judge, surveying his audience squintingly, over his glasses), "‘and the aim has been only too true. Gaunt Sorrow stalks abroad, we mourn with Pettigru Hill; we say—and we repeat—that the death of Roland Pettigru has left a vortex among us.’ Yes, vortex, ladies;—the death of a quiet, cultivated gentleman a vortex!”

At this moment Deely, the house-maid, appeared at the door; giving her calico skirt a twist by way of “manners,” she announced, “Miss Wungfy.”

Miss Leontine entered, carrying five books standing in a row upon her left arm as though it had been a shelf. She shook hands with Cousin Sarah Cray and Eve; then

she went through the same ceremony with the judge, but in a confused, downcast manner, and seated herself on a slippery ottoman as near as possible to the door.

“I hope you liked the books? Pray let me take them,” said Eve, for Miss Leontine was still balancing them against her breast.

“Literature?” remarked the judge, who also seemed embarrassed. He took up one of the volumes and opened it. “Ah, a novel.”

“Yes, but one that will not hurt you,” Eve answered. “For Miss Leontine prefers those novels where the hero and heroine are married to begin with, and then fall in love with each other afterwards; everything on earth may happen to them during this process—poisonings and murders and shootings; she does not mind these in the least, for it’s sure in any case to be moral, don’t you see, because they were married in the beginning. And marriage makes everything perfectly safe; doesn’t it, Miss Leontine?”

“I am sure I don’t know,” answered Miss Leontine, still a prey to nervousness; “but—but I have always supposed so. Yes. We read them aloud,” she added, turning for relief to Cousin Sarah Cray; “that is, I read to Polly—in the evenings.”

“These modern novels seem to me poor productions,” commented the judge, turning over the pages of the volume he had taken.

“Naturally,” responded Eve.

“May I ask why ‘naturally’?”

“Oh, men who read their Montaigne year after year without change, and who quote Charles Lamb, never care for novels, unless, indeed, it may be ‘Tom Jones.’ Montaigne and Lamb, Latin quotations that are not hard, a glass of good wine with his dinner, and a convexity of person—these mark your non-appreciator of novels, from Warwickshire to Gary Hundred.”

“Upon my word, young lady—” began the judge, laughing.

But Miss Leontine, by her rising, interrupted him. “I think I must go now. Yes. Thank you.”

“But you have only just come,” said Cousin Sarah Cray.

“I stopped to leave the books. Yes; really; that was all. Thanks, you are very kind. Yes; thank you.” She fumbled ineffectually for the handle of the door, and, when it was opened for her, with an embarrassed bow she passed out, her long back bent forward, her step hurried.

“I can’t imagine what is the matter with her,” said Cousin Sarah Cray, returning.

“I am afraid, Sarah, that I can inform you,” answered the judge gravely, putting down the volume. “I met her in her own garden about an hour ago, and we fell into conversation; I don’t know what possessed me, but in relating some anecdote of a jocular nature which happened to be in my mind at the time, by way of finish—I can’t imagine what I was thinking of—but I up and chucked her under the chin.”

“Chucked Miss Leontine!” exclaimed Cousin Sarah Cray, aghast, while Eve gave way to irrepressible mirth. “Was she—was she deeply offended?”

“She was simply paralyzed with astonishment. I venture to say”—here the judge sent an eye-beam towards the laughing Eve—“I venture to say that Miss Leontine has never been chucked under the chin in all her life before.”

“Certainly not,” answered Cousin Sarah Cray; “she is far too dignified.” Then, with a desire to be strictly truthful, she added, “Perhaps when she was a baby?”

But even this seemed doubtful.

Not long after this the Misses Wingfield (it was really Miss Polly) gave a party.

“Must we go?” said Eve.

“Why, it will be perfectly delightful!” answered Cousin Sarah Cray, looking at her in astonishment. “Every one will be there. Let me see: there will be ourselves, four; and Miss Polly and Miss Leontine, six; then the Debbses, thirteen—fourteen if Mrs.

Debbs comes; the Rev. Mr. Bushey and his wife, sixteen. And perhaps there will be some one else," she added, hopefully; "perhaps somebody has some one staying with them."

"Thomas Scotts, the tub man, will not be invited," remarked Cicely. "He will walk by on the outside. And look in."

"There's nothing I admire more than the way you pronounce that name Debbs," observed Eve. "It's plain Debbs; yet you call it Dessss—holding on to all the s's, and hardly sounding the b at all—so that you almost make it rhyme with noblesse."

"That's because we like 'em, I reckon," responded Cousin Sarah Cray. "They certainly are the sweetest family!"

"There's a faint trace of an original theme in Matilda. The others are all variations," said the caustic Miss Bruce.

They went to the party.

"Theme and variations all here," said Cicely, as they passed the open door of the parlor on their way up-stairs to lay aside their wraps; "they haven't spared us a trill."

"Well, you won't be spared either," said Cousin Sarah Cray. "You'll have to sing."

She proved a true prophet; Cicely was called upon to add what she could to the entertainments of the evening. Her voice was slender and clear; to-night it pleased her to sing straight on, so rapidly that she made mince-meat of the words of her song, the delicate little notes almost seeming to come from a flute, or from a mechanical music-bird screwed to a chandelier. Later, however, Miss Matilda Debbs supplied the missing expression when she gave them:

"Slee—ping, I dreamed, love, Dreamed, love, of thee; O'er—ther—bright waves, love, Float—ing were we."

Cicely seemed possessed by one of her wild moods. "I've been to the window; the tar-and-turpentine man is looking over the gate," she said, in a low voice, to Eve.

“I’m going out to say to him, ‘Scotts, wha hae! Send in a tub.’”

Presently she came by Eve’s chair again. “Have you seen the geranium in Miss Leontine’s hair? Let us get grandpa out on the veranda with her, alone; she has been madly in love with him ever since he chucked her under the chin. What’s more, grandpa knows it, too, and he’s awfully frightened; he always goes through the back streets now, like a thief.”

There was a peal at the door-bell. “Tar-and-turpentine man coming in,” murmured Cicely.

Susannah appeared with a letter. “Fer Mis’ Morrison,” she said.

There was a general laugh. For “Mister Cotesworth,” not sure that Eve would keep his secret, and alarmed for the safety of his official position, had taken to delivering his letters in person; clad in his best black coat, with a silk hat, the blue goggles, and a tasselled cane, he not only delivered them with his own hands, but he declaimed the addresses in a loud tone at the door. Not finding Cicely at home, he had followed her hither. “Fer Mis’ Fer’nen Morrison. A ferwerded letter,” he said to Susannah in the hall, at the top of his voice.

The judge had gone to the dining-room with Miss Polly, to see her little dog, which was ailing. Cicely put the letter in her pocket.

After a while she said to Eve, “I never have any letters, hardly.”

“But you must have,” Eve answered.

“No; almost never. I am going up-stairs for a moment, Eve. Don’t come with me.”

When she returned, more music was going on. As soon as she could, Eve said, inquiringly, “Well?”

“It was from Ferdie.”

“Is he coming back?”

“Yes,” responded Cicely, unmoved.

Eve's thoughts had flown to her own plans. But she found time to think, "What a cold little creature it is, after all!"

At that moment they could say no more.

About midnight, when Eve was in her own room, undressing, there was a tap at the door, and Cicely entered. She had taken off her dress; a forlorn little blue shawl was drawn tightly round her shoulders.

She walked to the dressing-table, where Eve was sitting, took up a brush, and looked at it vaguely. "I didn't mean to tell any one; but I have changed my mind, I am going to tell you." Putting down the brush, she let the shawl fall back. There across her white breast was a long purple scar, and a second one over her delicate little shoulder. "He did it," she said. Her eyes, fixed upon Eve's, were proud and brilliant.

"You don't mean—you don't mean that your husband—" stammered Eve, in horror.

"Yes, Ferdie. He did it."

"Is he mad?"

"Only after he has been drinking."

"Oh, you poor little thing!" said Eve, taking her in her arms protectingly. "I have been so hard to you, Cicely, so cruel! But I did not know—I did not know." Her tears flowed.

"I am telling you on account of baby," Cicely went on, in the same unmoved tone.

"Has he dared to touch baby?" said Eve, springing up.

"Yes, Eve; he broke poor baby's little arm; of course when he did not know what he was doing. When he gets that way he does not know us; he thinks we are enemies, and he thinks it is his duty to attack us. Once he put us out-of-doors—baby and me—in the middle of the night, with only our night-dresses on; fortunately it wasn't very cold. That time, and the time he broke baby's arm (he seized him by the arm and flung him out of his crib), we were not in Savannah; we were off by ourselves

for a month, we three. Baby was so young that the bone was easily set. Nobody ever knew about it, I never told. But—but it must not happen again." She looked at Eve with the same unmoved gaze.

"I should rather think not! Give him to me, Cicely, and let me take him away—at least for the present. You know you said—"

"I said 'perhaps.' But I cannot let him go now—not just now. I am telling you what has happened because you really seem to care for him."

"I think I have showed that I care for him!"

"Well, I have let you."

"What are we to do, then, if you won't let me take him away?" said Eve, in despair. "Will that man come here?"

"He may. He will go to Savannah, and if he learns there that I am here, he may follow me. But he will never go to Romney, he doesn't like Romney; even in the beginning, when I begged him to go, he never would. He—" She paused.

"Jealous, I suppose," suggested the sister, with a bitter laugh—"jealous of Jack's poor bones in the burying-ground. Your two ghosts will have a duel, Cicely."

"Oh, Ferdie isn't dead!" said Cicely, with sudden terror. She grasped Eve's arm. "Have you heard anything? Tell me—tell me."

Eve looked at her.

"Yes, I love him," said Cicely, answering the look. "I have loved him ever since the first hour I saw him. It's more than love; it's adoration."

"You never said that of Jack."

"No; for it wouldn't have been true."

The two women faced each other—the tall Eve, the dark little wife.

"Oh, if I could only get away from this hideous country—this whole horrible South!" said Eve, walking up and down the room like a caged tigress.

"You would like him if you knew him," Cicely went on, gently. "It seldom happens—that other; and when it doesn't happen, Eve—"

Eve put out her hand with a repelling gesture. "Let me take baby and go."

"Not now. But he will be safe at Romney."

"In Heaven's name, then, let us get him back to Romney."

"Yes; to-morrow."

Little Jack was asleep in his crib by the side of Eve's bed, for she still kept him with her at night. Cicely went to the crib and looked at her child; Eve followed her.

The little boy's night-dress had fallen open, revealing one shoulder and arm. "It was just here," whispered Cicely, kneeling down and softly touching the baby-flesh. She looked up at Eve, her eyes thick with tears.

"Why, you care?" said Eve. "Care for him?—the baby, I mean." She spoke her thoughts aloud, unwittingly.

"Did you think I didn't care?" asked Cicely, with a smile.

It was the strangest smile Eve had ever seen.

VIII.

EARLY spring at Romney. The yellow jessamine was nearly gone, the other flowers were coming out; Atamasco lilies shone whitely everywhere; the long line of the islands and the opposite mainland were white with blossoms, the salt-marshes were freshly green; shoals, which had wallowed under water since Christmas, lifted their heads; the great river came back within its banks again.

Three weeks had passed since their return to the island. They had made the journey without the judge, who had remained in South Carolina to give his aid to the widow of his old friend, Roland Pettigru, who had become involved in a lawsuit. The three weeks had been slow and anxious—anxious, that is, to Eve. Cicely had returned to

her muteness. Once, at the beginning, when Eve had pressed her with questions, she said, as general answer, “In any case, Ferdie will not come here.” After that, when again—once or twice—Eve had asked, “Have you heard anything more?” Cicely had returned no reply whatever; she had let her passive glance rest upon Eve and then glide to something else, as though she had not spoken. Eve was proud, she too remained silent. She knew that she had done nothing to win Cicely’s confidence; women understand women, and Cicely had perceived from the first, of course, that Jack’s sister did not like her.

But since that midnight revelation at Cousin Sarah Cray’s, Eve no longer disliked Cicely; on the contrary, she was attracted towards her by a sort of unwilling surprise. Often, when they were with the others, she would look at her twenty times in a half-hour, endeavoring to fathom something of the real nature of this little girl (to Eve, Cicely always seemed a school-girl), who had borne a tragedy in silence, covering it with her jests, covering it also with her coldness. But was Cicely really cold to all the world but Ferdie? She was not so, at least, as regarded her child; no one who had seen her on her knees that night beside the crib could doubt her love for him. Yet she let Eve have him for hours at a time, she let her have him at night, without even Dilsey to look after him; she never interfered, constantly as Eve claimed him and kept him. In spite of her confidence in her own perceptions, in spite of her confidence, too, in her own will, which she believed could force a solution in almost every case, Eve Bruce was obliged to acknowledge to herself that she was puzzled.

Now and then she would be harassed by the question as to whether she ought not to tell Miss Sabrina what she knew, whether she ought not to tell the judge. But Cicely had spared them, and Cicely had asked her to be equally merciful. At night, when lying awake, the horror of the poor baby’s broken arm would sometimes come to her so vividly that she would light the candle in haste to see if he were safe. If Ferdie should come here, after all! Cicely had said that he would not; but who could trust

Cicely,—loving the man as she did? To Eve, after all that had happened, Cicely's love seemed a mania as insane as the homicidal deliriums of the husband.

As to these deliriums, she tried to picture what they must be: the baby hurled from his little crib—that made her shudder with rage; she should not be afraid of the madman, then; she should attack him in return! Sometimes it was Cicely whom she saw, Cicely, shrinking under blows; it must have been something heavy and sharp, a billet of wood, perhaps, that had caused the scars across her white breast. She remembered that once, when inwardly exasperated by Cicely's fresh fairness, she had accused her of never having known what it was to be really tired in all her life. Cicely had answered, rather hesitatingly, "I don't know that I have ever been tired, exactly." She had not been tired—no. She had only been half killed.

The poor little girl's muteness, her occasional outbursts of wild sport, her jests and laughter, her abstractions, and the coldness sometimes seen in her beautiful eyes, were these the results of suffering? She questioned Miss Sabrina a little.

"She has always been the same, except that since her second marriage she is much more quiet," replied the unconscious aunt. "Until then she was like quicksilver, she used to run through the thickets so swiftly that no one could follow her, and she used to play ball by the hour with—" Here the speaker paused, disconcerted.

"With Jack," Eve added, her face contracting with the old pain.

Miss Sabrina had at last perceived this pain, and the discovery had stopped her affectionate allusions. But she did not forget—Eve often found her carefully made wreaths laid upon Jack's grave. As for Eve herself, she never brought a flower; she walked to and fro beside the mound, and the sojourn generally ended in angry thoughts. Why should other people keep their loved ones, and she be bereft? What had she done, what had Jack done, that was so wrong? God was not good, because He was not kind; people did not ask Him to create them, but when once He had done it for His own pleasure, and there they were, helpless, in His world, why should He

torture them so? To make them better? Why didn't He make them better in the beginning, when He was creating them? Or else not make them at all!

One afternoon during the fourth week after their return to Romney, she was on her way back with Miss Sabrina from Singleton Island; the two had been dining there, the Southern three-o'clock dinner, and now at sunset the row-boat was bringing them home. To Eve the visit had been like a day's truce, a short period, when one merely waits; the afternoon was beautiful, the Sound like a mirror; the home-island, when they left it, had been peacefully lovely, the baby from his wagon kissing his hand to them, and Dilsey squatting on the bank by his side, a broad grin of contentment on her dusky face. Cicely had declined the invitation, sending a jocular message to "little Rupert," which inspired him with laughter all day.

The dinner had been excellent as regards the succulence of its South Carolina dishes. The damask tablecloth was thin from age, the dinner-service a mixture of old Canton blue and the commonest, thickest white plates; coarse dull goblets stood beside cut-glass wine-glasses; the knives were in the last stage of decrepitude, and there was no silver at all, not even a salt-spoon; it had been replaced by cheaply plated spoons and forks, from which the plate was already half gone. Blanche, the old negro woman, waited, assisted by the long-legged Lucasta, and by little Boliver, who was attired for the occasion in a pair of trousers which extended from his knees to his shoulders, over which they were tightly strapped by means of strings. Boliver's part was to bring the hot dishes from the outside kitchen, which was in a cabin at some distance—a task which he performed with dignity, varied, however, by an occasional somerset on the veranda, when he thought no one was looking. Rupert was genial, very gallant to the ladies; he carried his gallantry so far that he even drank their health several times, the only wine being the mainland Madeira. Mrs. Singleton was hospitable and affectionate, remaining unconscious (in manner) as to the many deficiencies. And Eve looked on admiringly, as though it had been a beautiful, half-pathetic little play; for to her it was all pictorial—these ruined old

houses on their blooming desolate islands, with the ancient hospitality still animating them in spite of all that had passed. The short voyage over, the row-boat stopped at Romney landing. There was no one waiting for them; Abram assisted Miss Sabrina, and then Eve, to step from one of the boat's seats to the dock. Eve lingered for a moment, looking at the sunset; then she too turned towards the house. The path winding under the trees was already dusky, Miss Sabrina was a dozen yards in advance; as she approached a bend, Eve saw some one come round it and meet her. It was a figure too tall to be the judge; it was a young man; it was a person she had not seen; she made these successive discoveries as she drew nearer. She decided that it was a neighbor from one of the southern islands, who had taken advantage of the lovely afternoon for a sail.

When she came up she found Miss Sabrina half laughing, half crying; she had given the stranger both her hands. "Oh, Eve, it is Ferdinand. And I did not know him!"

"How could you expect to know me, when you have never seen me in your life?" asked the young man, laughing.

"But we have your picture. I ought to have known—"

"My dear aunt, never accuse yourself; your dearest friends will always do that for you. I dare say my picture doesn't half do me justice."

He spoke jestingly; but there was still twilight enough to show Eve that what he had said was simply the truth. The photograph was handsome, but the real face was handsomer, the features beautiful, the eyes blue and piercing.

"This is Cicely's sister Eve," said Miss Sabrina. "She has come out—so kindly—from England to pay us a visit."

Ferdinand put out his hand with a bright smile. He had a smile which would have been a fitting one for a typical figure of youthful Hope.

Eve could not refuse, conspicuously, to give him her hand in return. It all seemed to her a dream—his sudden appearance in the dusky path, and his striking beauty. She

did not speak. But her muteness passed unnoticed, because for once in her life Miss Sabrina was voluble, her words tumbled over one another. “Such a surprise! So nice! so delightful! How little we thought this morning, when we rose as usual, and everything was the same—how little we thought that it would be such a sweet, such a happy day!”

Ferdinand laughed again, throwing back his handsome head a little—a movement that was habitual with him. He gave Miss Sabrina his arm, drew her hand through it and held it in his own, as they moved onward towards the house. On the veranda, Cicely was waiting for them, her cheeks flushed with pink. Eve expected a defiant look, a glance that would dare her to express either her surprise or her fear; instead of that, Cicely’s eyes, meeting hers, were full of trust and sweetness, as if she believed that Eve would sympathize with her joy, as if she had entirely forgotten that there was any reason why Eve should not share it. Miss Sabrina sympathized, if Eve did not; she kissed Cicely with a motherly tenderness, and then, as she raised her wet eyes again towards Ferdinand, she looked so extraordinarily pleased that the young man bent and kissed her faded cheek. “There, auntie,” he said, “now we’ve made acquaintance; you must take me in as a genuine nephew. And improve me.”

“Oh, improve,” murmured Miss Sabrina, gazing at him near-sightedly. She put on her glasses (without turning her back) in order to see him more clearly. It marked a great emotion on her part—the not turning her back.

Eve went to her room; she thought that Cicely would follow her. But no one came until Powlyne knocked to say that tea was ready. At first Eve thought that she would not go to the dining-room, that she would send an excuse. The next moment she felt driven not only to go, but to hasten; to be always present in order to see everything and hear everything; this would be her office; she must watch for the incipient stages of what she dreaded. Cicely had said that it happened rarely. Would to God that the man would be touched by poor Miss Sabrina’s loving welcome, and by little

Cicely's deep joy, and refrain. But perhaps these very things would excite the longing that led to the madness!

When she reached the dining-room and saw the bright faces at the table, Miss Sabrina looking younger than she had looked for years, and wearing the white lace cape, Cicely, too, freshly dressed, and Ferdinand, they seemed to her like phantasmagoria. Or was it that these were the realities, and the phantasms the frightful visions which had haunted her nightly during all these waiting weeks?

As Ferdie talked (already Miss Sabrina had begun to call him Ferdie), it was impossible not to listen; there was a frankness in what he said, and in his sunny smile, which was irresistibly winning. And the contrast between these and his height and strength—this too was attractive. They sat long at the table; Eve felt that she was the foreign element, not he; that she was the stranger within their gates. She had made no change in her dress; suddenly it occurred to her that Ferdie must hate her for her mourning garb, which of course would bring Jack Bruce to his mind. As she thought of this, she looked at him. His eyes happened to meet hers at the moment, and he gave her a charming smile. No, there was no hate there. In the drawing-room, later, he told them comical stories of South America; he took Cicely's guitar and sang South American songs; the three women sat looking at him, Cicely in her mute bliss, Miss Sabrina with her admiration and her interest, Eve with her perplexity. His hand, touching the strings, was well-shaped, powerful; was that the hand which had struck a woman? A little child? As the evening wore on, she almost began to believe that Cicely had invented the whole of her damning tale; that the baby's arm had never been broken, and that her own hurts had been received in some other way. She looked at Cicely. But there was something very straightforward in her pure little face.

At ten o'clock she rose. Cicely made no motion, she was evidently not coming with her.

“Can I speak to you for a moment, Cicely?”

“Oh, yes,” answered Cicely, with alacrity. “What is it?” She followed Eve into the hall.

Eve closed the door; then she drew her into the dining-room, which was still lighted. “You said he would not come here.”

“Oh!” with a long breath; “he never would do it for me before, though I asked him, and asked him. And yet he has done it now! Think of that!”

Eve put her hands on Cicely’s shoulders as if to keep her, to call her back to realities. “Have you forgotten all you said that night at Mrs. Cray’s?”

Cicely gave a joyful laugh. “Yes.” Then, more defiantly, “Yes, I have forgotten the whole!” But her tone changed back swiftly to its happy confidence again: “Nothing will happen, Eve; you needn’t be afraid.”

“Has he told you so?”

“Oh, we never speak of it,” answered Cicely, looking at her with large, surprised eyes. “Did you think we spoke of it—of such a thing as that? A husband and wife—people who love each other? But you needn’t be troubled; it’s over forever.” She disappeared.

Eve waited a moment; then she went to her room. Before she reached her door Cicely overtook her; she had run swiftly after her down the long corridor. She put her arms round Eve from behind, and whispered, with her lips against Eve’s throat, “I ran after you to say that I hope that you will have, some day, as much happiness as mine.” Then she was gone, as swiftly as she had come.

To wish her a love like her own, this seemed almost a curse, a malediction. But, fortunately, there was no danger that she, Eve Bruce, should ever fall a victim to such miseries; to love any man so submissively was weakness, but to love as Cicely loved, that was degradation!

Her image gazed back at her from the mirror, fair in its tints, but strangely, almost fiercely, proud; at that moment she was revolting, dumbly, against the injustice of all the ages, past, present, and to come, towards women.

IX.

FERDIE had been two weeks at Romney.

Halcyon days they had seemed, each one beautiful from morning to night, with blue skies and golden sunshine; blossoms covered the trees, the air was full of perfume. Ferdie must always be doing something; besides the hunting and fishing, he had made a new swing, a new dock; he had taught the negroes base-ball; he had rowed and sailed hither and thither—up the river, out to sea, and north and south along the sounds, paying visits at the various islands when Cicely desired them. Every one was delighted with him, from Miss Sabrina down to the smallest darky; the captains of the Inland Route steamers grew accustomed to seeing him on the dock at Jupiter Light; the store-keeper on the mainland opposite looked out every morning for his sail coming across the Sound. Cicely, in the same state of mute bliss, accompanied him everywhere; Miss Sabrina went whenever the excursion was not too long. The negroes followed him about in a troop; of their own accord they gave him the title of "young marse."

Through these days Eve felt herself an alien; Cicely said nothing to her save when she was with the others; she never came to her in her own room. And Eve could not feel that this neglect was caused by dislike; it was simply the egotism of perfect happiness. When Eve was present, Cicely talked to her; when she was not present, Cicely hardly remembered her existence. Miss Sabrina was not quite so forgetful, but she too was absorbed; Eve sometimes sat all the evening without speaking; fortunately she could make her stay short, under the pretext of not disturbing Jack by coming in late. She was not a timid woman, not a woman easily disheartened; each

long, solitary day (for she seldom accompanied them), each silent evening, only strengthened her purpose of carrying away the child. She kept him with her constantly; Cicely allowed it, and Ferdie, after one or two good-natured attempts to carry off the little boy for a romp, left him undisturbed to his aunt. Whether Cicely had told him to do this, Eve did not know.

Strangely enough, Ferdie talked to her more than the others did. Several times, seeing her in the grove with Jack, he had come out to join her. And always, as he approached, Eve would make some excuse, and send the child farther away; this action on her part was involuntary. One morning she had gone to the beach. She had been there half an hour when she saw his figure emerging from the bush-bordered road. “Take Jack away,” she said quickly to Dilsey.

Dilsey, vexed at being ordered off when handsome “young marse” was approaching, took her charge round a point entirely out of sight, so that Eve and Ferdie were alone. The child gone, Eve could turn all her attention to the man by her side; her watching mood came upon her, the mood in which she spent her evenings. Ferdie had thrown himself down on the sand; handsome as he was, Eve had discovered faults in his face; the features were in danger of becoming too sharp; a little more, and the cheeks would be thin. The mouth had a flattening at the corners, a partly unconscious, partly voluntary action of the muscles, like that which accompanies a “dare” (so Eve described it to herself) on the part of a boy who has come off conqueror in one fight, but who is expecting another and severer one in a moment. This expression (it was visible when he was silent) and a look in his eyes sometimes—these two things seemed to Eve signs of the curse. They were slight signs, however; they would not have been discovered by one woman in a thousand; for Ferdie was not only handsome, there was also something charming about him. But Eve had small admiration for the charming.

To-day, as Ferdie lounged beside her, she determined to try an experiment.

“I am very anxious to have Jack,” she began.

“It seems to me that you do have him; it’s a complete possession,” answered Ferdie, laughing; “I’ve scarcely been able to touch the youngster since I came.”

“I mean that I want him to live with me, as though he were my own child; I would bring him up with all possible care.”

“Have you made a vow, then, never to marry?” Ferdie demanded, looking at her with a merry gleam in his eyes.

“Should you object—if Cicely were willing to give him to me?” Eve continued, a slight haughtiness in her manner alone replying to his remark.

“I suppose I couldn’t, though I’m fond of the little chap.” (“Fond!” Eve thought. She looked at him, with parted lips, in suspense.) “But I can’t imagine Cicely’s consenting,” Ferdie went on; “she is devoted to the child.”

“Not so much as she is to you.”

“Do you want me to urge her to give him to you?”

“Yes,” Eve answered.

“Why do you want him? For your own pleasure?”

Eve hesitated a moment. “Partly.”

“Are you by any possibility fancying that you can take better care of him than we can?” asked Ferdie, relapsing into his laugh, and sending another pebble skimming over the shining waters. “Leaving Cicely aside, I am the jolliest of fathers.”

“It must be that he does not know,” Eve thought; “whatever his faults, hypocrisy is not one of them.”

But this only made him the more terrible to her—a man who could change so unconsciously into a savage.

“Granting the jolliness, I wish you would ask Cicely,” she said; “do it for my sake. I am lonely, I shall grow lonelier. It would be everything to me to have him.”

"Of course you will grow lonelier," said Ferdie. He turned towards her, leaning on his elbow. "Come, let me advise you; don't be a forlorn old maid. All women ought to marry; it is much better for them."

"Are they then so sure to be happy?" asked Eve, sarcastically.

"Of course they are.—The nice ones."

Eve looked at him. "Even when married to brutes?—to madmen?"

"Oh, you wouldn't select a brute. As for the madmen, they are locked up," answered Ferdie, comfortably.

Eve rose. "I don't know what I shall say next—if I stay here," was her thought.

"I wish you knew my brother Paul," remarked Ferdie as he lifted himself from the sand. "I can't argue with you, I can't put you down" (his smile as he said "put you down" was wonderfully sweet). "But he could—Paul could; and what's more, he would, too! He hates a woman who goes on as you do."

"Your brother lives in Canada, I believe?" said Eve, coldly.

"Canada?—what gave you that idea? He loathes Canada. He has charge of a mine on Lake Superior. He has always worked tremendously hard, poor old Paul! I have never approved of it, such a steady grind as that."

"What is the name of the place?"

"Port aux Pins; called by the natives Potterpins. Are you thinking of going there?"

"I may," Eve answered. Her tone was defiant in spite of herself; what did she care for Port aux Pins and his brother, save for their connection with his wretched self?

They had begun to walk towards home; Dilsey was in advance with Jack. "I beg you to urge Cicely to let me have him," Eve began again, her eyes resting on Jack's little wagon.

"You have made up your mind to ask a favor of me; you must want it terribly," Ferdie responded. He took off his hat and let the breeze blow over his forehead. "I

will do what I can for you. Of course we cannot, Cicely and I, give up her child to you entirely; but he might live with you for part of the year, as you desire it so much. My intention is to go back to Valparaiso; I like the life there, and I shall make it my home; there are excellent houses to be had, I have one in view at this moment. Later, of course, Cicely would wish her boy to come to her there. But in the meantime, while he is still so young—yes, I will do what I can for you; you may count upon me."

"Thanks," answered Eve. Her words were humble, but she did not look humble as she spoke them; Ferdie with his favors and his good-nature seemed to her more menacing than ever.

The tranquil life went on. Every morning she said to herself, "To-day something must happen!" But the Arcadian hours continued, and two more weeks passed slowly by. Eve began to hate the sunshine, the brilliant, undimmed southern stars.

"My dear, you are growing paler," said Miss Sabrina one day. "Perhaps this sea-air of ours is not good for you."

Eve wanted to reply: "Is it good to be watching every instant?—to be listening and starting and thinking one hears something?" "You are right; it is not," she answered aloud; "all the same, I will stay awhile longer, if you will let me."

"Oh, my dear—when we want you to live here!"

"Perhaps I shall die here," Eve responded, with a laugh.

Miss Sabrina looked at her in surprise; for the laugh was neither gentle nor sweet.

Eve was tired, tired mentally and physically; this state of passive waiting taxed her; action of some sort, even though accompanied by the hardest conditions, would have been easier to her ardent unconquered will. She occupied herself with Jack; she said as little as she could to Ferdie; and she watched Cicely. Underneath this watchfulness there grew up a strong contempt for love.

X.

"EVE!" A hand on Eve's shoulder.

Eve sat up in bed with a start; Cicely stood beside her, candle in hand. "Help me to dress Jack," she said.

Eve was out of bed in an instant. She lighted her own candle.

Cicely lifted the sleeping child from his crib, and began hastily to dress him. Eve brought all the little garments quickly. "Are you going to take him out of the house?" she asked. (They spoke in whispers.)

"Yes."

Eve threw on her own clothes.

After a moment, during which the hands of both women moved rapidly, Eve said, "Where is he?"

"Outside—out of the house for the moment. But he will come back; and then, if he comes down this hall, we must escape."

"Where? We must have the same ideas, you know," said Eve, buttoning her dress, and taking her hat and shawl from the wardrobe.

"I thought we could go through the ballroom, and out by the north wing."

"And once outside?"

"We must hide."

"But where?"

"In the thicket."

"It isn't a very large space. Supposing Jack should cry?"

Cicely went on fastening Jack's little coat. "I can't talk!"

"You needn't," said Eve; "I'll take care of you!"

The hasty dressing completed, the two candles were extinguished. Jack had fallen asleep again. Cicely held him herself; she would not let Eve take him. They opened the door softly, and stood together outside in the dark hall. The seconds passed and turned into minutes; the minutes became three, then five; but the space of time seemed a half-hour. Eve, standing still in the darkness, recovered her coolness; she stepped noiselessly back into her room for a moment or two; then she returned and resumed the watch. Cicely's little figure standing beside her looked very small.

By-and-by the door at the far end of the hall opened, and for the first time in her life Eve saw a vision: Ferdie, half dressed and carrying a lighted candle, appeared, his eyes fierce and fixed, his cheeks flushed. At that moment his beauty was terrible; but he saw nothing, heard nothing; he was like a man listening to something afar off.

"Come," whispered Cicely.

Swiftly and noiselessly she went round the angle of the corridor, opened a door, and, closing it behind them, led the way to the north wing; Eve followed, or rather she kept by her side. After a breathless winding transit through the labyrinth of halls and chambers, they reached the ballroom.

"Now we can run," Cicely whispered. Silently they ran.

Before they had quite reached the door at the far end, they heard a sound behind them, and saw a gleam across the floor: he had not waited in Eve's room, then; he had divined their flight, and was following. Cicely's hand swiftly found and lifted the latch; she opened the door, and they passed through. Eve gave one glance over her shoulder; he was advancing, but he was not running; his eyes had the same stare.

Cicely threw up a window, gave Jack to Eve, climbed by the aid of a chair to the sill and jumped out; then she put up her arms for Jack, and Eve followed her; they drew down the window behind them from the outside. There was a moon, but dark clouds obscured its light; the air was still. Cicely led the way to the thicket; pushing her way within, she sank down, the bushes crackling loudly as she did so. "Hurry!" she

said to Eve.

Eve crouched beside her beneath the dense foliage. They could see nothing, but they could hear. They remained motionless.

After several minutes of suspense they heard a step on the plank floor of the veranda; he had made his way out. Then followed silence; the silence was worse than the sound of his steps; they had the sense that he was close upon them.

After some time without another sound, suddenly his candle gleamed directly over them; he had approached them unheard by the road, Eve not knowing and Cicely having forgotten that it was so near. For an instant Eve's heart stopped beating, she thought that they were discovered; escape was cut off, for the thorns and spiny leaves held their skirts like so many hands. But the fixed eyes did not see them; after a moment the beautiful, cruel face, lit by the yellow gleam of the candle, disappeared from above; the light moved farther away. He was going down the road; every now and then they could see that he threw a ray to the right and the left, as if still searching.

"He will go through the whole thicket, now that he has the idea," Cicely whispered. They crept into the road, Eve carrying Jack. But, once outside, Cicely took him again. They stood erect, they looked back; he and his candle were still going on towards the sea.

Cicely turned; she took a path which led to the north point. "There's no thicket there. And if he comes, there's a boat."

The distance to the point was nearly a mile. The white sand of the track guided them through the dark woods.

"Shouldn't you be safer, after all, in the house?" Eve asked.

"No, for this time he is determined to kill us; he thinks that I am some one else, a woman who is going to attack his wife; and he thinks that Jack is some other child, who has injured his Jack."

“He shall never touch Jack! Give him to me, Cicely; he is too heavy for you.”

“I will not give him to any one—any one,” Cicely answered, panting.

As they approached the north point, the moon shone through a rift in the clouds; suddenly it was as light as day; their faces and hands were ivory white in the radiance.

“What is that on your throat, and down the front of your dress?” said Eve. “It’s wet. Why, it’s blood!”

“Yes; I am cut here a little,” Cicely answered, making a gesture with her chin towards her left shoulder; “I suppose it has begun to bleed again. He has a knife to-night. That is what makes me so afraid.”

The Sound now came into view. At the same instant Eve, looking back, perceived a point of yellow light behind them; the path was straight for a long distance, and the light was far away; but it was advancing in their direction. Little Jack, fully awakened by their rapid flight, had lifted his head, trying to see his mother’s face; as no one paid any attention to him, he began to cry. His voice seemed to make Cicely frantic; clasping him close, pressing his head down against her breast, she broke into a run.

“Get into the boat and push off, don’t wait for me; I’m in no danger,” Eve called after her. She stood there watching.

Cicely reached the beach, put Jack into the boat, and then tried to push it off. It was a heavy old row-boat, kept there for the convenience of the negroes who wished to cross to Singleton Island; to-night it was drawn up so high on the sands that with all her effort Cicely could not launch it. She strained every muscle to the utmost; in her ears there was a loud rushing sound; she paused dizzily, turning her head away from the water for a moment, and as she did so, she too saw the gleam, pale in the moonlight, far down the path. She did not scream, there was a tension in her throat which kept all sound from her parched mouth; she climbed into the boat, seized

Jack, and staggered forward with the vague purpose of jumping into the water from the boat's stern; but she did not get far, she sank suddenly down.

"She has fainted; so much the better," Eve thought. Jack, who had fallen as his mother fell, cried loudly. "He is not hurt; at least not seriously," she said to herself. Then, turning into the wood, she made her way back towards the advancing point of light. After some progress she stopped.

Ferdie was walking rapidly now; in his left hand he held his candle high in the air; in his right, which hung by his side, there was something that gleamed. The moonlight shone full upon his face, and Eve could see the expression, whose slight signs she had noticed, the flattening of the corners of the mouth; this was now so deepened that his lips wore a slight grin. Jack's wail, which had ceased for several minutes, now began again, and at the same instant his moving head could be seen above the boat's side; he had disengaged himself, and was trying to climb up higher, by the aid of one of the seats, in order to give larger vent to his astonishment and his grief.

Ferdie saw him; his shoulders made a quick movement; an inarticulate sound came from his flattened, grimacing mouth. Then he began to run towards the boat. At the same moment there was the crack, not loud, of a pistol discharged very near. The running man lunged forward and fell heavily to his knees; then to the sand. His arms made one or two spasmodic movements. Then they were still.

Eve's figure went swiftly through the wood towards the shore; she held her skirts closely, as if afraid of their rustling sound. Reaching the boat, she made a mighty effort, both hands against the bow, her body slanting forward, her feet far behind her, deep in the sand and pressing against it. She was very strong, and the boat moved, it slid down slowly and gratingly; more and more of its long length entered the water, until at last only the bow still touched the sand. Eve jumped in, pushed off with an oar, and then, stepping over Cicely's prostrate form to reach one of the seats, she sat down and began to row, brushing little Jack aside with her knee (he fell

down more amazed and grief-stricken than ever), and placing her feet against the next seat as a brace. She rowed with long strokes and with all her might; perhaps he was not much hurt, after all; perhaps he too had a pistol, and could reach them. She watched the beach breathlessly.

The Sound was smooth; before long a wide space of water, with the silvery path of the moon across it, separated them from Abercrombie Island. Still she could not stop. She looked at Cicely's motionless figure; Jack, weary with crying, had crawled as far as one of her knees and laid his head against it, sobbing "Aunty Eve? Aunty Eve?"

"Yes, darling," said Eve, mechanically, still watching the other shore.

At last, with her hands smarting, her arms strained, she reached Singleton Island. After beaching the boat, she knelt down and chafed Cicely's temples, wetting her handkerchief by dipping it over the boat's side, and then pressing it on the dead-white little face. Cicely sighed. Then she opened her eyes and looked up, only half consciously, at the sky. Next she looked at Eve, who was bending over her, and memory came back.

"We are safe," Eve said, answering the look; "we are on Singleton Island, and no one is following us." She lifted the desperate little Jack and put him in his mother's arms.

Cicely sat up, she kissed her child passionately. But she fell back again, Eve supporting her.

"Let me see that—that place," Eve said. With nervous touch she turned down the little lace ruffle, which was dark and limp with the stain of the life-tide.

"It's nothing," murmured Cicely. The cut had missed its aim, it was low down on the throat, near the collar-bone; it was a flesh-wound, not dangerous.

Cicely pushed away Eve's hands and sat up. "Where is Ferdie?" she demanded.

"He—he is on the other island," Eve answered, hesitatingly. "Don't you remember that he followed us?—that we were trying to escape?"

"Well, we have escaped," said Cicely. "And now I want to know where he is."

She got on her feet, stepped out of the boat to the sand, and lifted Jack out; she muffled the child in a shawl, and made him walk with her to the edge of the water. Here she stood looking at the home-island, straining her eyes in the misty moonlight.

Eve followed her. "I think the farther away we go, Cicely, the better; at least for the present. The steamer stops at Singleton Landing at dawn; we can go on board as we are, and get what is necessary in Savannah."

"Why don't I see him on the beach?" said Cicely. "I could see him if he were there—I could see him walking. If he followed us, as you say, why don't I see him!" She put a hand on each side of her mouth, making a circle of them, and called with all her strength, "Ferdie? Fer-die?"

"Are you mad?" said Eve.

"Fer-die?" cried Cicely again.

Eve pulled down her hands. "He can't hear you."

"Why can't he?" said Cicely, turning and looking at her.

"It's too far," answered Eve, in a trembling voice.

"Perhaps he has gone for a boat," Cicely suggested.

"Yes, perhaps he has," Eve assented, eagerly. And for a moment the two women gazed southward with the same hopefulness.

Then Eve came back to reality. "What are we thinking of? Do you want to have Jack killed?"

Cicely threw up her arms. "Oh, if it weren't for Jack!" Her despair at that moment gave her majesty.

“Give him to me; let me take him away,” urged Eve again.

“I will never give him to any one; I will never leave him, never.”

“Then you must both go with me for the present; we will go farther north than Savannah; we will go to New York.”

“There is only one place I will go to—one person, and that is Paul; Ferdie loves Paul;—I will go nowhere else.”

“Very well; we will go to Paul.”

The struggle was over; Cicely’s voice had grown lifeless. Little Jack, tired out, laid himself despairingly down on the sand; she sat down beside him, rearranged the shawl under him and over him, and then, as he fell asleep, she clasped her hands round her knees, and waited inertly, her eyes fixed on the opposite beach.

Eve, standing behind her, also watched the home-island. “If I could only see him!” was her constant prayer. She was even ready to accept the sight of a boat shooting from the shadows which lay dark on the western side, a boat coming in pursuit; he would have had time, perhaps, to get to the skiff which was kept on that side, not far from the point; he knew where all the boats were. Five minutes—six—had elapsed since they landed; yes, he would have had time. She looked and looked; she was almost sure that she saw a boat advancing, and clasped her hands in joy.

But where could they go, in case he should really come? To Singleton House, where there was only a lame old man, and women? There was no door there which he could not batter down, no lock which could keep him out—the terrible, beautiful madman. No; it was better to think, to believe, that he could not come.

She walked back to the trees that skirted the beach, leaned her clasped arms against the trunk of one of them, and, laying her head upon the arm that was uppermost, stood motionless.

XI.

THE dawn was still very faint when the steamer stopped at Singleton Landing. There was no one waiting save an old negro, who caught the shore rope, and there was no one stirring on the boat save the gruff captain, muffled in an overcoat though the night was warm, and two deck-hands, who put ashore a barrel and a sack. Lights were burning dimly on board; the negro on the dock carried a lantern.

Two women came from the shadows, and crossed the plank to the lower deck, entering the dark space within, which was encumbered with loose freight—crates of fowls, boxes, barrels, coils of rope. The taller of the two women carried a sleeping child.

For Cicely had come to the end of her strength; she could hardly walk.

Eve found the sleepy mulatto woman who answered to the name of stewardess, and told her to give them a cabin immediately.

“Cabin? Why, de cabin’s dish-yere,” answered the woman, making a motion with her hand to indicate the gaudy little saloon in which they stood. She surveyed them with wonder.

“State-room,” murmured Cicely.

Upon the lower bed in the very unstately white cell which was at last opened for them, her little figure was soon stretched out, apathetically. Her eyes remained closed; the dawn, as it grew brighter, did not tempt her to open them; she lay thus all day. Jack slept profoundly for several hours on the shelf-like bed above her. Then he woke, and instantly became very merry, laughing to see the shining green water outside, the near shores, the houses and groves and fields, and now and then a row-boat under sail. Eve brought him some bread and milk, and then she gave him a bath; he gurgled with laughter, and played all his little tricks and games, one after the other. But Cicely remained inert, she could not have been more still if she had

been dead; the rise and fall of her chest as she breathed was so slight that Eve was obliged to look closely in order to distinguish it at all. Just before they reached Savannah she raised her to a sitting position, and held a cup of coffee to her lips. Cicely drank. Then, as the steamer stopped, Eve lifted her to her feet.

Cicely's eyes opened; they looked at Eve reproachfully.

"It will only take a few moments to go to the hotel," Eve answered.

She called the stewardess and made her carry Jack; she herself half carried Cicely. She signalled to the negro driver of one of the carriages waiting at the dock, and in a few minutes, as she had said, she was undressing her little sister-in-law and lifting her into a cool, broad bed.

Jack asleep, she began her watch. The sun was setting, she went to one of the windows, and looked out. Below her was a wide street without pavement, bordered on each side by magnificent trees. She could see this avenue for a long distance; the perspective made by its broad roadway was diversified, every now and then, by a clump of greenery standing in the centre, with a fountain or a statue gleaming through the green. Trees were everywhere; it was a city in a grove. She remembered her first arrival off this coast, when she came from England,—Tybee Light, and then the lovely river; now she was passing through the same city, fleeing from—danger?—or was it from justice? Twilight deepened; she left the window and sat down beside the shaded lamp; her hands were folded upon her lap, her gaze was fixed unseeingly upon the carpet. After ten minutes had passed, she became conscious of something, and raised her eyes; Cicely was looking at her. Eve rose and went to her. "Are we in Savannah?" Cicely asked.

"Yes."

Cicely continued to look at her. "If you really want me to go on, you had better take me at once."

"But you were too tired to go on—"

“It is not a question of tired, I shall be tired all my life. But if you don’t want me to go back by the first boat to-morrow, you had better take me away to-night.”

“By the midnight train,” Eve answered.

And at midnight they left Savannah.

At Charleston they were obliged to wait; there had been a flood, and the track was overflowed.

Some purchases were necessary for their comfort; Eve did not dare to leave Cicely with Jack, lest she should find them both gone on her return; she therefore took them with her, saying to the negro coachman, privately, “If that lady should tell you to return to the hotel or to drive to the steamer when I am not with you, pay no attention to her; she is ill, and not responsible for what she says.”

As she was coming out of a shop, a face she knew met her eyes—Judge Abercrombie. He had come from Gary Hundred that morning, and was on his way to Romney; he intended to take the evening boat.

He recognized them; he hurried to the carriage door, astonished, alarmed. Eve seemed cowed by his presence. It was Cicely who said, “Yes, we are here, grandpa. Get in, and I will tell you why.”

But when the old man had placed himself opposite to her, when Eve had taken her seat again and the carriage was rolling towards the hotel, Cicely still remained mute. At last she leaned forward. “I can’t tell you,” she said, putting her hand into his; “at least I can’t tell you now. Will you wait, dear? Do wait.” Her voice, as she said this, was like the voice of a little girl of ten.

The old man, wondering, held her hand protectingly. He glanced at Eve. But Eve’s eyes were turned away.

The drive was a short one. As they entered Cicely’s room, Eve took Jack in her arms and went out again into the hall, closing the door behind her.

The hall was long, with a window at each end; a breeze blew through it, laden with the perfume of flowers. Jack clamored for a game; Eve raised him to her shoulder, and went to the window at the west end; it overlooked a garden crowded with blossoms; then she turned and walked to the east end, Jack considering it a march, and playing that her shoulder was his drum; the second window commanded a view of the burned walls of the desolated town. Eight times she made the slow journey from the flowers to the ruins, the ruins to the flowers. Then Cicely opened the door. "You can come in now. Grandpa knows."

Grandpa's face, in his new knowledge, was pitiful to see. He had evidently been trying to remain calm, and he had succeeded so far as to keep his features firm; but his cheeks, which ordinarily were tinted with pink, had turned to a dead-looking yellow. "I should be greatly obliged if you would come with me for a walk," he said to Eve; "I have travelled down from Gary Hundred this morning, and, after being shut up in the train, you know, one feels the need of fresh air." He rose, and gave first one leg and then the other a little shake, with a pathetic pretence of preparing for vigorous exercise.

"I don't think I can go," Eve began. But a second glance at his dead-looking face made her relent, or rather made her brace herself. She rang the bell, and asked one of the chamber-maids to follow them with Jack; once outside, she sent the girl forward. "I have taken Jack because we cannot trust Cicely," she explained. "If she had him, she might, in our absence, take him and start back to the island; but she will not go without him."

"Neither of them must go back," said the judge. He spoke mechanically.

They went down the shaded street towards the Battery. "And there's Sabrina, too, poor girl! How do we know what has happened to her!" Eve hesitated. Then she said, slowly, "Cicely tells me that when these attacks are on him, he is dangerous only to herself and Jack."

“That makes him only the greater devil!” answered the judge. “What I fear is that he is already on her track; he would get over the attack soon—he is as strong as an ox—and if he should reach her,—have a chance at her with his damned repentant whinings—We must get off immediately! In fact, I don’t understand why you are stopping here at all,” he added, with sudden anger.

“We couldn’t go on; the track is under water somewhere. And perhaps we need not hurry so.” She paused. “I suppose you know that Cicely will go only to Paul Tennant,” she added. “She refuses to go anywhere else.”

“Where the devil is the man?”

“It’s a place called Port aux Pins, on Lake Superior. I really think that if we don’t take her to him at once, she will leave us and get back to Ferdie, in spite of all we can do.”

“If there’s no train, we’ll take a carriage, we’ll drive,” declared the judge. “This is the first place he’ll come to; we won’t wait here!”

“There’ll be a train this evening; they tell me so at the hotel,” Eve answered. Then she waited a moment. “We shall have to stop on the way, Cicely is so exhausted; I suppose we go to Pittsburgh, and then to Cleveland to take the lake steamer; if you should write to Miss Sabrina from here, the answer might meet us at one of those places.”

“Of course I shall write. At once.”

“No, don’t write!” said Eve, grasping his arm suddenly. “Or at least don’t let her send any answer until the journey is ended. It’s better not to know—not to know!”

“Not to know whether poor Sabrina is safe? Not to know whether that brute is on our track? I can’t imagine what you are thinking of; perhaps you will kindly explain?”

“It’s only that my head aches. I don’t know what I am saying!”

“Yes, you must be overwrought,” said the judge. He had been thinking only of Cicely. “You protected my poor little girl, you brought her away; it was a brave act,” he said, admiringly.

“It was for Jack, I wanted to save my brother’s child. Surely that was right?” Eve’s voice, as she said this, broke into a sob.

“They were in danger of their lives, then?” asked the grandfather, in a low tone. “Cicely didn’t tell me.”

“She did not know, she had fainted. A few minutes more, and I believe he would—We should not have them now.”

“But you got the boat off in time.”

“But I got the boat off in time,” Eve repeated, lethargically.

They had now reached the Battery Park; they entered and sat down on one of the benches; the negro girl played with Jack on the broad walk which overlooks the water. The harbor, with Sumter in the distance, the two rivers flowing down, one on each side of the beautiful city—beautiful still, though desolated by war—made a scene full of loveliness. The judge took off his hat, as if he needed more air.

“You are ill,” said Eve, in the same mechanical voice.

“It’s only that I cannot believe it even now—what Cicely told me. Why, it is my own darling little grandchild, who has been treated so, who has been beaten—struck to the floor! His strong hand has come down on her shoulder so that you could hear it!—Cicely, Eve; my little Cicely!” His old eyes, small and dry, looked at Eve piteously.

She put out her hand and took his in silence.

“She has always been such a delicate little creature, that we never let her have any care or trouble; we even spoke to her gently always, Sabrina and I. For she was so delicate when she was a baby that they thought she couldn’t live; she had her bright

eyes, even then, and she was so pretty and winning; but they said she must soon follow her mother. We were so glad when she began to grow stronger. But—have we saved her for this?"

"She is away from him now," Eve answered.

"And there was her father—my boy Marmaduke; what would Duke have said?—his baby—his little girl!" He rose and walked to and fro; for the first time his gait was that of a feeble old man.

"They can't know what happens to us here!—or else that they see some way out of it that we do not see," said Eve, passionately. "Otherwise, it would be too cruel."

"Duke died when she was only two years old," the judge went on. "'Father, ' he said to me, just at the last, 'I leave you baby.' And this is what I have brought her to!"

"You had nothing to do with it, she married him of her own free will. And she forgot everything, she forgot my brother very soon."

"I don't know what she forgot, I don't care what she forgot," the old man answered. He sat down on the bench again, and put his hands over his face. He was crying—the slow, hard tears of age.

At sunset they started. The negro chamber-maid, to whom Jack had taken a fancy, went with them as nurse, and twenty shining black faces were at the station to see her off.

"Good-bye, Porley; take keer yersef."

"Yere's luck, Porley; doan yer forgot us."

"Step libely, Jonah; Porley's a-lookin' at yer."

"Good-lye, Porley!"

The train moved out.

XII.

A DOCK on the Cuyahoga River, at Cleveland. The high bows of a propeller loomed up far above them; a wooden bridge, with hand-rails of rope, extended from a square opening in its side to the place where they were standing—the judge, bewildered by the deafening noise of the letting-off of steam and by the hustling of the deck-hands who ran to and fro putting on freight; little Jack, round-eyed with wonder, surveying the scene from his nurse's arms; Cicely, listless, unhearing; and Eve, with the same pale-cheeked self-control and the same devoted attention to Cicely which had marked her manner through all their rapid journey across the broad country from Charleston to Washington, from Washington to Pittsburgh, from Pittsburgh to Cleveland.

"I think we cross here," she said; "by this bridge." She herself went first. The bridge ascended sharply; little slats of wood were nailed across its planks in order to make the surface less slippery. The yellow river, greasy with petroleum from the refineries higher up the stream, heaved a little from the constant passing of other craft; this heaving made the bridge unsteady, and Eve was obliged to help the nurse when she crossed with Jack, and then to lead Cicely, and to give a hand to the judge, who came last.

"You are never dizzy," said the judge.

"No, I am never dizzy," Eve answered, as though she were saying the phrase over to herself as a warning.

She led the way up a steep staircase to the cabin above. This was a long narrow saloon, decked with tables each covered with a red cloth, whereon stood, in white vases representing a hand grasping a cornucopia, formal bouquets, composed principally of peonies and the foliage of asparagus. Narrow doors, ornamented with gilding, formed a panelling on each side; between the doors small stiff sofas of red velvet were attached by iron clamps to the floor, which was covered with a brilliant carpet; above each sofa, under the low ceiling, was a narrow grating. Women and a

few men sat here and there on the sofas; they looked at the new passengers apathetically. Lawless children chased one another up and down the narrow spaces between the sofas and the tables, forcing each person who was seated to draw in his or her legs with lightning rapidity as they passed; babies with candy, babies with cookies, babies with apples, crawled and tottered about on the velvet carpet, and drew themselves up by the legs of the tables, leaving sticky marks on the mahogany surfaces, and generally ending by striking their heads against the top, sitting down suddenly and breaking into a howl. Eve led the way to the deck; she brought forward chairs, and they seated themselves. A regularly repeated and deafening clash came from the regions below; the deck-hands were bringing steel rails from a warehouse on the dock, and adding them one by one to the pile already on board by the simple method of throwing them upon it. After the little party had sat there for fifteen minutes, Eve said, “It is—it is insupportable!”

“You feel it because you have not slept. You haven’t slept at all since we started,” said Cicely, mentioning the fact, but without evident interest in it.

“Yes I have,” responded Eve, quickly.

There came another tremendous clash. Eve visibly trembled; her cheeks seemed to grow more wan, the line between her eyes deepened.

“This noise must be stopped!” said the old planter, authoritatively. He got up and went to the side.

“They won’t stop,” said Cicely.

Eve sat still, the tips of the fingers of each of her hands pressed hard into the palm, and bits of her inner cheek held tightly between her teeth. At last the rails were all on board and the gangways hauled in; the propeller moved slowly away from her dock, a row of loungers, with upturned faces, watching her departure, and visibly envying the captain, who called out orders loudly from the upper deck—orders which were needed; for the river was crowded with craft of all kinds, and many

manœuvres were necessary before the long steamer could turn herself and reach the open lake. She passed out at last between two piers, down which boys ran as fast as they could, racing with the engine to see which should reach the end first. At last they were away, and the noises ceased; there was only the regular throb of the machinery, the sound of the water churned by the screw. The sun was setting; Eve looked at the receding shores—the spires of Cleveland on the bluffs which rise from the Cuyahoga, the mass of roofs extending to the east and the west, bounded on the latter side by the pine-clad cliffs of Rocky River. After the splendid flaming sunset, the lake grew suddenly dark; it looked as vast and dusky as the ocean. Cicely sprang up. “I know I shall never come back across all this water!—I know I never, never shall!”

“Yes, you will, little girl,” answered her grandfather, fondly.

“I don’t mind. But I can’t stay here and think! They must be doing something in there—all those people we saw in the cabin; I am going in to see.” She went within, and Eve followed her; the nurse carried Jack after his mother. But the judge remained where he was; he sat with one hand laid over the other on the top of his cane. He looked at the dark lake; his feeling was, “What is to become of us?”

Within, all was animation; the tables had been pushed together by a troop of hurrying darkies in white aprons, and now the same troop were bringing in small open dishes, some flat and some bowl-like, containing an array of food which included everything from beefsteak to ice-cream. The passengers occupying the sofas watched the proceedings; then, at the sound of a tap on the gong, they rose and seated themselves on the round stools which did duty as chairs.

“Come,” said Cicely, “let us go too.” She seated herself; and again Eve patiently followed her. Cicely tasted everything and ate nothing. Eve neither tasted nor ate; she drank a glass of water. When the meal was over she spoke to one of the waiters, and gave him a fee; ten minutes later she carried out to the old man on the deck,

with her own hands, a tray containing freshly cooked food, toast and tea; she arranged these on a bench under the hanging lamp (for the deck at the stern was covered); then she drew up a chair. The judge had not stirred.

“Won’t you come?” said Eve, gently. “I have brought it for you.”

The judge rose, and, coming to the improvised table, sat down. He had not thought that he could touch anything, but the hot tea roused him, and before he knew it he was eating heartily. “Do you know, I—I believe I was cold,” he said, trying to laugh. “Yes—even this warm night!”

“I think we are all cold,” Eve answered; “we are all numbed. It will be better when we get there—wherever it is.”

The judge, warmed and revived, no longer felt so dreary. “You are our good angel,” he said. And, with his old-fashioned courtesy, he bent his head over her hand.

But Eve snatched her hand away and fled; she fairly ran. He looked after her in wonder.

Within, the tables had again been cleared, and then piled upon top of one another at one end of the saloon; in front of this pile stretched a row of chairs. These seats were occupied by the orchestra, the same negro waiters, with two violins and a number of banjoes and guitars.

“Forward one; forward two— De engine keeps de time; Leabe de lady in de centre, Bal-unse in er line,”

sang the leader to the tune of “Nelly Bly,” calling off the figures of the quadrille in rhymes of his own invention. Three quadrilles had been formed; two thin women danced with their bonnets on; a tall man in a linen duster and a short man in spectacles bounded about without a smile, taking careful steps; girls danced with each other, giggling profusely; children danced with their mothers; and the belle of the boat, a plump young woman with long curls, danced with two youths, changing impartially after each figure, and throwing glances over her shoulder meanwhile at

two more who stood in the doorway admiring. The throb of the engine could be felt through the motion of the twenty-four dancers, through the clear tenor of the negro who sang. Outside was the wide lake and the night.

Sitting on one of the sofas, alone, was Cicely. She was looking at the dancers intently, her lips slightly parted. Eve sat down quietly by her side.

“Oh, how you follow me!” said Cicely, moving away.

Then suddenly she began to laugh. “See that man in the linen duster! He takes such mincing little steps in his great prunella shoes. See him smile! Oh! oh!” She pressed her handkerchief over her lips to stifle her spasmodic laughter. But she could not stifle it.

“Come,” said Eve, putting her arm round her. Their state-room was near, she half carried her in. Light came through the gilded grating above. Cicely still laughed, lying in the lower berth; Eve undressed her; with soothing touch she tried to calm her, to stop her wild glee.

“He turned out his toes in those awful prunella shoes!” said Cicely, breaking into another peal of mirth.

“Hush, dear. Hush.”

“I wish you would go away. You always do and say the wrong thing,” said Cicely, suddenly.

“Perhaps I do,” answered Eve, humbly enough.

Jack was asleep in the upper berth; she herself (as she would not leave them) was to occupy an improvised couch on the floor. But first she went out softly, closing the door behind her; she was going to look for her other charge. The judge, however, had gone to bed, and Eve came back. The dancing had ceased for the moment; a plump young negro was singing, and accompanying himself on the guitar; his half-closed eyes gazed sentimentally at the ceiling; through his thick lips came, in

one of the sweetest voices in the world,

“No one to love, None to cay-ress; Roam-ing alone through This world’s wilderness—”

Eve stood with her hand on her door for an instant looking at him; then she looked at the listening people. Suddenly it came over her: “Perhaps it is all a dream! Perhaps I shall wake and find it one!”

She went in. Cicely was in her lethargic state, her hands lying motionless by her sides, her eyes closed. Eve uncoiled her own fair hair and loosened her dress; then she lay down on her couch on the floor.

But she could not sleep; with the first pink flush of dawn she was glad to rise and go out on deck to cool her tired eyes in the fresh air. The steamer was entering the Detroit River; deep and broad, its mighty current flowed onward smoothly, brimming full between its low green banks; the islands, decked in the fresh verdure of early summer, looked indescribably lovely as the rising sun touched them with gold; the lonely gazer wished that she might stop there, might live forever, hide forever, in one of these green havens of rest. But the steamer did not pause, and, laggingly, the interminable hours followed one another through another day. They were now crossing Lake Huron, they were out of sight of land; the purity of the cool blue water, ruffled by the breeze into curls of foam, made a picture to refresh the weariest vision. But Eve looked at it unseeingly, and Cicely did not look at all; the judge, too, saw nothing—nothing but Cicely. There had been no letter at Cleveland; for tidings they must still wait. Cicely had written a few lines to Paul Tennant, announcing their arrival. But to Eve it seemed as if they should never arrive, as if they should journey forever on this phantom boat, journey till they died.

At last Lake Huron was left behind; the steamer turned and went round the foaming leap of the St. Mary’s River, the Sault Sainte Marie (called by lake-country people the Soo), and entered Lake Superior. Another broad expanse of water like a sea. At

last, on the fifth day, Port aux Pins was in sight, a spot of white amid the pines. They were all assembled at the bow—Cicely, Eve, the judge, and Porley with little Jack; as the pier came into view with the waiting group of people at its end, no one spoke. Nearer and nearer, now they could distinguish figures; nearer and nearer, now they could see faces. Cicely knew which was Paul immediately, though she had never seen him. The judge took the knowledge from her eyes. Now people began to call to friends on the pier. Now the pier itself touched the steamer's side, the gangways were put out, and persons were crossing; in another minute a tall man had joined them, and, bending his head, had kissed Cicely.

"Mr. Tennant?" the judge had asked.

"Yes," answered Paul Tennant. He was looking at Cicely, trying to control a sudden emotion that had surprised him,—a man not given to emotions; he turned away for a moment, patting Jack's head. "She is so young!" he murmured to the judge.

"Paul," said Cicely, coming to them, "you have heard from Ferdie? There are letters?"

"No, I haven't heard lately. There are two letters for you, but they are not in his handwriting."

"Are they here?"

Paul's eyes turned rapidly, first to the judge, then to Eve. Eve's eyes answered him.

"At the house," he said.

"Is it far? Let us go at once." And Cicely turned towards the stairs.

"It's at the other end of the town; I've a wagon waiting."

Cicely was already descending. She crossed the gangway with rapid step; she would not wait for their meagre luggage. "Take me there at once, please; the wagon can come back for the others."

"I must go too," said Eve. The tone of her voice was beseeching.

“Get in, then,” said Cicely. “Paul, take us quickly, won’t you?” In her haste she seized the reins and thrust them into his hands. She would not sit down until he had taken his seat.

“I will send the wagon back immediately,” Paul said to the judge. Then, seeing the lost look of the old planter, he called out: “Hollis! Here a moment.”

A thin man with gray hair detached himself from the group of loungers on the pier, and hurried towards them.

“Judge Abercrombie, this is Mr. Christopher Hollis,” said Paul; “he lives here, and he is a great friend of mine. Hollis, will you help about the baggage? I’m coming back immediately.”

They drove away, but not before Cicely had asked Paul to let her sit beside him; Eve was left alone on the back seat.

“I wanted to sit beside you, Paul; but I’m afraid I can’t talk,” Cicely said. She put the back of her hand under her chin, as if to support her head; she looked about vaguely—at the street, the passing people.

“That’s right, don’t say anything; I like it better. You must be terribly tired,” answered Paul, reassuringly.

They stopped before a white cottage. Upon entering, Paul gave an inquiring glance at Eve; then he left the room, and came back with two letters.

Cicely tore them open.

Eve drew nearer.

In another instant Cicely gave a cry which rang through the house. “He is hurt! Some one has shot him—has shot him!” Clutching the pages, she swayed forward, but Paul caught her. He laid her upon a couch; with his large, strong hands he placed a cushion under her head.

Eve watched him. She did not help him. Then she came to the sofa. “Is he dead,

Cicely?" she asked, abruptly.

Cicely looked at her. "You want him to be!" Springing up suddenly, like a little tigress, still clutching her letters, she struck Eve with her left hand. Her gloved palm was soft, but, as she had exerted all her strength in the blow, the mark across Eve's cheek was red.

"Never mind," said Eve, hastily, as Paul started forward; "I am glad she did it." Her eyes were bright; the red had come into her other cheek; in spite of the mark of the blow, her face looked brilliant.

Cicely had fallen back; and this time she had lost consciousness.

"You can leave her to me now," Eve went on. "Of course what she said last means that he is not dead!" she added, with a long breath.

"Dead?" said Paul Tennant. "Poor Ferdie dead? Never!"

Eve had knelt down; she was chafing Cicely's temples. "Then you care for him very much?" she asked, looking at him for a moment over her shoulder.

"I care for him more than for anything else in the world," said the brother, shortly.

XIII.

IT was the afternoon of the same day.

"I shall go, grandpa," said Cicely; "I shall go to-night. There's a boat, somebody said."

"But, my dear child, listen to reason; Sabrina does not say that he is in danger."

"And she does not say that he is out of it."

The judge took up the letter again, and, putting on his glasses, he read aloud, with a frown of attention: "'For the first two days Dr. Daniels came over twice a day'"—

"You see?—twice a day," said Cicely.

—“‘But as he is beginning to feel his age, the crossing so often in the row-boat tired him; so now he sends us his partner, Dr. Knox, a new man here, and a very intelligent person, I should judge. Dr. Knox comes over every afternoon and spends the night’”—

“You see?—spends the night,” said Cicely.

—“‘Going back early the following morning. He has brought us a nurse, an excellent and skilful young man, and now we can have the satisfaction of feeling that our poor Ferdie has every possible attention. As I write, the fever is going down, and the nurse tells me that by to-morrow, or day after to-morrow, he will probably be able to speak to us, to talk.’”

“I don’t know exactly how many days it will take me to get there,” said Cicely, beginning to count upon her fingers. “Four days—or is it three?—to Cleveland, where I take the train; then how many hours from there to Washington? You will have to make it out for me, grandpa; or rather Paul will; Paul knows everything.”

“My poor little girl, you haven’t had any rest; even now you have only just come out of a fainting-fit. Sabrina will write every day; wait at least until her next letter comes to-morrow morning.”

“You are all so strange! Wouldn’t you wish me to see him if he were dying?” Cicely demanded, her voice growing hard.

“Of course, of course,” replied the old man, hastily. “But there is no mention of dying, Sabrina says nothing that looks like it; Daniels, our old friend—why, Daniels would cross twenty times a day if he thought there was danger.”

“I can’t argue, grandpa. But I shall go; I shall go to-night,” Cicely responded.

She was seated on a sofa in Paul Tennant’s parlor, a large room, furnished with what the furniture dealer of Port aux Pins called a “drawing-room set.” The sofa of this set was of the pattern named tête-à-tête, very hard and slippery, upholstered in hideous green damask. Cicely was sitting on the edge of this unreposeful couch, her feet

close together on a footstool, her arms tight to her sides and folded from the elbows in a horizontal position across the front of her waist. She looked very rigid and very small.

“But supposing, when you get there, that you find him up,—well?” suggested the judge.

“Shouldn’t I be glad?” answered Cicely, defiantly. “What questions you ask!”

“But we couldn’t be glad. Can’t you think a little of us?—you are all we have left now.”

“Aunt Sabrina doesn’t feel as you do—if you mean Aunt Sabrina; she would be delighted to have me come back. She likes Ferdie; it is only you who are so hard about him.”

“Sabrina doesn’t know. But supposing it were only I, is my wish nothing to you?” And the old man put out his hand in appeal.

“No,” answered Cicely, inflexibly. “I am sorry, grandpa; but for the moment it isn’t, nothing is anything to me now but Ferdie. And what is it that Aunt Sabrina doesn’t know, pray? There’s nothing to know; Ferdie had one of his attacks—he has had them before—and I came away with Jack; that is all. Eve has exaggerated everything. I told her I would come here, come to Paul, because Ferdie likes Paul; but I never intended to stay forever, and now that Ferdie is ill, do you suppose that I will wait one moment longer than I must? Of course not.”

The door opened and Eve came in. Cicely glanced at her; then she turned her eyes away, looking indifferently at the whitewashed wall.

“She is going to take the steamer back to-night,” said the judge, helplessly.

“Oh no, Cicely; surely not to-night,” Eve began. In spite of the fatigues of the journey, Eve had been a changed creature since morning; there was in her eyes an expression of deep happiness, which was almost exaltation.

“There is no use in explaining anything to Eve, and I shall not try,” replied Cicely. She unfolded her arms and rose, still standing, a rigid little figure, close to the sofa. “I love my husband, and I shall go to him; what Eve says is of no consequence, because she knows nothing about such things; but I suppose you cared for grandma once, didn’t you, grandpa, when she was young? and if she had been shot, wouldn’t you have gone to her?”

“Cicely, you are cruel,” said Eve.

“When grandpa thinks so, it will be time enough for me to trouble myself. But grandpa doesn’t think so.”

“No, no,” said the old man; “never.” And for the moment he and his grandchild made common cause against the intruder.

Eve felt this, she stood looking at them in silence. Then she said, “And Jack?”

“I shall take him with me, of course. That reminds me that I must speak to Porley about his frocks; Porley is so stupid.” And Cicely turned towards the door.

Eve followed her. “Another long journey so soon will be bad for Jack.”

“There you go again! But I shall not leave him with you, no matter what you say; useless, your constant asking.” She opened the door. On the threshold she met Paul Tennant coming in.

He took her hand and led her back. “I was looking for you; I have found a little bed for Jack; but I don’t know that it will do.”

“You are very good, Paul, but Jack will not need it. I am going away to-night; I have only just learned that there is a boat.”

“We don’t want to hear any talk of boats,” Paul answered. He drew her towards the sofa and placed her upon it. “Sit down; you look so tired!”

“I’m not tired; at least I do not feel it. And I have a great deal to do, Paul; I must see about Jack’s frocks.”

“Jack’s frocks can wait. There’s to be no journey to-night.”

“Yes, there is,” said Cicely, with a mutinous little smile. Her glance turned towards her grandfather and Eve; then it came back to Paul, who was standing before her. “None of you shall keep me,” she announced.

“You will obey your grandfather, won’t you?” Paul began, seriously.

The judge got up, rubbing his hands round each other.

“No,” Cicely answered; “not about this. Grandpa knows it; we have already talked it over.”

“You are wrong; you ought not to be willing to make him so unhappy.”

“Never mind about that, Tennant; I’ll see to that,” said the judge. He spoke in a thin old voice which sounded far away.

Paul looked at him, surprised. Then his glance turned towards Eve. “Miss Bruce too; I am sure she does not approve of your going?”

“Oh, if I should wait for Eve’s approval!” said Cicely. “Eve doesn’t approve of anything in the world except that she should have Jack, and take him away with her, Heaven knows where. She hasn’t any feelings as other people have; she has never cared for anybody excepting herself, and her brother, and I dare say that when she had him she tried to rule him, as she tries now to rule me and every one. She is jealous about him, and that makes her hate Ferdie: perhaps you don’t know that she hates Ferdie? She does; she was sorry this morning, absolutely sorry, when she heard that, though he was dreadfully hurt, he wasn’t dead.”

“Oh, Cicely!” said Eve. She turned away and walked towards one of the windows, her face covered by her hands.

Paul’s eyes followed her. Then they came back to Cicely. “Very well, then, since it appears to be left to me, I must tell you plainly that you cannot go to-night; we shall not allow it.”

"We!" ejaculated Cicely. "Who are we?"

"I, then, if you like—I alone."

"What can you do? I am free; no one has any authority over me except Ferdie." Paul did not reply. "You will scarcely attempt to keep me by force, I suppose?" she went on.

"If necessary, yes. But it will not be necessary."

"Grandpa would never permit it. Grandpa?" She summoned him to her side with an imperious gesture.

The old man came towards her a step or two. Then he left the room hurriedly.

Cicely watched him go, with startled eyes. But she recovered herself, and looked at Paul undaunted.

"Why do you treat me so, Cicely?" he said. "I care about Ferdie as much as you do; I have always cared about him,—hasn't he ever told you? There never were two boys such chums; and although, since he has grown up, he has had others, I have never had any one but him; I haven't wanted any one. Is it likely, then, that I should try to set you against him?—that I should turn against him myself?—I ask you that."

"It is setting me against him not to let me go to him. How do we know that he is not dying?" Her voice was quiet and hard.

"We know because the letters do not speak of danger; on the contrary, they tell us that the ball has been extracted, and that the fever is going down. He will get well. And then some measures must be taken before you can go back to him; otherwise it would not be safe."

"And do I care about safe? I should like to die if he did!" cried Cicely, passionately. She looked like a hunted creature at bay.

"And your child; what is your idea about him?"

"That's it; take up Eve's cry—do! You know I will never give up baby, and so you

both say that." She sank down on the sofa, her head on her arms, her face hidden.

Her little figure lying there looked so desolate that Eve hurried forward from the window. Then she stopped, she felt that Cicely hated her.

"I say what I think will influence you," Paul was answering. "Ferdie has already thrown the boy about once; he may do it again. Of course at such times he is not responsible; but these times are increasing, and he must be brought up short; he must be brought to his senses." He went to the sofa, sat down beside her, and lifted her in his arms. "My poor little sister, do trust me. Ferdie does; he wrote to me himself about that dreadful time, that first time when he hurt you; isn't that a proof? I will show you the letter if you like."

"I don't want to see it. Ferdie and I never speak of those things; there has never been an allusion to them between us," replied Cicely, proudly.

"I can understand that. You are his wife, and I am only his big brother, to whom he has always told everything." He placed her beside him on the sofa, with his arm still round her. "Didn't you know that we still tell each other everything,—have all in common? I have been the slow member of the firm, as one may say, and so I've stayed along here; but I have always known what Ferdie was about, and have been interested in his schemes as much as he was."

"Yes, he told me that you gave him the money for South America," said Cicely, doubtfully.

"That South American investment was his own idea, and he deserves all the credit of it; he will make it a success yet. See here, Cicely: at the first intimation that he is worse, I should go down there myself as fast as boat and train could carry me; I've telegraphed to that Dr. Knox to keep me informed exactly, and, if there should be any real danger, I will take you to him instantly. But I feel certain that he will recover. And then we must cure him in another way. The trouble with Ferdie is that he is sure that he can stop at any moment, and, being so sure, he has never really

tried. The thing has been on him almost from a boy, he inherits it from his father. But he has such a will, he is so brilliant—”

“Oh, yes! isn’t he?” said Cicely, breathlessly.

—“That he has never considered himself in danger, in spite of these lapses. Now there is where we must get hold of him—we must open his eyes; and that is going to be the hard point, the hard work, in which, first of all, you must help. But once he is convinced, once the thing is done, then, Cicely, then”—

“Yes, then?”

—“He will be about as perfect a fellow as the world holds, I think,” said Paul, with quiet enthusiasm. He stooped and kissed her cheek. “I want you to believe that I love him,” he added, simply.

He got up, smiling down upon her,—“Now will you be a good girl?” he said, as though she were a child.

“I will wait until to-morrow,” Cicely answered, after a moment’s hesitation.

“Come, that’s a concession,” said Paul, applaudingly. “And now won’t you do something else that will please me very much?—won’t you go straight to bed?”

“A small thing to please you with,” Cicely answered, without a smile; “I will go if you wish. I should like to have you know, Paul, that I came to you of my own choice,” she went on; “I came to you when I would not go anywhere else; Eve will tell you so.”

“Yes,” assented Eve from her place by the window.

“Well, I’m glad you had some confidence,” Paul responded; “I must try to give you more. And now who will—who will see to you? Does that wool-headed girl of yours know anything?”

He looked so anxious as he said this that Cicely broke into a faint laugh. “I haven’t lost my mind; I can see to myself.”

“But I thought you Southerners— However, Miss Bruce will help you.” He looked at Eve.

“I am afraid Cicely is tired of me,” Eve answered, coming forward. “All the same, I know how to take care of her.”

“Yes, she took care of me all the way here,” remarked Cicely, looking at Eve coldly. “She needs to be taken care of herself,” she went on, in a dispassionate voice; “she has hardly closed her eyes since we started.”

“I feel perfectly well,” Eve answered, the color rushing to her face in a brilliant flush.

“I don’t think we need borrow any trouble about Miss Bruce, she looks the image of health,” observed Paul (but not as though he admired the image). “I am afraid your bedrooms are not very large,” he went on, again perturbed. “There are two, side by side.”

“Cicely shall have one to herself; Jack and I will take the other,” said Eve.

“Where is Jack?” demanded Cicely, suddenly. “What have you done with him, Eve?”

Paul opened the door. “Polly!” he cried, in a voice that could have been heard from garret to cellar. Porley, amazed by the sound, came running in, with Jack in her arms. Paul looked at her dubiously, shook his head, and went out.

Cicely took her child, and began to play all his games with him feverishly, one after the other.

Jack was delighted; he played with all his little heart.

XIV.

FOUR days had passed slowly by. “What do you think, judge, of this theory about the shooting,—the one they believe at Romney?” said Paul, on the fifth morning.

"It's probable enough. Niggers are constitutionally timid, and they always have pistols nowadays; these two boys, it seems, had come over from the mainland to hide; they had escaped from a lock-up, got a boat somewhere and crossed; that much is known. Your brother, perhaps, went wandering about the island; if he came upon them suddenly, with that knife in his hand, like as not they fired."

"Ferdie was found lying very near the point where your boat was kept."

"And the niggers might have been hidden just there. But I don't think we can tell exactly where our boat was; Cicely doesn't remember—I have asked her."

"Miss Bruce may have clearer ideas."

"No; Eve seems to have a greater confusion about it than Cicely even; she cannot speak of it clearly at all."

"Yes, I have noticed that," said Paul.

"I suppose it is because, at the last, she had it all to do; she is a brave woman."

Paul was silent.

"Don't you think so?" said the judge.

"I wasn't there. I don't know what she did."

"You're all alike, you young men; she's too much for you," said the judge, with a chuckle.

"Why too much? She seems to me very glum and shy. When you say that we are all alike, do you mean that Ferdie didn't admire her, either? Yet Ferdie is liberal in his tastes," said the elder brother, smiling.

But the judge did not want to talk about Ferdie. "So you find her shy? She did not strike us so at Romney. Quiet enough—yes. But very decidedly liking to have her own way."

Paul dismissed the subject. "I suppose those two scamps, who shot him, got safely away?"

“Yes, they were sure to have run off on the instant; they had the boat they came over in, and before daylight they were miles to the southward probably; I dare say they made for one of the swamps. In the old days we could have tracked them; but it’s not so easy now. And even if we got them we couldn’t string them up.”

“You wouldn’t hang them?”

“By all the gods, I would!” said the planter, bringing his fist down upon the table with a force that belonged to his youth.

“Ferdie may have attacked them first, you know.”

“What difference does that make? Damnation, sir! are they to be allowed to fire upon their masters?”

“They did not fire very well, these two; according to Dr. Knox, the wound is not serious; his despatch this morning says that Ferdie is coming on admirably.”

“Yes, I suppose he is,” said the old man, relapsing into gloom.

“As soon as he is up and about, I am going down there,” Paul went on; “I must see him and have a serious talk. Some new measures must be taken. I don’t think it will be difficult when I have once made him see his danger; he is so extraordinarily intelligent.”

“I wish he were dull, then,—dull as an owl!” said the judge, with a long sigh.

“Yes, regarded simply as husbands, I dare say the dull may be safer,” responded Paul. “But you must excuse me if I cannot look upon Ferdie merely as the husband of your daughter; I expect great things of him yet.”

“Granddaughter. If her father had lived—my boy Duke—it would have been another story; Duke wouldn’t have been a broken old man like me.” And the judge leaned his head upon his hand.

“I beg your pardon, sir; don’t mind my roughness. It’s only that I’m fond of Ferdie, and proud of him; he has but that one fault. But I appreciate how you feel about

Cicely; we must work together for them both."

Paul had risen, and was standing before him with outstretched hand. "Thank you; you mean well," said the judge. He had let his hand be taken, but he did not look up. He felt that he could never really like this man—never.

"I am to understand, then, that you approve of my plan?" Paul went on, after a short silence. "Cicely to stay here for the present—the house, I hope, is fairly comfortable—and then, when Ferdie is better, I to go down there and see what I can do; I have every hope of doing a great deal! Oh, yes, there's one more thing; you needn't feel obliged to stay here any longer than you want to, you know; I can see to Cicely. Apparently, too, Miss Bruce has no intention of leaving her."

"I shall stay, sir—I shall stay."

"On my own account, I hope you will; I only meant that you needn't feel that you must; I thought perhaps there was something that called you home."

"Calls me home? Do you suppose we do anything down there nowadays with the whole coast ruined? As for the house, Sabrina is there, and women like illness; they absolutely dote on medicines, and doctors, and ghastly talking in whispers."

"Very well; I only hope you won't find it dull, that's all. The mine isn't bad; you might come out there occasionally. And the steamers stop two or three times a day. There's a good deal going on in the town, too; building's lively."

"I am much obliged to you."

"But you don't care for liveliness," pursued Paul, with a smile. "I am afraid there isn't much else. I haven't many books, but Kit Hollis has; he is the man for you. Queer; never can decide anything; always beating round the bush; still, in his way, tremendously well read and clever."

"He appears to be a kind of dry-nurse to you," said the judge, rising.

Paul laughed, showing his white teeth. He was very good-natured, his guest had

already discovered that.

The judge was glad that their conversation had come to an end. He could no longer endure dwelling upon sorrow. Trouble was not over for them by any means; their road looked long and dark before them. But for the moment Cicely and her child were safe under this roof; let them enjoy that and have a respite. As for himself, he could—well, he could enjoy the view.

The view consisted of the broad lake in front, and the deep forest which stretched unbroken towards the east and the west. The water of the lake was fresh, the great forest was primeval; this made the effect very unlike that of the narrow salt-water sounds, and the chain of islands, large and small, with their gardens and old fields. The South had forgotten her beginnings; but here one could see what all the new world had once been, here one could see traces of the first struggle for human existence with the inert forces of nature. With other forces, too, for Indians still lived here. They were few in number, harmless; but they carried the mind back to the time of sudden alarms and the musket laid ready to the hand; the days of the block-house and the guarded well, the high stockade. The old planter as he walked about did not think of these things. The rough forest was fit only for rough-living pioneers; the Indians were but another species of nigger; the virgin air was thin and raw,—he preferred something more thick, more civilized; the great fresh-water sea was abominably tame, no one could possibly admire it; Port aux Pins itself was simply hideous; it was a place composed entirely of beginnings and mud, talk and ambition, the sort of place which the Yankees produced wherever they went, and which they loved; that in itself described it; how could a Southern gentleman like what they loved?

And Port aux Pins was ugly. Its outlying quarters were still in the freshly plucked state, deplumed, scarred, with roadways half laid out, with shanties and wandering pigs, discarded tin cans and other refuse, and everywhere stumps, stumps. Within

the town there were one or two streets where stood smart wooden houses with Mansard-roofs. But these were elbowed by others much less smart, and they were hustled by the scaffolding of the new mansions which were rising on all sides, and, with republican freedom, taking whatever room they found convenient during the process. Even those abodes which were completed as to their exteriors had a look of not being fully furnished, a blank, wide-eyed, unwinking expression across their façades which told of bare floors and echoing spaces within. Always they had temporary fences. Often paths of movable planks led up to the entrance. Day after day a building of some sort was voyaging through Port aux Pins streets by means of a rope and windlass, a horse, and men with boards; when it rained, the house stopped and remained where it was, waiting for the mud to dry; meanwhile the roadway was blocked. But nobody minded that. All these things, the all-pervading beginnings, the jokes and slang, the smell of paint, and always the breathless constant hurry, were hateful to the old Georgian. It might have been said, perhaps, that between houses and a society uncomfortable from age, falling to pieces from want of repairs, and houses and a society uncomfortable from youth, unfurnished, and encumbered with scaffolding, there was not much to choose. But the judge did not think so; to his mind there was a great deal to choose.

As the days passed, Christopher Hollis became more and more his companion; the judge grew into the habit of expecting to see his high head, topped with a silk hat, put stealthily through the crevice of the half-open door of Paul's dining-room (Hollis never opened a door widely; whether coming in or going out, he always squeezed himself through), with the query, "Hello! What's up?" There was never anything up; but the judge, sitting there forlornly, with no companion but the local newspaper (which he loathed), was glad to welcome his queer guest. Generally they went out together; Port aux Pins people grew accustomed to seeing them walking down to the end first of one pier, then of the other, strolling among the stumps in the suburbs, or sitting on the pile of planks which adorned one corner of the Public Square, the

long-legged, loose-jointed Kit an amusing contrast to the small, precise figure by his side.

“I say, he’s pretty hard up for entertainment, that old gentleman of yours,” announced Hollis one day, peering in through the crevice of the door of Paul Tennant’s office in the town.

“I depended on you to entertain him,” answered Paul without lifting his head, which was bent over a ledger.

“Well, I’ve taken him all over the place, I’ve pretty nearly trotted his legs off,” Hollis responded, edging farther in, the door scraping the buttons of his waistcoat as he did so. “And I’ve shot off all my Latin at him too—all I can remember. I read up on purpose.”

“Is he such a scholar, then?”

“No, he ain’t. But it does him good to hear a little Horace in such an early-in-the-morning, ten-minutes-ago place as this. See here, Paul; if you keep him on here long he won’t stand it—he’ll mizzle out. He’ll simply die of Potterpins.”

“I’m not keeping him. He stays of his own accord.”

“I don’t believe it. But, I say, ain’t he a regular old despot though! You ought to hear him hold forth sometimes.”

“I don’t want to hear him.”

“Well, I guess he don’t talk that way to you, on the whole. Not much,” said Hollis, jocularly.

And Paul Tennant did not look like a man who would be a comfortable companion for persons of the aggressive temperament. He was tall and broad-shouldered; not graceful like Ferdie, but powerful. His neck was rather short; the lower part of his face was strong and firm. His features were good; his eyes, keen, gray in hue. His hair was yellow and thick, and he had a moustache and short beard of the same

yellow hue. No one would have called him handsome exactly. There was something of the Scandinavian in his appearance; nothing of the German. His manner, compared with Ferdie's quick, light brilliancy, was quiet, his speech slow.

"Have you been thinking about that proposition—that sale?" Hollis went on.

"Yes."

"What are you going to do?"

"It's done. I've declined."

"What! not already? That's sudden, ain't it?"

Paul did not answer; he was adding figures.

"Have you been over the reasons?—weighed 'em?"

"Oh, I leave the reasons to you," said Paul, turning a page.

Hollis gave his almost silent laugh. But he gave it uneasily. "Positively declined? Letter gone?"

"Yes."

"Oh; well!" He waited a moment; then, as Paul did not speak, he opened the door and edged himself out without a sound.

Ten minutes later his head reappeared with the same stealth. "Oh, I thought I'd just tell you—perhaps you don't know—the mail doesn't go out to-day until five o'clock: you can get that letter back if you like."

"I don't want it back."

"Oh; well." He was gone again.

Outside in the street he saw the judge wandering by, and stopped him. "That there son-in-law of yours—" he began.

"Son-in-law?" inquired the judge, stiffly.

"Whatever pleases you; step-sister."

“Mr. Tennant is the half-brother of the husband of my granddaughter.”

“’T any rate, that man in there, that Paul, he’s so tremendously rash there’s no counting on him; if there’s anything to do he goes and does it right spang off without a why or a wherefore. He absolutely seems to have no reasons!—not a rease!”

“I cannot agree with you. To me Mr. Tennant seems to have a great many.”

“But you haven’t heard about this. Come along out to the Park for a walk, and I’ll tell you.”

He moved on. But the judge did not accompany him. A hurrying mulatto, a waiter from one of the steamers, had jostled him off the narrow plank sidewalk; at the same moment a buggy which was passing, driven at a reckless speed, spattered him with mud from shoulder to shoe.

“Never mind, come on; it’ll dry while you’re walking,” suggested Hollis from the corner where he was waiting.

The judge stepped back to the planks; he surveyed his befouled person; then he brought out a resounding expletive—half a dozen of them.

“Do it again—if it’ll ease you off,” called Kit, grinning. “When you’re blessing Potterpins, I’m with you every time.”

The judge rapped the planks with his cane. “Go on, sir! go on!” he said, violently.

Hollis went loafing on. And presently the judge caught up with him, and trotted beside him in silence.

“Well, that Paul now, as I was telling you, I don’t know what to make of him,” said Hollis, returning to his topic. “I think I know him, and then, suddenly he stumps me. Once he has made up his mind to anything—and it does not take long—off he goes and does it, I tell you! He does it.”

“I don’t know what he does; his conversation has a good deal of the sledge-hammer about it,” remarked the judge.

"So it has," responded Hollis, delighted with the comparison; he was so delighted that he stopped and slapped his thigh. "So it has, by George!—convincing and knock-you-down." The judge walked on. He had intended no compliment. "To-day, now, that fellow has gone and sent off a letter that he ought to have taken six months to think over," Hollis continued. "Told you about his Clay County iron?"

"No."

"Well, he was down there on business—in Clay County. It was several years ago. He had to go across the country, and the roads were awful—full of slew-holes. At last, tired of being joggled to pieces, he got out and walked along the fields, leaving the horse to bring the buggy through the mud as well as he could. By-and-by he saw a stone that didn't look quite like the others, and he gave it a kick. Still it didn't look quite like, so he picked it up. The long and short of it was that it turned out to be hematite iron, and off he went to the county-seat and entered as much of the land as he could afford to buy. He hasn't any capital, so he has never been able to work it himself; all his savings he has invested in something or other in South America. But the other day he had a tip-top offer from a company; they wanted to buy the whole thing in a lump. And that's the chance he has refused this identical morning!" The judge did not reply. "More iron may be discovered near by, you know," Hollis went on, warningly, his forefinger out. His companion still remained silent. "He may never have half so good an offer in his whole life again!"

They had now reached the Park, a dreary enclosure where small evergreens had been set out here and there, together with rock-work, and a fountain which did not play. The magnificent forest trees which had once covered the spot had all been felled; infant elms, swathed in rags and tied to whitewashed stakes, were expected to give shade in fifteen or twenty years. There were no benches; Hollis seated himself on the top of a rail-fence which bordered the slight descent to the beach of the lake; the heels of his boots, caught on a rail below, propped him, and sent his knees forward

at an acute angle.

“There were all sorts of side issues and possibilities which that fellow ought to have considered,” he pursued, ruminatively, his mind still on Paul’s refusal. “There were other things that might have come of it. It was an A number one chance for a fortune.” The judge did not answer. “For a fortune,” repeated Hollis, dreamily, gazing down at him from his perch. No reply. “A for-chun!”

“Da-a-a-m your fortune!” said the judge, at the end of his patience, bringing out the first word with a long emphasis, like a low growl from a bull-dog.

Hollis stared. Then he gave his silent laugh, and, stretching down one long arm, he laid it on the old man’s shoulder soothingly. “There, now; we are awful Yankees up here, all of us, I’m afraid; forever thinking of bargains. Fact is, we ain’t high-minded; you can’t be, if you are forever eating salt pork.” The judge had pulled himself from the other’s touch in an instant. But Hollis remained unconscious of any offence.

”‘At the battle of the Nile I was there all the while; I was there all the while at the battle of the Nile.’”

he chanted.

”‘At the bat— ’

“Hello, isn’t that Miss Bruce coming down the beach? Yes, sure-ly; I know her by the way she carries her head.” Detaching his boot-heels from the rail, he sprang down, touching the ground with his long legs wide apart; then, giving his waistcoat a pull over the flatness below it, he looked inquiringly at the judge.

But that gentleman ignored the inquiry. “It is time to return, I reckon,” he remarked, leading the way inflexibly towards the distant gate and the road.

Hollis followed him with disappointed tread. “She won’t think us very polite, skooting off in this fashion,” he hazarded.

The judge vouchsafed him no reply. It was one thing for this backwoodsman to go about with him; it was another to aspire to an acquaintance with the ladies of his family. Poor Hollis aspired to nothing; he was the most modest of men; all the same it would never have occurred to him that he was not on an equality with everybody. They returned to Port aux Pins by the road.

The beach was in sight all the way on the left; Eve's figure in three-quarter length was visible whenever Hollis turned his head in that direction, which was often. She gained on them. Then she passed them.

"She's a tip-top walker, isn't she? I see her coming in almost every day from 'way out somewhere—she doesn't mind how far. Our ladies here don't walk much; they don't seem to find it interesting. But Miss Bruce, now—she says the woods are beautiful. Can't say I have found 'em so myself."

"Have you had any new cases lately?" inquired the judge, coldly.

"Did that Paul tell you I was a lawyer? Was once, but have given up practising. I've got an Auction and Commission store now; never took you there because business hasn't been flourishing; sometimes for days together there's been nothing but the skeleton." The judge looked at him. "I don't mean myself! Say, now, did you really think I meant myself?" And he laughed without a sound. "No, this is a real one; it was left with me over a year ago to be sold on commission—medical students, or a college, you know. Man never came back—perhaps he's a skeleton himself in the lake somewhere—so there it hangs still; first-class, and in elegant condition. To-day there are six bonnets to keep it company; so we're full."

They were now entering the town. Presently, at a corner, they came suddenly upon Eve; she was waiting for them. "I saw you walking in from the Park, so I came across to join you," she said.

Hollis showed his satisfaction by a broad smile; he did not raise his hat, but, extracting one of his hands from the depths of his trousers pocket, he offered it

frankly. “You don’t mind a longish walk, do you? You look splendid.”

“We need not take you further, Mr. Hollis,” said the judge. “Your time must be valuable to you.”

“Not a bit; there’s no demand to-day for the bonnets—unless the skeleton wants to wear ’em.”

“Is it an exhibition?” asked Eve, non-comprehendingly.

“It’s my store—Auction and Commission. Not crowded. It’s round the next corner; want to go in?” And he produced a key and dangled it at Eve invitingly.

“By all means,” said Eve.

It was evident that she liked to be with him. The judge had perceived this before now.

Hollis unlocked a door, or rather two doors, for the place had been originally a wagon shop. A portion of the space within was floored, and here, between the two windows, the long white skeleton was suspended, moving its legs a little in the sudden draught.

“Here are the bonnets,” said Hollis. “They may have to go out to the mines. You see, it’s part of a bankrupt stock. Not but what they ain’t first-class;—remarkably so.” He went to a table where stood six bandboxes in a row; opening one of them, he took out a bonnet, and, freeing it from its wrappings, held it anxiously towards Eve, perched on one of his fingers.

“Are you trying to make Miss Bruce buy that old rubbish?” said a voice at the door. It was Paul Tennant’s voice.

“Old?” said Hollis, seriously. “Why, Paul, I dare say this here bonnet was made in Detroit not later than one year ago.”

“If I cannot buy it myself,” said Eve, “I might take it out to the mines for you, Mr. Hollis, and sell it to the women there; I might take out all six.” She spoke gayly.

“You’d do it a heap better than I could,” Hollis declared, admiringly.

“Let me see, I can try.” She opened a bandbox and took out a second bonnet. This she began to praise in very tropical language; she turned it round, now rapidly, now slowly; she magnified its ribbons, its general air. Finally, taking off her round-hat, she perched it on her own golden braids, and, holding the strings together under her chin, she said, dramatically: “What an effect!” She did not smile, but her eyes shone. She looked brilliant.

The judge stared, amazed. Hollis, contorting himself like an angle-worm in his delight, applauded. Paul looked on tranquilly.

“Whatever the rest of you may do, I must be going,” said the judge, determinedly. He went towards the door, each short step sounding on the planks.

“So must I,” said Eve. “Wait until I put back the bonnets.” With deft hands she returned them to their boxes, Paul and Hollis looking on. Then they all went out together, Hollis relocking the door.

“I was on my way home,” said Paul, “and I suppose you were too? Hollis, won’t you come along?”

He went on in advance with Eve, Hollis following with the unwilling judge, whose steps were still like little taps with a hammer.

The cottage was on the outskirts of the town. To walk thither took twenty minutes.

XV.

PAUL had succeeded in keeping Cicely tranquil by a system of telegraphic despatches and letters, one or the other arriving daily; each morning Ferdie’s wife received a few lines from Romney, written either by Miss Sabrina or the nurse; after she had read her note, she let herself be borne along indifferently on the current of another Port aux Pins day.

The Port aux Pins days were, in themselves, harder for the judge than for Cicely. For Cicely remained passive; but the old judge could not be passive to things he hated so intensely. At last, by good-fortune, Hollis found something that placated him a little; this was fishing, fishing for trout; not the great rich creature of the lakes, which passes under that name, but that exquisite morsel, the brook-trout. The judge had gone off contentedly, even happily, in search of this delicate prey; he and Hollis had explored the trout-streams of the two neighboring rivers. A third river, at a greater distance, was reported richer than any other; one morning they reached it, not only the two fishermen, but Cicely also, and Eve and Paul. They had crossed by steamer to a village on the north shore, an old fur-trading post; here they had engaged canoes and two Indians, and had spent a long day afloat on the clear wild stream. Its shores were rocky, deeply covered to the water's edge with a dark forest of spruce-trees; the branchlet trout-brooks, therefore, had been hard to find under the low-sweeping foliage. But in this search, Hollis was an expert; with his silk hat tipped more than ever towards the back of his head, he kept watch, and he and the judge were put ashore several times in the course of the day, returning smiling and amiable whether they brought trout or not, with the serene contentment of fishermen. The others remained in the canoes, those light birch-bark craft of the American red-men, which, for grace and beauty, have never been surpassed. Two red-men were paddling one of them at present; they were civilized red-men, they called themselves Bill and Jim. But, under their straw hats, hung down their long straight Indian hair, and the eagle profiles seemed out of place above the ready-made coats and trousers. On their slender feet they wore beaded moccasins. Paul Tennant and Hollis also wore moccasins, and the judge had put on his thinnest shoes; for the birch-bark canoe has a delicate floor.

The boat paddled by the Indians carried Cicely, Porley and Jack, and the judge; the second held only three persons—Eve, Hollis, and Paul Tennant. Paul was propelling it alone, his paddle touching the water now on one side, now on the other, lifted

across as occasion required as lightly as though it had been a feather. Cicely was listless, Paul good-natured, but indifferent also—so it seemed to Eve; and Eve herself, though she remained quiet (as the judge had described her), Eve was at heart excited. These thick dark woods without a path, without a sound, the wild river, the high Northern air which was like an intoxicant—all these seemed to her wonderful. She breathed rapidly; she glanced at the others in astonishment. “Why don’t they admire it? Why doesn’t he admire it?” she thought, looking at Paul.

Once the idea came suddenly that Paul was laughing at her, and the blood sprang to her face; she kept her gaze down until the stuff of her dress expanded into two large circles in which everything swam, so that she was obliged to close her eyes dizzily.

And then, when at last she did look up, her anger and her dizziness had alike been unnecessary, for Paul was gazing at the wooded shore behind her; it was evident that he had not thought of her, and was not thinking of her now.

This was late in the day, on their way back. A few minutes afterwards, as they entered the lake, she saw a distant flash, and asked what it was.

“Jupiter Light,” said Paul. “It’s a flash-light, and a good one.”

“There’s a Jupiter Light on Abercrombie Island, too,” Eve remarked.

“It’s a common enough name,” Paul answered; “the best-known one is off the coast of Florida.”

The Indians passed them, paddling with rushing, rapid strokes.

“They’re right; we shall be late for the steamer if we don’t look out,” said Paul. “You can help now if you like, Kit.”

He and Hollis took off their coats, and the canoe flew down the lake under their feathery paddles; the water was as calm as a floor. Eve was sitting at the bow, facing Paul. No one spoke, though Hollis now and then crooned, or rather chewed, a fragment of his favorite song:

”‘At the battle of the Nile I was there all the while—’”

The little voyage lasted half an hour.

They reached the village in time for the steamer, and soon afterwards not only Jack and Porley, but Cicely, the judge, and Hollis, tired after their long day afloat, had gone to bed. When Cicely sought her berth Eve also sought hers, the tiny cells being side by side. Since their arrival at Port aux Pins, Cicely had become more lenient to Eve; she was not so cold, sometimes she even spoke affectionately. But she was very changeable.

To-night, after a while, Eve tapped at Cicely’s door. “Are you really going to bed so early?”

“I am in bed already.”

“Do you want anything? Isn’t there something I can bring you?”

“No.”

Eve went slowly back to her own cell. But the dimness, the warm air, oppressed her; she sat down on a stool behind her closed door, the excitement of the day still remaining with her. “Is it possible that I am becoming nervous?—I, who have always despised nervousness?” She kept saying to herself, “I will go to bed in a few minutes.” But the idea of lying there on that narrow shelf, staring at the light from the grating, repelled her. “At any rate I will not go on deck.”

Ten minutes later she opened her door and went out.

The swinging lamp in the saloon was turned down, the place was empty; she crossed the short half-circle which led to the stern-deck, and stepped outside. There was no moon, but a magnificent aurora borealis was quivering across the sky, now an even band, now sending out long flakes of light which waved to and fro. Before she looked at the splendid heavens, however, she had scanned the deck. There was no one there. She sat down on one of the benches.

Presently she heard a step, some one was approaching. There was a gleam of a cigar; a man's figure; Paul.

"Is that you? I thought there would be no one here," she said.

"We are the only passengers," Paul answered. "But, as there are six of us, you cannot quite control us all."

"I control no one." ("Not even myself!" she thought.)

"You will have your wish, though you ought not to; despots shouldn't be humored. You will have the place to yourself in a few moments, because I shall turn in soon—the time to finish this cigar—if you don't mind the smoke?"

"No, I don't mind," she answered, a chill of disappointment creeping slowly over her.

"Hasn't it been jolly?" Paul said, after a moment: he had seated himself on a stool near her bench. "I do love to be out like this, away from all bother."

"Do you? I thought you didn't."

The words were no sooner out than she feared he would say, "Why?" And then her answer (for of course she must say something; she could not let him believe that she had had no idea)—her answer would show that she had been thinking about him.

But apparently Paul was not curious, he did not ask. "It's very good for Cicely too; I wish I could take her oftener," he went on. "Her promise to stay on here weighs upon her heavily. I don't know whether she would have kept her word with me or not; but you know, of course, that Ferdie himself has written, telling her that she must stay?"

"No."

"She didn't tell you?"

"She tells me nothing!" replied Eve. "If she would only allow it, I would go down there to-morrow. I could be the nurse; I could be the housekeeper; anything."

“You’re not needed down there, they have plenty of people; we want you here, to see to her.”

“One or the other of them;—I hope they will always permit it. I can be of use, perhaps, about Jack.”

“You are too humble, Miss Bruce; sometimes you seem to be almost on your knees to Cicely, as though you had done her some great wrong. The truth is the other way; she ought to be on her knees to you. You brought her off when she hadn’t the force to come herself, poor little woman! And you did it boldly and quickly, just as a man would have done it. Now that I know you, I can imagine the whole thing.”

“Never speak of that time; never,” murmured Eve.

“Well, I won’t, then, if you don’t like it. But you will let me say how glad I am that you intend to remain with her, at least for a while. You will see from this that I don’t believe a word of her story about your dislike for my brother.”

“There is nothing I would not do for him!”

“Yes, you like to do things; to be active. They tell me that you are fond of having your own way; but that is the very sort of person they need—a woman like you, strong and cool. After a while you would really like Ferdie, you couldn’t help it. And he would like you.”

“It is impossible that he should like me.” She rose quickly.

“You’re going in? Well, fifteen hours in the open air are an opiate. Should you care to go forward first for a moment? I can show you a place where you can look down below; there are two hundred emigrants on board; Norwegians.”

She hesitated, drawing her shawl about her.

“Take my arm; I can guide you better so. It’s dark, and I know the ins and outs.”

She put her hand upon his arm.

He drew it further through. “I don’t want you to be falling down!”

They went forward along the narrow side. Conversation was not easy, they had to make their way round various obstacles by sense of feeling; still Eve talked; she talked hastily, irrelevantly. When she came to the end of her breath she found herself speaking this sentence: “I like your friend Mr. Hollis so much!”

“Yes, Kit is a wonderful fellow; he has extraordinary talent.” He spoke in perfect good faith.

“Oh, extraordinary?” said Eve, abandoning Hollis with feminine versatility, as an obscure feeling, which she did not herself recognize, rose within her.

“If you don’t think so, it’s because you don’t know him. He is an excellent classical scholar, to begin with; he has read everything under the sun; he is an inventor, a geologist, and one of the best lawyers in the state, in spite of his notion about not practising.”

“You don’t add that he is an excellent auctioneer?”

“No; that he is not, I am sorry to say; he is a very bad one.”

“Yet it is the occupation which he has himself selected. Does that show such remarkable talent? Now you, with your mining—” She stopped.

“I didn’t select mining,” answered Paul, roughly, “and I’m not particularly good at it; I took what I could get, that’s all.”

They had now reached the forward deck. Two men belonging to the crew were sitting on a pile of rope; above, patrolling the small upper platform, was the officer in charge; they could not see him, but they could hear his step. To get to the bow, they walked as it were up hill; they reached the sharp point, and looked down over the high, smooth sides which were cutting the deep water so quietly. Eve’s glance turned to the splendid aurora quivering and shining above.

“This T. P. Mayhew is an excellent boat,” remarked Paul, who was still looking over the sides. “But, as to that, all the N. T. boats are good.”

“N. T.?”

“Northern Transportation.” He gave a slight yawn.

“Tell me about your iron,” said Eve, quickly. (“Oh, he will go in! he is going in!” was her thought.)

“It isn’t mine—I wish it was; I’m only manager.”

“I don’t mean the mine here; I mean your Clay County iron.”

“What do you know about that?” said Paul, surprised.

“Mr. Hollis told me; he said you had declined an excellent offer, and he was greatly concerned about it; he told me the reasons why he did not agree with you.”

“It must have been interesting! But that all happened some time ago; didn’t you know that he had come round to my view of it, after all?”

“No.”

“Yes, round he came; it took him eight days. He has got such a look-on-all-sides head that, when he starts out to investigate, he tramps all over the sky; if he intends to go north, he goes east, west, and south first, so as to make sure that these are not the right directions. However, on the eighth day in he came, squeezing himself through a crack, as usual, and explained to me at length the reasons why it was better, on the whole, to decline that offer. He had thought the matter out to its remotest contingencies—some of them went over into the next century! It was remarkably clear and well argued; and of course very satisfactory to me.”

“But in the meantime you had already declined, hadn’t you?”

“Yes. But it was a splendid piece of following up. I declare, I always feel my inferiority when I am with people who can really talk—talk like that!”

“Oh!” said Eve, in accents of remonstrance. Her tone was so eloquent that Paul laughed. He laughed to himself, but she heard it, or rather she felt it; she drew her hand quickly from his arm.

“Don’t be vexed. I was only laughing to see how—”

“How what?”

“How invariably you women flatter.”

“I don’t.” She spoke hurriedly, confusedly.

“You had better learn, then,” Paul went on, still laughing; “I’m afraid that when we’re well stuffed with it we’re more good-natured. Shall I take you back to the stern? I’m getting frightfully sleepy; aren’t you?”

On the way back she did not speak.

When they reached the stern-deck, “Good-night,” he said, promptly opening the door into the lighted saloon.

She looked up at him; in her face there was an inattention to the present, an inattention to what he was saying. Her eyes scanned his features with a sort of slow wonder. But it was a wonder at herself.

“You had better see that the windows are closed,” said Paul. “There’s going to be a change of wind.”

XVI.

EVE’S cheeks showed a deep rose bloom; she was no longer the snow-white woman whom near-sighted Miss Sabrina had furtively scanned upon her arrival at Romney six months before. She was still markedly erect, but her step had become less confident, her despotic manner had disappeared. Often now she was irresolute, and she had grown awkward—a thing new with her; she did not know how to arrange her smallest action, hampered by this new quality.

But since the terrible hour when Ferdie had appeared at the end of the corridor with his candle held aloft and his fixed eyes, life with her had rushed along so rapidly that she had seemed to be powerless in its current. The first night in Paul’s cottage, in her

little room next to Cicely's, she had spent hours on her knees by the bedside pouring forth in a flood of gratitude to Some One, Somewhere—she knew no formulas of prayer—that she had been delivered from the horror that had held her speechless through all the long journey. Ferdie was living! She repeated it over and over—Ferdie was living!

At the time there had been no plan; she had stepped back into her room to get the pistol, not with any purpose of attack, but in order not to be without some means of defence. The pistol was one of Jack's, which she had found and taken possession of soon after her arrival, principally because it had been his; she had seen him with it often; with it he himself had taught her to shoot. Then at the last, when Jack's poor little boy had climbed up by the boat's seat, and the madman had made that spring towards him, then she had—done what she did. She had done it mechanically; it had seemed the only thing to do.

But, once away, the horror had come, as it always does and must, when by violence a human life has been taken. She had dropped the pistol into the Sound, but she could not drop the ghastly picture of the dark figure on the sand, with its arms making two or three spasmodic motions, then becoming suddenly still. Was he dead? If he was, she, Eve Bruce, was a murderer, a creature to be imprisoned for life,—hanged. How people would shrink from her if they knew! And how monstrous it was that she should touch Cicely! Yet she must. Cain, where is thy brother? And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. Would it come to this, that she should be forced at last to take her own life, in order to be free from the horror of murder? These were the constant thoughts of that journey northward, without one moment's respite day or night.

But deliverance had come: he was alive! God was good after all, God was kind; he had lifted from her this pall of death. He was alive! He was alive!

"Oh, I did not do it! I am innocent! That figure has gone from the sand; it got up and

walked away!" She laughed in the relief, the reaction, and buried her face in the pillow to stifle it. "Cicely will not know what I am laughing at; she will wonder. I need never tell her anything now, because the only men who were suspected have got safely away. She is safe, little Jack is safe, and Ferdie is not dead; he is alive—alive!" So swept on through the night the tide of her immense joy. For the next day and the next, for many days after, this joy surged within her, its outward expression being the flush, and the brilliant light in her eyes.

Eve Bruce had a strongly truthful nature, she was frank not only with others, but with herself; she possessed the unusual mental quality (unusual in a woman) of recognizing facts, whether they were agreeable or not; of living without illusions. This had helped to give her, perhaps, her brusque manner, with its absence of gentleness, its scanty sweetness. With her innate truthfulness, it was not long before this woman perceived that there was another cause contributing to the excitement that was quickening her breath and making life seem new. The discovery had come suddenly.

It had been arranged that on a certain day they should walk out to the mine, Paul, the judge, Hollis, and herself. When the time came, Hollis appeared alone, Paul was too busy to leave the office. They walked out to the mine. But Eve felt her feet dragging, she was unaccountably depressed. Upon her return, as she came in sight of the cottage, she remembered how happy she had been there the day before, and for many days. What had changed? Had she not the same unspeakable great cause for joy? For what reason did the day seem dull and the sky dark? And then the truth showed itself: it was because Paul Tennant was not there; nothing else.

Another woman would have veiled it, would not have acknowledged the fact even to herself; for women have miraculous power of really believing only what they wish to believe; for many women facts, taken alone, do not exist. But Eve had no such endowments. She had reached her room; she pushed to the door and stood there

motionless; after two or three minutes she sank into the nearest chair; here she sat without stirring for some time. Then she rose, went down the stairs, and out again. It was six o'clock, but there were still two hours of daylight; she hurried towards the nearest border of forest, and, just within its fringe, she began walking rapidly to and fro, her hands, clasped together, hanging before her, her eyes on the ground. She did not come back until nightfall.

As she entered she met Paul.

"I was coming to hunt for you. Where have you been?" He spoke with surprise.

Eve looked at him once. Then she turned away. What a change in herself! Now she understood Cicely. Now she understood—yes, she understood everything—the things she had always despised—pettiness, jealousy, impossible hopes, disgrace, shame.

"I was afraid Cicely would be alarmed," Paul went on.

And Eve was not offended that it was Cicely of whom he was thinking. It had not yet occurred to her that he could think of her.

She went in search of Cicely, who had nothing to say to her; then, excusing herself, she retreated to her room. Here she took off her dress and began to unbraid her hair. Then the thought came to her that Paul would go to the parlor about this time, that he would play a game of chess, perhaps, with the judge; hastily repairing the disorder she had made, she rearranged the braids, felt in the rough closet for her evening shoes, put them on, and went down-stairs again with rapid step.

Cicely made no remark as she came in; Paul and the judge were playing their game, with Hollis looking on. Eve took a book and sat reading, or apparently reading, at some distance. "Oh, how abject this is! How childish, how sickening!" Anger against herself rose hotly; under its sting she felt her strength returning. She sat there as long as the others did. "I will not make a second scene by going out" (but no one had noticed her first). She answered Paul's good-night coldly. But when she was

back in her room again, when there was no more escape from its four walls until morning, then she found herself without defences, without pretexts, face to face with the fact that she loved this man, this Paul Tennant, with all her heart. It was a surprise as great as if she had suddenly become blind, or deaf, or mad—"stricken of God," as people call it. "I am stricken. But I am not sure it is of God!" That she, no longer a girl, after all these years untouched by such feelings—that she, with her clear vision and strong will (she had always been so proud of her will), should be led captive in this way by a stranger who cared nothing for her, who did not even wish to capture—it was a sort of insanity. She paced her room to and fro as she had paced the fringe of woods. She stretched out her hands and looked at them as though they had been the hands of some one else; she struck one of them upon her bare arm; she was so humiliated that she must hurt something; that something should be herself. "If he should ever care for me, I would refuse him," she repeated, in bitter triumph. Immediately the thought followed, "He will never care!"

"I do not love him really," she kept repeating. "I am not well; it will pass." But while she was saying this, there came a glow that contradicted her, a glow before whose new sway she was helpless. "Oh, I do! I loved him the first day I saw him. What is that old phrase?—I love the ground he walks on." She buried her face in her hands.

"How strange! I am happier than I have ever been in my life before; I didn't know that there was such happiness!" A door seemed to open, showing a way out of her trouble, a way which led to a vision of subtle sweetness—her life through the future with this passion hidden like a treasure in her heart, no one to know it, no one to suspect its existence. "As I am to be nothing to him, as I wish to be nothing to him, I shall not care whom he loves; that is nothing to me." Upon this basis she would arrange her life.

But it is not so easy to arrange life. Almost immediately she began to suffer, a

species of suffering, too, to which she was unused: trifles annoyed her like innumerable stings—she was not able to preserve her calm; as regarded anything important, she could have been herself, or so she imagined; but little things irritated her, and the days were full of little things. She rebelled against this nervousness, but she could not subdue it; and gradually the beautiful vision of her life, as she had imagined it, faded away miserably in a cloud of petty exasperations and despair. After wretched hours, unable to endure her humiliation longer, she resolved to conquer herself at any cost, to set herself free; she could not go away, because she would not leave Cicely; there was still her brother's child; but here, on the spot, she would overcome this feeling that had taken possession of her and changed her so that she did not know herself. "I will!" she said. It was a vow; her will was the strongest force of her being.

This very will blinded her, she was too sure of it. She was in earnest about wishing and intending to win in her great battle. But she forgot the details.

These are some of the details:

The one time of day when Paul was neither at the mine nor in his office was at sunset; twice she went through a chain of reasoning to prove to herself that she had a necessary errand at that hour at one of the stores; both times she met him. She had heard Paul say that he liked to see women sew; she was no needlewoman; but presently she began to embroider an apron for Jack (with very poor success). Paul was no reader; he looked through the newspapers once a day, and when it rained very hard in the evening, and there was nothing else to do, occasionally he took up his one book; for he had but one, at least so Hollis declared; at any rate he read but one; this one was Gibbon. The only edition of the great history in the little book-store of Port aux Pins was a miserably printed copy in paper covers. But a lady bought it in spite of its blurred type.

Finally this same lady went to church. It was on a Sunday afternoon, the second

service; she came in late, and took a seat in the last pew. When had Eve Bruce been to church before? Paul went once in a while. And it was when she saw his head towering above the heads of the shorter people about him, as the congregation rose to repeat the creed—it was then suddenly that the veil was lifted and she saw the truth: this was what she had come for.

She did not try to deny it, she comprehended her failure. After this she ceased to struggle, she only tried to be quiet. She lived from day to day, from hour to hour; it was a compromise. “But I shall not be here long; something will separate us; soon, perhaps in a few weeks, it will have come to an end, and then I may never see him again.” So she reasoned, passively.

About this time Cicely fell ill. The Port aux Pins doctor had at length given a name to her listlessness and her constantly increasing physical weakness; he called it nervous prostration (one of the modern titles for grief, or an aching heart).

“What do you advise?” Paul had asked.

“Take her away.”

Two days later they were living under tents at Jupiter Light.

“We cannot get off this evening; it is perfectly impossible,” the judge had declared, bewildered by Paul’s sudden decision, not knowing as yet whether he agreed with it or not, and furthermore harried by the arrival of tents, provisions, Indians, cooks, and kettles, the kettles invading even the dining-room, his especial retreat.

“Oh, we shall go; never you fear,” said Hollis, who was hard at work boxing up an iron bedstead. “At the last moment Paul will drive us all on board like a flock of sheep.”

And, at nine o’clock that night, they did embark, the judge, who had given up comprehending anything, walking desperately behind the others; Hollis, weighed down with rods and guns, and his own clothing escaping from newspapers; a man cook; a band of Indians; Porley and Jack; Eve; and, last of all, Cicely, tenderly

carried in Paul's arms. In a week the complete change, the living under canvas in the aromatic air of the pines, produced a visible effect; Cicely began to recover her lost vitality; the alarming weakness disappeared. Every day there came her letter or despatch, one of the Indians going fifteen miles for it, in a canoe; the message was always favorable, Ferdie was constantly improving. All was arranged, Paul was to go southward in July. He and Cicely had frequent talks (talks which Paul tried to make as cheerful as possible); perhaps, next winter, they should all be living together at Port aux Pins; that is, in case it should be thought best to give up Valparaiso, after all. Cicely read and re-read the letters; she always kept the last one under her dress on her heart; for the rest she floated in the canoe, and she played with Jack, who bloomed with health to that extent that he was called the Porpoise. The judge, happy in the improvement of his darling little girl, fished; snarled with Hollis; then fished again. Hollis, always attired in his black coat, showed positive genius in the matter of broiling. And Paul came and went as he was able. As he could not be absent long from the mine, he made the journey to Port aux Pins every three days, leaving Hollis in charge at the camp during his absence. One day Hollis also was obliged to go to Port aux Pins. And while he was there he attended an evening party. This entertainment he described for Cicely's amusement upon his return. For she was the central person to them all; they gathered round her, they obeyed eagerly her slightest wish; when she laughed, they laughed also, they were so glad to see life once more animating her white little face; it was for this that Hollis prolonged his story, and quoted Shakespeare; he would have stood on his head if it would have made her smile.

A part of Hollis's description: "So then her sister Idora started on the piano an accompaniment that went like this: Bang! la-la-la. Bang! la-la-la, and Miss Parthenia, she began singing:

'O why-ee should the white man follow my path Like the hound on the tiger's track?'

And then, with her hand over her mouth, she gave us a regular Indian war-whoop."

"How I wish I had been there!" said Cicely, with sudden laughter.

"She'll whoop for you at any time; proud to," continued Hollis. "Well, after the song was over, Mother Drone she sat back in her chair, and she loosened her cap-strings on the sly. Says she: 'I hope the girls won't see me doing this, Mr. Hollis; they think tarlatan strings tied under the chin for a widow are so sweet. I told them I'd been a widow fifteen years without 'em; but they say, now they've grown up, I ought to have strings for their sakes, and be more prominent. Is Idora out on the steps with Wolf Roth? Would you mind peeking? ' So I peeked. But Wolf Roth was there alone. 'He don't look dangerous,' I remarked, when I'd loped back. Says she: 'He'd oughter, then. And he would, too, if he knew it was me he sees when he comes serenading. I tap the girls on the shoulder: 'Girls? Wolf Roth and his guitar!' But you might as well tap the seven sleepers! So I have to cough, and I have to glimp, and Wolf Roth—he little thinks it's ma'am!"

"Oh, what is glimp?" said Cicely, still laughing.

"It's showing a light through the blinds, very faint and shy," answered Hollis.

"'Thou know'st the mask of night is on me face, Else would a maid-en blush bepaint me cheek,'"

he quoted, gravely. "That's about the size of it, I guess."

Having drawn the last smile from Cicely, he went off to his tent, and presently he and the judge started for the nearest trout-brook together.

Paul came up from the beach. "There's an Indian village two miles above here, Cicely; do you care to have a look at it? I could take you and Miss Bruce in the little canoe."

But Cicely was tired: often now, after a sudden fit of merriment (which seemed to be a return, though infinitely fainter, of her old wild moods), she would look exhausted.

“I think I will swing in the hammock,” she said.

“Will you go, then, Miss Bruce?” Paul asked, carelessly.

“Thanks; I have something to do.”

Half an hour later, Paul having gone off by himself, she was sitting on a fallen tree on the shore, at some distance from the tents, when his canoe glided suddenly into view, coming round a near point; he beached it and sprang ashore.

“You surely have not had time to go to that village?” she said, rising.

“Did I say I was going alone? Apparently what you had to do was not so very important,” he added, smiling.

“Yes, I was occupied,” she answered.

“We can go still, if you like; there is time.”

“Thank you;—no.”

Paul gave her a look. She fancied that she saw in it regret. “Is it very curious—your village? Perhaps it would be amusing, after all.”

He helped her into the canoe, and the next moment they were gliding up the lake. The village was a temporary one, twenty or thirty wigwams in a grove. Only the women and children were at home, the sweet-voiced young squaws in their calico skirts and blankets, the queer little mummy-like pappooses, the half-naked children. They brought out bows and arrows to sell, agates which they had found on the beach, Indian sugar in little birch-bark boxes, quaintly ornamented.

“Tell them to gather some bluebells for me,” said Eve. Her face had an expression of joyousness; every now and then she laughed like a merry girl.

Paul repeated her request in the Chippewa tongue, and immediately all the black-eyed children sallied forth, returning with large bunches of the fragile-stemmed flowers, so that Eve’s hands were full. She lingered, sitting on the side of an old canoe; she distributed all the small coins she had. Finally they were

afloat again; she wondered who had suggested it. “There’s a gleam already,” she said, as they passed Jupiter Light. “Some day I should like to go out there.”

“I can take you now,” Paul answered. And he sent the canoe flying towards the reef.

She had made no protest. “He wished to go,” she said to herself, contentedly.

The distance was greater than she had supposed; it was twilight when they reached the miniature beach.

“Shall we make them let us in, and climb up to the top?” suggested Paul.

She laughed. “No; better not.”

She looked up at the tower. Paul, standing beside her, his arms folded, his head thrown back, was looking up also. “I can’t see the least light from here,” he said. Then again, “Don’t you want to go up?”

“Well—if you like.”

It was dark within; a man came down with a lantern, and preceded them up the narrow winding stairway. When they reached the top they could see nothing but the interior of the little room; so down they came again, without even saying the usual things: about the probable queerness of life in such a place; and whether any one could really like it; and that some persons might be found who would consider it an ideal residence and never wish to come away. Though their stay had been so short, their going up so aimless, the expedition did not seem to Eve at all stupid; in her eyes it had the air of an exciting adventure.

“They will be wondering where we are,” said Paul, as he turned the canoe homeward. She did not answer, it was sweet to her to sit there in silence, and feel the light craft dart forward through the darkness under his strong strokes. Who were “they"? Why should “they” wonder? Paul too said nothing. Unconsciously she believed that he shared her mood.

When they reached the camp he helped her out. “I hope you are not too tired? At last

I can have the credit of doing something that has pleased you; I saw how much you wanted to go."

He saw how much she had wanted to go!—that spoiled all. Anger filled her heart to suffocation.

Two hours later she stood looking from her tent for a moment. Cicely and Jack, with whom she shared it, were asleep, and she herself was wrapped in a blue dressing-gown over her delicate night-dress, her hair in long braids hanging down her back. The judge and Hollis had gone to bed, the Indians were asleep under their own tent; all was still, save the regular wash of the water on the beach. By the dying light of the camp-fire she could make out a figure—Paul, sitting alone beside one of their rough tables, with his elbow upon it, his head supported by his hand. Something in his attitude struck her, and reasonlessly, silently, her anger against him vanished, and its place was filled by a great tenderness. What was he thinking of? She did not know; she only knew one thing—that she loved him. After looking at him for some minutes she dropped the flap of the tent and stole to bed, where immediately she began to imagine what she might say to him if she were out there, and what he might reply; her remarks should be very original, touching, or brilliant; and he would be duly impressed, and would gradually show more interest. And then, when he began to advance, she would withdraw. So at last she fell asleep.

Meanwhile, outside by the dying fire, what was Paul Tennant thinking of? His Clay County iron. He had had another offer, and this project was one in which he should himself have a share. But could he accept it? Could he pledge himself to advance the money required? He had only his salary at present, all his savings having gone to Valparaiso; there were Ferdie's expenses to think of, and Ferdie's wife, that little wife so unreasonable and so sweet, she too must lack nothing. It grew towards midnight; still he sat there pondering, adding figures mentally, calculating. The bird which had so insistently cried "Whip-po-Will," "Whip-po-Will," had ceased its

song; there came from a distance, twice, the laugh of a loon; Jupiter Light went on flashing its gleam regularly over the lake.

The man by the fire never once thought of Eve Bruce.

XVII.

PAUL'S arrangements, as regarded Cicely, had been excellent. But an hour arrived when the excellence suddenly became of no avail; for Cicely's mood changed. When the change had taken place, nothing that any of these persons, who were devoting themselves to her, could do or say, weighed with her for one instant. She came from her tent one morning, and said, "Grandpa, please come down to the shore for a moment." She led the way, and the judge followed her. When they reached the beach the moon was rising, its narrow golden path crossed the lake to their feet. "I can't stay here any longer, grandpa."

"We will go back to Port aux Pins, then, dearie; though it seems a pity, you have been so well here."

"I don't mean Port aux Pins; I am going to Romney."

"But I thought Ferdie had written to you not to come? Tennant certainly said so, he assured me that Ferdie had written, urging you to stay here; he has no right to deceive me in that way—Paul Tennant; it's outrageous!"

"Ferdie did write. And he didn't urge me to stay, he commanded me."

"Then you must obey him," said the judge.

"No; I must disobey him." She stood looking absently at the water. "He has some reason."

"Of course he has—an excellent one; he wants to keep you out of the mess of a long illness—you and Jack."

"I wish you would never mention Jack to me again."

“My dear little girl,—not mention Jack? Why, how can we talk at all, without mentioning baby?”

“You and Eve keep bringing him into every conversation, because you think it will have an influence—make me give up Ferdie. Nothing will make me give up Ferdie. So you need not talk of baby any more.”

The judge looked at her with eyes of despair.

Cicely went on. “No; it is not his illness that made Ferdie tell me to stay here. He has some other reason. And I am afraid.”

“What are you afraid of?”

“I don’t know,—that is the worst of it! Since his letter, I have imagined everything. I cannot bear it any longer; you must take me to him to-morrow, or I shall start by myself; I could easily do it, I could outwit you twenty times over.”

“Outwit? You talk in that way to me?”

Cicely watched him as his face quivered, all his features seeming to shrink together for an instant. “I suppose I seem selfish, grandpa.” She threw out her hands with sudden passion. “I don’t want to be, I don’t mean to be! It is you who are keeping me here. Can’t you see that I must go? Can’t you?”

“Why no, I can’t,” said the old man, terrified by her vehemence.

“There’s no use talking, then.” She left him, and went back through the woods towards the tents.

The judge came up from the beach alone. Hollis, who was sitting by the fire, noted his desolate face. “Euchre?” he proposed, good-naturedly. (He called it “yuke.”) But the judge neither saw him nor heard him.

As Cicely reached her tent, she met Eve coming out, with Jack in her arms. She seized the child, felt of his feet and knees, and then, holding him tightly, she carried him to the fire, where she seated herself on a bench. Eve came also, and stood beside

the fire. After a moment the judge seated himself humbly on the other end of the bench which held his grandchild. There was a pause, broken only by the crackling of the flame. Then Cicely said, with a dry little laugh, “You had better go to your tent, Mr. Hollis. You need not take part in this family quarrel.”

“Quarrel!” replied Hollis, cheerily. “Who could quarrel with you, Mrs. Morrison? Might as well quarrel with a bobolink.” No one answered him. “Don’t know as you’ve ever seen a bobolink?” he went on, rather anxiously. “I assure you—lively and magnificent!”

“It is a pity you are so devoted to Paul,” remarked Cicely, looking at him.

“Devoted? Well, now, I never thought I should come to that,” said Hollis, with a grin of embarrassment, kicking the brands of the fire apart with, his boot.

“Because if you weren’t, I might take you into my confidence—I need some one; I want to run away from grandpa and Eve.”

“Oh, I dare say,” said Hollis, jocularly. But his eyes happening to fall first upon Eve, then upon the judge, he grew suddenly disturbed. “Why don’t you take Paul?” he suggested, still trying to be jocular. “He is a better helper than I am.”

“Paul is my head jailer,” answered Cicely. “Grandpa and Eve are only his assistants.”

The judge covered his face with his hand. Hollis saw that he was suffering acutely. “Paul had better come and defend himself,” he said, still clinging to his jocosity; “I am going to get him.” And he started towards Paul’s tent with long swinging strides, like the lope of an Indian.

“Cicely,” said Eve, coming to the bench, “I will take you to Romney, if that is what you want; we will start to-morrow.”

“Saul among the prophets!” answered Cicely, cynically. “Are you planning to escape from me with Jack, as I am planning to escape from grandpa?”

“I am not planning anything; I only want to help you.”

Cicely looked at her. “Curiously enough, Eve, I believe you. I don’t know what has changed you, but I believe you.”

The judge looked up; the two women held each other’s hands. The judge left his seat and hurried away.

He arrived at Paul’s tent breathless. The hanging lamp within illuminated a rude table which held ink and paper; Paul had evidently stopped in the midst of his writing, for he still held his pen in his hand.

“I was saying to Paul that he really ought to come out now and talk to the ladies, instead of crooking his back over that writing,” said Hollis.

But the judge waved him aside. “For God’s sake, Tennant, come out, and see what you can do with Cicely! She is determined to go to that murdering brother of yours in spite of—“

“Hold up, if you please, about my brother,” said Paul, putting down his pen.

“And Eve is abetting her;—says she will take her to-morrow.”

“Not Miss Bruce? What has made her change so?—confound her!”

The judge had already started to lead the way back. But Hollis, who was behind, touched Paul’s arm. “I say, don’t confound her too much, Paul,” he said, in a low tone. “She is a remarkably clever girl. And she thinks a lot of you.”

“Sorry for her, then,” answered Paul, going out. As Hollis still kept up with him, he added, “How do you know she does?”

“Because I like her myself,” answered Hollis, bravely. “When you’re that way, you know, you can always tell.”

He fell behind. Paul went on alone.

When he reached the camp-fire, Cicely looked up. “Oh, you’ve come!”

“Yes.”

“There are two of us now. Eve is on my side.”

“So I have heard.” He went to Eve, took her arm, and led her away almost by force to the shadow at some distance from the fire. “What in the world has made you change so?” he said. “Do you know—it’s abject.”

“Yes, it’s abject,” Eve answered. She could see him looking at her in the dusky darkness; she had never been looked at in such a way before. “It’s brave, too,” she added, trying to keep back the tears.

“I don’t understand riddles.”

“I think you understand mine.” She had said it. She had been seized with a sudden wild desire to make an end of it, to put it into words. The overweight of daring which nature had given her drew her on.

“Well, if I do, then,” answered Paul, “why don’t you want to please me?”

She turned her head away, suffocated by his calm acceptance of her avowal. “It would be of no use. And I want to make one woman happy; so few women are happy!”

“Do you call it happy to have Ferdie knocking her about?”

“She does.”

“And knocking about Jack, too?”

“I shall be there, I can take care of Jack.”

“I see I can do nothing with you. You have lost your senses!”

He went back to Cicely. “Ferdie has his faults, Cicely, as we both know; but you have yours too, you make yourself out too important. How many other women do you think he has cared for?”

“Before he saw me, five hundred, if you like; five thousand.”

“And since he saw you—since he married you?”

Cicely laughed happily.

“I will bring you something,” said Paul. He went off to his tent.

Eve came rapidly to Cicely. “Don’t believe a word he tells you!”

“If it is anything against Ferdie, of course I shall not,” answered Cicely, composedly.

The judge had followed Paul to his tent. He waited anxiously outside, and then followed him back.

“I don’t believe, after all, Cicely, that you are going to do what I don’t want you to do,” said Paul, in a cheerful tone, as he came up. He seemed to have abandoned whatever purpose he had had, for he brought nothing with him—his hands were empty.

Cicely did not reply, she played with a curl of Jack’s hair.

“Ferdie himself doesn’t want you to go; you showed me his letter saying so.”

“Yes.”

“Isn’t that enough, then? Come, don’t be so cold with me,” Paul went on, his voice taking caressing tones.

Cicely felt their influence. “I want to go, Paul, because that very letter of Ferdie’s makes me afraid,” she said, wistfully; “I feel that there is something behind, something I do not know.”

“If there is, it is something which he does not wish you to know.”

“That could never be; it is only because I am not with him; when I am with him, he tells me everything, he likes to tell me.”

“Will you take my word for it if I assure you that it is much better for both of you, not only for yourself, but for Ferdie, that you stay here awhile longer?”

“No,” replied Cicely, hardening. Her “no” was quiet, but it expressed an obstinacy that was immovable.

Paul looked at her. “Will you wait a week?”

“No.”

“Will you wait three days?”

“I shall start to-morrow,” replied Cicely.

“Read this, then.” He took a letter from his pocket and held it towards her, his name, “Paul Tennant, Esq.,” clearly visible on the envelope in the light of the flame.

But at the same instant Eve bent forward; she grasped his arm, drawing his hand back.

“Don’t you interfere,” he said, freeing himself.

Eve turned to the judge. “Oh, take her away!”

“Where to? I relied upon Tennant; I thought Tennant would be able to do something,” said the old man, miserably.

Paul meanwhile, his back turned squarely to Eve, was again holding out the letter to Cicely.

Cicely did not take it.

“I’ll read it aloud, then.” He drew the sheet from its envelope, and, opening it, began, “‘Dear old Paul—’”

Cicely put out both her hands,—“Give it to me.” She took it hastily. “Oh, how can you treat him so—Ferdie, your own brother!” Her eyes were full of tears.

“I cared for him before you ever saw him,” answered Paul, exasperated. “What do you know about my feelings? Ferdie wishes you to stay here, and every one thinks you exceedingly wrong to go—every one except Miss Bruce, who seems to have lost her head.” Here he flashed a short look at Eve.

“I shall go!” cried Cicely.

“Because you think he cannot get on without you?”

“I know he cannot.”

“Read the letter, then.”

“No, take the letter away from her,” said Eve. She spoke to Paul, and her tone was a command. He looked at her; with a sudden change of feeling he tried to obey her. But it was too late, Cicely had thrust the letter into the bodice of her dress; then she rose, her sleeping child in her arms. “Grandpa, will you come with me? Will you carry Jack?”

“I will take him,” said Paul.

“No, only grandpa, please; not even you, Eve; just grandpa and I. You may come later; in fifteen minutes.” She spoke with a dignity which she had never shown before, and they went away together, the old man carrying the sleeping child.

“What was in that letter?” Eve demanded accusingly, as soon as they were left alone.

“Well, another woman.”

“Cruel!”

“Yes, it seems so now,” said Paul, disturbed. “My one idea about it was that it might make her less confident that she was all-important to him; in that way we could keep her on here a while longer.”

“Yes, with a broken heart.”

“Oh, hearts! rubbish!—the point was to make her stay. You haven’t half an idea how important it is, and I can’t tell you; she cannot go back to him until I have been down there and—and changed some things, made new arrangements.”

“I think it the greatest cruelty I have ever heard of!” She hurried through the woods towards the tents; Paul followed her.

The judge came out as they approached. “She is reading it,” he said in a whisper. “Tennant, I hope you know what you are about?”

“Yes; that letter will make her stay,” answered Paul, decisively.

Eve turned to enter the tent.

“The fifteen minutes are not up,” said Paul, holding her back.

She drew away from him, but she did not try to enter again; they waited in silence.

Then came a sound. Eve ran within, the two men behind her.

Little Jack, on the bed, was sleeping peacefully. Cicely had fallen from her seat to the matting that covered the floor.

Eve lifted her; kneeling on the matting, she held her in her arms.

XVIII.

THE letter, though it was only a partial revelation, roused in Ferdie’s wife a passion of anger so intense that they were all alarmed. She did not speak or stir; she sat looking at them; but her very immobility, with the deep spot of red in each cheek, and her darkened narrowed eyes, made her terrible. This state lasted for twenty-four hours, during which time the poor old judge, unable to sit down or to sleep, wandered about, Hollis accompanying him silently, and waiting outside when he went every now and then to the entrance of the tent to look in. Paul came once. But Cicely’s eyes darkened so when she saw him that Eve hurriedly motioned him away. She followed him out.

“Do not come again until I send for you.”

“If there is nothing for me to do then, I might as well go to bed.”

“You are fortunate in being able to sleep!”

“I shall sleep a great deal better than I did when I thought she would be starting south in spite of us,” retorted Paul. “Imagine her arriving there and finding out—It’s much worse than she knows; that letter only tells a little. There are others, telling more, which I have kept back.”

“Did you really, then, keep back anything!”

“She’ll forgive me. She’ll forgive me, and like me better than ever; you’ll see.”

“And is it a question of you? It is her husband, her faith in him, her love for him,” said Eve, passionately.

“Oh, as to that, she will forgive him the very first moment she sees him,” answered Paul, going off.

Early in the morning of the second day, Cicely sent for him. “If you don’t still believe in him, if you don’t still love him—” she began the instant he entered, her poor little voice trying to be a threat.

“Of course I believe in him.”

“And he is noble? and good?”

“If you can call him that—to-day—you are a trump,” said Paul, delightedly.

He had gained his point; and, by one of the miracles of love, she could forgive her husband and excuse his fault; she could still worship him, believe in him. Paul also believed in him, but in another way. And upon this ground they met, Paul full of admiration for what he called her pluck and common-sense (both were but love), and she adoring him for his unswerving affection for his brother. Paul would go South soon; he would—he would make arrangements. She pinned all her faith upon Paul now; Paul was her demi-god because he believed in his brother.

And thus the camp-life went on again.

One morning, not long after this, Hollis and the judge were sitting at the out-door table, engaged with their fishing-tackle. Hollis was talking of the approaches of old age.

“Yes, two sure signs of it are a real liking for getting up early in the morning, and a promptness in doing little things. Contrariwise, an impatience with the younger people, who don’t do ’em.”

"Stuff!" said the judge. "The younger people are lazy; that's the whole of it."

"Yet they do all the important work of the world," Hollis went on; "old people only potter round. Take Paul, now—he ain't at all keen about getting up at daylight; in fact, he has a most uncommon genius for sleep; but, once up, he makes things drive all along the line, I can tell you. Not the trifles" (here Hollis's voice took a sarcastic tone); "not what borrowed books must be sent here, nor what small packages left there; you never saw him pasting slips out of a newspaper in a blank-book, nor being particular about his ink, with a neat little tray for pens; the things he concerns himself about are big things: ore contracts, machinery for the mines, negotiations with thousands of dollars tacked to the tail of 'em."

"I dare say," said the judge, with a dry little yawn; "Mr. Tennant is, without doubt, an excellent accountant."

The tone of this remark, however, was lost upon Hollis. "That Paul, now, has done, since I've known him, at least twenty things that I couldn't have done myself, any one of them, to save my life," he went on; "and yet I'm no fool. Not that they were big undertakings, like the Suez Canal or the capture of Vicksburg; but at least they were things done, and completely done. Have you ever noticed how mighty easy it is to believe that you could do all sorts of things if you only had the opportunity? The best way, sir, to go on believing that is never to let yourself try! I once had a lot of that kind of fool conceit myself. But I know better now; I know that from top to bottom and all round I'm a failure."

The judge made no effort to contradict this statement; he changed the position of his legs a little, by way of answer, so as not to appear too discourteous.

"I'm a failure because I always see double," pursued Hollis, meditatively; "I'm like a stereoscope out of kilter. When I was practising law, the man I was pitching into always seemed to me to have his good side; contrariwise, the man I was defending had his bad one; and rather more bad because my especial business was to make him

out a capital good fellow."

There was a sound of voices; Paul came through the wood on his way to the beach, with Cicely; Eve, behind them, was leading Jack.

"Are you going out again?" said the judge.

"Yes. Paul can go this morning," Cicely answered.

"But you were out so long yesterday," said the old man, following them.

"Open air fatigue is a good fatigue," said Paul, as he lifted Cicely into one of the canoes.

The judge had stopped at the edge of the beach; he now went slowly back into the wood and joined Hollis.

"Your turn, Miss Bruce," said Paul. And Eve and Jack were placed in a second canoe. One of the Indians was to paddle it, but he was not quite ready. Paul and Cicely did not wait; they started.

"I's a-goin' wis old Eve!—old Eve!—old Eve!"

chanted Jack, at the top of his voice, to the tune of "Charley is my darling," which Hollis had taught him.

"Seems mean that she should have to go with a Chip, when there are white men round," said Hollis.

The judge made no reply.

But Eve at that moment called, "Mr. Hollis, are you busy? If not, couldn't you come with me instead of this man?"

Hollis advanced to the edge of the woods and made a bow. "I am exceedingly pleased to accept. My best respects." He then took off his coat, and, clucking to the Indian as a sign of dismissal, he got into the canoe with the activity of a boy, and pushed off.

It was a beautiful day. The thick woods on the shore were outlined sharply in the

Northern air against the blue sky. Hollis paddled slowly.

“Why do you keep so far behind the other boat?” said Eve, after a while.

“That’s so; I’m just loafing,” answered Hollis.

“Christopher H., paddle right along,” he went on to himself. “You needn’t be so afraid that Paul will grin; he’ll understand.”

And Paul did understand. At the end of half an hour, when Eagle Point was reached, and all had disembarked, he came to Hollis, and stood beside him for a moment.

“This canoe is not one of the best,” Hollis remarked.

“No,” said Paul.

“I think we can make it do for a while longer, though,” Hollis went on, examining it more closely.

“I dare say we can,” Paul answered.

They stood there together for a moment, rapping it and testing it in various ways; then they separated, perfectly understanding each other. “I really didn’t try to come with her:” this was the secret meaning of Hollis’s remark about the canoe.

And “I know you didn’t,” was the signification of Paul’s answer.

Cicely and Eve were sitting on the beach. It was a wild shore, clean, untouched by man; the pure waters of the lake rolled up and laved its glistening brown pebbles. Jack ramped up and down against Eve’s knees. “Sing to Jacky—poor, poor Jacky!” he demanded loudly.

“That child is too depressing with his ‘Poor Jacky’!” said Cicely. “Never say that again, Jack; do you hear?”

“Poor, poor Jacky!” said the boy immediately, as though he were irresistibly forced to try the phrase again.

“He heard some one say it to that parrot in Port aux Pins,” explained Eve.

“Oh, I shall never be able to govern him!” Cicely answered.

“Sing to Jacky, Aunty Eve—poor, poor Jacky!”

And in a low tone Eve began to sing:

”‘Row the boat, row the boat up to the strand; Before our door there is dry land. Who comes hither all booted and spurred? Little Jacky Bruce with his hand on his sword.’”

Paul came up. “Now for a walk,” he said to Cicely.

“I am sorry, Paul. But if I sit here it will be lovely; if I walk, I am afraid I shall be too tired.”

“I’ll stay here, then; I am not at all keen about a tramp.”

“No, please go. And take Eve.”

“Uncly Paul, not old Eve. I want old Eve,” announced Jack, reasonably.

“You don’t seem to mind his calling you that,” said Paul, laughing.

“Why should I?” Eve answered. “I don’t care for a walk, thanks.”

“Make her go,” continued Cicely; “march her off.”

“Will you march?” asked Paul.

“Not without a drum and fife.”

Jack was now cooing without cessation, and in his most insinuating tones, “Sing to Jacky—poor, poor Jacky. Sing to Jacky—poor, poor Jacky!”

She took him in her arms and walked down the beach with him, going on with her song in a low tone:

”‘He knocks at the door and he pulls up the pin, And he says, “Mrs. Wingfield, is Polly within?” “Oh, Polly’s up-stairs a-sewing her silk.” Down comes Miss Polly as white as milk.’”

“Eve never does what you ask, Paul,” remarked Cicely.

“Do I ask so often?”

“I wish you would ask her oftener.”

“To be refused oftener?”

“To gain your point—to conquer her. She is too self-willed—for a woman.” She looked at Paul with a smile.

The tie between them had become very close, and it was really her dislike to see him rebuffed, even in the smallest thing, that made her say, alluding to Eve, “Conquer her; she is too self-willed—for a woman.”

Paul smiled. “I shall never conquer her.”

“Try, begin now; make her think that you want her to walk with you.”

“But I don’t.”

“Can’t you pretend?”

“Why should I?”

“Well, to please me.”

“You’re an immoral little woman,” said Paul, laughing. “I’ll go; remember, however, that you sent me.” He went up the beach to meet Eve, who was still walking to and fro, singing to Jack, Hollis accompanying them after his fashion; that is, following behind, and stopping to skip a stone carelessly when they stopped. Paul went straight to Eve. “I wish you would go with me for a walk,” he said. He looked at her, his glance, holding hers, slowly became entreating. The silence between them lasted an appreciable instant.

“I will go,” said Eve.

Jack seemed to understand that his supremacy was in danger. “No, old Eve—no. I want old Eve, Uncly Paul,” he said, in his most persuasive voice. Then, to make himself irresistible, he began singing Eve’s song:

”‘Who pums idder, all booted an’ spurred? Little Jacky Bruce wiz his han’ on his

sword.’”

Hollis came up. “Were you wanting to go off somewhere? I’ll take Jack.”

“Old man, you get out,” suggested Jack, calmly.

“Oh, where does he learn such things?” said Eve. She thought she was distressed—she meant to be; but there was an undertide of joyousness, which Hollis saw.

“On the contrary, Jackum, I’ll get in,” he answered. “If it’s singing you want, I can sing very beautifully. And I can dance too; looker here.” And skipping across the beach in a Fisher’s Horn-pipe step, he ended with a pigeon’s wing.

Jack, in an ecstasy of delight, sprang up and down in Eve’s arms. “’Gain! ’gain!” he cried, imperiously, his dimpled forefinger pointed at the dancer.

Again Hollis executed his high leap. “Now you’ll come to me, I guess,” he said. And Jack went readily. “You are going for a walk, I suppose?” Hollis went on. “There’s nothing very much in these woods to make it lively.” He had noted the glow of anticipation in her face, and was glad that he had contributed to it. But when he turned to Paul, expecting as usual to see indifference, he did not see it; and instantly his feelings changed, he felt befooled.

Jack made prodding motions with his knees. “Dant! dant!”

“I’ll dance in a few minutes, my boy,” said Hollis.

Paul and Eve went up the beach and turned into the wood. It was a magnificent evergreen forest without underbrush; above, the sunlight was shut out, they walked in a gray-green twilight. The stillness was so intense that it was oppressive.

XIX.

THEY walked for some distance without speaking. “I have just been writing to Ferdie,” Paul said at last.

The gray-green wood had seemed to Eve like another world, an enchanted land. Now she was forced back to real life again. “Oh, if he would only say nothing—just go on without speaking; it’s all I ask,” she thought.

“I shall go down there in ten days or so,” Paul went on. “Ferdie will be up then—in all probability well. I shall take him to Charleston, and from there we shall sail.”

“Sail?”

“To Norway.”

“Norway?”

“Didn’t I tell you?—I have made up my mind that a long voyage in a sailing vessel will be the best thing for him just now.”

“And you go too?”

“Of course.”

“Four or five weeks, perhaps?”

“Four or five months; as it grows colder, we can come down to the Mediterranean.”

A chill crept slowly over Eve. “Was it—wasn’t it difficult to arrange for so long an absence?”

“As Hollis would phrase it, ‘You bet it was!’” answered Paul, laughing. “I shall come back without a cent in either pocket; but I’ve been centless before—I’m not terrified.”

“If you would only take some of mine!”

“You will have Cicely. We shall both have our hands full.”

She looked up at him more happily; they were to be associated together in one way, then, after all. But a vision followed, a realization of the blankness that was to come. Less than two weeks and he would be gone!

“When the journey is over, shall you bring Ferdie to Port aux Pins?”

"That depends. On the whole, I think not; Ferdie would hate the place; it's comical what tastes he has—that boy! My idea is that he will do better in South America; he has already made a beginning there, and likes the life. This time he can take Cicely with him, and that will steady him; he will go to housekeeping, he will be a family man." And Paul smiled; to him, Ferdie was still the lad of fifteen years before.

But in Eve's mind rose a recollection of the light of a candle far down a narrow road. "Oh, don't let her go with him! Don't!"

Paul stopped. "You are sometimes so frightened, I have noticed that. And yet you are no coward. What happened—really? What did you do?"

She could not speak.

"I'm a brute to bother you about it," Paul went on. "But I have always felt sure that you did more that night than you have ever acknowledged; Cicely couldn't tell us, you see, because she had fainted. How strange you look! Are you ill?"

"It is nothing. Let us walk on."

"As you please."

"If they go to South America, why shouldn't you go with them?" he said, after a while, returning to his first topic. "You will have to go if you want to keep a hold on Jack, for Cicely will never give him up to you for good and all, as you have hoped. If you were with them, I should feel a great deal safer."

Well, that was something. Was this, then, to be her occupation for the future—by a watch over Ferdie, to make his brother more comfortable? She tried to give a sarcastic turn to this idea. But again the feeling swept over her: Oh, if it had only been any one but Ferdinand Morrison!—Ferdinand Morrison!

"How you shuddered!" said Paul. Walking beside her, he had felt her tremble. "You certainly are ill."

"No. But don't let us talk of any of those things to-day, let us forget them."

“How can we?”

“I can!” The color rose suddenly in her cheeks; for the moment she was beautiful. “My last walk with him! When he is gone, the days will be a blank.”

—“It is my last walk with you!” she said aloud, pursuing the current of her thoughts.

He looked at her askance.

His glance brought her back to reality. She turned and left him; she walked rapidly towards the lake, coming out on the beach beyond Eagle Point.

He followed her, and, as he came up, his eyes took possession of and held hers, as they had done before; then, after a moment, he put his arm round her, drew her to him, and bent his face to hers.

She tried to spring from him. But he still held her. “What shall I say to excuse myself, Eve?”

The tones of his voice were very sweet. But he was smiling a little too. She saw it; she broke from his grasp.

“You look as though you could kill me!” he said.

(And she did look so.)

“Forgive me,” he went on; “tell me you don’t mind.”

“I should have thought—that what I confessed to you—you know, that day—

But there were no subtleties in Paul. “Why, that was the very reason,” he answered. “What did you tell me for, if you didn’t want me to think of it?” Then he took a lighter tone. “Come, forget it. It was nothing.—What’s one kiss?”

Eve colored deeply.

And then, suddenly, Paul Tennant colored too.

He turned his head away, and his glance, resting on the water, was stopped by something—a dark object floating. He put up a hand on each side of his face and

looked more steadily. “Yes. No. Yes! There’s a woman out there—lashed to something. I must go out and see.” He had thrown his hat down upon the sand as he spoke; he was hastily taking off his coat and waistcoat, his shoes and stockings; then he waded out rapidly, and when the rock shelved off, he began to swim.

Eve stood watching him mechanically. “He has already forgotten it!”

Paul reached the dark object. Then, after a short delay, she could see that he was trying to bring it in.

But his progress was slow.

“Oh, there must be something the matter! Perhaps a cramp has seized him.” A terrible impatience took possession of her; it was impossible for him to hear her, yet she cried to him at the top of her voice, and fiercely: “Let it go! Let it go, I say! Come in alone. Who cares for it, whatever it is?” It was not until his burden lay on the beach that she could turn her mind from him in the least, or think of what he had brought.

The burden was a girl of ten, a fair child with golden curls, now heavy with water; her face was calm, the eyes peacefully closed. She had been lashed to a plank by somebody’s hand—whose? Her father’s? Or had it been done by a sobbing mother, praying, while she worked, that she and her little daughter might meet again.

“It’s dreadful, when they’re so young,” said big Paul, bending over the body reverently to loosen the ropes. He finished his task, and straightened himself. “A collision or a fire. If it was a fire, they must have seen it from Jupiter Light.” He scanned the lake. “Perhaps there are others who are not dead; I must have one of the canoes at once. I’ll go by the beach. You had better follow me.” He put on his shoes, and, dripping as he was, he was off again like a flash, running towards the west at a vigorous speed.

Eve watched him until he was out of sight. Then she sat down beside the little girl and began to dry her pretty curls, one by one, with her handkerchief. Even then she

kept thinking, “He has forgotten it!”

By-and-by—it seemed to her a long time—she saw a canoe coming round the point. It held but one person—Paul. He paddled rapidly towards her. “Why didn’t you follow me, as I told you to?” he said, almost angrily. “Hollis has gone back to the camp for more canoes and the Indians; he took Cicely, and he ought to have taken you.”

“I wanted to stay here.”

“You will be in the way; drowned people are not always a pleasant sight. Sit where you are, then, since you are here; if I come across anything, I’ll row in at a distance from you.”

He paddled off again.

But before very long she saw him returning. “Are you really not afraid?” he asked, as his canoe grated on the beach.

“No.”

“There’s some one out there. But I find I can’t lift anything into this canoe alone—it’s so tottlish; I could swim and tow, though, if I had the canoe as a help. Can you paddle?”

“Yes.”

“Get in, then.” He stepped out of the boat, and she took his place. He pushed it off and waded beside her until the water came to his chin; then he began to swim, directing her course by a movement of his head. She used her paddle very cautiously, now on one side, now on the other, the whole force of her attention bent upon keeping the little craft steady. After a while, chancing to raise her eyes, she saw something dark ahead. Fear seized her, she could not look at it; she felt faint. At the same moment, Paul left her, swimming towards the floating thing. With a determined effort at self-control, she succeeded in turning the canoe, and waited

steadily until Paul gave the sign. Keeping her eyes carefully away from that side, she then started back towards the shore, Paul convoying his floating freight a little behind her. As they approached the beach, he made a motion signifying that she should take the canoe farther down; when she was safely at a distance, he brought his tow ashore. It was the body of a sailor. The fragment of deck planking to which he was tied had one end charred; this told the dreadful tale—fire at sea.

The sailor was dead, though it was some time before Paul would acknowledge it. At length he desisted from his efforts. He came down the beach to Eve, wiping his forehead with his wet sleeve. “No use, he’s dead. I am going out again.”

“I will go with you, then.”

“If you are not too tired?”

They went out a second time. They saw another dark object half under water. Again the sick feeling seized her; but she turned the canoe safely, and they came in with their load. This time, when he dismissed her, she went back to the little girl, and, landing, sat down; she was very tired.

After a while she heard sounds—four canoes coming rapidly round the point, the Indians using their utmost speed. She rose; Hollis, who was in the first canoe, saw her, and directed his course towards her. “Why did you stay here?” he demanded, sternly, as he saw the desolate little figure of the child.

Eve began to excuse herself. “I was of use before you came; I went out; I helped.”

“Paul shouldn’t have asked you.”

“He had to; he couldn’t do it alone.”

“He shouldn’t have asked you.” He went off to Paul, and she sat down again; she took up her task of drying the golden curls. After a while the sound of voices ceased, and she knew that they had all gone out on the lake for further search. She went on with what she was doing; but presently, in the stillness, she began to feel that she

must turn and look; she was haunted by the idea that one of the men who had been supposed to be dead was stealing up noiselessly to look over her shoulder. She turned. And then she saw Hollis sitting not far away.

“Oh, I am so glad you are there!”

Hollis rose and came nearer, seating himself again quietly. “I thought I wouldn’t leave you all alone.”

She scanned the water. The five canoes were clustered together far out; presently, still together, they moved in towards the shore.

“They are bringing in some one else!”

“Sha’n’t we go farther away?” suggested Hollis—“farther towards the point? I’ll go with you.”

“No, I shall stay with this little girl; I do not intend to leave her. You won’t understand this, of course; only a woman would understand it.”

“Oh, I understand,” said Hollis.

But Eve ignored him. “The canoes are keeping all together in a way they haven’t done before. Do you think—oh, it must be that they have got some one who is living!”

“It’s possible.”

“They are holding something up so carefully.” She sprang to her feet. “I am sure I saw it move! Paul has really saved somebody. How can you sit there, Mr. Hollis? Go and find out!”

Hollis went. In twenty minutes he came back.

“Well?” said Eve, breathlessly.

“Yes, there’s a chance for this one; he’ll come round, I guess.”

“Paul has saved him.”

“I don’t know that he’s much worth the saving; he looks a regular scalawag.”

“How can you say that—a human life!”

Hollis looked down at the sand, abashed.

“Couldn’t I go over there for a moment?” Eve said, still excitedly watching the distant group.

“Better not.”

“Tell me just how Paul did it, then?” she asked. “For of course it was he, the Indians don’t know anything.”

“Well, I can’t say how exactly. He brought him in.”

“Isn’t he wonderful!”

“I have always thought him the cleverest fellow I have ever known,” responded poor Hollis, stoutly.

The next day the little girl, freshly robed and fair, was laid to rest in the small forest burying-ground belonging to Jupiter Light; Eve had not left her. There were thirty new mounds there before the record was finished.

“Steamer Mayhew burned, Tuesday night, ten miles east Jupiter Light, Lake Superior. Fifteen persons known to be saved. Mayhew carried twenty cabin passengers and thirty-five emigrants. Total loss.” (Associated Press despatch.)

Soon after this the camp was abandoned; as Paul was to go south so soon, he could not give any more time to forest-life, and they all, therefore, returned to Port aux Pins together. Once there Paul seemed to have no thought for anything but his business affairs. And Eve, in her heart, said again, “He has forgotten!”

XX.

FOURTH OF JULY at Port aux Pins; a brilliant morning with the warm sun tempering the cool air, and shining on the pure cold blue of the lake.

At ten o'clock, the cannon began to boom; the guns were planted at the ends of the piers, and the men of the Port aux Pins Light Artillery held themselves erect, trying to appear unconscious of the presence of the whole town behind them, eating peanuts, and criticising.

The salute over, the piers were deserted, the procession was formed. The following was the order as printed in the Port aux Pins Eagle:

"The Marshal of the Day. The Goddess of Liberty. (Parthenia Drone.) The Clergy. (In carriages.) Fire-Engine E. P. Snow. The Mayor and Common Council. (In carriages.) Hook and Ladder No. 1. The Immortal Colonies. (Thirteen little girls in a wagon, singing the 'Red, White, and Blue.') Fire-Engine Leander Braddock.

The Carnival of Venice. (This was a tableau. It represented the facade of a Venetian palace, skilfully constructed upon the model of the Parthenon, with Wolf Roth in an Indian canoe below, playing upon his guitar. Wolf was attired, as a Venetian, in a turban, a spangled jacket, high cavalry boots with spurs, and powdered hair; Idora Drone looked down upon him from a Venetian balcony; she represented a Muse.)

Reader of the Declaration of Independence, and Orator of the Day. (In carriages.) The Survivors of the War. (On foot with banners.) Model of Monument to Our Fallen Heroes. The Band. (Playing 'The Sweet By-and-By.') Widows of Our Fallen Heroes. (In carriages.) Fire-Engine Senator M. P. Hagen.

The Arts and Sciences. (Represented by the portable printing-press of the Port aux Pins Eagle; wagons from the mines loaded with iron ore; and the drays, coal-carts, and milk-wagons in a procession, adorned with streamers of pink tarlatan)."

Cicely watched the procession from the windows of Paul's office, laughing constantly. When Hollis passed, sitting stiffly erect in his carriage—he was the "Reader of the Declaration of Independence"—she threw a bouquet at him, and compelled him to bow; Hollis was adorned with a broad scarf of white satin, fastened on the right shoulder with the national colors.

“I am going to the public square to hear him read,” Cicely announced, suddenly. “Paul, you must take me. And you must go too, grandpa.”

“I will keep out of the rabble, I think,” said the judge.

“Oh, come on; I dare say you have never heard the thing read through in your life,” suggested Paul, laughing.

“The Declaration of Independence? My grandfather, sir, was a signer!”

The one church bell (Baptist) and the two little fire bells were jangling merrily when they reached the street. People were hurrying towards the square; many of them were delegates from neighboring towns who had accompanied their fire-engines to Port aux Pins on this, the nation’s birthday. White dresses were abundant; the favorite refreshment was a lemon partially scooped out, the hollow filled with lemon candy. When they reached the square Paul established Cicely on the top of a fence, standing behind to steady her; and presently the procession appeared, wheeling slowly in, and falling into position in a half-circle before the main stand, the gayly decorated fire-engines in front, with the Carnival of Venice and the Goddess of Liberty, one at each end. The clergy, the mayor and common council, the orator of the day, were escorted to their places on the stand, and the ceremonies opened. By-and-by came the turn of Hollis. In a high voice he began:

“When in the course—of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another—”

“Cheer!” whispered Cicely to Paul.

Paul, entering into it, set up hurrahs with so much vigor that all the people near him joined in patriotically, to the confusion of the reader, who went on, however, as well as he could:

“We hold these truths—to be self-evident, that all men are created equal—”

“Again,” murmured Cicely.

And again Paul's corner burst forth irrepressibly, followed after a moment by the entire assemblage, glad to be doing something in a vocal way on their own account, and determined to have their money's worth of everything, noise and all.

And so, from "the present king of Great Britain" to "our lives, our forrchuns, and our sacrred honor" on it went, a chorus of hurrahs growing louder and louder until they became roars.

"I knew it was you," Hollis said to Paul, when, later, his official duties over, and his satin scarf removed, he appeared at the cottage to talk it over.

"But say, did you notice the widows of our fallen heroes? They had a sort of glare under their crape. You see, once we had eight of 'em, but this year there is only one left; all the rest have married again. Now it happens that this very year the Soldiers' Monument is done at last, and naturally the committee wanted the widows to ride in the procession. The one widow who was left declared that she would not ride all alone; she said it would look as though no one had asked her, whereas she had had at least three good offers. So the committee went to the others and asked them to dress up as former widows, just for to-day. So they did; and lots of people cried when they came along, two and two, all in black, so pathetic." He sprang up to greet Eve, who was entering, and the foot-board entangled itself with his feet, after the peculiarly insidious fashion of extension-chairs. "Instrument of torture!" he said, grinning.

"I will leave it to you in my will," declared Paul. "And it is just as well to say it now, before witnesses, because I am going away to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" said Cicely.

"Only to Lakeville on business. I shall be back the day before I start south."

"There go the last few hours!" thought Eve.

The third evening after, Hollis came up the path to Paul's door. The judge, Eve, Cicely, and Porley with Jack, were sitting on the steps, after the Port aux Pins fashion. They had all been using their best blandishments to induce Master Jack to

go to bed; but that young gentleman refused; he played patty-cake steadily with Porley, looking at the others out of the corner of his eye; and if Porley made the least attempt to rise, he set up loud bewailings, with his face screwed, but without a tear. It was suspected that these were pure artifice; and not one of his worshippers could help admiring his sagacity. They altogether refrained from punishing it.

“I was at the post-office, so I thought I’d just inquire for you,” said Hollis. “There was only one letter; it’s for Miss Bruce.”

Eve took the letter and put it in her pocket. She had recognized the handwriting instantly.

Hollis, who also knew the handwriting, began to praise himself in his own mind as rapidly as he could for bringing it. “It was a good thing to do, and a kind thing; you must manage jobs like that for her often, C. Hollis. Then you’ll be sure that you ain’t, yourself, a plumb fool. She doesn’t open it? Of course she doesn’t. Sit down, and stop your jawing!”

Eve did not open her letter until she reached her own room. It was eleven o’clock; when she was safely behind her bolted door, she took it from its envelope and read it. She read it and re-read it; holding it in her hand, she pondered over it. She was standing by the mantelpiece because her lamp was there. After a while she became half conscious that the soles of her feet were aching; she bore it some time longer, still half consciously. When it was one o’clock she sat down. The letter was as follows:

"DEAR EVE,—Now that I am away from her, I can see that Cicely is not so well as we have thought. All that laughing yesterday morning wasn’t natural; I am afraid that she will break down completely when I start south. So I write to suggest that you take her off for a trip of ten days or so; you might go to St. Paul. Then she needn’t see me at all, and it really would be better.

“As to seeing you again—

"Yours sincerely, PAUL TENNANT."

"Why did he write, 'As to seeing you again,' and then stop? What was it that he had intended to say, and why did he leave it unfinished? 'As to seeing you again—' Supposing it had been, 'As to seeing you again, I dread it!' But no, he would never say that; he doesn't dread anything—me least of all! Probably it was only, 'As to seeing you again, there would be nothing gained by it; it would be for such a short time.'"

But imagination soon took flight anew. "Possibly, remembering that day in the wood, he was going to write, 'As to seeing you again, do you wish to see me? Is it really true that you care for me a little? It was so brave to tell it! A petty spirit could never have done it.' But no, that is not what he would have thought; he likes the other kind of women—those who do not tell." She laid her head down upon her arms.

Presently she began again: "He had certainly intended to write something which he found himself unable to finish; the broken sentence tells that. What could it have been? Any ordinary sentence, like, 'As to seeing you again, it is not necessary, as you know already my plans,'—if it had been anything like that, he would have finished it; it would have been easy to do so. No; it was something different. Oh, if it could only have been, 'As to seeing you again, I must see you, it must be managed in some way; I cannot go without a leave-taking!'" She sat up; her eyes were now radiant and sweet. Their glance happened to fall upon her watch, which was lying, case open, upon the table. Four o'clock. "I have sat here all night! I am losing my wits." She undressed rapidly, angrily. Clad in white, she stood brushing her hair, her supple figure taking, all unconsciously, enchanting postures as she now held a long lock at arm's-length, and now, putting her right hand over her shoulder, brushed out the golden mass that fell from the back of her head to her knees. "But he must have intended to write something unusual, even if not of any of the things I have been

thinking of; then he changed his mind. That is the only solution of his leaving it unfinished—the only possible solution." This thought still filled her heart when daylight came.

The evening before, sitting in the bar-room of the Star Hotel, Lakeville, Paul had written his letter. He had got as far as, "Then she needn't see me at all, and it really would be better. As to seeing you again," when a voice said, "Hello, Tennant!—busy?"

"Nothing important," replied Paul, pushing back the sheet of paper.

The visitor shook hands; then he seated himself, astride, on one of the bar-room chairs, facing the wooden back, which he hugged tightly. He had come to talk about Paul's Clay County iron; he had one or two ideas about it which he thought might come to something.

Paul, too, thought that they might come to something when he heard what they were. He was excited; he began to jot down figures on the envelope which he had intended for Eve. Finally he and the new-comer went out together; before going he put the letter in his pocket.

When he came in, it was late. "First mail to Port aux Pins?" he inquired.

"Five o'clock to-morrow morning," replied the drowsy waiter.

"Must finish it to-night, then," he thought. He took out the crumpled sheet, and, opening it, read through what he had written. "What was it I was going to add?" He tried to recall the train of thought. But he was sleepy (as Hollis said, Paul had a genius for sleep); besides, his mind was occupied by the new business plan. "I haven't the slightest idea what I was going to say.—A clear profit of fifty thousand in four years; that isn't bad. Ferdie will need a good deal. Ye-ough!" (a yawn). "What was it I was going to say?—I can't imagine. Well, it couldn't have been important, in any case. I'll just sign it, and let it go." So he wrote, "Yours sincerely, Paul Tennant;" and went to bed.

XXI.

PAUL came back to Port aux Pins five days before the time of his departure for the South. Cicely was still there. She had refused to go to St. Paul. “The only Paul I care for is the one here. What an i-dea, Eve, that I should choose just this moment for a trip! It looks as though you were trying to keep me away from him.”

“I’m not trying; it’s Paul,” Eve might have answered.

“It must be curious to be such a cold sort of person as you are,” Cicely went on, looking at her. “You have only one feeling that ever gives you any trouble, haven’t you? That’s anger.”

“I am never angry with you,” Eve answered, with the humility which she always showed when Cicely made her cutting little speeches.

Paul had been right. As the time of his departure for Romney drew near, Cicely grew restless. She was seized with fits of wild weeping. At last, when there were only two days left, Paul proposed a drive—anything to change, even if only upon the surface, the current of her thoughts. “We will go to Betsy Lake, and pay a visit to the antiquities.”

The mine at Betsy Lake—the Lac aux Becs-Scies of the early Jesuit explorers—had been abandoned. Recently traces of work there in prehistoric times had been discovered, with primitive tools which excited interest in the minds of antiquarians. The citizens of Port aux Pins were not antiquarians; they said “Mound Builders;” and troubled themselves no more about it.

“We had better spend the night at the butter-woman’s,” Paul suggested. “It is too far for one day.”

Eve did not go with the party. They had started at three o’clock, intending to visit a hill from which there was an extensive view, before going on to the butter-woman’s farm-house. At four she herself went out for a solitary walk.

As she was passing a group of wretched shanties, beyond the outskirts of the town, a frightened woman came out of one of them, calling loudly, “Mrs. Halley! oh, Mrs. Halley, your Lyddy is dying!”

A second woman, who was hanging out clothes, dropped the garment she had in her hand and ran within; Eve followed her. A young girl, who appeared to be in a spasm, occupied the one bed, a poor one; the mother rushed to her. In a few minutes the danger was over, and the girl fell into a heavy sleep.

“That Mrs. Sullivan—she’s too sprightly,” said Mrs. Halley, after she had dismissed her frightened neighbor. “I just invited her to sit here trenquilly while I put out me clothes, when lo! she begins and screams like mad. She’s had no education, that’s plain. There’s nothing the matter with my Lyddy except that she’s delicate, and as soon as she’s a little better I’m going to have her take music lessons on the peanner.”

Eve looked at Mrs. Halley’s ragged, wet dress, and at the wan, pinched face of the sleeping girl. “It is a pity you have to leave her,” she said. “Couldn’t you get somebody to do your washing?”

“I take in washing, miss; I’m a lady-laundress. Only the best; I never wash for the boats.”

“How much do you earn a week?”

“Oh, a tidy sum,” answered Mrs. Halley. Then, seeing that Eve had taken out her purse, her misery overcame her pride, and she burst forth, suddenly: “Never more than three dollars, miss, with me slaving from morning to night. And I’ve five children besides poor Lyddy there.”

Eve gave her a five-dollar bill.

“Oh, may the Lord bless you!” she began to cry. “And me with me skirt all wet, and the house not clean, when the chariot of the Lord descended upon me!” She sank into a chair, her toil-worn hands over her face, her tired back bent forward, relaxed

at last, and resting.

Eve pursued her investigations; she sent a boy to town for provisions, and waited to see a meal prepared. Mrs. Halley, still wet and ragged, but now refreshed by joy, moved about rapidly; at last there was nothing more to do but to sit down and wait. "She was the prettiest of all my children," she remarked, indicating the sleeping girl with a motion of her head.

"She is still pretty," Eve answered.

"Yet you never saw her making eyes at gentlemen like some; there's a great deal of making eyes at Potterpins. Rose Bonham, now—she got a silk dress out of Mr. Tennant no longer ago as last March."

"Mr. Tennant?"

"Yes; the gentleman who superintends the mine. Not that I have anything to say against him; gentlemen has their priviluges. All I say is—girls hasn't!"

Eve had risen. "I must go; I will come again soon."

"Oh, miss," said the woman, dropping her gossip, and returning to her gratitude (which was genuine)—"oh, miss, mayn't I know your name? I want to put it in me prayers. There was just three cents in the house, miss, when you came; and Lyddy she couldn't eat the last meal I got for her—a cracker and a piece of mackerel."

"You can pray for me without a name," said Eve, going out.

She felt as though there were hot coals in her throat, she could scarcely breathe. She went towards the forest, and, entering it by a cart-track, walked rapidly on. Rose Bonham was the daughter of the butter-woman. Bonham had a forest farm about five miles from Port aux Pins on the road to Betsy Lake, and his wife kept Paul's cottage supplied with butter. Eve had seen the daughter several times; she was a very beautiful girl. Eve and Cicely thought her bold; but the women who eat the butter are apt to think so of those who bring it, if the bringers have sparkling eyes,

peach-like complexions, and the gait of Hebe.

And Paul himself had suggested the spending the night there—an entirely unnecessary thing—under the pretence of gaining thereby an earlier start in the morning.

She came to a little pool of clear water; pausing beside it, half unconsciously, she beheld the reflection of her face in its mirror, and something seemed to say to her, "What is your education, your culture, your senseless pride worth, when compared with the peach-like bloom of that young girl?" Her own image looked up at her, pale, cold, and stern; it did not seem to her to have a trace of beauty. She took a stone, and, casting it in the pool, shattered the picture. "I wish I were beautiful beyond words! I could be beautiful if I had everything; if nothing but the finest lace ever touched me, if I never raised my hand to do anything for myself, if I had only dainty and delicate and beautiful things about me, I should be beautiful—I know I should. Bad women have those things, they say; why haven't they the best of it?"

She began to walk on again. She had not given much thought to the direction her steps were taking; now it came to her that the road to Lake Betsy, and therefore to Bonham's, was not far away, and she crossed the wood towards it. When she reached it, she turned towards Bonham's. Five miles. It was now after five o'clock.

When she came in sight of the low roof and scattered out-buildings a sudden realization of what she was doing came to her, and she stopped. Why was she there? If they should see her, any of them, what would they think? What could she say? As though they were already upon her, she took refuge hastily behind the high bushes with which the road was bordered. "Oh, what have I come here for? Humiliating! Let me get back home!—let me get back home!" She returned towards Port aux Pins by the fields, avoiding the road; the shadows were dense now; it was almost night.

She had gone more than a mile when she stopped. An irresistible force impelled her, and she retraced her steps. When she reached Bonham's the second time, lights were

shining from the windows. The roughly-built house rose directly from the road. Blinds and curtains were evidently considered superfluous. With breathless eagerness she drew near; the evening was cool, and the windows were closed; through the small wrinkled panes she could distinguish a wrinkled Cicely, a wrinkled judge, a Hollis much askew, and a Paul Tennant with a dislocated jaw; they were playing a game. After some moments she recognized that it was whist; she almost laughed aloud, a bitter laugh at herself; she had walked five miles to see a game of whist.

A dog barked, she turned away and began her long journey homeward.

But the thought came to her, and would not leave her. “After the game is over, and the others have gone to bed, he will see that girl somehow!”

She did not find the road a long one. Passion made it short, a passion of jealous despair.

Reaching the town at last, she passed an ephemeral ice-cream saloon with a large window; seated within, accompanied by a Port aux Pins youth of the hobbledehoy species, was Rose Bonham, eating ice-cream.

The next evening at six the excursion party returned. At seven they were seated at the tea-table. The little door-bell jangled loudly in the near hall, there was a sound of voices; Paul, who was nearest the door, rose and went to see what it was.

After a long delay he came back and looked in. They had all left the table, and Cicely had gone to her room; Paul beckoned Eve out silently. His face had a look that made her heart stop beating; in the narrow hall, under the small lamp, he gave her, one by one, three telegraphic despatches, open.

The first:“Monday. “Break it to Cicely.Dear Ferdie died at dawn. “SABRINA ABERCROMBIE.” The second:“Monday. “Morrison died this morning.Telegraph your wishes. “EDWARD KNOX, M.D.” The third:“Wednesday. “Morrison buried this afternoon. Address me, Charleston Hotel, Charleston. “EDWARD KNOX,

M.D.”

“I ought to have had them two days ago,” said Paul. He stood with his lips slightly apart looking at her, but without seeing her or seeing anything.

XXII.

“Up the airy mountain, Down the rushy glen, We daren’t go a-hunting, For fear of little men: Wee folk, good folk, Trooping all together; Green jacket, red cap, And white owl’s feather!”

SO, in a sweet little thread of a voice, sang Cicely; her tones, though clear, were so faint that they seemed to come from far away. She was sitting in an easy-chair, with pillows behind her, her hands laid on the arms of the chair, her feet on a footstool. Her eyes wandered over the opposite wall, and presently she began again, beating time with her hand on the arm of the chair:

“Down along the rocky shore Some make their home; They live on crispy pancakes Of yellow tide foam; Some in the reeds Of the black mountain lake, With frogs for their watch-dogs, All night awake—awake.”

She laughed.

The judge left the room. He walked on tiptoe; but he might have worn hobnailed shoes, and made all the noise possible—Cicely would not have noticed it. “I can’t stand it!” he said to Paul, outside.

“How it must feel—to be as stiff and old as that!” was the thought that passed through the younger man’s mind. For the judge’s features were no longer able to express the sorrows that lay beneath; even while speaking his despair his face remained immovable, like a mask.

“But it’s merciful, after all,” Paul had answered, aloud.

“Merciful?”

"Yes. Come to my room and I'll tell you why."

Straw was laid down before Paul's cottage. Within, all was absolutely quiet; even little Jack had been sent away. He had been sent to Hollis, who was taking care of him so elaborately, with so many ingenious devices for his entertainment, that Porley was wildly idle; there was nothing for her to do.

Standing beside the white-pine table in Paul's bare bedroom, the two men held their conference. Paul's explanation lasted three minutes. "Ferdie was entangled with her long before he ever saw Cicely," he concluded, "and he always liked her; that was her hold upon him—he liked her, and she knew it; he didn't drop her even after he was married."

From the rigid old face there came a hot imprecation.

"Let him alone—will you?—now he's dead," suggested Paul, curtly. "I don't suppose that you yourself have been so immaculate all your life that you can afford to set up as a pattern?"

"But my wife, sir—Nothing ever touched her."

"You mean that you arranged things so that she shouldn't know. All decent men do that, I suppose, and Ferdie didn't in the least intend that Cicely should know, either. He told her to stay here; if she had persisted in going down there against his wish, and against his arrangements also, fancy what she would have put her head into! I couldn't let her do that, of course. But though I told her enough to give her some clew, she hadn't the least suspicion of the whole truth, and now she need never know."

"She won't have time, she's dying," answered the grandfather.

Cicely's state was alarming. A violent attack of brain-fever had been followed by the present condition of comparative quiet; she recognized no one; much of the time she sang to herself gayly. The doctor feared that the paroxysms would return. They had been terrible to witness; Paul had held her, and he had exerted all the force of

his strong arms to keep her from injuring herself, her fragile little form had thrown itself about so wildly, like a bird beating its life out against the bars of its cage.

No one in this desolate cottage had time to think of the accumulation of troubles that had come upon them: the silence, broken only by Cicely's strange singing, the grief of Paul for his brother, the dumb despair of the old man, the absence of little Jack, the near presence of Death. But of the four faces, that of Eve expressed the deepest hopelessness. She stayed constantly in the room where Cicely was, but she did nothing; from the first she had not offered to help in any way, and the doctor, seeing that she was to be of no use, had sent a nurse. On the fourth day, Paul said: "You must have some sleep, Eve. Go to your room; I will have you called if she grows worse."

"No; I must stay here."

"Why? There is nothing for you to do."

"You mean that I do nothing. I know it; but I must stay."

On the seventh evening he spoke again; Cicely's quiet state had now lasted twenty-four hours. "Lying on a lounge is no good, Eve; to-night you must go to bed. Otherwise we shall have you breaking down too."

"Do I look as though I should break down?"

They had happened to meet in the hall outside of Cicely's door; the sunset light, coming through a small window, flooded the place with gold.

"If you put it in that way, I must say you do not."

"I knew it. I am very strong."

"You speak as though you regretted it."

"I do regret it." She put out her hand to open the door.—"Don't think that I am trying to be sensational," she pleaded.

"All I think is that you are an obstinate girl; and one very much in need of rest, too."

Her eyes filled, he had spoken as one speaks to a tired child; but she turned her head so that he should not see her face, and left him, entering Cicely's room, and closing the door behind her; her manner and the movement, as he saw them, were distinctly repellent.

Cicely did not notice her entrance; the nurse, who had some knitting in her hand in order not to appear too watchful, but who in reality saw the rise and fall of her patient's every breath, was near. Eve went to the place where she often sat—a chair partially screened by the projection of a large wardrobe; she could see only a towel-stand opposite, and the ingrain carpet, in ugly octagons of red and green, at her feet. The silence was profound.

"I am a murderer, it is a murderer who is sitting here. If people only knew! But it is enough for me to know.

—"They said he was getting better. Instead of that he is dead,—he is dead, and I shot him; I lifted the pistol and fired. At the time it didn't seem wrong. But this is what it means to kill, I suppose;—this awful agony.

—"I have never been one of the afraid kind. I wish now that I had been; then this wouldn't have happened; the baby might have been horribly hurt, Cicely too; but at least I shouldn't have been a murderer. For if you kill you are a murderer, no matter whether the person you kill is good or bad, or what you do it for; you have killed some one, you have made his life come to a sudden stop, and for that you must take the responsibility.

—"Oh, God! it is too dreadful! I cannot bear it. Sometimes, when I have been unhappy, I have waked and found it was only a dream; couldn't this be a dream?

—"I was really going to tell, I was going to tell Cicely. But I thought I would wait until he was well—as every one said he would be soon—so that she wouldn't hate me quite so much. If she should die without coming to her senses, I shouldn't be able to tell her.

—“Hypocrite! even to myself. In reality I don’t want her to come to her senses; I have sat here for days, afraid to leave her, watching every moment lest she should begin to talk rationally. For then I should have to tell her; and she would tell Paul. Oh, I cannot have him know—I cannot.”

Made stupid by her misery, she sat gazing at the floor, her eyes fixed, her lips slightly apart.

She was exhausted; for the same thoughts had besieged her ever since she had read the despatch, “Morrison died this morning,”—an unending repetition of exactly the same sentences, constantly following each other, and constantly beginning again; even in sleep they continued, like a long nightmare, so that she woke weeping. And now without a moment’s respite, while she sat there with her eyes on the carpet, the involuntary recital began anew: “I am a murderer, it is a murderer who is sitting here. If people only knew!”

“They may rail at this life; from the hour I began it I’ve found it a life full of kindness and bliss; And until you can show me some happier planet, More social, more gay, I’ll content me with this,”

chanted Cicely, sweetly.

“The song of last Christmas at Romney,” Eve’s thoughts went on. “Oh, how changed I am since then—how changed! That night I thought only of my brother. Now I have almost forgotten him;—Jack, do you care? All I think of is Paul, Paul, Paul. How beautiful it was in that gray-green wood! But what am I dreaming about? How can the person who killed his brother be anything to him?

—“Once he said—he told me himself—‘I care for Ferdie more than for anything in the world.’ It’s Ferdie I have killed.

—”‘Morrison buried this afternoon. Address me Charleston Hotel, Charleston.’ He put those despatches in his pocket and went into the back room. He sat down by the table, and laid his head upon his arms. His shoulders shook, I know he was crying,

he was crying for his brother. Oh, I will go down-stairs and tell him the whole; I will go this moment." She rose.

On the stairs she met the judge. "Is she worse?" he asked, alarmed at seeing her outside of the room.

"No; the same."

She found Paul in the lower hall. "Is she worse?" he said.

"No. How constantly you think of her!"

"Of course."

"Can I speak to you for a moment?" She led the way to the small back room where he had sat with his head on his arms. "I want to tell you—" she began. Then she stopped.

His face had a worn look, his eyes were dull—a dullness caused by sorrow and the pressure of care. But to her, as he stood there, he was supreme, her whole heart went out to him. "How I love him!" The feeling swept over her like a flood, overwhelming everything else.

"What is it you wish to tell me?" Paul asked, seeing that she still remained silent.

"How can I do it!—how can I do it!" she said to herself.

"Don't tell me, then, if it troubles you," he added, his voice taking the kindly tones she dreaded.

Her courage vanished. "Another time," she said hurriedly, and, turning, she left the room.

But as she went up the stairs she knew that there would be no other time. "Never! never! I shall never tell him. What do I care for truthfulness, or courage, compared with one word of his spoken in that tone!"

XXIII.

MISS SABRINA'S first letters had been so full of grief that they had been vague; to her there had been but the one fact: Ferdie was dead.

She had become much attached to him. There was nothing strange in this; both as boy and as man, Ferdinand Morrison had been deeply loved by many. The poor woman knew his fault (she thought it his only one), for the judge had written an account of all that had happened, and the reasons for Cicely's flight. Nevertheless she loved this prodigal as the prodigal is often so dearly loved by the woman whose heart is pierced the most deeply by his excesses—his mother. And Miss Sabrina, as regarded her devotion, might indeed have been Ferdie's mother; something in him roused the dormant maternal feeling—the maternal passion—which existed in her heart unknown to herself. She did not comprehend what it was that was disturbing her so much, and yet at the same time making her so happy—she did not comprehend that it was stifled nature asserting itself at this late day; the circumstances of her life had made her a gentle, conciliatory old maid; she was not in the least aware that as a mother she could have been a tigress in the defence of her sons. For she was a woman who would have rejoiced in her sons; daughters would never have been important to her.

She thought that she was perfectly reasonable about Ferdie. No, Cicely must not come back to him for the present; baby too—darling little boy!—he must be kept away; and oh! how terrible that flight through the woods, and the escape in the boat; she thought of it every night with tremors. Yet, in spite of all, she loved the man who had caused these griefs. His illness made him dependent upon her, and his voice calling her name in peremptory tones, like those of a spoiled child—this was the sweetest sound her ears had ever heard. He would reform, all her hopes and plans were based upon that; she went about with prayer on her lips from morning till night—prayer for him.

When his last breath had been drawn, it seemed to her as if the daily life of the

world must have stopped too, outside of the darkened chamber; as if people could not go on eating and drinking, and the sun go on shining, with Ferdie dead. She was able to keep her place at the head of the household until after the funeral; then she became the prey of an illness which, though quiet and unobtrusive, like everything else connected with her, was yet sufficiently persistent to confine her to her bed. Nanny Singleton, who had come to Romney every day, rowed by Boliver, now came again, this time to stay; she took possession of the melancholy house, re-established order after her inexact fashion, and then devoted herself to nursing her friend.

Two of Nanny Singleton's letters.

Letter number one:

"ROMNEY, Friday evening.

"DEAR JUDGE,—I feel that we have been very remiss in not sending to you sooner the details of this heart-breaking event. But we have been so afflicted ourselves with the unexpectedness of it all, with the funeral, and with dear Sabrina's illness, that we have been somewhat negligent. We feel, Rupert and I, that we have lost not only one who was personally dear to us, but also the most fascinating, the most brilliant, the most thoroughly engaging young man whom it has ever been our good-fortune to meet. Such a death is a public calamity, and you, his nearest and dearest, must admit us (as well as many, many others) to that circle of mourning friends who esteemed him highly, admired him inexpressibly, and loved him sincerely for the unusually charming qualities he possessed.

"Our dearest Sabrina told us all the particulars the morning after his death, for of course we came directly to her as soon as we heard what had happened. He had been making, as you probably know, a visit in Savannah; Dr. Knox had accompanied him, or perhaps it was that he joined him there; at any rate, it was Dr. Knox who brought him home. It seems that he had overestimated his strength—so natural in a young man!—and he arrived much exhausted; so much so, indeed, that the doctor

thought it better that dear Sabrina should not see him that evening. And the next day she only saw him once, and from across the room; he was alarmingly pale, and did not open his eyes; Dr. Knox said that he must not try to speak. It was the next morning at dawn that the doctor came to her door and told Powlyne to waken her. (But she was not asleep.) 'He is going, if you wish to come;' this was all he said. Dear Sabrina, greatly agitated, threw on her wrapper over her night-dress, and hastened to the bedside of the dear boy. He lay in a stupor, he did not know her; and in less than half an hour his breath ceased. She prayed for him during the interval, she knelt down and prayed aloud; it was a wonder that she had the strength to do it when a soul so dear to her was passing. When it had taken flight, she closed his eyes, and made all orderly about him. And she kissed him for Cicely, she told me.

"The funeral she arranged herself in every detail. Receiving no replies to her despatches to you, she was obliged to use her own judgment; she had confessed to me in the beginning that she much wished to have him buried here at Romney, in the little circle of her loved ones, and not hearing from you to the contrary, she decided to do this; he lies beside your brother Marmaduke. Our friends came from all the islands near and far; there must have been sixty persons in all, many bringing flowers. Dr. Knox stayed with us until after the funeral—that is, until day before yesterday; then he took his leave of us, and went to Charleston by the evening boat. He seems a most excellent young man. And if he strikes us as a little cold, no doubt it is simply that, being a Northerner, and not a man of much cultivation, he could not appreciate fully Ferdie's very remarkable qualities. Dear old Dr. Daniels, who has been in Virginia for several weeks, has now returned; he comes over every day to see Sabrina. He tells me that her malady is intermittent fever—a mild form; the only point is to keep her strength up, and this we endeavor to do with chickens. I will remain here as long as I can be of the slightest service, and you may rest assured that everything possible is being done.

"I trust darling Cicely is not burdened by the many letters we have written to

her—my own four, and Rupert's three, as well as those of her other friends on the islands about here. All wished to write, and we did not know how to say no.

"With love to Miss Bruce, I am, dear judge, your attached and sorrowing friend,

NANNY SINGLETON."

Letter number two:

"ROMNEY, Saturday Morning.

"MY DEAR MR. TENNANT,—My husband has just received your letter, and as he is much crippled by his rheumatism this morning, he desires me to answer it immediately, so that there may be no delay.

"We both supposed that Dr. Knox had written to you. Probably while he was here there were so many things to take up his time that he could not; and I happen to know that as soon as he reached Charleston, day before yesterday, he was met by this unexpected proposition to join a private yacht for a cruise of several months; one of the conditions was that he was to go on board immediately (they sailed the same evening), and I dare say he had time for nothing but his own preparations, and that you will hear from him later. My husband says, however, that he can give you all the details of the case, which was a simple one. Your brother overestimated his strength, he should not have attempted that journey to Savannah; it was too soon, for his wound had not healed, and the fatigue brought on a dangerous relapse, from which he could not rally. He died from the effects of that cruel shot, Mr. Tennant; his valuable life has fallen a sacrifice (in my husband's opinion) to the present miserable condition of our poor State, where the blacks, our servants, who are like little children and need to be led as such,—where these poor ignorant creatures are put over us, their former masters; are rewarded with office; are intrusted with dangerous weapons—a liberty which in this case has proved fatal to one of the higher race. It seems to my husband as if the death of Ferdinand Morrison should be held up as a marked warning to the entire North; this very superior, talented, and

engaging young man has fallen by the bullet of a negro, and my husband says that in his opinion the tale should be told everywhere, on the steps of court-houses and in churches, and the question should be solemnly asked, Shall such things continue?—shall the servant rule his lord?

“We are much alarmed by the few words in Judge Abercrombie’s letter (received this morning) concerning our darling Cicely, and we beg you to send us a line daily. Or perhaps Miss Bruce would do it, knowing our anxiety? I pray that the dear child, whom we all so fondly love, may be better very soon; but I will be anxious until I hear.

“As I sent a long letter to the judge last evening, I will not add more to this. Our sympathy, dear Mr. Tennant, with your irreparable loss is heartfelt; you do not need our assurances of that, I know.

“Mr. Singleton desires me to present his respects. And I beg to remain your obedient servant,

N. SINGLETON.”

XXIV.

MIDSUMMER at Port aux Pins. The day was very hot; there was no feeling of dampness, such as belongs sometimes to the lower-lake towns in the dog-days, up here the air remained dry and clear and pure; but the splendid sunshine had almost the temperature of flame; it seemed as if the miles of forest must take fire, as from a burning-glass.

Eve stood at the open window of Paul’s little parlor. A figure passed in the road outside, but she did not notice it. Reappearing, it opened the gate and came in. “Many happy returns—of cooler weather! We ought to pity the Eyetalians; what must their sufferings be on such a day as this!”

Eve gazed at the speaker unseeingly. Then recognition arrived;—"Oh, Mr. Hollis."

Hollis came into the house; he joined her in the parlor. "My best respects. Can't help thinking of the miserable Eyetalians." Eve made no reply. "Just heard a piece of news," Hollis went on. "Paul has sold his Clay County iron. He would have made five times as much by holding on. But he has been so jammed lately by unexpected demands made upon him that he had no other course; all his brother's South American speculations have come to grief, and the creditors have come down on him like a thousand of brick!"

"Will he have to pay much?" asked Eve, her lassitude gone.

"More than he's got," answered Hollis, putting his hands still more deeply into his trousers pockets, his long, lean, fish-like figure projecting itself forward into space from the sixth rib. "I don't get this from Paul, you may depend; he don't blab. But the law sharks who came up here to get hold of whatever they could (for you see Paul has always been a partner in his brother's enterprises, so that gives 'em a chance), these scamps talked to me some. So I know. But even the sale of his Clay County iron won't clear Paul—he will have to guarantee other debts; it will take him years to clear it all off, unless he has something better than his present salary to do it with."

"You ought to have told me. I have money."

"I guess he wouldn't take it. He's had pretty hard lines all round; he wanted terribly bad to go straight to Ferdie, as soon as he heard he was shot. But Mrs. Morrison—she had come here, you know; and he had all Ferdie's expenses to think of too, so that kept him grinding along. But he wanted awfully to go; he thought the world and all of Ferdie."

"I know he did," said Eve. And now her face was like a tragic mask—deadly white, with a frown, the eyes under her straight brows looking at him fixedly.

"Oh, eheu!" thought Hollis distressfully, disgustedly. "You screw yourself up to tell

her all these things about him, because you think it will please her; and this is the way she takes ’em!”

He looked at her again; she gave no sign. Feeling painfully insignificant and helpless, he turned and left the room.

A few minutes later Paul came in. “You have sold your Clay County iron!” said Eve.

“I have always intended to sell it.”

“Not at a sacrifice.”

“One does as one can—a business transaction.”

“How much money have you sent to your brother all these years?”

“I don’t know that it is—I don’t know what interest you can have in it,” Paul answered.

“You mean that it is not my business. Oh, don’t be so hard! Say three words just for once.”

“Why, I’ll say as many as you like, Eve. Ferdie was one of the most brilliant fellows in the world; if he had lived, all his investments would have turned out finely, he was sure of a fortune some time.”

“And, in the meanwhile, you supported him; you have always done it.”

“You are mistaken. I advanced him money now and then when he happened to be short, but it was always for the time being only; he would have paid me back if he had lived.”

The door opened, and the judge came in. “I’m glad you’re here,” said Paul; “now we can decide, we three, upon what is best to be done. The doctor says that while this heat is very bad for Cicely, travel would be still worse; she cannot go anywhere by train, and hardly by steamer—though that is better; there would be no use, then, in trying to take her south.”

“It’s ten times hotter here to-day than I ever saw it at Romney,” interposed the judge. “It’s a tophet—this town of yours!”

“I was thinking also of Miss Abercrombie’s illness,” Paul went on. “Though her fever is light, her room is still a sick-room, and that would depress Cicely, I feel sure. But, meanwhile, the poor girl is hourly growing weaker, and so this is what I have thought of: we will go into camp in the pines near Jupiter Light. Don’t you remember how much good camp-life did her before?”

Six days later they were living in the pine woods at Jupiter. This time lodges had been built; the nurse accompanied Cicely; they were a party of eight, without counting the cook and the Indians.

At first Cicely remained in much the same state, she recognized no one but Jack.

Jack continued to be his mother’s most constant adorer; he climbed often into her lap, and, putting his arms round her neck, “loved” her with his cheek against hers, and with all his little heart; he came trotting up many times a day, to stroke her face with his dimpled hand. Cicely looked at him, but did not answer. After ten days in the beneficent forest, however, her strength began to revive, and their immediate fears were calmed. One evening she asked for her grandfather, and when he came hastily in and bent over her couch, she smiled and kissed him. He sat down beside her, holding her hand; after a while she fell into a sleep. The old man went softly out, he went to the camp-fire, and made it blaze, throwing on fresh pine-cones recklessly.

“Sixty-five in the shade,” remarked Hollis.

“This Northern air is always abominable. Will you make me a taste of something spicy? I feel the need of it. Miss Bruce,—Eve—Cicely knows me!”

Eve looked at his brightened face, at the blazing fire, the rough table with the tumblers, the flask, and the lemons. Hollis had gone to the kitchen to get hot water.

“She knows me,” repeated the judge, triumphantly. “She sent for me herself.”

Paul now appeared, and the good news was again told. Paul had just come from Port aux Pins. After establishing them at Jupiter, he had been obliged to return to town immediately, and he had remained there closely occupied for more than a week. He sat down, refusing Hollis's proffered glass. The nurse came out, and walked to and fro before Cicely's lodge, breathing the aromatic air; this meant that Cicely still slept. Eve had seated herself a little apart from the fire; her figure was in the shadow. Her mind was filled with but one thought: "Cicely better? Then must I tell her?" By-and-by the conversation of the others came to her.

"Hanging is too good for them," said the judge.

"But wasn't it supposed to be a chance shot?" remarked Hollis. "Not intentional, exactly?"

"That makes no difference. You may call it absolute chance, if you like; but the negro who dares to lift a pistol against a white man should not be left alive five minutes afterwards," declared the old planter, implacably.

"You'd ought to have lived in the days of religious wars," drawled Hollis. "I don't know anything else carnivorous enough to suit you."

"You must be a Quaker, sir! Tennant feels as I do, he'd shoot at sight."

"Oh no, he wouldn't," said Hollis. "He ain't a Southerner."

"Tennant can speak for himself," said the judge, confidently.

"I'd shoot the man who shot my brother," answered Paul. "I'd go down there to-morrow—I should have gone long ago—if I thought there was the least chance of finding him." A dark flush rose in his face. "I'm afraid—even if it was an unintentional shot—that I should want to kill that man just the same; I should be a regular savage!"

"Would you never forgive him?" asked Eve's voice from the shadow.

"Blood for blood!" responded Paul, hotly. "No, not unless I killed him; then I

might."

Eve rose.

Paul got up. "Oh, are you going?" But she did not hear him; she had gone to her lodge. He sat down again. She did not reappear that night.

The next morning she went off for a solitary walk. By chance her steps took the direction of a small promontory that jutted sharply into the lake, its perpendicular face rising to a height of forty feet from the deep water below; she had been here several times before, and knew the place well; it was about a mile from the camp. As she sat there, Paul's figure appeared through the trees. He came straight to her. "I have been looking for you, I tried to find you last night." He paused a moment. "Eve, don't you see what I've come for? Right in the midst of all this grief and trouble I've found out something. It's just this, Eve: I love you."

She tried to rise, but he put his hand on her shoulder to keep her where she was. "Oh, but I do, you needn't doubt it," he went on, with an amused smile—amused at himself; "in some way or other the thing has come about, I may say, in spite of me. I never thought it would. But here 'tis—with a vengeance! I think of you constantly, I can't help thinking of you; I recognize, at last, that the thing is unchangeable, that it's for life; have you I must." The words were despotic, but the tone was entreating; and the eyes, looking down upon her, were caressing—imploring. "Yes, I'm as helpless as any one," Paul went on, smiling as he said it; "I can't sleep, even. Come, take me; I'm not such a bad fellow, after all—I really think I'm not. And as regards my feeling for you, you need not be troubled; it's strong enough!"

She quailed under his ardor.

"I haven't spoken before because there has been so much to do," Paul continued; "there has been Cicely, and then I've been harassed about business; I've been in a box, and trying to get out. Besides, I wasn't perfectly sure that my time had come." He laughed. "I'm sure now." He took her in his arms. "Don't let us make any delays,

Eve; we're not so young, either of us. Not that you need be afraid that you're to be the less happy on that account; I'll see to that!"

She broke from him.

But again he came to her, he took her hands, and, kneeling, laid his forehead upon them. "I will be as humble as you like; only—be good to me. I long for it, I must have it."

A sob rose in her throat. He sprang up. "Don't do that! Why, I want to make you absolutely happy, if I can. We shall have troubles enough, and perhaps we shall have sorrows, but at least we shall be together; you must never leave me, and I will do all I can to be less rough. But on your side there's one thing, Eve: you must love me." These last words were murmured in her ear.

She drew herself away from him. The expression of her face was almost like death.

"You look as though you were afraid of me! I thought you loved me, Eve?"

"I do."

"Pretend you are a man, then, long enough to say 'yes' without any more circumlocution. We will be married at Port aux Pins. Then we can take care of Cicely together."

"I shall never marry."

"Yes, you will."

"I do not wish to leave Cicely."

"She wouldn't care about that. She isn't even fond of you."

"Oh, what shall I say to you?" cried Eve, her hands dropping by her sides. "Listen: it will be absolutely impossible for you to change my determination. But I am so horribly unhappy that I do believe I cannot stand anything more—any more contests with you. Leave me to myself; say nothing to me. But don't drive me away; at least let me stay near you."

“In my arms, Eve.”

“Let me stay near you; see you; hear you talk; but that is all.”

“And how long do you suppose that could last? It’s a regular woman’s idea: nonsense.”

“Paul, be merciful!”

“Merciful? Oh, yes!” He took her again in his arms.

“I swear to you that I cannot marry you,” she said, trembling as his cheek touched hers. “Since I’ve known you I haven’t wanted to die, I’ve wanted to live—live a long life. But now I do want to die; there is a barrier between us, I cannot lift it.”

He released her. “There could be but one.—I believe that you are truthful; is the barrier another man?”

Another man? She hesitated a moment. “Yes.”

He looked at her. “I don’t believe you! You are lying for some purpose of your own. See here, Eve, I don’t want to be played with in this way; you love me, and I worship you; by this time next week you are to be my wife.”

“I must go away from you, then? You won’t help me? Where can I go!” She left him; she walked slowly towards the lake, her head bowed.

He followed her. He had paid no attention to what she was saying; “feminine complications”—this was all he thought. He was very masterful with women.

As he came up she turned her head and looked at him. And, by a sort of inspiration, he divined that the look was a farewell. He caught her, and none too soon, for, as he touched her, he felt the impulse, the first forward movement of the spring which would have taken her over the edge, down to the deep water below.

Carrying her in his arms, close against his breast, he hastened away from the edge; he went inland for a long distance. Then he stopped, releasing her. He was extremely pale.

"I believe you now," he said. "All shall be as you like—just as you like; I will do anything you wish me to do." He seemed to be still afraid, he watched her anxiously.

She came and put her hands on his shoulders; she lifted her head and kissed his cheek. It was like the kiss one gives in the chamber of death.

He did not move, he was holding himself in strict control. But he felt the misery of her greeting so acutely that moisture rose in his eyes.

She saw it. "Don't be troubled about me," she said. "I didn't want to die—really, I didn't want to at all. It was only because just at that moment I could not bear it to have you keep asking me when it was impossible,—I felt that I must go away; and apart from you, and Cicely and baby, there seemed no place in the world for me! But now—now I want to live. Perhaps we shall both live long lives."

"I'm not a woman, you know," said Paul, with a faint smile. "Women do with make-believes; men can't."

She had left him. "Go now," she said.

He turned to obey. Then he came back. "Eve, can't you tell me your real reason?"

But her face changed so quickly to its old look of agony that he felt a pang of regret that he had spoken. "I will never ask you again," he said.

This was the offering he made her—a great one for Paul Tennant. He went away.

An hour later she came back to the camp.

"Paul has gone to Potterpins," said Hollis, who was sitting by the fire. "Told me to give you this." He handed her a note.

It contained but two lines: "I shall come back next week. But send a note by mail; I want to know if you are contented with me."

Eve wrote but one word—"Yes."

XXV.

PAUL remained away for ten days; not by his own wish, but detained by business.

During his absence Hollis's services were in demand. Cicely was now able to go out on the lake, and he took her for an hour or two every morning in one of the larger canoes; the nurse and Cicely sat at the bow, then came Porley and Jack, then Eve, then Hollis. Cicely still did not talk, she had not again asked for her grandfather; but she looked at the water and the woods on the shore, and her face showed occasionally some slight childish interest in what was passing. Eve, too, scarcely spoke; but it was pleasure enough for poor Hollis to be opposite to her, where he could see her without appearing to gaze too steadily. He had always admired her; he had admired her voice, her reticent, independent way; he had admired her tall, slender figure, with the broad sweep of the shoulders, the erect carriage, and lithe, strong step. He had never thought her too cold, too pale; but now in the increased life and color which had come to her she seemed to him a daughter of the gods—the strong Northern gods with flaxen hair; the flush in her cheeks made her eyes bluer and her hair more golden; the curve of her lips, a curve which had once been almost sullen, was now strangely sweet. Her love had made her beautiful; her love, too, made her kind to Hollis;—women are often unconsciously cruel in this way. The poor auctioneer lived in a fool's paradise and forgot all his cautions; day-dreams began to visit him, he was a boy again.

On the eleventh day Paul returned.

Hollis happened to see him meet Eve. Outwardly it was simply that they shook hands, and stood for a moment exchanging an unimportant question or two; or rather Paul asked, and Eve answered; but Paul's tone was not what it once had been, his eyes, looking at Eve, were different. It was one thing to know that she loved Paul, Hollis was used to that; it was another to know that Paul loved her. He watched through the day, with all the acuteness of jealousy, discovering nothing. But that evening, when Eve had said good-night and started towards her lodge, Paul rose and

followed her.

“I guess I’ll go down to the lake for a moment or two,” Hollis said to the judge, who was sitting by the fire. He walked away in the direction of the lake; then, doubling upon his track, he returned, avoiding the fire and going towards the row of lodges. Presently he saw two dusky figures, a man and a woman; they stood there for a moment; then the man bent his head and touched with his lips the woman’s wrist. It was but for a second; they separated, she going towards her lodge, and he returning to the fire. The watcher in the wood stole noiselessly down to the beach and got out a canoe; then he went off and woke an Indian. Presently the two were paddling westward over the dark lake. They caught the steamer. Hollis reached Port aux Pins the following evening.

From the boat he went to a restaurant and ordered dinner; he called it “dinner” to make it appear more fine. He ordered the best that the establishment could offer. He complained because there were no anchovies. He said to the waiter: “This patty de fograr?—You must be sick! Take away these off-color peaches and bring me something first class. Bring lick-koors, too; can you catch on to that?” He drank a great deal of wine, finishing with champagne; then he lit a cigar and sauntered out.

He went to a beer-garden. The place was brightly lighted; dusty evergreens planted in tubs made foliage; little tables were standing in the sand; there was a stage upon which four men, in Tyrolese costume, were singing, “O Strassburg, du wunderschöne Stadt!” very well, accompanied by a small orchestra.

“Hello, Katty, wie geht’s?” said Hollis to a girl who was passing with a tray of empty beer-glasses. She stopped. “Want some ice-cream, Katty?”

“Oh, come now, Mr. Hollis, you know there’s no ice-cream here.”

“Did I say here? Outside, of course. Come along.”

Katty went, nothing loath.

She was a girl of sixteen, with bright eyes, thick braids of brown hair, and a sweet

voice; the fairness of extreme youth gave her a fictitious innocence. He took her to the ephemeral saloon, and sat looking at her while she devoured two large slabs of a violently pink tint; her preposterous Gainsborough hat, with its imitation plumes, she had taken off, and the flaring gas-light shone on her pretty face.

“Now shall we have a walk, Katty?”

They strolled through the streets for half an hour. He took her into a jeweller’s shop, and bought her a German-silver dog-collar which she had admired in the window; she wanted it to clasp round her throat: “Close up, you know, under the chin; it’s so cute that way.” She was profuse in her thanks; of her own accord, when they came out, she took his arm.

He fell into silence. They passed his rooms; Katty looked up. “All dark,” she said.

“Yes. I guess I’ll take you back now, Katty; do you want to go home, or to the garden again?”

“I ain’t accustomed to going to bed at this early hour, Mr. Hollis, whatever you may be. I’ll go back to the gardens, please.”

When they reached the entrance, he put his hand in his pocket and drew something out. “There, Katty, take that and buy more dog-collars. Money’s all an old fellow like me is good for.”

“Oh, Mr. Hollis,—when I like you better than many that’s young.”

“Thank you, Katty. Good-night.”

He went, as he would have called it, “home.” On the way he passed his office; a vague impulse made him unlock the door, and look in, by the light of a match. The skeleton was there, and the bonnets in their bandboxes. “I must try to work ’em off before winter,” he thought; “they are really elegant.” He locked the door again, and, going a little farther down the street, he entered an open hallway, and began to climb a long flight of stairs. On the second floor he inserted his key in a door, and,

opening, entered; he was at home. The air was close and hot, and he threw up the windows; leaving the candle in the outer room, he went and sat down in his parlor, crossing his legs, and trying to lean back; every chair in the room was in its very nature and shape uncomfortable. Sitting there, his life in retrospect passed slowly before him, like a picture unrolling itself on the dark wall; he saw all the squalid poverty of it, all its disappointments, its deprivations. “From first to last it’s been a poor affair; I wonder how I’ve stood it!” The dawn came into the room, he did not move; he sat there with his hat on until the little bell of the Baptist church near by began to ring for Sabbath-school. He listened to the sound for a while, it was persistent; finally he got up; his legs felt stiff, he brushed some dust from his trousers with the palm of his hand; then he went out.

He went down to the street, and thence to the Baptist church. The door stood open, and he went in; the children were already in their places, and the organ was sounding forth a lively tune; presently the young voices began all together in a chorus,

“The voice of free grace cries escape to the mount-ins—”

His mother used to sing that song, he remembered. She often sang it over her work, and she was always at work—yes, to the very day of her death; she was a patient, silent creature.

“I don’t know that I’d oughter have less pluck than she had,” thought her son.

“Brother, will you have a book?” whispered a little man in a duster, proffering one from behind.

Hollis took it, and followed the words as the children sang them to the end. When the prayer began, he laid the book down carefully on the seat, and went out on tiptoe. He went down to the pier; the westward bound boat had just come in; he went on board.

“Business,” he explained to the judge, when he reached the camp. “Had to go.”

“Sold the skeleton, perhaps?”

“Well, I’ve laid one!” responded Hollis, grimly.

The judge was in gay spirits, Cicely had been talking to him; it had been about Jack, and she had said nothing of importance; but the sentences had been rational, connected.

Several days passed, and the improvement continued; consciousness had returned to her eyes, they all felt hopeful. They had strolled down to the beach one evening to see the sunset, and watch the first flash of Jupiter Light out on its reef. Eve was with Hollis; she selected him each day as her companion, asking him in so many words to accompany her; Hollis went, showering out jokes and puns. Now and then he varied his efforts at entertainment by legends of what he called “old times on the frontier.” They always began: “My father lived on a flat-boat. He was a bold and adventurous character.” In reality, his father was a teacher of singing, who earned his living (sometimes) by getting up among school-children, who co-operated without pay, a fairy operetta called The Queen of the Flowers; he was an amiable man with a mild tenor voice; he finally became a colporteur for the Methodist Book Concern. To-day Hollis was talking about the flat-boat—maundering on, as he would himself have called it; Paul and the judge strolled to and fro. The water came up smoothly in long, low swells, whose edge broke at their feet with a little sound like “whisssh,” followed by a retreating gurgle.

“Paul Tennant, are you there?” asked a voice.

Startled, they turned. On the bank above the beach, and therefore just above their heads (the bank was eight feet high), stood Cicely.

“It is you I want, Paul Tennant. Everything has come back to me; I know now that Ferdie is dead. You would not let me go to him; probably he thought that it was because I did not want to go. This I owe to you, and I curse you for it. I curse you, Paul Tennant, I curse your days and nights; all the things and people you like, all

your hopes and plans. If you trust any one, I hope that person will betray you; if you love any one, I hope that person will hate you; if you should have any children, I hope they will be disobedient, and, whatever they may be to others, undutiful to you."

"Cicely, stop!" cried Eve. "Will no one stop her?"

"God, curse Paul Tennant. He has been so cruel!" She was now kneeling down, her arms held up to heaven in appeal.

The judge looked waxily pallid; Hollis did not move; Paul, much less disturbed than any one, was already climbing the bank. It was perpendicular, and there was neither footing nor hold, but after one or two efforts he succeeded. When he reached the top, however, Cicely was gone. He went to her lodge; here he found her sitting quietly beside Jack's bed; she was alone, neither the nurse nor Porley was with her. Before he could speak, Eve appeared, breathless.

"Where is the nurse, Cicely?" Paul asked, in his usual tone.

"Do you mean that woman whom you have put over me? She has gone for a walk."

"And Porley?"

"You will find Porley at the big pine."

"What is she doing there?"

"I didn't want her about, so I tied her to the trunk," Cicely answered. "Probably she is frightened," she added, calmly.

"Go and find her," said Eve to Paul. "I will stay here."

"Have nothing to do with Paul Tennant, Eve," Cicely remarked. "He is almost a murderer. He didn't go to his brother; he let him die alone."

"I shall not leave you," said Paul, looking at Eve's white cheeks.

"Have you fallen in love with each other?" asked Cicely. "It needed only that."

"I beg you to go," Eve entreated.

Paul hesitated. “Will you promise not to leave this lodge until I come back?”

“Yes.”

Paul went out. As he did so, he saw the judge approaching, leaning heavily on Hollis’s arm.

“It’s nothing,” Hollis explained. “The judge, he’s only tuckered out; a night’s rest is all he needs.”

“Take me to Cicely,” the judge commanded.

“Cicely ought to be quiet now,” Paul answered in a decided voice. “Eve is with her, and they’re all right; women do better alone together, you know, when one of them has hysteria.”

“Hysteria! Is that what you called it?” said the judge.

“Of course. And it’s natural,” Paul went on:—“poor little girl, coming to herself suddenly here in the woods, only to realize that her husband is dead. We shall have to be doubly tender with her, now that she is beginning to be herself again.”

“You didn’t mind it, then?” pursued the judge. He was relieved, of course—glad. Still it began to seem almost an impertinence that Paul should have paid so little attention to what had been to the rest of them so terrible.

“Mind? Do you mean what she was saying? I didn’t half hear it, I was thinking how I could get up that bank. And that reminds me there’s something wrong with Porley; she’s at the big pine. I am going out there to see. Cicely told me that she had tied her in some way.”

“If she did, the wench richly deserved it,” said the judge, going towards his lodge, his step stiff and slow.

“He came mighty near a stroke,” said Hollis to Paul in an undertone.

“Hadn’t you better go with him, then?”

“Oh yes; I’ll go.” He went towards the judge’s lodge. “You go right into that lodge,

fool Hollis, and stay there,—stay with that unreasonable, vituperative, cantankerous old Bourbon of a judge, and—judge of Bourbon! You smooth him down, and you hearten him up, you agree with him every time; you tuck him in, you hang his old clothes over a chair, you take his shoes out, and black 'em; and you conduct yourself generally like one of his own nigs in the glorious old days of slavery—Maryland, my Maryland!" He lifted the latch of the door, and went in.

Paul, meanwhile, had gone to the big pine; when he reached it, the twilight had darkened into night. A crouching figure stood close to the trunk—Porley; she was tied by a small rope to the tree, the firm ligatures encircling her in three places—at the throat, the waist, and the ankles; in addition, her hands were tied behind her.

"Well, Porley, a good joke, isn't it?" Paul said, as he cut the knots of the rope with his knife.

"Ah-hoo!" sobbed the girl, her fright breaking into audible expression now that aid was near.

"Mrs. Morrison thought she would see how brave you were."

"Ah-hoo! Ah-hoo-hoo-hoo!" roared Porley, in a paroxysm of frantic weeping.

"If you are so frightened as that, what did you let her do it for? You are five times as strong as she is."

"I coulden tech her, marse—I coulden! Says she, 'A-follerin' an' spyin', Porley? Take dat rope an' come wid me. ' So I come. She's cunjud me, marse; I is done fer."

"Nonsense! Where's the nurse?"

"I doan know—I doan know. Says she, 'We'll take a walk, Miss Mile.' An' off dey went, 'way ober dat way. Reckon Miss Mile's dead!"

"No more dead than you are. Go back to the camp and un-cunjer yourself; there's a dollar to help it along."

He went off in the direction she had indicated. After a while he began to call at

intervals; there was a distant answer, and he called again. And then gradually, nearer and nearer, came the self-respecting voice of Mary Ann Mile. Each time he shouted, "Hello there!" her answer was, "Yes, sir; present-lée," in a very well-educated tone.

"What is this, Mrs. Mile?"

"You may well ask, sir. Such an incident has never happened to me before. Mrs. Morrison remarked that she should enjoy a walk, and I therefore went with her; after we had proceeded some distance, suddenly she darted off. I followed her, and kept her in sight for a while, or rather she kept me in sight; then she disappeared, and I perceived not only that I had lost her, but that I myself was lost. It is a curious thing, sir,—the cleverness of people whose minds are disordered!"

"Her mind is no longer disordered, Mrs. Mile; she has got back her senses."

"Do you consider this an instance of it?" asked the nurse, doubtfully.

When Paul left Cicely's lodge, Eve closed the door. "Cicely, I have something to tell you. Listen."

"It is a pity you like that man—that Paul Tennant," Cicely answered.

"If I do like him, I can never be anything to him. This is what I wanted to tell you: that I shot his brother."

"Well, if his brother was like him—"

"Oh, Cicely, it was Ferdie—your Ferdie."

"What do you know about Ferdie?" demanded Cicely, coldly. "He never liked you in the least."

"Don't you know, Cicely, that Ferdie is dead?"

"Oh, yes, I know it. Paul would not let me go to him, and he died all alone."

"And do you know what was the cause of his death?"

"Yes; he was shot; there were some negroes, they got away in a boat."

“No, there were no negroes; I shot him. I took a pistol on purpose.”

“It seems to be very hard work for you to tell me this, you are crying dreadfully,” remarked Cicely, looking at her. “Why do you tell?”

“Because I am the one you must curse. Not Paul.”

“It’s all for Paul, then.”

“But it was for you in the first place, Cicely. Don’t you remember that we escaped?—that we went through the wood to the north point?—that you tried to push the boat off, and couldn’t? Baby climbed up by one of the seats, and Ferdie saw him, and made a dash after him; then it was that I fired. I did it, Cicely. Nobody else.”

“Oh,” said Cicely, slowly, “you did it, did you?” She rose. “And Paul kept me from going to him! It was all you two.” She went to the crib, and lifted Jack from his nest. He stirred drowsily; then fell asleep again. (Poor little Jack, what journeys!)

“Open that door; and go,” Cicely commanded.

Eve hesitated a moment. Then she obeyed.

Cicely wrapped a shawl about Jack, and laid him down; she set to work and made two packets of clothing—one for herself, and one for the child—slinging them upon her arm; she put on her straw hat, took Jack, and went out, closing the door behind her. Eve, who was waiting outside in the darkness, followed her. She dared not call for help; she hoped that they might meet Paul coming back, or Porley, or the nurse. But they met no one, Paul was still at the big pine. Cicely turned down to the beach, and began to walk westward. Eve followed, moving as noiselessly as possible; but Cicely must have heard her, though she gave no sign of it, for, upon passing a point, Eve found that she had lost her, there was no one in sight. She ran forward, she called her name entreatingly; she stood by the edge of the water, fearing to see something dark floating there. She called again, she pleaded. No answer from the dusky night. She turned and ran back to the camp.

At its edge she met Paul. “You promised me that you would not leave the lodge,” he said.

“Oh, Paul, I don’t know where she is. Oh, come—hurry, hurry!”

They went together. She was so tired, so breathless, that he put his arm round her as a support.

“Oh, do not.”

“This is where you ought always to be when you are tired—in my arms.”

“Don’t let us talk. She may be dead.”

“Poor little Cicely! But you are more to me.”

His tones thrilled her, she felt faint with happiness. Suddenly came the thought: “When we find her, she will tell him! She will tell him all I said.”

“Don’t believe her; don’t believe anything she may tell you,” she entreated, passionately. A fierce feeling took possession of her; she would fight for her happiness. “Am I nothing to you?” she said, pausing; “my wish nothing? Promise me not to believe anything Cicely says against me,—anything! It’s all an hallucination.”

Paul had not paid much heed to her exclamations, he thought all women incoherent; but he perceived that she was excited, exhausted, and he laid his hand protectingly on her hair, smoothing it with tender touch. “Why should I mind what she says? It would be impossible for her to say anything that could injure you in my eyes, Eve.”

Beyond the next point they saw a light; it came from a little fire of twigs on the beach. Beside the fire was Jack; he was carefully wrapped in the shawl, the two poor little packets of clothing were arranged under him as a bed; Cicely’s straw hat was under his head, and her handkerchief covered his feet. But there was no Cicely. They went up and down the beach, and into the wood behind; again Eve looked fearfully at the water.

“She isn’t far from Jack,” said Paul. “We shall find her in a moment or two.”

Eve’s search stopped. “In a moment or two he will know!”

“Here she is!” cried Paul.

And there was Cicely, sitting close under the bank in the deepest shadow. She did not move; Paul lifted her in his arms.

“The moon is under a cloud now,” she explained, in a whispering voice; “as soon as it comes out, I shall see Ferdie over there on the opposite shore, and I shall call to him. “Don’t let that fire go out, I haven’t another match; he will need the light as a guide.”

“She thinks she is on Singleton Island!” said Eve;—“the night we got away.”

Her tone was joyous.

XXVI.

PAUL AND EVE took Cicely back to the camp. And almost immediately, before Mrs. Mile could undress her, she had fallen asleep. It was the still slumber of exhaustion, but it seemed also to be a rest; she lay without moving all that night, and the next day, and the night following. As she slumbered, gradually the tenseness of her face was relaxed, the lines grew lighter, disappeared; then slowly a pink colored her cheeks, restoring her beauty.

They all came softly in from time to time to stand beside her for a moment. The nurse was sure that the sleep was nature’s medicine, and that it was remedial; and when at last, on the second day, the dark eyes opened, it could be seen that physically the poor child was well.

She laughed with Jack, she greeted her grandfather, and talked to him; she called Porley “Dilsey,” and told her that she was much improved. “I will give you a pair of silver ear-rings, Dilsey, when we get home.” For she seemed to comprehend that

they were not at home, but on a journey of some sort. The memory of everything that had happened since Ferdie's arrival at Romney had been taken from her; she spoke of her husband as in South America. But she did not talk long on any subject. She wished to have Jack always with her, she felt a tranquil interest in her grandfather, and this was all. With the others she was distant. Her manner to Eve was exactly the manner of those first weeks after Eve's arrival at Romney. She spoke of Paul and Hollis to her grandfather as "your friends."

She gathered flowers; she talked to the Indians, who looked at her with awe; she wandered up and down the beach, singing little songs, and she spent hours afloat. Mrs. Mile, who, like the well-trained nurse that she was, had no likes or dislikes as regarded her patients, and who therefore cherished no resentment as to the manner in which she had been befooled in the forest—Mrs. Mile thoroughly enjoyed "turning out" her charge each morning in a better condition than that of the day before. Cicely went willingly to bed at eight every evening, and she did not wake until eight the next morning; when she came out of her lodge after the bath, the careful rubbing, and the nourishing breakfast which formed part of Mrs. Mile's excellent system, from the crisp edges of her hair down to her quick-stepping little feet, she looked high-spirited, high-bred, and fresh as an opening rose. Mrs. Mile would follow, bringing her straw hat, her satisfaction expressed by a tightening of her long upper lip that seemed preliminary to a smile (though the smile never came), and by the quiet pride visible in her well-poised back. When, as generally happened, Cicely went out on the lake, Mrs. Mile, after over-seeing with her own eyes the preparations for lunch, would retire to a certain bench, whence she could watch for the returning boats, and devote herself to literature for a while, always reading one book, the History of Windham, Connecticut, Windham being her native place. As she sat there, with her plain broad-cheeked face and smooth scanty hair, her stiff white cuffs, her neat boots, size number seven, neatly crossed before the short skirt of her brown gown, she made a picture of a sensible, useful person (without one

grain of what a man would call feminine attractiveness). But no one cared to have her attractive at Jupiter Light; they were grateful for her devotion to Cicely, and did not study her features. They all clustered round Cicely more constantly than ever now, this strange little companion, so fair and fresh, so happily unconscious, by God's act, of the sorrows that had crushed her.

Paul was back and forth, now at the camp for a day or two, now at Port aux Pins. One afternoon, when he was absent, Eve went to the little forest burying-ground belonging to Jupiter Light. On the way she met Cicely, accompanied by Mrs. Mile.

"Where are you going? I will go with you, I think," Cicely remarked. "It can't be so tiresome as this."

Mrs. Mile went intelligently away.

"I am very tired of her," Cicely continued; "she looks like the Mad Hatter at the tea-party: this style ten-and-six. Why are you turning off?"

"This path is prettier."

"No; I want to go where you were going first."

"Perhaps she won't mind," thought Eve.

When they came to the little enclosure, Cicely looked at it calmly. "Is this a garden?" she asked. She began to gather wild flowers outside. Eve went within; she cleared the fallen leaves from the grave of the little girl. While she was thus occupied, steps came up the path, and Hollis appeared; making a sign to Eve, he offered his arm quickly to Cicely. "Mrs. Morrison, the judge is in a great hurry to have you come back."

"Grandpa?" said Cicely. "Is he ill?"

"Yes, he is very ill indeed," replied Hollis, decidedly.

"Poor grandpa!" said Cicely. "Let us hurry."

They went back to the camp. Reaching it, he took her with rapid step to her lodge,

where the judge and Mrs. Mile were waiting. “You are ill, grandpa?” said Cicely, going to him.

“I am already better.”

“But not by any means well yet,” interposed Mrs. Mile; “he must stay here in this lodge, and you shouldn’t leave him for one moment, Mrs. Morrison.”

Porley and Jack were also present; every now and then Mrs. Mile would give Porley a peremptory sign.

Hollis and Eve stood together near the door talking in low tones. “A muss among the Indians,” Hollis explained. “Those we brought along are peaceful enough if left to themselves; in fact, they are cowards. But a dangerous fellow, a very dangerous scamp, joined them this morning on the sly, and they’ve got hold of some whiskey; I guess he brought it. I thought I’d better tell you; the cook is staying with them to keep watch, and the judge and I are on the lookout here; I don’t think there is the least real danger; still you’d better keep under cover. If Paul comes, we shall be all right.”

“Do you expect him to-day?”

“Sorter; but I’m not sure.”

A drunken shout sounded through the forest.

“An Indian spree is worse than a white man’s,” remarked Hollis. “But you ain’t afraid, I see that!” He looked at her admiringly.

“I’m only afraid of one thing in the world,” replied Eve, taking, woman-like, the comfort of a confession which no one could understand.

“Can you shoot?” Hollis went on.—“Fire a pistol?”

She blanched.

“There, now, never mind. ’Twas only a chance question.”

“No, tell me. I can shoot perfectly well; as well as a man.”

"Then I'll give you my pistol. You'll have no occasion to use it, not the least in the world; but still you'll be armed."

"Put it on the table. I can get it if necessary."

"Well, I'll go outside. I'm to stroll about where I can see the cook; that's my cue; and you can stay near the door, where you can see me; that's yours. And the judge, he has the back window, one of the guns is there. All right? Bon-sor, then." He went out.

Eve sat down by the door. The judge kept up a conversation with Cicely, and anxiously played quiet games with little Jack, until both fell asleep; Cicely fell asleep very easily now, like a child. Mrs. Mile lifted her in her strong arms and laid her on the bed, while Porley took Jack; poor Porley was terribly frightened, but rather more afraid of Mrs. Mile, on the whole, than of the savages.

By-and-by a red light flashed through the trees outside; the Indians had kindled a fire.

Twenty minutes later Hollis paused at the door. "Paul's coming, I guess; I hear paddles."

"Of course you'll go down and meet him?" said Eve.

"No, I can't leave the beat."

"I can take your place for that short time."

"Don't you show your head outside—don't you!" said Hollis, quickly.

Eve looked at him. "I shall go down to the beach myself, if you don't." Her eyes were inflexible.

All Hollis's determination left him. "The judge can take this beat, then; you can guard his window," he said, in a lifeless tone. He went down to the beach.

All of them—the judge, Mrs. Mile, and Porley, as well as Eve—could hear the paddles now; the night, save for the occasional shouts, was very still. Eve stood at

the window. “Will the Indians hear him, and go down?”

But they did not hear him. In another five minutes Paul had joined them.

Hollis, who was with him, gave a hurried explanation. “We’re all right, now that you are here,” he concluded; “we are more than a match for the drunken scamps if they should come prowling up this way. When the whiskey’s out of ’em to-morrow, we can reduce ’em to reason.”

“Why wait till to-morrow?” said Paul.

“No use getting into a fight unnecessarily.”

“I don’t propose to fight,” Paul answered.

“They’re eleven, Tennant,” said the judge; “you wouldn’t have time to shoot them all down.”

“I’m not going to shoot,” Paul responded. He went towards the door.

“Don’t go,” pleaded Eve, interposing.

He went straight on, as though he had not heard her.

“I can’t move him,” she thought, triumphantly. “I can no more move him than I could move a mountain!”

Paul was gone. Hollis followed him to the door. “We two must stay here and protect the women, you know,” said the judge, warningly.

“Why, certainly,” said Hollis; “of course,—the ladies.” He came back.

Suddenly Eve hurried out.

Paul reached the Indian quarters, and walked up to the fire. He gave a look round the circle.

The newly arrived man, the one whom Hollis had called dangerous, sprang to his feet.

Paul took him by the throat and shook the breath out of him.

When Hollis came hurrying up, the thing was done; the other Indians, abject and terrified, were helping to bind the interloper.

“The cook can watch them now,” said Paul. “I suppose there’s no supper, with all this row?”

Hollis gave a grim laugh. “At a pinch—like this, I don’t mind cooking one.”

Paul turned. And then he saw Eve behind him.

Hollis had gone to the kitchen; he did not wish to see them meet.

“You did absurdly wrong to come, Eve,” said Paul, going to her. “What possible good was it? And if there had been real danger, you would have been in the way.”

“You are trembling; are you so frightened, then?” he went on, his voice growing softer.

“I am not frightened now.”

They went towards the lodge.

“It’s a desolate life you’ve arranged for me, Eve,” he said, going back to his subject, the Indians already forgotten. “I’m not to say anything to you; I’m to have nothing; and so we’re to go on apparently forever. What is it you are planning for? I am sure I don’t know. I know you care for me, and I don’t believe that you’ll find anything sweeter than the love I could give you,—if you would let me.”

“There is nothing sweeter,” Eve answered.

“Have you given up keeping me off?” He drew her towards him. She did not resist.

In her heart rose the cry, “For one day, for one hour, let me have it, have it all! Then—”

XXVII.

ON the second day after the alarm, Paul took the Indians back to Port aux Pins, and

dismissed them, after handing the ringleader to the proper authorities; the others slunk away with their long black hair hanging down below their white man's hats, their eagle profiles, in spite of fierceness of outline, entirely unalarming. Paul then selected half a dozen Irishmen, the least dilapidated he could find (the choice lay between Indians and Irishmen), and brought them to Jupiter Light to take the place of the crestfallen aborigines. He remained there a few days to see that all went well; then he returned to Port aux Pins for a week's stay. "Come a little way up the lake to meet me," he said to Eve, as he bade her good-by; "I shall be along about four o'clock next Wednesday afternoon."

His manner still remained a little despotic. But to women of strong will despotism is attractive; when a despotism of love, it is enchanting. Eve's feeling was, "Oh, to have at last found some one who is stronger than I!"

Even now not for a moment did she bend her opinions, her decisions, to his, of her own accord; each time it was simply that she was conquered; after contesting the point as strongly as she could, how she gloried in feeling herself overridden at last! She would look at Paul with delighted eyes, and laugh in triumph. To have yielded because she loved him, would have had a certain sweetness; but to be conquered unyielding, that was a satisfaction whose intensity could go no further.

Since that walk in the darkness from the Indian quarters to Cicely's lodge, when, suddenly, she had let her love have its way, she had allowed herself to be carried along by chance events whithersoever they pleased; she had defied conscience, she had accepted the bliss that hung temptingly before her; she did not think, she only enjoyed. Once or twice she had sent forth mentally this defiance,—"If you feel as I do, then you may judge me!" To whom was this said? To Fate? To the world at large? In reality it was said to all women who in that summer of 1869 were young enough to love: "If you can feel as I do, then you may judge me." But it was only once or twice that this mood had come to her, only once or twice that she thought of

anything but Paul; his offered hand taken, her acceptance of it was at least superb in its completeness; there was no looking back, no fear, no regret; nothing but the fulness of joy.

Still sweeter was it to feel that, deeply as she loved, she was loved as deeply. Paul might be imperious, he might be negligent in explaining things, and in other small ways; but there was nothing negligent in his passion. His genius for directness, which puzzled Hollis in other matters, showed itself also here; he had little to say—that was possible—but no woman could have misunderstood the language of his eyes or of the touch of his hand; or fail to be thrilled by it. The feeling that possessed him went straight to its end, namely, Eve Bruce for his wife; the same Eve whom he had not liked at all at first; to whom he had found it difficult only a few weeks before to write a short letter. This inconsistency did not trouble him; love had arrived, had descended upon him in some way, he knew not how, had taken possession of him by force and forever—he recognized that, and did not contest it. Women are only women: this had been one of the settled convictions in the depths of his mind, and it was a conviction not much changed even now; yet this same Paul, with his mediæval creed, made a lover much more invincible than a hundred, a thousand other men, who would have said, perhaps, that they revered women more. "Revered?" Paul would have answered, "I don't revere Eve, I love her!"

Whatever name he gave it, she knew that she held the joy of his life in her hands, that he would come to her for this—had already come; and that it always would be so. This was happiness enough for her.

This happiness had existed but ten days. But these days had seemed like months of joy, she had lived each moment so fully. "Sejed, Prince of Ethiopia, vowed to have three days of uninterrupted happiness—" she might have remembered the old fable and its ending. But she remembered nothing, she scorned to remember; let the unhappy, the unloved, think of the past; she would drink in all the sunshine of the

present, she would live, live!

“Row a little way up the lake to meet me,” Paul had said. At half-past three of the afternoon he had indicated, she went to the beach; one of the Irishmen, under her direction, began to push down a canoe. The open way in which she did this—in which she had done everything since that night—was in itself an effectual disguise; no one thought it remarkable that she should be going to meet Paul. As she was about to take her place in the canoe, Hollis appeared.

“Going far? We don’t know much about that Paddy,” he said, in an undertone.

“Only to meet Paul.”

“If he’s late, you may have to go a good way.”

“He won’t be late.”

“Well, he may be,” answered Hollis, patiently. “I guess I’ll take you, if you’ll let me; and then, when we meet, I’ll come back with his man in the other canoe.”

“Very well,” Eve responded. She did not comment upon the terms of his offer, she did not care what he thought. She took her place, and he paddled westward.

It was a beautiful afternoon; a slight coolness, which made itself felt through the sunshine, showed that the short Northern summer was approaching its end. As she sat with her back to the prow, she was obliged to turn her head to look for the other canoe; and this she did many times. After one of these quests, she saw that Hollis’s eyes were upon her.

“Is there any change in me?” she asked, laughing.

“Rather!”

“What is it?”

But poor Hollis did not know how to say, “You are so much more beautiful.”

“It’s my white dress,” Eve suggested, in a somewhat troubled voice. “I had it made in Port aux Pins. It’s only piqué.” She smoothed the folds of the skirt for a moment,

doubtfully.

“I guess white favors you,” answered Hollis, with what he would have called a festive wave of his hand.

Her mood had now changed. “It’s no matter, I’m not afraid!” She was speaking her thoughts aloud, sure that he would not understand. But he did understand.

The other canoe came into sight after a while, shooting round a point; Eve waved her handkerchief in answer to Paul’s hail; the two boats met.

“Mr. Hollis knows that you are to take me back,” said Eve, as eagerly as a child.

Paul glanced at Hollis. But the other man bore the look bravely. “Proud to be of service,” he answered, waving his hand again, with two fingers extended lightly. He changed places with Paul; Paul and Eve, in their canoe, glided away.

It was at this moment that Cicely, who had been asleep, opened her eyes. Her lodge was quiet; Mrs. Mile was reading near the window, her seat carefully placed so that the light should fall over her left shoulder upon the page.

Cicely gazed at her for some time; then she jumped from the couch with a quick bound. “It’s impossible to lie here another instant and see that History of Windham! The next thing, you’ll be proposing to read it aloud to me; you look exactly like a woman who loves to read aloud.” She began to put on her shoes.

“You are going for a walk? I shall be glad to go too,” answered Mrs. Mile promptly, putting a marker in her book, and rising.

“No,” responded Cicely; “I can’t have those boots of yours pounding along beside me to-day, Priscilla Jane. Impossible.”

“Well, I do declare!” said Mrs. Mile, reduced in her surprise to the language of her youth. “They can’t pound much, Mrs. Morrison, in the sand; and there’s nothing but sand here.”

“They grind it down!” answered Cicely. “You can call grandpa, if you don’t want

me to go alone; but come with me to-day you shall not, you clean, broad-faced, turn-out-your-toes, do-your-duty old relict of Abner Whittredge Mile." She looked at Mrs. Mile consideringly as she said this, bringing out each word in a soft, clear tone.

The judge was listlessly roving about the beach. Mrs. Mile gave him Cicely's request. "She is saying very odd things to-day, sir," she added, impersonally.

The judge, alarmed, hurried to the lodge; Mrs. Mile could not keep up with him.

"Priscilla Jane is short-winded, isn't she?" remarked Cicely, at the lodge door, as he joined her. "Whenever she comes uphill, she always stops, and pretends to admire the view, while she pants, 'What a beautiful scene! What a privilege to see it!'"

The judge grinned; he too had heard Mrs. Mile speak of "privileges."

"Come for a walk, grandpa," Cicely went on. She took his arm and they went away together, followed by the careful eyes of the nurse, who had paused at the top of the ascent.

"This is a ruse, grandpa," Cicely said, after a while. "I wanted to take a walk alone, and she wouldn't let me; but you will."

"Why alone, my child?"

"Because I'm always being watched; I'm just like a person in a cell, don't you know, with one of those little windows cut in the door, through which the sentinel outside can always look in; I am never alone."

"It must be dreadful," the judge answered, with conviction.

"Wait till you have seen Priscilla Jane in her night-gown," said Cicely, with equal conclusiveness.

"Heaven forbid!" said the judge, with a shrill little chuckle. Then he turned and looked at her; she seemed so much like her old self.

"You will let me go, grandpa?" She put up her face and kissed him.

“If you will promise to come back soon.”

“Of course I will.”

He let her go on alone. She looked back and smiled once or twice; then he lost sight of her; he returned to the beach by a roundabout way, in order to deceive Priscilla Jane; he was almost as much pleased as Cicely to outwit her.

Cicely went on through the forest; she walked slowly, not stopping to gather flowers as usual. After a while her vague glance rested upon two figures in the distance. She stopped, and as, by chance, she was standing close beside the trunk of a large tree, her own person was concealed. The two figures were coming in her direction, they drew nearer, they paused; and then there followed a picture as old as Paris and Helen, as old as Tristram and Isolde: a lover taking in his arms the woman he adores. And it was Paul Tennant who was the lover; it was Eve who looked up at him with all her heart in her eyes.

A shock passed over Cicely, the expression of her face changed rapidly as her gaze remained fixed upon Eve: first, surprise; then a strange quick anger; then perplexity. She left her place, and went rapidly forward.

Eve saw her first, she drew herself away from Paul; but immediately she came back to him, laying her hand on his shoulder as if to hold him, to keep him by her side.

“Paul,” said Cicely, still looking at Eve, “something has come to me; Eve told me that she did a dreadful thing.” And now she transferred her gaze to Paul, looking at him with earnestness, as if appealing to him to lighten her perplexity.

“Yes, dear; let us go back to the camp,” said Paul, soothingly.

“Wait till I have told you all. She came to me, and asked—I don’t know where it was exactly?” And now she looked at Eve, inquiringly.

Eve’s eyes met hers, and the deep antagonism of the expression roused the dulled intelligence. “How you do hate me, Eve! It’s because you love Paul. I don’t see how

Paul can like you, when you were always so hard to Ferdie; for from the first she was hard to him, Paul; from the very first. I remember—“

Eve, terrified, turned away, thus releasing Cicely from the spell of her menacing glance.

Cicely paused; and then went back to her former narrative confusedly, speaking with interruptions, with pauses. “She came to me, Paul, and she asked, ‘Cicely, do you know how he died?’ And I said, ‘Yes; there were two negroes.’ And she answered me, ‘No; there were no negroes—’”

“Dreams, Cicely,” said Paul, kindly. “Every one has dreams like that.”

“No. I have a great many dreams, but this was not one of them,” responded Cicely. “Wait; it will come to me.”

“Take her back to the camp; carry her,” said Eve, in a sharp voice.

“Oh, she’ll come without that,” Paul answered, smiling at the peremptory tone.

“You go first, then. I will bring her.”

“Don’t leave me alone with Eve,” pleaded Cicely, shrinking close to Paul.

“Take her back,” said Eve. And her voice expressed such acute suffering that Paul did his best to content her.

“Come,” he said, gently, taking Cicely’s hand.

“A moment,” answered Cicely, putting her other hand on Paul’s arm, as if to hold his attention. “And then she said: ‘Don’t you remember that we escaped through the woods to the north point, and that you tried to push off the boat, and couldn’t. Don’t you remember that gleam of the candle down the dark road?’”

Eve made an involuntary movement.

“I wonder what candle she could have been thinking of!” pursued Cicely, in a musing voice. “There are a great many candles in the Catholic churches, that I know.”

Eve looked across at Paul with triumph in her eyes.

“And she said that a baby climbed up by one of the seats,” Cicely went on. “And that this man—I don’t know who he was, exactly—made a dash forward—” Here she lost the thread, and stopped. Then she began again: “She took me away ever so far—we went in a steamboat; and Ferdie died all alone! You can’t like her for that, Paul; you can’t!” Her face altered. “Why don’t I see him over there on the other beach?” she asked, quickly.

“You see?” said Eve, with trembling lips.

“Yes,” answered Paul, watching the quivering motion. “We haven’t had our walk, Eve; remember that.”

“I can come out again. After we have got her back.”

Cicely had ceased speaking. She turned and searched Eve’s face with eyes that dwelt and lingered. “How happy you look, Eve! And yet I am sure you have no right to be happy, I am sure there is some reason—The trouble is that I can’t remember what it is! Perhaps it will come to me yet,” she added, threateningly.

Paul, drew her away; he took her back to the camp.

That evening, Eve came to him on the beach.

“Do you love me? Do you love me the same as ever?” she said.

He could scarcely hear her.

“Do you think I have had time to change since afternoon?” he asked, laughing.

And then life came back to the woman by his side, came in the red that flushed her cheeks and her white throat, in her revived breath.

“Paul,” she said, after a while, “send Cicely home; send her home with her grandfather, she can travel now without danger.”

“I can’t desert Cicely,” said Paul, surprised.

“It wouldn’t be desertion; you can always help her. And she would be much happier

there than here."

"She's not going to be very happy anywhere, I am afraid."

"The judge would be happier, too," said Eve, shifting her ground.

"I dare say. Poor old man!"

"A winter in Port aux Pins would kill him," Eve continued.

"I intended to take them south before the real winter, the deep snow."

"Mrs. Mile could go now. And—and perhaps Mr. Hollis."

"Kit? What could Kit do down there?"

"Marry Miss Sabrina," suggested Eve, with a sudden burst of wild laughter, in which Paul joined.

"They are all to go, are they? But you and I are not to go; is that your plan?" he went on.

"Yes."

He kissed her. "Paul Tennant and his wife will take Cicely south themselves," he said, stroking her hair caressingly. "It's always braided so closely, Eve; how long is it when down?"

But she did not hear these whispered words; she drew herself away from him with passionate strength. "No, she must go with some one else; she can go with any one you please; we can have two nurses, instead of one. But you—you must not go; you must stay with me."

"Why, Eve, I hardly know you! Why do you feel so about poor little Cicely? Why strike a person who's down?"

"Oh, yes—down; that is what you all say. Yet she has had everything, even if she has lost it now; and some people go through all their lives without one single thing they really care for. She shall not rob me of this, I will not let her. I defy her; I defy her!"

"She shall go back to Romney," said Paul. What these disagreements between the two women were about, he did not know. His idea was that he would marry Eve as soon as possible—within the next ten days; and then, after they were married, he would tell her that it was best that they should take Cicely south themselves. She would see the good sense of his decision, she would not dispute his judgment when once she was his wife; she could not have any real dislike for poor little Cicely, that was impossible.

Eve came back to him humbly enough. "I am afraid you do not like my interfering with your plans?" she said.

"You may interfere as much as you like," answered Paul, smiling.

XXVIII.

THE next day Paul started at dawn for Port aux Pins, he wished to make the house ready for his wife; he had not much money, but there was one room in the plain cottage which should be beautiful. No suspicion came to him that there would be any difficulty in making it beautiful; his idea was simply that it was a matter of new furniture.

He reached Port aux Pins at night, and let himself into his cottage with his key; lighting a candle, he went to his room. He had never been dissatisfied with this simple apartment, he was not dissatisfied now; there was a good closet, where he could hang up his clothes; there was a broad shelf, where he could put his hand in the dark upon anything which he might want; there was his iron bedstead, and there was his white-pine bureau; two wooden chairs; a wash-hand stand, with a large bowl; a huge tin pail for water, a flat bath-tub in position on the floor, and plenty of towels and sponges—what could man want more?

But a woman would want more; and he gave a little laugh, which had a thrill in it, as he thought of Eve standing there, and looking about her at his plain masculine

arrangements. The bare floor would not please her, perhaps; he must order a carpet. "Turkey," he thought, vaguely; he had heard the word, and supposed that it signified something very light in color, with a great many brilliant roses. "Perhaps there ought to be a few more little things," he said to himself, doubtfully. Then, after another moment's survey: "But I needn't be disturbed, she'll soon fill it full of tottlish little tables and dimity; she'll flounce everything with white muslin, and tie everything with blue ribbons; she'll overflow into the next room too, this won't be enough for her. Perhaps I'd better throw the two into one, with a big fireplace—I know she likes big fireplaces; if it's as large as that, I sha'n't be suffocated, even with all her muslin." And, with another fond laugh, he turned in.

The morning after Paul's departure, Eve did not go near Cicely; she asked Mrs. Mile, in a tone which even that unimaginative woman found haughty, how Mrs. Morrison was. (In reality the haughtiness hid a trembling fear.)

"She seems better, Miss Bruce, as regards her physical state. Truth compels me to add, however, that she says extremely irrational things."

"What things?" asked Eve, with a pang of dread. For the things which Mrs. Mile would call irrational might indicate that Cicely was herself again, Mrs. Mile's idea of the rational being always the commonplace.

"When she first woke, ma'am, she said, 'Oh, what a splendid wind!—how it does blow! I must go out and run and run. Can you run, Priscilla Jane?'—when my name, ma'am, is Priscilla Ann. Seeing that she was so lively, I began to tell her a dream which I had had. She interrupted me: 'Dreams are the reflections of our thoughts by day, Priscilla Jane. I know your thoughts by day; they are wearing. I don't want repetitions of them by night, I should be ground to powder.' Now, ma'am, could anything be more irrational?"

"She is herself again!" thought Eve. She went off into the forest, and did not return until the noon meal was over. Going to the kitchen, she ate some bread, she was

fond of dry bread; coming back after this frugal repast, she still avoided Cicely's lodge, she went down to the beach. Here her restlessness ceased for the moment; she sat looking over the water, her eyes not seeing it, seeing only Paul. After half an hour, Hollis, with simulated carelessness, passed that way and stopped. As soon as he saw her face he said to himself, "They are to be married immediately!"

"We sha'n't be staying much longer at Jupiter Light, I guess," he said aloud, in a jocular tone.

"No," Eve answered. "The summer is really over," she added, as if in explanation.

"Don't look much like it to-day."

She made no reply.

"Paul went back to Potterpins rather in a hurry, didn't he?" pursued Hollis, playing with his misery.

"Yes.—He has a good deal to do," she continued. If he could not resist playing with his misery, neither could she help exulting in her happiness, parading it for her own joy in spoken words; it made it more real.

"Good deal to do? He didn't tell me about it; perhaps I could have helped him," Hollis went on awkwardly, but looking at her with all his heart in his eyes—his poor, hungry, unsatisfied old heart.

"You could be of use to us," said Eve, suddenly; ("Us!" thought Hollis.)—"the very greatest, Mr. Hollis. If you would go south with Judge Abercrombie and Mrs. Morrison it would be everything. They will probably go in a week or ten days, and Mrs. Mile accompanies them; but if you could go too, it would be much safer."

"And you to stay in Port aux Pins with Paul," thought Hollis. "I don't grudge it to you, Evie, God knows I don't—may you be very happy, sweet one! But I shall have to get out of this all the same. I'm ashamed of myself, old fellow that I am, but I can't stand it, I can't! I shall have to clear out. I'll go west."

Eve, meanwhile, was waiting for his reply. “Of course, Miss Bruce,” he answered aloud, “should like nothing better than a little run down South. Why, the old judge and me, we’ll make a regular spree of it!” And he slapped his leg in confirmation.

Eve gave him a bright smile by way of thanks. But she was too much absorbed to talk long with anybody, and presently she left him, taking a path through the woods.

In fifteen minutes her restlessness brought her back again. She stopped at the edge of the camp; Porley, near by, was making “houses”—that is, squares and pyramids of the little pebbles of the beach, which Master Jack demolished when completed, with the air of a conqueror. “Porley, go and ask the nurse how Mrs. Morrison is now;—whether she is more quiet.”

“Mis’ Morrison, she’s ebber so much weller to-day,” volunteered Porley. “When she ain’t so quiet, Miss Bruce—droppin’ off inter naps all de time—den she’s weller.”

“Do as I tell you,” said Eve.

The girl went off.

“House,” demanded Jack.

Eve took him on her shoulder instead.

“Sing to Jacky; poor, poor Jacky!” said the child, gleefully.

“Mis’ Mile, she say Mis’ Morrison done gone ter sleep dish yere minute,” reported Porley, with a crestfallen air, returning.

Eve’s spirits rose. “Oh, Jack, naughty boy!” She laughed convulsively, lifting up her shoulder, as the child tried to insert one of his pebbles under her linen collar, selecting a particularly ticklish spot on her throat for the purpose.—“Do you want to go out on the lake?”

Jack dropped his pebble; he was always wild with delight at the prospect of a voyage. Porley picked up his straw hat, and brought his little coat, in case the air should grow cool; in ten minutes they were afloat. Eve turned the canoe down the

lake, rowing eastward.

After a voyage of twenty minutes, she headed the boat shoreward and landed; the woods hereabout had a gray-green look which tempted her; they brought back the memory of that first walk with Paul. “See to Jack,” she said to Porley briefly, lifting the child safely to the beach. “I shall be back soon.” Entering the wood, she walked on at random, keeping within sight of the water.

She was lost in a day-dream, one of those day-dreams which come sometimes to certain temperaments with such vividness that the real world disappears; she was with Paul, she was looking at him, his arm was round her, their future life together unrolled itself before her day by day, hour by hour, in all its details; in her happiness, all remembrance of anything else vanished away.

How long this state lasted she never knew. At a certain point a distant cry crossed the still ecstasy; but it reached her vaguely, it did not bring her back. A second summons was more distinct; but it seemed an impertinence which it was not necessary to answer. A third time came the sound, and now there were syllables: “Miss E-eve! Miss E-eve!” Then, a moment later, “Oh, Ba-by!” She recognized the shrillness of a negro woman’s voice—it was Porley. “Baby?” That could only mean Jack! The trance was over, she felt as if a whip had been brought suddenly down upon her shoulders. She rushed to the lake, and from there along the beach towards the spot where she had left the child.

The screams grew louder. A bend hid that part of the beach from her view; would she never reach the end of that bend! She was possessed by a great fear. “Oh, don’t let anything happen to baby!” She could not have told herself to whom she was appealing.

At last she reached the curve, she saw what had happened: the child, alone in the canoe, had been carried out to deep water.

Porley, frantic with grief, had waded out as far as she could; she was standing with

the water up to her chin, sobbing aloud. Eve's flushed face turned white. She beckoned to Porley to come to her. Then she forced herself to stand motionless, in order to recover her breath. As Porley came up, "Stop crying!" she commanded. "We must not frighten him. Go back under the trees where he cannot see you, and sit there quietly; don't speak."

When she was left alone, she went up the beach until she was on a line with the canoe; the boat moved waywardly and slowly, but it was being carried all the time still farther from the shore. "Jacky, are you having a good time out there?" she called, with a smiling face, as though the escapade had been his own, and he had cleverly outwitted them.

There was not a grain of the coward in the child. "Ess," he called back, triumphantly. He was sitting on a folded shawl in the bottom of the canoe, holding on with his hands to the sides; his eyes came just above its edge.

"Aunty Eve is going to get a boat and come out after you," Eve went on; "then we'll go fishing. But Jack must sit perfectly still, or else she won't come; perfectly still. Does Jacky hear?"

"Ess," called Jack again.

"If you are tired, put your head down and go to sleep. Aunty Eve will come, soon if you are still; not if you move about."

"I's still," called Jack, in a high key.

"If there was only a man here!—a man could swim out and bring the boat in," she thought, wringing her hands, and then stopping lest Jack should see the motion. She did not allow herself to think—"If Paul were only here!" It was on Paul's account, to be able to think of him by herself, to dream of their daily life together—it was for this that she had left her brother's child on that solitary beach, with only a careless negro girl to watch over him! But there was no man near, and there was no second boat. The canoe was already visibly farther away; little Jack's eyes, looking at her,

were becoming indistinct, she could see only the outline of his head and the yellow of his curls. She waved her hand to him and sang, clearly and gayly:

"Row the boat, row the boat, up to the strand; Before our door there is dry land—"

And Jack answered with a distant "Ess." Then he tried to go on with it. "Who pums idder, all booted an' spur-r-rd," he chanted, straining his little lungs to the utmost, so that his auntie should hear him.

The tears poured down Eve's cheeks as she heard the baby voice; she knew he could not see them. For an instant, she thought of trying to swim out to him herself. "I can swim. It isn't very far." She began to unbutton her boots. But should she have the strength to bring him in, either in the canoe or in her arms? And if she should sink, there would be no one to save Jack. She rebuttoned her boots and ran to Porley. "Go to the beach, and walk up and down where Jack can see you. Call to him once in a while, but not too often; call gayly, don't let him see that you are frightened; if he thinks you are frightened, he will become frightened himself and move about; then he will upset the boat. Do you understand what I mean? I am going back to the camp for another canoe. Keep him in sight; and try—do try to be sensible."

She was off. Without much hope she began her race. Before she passed beyond hearing, Porley's voice came to her: "Hi-yi, Jack! Yo're kyar'in on now, ain't yer? Splendid fun, sho! Wisht I was 'long!" And then followed a high chuckle, which Porley intended as a laugh. At least the girl had understood.

Eve could run very swiftly; her light figure, with its long step, made running easy to her. Yet each minute was now so precious that instinctively she used every precaution: she let her arms hang lifelessly, so that no energy should be spent in poising them; she kept her lips apart, and her eyes fixed on the beach about two yards in advance of her, so that she could select as she ran the best places for her feet, and avoid the loose stones. Her slender feet, too (undressed they were models for a sculptor), aided her by their elasticity; she wore a light boot, longer than her

foot, and the silken web of her stocking was longer, so that her step was never cramped. But she could not run as rapidly as her canoe had skimmed the water under her strong strokes when it had brought her here; and that voyage had lasted twenty minutes; she remembered this with dread. For a while she ran rapidly—too rapidly; then, feeling that her breath was labored, she forced herself to slacken her pace and make it more regular; as much as possible like a machine. Thus she ran on. Once she was obliged to stop. Then she fell into a long swinging step, throwing her body forward a little from right to left as her weight fell now upon one foot, now upon the other, and this change was such a relief that she felt as if she could run the remaining distance with comparative ease. But before she reached the camp, she had come to the end of all her arrangements and experiments; she was desperate, panting.

"If I can only keep on until they see me!"

The camp had an unusually quiet look; so far as her eyes, injected with red by the effort she had made, could see, there were no moving figures anywhere; no one sitting on the benches; no one on the beach. Where were all the people?—what could have become of them? Hollis and the judge?—even the cook and the Irishmen? Nothing stirred; it seemed to her as if the very leaves on the trees and the waters of the lake had been struck by an unnatural calm. She came to the first stakes, where the nets were sometimes spread out. The nets were not there now. Then she came to the cistern—a sunken cask to which water was brought from an ice-cold spring; still no sound. Then the wood-pile; the Irishmen had evidently been adding to it that day, for an axe remained in a severed trunk; but no one was there. Though she had kept up her pace without break as she ran past these familiar objects, there was now a singing in her ears, and she could scarcely see, everything being rimmed by the hot, red blur which seemed to exhale from her own eyes. She reached the line of lodges at last; leaving the beach, and going through the wood, she went straight to Cicely's door. It was closed. She opened it. "Cicely!" she said, or rather her lips formed the name without a sound.

"What is the matter? Where is Jack?" cried Cicely, springing up as soon as she saw Eve's face.

They met, grasping each other's hands.

"Where is he? What have you done with him?" Cicely repeated, holding Eve with a grasp of iron.

Eve could not talk. But she felt the agony in the mother's cry. "Safe," she articulated.

Cicely relaxed her hold. Eve sank to her knees; thence to the floor.

Cicely seemed to understand; she brought a pillow with business-like swiftness, and placed it under Eve's head; then she waited. Eve's eyes were closed; her throat and chest labored so, as she lay with her head thrown back, that Cicely bent down and quickly took out the little arrow-pin, and unbuttoned the top buttons of her dress. This relieved Eve; the convulsive panting grew quiet.

But with her first long breath she was on her feet again. "Come!" she said. She opened the door and left the lodge, hurrying down to the beach; thence she ran westward along the shore to the point where the canoes were kept. Cicely ran by her side without speaking; they had no need of words.

Reaching the boats, Eve began to push one of them towards the water. "Call Mr. Hollis;—go up to the edge of the wood and call," she said to Cicely, briefly.

"Gone fishing," Cicely responded, helping to push the boat on the other side.

At this moment some one appeared—one of the Irishmen.

"Take him and follow in that other canoe," said Eve. "We want all the help we can get."

As they pushed off rapidly—three minutes had not passed since they left the lodge—Priscilla Mile came hurrying down to the shore; she had been taking her daily exercise—a brisk walk of half an hour, timed by her watch. "Mrs. Morrison,

Mrs. Morrison, where are you going? Take me with you."

Cicely did not even look at her. "Go on," she said to the man.

Eve was paddling rapidly; the second canoe followed hers.

When Mrs. Mile found that the two boats kept on their course, she went back to the lodge, put on her bonnet and shawl, and set off down the beach in the direction in which they were going, walking with steady steps, the shawl compactly pinned with two strong shawl-pins representing beetles.

As soon as they were fairly afloat, Cicely called: "Where is Jack? Tell me about it."

"Presently," answered Eve, without turning her head.

"No. Now!" said the mother, peremptorily.

"He is out on the lake, in the canoe."

"Alone?"

"Yes."

"Oh! and it's getting towards night! Row faster; what is the matter with you?" (This to the Irishman.) "Eve, wait; how far out is he?"

"It's very calm," Eve answered.

"But in the dark we can never find him," wailed the mother, in a broken voice.

Eve made swift, tireless strokes. The Irishman could not keep up with her.

It was growing towards night, as Cicely had said; the days were shorter now; clouds were gathering too, though the air and water remained strangely still; the night would be dark.

"Your arms are like willow twigs, you have no strength," said Cicely to the Irishman. "Hurry!"

The man had plenty of strength, and was exerting every atom of it. Still Eve kept ahead of him. "Oh, Jack!" she said to herself, "let me be in time!" It was her brother

to whom she was appealing.

She reached the spot where she had left Porley; but there was no Porley there. Without stopping, she paddled on eastward; Cicely's canoe was now some distance behind. Fifteen minutes more and she saw Porley, she rowed in rapidly. "Where is he?"

"Dair!" answered Porley, pointing over the darkening water with a gesture that was tragic in its despair.

At first Eve saw nothing; then she distinguished a black speck, she pointed towards it with her paddle.

"Yass'm, dat's him. I 'ain't nebber take my yies off 'em," said the girl, crying.

"Tell Mrs. Morrison. She's coming," said Eve. She turned her boat and paddled out rapidly towards the speck.

"If I only had matches—why didn't I bring some? It will be dark soon. But it's so calm that nothing can have happened to him; he will be asleep." In spite of her pretended certainty, however, dread held her heart as in a vise. "I won't think—only row." She tried to keep her mind a blank, resorting to the device of counting her strokes with great interest. On the light craft sped, with the peculiar skimming motion of the Indian canoe, as if it were gliding on the surface of the water. The twilight grew deeper.

There came a little gust, lightning showed itself for an instant in the bank of clouds across the southern sky. "There is going to be a storm." She stopped; the other boat, which had been following her swiftly, came up.

"Have you ever been out in a canoe in a storm?" she called to the Irishman, keeping her own boat well away from Cicely's.

"No, mum."

"Take Mrs. Morrison back to shore, then, as fast as you can."

“Go on!” commanded Cicely, with flashing eyes.

There came another gust. The man, perplexed by the contrary orders, made wrong strokes; the boat careened, then righted itself.

“Take her back,” called Eve, starting onward again.

“Follow that canoe!” said Cicely.

The man tried to obey Cicely; to intensify his obedience he stood up and paddled with his back bent. There came another flurry of wind; his boat careened again, and he lost his balance, he gave a yell. For a moment Eve thought that he had gone overboard. But he had only crouched. “Go back—while you can,” she called, warningly.

And this time he obeyed her.

“Eve, take me with you—take me!” cried Cicely, in a tone that went to the heart.

“We needn’t both of us die,” Eve answered, calling back for the last time.

As she went forward on her course, lightning began to show itself frequently in pallid forks on the dark cloud-bank. “If only there’s no gale!” she thought. Through these minutes she had been able to distinguish what she supposed was the baby’s canoe; but now she lost it. She rowed on at random; then she began to call. Nothing answered. The lightning grew brighter, and she blessed the flashes; they would show her, perhaps, what she was in search of; with every gleam she scanned the lake in a different direction. But she saw nothing. She called again: “Jacky! Jack-y!” A great bird flew by, close over her head, and startled her; its wings made a rushing sound. “Jack-y! Jack-y!” She rowed on, calling loudly.

It was now perfectly dark. Presently an unusually brilliant gleam revealed for an instant a dark object on her left. She rowed towards it. “Jacky, speak to Aunty Eve. Aunty Eve is close beside you.” She put her whole heart into this cry; then she waited, breathless.

From a distance came a sound, the sweetest which Eve Bruce had ever heard. “Ess,” said Jack’s brave little voice.

She tried to row towards it. Before she could reach the spot a wind coming from the south drove her canoe back. “Jacky, Jacky, say yes again.”

“Ess,” said the voice, fainter, and farther away.

The wind was stronger now, and it began to make a noise too, as it crossed the lake.

“Jacky, Jacky, you must answer me.”

“Ess.”

A crashing peal of thunder broke over their heads; when it had ceased, she could hear the poor little lad crying. His boat must have drifted, for his voice came from a new direction.

“I am coming directly to you, Jacky,” she called, altering her course rapidly.

The thunder began again, and filled her ears. When it ceased, all was still.

“Jacky! Jacky!”

No answer.

And now there came another cry: “Eve, where are you? Wait for me.” It was Cicely.

“This way,” called Eve.

She never dreamed that Cicely was alone; she supposed that the Irishman had taken heart of grace and ventured back. But presently a canoe touched hers, and there in the night she saw Cicely all alone, like a phantom. “Baby?” demanded Cicely, holding the edge of Eve’s boat.

“I heard him only a moment ago,” answered Eve, as excited as herself. “Jacky! Jacky!”

No reply.

Then Cicely’s voice sounded forth clearly: “It’s mamma, Jack. Speak to mamma.”

“Mam-ma!” came the answer. A distant sound, but full of joy.

Eve put her paddle in the water again. “Wait,” said Cicely. And she stepped from her canoe into Eve’s, performing the difficult feat without hesitation or tremor. The other canoe was abandoned, and Eve was off with a strong stroke.

“Call,” she said.

Cicely called, and Jack answered.

“Call again.”

“His poor little throat will be so tired!” said Cicely, her own voice trembling.

“We must,” said Eve.

“Jack-y!”

“Ess.”

On they went, never reaching him, though he answered four times; for, in spite of the intensity of Eve’s exertion, the sound constantly changed its direction. Cicely called to her child, she sang to him; she even laughed. “How slow you are!” she said to Eve. “Don’t stop.”

“I stopped to listen.”

But presently they were both listening in vain. Jack’s voice had ceased.

The wind now blew not in gusts, but steadily. Eve still rowed with all her strength, in reality at random, though; with each new flash of lightning she took a new direction, so that her course resembled the spokes of a wheel.

“He has of course fallen asleep,” said Cicely. “He is always so good about going to bed.”

Their canoe now rose and fell perceptibly; the tranquillity of the lake was broken, it was no longer gray glass, nor a black floor; first there was a swell; then little waves showed themselves; by-and-by these waves had crests. Eve, kneeling on the bottom, exerted all her intelligence to keep the boat in the right position.

“These canoes never tip over when left alone; it’s only when people try to guide them,” said Cicely, confidently. “Now Jack’s just like no one; he’s so very light, you know.”

Words were becoming difficult, their canoe rose on the crest of one wave, then plunged down into the hollow behind it; then rose on the next. A light flared out on their left; it was low down, seeming below their own level.

“They have kindled—a fire—on the beach,” called Eve. She was obliged to call now, though Cicely was so near.

“Yes. Porley,” Cicely answered.

They were not so far out as they had thought; the light of the fire showed that. Perhaps they had been going round in a circle.

Eve was now letting the boat drift; Jack’s canoe was drifting, the same currents and wind might take theirs in the same direction; it was not very long since they had heard his last cry, he could not be far away. The lightning had begun to come in great sheets of white light; these were blinding, but if one could bear to look, they lit up the surface of the water for an instant with extraordinary distinctness. Cicely, from her babyhood so impressionable to lightning, let its glare sweep over her unmoved; but her beautiful eyes were near-sighted, she could not see far. Eve, on the contrary, had strong eyesight, and after what seemed a long time (it was five minutes), she distinguished a dark, low outline very near at hand; she sent the boat in that direction with all her might.

“It’s Jack!” she called to Cicely.

Cicely, holding on to the sides of the canoe, kept her head turned, peering forward with her unseeing eyes into the alternating darkness and dazzling glare. The flashes were so near sometimes that it seemed as if they would sweep across them, touch them, and shrivel them up.

Now they approached the other boat; they came up to it on the crest of a wave.

Cicely took hold of its edge, and the two boats went down into the hollow behind together.

“Sit—in the centre—as much—as you can,” Eve shouted. Then, being the taller, she rose, and in the next flash looked within. There lay Jack in the bottom, probably unconscious, a still little figure with a white face.

“He’s there,” she called, triumphantly. And then they went up on the next wave together, and down again.

“Slip—your hand—along—to the end,” Eve called.

Cicely obeyed.

The second canoe, which all her strength had scarcely been able to hold alongside, now accompanied them more easily, towed by its stern. If it could have followed them instead of accompanying them, that would have been easier still; but Cicely’s seat was at the bow, and Eve did not dare to risk a change of places; with the boat in tow, she paddled towards the shore as well as she could, guided by the fire, which was large and bright, poor Porley, owing to whose carelessness in the second place the accident had occurred (Eve’s in the first place), expending in the collecting of dry fuel all the energy of her repentance and her grief. They were not very far out, but progress was difficult; Eve was not an expert; she did not know how to allow for the opposition, the dead weight, of the second canoe attached to the bow of her own; every now and then, owing to her lack of skill, the wind would strike it, and drive it from her so strongly that it seemed as if the connecting link, Cicely’s little arm, would be drawn from its socket. The red glow of the fire looked human and home-like to these wanderers,—should they ever reach it? The waves grew more formidable as they approached the beach,—they were like breakers; Eve did her best, yet their progress seemed snail-like. At length, when they were so far in that she could distinguish the figures of Porley and the Irishman outlined against the fire, there came a breaker which struck the second canoe full on its side, filling it with

water. Cicely gave a wild shriek of rage as it was forced from her grasp. At the same instant the aunt, leaving the paddle behind her, sprang into the sinking craft, and, seizing the child, went down with him into the dark lake.

She came up again, grasping the side of the boat; with one arm she lifted the boy, and gave him to his mother, an enormous effort, as his little body was rigid and heavy—like death.

And then they got ashore, they hardly knew how, though it took a long time, Eve clinging to the stern and Cicely paddling, her child at her feet; the Irishman came to their assistance as soon as he could, the wind drove them towards the beach; Porley helped when it came to the landing. In reality they were blown ashore.

Jack was restored. As Eve ceased her rubbing—she had worked over him for twenty minutes—and gave him alive and warm again to his mother's arms, Cicely kissed her cheek. "Bend down your head, Eve; I want to tell you that I forgive you everything. There is nothing the matter with me now; I understand and know—all; yet I forgive you,—because you have saved my child."

XXIX.

PRISCILLA MILE, close-reefed as to her skirts, and walking solidly, reached the shipwrecked party soon after nine o'clock; as she came by the beach, the brilliant light of Porley's fire guided her, as it had guided Cicely and Eve out on the dark lake. Priscilla asked no questions, her keen eyes took in immediately Eve's wet clothes and Jack's no clothes, the child being wrapped merely in a shawl. She said to the Irishman, who was wet also: "Patrick Carty, you go back to the camp, you run just as fast as you can split; tell them what's happened, and let them send for us as soon as they can. 'Taint going to rain much, I guess."

The man hesitated.

"Well, what are you about?" asked Mrs. Mile, walking up to him threateningly, her

beetle shawl-pins shining in the fire-light.

The Irishman, who had been in a confused state ever since Cicely had forced his canoe into the water again after he had hauled it up on the beach, and had beaten his hands off fiercely with the oar when he had tried to stop her progress—a little creature like that turning suddenly so strong—answered, hurriedly, “It’s goin’ I am; ye can see it yersilf!” and was off like a shot. “Wan attack from a fimmale will do!” was his thought.

The nurse then effected a change of dress; with the aid of part of her own clothing and part of Cicely’s and Porley’s, she got Eve and Jack into dry garments of some sort, Jack being wrapped in a flannel petticoat. The wind had grown much more violent, but the strange atmospheric conditions had passed away; the lightning had ceased. It was now an ordinary gale, the waves dashed over the beach, and the wind drove by with a shriek; but it was not cold. The four women sheltered themselves as well as they could, Cicely holding Jack closely; she would not let any one else touch him.

A little after two o’clock the crouched group heard a sound, and Hollis appeared in the circle of light shed by the flaring wind-swept fire. He bore a load of provisions and garments in baskets, in a sack suspended from his neck, in bags dangling from his arms, as well as in his hands and pockets; he had even brought a tea-kettle; it was a wonder how he had come so far with such a load, the wind bending him double. Priscilla Mile made tea as methodically as though the open beach, with the roaring water and the shrieking gale, had been a quiet room. Hollis watched them eat with an eagerness so intense that unconsciously his face made masticating movements in sympathy. When they had finished, a start passed over him, as if he were awakening, and, making a trumpet of his hands, he shouted to Cicely: “Must go now; ’f I don’t, the old judge ’ll be trying to get here. Back—with boat—soon as ca-a-an.”

“I’ll take your coat, if you don’t mind,” said Mrs. Mile, shrieking at him in her turn;

"then Miss Bruce can have this shawl." And she tapped her chest violently to show him her meaning. Hollis denuded himself, and started.

With the first light of dawn he was back. They reached the camp about ten o'clock the next morning.

At three in the afternoon Cicely woke from a sleep of four hours. Her first movement was to feel for Jack.

Jack was sitting beside her, playing composedly with four spools and a little wooden horse on rollers.

"We'd better dress him now, hadn't we?" suggested Mrs. Mile, coming forward. She spoke in her agreeing voice; Mrs. Mile's voice agreed beforehand that her patients should agree with her.

"I will dress him," said Cicely, rising.

"I wouldn't, now, if I were you, Mrs. Morrison; you're not strong enough."

"Where is my dress?" asked Cicely, looking about her.

"You don't want anything, surely, but your pretty blue wrapper?" said Mrs. Mile, taking it from its nail.

"Bring me my thick dress and my walking-shoes, please."

They were brought.

Eve came in while Cicely was dressing.

"Eve, who is this person?" Cicely demanded, indicating the nurse with a sideward wave of her head.

"Oh, I'm just a lady's maid—they thought you'd better have one; Porley, in that way, you know, isn't good for much," answered Mrs. Mile, readily.

"Whatever you are, I shall not need your services longer," said Cicely. "Do you think you could go to-night?"

“Certainly, ma’am; by the evening boat.”

“There is no evening boat. I must have been ill a long while,—you talk in such a wheedling manner. I am well now, at any rate, and you can return to Port aux Pins whenever you like; no doubt you have been much missed there.”

Mrs. Mile, giving Eve a significant look, went out.

The storm was over, but the air had turned much colder; the windows of the lodge were closed. Eve seated herself by the east window.

“I have been ill, then?” asked Cicely.

“Yes.”

“I have been out of my mind?”

“Yes,” Eve answered again, in a listless voice.

“I’m not so any longer,—you understand that?”

“I understand,” Eve responded.

Her cheeks were white, the lines of her face and figure had fallen; she looked lifeless.

Cicely stopped her work of dressing Jack, and gazed at her sister-in-law for a moment or two; then she came and stood before her. “Perhaps you didn’t understand what I said on the beach? I told you that I remembered everything, knew everything. And that I forgave you because you had saved baby; you jumped into the lake and saved him.” She paused a moment; “I forgive you—yes; but never let us speak of it again—never on this earth;—do you hear?” And, putting her hands on Eve’s shoulders, she pressed the palms down violently, as emphasis.

Then going back to Jack, she resumed the dressing. “It’s the strangest thing in the world about a child. When it comes, you think you don’t care about it—little red thing!—that you love your husband a million times more, as of course in many ways you do. But a new feeling comes too, a feeling that’s like no other; it takes

possession of you whether you want it to or not; it's stronger than anything else—than life or death. You would let yourself be cut to pieces, burned alive, for your child. Something came burning right through me when I knew that Jacky was in danger.—Never mind, Jacky, play away; mamma's not frightened now, and Jacky's her own brave boy.—It made everything clear, and I came to myself instantly. I shall never lose my senses again; though I might want to, I'm so miserable."

"And I, who think you fortunate!" said Eve.

Cicely turned her head and looked at her with parted lips.

"Ferdie loved you—"

"Oh, he cared for others too," said Cicely, bringing her little teeth together. "I know more than you think;—than Paul thinks." She went on hurriedly with her task.

A quiver had passed over Eve at the name. "You loved him, and he was your husband. But Paul can never take me for his wife; you forgive, but he couldn't."

"You love Paul, then; is that it?" said Cicely, turning round again. "Now I remember—that day when I saw you in the woods. Why, Eve, he did forgive you, he had you in his arms."

"He did not know. He does not know now."

"You haven't told him?"

"I couldn't."

Cicely paused, consideringly. "No, you could not," she said, with conviction. "And he can never marry you." She sat down on the side of the bed and folded her hands.

"Not when he knows," Eve answered.

"And were you going to deceive him, not let him know?"

"That is what I tried to do," said Eve, sombrely. "You were the only person who knew (you knew because I had told you), and you were out of your mind; his love

came to me,—I took it."

"Especially as you loved him!"

"Yes, I loved him."

"I'm glad you do," said Cicely; "now you won't be so lofty. Now you understand, perhaps, how I felt about Ferdie, and why I didn't mind, no matter what he did?"

"Yes, now I understand."

"Go on; what made you change your mind? Was it because I had got back my senses, and you were afraid I should tell?" She spoke with a jeer in her voice.

"No; it changed of itself when I saw baby out in that boat alone—my brother's poor little child. I said then,'O, let me save him, and I'll give up everything!'"

"And supposing that nothing had happened to Jack, and that I had not got back my senses, how could you even then have married Paul, Eve Bruce?—let let him take as his wife a woman who did what you did?"

"What I did was not wrong," said Eve, rising, a spot of red in each cheek. She looked down upon little Cicely. "It was not wrong," she repeated, firmly.

"'Blood for blood'?" quoted Cicely, with another jeer.

"Yes, that is what Paul said," Eve answered. And she sank down again, her face in her hands.

"You say you have given him up;—are you going to tell him the reason why you do it?" pursued Cicely, with curiosity.

"How can I?"

"Well, it would keep him from pursuing you,—if he does pursue."

"I don't want him to stop!"

"Oh! you're not in earnest, then; you are going to marry him, after all? See here, Eve, I'll be good; I'll never tell him, I'll promise."

"No," said Eve, letting her hands fall; "I gave him up when I said, 'If I can only save baby!'" Her face had grown white again, her voice dull.

"What are you afraid of? Hell? At least you would have had Paul here. I should care more for that than for anything else."

"We're alike!" said Eve.

"If we are, do it, then; I should. It's a muddle, but that is the best way out of it."

"You don't understand," Eve replied. "What I'm afraid of is Paul himself."

"When he finds out?"

"Yes."

"I told you I wouldn't tell."

"Oh, any time; after death—in the next world."

"You believe in the next world, then?"

"Yes."

"Well, I should take all the happiness I could get in this," remarked Cicely.

"I care for it more than you do—more than you do?" said Eve, passionately.

Cicely gave a laugh of pure incredulity.

"But I cannot face it—his finding out," Eve concluded.

Cicely gazed at her. "How handsome you are to-day! What are men, after all? Poor things compared to us. What wouldn't we do for them when we love them?—what don't we do? And what do they ever do for us in comparison? Paul—he ought to be at your feet for such a love as you have given him; instead of that, we both know that he would mind; that he couldn't rise above it, couldn't forget. See here"—she ran to Eve, and put her arms round her, excitedly—"supposing that he is better than we think,—supposing that I should go to him and tell him the whole, and that he should come here and say: 'What difference does that make, Eve? We will be

married to-morrow.’” And she looked up at Eve, her dark little face flushed for the moment with unselfish hopefulness.

“No,” answered Eve, slowly, “he couldn’t, he loved Ferdie so!” She raised her right hand and looked at it. “He would see me holding it—taking aim—”

Cicely drew away, she struck Eve’s hand down with all her force. Then she ran sobbing to the bed, where Jack, half dressed, had fallen asleep again, and threw herself down beside him. “Oh, Ferdie! Ferdie!” she sobbed, in a passion of grief.

Eve did not move.

After a while Cicely dried her eyes and rose; she woke Jack, and finished dressing him in silence; kneeling down, she began to put on his shoes.

The child rolled his little wooden horse over her shoulder. Then he called: “Old Eve! old Eve! Pum here, an’ det down; I want to roll de hortie on you, too.”

Eve obeyed; she took up the other little shoe.

“Oh, well,” said Cicely, her voice still choked with sobs, “we can’t help it, Eve—as long as we’ve got him between us; he’s a tie. We shall have to make the best of each other, I suppose.”

“May I go with you to Romney?” Eve asked, in a low tone.

“How can you want to go there?” demanded Cicely, her eyes beginning to flash again.

“I know.—But I don’t want to leave Jack and you. If you would take me—”

They said but a few words more. Yet it was all arranged; they would go to Romney; Paul was to know nothing of it.

XXX.

CICELY thought of everything, she ordered everything; she and Eve had changed places. It was decided that they should take a North Shore steamer; this would carry

them eastward to the Sault by a route far away from Port aux Pins. Mrs. Mile was to be sent back to that flourishing town on the day of their own departure, but preceding it in time by several hours; she would carry no tidings because she would know none. Hollis was to be taken into their confidence in a measure—he was to be informed that this change of plan was a necessity, and that Paul must not hear of it.

"He will do what we tell him to do," Cicely remarked.

"Oh, yes," said Eve, assentingly.

The first North Shore steamer would not pass before the morning of the third day. For twenty-four hours Eve remained inert, she did nothing. The judge, troubled, but inexpressibly excited at the prospect of never seeing Port aux Pins again; of getting away from these cold woods, and in a few days from these horrible great lakes; of soon breathing once more the air of his dear, warm, low-lying country, with its old plantations, its old towns, its old houses and old friends, hurried about wildly, trotting hither and thither on many errands, but without accomplishing much. On the second day Eve's mood changed, and a feverish activity took possession of her also; she was up and out at dawn, she did everything she could think of, she worked incessantly. By noon there was nothing more left to do, and there still remained the whole half of the day, and the night.

"I think I'll go out on the lake," she said to Cicely.

"Yes, row hard; tire yourself," Cicely answered.

She spoke coldly, though the advice she offered was good. She was trying hard to be kind to Eve during these difficult last hours when Paul was still so near; but though she did her best, she often failed. "You'd better not come back until nearly dark," she added; "we've got to be together through the long journey, you know."

"Very well," Eve replied.

It was a brilliant afternoon, the air was clear; already the woods had an autumn look. Eve paddled eastward for some time; then she came back and went out to Jupiter

Light. Beaching her canoe, she strolled to and fro for a while; then she sat down. The water came up and laved the reef with a soft, regular sound, the Light loomed above her; presently a man came out of the door and locked it behind him.

“Good-afternoon, mum,” he said, pausing on his way to his boat. “From the camp down below, ain’t yer?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I’m going the other way myself. Want to be light-keeper for an hour or two?” This jocularly.

It was the man who had come down with a lantern and preceded her and Paul up the stairs to the little room at the top.

“There’s some one else above, isn’t there?” she asked.

“No, mum; all three of us off ter-day. But me and John Rail’ll be back afore dark; you won’t tell on us, I guess?” He gave a toothless smile and pushed off, nodding slightly in farewell as the distance between them increased. He went eastward round the point; his boat was soon out of sight.

Eve sat gazing at the Light; she recalled the exact tones of Paul’s voice as he said, “Don’t you want to go up?” Then they had climbed up, and down again; and how sweet and strange and exciting it was! Then he had rowed the canoe home; how delightful it had been to sit there and feel the boat dart forward under his strong strokes in the darkness!—for night had come on while they lingered on the reef. Then she remembered her anger when he said, as he was helping her out, “I saw how much you wanted to go!” It seemed so strange that she should ever have been angry with him; she could never be so again, no matter what he might do. She tried to think of the things he might do; for instance, he might marry (she had almost said “marry again”). “I ought to wish that he might find some one—” But she could go no further, that was the end of that line of thought; she could not wish anything of the kind. She pressed her hands together in bitter, hot rebellion. But even her

rebellion was without hope. She had been sitting with her feet crossed before her; she drew up her knees, put her arms upon them, and her head on her arms. She sat thus a long time.

A voice said, “Eve!”

With a start she raised her head. Paul stood there beside her.

“You did not expect to see me. But I had word. Hollis got one of the men off secretly as soon as he could; he was ashamed to see me treated so.”

“No,” said Eve; “he wanted to give me a pleasure.” Nothing could have been more dreary than her tone, more desperate than her eyes, as she looked at him.

“Oh, why did you come here?” she went on.

“I didn’t believe it, Eve; I thought it was all gammon.”

“No; it’s true.”

“That you were going to leave me?—Going off without letting me know?”

“Yes.”

“Who has been talking to you? Cicely—now that she is herself again? She’s a murderous little creature.”

“I talked to her, I asked her to take me with her.”

“What is the matter with you?” said Paul. He bent and took her hands, and drew her to her feet. “Now I can look at you.—Tell me what you mean.”

“Baby came near being drowned. And it was my fault. That brought me to my senses.”

“It took you out of them!”

“I saw then that I had been thinking only of myself, my own happiness.”

“Oh, it would have been some happiness, would it?” said Paul, with a touch of sarcasm. He took her in his arms.

"Have you the least doubt about my love for you?" Eve asked.

He looked deep into her eyes, so near his own. "No, I haven't." And he rested his lips on hers.

She did not resist, she returned his kiss. Then she left him. "It's like death to me, but I must. I shall never marry you." She went towards her canoe.

Paul gave a laugh. "That's a nice way to talk when I've been slaving over the house, and got all sorts of suffocating things you'll like." He came and took her hands off the boat's edge. "Why, Eve," he said, with sudden passion, "a week from to-day we shall be living there together."

"Never together."

"Why?"

"I can't tell you, because it's against myself.—I haven't the strength to tell you."

"Because it will make me think less of you? Not so much so as your trying to slip away from me unawares."

"You think it wouldn't. But it would."

"Try me!"

She released herself from the grasp of his hands. "Oh, if the cases had been reversed, how little I should have minded! No matter what you had done, you would have been the same to me—God knows you would! In life, in death, before anything and everything, I should have adored you always, you would always have come first."

"So it is with me," said Paul.

"No, it is not. And it's for that reason I am leaving you."

Paul made no more use of words. What she had said had left no impression upon him—no impression of importance. He had never been so much in love with her as at this moment.

"Don't you see how I am suffering?—I cannot bear it. Oh, leave me! let me go!

Another minute and I shall not have the strength.—Don't kiss me again. Listen! I shot Ferdie, your brother. I—I!"

Paul's arms dropped. "Ferdie? Poor Ferdie?" The tears rushed to his eyes. "Why, some negroes did it."

"There were no negroes. It was I."

He stood there as if petrified.

With desperate courage, she launched her canoe. "You see now that I had to go. You could not marry a woman who—Not even if she did it to save—" She waited an instant, looking at him. He did not speak. She pushed off, lingering a moment longer. "Forgive me for trying to deceive you those few days," she said. Then, with quick strokes, she sent the boat westward. After a while, she changed her position, and, taking the other paddle, she began to row, so that she could look back the longer. His figure remained motionless for many minutes; then he sat down on the edge of his canoe. Thus she left him, alone under Jupiter Light.

XXXI.

WHEN Eve reached the camp, after her parting with Paul, Cicely was waiting for her on the beach, alone; apparently she had sent every one away. "Well?" she said, as the canoe grated on the sand.

"I told him," Eve answered.

"Everything?"

"Everything."

"And he did not—?"

"No, he did not."

For an instant Cicely's face expressed keen sympathy. Then her expression changed. "You did it, you know. You'll have to pay for it!"

“Will you help me to get away?” Eve asked.—“I cannot see him again.”

“And do you imagine that by any chance he wishes to see you?” demanded Cicely, sarcastically.

“But he will have to come back here—he must; let me go away before he comes. We were leaving to-morrow in any case; help me off now,” Eve pleaded.

Cicely surveyed her with pitiless eyes; the once strong Eve now looked at her imploringly, her face despairing, her voice broken. Having had her satisfaction, the vindictive little creature turned, and, going back to the lodge, began to issue orders with imperative haste, as though she had but one wish in the world, namely, to help Eve; Mrs. Mile found herself working as she had never worked before; the Irishmen tumbled over each other; Porley and the cook constantly gallopaded—no other word could describe their gait. The judge worked fiercely; he helped in launching the canoes until the blood rushed to his head; he ran after the Irishmen; he carried Jack, he scolded Porley. And then, during one of these journeys, his strength failed so suddenly that he was obliged to sit down; as there was no bench near, he sat down on the ground.

Soon afterwards Mrs. Mile came by.

“Dear me! Do let me assist you,” she said sweetly.

“I am merely looking at the lake; it is charming this morning,” replied the judge, waving his hand.

“I could assist you so well,” said the nurse, coming nearer, “knowing, as I do, the exact position of all the muscles.”

“Muscles, madam? It’s more than I do! May I ask you to pass on?”

One of the Irishmen next appeared, carrying Jack’s pillows and toys.

“Can you tell me where Mr. Hollis is?” demanded the judge, still seated.

“Mr. Hollis, surr? Yes, surr. Think he’s gone fishing, surr.”

“D—n him! He takes a nice time for it—when we’re sweating here,” muttered the judge, angrily.

But poor Hollis was fishing only in a figurative sense, and in bitter waters. He had sent for Paul—yes; but he could not stay to witness his return with Eve; (he had not the slightest doubt but that Eve would return with him). He shook hands with Paul upon his arrival, and made a number of jokes, as usual. But soon after the younger man’s canoe had started eastward in search of Eve, a second canoe, with Hollis paddling, stole quietly away, going in the opposite direction. Its occupant reached Port aux Pins, in due time. He remained there but a few hours.

A month later a letter came to Paul from a small town near the base of the Rocky Mountains. “You see, when I got back to Port aux Pins, it sort of came over me that I’d go west. People are more lively out here, and not so crowded. I’ve got hold of a capital thing in raisins, in southern California. If that fails, there is stock-raising, and plenty of other things; and the same old auctioneer line. I’ve left a trifle in the savings-bank for Jacky. Perhaps you’ll take charge of it for him? You’ll hear from me again soon.—C. HOLLIS.”

But Paul never heard from him; from that moment all trace of him was lost. Ferdie, if he had known Hollis, would have had a vision of him making his way year by year farther westward, always attired in the black coat and tall hat (which marked his dignity as a lawyer), whether voyaging in a prairie schooner, chopping wood at a camp, hunting elk, or searching for ore. But Paul had no such visions, he did not see human lives as tableaux-vivants. He was sincerely sorry that Hollis had vamosed in that way. But he understood it too.

The trifle turned out to be eight hundred dollars. It was regularly entered to little Jack’s account, and there was a pass-book with his full name, “John Frederick Bruce.” “Bruce,—that did it,” thought Paul; “he could give it to the child. Poor old Kit! it must have been all he had.”

Cicely's generalship was excellent; in less than half an hour the three canoes were ready, and the judge, Porley and Jack, Eve, Cicely herself, with three of the men to row, took their places; the boats glided out from the shore, turning towards the west. Mrs. Mile bowed gravely to the judge, with an air of compunction; she knew what an impression she had made upon that poor old man; she was afraid that she had not done right! Mrs. Mile was left in charge of the camp to await the arrival of Paul Tennant.

The canoes were out all night. At dawn the little party found refuge on one of the North Shore steamers, and began the long voyage down the chain of lakes, stopping again at the beautiful city of Cleveland, thence by railway to New York, and from there southward by sea. On the ninth morning of their journey their ocean steamer turned her bows towards the distant land, a faint line on the right; by noon, she was making her way along a winding channel, which was indicated here and there in the water by buoys painted white, which looked like ducks; the Atlantic was very calm, its hue was emerald green; it was so clear that one could see the great jelly-fish floating down below. The judge, with his hands clasped on his cane's head, stood looking eagerly at everything. His joy was deep, he felt himself an exile returning home. And oh! how beautiful home was! To him, this Southern coast was fair as Paradise; he welcomed the dark hue of the Southern trees, he welcomed the neglected fields, he even welcomed the broken-down old houses here and there. For at least they were not staring, they were not noisy; to the judge, the smart new houses of Port aux Pins—those with Mansard roofs—had seemed to shout and yell. Three negro fishermen, passing in a row-boat with a torn sail, were eminently worthy creatures; they were not the impudent, well-dressed mulattoes of the North, who elbowed him off the pavements, who read newspapers on steamers with the air of men of the world. When the winding channel—winding through water—came to an end at the mouth of an inlet, the white sand-hills on each hand were more beautiful to his eyes than the peaks of the Alps, or the soft outline of Italian

mountains. “God bless my country!” was the old man’s fervent thought. But his “country” was limited; it was the territory which lies between the St. Mary’s River and the Savannah.

At the little port within the inlet they disembarked, and took the small steamer of the Inside Route, which was to carry them through the sounds to Romney. Night had come on, dark and quiet; clouds covered the sky; the air was warm, for it was still summer here. The dusky shores, dimly visible on either hand, gave a sense of protection after the vastness of the ocean; the odors of flowers reached them, and seemed sweet after its blank, cold purity. Cicely, with Porley and Jack, was on the deck near the stern; the judge was now with them, now at the prow, now up-stairs, now down-stairs; he could not be still. Eve sat by herself on the forward deck, gazing through the darkness at the water; she could not see it save here and there in broken gleams, where the lights from the lower cabin shone across it; she heard the rushing sound made by the great paddle-wheels as they revolved unseen behind her, and the fancy came to her that she should like to be lashed to the outer rim of one of them, and be carried up and down through the cool water. Towards ten o’clock a beam shone out ahead. “See it?” said the judge, excitedly, coming to show it to her. “Jupiter Light!”

And Eve remembered that less than a year before she had landed here for the first time, a woman imperious, sufficient to herself; a woman who was sure that she could direct her own course; in addition, a woman who supposed herself to be unhappy. How like child’s play did this all seem now—her certainties, and her pride, and her supposed sorrow! “If I could die, wouldn’t that be the best thing for me, as well as for Paul? A way out of it all? The first shock over, I should be but a memory to him; I should not be a miserable haunting presence, wretched myself, and making him wretched too. I wonder—I wonder—is it wrong to try to die?”

The stern Puritan blood of her father in her answered, “One must not give up until

one has exhausted every atom of one's strength in the contest."

"But if it is all exhausted? If—" Here another feeling came sweeping over her. "No, I cannot die while he is in the world; in spite of my misery, I want to be here if he is here. Perhaps no knowledge of anything that happens here penetrates to the next world; if that is the case, I don't want to be there, no matter how beautiful it may be. I want to stay where I can hear of Paul."

After they had left the boat, and Pomp and Plato were hoisting the trunks into one of the wagons, Cicely came up.

"Eve, you must stay with me more, now that we are here; you mustn't be always off by yourself."

"I thought you preferred it."

"Yes, through the journey. But not now. It's a great deal worse for me now than it is for you; you have left Paul behind, but I am going to see Ferdie in a moment or two. I shall see him everywhere—in the road, at the door, in our own room; he will stand and look at me."

"Well, you will like that."

"No, for it will be only a mockery; I shall not be able to put my arms round him; he won't kiss me."

"Cecilia," called the judge, his voice ringing out happily, "everything is ready now, and Cesh is restive."

Cicely gave one of her sudden little laughs. "Poor grandpa! he is so frantic with joy that he even says 'Cesh,'—though he loathes abbreviations!"

Secession, the mule, started on his leisurely walk towards Romney.

In the same lighted doorway where Eve had been received upon her first arrival, now appeared again the tall figure of Miss Sabrina. The poor lady was crying.

"Oh, my darling Cicely, what sorrow!" she said, embracing her niece fondly.

As they entered the hall: “Oh, my darling Cicely, what a home-coming for you! And to think—“ More tears.

As they came into the lighted parlor: “Oh, my darling Cicely—What! no mourning?” This last in genuine surprise.

Cicely closed the door. She stood in the centre of the room. “This is not a charnel-house, Sabrina. No one is to speak to me of graves. As to mourning, I shall not wear an inch of it; you may wear as many yards as you like—you always loved it; did you begin to mourn for Ferdie before he was dead?”

“Oh, pa, she said such terrible things to me—our own Cicely. I don’t know how to take it!” moaned poor Miss Sabrina to her father when they were left alone.

“Well, you are pretty black, Sabrina,” suggested the judge, doubtfully. “Those tossels now—”

“I got them because they were cheap. I hope they look like mourning?”

“You needn’t be afraid; they’re hearse-like!”

“Are they, really?” said Miss Sabrina, with gratification. “The choice at the mainland store is so small.” But presently the tears came again. “Oh, pa, everything is so sad now. Do you remember when I used to ride my little pony by your side, and you were on your big black horse? How kind you have always been to me, pa; and I have been such a disappointment to you!”

“No, no, Breeny; no, little girl,” said the judge.

They kissed each other, the old man and his gray-haired child. Their minds went back to brighter days; they understood each other’s sorrow.

At two o’clock Eve had not yet gone to bed. There was a tap at her door. She spoke. “Cicely?”

“Yes.”

She drew back the bolt, and Cicely entered, carrying a small lamp. “You haven’t

gone to bed? So much the better; you are to come with me."

"Where?"

"To all the places where we went that night."

"I cannot."

"There is no question of 'cannot;' I wish you to go, and you must, if I say so."

Eve looked at her with forlorn eyes. But Cicely was inflexible. She opened the door; Eve followed her.

"First, I want to see that Jacky is all right," Cicely said. She led the way to her own room. Jack was asleep, his dimpled arms thrown out on the pillow. Cicely bent over him for a moment. Then she looked at Eve. "You won't ever be troubled by this sort of thing, will you? You'll never have a child!" She laughed, and, taking the lamp, turned towards the door. "This was Ferdie's dressing-room; don't you see him over there by the window?" Eve shrank. "Now he has gone. But we shall hear him following us along the corridor presently, and across the ballroom. Then, in the thicket, he will come and look at us;—do you remember his eyes, and the corners of his mouth,—how they were drawn down?" And the corners of her own mouth took the same grimace.

"I cannot go with you," said Eve, stopping.

"You will do what I wish you to," answered Cicely;—"one generally does when one has injured a person as you have injured me. For I loved Ferdie, you know; I really had the folly to love him." (She said this insolently.) Turning to Eve, with the same insolent smile, "At last you know what love is, don't you?" she added. "Has it brought you much happiness?"

Eve made no answer, she followed humbly; together they went through the labyrinth of small rooms at the end of the corridor and entered the ballroom.

Its empty space was dark, a glimmering gray alone marking the unshuttered

windows. The circle of light from their lamp made the blackness still blacker.

“Do you remember when I put on that ball-dress of my grandmother’s, and came jumping along here?” said Cicely. “How strange it is!—I think I was intended to be happy.”

After a moment she went on: “Now we must begin to listen; he will come in behind us, we shall hear his step. You ought to hear it all your life!” she added.

They reached the window at last; it had seemed to Eve an endless transit. Cicely drew back the bolt, threw up the sash, and, with the aid of a chair, stepped out.

“Wait here,” she said, when Eve had joined her outside; “then, when I have reached the thicket, draw the window down, just as he did; I want to hear the sound.”

She went quickly towards the thicket, carrying her lamp. Eve was left alone on the veranda.

After a few minutes Eve tried to draw down the sash. It resisted, and she was obliged to use all her strength. A shiver came over her as she lifted her arms to try a second time, she almost expected to see a hand come stealing over her shoulder (or under it), and perform the task for her; and the hand would be—Ferdie’s. She hurried after Cicely.

Cicely came out from the thicket. “Now take the lamp and walk down the road a little way; I wish to see the gleam moving over the bushes,—don’t you remember?”

Eve obeyed. It seemed to her as if she should never be free from this island and its terror; as if she should spend the rest of her life here following Cicely, living over again their dreadful flight.

When she came back, Cicely said, “Now for the north point;” she led the way along the road; their footsteps made crunching sounds in the sand.

Cicely said, “I was in hopes that the moon would come out from behind those clouds. Oh, I’m so glad! there it is! Now it will light up the very spot where you shot

him. I will leave the lamp here on the sand; that will give the yellow gleam that we saw behind us. Now go into the woods. Then, in a few moments, you must come out and look about, just as you did then, and you must put out your hand and make a motion of shooting."

"I will not," said Eve, outraged. "I shall leave you and go back."

Cicely saw that she had come to the end of her power. She put her arms round Eve's neck, and held her closely. "To please me, Eve; I shall never be content without it; I want to see how it all was, how you looked. Just this once, Eve; never again, but just this once."

"I thought you had forgiven me, Cicely?"

"I have, I have." She kissed Eve again. "Do content me."

Eve went slowly towards the trees. As she disappeared within the shadow, Cicely instantly concealed herself on the other side of the road. There was a silence.

The moon, emerging still further from the clouds, now silvered the forest, the path, and the sound with its clear light; there was no boat drawn up at the point's end; the beach sloped smoothly to the water, unbroken by any dark outline, and the water stretched smoothly towards Singleton Island, with only the track of the moon across it.

Eve stood in the shadow under the trees. The spell of the place was upon her; like a somnambulist, she felt herself forced by some inward compelling power to go through the whole scene. The thought of Cicely had passed from her mind; there was but one person there now—Ferdie; in another moment she should see him; she listened; then she went forward to the edge of the wood and looked down the road.

Something came rushing from the other side, and with quick force bore her to the ground. Not Ferdie, but Cicely, like a tigress, was upon her, her hands at her throat. In a strange suffocated voice, she cried, "Do you like it? Do you like it? Do you like to be dead?"

And Eve did not struggle; she lay motionless in Cicely's grasp—motionless under the weight of her body keeping her down. The thing did not seem to her at all incredible; suddenly it seemed like a remedy for all her troubles—if Cicely's grasp should tighten. Passively she closed her eyes.

But Cicely's grasp did not tighten; the fury that had risen within her had taken all her strength, and now she lay back white and still. Eve, like a person in a dream, went down to the beach and dipped her handkerchief in the water; slowly she came back, and bathed Cicely's forehead and wrists. But still Cicely did not stir. Eve put her hand on her heart. It was beating faintly. She stooped, and lifted Cicely in her arms, holding her as one holds a child, with one arm round her shoulders and the other under her knees, Cicely's head lying against her breast. Then she began her long walk back.

XXXII.

THE stars were fading, there was a band of clear light in the east over the sea, when Eve reached the veranda of Romney again; with pauses for rest, she had carried her sister all the way. Cicely was small and light, her weight was scarcely more than that of a child; still, owing to the distance, the effort had been great, and Eve's strength was exhausted. She put her burden gently down on the floor of the veranda, and stood leaning against one of the wooden pillars, with her arms hanging by her sides to rest them; they were numb and stiff, almost paralyzed; she began to be afraid lest she should not be able to raise them again; she went to the window to try. The effort of lifting the sash drew a groan of anguish from her. But Cicely did not hear it; she remained unconscious. The dawn grew brighter, soon the sun would appear. It was not probable that at this early hour any one would pass this uninhabited end of the house; still, negroes were inconsequent; Pomp and Plato might be seized with a fancy to come; if she could only get Cicely back to her room unseen, there need be

no knowledge of their midnight expedition. She knelt down beside her, and chafed her hands and temples; she spoke her name with insistence: “Cicely! Cicely!”—she put the whole force of her will into the effort of reaching the dormant consciousness, wherever it was, and compelling it to waken. “Cicely!” She looked intently at Cicely’s closed eyes.

Cicely stirred, her dark-fringed lids opened; her vague glance caught the gleam of the sound. “Where are we?” she asked.

“We came out for a walk,” Eve answered. “Do you think you could climb in—I mean by the window? I am afraid I cannot lift you.”

“Of course I can. Why shouldn’t I?”

She did it as lightly and easily as ever; she was in perfect possession of all her faculties. Eve followed her. Then she drew down the sash with the same effort.

“What is the matter with your arms?” Cicely asked. “You move them as though they were rusty.”

“I think they are rusty.”

They went through the ballroom, now looking very prosaic, flooded with the light of the rising sun. “We’re always tramping through this old room,” said Cicely.

When she reached the door of her own chamber, she abruptly drew Eve in. “Well—are you going to leave me forever?”

“Not unless you send me away.”

“Is it on baby’s account that you stay?”

“Not more now than at any time.”

“You don’t mind what I did, then?”

“You didn’t do anything.”

“That’s brave of you, Eve, when you hate lies so. You are trying to make me believe that nothing happened out there in the road—that I was just as usual. But I

remember perfectly—I sprang at you; if I had been a man—my hands stronger—you wouldn't be here now!"

"Fortunately you are not a man, nor anything like one," Eve answered, in the tone of a person who makes a joke. She turned towards the door.

"Wait, I want to tell you," said Cicely, going after her, and turning her round with her hands on her shoulders. "This is it, Eve; it comes over me with a rush sometimes, when I look at you—that here you are alive, and Ferdie dead! He was a great deal more splendid than you are, he was so handsome and so young! And yet there he is, down in the ground; and you walking about here! Nothing seems too bad for you then; my feeling is, 'Let her die too! And see how she likes it.'"

"I should like it well enough, if somebody else did it," Eve answered. "Death wouldn't be a punishment, Cicely; it would be a release."

Cicely's grasp relaxed. "Oh, very well. Then why haven't you tried it?"

"Because Paul Tennant is still in the world! I am pusillanimous enough to wish to breathe the same air."

"You do love him!" said Cicely. She paused. "Perhaps—after a little—"

"No, I have thought it all out; it can never be. If he should come to me this moment, and tell me that he loved me in spite of everything, it wouldn't help me; for I should know that it could not last; I should know that, if I should marry him, sooner or later he would hate me; it would be inevitable. Ferdie's face would come always between us."

"I hope it may," said Cicely, savagely. "Why do you keep on staying with me? I don't wish you to stay. Not in the least."

"I thought that I could perhaps be of some use. You were so dear to my brother—"

"Much you care for poor old Jack now! Even I care more."

"Yes, I have changed. But—Jack understands."

“A convenient belief!”

“And you have his child.”

—“And I am Paul’s sister!”

“Yes; I can sometimes hear of Paul through you.”

Eve’s voice, as she said this, was so patient that Cicely was softened. She came to Eve and kissed her. “I am sorry for you, Eve.”

“Will you promise me to go to bed?” Eve answered, resuming her usual tone, as she turned towards the door. “I must go now, I am tired.”

Cicely went with her. “I am never sure of myself, Eve,” she said, warningly; “I may say just the same things to you to-morrow,—remember that.”

Once in her own room, Eve did not follow the advice which she had given to Cicely; finding that she could not sleep, she dressed herself afresh, and sought the open air again. It was still early, no one was stirring save the servants. Meeting Porley, she asked the girl to bring her some tea and a piece of corn-bread; after this frugal breakfast, taken in the shade of the great live-oaks, she wandered down one of the eastern roads. Her bath had brought no color to her cheeks; her eyes had the contracted look which comes after a night of wakefulness; though the acute pain had ceased, her weary arms still hung lifelessly by her side, her step was languid; only her golden hair looked bright and young as the sun’s rays shone across it.

She walked on at random; after a while, upon looking down one of the tracks, bordered by the glittering green bushes, she recognized Miss Sabrina’s figure, and, turning, followed it.

Miss Sabrina had come out to pay an early visit to her temple of memories. She heard Eve’s step, and looked up. “Oh, is it you, my dear? It’s St. Michael and All-Angels; I have only brought a few flowers, I hope you don’t mind?” Her voice was apologetic.

“Do you mean for my brother? I wish you had brought more, then; I wish you would always remember him,” said Eve, going over and sitting down beside the mound. “He has the worst time of any of us, after all!”

“Oh, my dear, how can we know?” murmured Miss Sabrina, shocked.

“I don’t mean that he is in hell,” said Eve.

Miss Sabrina had no idea what she meant; she returned to the subject of her temple. “Cicely thinks I come here too often,—she spoke of charnel-houses. Perhaps I do come often; but it has been a comfort to me.”

“Miss Sabrina, do you believe in another world?”

“My dear child, most certainly.”

“And have we the same feelings, the same affections, there as here?”

“The good ones, I suppose.”

“Is love one of these?”

“The best, isn’t it?”

“Well, then, my brother took his love for Cicely; if she should die to-day, how much would she care for him, when she met him?”

“I think that something else would be provided for your brother, probably,” said Miss Sabrina, timidly.

“Another wife? Why not arrange that for Ferdie Morrison, and give Cicely to Jack?”

“She loved Ferdie the best. Aren’t you inclined to think that it must be when they both love?” suggested the maiden lady.

“And when they both love, should anything be permitted to come between them?”

“Oh, nothing! nothing!” said Miss Sabrina, with fervor. “That is, of course, when there is no barrier; when it would be no crime.”

“What is crime?” demanded Eve, looking at her sombrely. “I don’t think I know.”

“Surely the catechism tells us, doesn’t it?”

“What does it tell?”

Miss Sabrina murmured reverently: “Idolatry, isn’t it?—and blasphemy; desecration of the Lord’s Day and irreverence to parents; murder, adultery, theft; falsehood and covetousness.”

“And which is the worst? Murder?”

“I suppose so.”

“Have you ever spoken to a murderer?”

“Heaven forbid!” said Miss Sabrina. She glanced with suffused eyes towards Ferdie’s grave. “It is such a comfort to me to think that though he was in effect murdered, those poor ignorant nig-roes had probably no such intention; it was not done deliberately, by some one who wished to harm him.”

“I don’t believe his murderer will be afraid to face him in the next world,” said Eve. She, too, looked towards the mound; she seemed to see Ferdie lying down below, with closed eyes, but the same grimacing lips.

“Oh, as to that, they would have so little in common that they wouldn’t be thrown much together, I reckon,” said Miss Sabrina, hopefully; “I doubt if they even meet.”

“Your heaven is not like the Declaration of Independence, is it?” said Eve.

Miss Sabrina did not understand. She pinched her throat with her thumb and forefinger, and looked vaguely at Eve.

“I mean that all men ‘are created equal;’ your heaven has an outside colony for negroes, and once or twice a week white angels go over there, I suppose, ring the Sunday-school bell, and hold meetings for their improvement.”

Miss Sabrina colored; she took up her basket.

“Forgive me!” said Eve, dropping her sarcasms. “I am unhappy. That is the reason I talk so.”

“I feared so, my dear; I feared so,” answered the gentle lady, melted at once.

Eve left her, and wandered across the island to the ocean beach. Low waves came rolling in and broke upon the sand; no ship was in sight; the blue of the water met the horizon line unbroken. She walked southward with languid step; every now and then she would stop, then walk slowly on again. After half an hour a sound made her turn; Paul Tennant was close upon her, not twenty feet distant; the wash of the waves had prevented her from hearing his approach. She stood still, involuntarily turning towards him as if at bay.

Paul came up. “Eve, I know what I am about now. I didn’t know out there at Jupiter Light; I was dazed; but I soon understood. I went back to the camp, but you were gone. As soon as I could I started after you. Here I am.”

“You understood? What did you understand?” said Eve, her face deathly white.

“That I loved you,” said Paul, taking her in his arms. “That is enough for me; I hope it is for you.”

“That you love me in spite of—”

“There is no ‘in spite of;’ what you did was noble, was extraordinarily brave. A woman is timid; you are timid, though you may pretend not to be; yet with your own hand—”

Eve remembered how Cicely had struck her hand down. “You will strike it down, too!” she said, incoherently, bursting into tears.

Paul soothed her, not by words, but by his touch. Her whole being responded; she leaned her head against his breast.

“To save Cicely you crushed your own feelings; you did something utterly horrible to you. And you faced all the trouble and grief which would certainly come in consequence of it. Why, Eve, it was the bravest thing I have ever heard of.”

Eve gave a long sigh. “I have been so unhappy—”

“Never again, I hope,” said Paul; “from this moment I take charge of you. We will be married as soon as possible; we will go to Charleston.”

“Don’t let us talk of that. Just love me here;—- now.”

“Well—don’t I?” said Paul, smiling.

He found a little nook between two spurs of the thicket which had invaded the beach; here he made a seat for her with a fragment of wreck which had been washed up by the sea.

“Let us stay here all day,” she said, longingly.

“You will have me all the days of your life,” said Paul. He had seated himself at her feet. “We shall have to live in Port aux Pins for the present; you won’t mind that, I hope?”

She drew his head down upon her breast. “How I have loved you!”

“I know it,” he said, flushing. “It was that which made me love you.” He rose (it was not natural to Paul to keep a lowly position long), and, taking a seat beside her, lifted her in his arms. “I’m well caught,” he murmured, looking down upon her with a smile. “Who would ever have supposed that you could sway me so?”

“Oh,” cried Eve, breaking away from him, “it’s of no use; my one day that I counted on—my one short day—I cannot even dare to take that! Good women have the worst of it; if I could pretend that I was going to marry you, all this would be right; and if I could pretend nothing, but just take it, then at least I should have had it; a remembrance for all the dreary years that have got to come. Instead of that, as I have been brought up a stupid, good woman, I can’t change—though I wish I could! I shall have to tell you the truth: I can never marry you; the sooner we part, then, the better.” She turned and walked northward towards the Romney road.

With a stride Paul caught up with her. “What are you driving at?”

“I shall never marry you.”

He laughed.

She turned upon him. “You laugh—you have no idea what it is to me! I think of you day and night, I have longed to have you in my arms—on my heart. No, don’t touch me; it is only that I won’t have you believe that I don’t know what love is, that I don’t love you. Why, once at Port aux Pins, I walked miles at night because I was so mad with jealousy; and I found you playing whist! If I could only have known beforehand—if I could only have seen you once, just once, Ferdie might have done what he chose with Cicely; I shouldn’t have stirred!”

“Yes, you would,” said Paul.

“No, I shouldn’t have stirred; you might as well know me as I am. What I despise myself for now is, that I haven’t the force to make an end of it, to relieve you of the thought of me—at least as some one living. But as long as you are alive, Paul—” She looked at him with her eyes full of tears.

“You don’t know what you are talking about,” said Paul, sternly. “You will live, and as my wife; we will be married here at Romney to-morrow.”

“Would you really marry me here?” said Eve, the light of joy coming into her wan face.

“It’s a tumble-down old place, I know. But won’t it do to be married in?”

“Oh, it is so much harder when you seem to forget,—when for the moment you really do forget! But of course I know that it could not last.”

“What could not last?”

She moved away a step or two. “If I should marry you, you would hate me. Not in the beginning. But it would come. For Ferdie was your brother, and I did kill him; nothing can alter these facts—not even love. At first you wouldn’t remember; then, gradually, he would come back to you; you would think of the time when you were boys together, and you would be sorry. Then, gradually, you would realize that I

killed him; whenever I came near you, you would see—" Her voice broke, but she hurried on. "You said I was brave to do it, and I was. You said it was heroic, and it was. Yet all the same, he was your brother; and I killed him. In defence of Cicely and the baby? Nothing makes any difference. I killed him, and you would end by hating me. Yet I shouldn't be able to leave you; once your wife, I know that I should stay on, even if it were only to fold your clothes,—to touch them; to pick up the burnt match-ends you had dropped, and your newspapers; to arrange the chairs as you like to have them. I should be weak, weak—I should follow you about. How you would loathe me! It would become to you a hell."

"I'll take care of that," said Paul; "I'll see to my own hells; at present I'm thinking of something very different. We will be married to-day, and not wait for to-morrow; I will take you away to-night."

Eve looked at him.—"Haven't you heard what I've been saying?"

"Yes, I heard it; it was rubbish." But something in her face impressed him. "Eve, you are not really going to throw me over for a fancy like that?"

"No; for the horrible truth."

"My poor girl, you are all wrong, you are out of your mind. Let us look at only one side of it: what can you do in the world without me and my love as your shield? Your very position (which you talk too much about) makes me your refuge. Where else could you go? To whom? You speak of staying with Cicely. But Cicely—about Ferdie—is a little devil. The boy will never be yours, she will not give him to you; and, all alone in the world, how desolate you will be! You think yourself strong, but to me you are like a child; I long to take care of you, I should guard you from everything. And there wouldn't be the least goodness in this on my part; don't think that; I'm passionately in love with you—I might as well confess it outright."

Eve quivered as she met his eyes. "I shall stay with Cicely."

"You don't care whether you make me suffer?"

“I want to save you from the far greater suffering that would come.”

“As I told you before, I’ll take care of that,” said Paul. “You needn’t be so much concerned about what my feelings will be after you are my wife—I know what they will be. Women are fools about that sort of thing—what the future husband may or may not feel, may or may not think; when he has got the woman he loves, he doesn’t think about her at all; he thinks about his business, his affairs, his occupations, whatever he has to do in the world. As to what he feels, he knows. And she too. There comes an end to all her fancies, and generally they’re poor stuff.” Drawing her to him, he kissed her. “That’s better than a fancy! Now we will walk back to the house; there is a good deal to do if we are to be married this afternoon—as we certainly shall be; by this time to-morrow it will be an old story to you—the being my wife. And now listen, Eve, let me make an end of it; Ferdie was everything to me, I don’t deny it; he was the dearest fellow the world could show, and I had always had the charge of him. But he had that fault from boyhood. The time came when it endangered Cicely’s life and that of her child; then you stepped forward and saved them, though it was sure to cost you a lifetime of pain. I honor you for this, Eve, and always shall. Poor Ferdie has gone, his death was nobody’s fault but his own; and it wasn’t wholly his own, either, for he had inherited tendencies which kept him down. He has gone back to the Power that made him, and that Power understands his own work, I fancy; at any rate, I am willing to leave Ferdie to Him. But, in the meantime, we are on the earth, Eve, we two,—and we love each other; let us have all there is of it, while we are about it; in fact, I give you warning, that I shall take it all!”

Two hours later, Paul came back from the mainland, where he had been making the necessary arrangements for the marriage, which was to take place at five o’clock; so far, he had told no one of his intention.

A note was handed to him. He opened it.

“It is of no use. In spite of all you have said, I feel sure that in time you could not help remembering. And it would make you miserable beyond bearing.

“Once your wife, I should not have the strength to leave you—as I can now.

EVE.”

XXXIII.

THE judge was waiting for the steamer at Warwick Landing. Attired in white duck, with his boy Pomp (Pomp was sixty) waiting respectfully in the background, he was once more himself. As the steamer drew near, he bowed with all his old courtliness, and he was immediately answered by the agitated smile of a lady on the deck, who, with her shawl blowing off and her veil blowing out, was standing at the railing, timid in spite of her fifty-three years. It could be no one but Miss Leontine, who had come over from Gary Hundred, with her maid, to pay a visit to her dear Sabrina at Romney. The maid was a negro girl of thirteen, attired in a calico dress and sun-bonnet; she did nothing save strive to see how far she could straddle on the deck, whose flat surface seemed to attract her irresistibly. Miss Leontine carried her own travelling-bag. Occasionally she would say: “Clementine, shush! draw yourself together immediately.” But Clementine never drew herself.

The judge assisted his guest to disembark—she ambled across the plank, holding his hand; they drove to Romney in the one-seated wagon, the judge acting as charioteer. Pomp and the maid were supposed to walk.

“Clementine, whatever you do, don’t cling on behind,” said Miss Leontine, turning her head once or twice unseemingly, to blink at the offender. But Clementine clung all the way; and brayed at intervals.

The judge, in his present state of joy, almost admired Miss Leontine,—she was so unlike Parthenia Drone! “Ah, my dear Miss Wingfield, how changed is society in these modern days!” he said, flicking the flank of the mule. “In my time who ever

heard a lady's voice three feet away? Who ever knew her opinions—if she had any? Who ever divined, at least in the open air, the texture of her cheek, modestly hidden under her bonnet, or saw more than the tip of her slipper under the hem of her robe? Now women think nothing of speaking in public—at least at the North; they attend conventions, pass resolutions, appear in fancy-dress at Fourth of July parades; their bonnets for the most part" (not so Miss Leontine's) "are of a brazen smallness; and their feet, if I may so express it, are the centre of every room! When I was young, the most ardent suitor could obtain as a sign of preference, only a sigh;—at most some startled look, some smile, some reppurtee. All was timidity—timidity and retirement."

Miss Leontine, in her gratification at this description of her own ideal, clasped her hands so tightly together under her shawl that her corset-board made a long red mark against her ribs in consequence.

As they came within sight of the house, a figure was walking rapidly across the lawn. "Is that Mr. Singleton?" inquired Miss Leontine. "Dear Nannie wrote that they would come over to-day."

"No, that's not Singleton; Singleton's lame," said the judge.

"And yet it looks so much like him," murmured Miss Leontine, with conviction, still peering, with the insistence of a near-sighted person.

"It's a man named Watson," said the judge, decidedly.

Watson was a generic title, it did for any one whom the judge could not quite see. He considered that a name stopped unnecessary chatter,—made an end of it; if you once knew that it was Watson or Dunlap, you let it alone.

In reality the figure was that of Paul Tennant. After reading Eve's note he crushed the sheet in his hand, and turned towards the house with rapid stride. There was no one in the hall; he rang the parlor bell.

"Do you know where Miss Bruce is?" he asked, when Powlyne appeared.

“In her room, marse, I spex.”

“Go and see. Don’t knock; listen.” He paced to and fro until Powlyne came back.

“Ain’t dere, marse. Nor yet, periently, she ain’t in de house anywhuz; spex she’s gone fer a walk.”

“Go and find out if any one knows which way she went.”

But no one had seen Eve.

“Where is Mrs. Morrison?”

“She’s yere, safe enough. I know whur she is,” answered Powlyne. “Mis’ Morrison she’s down at de barf-house, taken a barf.”

“Is any one with her?”

“Dilsey; she’s dere.”

“Go and ask Dilsey how soon Mrs. Morrison can see me.”

Powlyne started. As she did not come back immediately, he grew impatient, and went himself to the bath-house. It was a queer little place, a small wooden building, near the sound. It seemed an odd idea to bathe there, in a tank filled by a pump, when, twenty feet distant, stretched the lagoon, and on the other side of the island the magnificent sea-beach, smooth as a floor.

Paul knocked. “How soon can Mrs. Morrison see me?”

“She’s troo her barf,” answered Dilsey’s voice at the crack. “Now she’s dess a-lounjun.”

“Tell her who it is;—that it’s important.”

In another moment Dilsey opened the door, and ushered him into the outer room. It was a square apartment, bare and rough, lighted only from above; its sole article of furniture was a divan in the centre; an inner door led to the bath-room beyond. Upon the divan Cicely was lying, her head propped by cushions, the soft waves of her hair loose on her shoulders. Delicate white draperies, profusely trimmed with lace,

enveloped her, exhaling an odor of violets.

“Cicely, where is Eve?” demanded Paul.

“Wait outside, Dilsey,” said Cicely. Then, when the girl had disappeared, “She has gone to Charleston,” she answered.

“And from there?”

“I don’t know.”

“When did she start!”

“Two hours ago.”

—“Immediately after leaving me,” Paul reflected, audibly.

“Yes.”

“But there’s no steamer at this hour.”

“One of the field hands rowed her up to Mayport; there she was to take a wagon, and drive inland to a railway station.”

“She could only hit the Western Road.”

“Yes; but she can make a connection, farther on, which will enable her to reach Charleston by to-morrow night.”

“I shall be twelve hours behind her, then; the first steamer leaves this evening. You are a traitor, Cicely! Why didn’t you let me know?”

“She did not wish it.”

“I know what she wishes.”

“Yes, she loves you—if you mean that. But—I agree with her.”

“Agree with her how?”

“That the barrier is too great. You would end by hating her,” said Cicely.

“I’m the judge of that! If any one hates her, it is you; you constantly torture her, you are merciless.”

“She shot my husband.”

“She shot your murderer! Another moment and Ferdie might have killed you.”

“And if I preferred it? At any rate, she had no right to interfere,” cried Cicely, springing up.

“Why were you running away from him, then, if you preferred it? You fled to her room, and asked for help; you begged her to come out with you.”

“It was on account of baby,” answered Cicely, her voice like that of a little girl, her breast beginning to heave.

“And she saved your child’s life a second time—on Lake Superior.”

“I know it—I know it. But you cannot expect—”

“I expect nothing; you are absolutely unreasonable, and profoundly selfish.”

“I’m not selfish. I only want to make her suffer!” cried Cicely, with sparkling eyes.

Paul looked at her sternly. “In that dress you appear like a courtesan; and now you talk like one. It is a good thing my brother was taken off, after all—with such a wife!”

Cicely sank down at his feet. “Oh, don’t say that, Paul; it is not true. All this—these are the things that are underneath, they are the things that touch me; you never see them when I am dressed. It is only that I always liked to be nice for him; that is the reason I had all this lace; and I keep it up, because I want him to think of me always as just the same; yes, even when I am old. For I know he does think of me, and he sees me too; he is often here. Listen,—I can’t help hating Eve, Paul. But it only comes in little whiffs, now and then. Supposing I had shot her, could you like me, after that?” She rose, holding up her hands to him pleadingly. “In one way I love Eve.”

“Yet you let her go! Heaven knows where she is now.”

He turned his head away sharply. But she saw his tears. “No, Paul,” she cried,

terrified, “she isn’t dead—if you mean that; she told me once, ‘As long as he is in the world, I want to live!’”

“Well—I shall go after her,” said Paul, controlling himself. He turned towards the door.

Cicely followed him. “Say good-by to me.” She put up her face.

He touched her forehead with his lips. Then he held her off for a moment, and looked at her. “Poor child!” he said.

He returned to the house for his travelling-bag; he remembered that he had left it in the parlor upon his arrival, five hours before.

The pleasant, shabby room, as he opened the door, held a characteristic group: Miss Sabrina, gliding about with plum-cake; the judge, pouring cherry-bounce; Mistress Nannie Singleton, serenely seated, undergoing the process of being brushed by Clementine and Powlyne, who made hissing sounds like hostlers, and, standing on one foot in a bent attitude, held out behind a long leg. Rupert Singleton, seated in the largest arm-chair, was evidently paying compliments to Miss Leontine, who, gratified and embarrassed, and much entangled with her wineglass, her gloves, and her plate of cake, hardly knew, to use a familiar expression, whether she was on her head or her heels. Not that Miss Sabrina would have mentioned her heels; to her, heels, shins, and ribs did not exist, in a public way; they were almost medical terms, belonging to the vocabulary of the surgeon.

“I beg your pardon; I think I left my bag here,” said Paul.

“I had it taken to your room,” answered Miss Sabrina, coming forward. “Powlyne, go with Mr. Tennant.”

“Let her bring it down, please; I am leaving immediately,” said Paul, shaking hands with his hostess in farewell.

The judge followed him out. “Leaving, did you say? But you’ve only just come.”

“I am going to Charleston.—I must follow Miss Bruce without a moment’s delay.”

“Has she gone!” There was a gleam of triumph in the old Georgian’s eyes as he said this. “You will find Charleston a very pleasant place,” he added, politely.

XXXIV.

“DRIVE to the New York steamer.”

“She’s off, boss. Past her time.”

“Drive, I tell you.”

The negro coachman cracked his whip, his two rawboned steeds broke into a gallop; the loose-jointed landau behind clattered and danced over the stones.

“Faster,” said Paul.

The negro stood up, he shook the reins over the backs of his team with a galloping motion that corresponded with the sound of their feet; in addition, he yelled without intermission. They swayed round corners, they lurched against railings and other carriages; every head turned, people made way for them as for a fire-engine; at last they reached the harbor, and went clattering down the descent to the dock. Here there met them the usual assemblage of loiterers, who were watching the steamer, which was already half a mile distant, churning the blue water into foam behind her, her nose pointed straight towards Sumter.

Paul watched the line of her smoke for a moment; then he got out of his carriage, paid the coachman mechanically, told him to take his luggage to the Charleston Hotel, and walked away, unconscious alike of the mingled derision and sympathy which his late arrival had drawn from the group—boys with market-baskets, girls with baby-wagons, slouching mulattoes with fishing-tackle, and little negroes of tender age with spongy lips and bare prehensile toes, to whose minds the departure of the steamer was a daily drama of intensest interest and excitement.

There was nothing to be done until evening, when he could take the fast train to New York. Paul went to the Battery; but noticed nothing. A band from the arsenal began to play; immediately over all the windows of the tall old houses which looked seaward the white shades descended; Northern music was not wanted there. He went up Meeting Street; and noticed nothing. Yet on each side, within sight, were picturesque ruins, and St. Michael's spire bore the marks of the bomb-shells of the siege. He opened the gate of the church-yard of the little Huguenot church and entered; the long inscriptions on the flat stones were quaint, but he did not read them. He walked into the country by the shaded road across the neck. Then he came back again. He strolled hither and thither, he stared at the old Manigault House. Finally, at three o'clock, he went to the hotel.

Half an hour later an omnibus came up; waiters in white and bell-boys with wisp-brushes rushed out, dusty travellers descended; Paul, standing under the white marble columns, looked on. He still stood there after the omnibus had rolled away, and all was quiet, so quiet that a cat stole out and crossed the street, walking daintily on its clean white paving-stones, and disappearing under a wall opposite.

A figure came to the doorway behind, Paul became conscious that he was undergoing inspection; he turned, and scanned the gazer. It proved to be a muscular, broad-shouldered man of thirty-five, with a short yellow beard and clumsy features, which were, however, lighted by keen blue eyes; his clothes were dusty, he carried a travelling-bag; evidently he was one of the travellers who had just arrived, coming from the Northern train. A bell-boy came out and looked up and down the colonnade; then, with his wisp-brush, he indicated Paul.

"Dat's him, sah.—You was a-asking."

"All right," said the traveller. Putting his travelling-bag on a bench, he walked up to Paul. "Think I know you. Mr. Tennant, isn't it—Port aux Pins? Saw your name on the book. I'm Dr. Knox—the one who was with your brother."

Paul's face changed, its fixed look disappeared. "Will you come to my room?"

"In twenty minutes. I must have a wash first, and something to eat. Be here long?"

"I go North at six o'clock."

"All right, I'll look sharp, then; we'll have time."

In twenty minutes he appeared at Paul's door. The door was open, revealing the usual bachelor's room, with one window, a narrow bed, a washstand, one chair, a red velvet sofa, with a table before it; the bed was draped in white mosquito netting; the open window looked down upon a garden, where were half a dozen negro nurses with their charges—pretty little white children, overdressed, and chattering in the sweet voices of South Carolina.

"Curious that I should have run against you here, when this very moment I am on my way to hunt you up," said Knox, trying first the chair, and then the sofa. "I landed twenty-four hours ago in New York; been off on a long yachting excursion; started immediately after your brother's death,—perhaps Miss Abercrombie told you? Whole thing entirely unexpected; had to decide in ten minutes, and go on board in an hour, or lose the chance; big salary, expenses paid; couldn't afford to lose it. I'd have written before starting, if it had been possible; but it wasn't. And after I was once off, my eyes gave way suddenly, and I had to give them a rest. It wasn't a thing to write, anyway; it was a thing to tell. There was nothing to be done in any case, and such kind of news will keep; so I decided that as soon as I landed, I'd come down here and find out about you and Miss Abercrombie; then I was going up to Port aux Pins—or wherever you were—to see you."

"I suppose you can tell me—in three words—what all this is about," said Paul, who had not seated himself.

"Yes, easy. What do you suppose was the cause of your brother's death?"

"Pistol-shot," Paul answered, curtly.

“No, that was over, I had cured him of that; I telegraphed you that the wound wasn’t dangerous, and it wasn’t. No, sir; he died of a spree—of a series of ’em.”

Paul sat down.

“I say, have some brandy? No? Well, then I’ll go on, and get it over. But don’t you go to thinking that I’m down on Ferdie; I’m not, I just loved that fellow; I don’t know when I’ve seen anybody that took me so. I was called to him, you know, after those negroes shot him. ’Twasn’t in itself a vital wound; only a tedious one; the difficulty was fever, but after a while we subdued that. Of course I saw what was behind,—he had had an attack of something like delirium tremens; it was that which complicated matters. Well, I went over there every day, sometimes twice a day; I took the biggest sort of interest in the case, and, besides, we got to be first-rate chums. I set about doing everything I could for him, not only in the regular line of business, but also morally, as one may call it; as a friend. You see, I wanted to open his eyes to the danger he was in; he hadn’t the least conception of it. He thought that it was only a question of will, and that his will was particularly strong;—that sort of talk. Well, after rather a slow job of it, I pronounced him cured—as far as the wound was concerned; all he needed was rest. Did he take it? By George, sir, he didn’t! He slipped off to Savannah, not letting me know a gleam of it, and there he was joined by—I don’t know whether you have heard that there was a woman in the case?”

Paul nodded.

“And she wasn’t the only one, though she supposed she was. From the first, the drink got hold of him again. And this time it killed him,—he led an awful life of it there for days. As soon as I found out that he had gone—which wasn’t at once, as I had given up going over there regularly—I chased up to Savannah after him as fast as I could tear,—I had the feeling that he was going to the devil! I couldn’t find him at first, though I scoured the town. And when I did, he was past helping;—all I could do was to try to get him back to Romney; I wanted him to die decently, at home, and

not up there among those— Well, sir, he died the next day. I couldn't tell those women down there—Miss Abercrombie, Mrs. Singleton, and her aunt, Miss Peggy. They were all there, of course, and crying; but they would have cried a great deal worse if they had known the truth, and, as there was nothing to be gained by it for any one, it seemed cruel to tell them. For good women are awful fools, you know; they are a great deal harder than we are; they think nothing of sending a man to hell; they're awfully intolerant. 'Tany rate, I made up my mind that I'd say nothing except to you, leaving it to you to inform the wife or not, as you thought best. Then, suddenly, off I had to go on that yachting expedition. But as soon as I landed I started; and, here I am—on the first stage of the journey."

Paul did not speak.

"I say, do you take it so hard, then?" said Knox, with an embarrassed laugh.

Paul got up. "You have done me the greatest service that one man can do another." He put out his hand.

Knox, much relieved, gave it a prolonged shake. "Faults and all, he was the biggest kind of a trump, wasn't he? Drunkards are death to the women—to the wives and mothers and sisters; but some of 'em are more lovable than lots of the moral skinflints that go nagging about, saving a penny, and grinding everybody but themselves. The trouble with Ferdie was that he was born without any conscience, just as some people have no ear for music; it was a case of heredity; and heredity, you know—"

"You needn't excuse him to me," said Paul.

XXXV.

OUTSIDE of a walled town in North Italy there stands, on a high hill, an old villa, which, owing to its position, is visible for miles in every direction. It was built in the fourteenth century. Its once high tower was lowered in A. D. 1423. Its blank yellow

walls are long, pierced irregularly by large windows, which are covered with iron cages; massive doors open upon a square court-yard within; an avenue of cypresses leads up the bare hill to the entrance.

Sixteen days after the conversation between Paul Tennant and Edward Knox, three persons were standing in the court-yard of this villa behind the closed outer doors. The court-yard was large, open to the sky; a stone shield, bearing three carved wolves, was tilted forward on one of the walls; opposite, over a door, there was a headless figure of a man in armor; a small zinc cross over a smaller door marked the entrance to the family chapel. In one corner stood a circular stone well, with a yellow marble parapet supported by grinning masks; in another hung a wire cord that led to a bell above, which was covered by a little turret roof, also bearing a cross. There were no vines or flowers, not a green leaf; the yard was bare, paved with large stones, which, though ancient, were clean; the blades of grass marking the interstices, usual in Italy, were absent here.

Of the three persons who stood together near the well, one was a stout woman with a square face, an air of decision and business-like cheerfulness, and pretty hands which she kept crossed on her black dress. The second was a small, thin man of fifty. The third was Paul Tennant.

“I have heard your reasons, I am not satisfied with them,” Paul was saying; “I must insist upon seeing her.”

“But consider, pray—when I tell you that she does not wish to see you,” said the woman, rubbing her hands together, and then looking at them inspectingly.

“How can I be sure of that?”

“You have my word for it.”

“It is as Mrs. Wingate says,” interposed the small, thin man, earnestly. His voice was clear and sweet.

“Miss Bruce may have said it. But when we have once met—”

"Well, I think I'll go in now," interrupted Mrs. Wingate, giving her hands a last rub, looking at them, and then crossing them on her black dress again. "I've given you twenty minutes, but I've a thousand things to do; all the clothes to cut out—fancy! I leave you with Mr. Smith. Good-day."

"Instead of leaving me, you had better take me to Miss Bruce," said Paul.

She shook her finger at him. "Do you think I'd play her such a trick as that?" She crossed the court, opened a door, and disappeared.

Paul turned impatiently to Mr. Smith. "There is something that Miss Bruce must know. Call her down immediately."

Mr. Smith was silent. Then he said: "I might evade, but I prefer not to; the lady you speak of has asked our protection, and especially from you; she is soon to be taken into the Holy Church."

"So you're a priest, are you?" said Paul, in a fury.

"And that woman Wingate is your accomplice? Now I know where to have you!"

Mr. Smith did not quail, though Paul's fist was close under his nose. "I am not a priest; Mrs. Wingate is an English lady of fortune, who devotes her life to charitable works. Miss Bruce came to us of her own accord, only three days ago. She was ill and unhappy. Now she is—tranquil."

"Is she—is she alive?" said Paul, his voice suddenly beginning to tremble. It had come to him that Eve was dead.

"She is. I may as well tell you that she did not wish to be; but—but it has been represented to her that our lives are not our own, to cut short as we please; and so she has repented."

"I don't believe she has repented!" said Paul, with inconsequent anger. He hated the word, and the quiet little man.

"She told me that she had killed some one," Mr. Smith went on, in a whisper, his

voice, even in a whisper, however, preserving its sweetness.

“See here!” said Paul, taking him by the arm eagerly; “that is what I have come for; all these months she has thought so, but it is a mistake; he died from another cause.”

“Thank God!” said Mr. Smith.

“Thank God and bring her out, man! She is the one to know.”

“I’ll do what I can. But it may not be thought best by those in authority; I must warn you that I shall obey the orders of my superior, in any case.”

“Yet you don’t look like an ass!”

“Wait here, please,” said Mr. Smith, without noticing this comment. He opened a door beside the chapel (not the one by which Mrs. Wingate had entered), and, going in, gently closed it behind him.

Paul waited. Five minutes passed. Ten. Fifteen. He tried all the doors; they were locked. He went over to the corner where the bell-rope hung and pulled it twice; “cling-clang! cling-clang!” sounded the bell in its turret.

In answer a window opened above, and a large, placid Italian peasant appeared, looking at him amiably.

“Mr. Smith?” said Paul.

“Fuori.”

“Mrs. Wingate, then?”

“Fuori.”

“There’s only one road—the one by which I came up, and I haven’t heard any carriage drive away; if ‘Fuori’ means out, you are not telling the truth; they are not out, they are here.”

The Italian smiled, still amiably.

“Is there any one here who speaks English?” said Paul, in despair.

“Ingleese? Si.” She went off with the same serene expression. Before long she appeared again at a door below, which she left open; Paul could see a bare stone-floored hall, with a staircase at the end.

Presently down the staircase came a quick-stepping little old woman, with a black lace veil on her head; she came briskly to the door. “I hear you wish to speak to me?”

“You’re an American,” said Paul. “I’m glad of that.”

“Well, you’re another, and I’m not glad of it! Americans are limited. Besides, they are Puritans. My being an American doesn’t make any difference to you, that I know of.”

“Yes, it does. You come from a country where no one is shut up.”

“How about the prisons?”

“For criminals, yes. Not for girls.”

“Girls are silly. Have nothing to do with them until they are older; that’s my advice,” said the old lady, alertly.

“Do you know Miss Bruce?”

“A little.”

“Take me to her.”

“I can’t, she is in retreat.”

“You wouldn’t approve of force being used for any one; I am sure you would not,” said Paul, trying to speak gently.

“Force? Force is never used here, you must be out of your mind. If you do not see Miss Bruce, you may depend that it is because she does not wish to see you.”

“She would—if she could hear me say one word!”

“No doubt you’d cajole her! I’m glad she is where you can’t get at her, poor dear!”

“She was to have been my wife two weeks ago,” said Paul, making a last effort to soften her.

“Well, go home now; she’ll never be your wife this side the grave,” said the old lady, laughing.

“I’ll make all Italy ring with it, madam. This old house shall come down about your ears.”

“Mercy me! We’re not Italians, we’re English. And we’ve got a government protection; it’s a charitable institution.”

“For inveigling people, and getting their money! Miss Bruce, you know, has money.”

“I didn’t know a thing about it—not a thing! Money, has she? Well, Ernestine Wingate does like money; she wants to build a new wing. Look here, young man, Father Ambrose is coming here to-day; you want to see him. He’ll do what’s right, he is a very good man; and he commands all the others; they have to do as he says, whether they like it or not,—I guess you’d better not hurry away.” And, with a nod in which there was almost a wink, the American convert went back down the hall and up the stairway, disappearing through a door which closed with a sharp bang behind her.

Paul crossed the court-yard, and, opening one of the great portals, he passed through, shutting it behind him. Outside, attached to the wall of the villa, there ran a long, low stone bench, crumbling and overgrown with ivy; he sat down here, and remained motionless.

An hour later a carriage drove up, and a priest descended; he was a man of fifty-eight or there-abouts, tall, with a fine bearing and an agreeable face. Paul went up to him, touching his hat as he did so. “Are you going in?”

“That is what I have come for,” answered the priest, smiling.

The doors, meanwhile, had been thrown open; the priest passed in, followed by Paul.

When they reached the court-yard the priest stopped. “Will you kindly tell me your business?”

“It concerns Miss Bruce, an American who has only been here a few days. She came, supposing that the death of my brother was due to an act of hers; I have just learned that she is completely mistaken, he died from another cause.”

“God be praised! She has been very unhappy—very,” said the priest, with sympathy. “This will relieve her.”

“I should like to see her.—The whole community can be present, if you please.”

“That will hardly be necessary,” said Father Ambrose, smiling again. He went towards the door by the side of the chapel. “I will tell her myself, I will go at once.” He opened the door.

“I prefer to see her. You have no real authority over her, she has not yet taken the vows.”

“There has been no talk of vows,” said Father Ambrose, waving his hand with an amused air. “Every one is free here, I don’t know what you are thinking of! If you will give me your address, Miss Bruce will write to you.”

“Do you refuse to let me see her?”

“For the present—yes. You must remember that we don’t know who you are.”

“She will tell you.”

“Yes; she is very intelligent,” answered the priest, entering the doorway and preparing to mount the stairs.

But Paul knocked him down.

Then he ran forward up the stairs; he opened doors at random, he ran through room after room; women met him, and screamed. At last, where the hall turned sharply,

Mr. Smith confronted him. Mr. Smith was perfectly composed.

“Let me pass,” said Paul.

“In a moment. All shall be as you like, if you will wait—”

“Wait yourself!” cried Paul, felling him to the floor. Then he ran on.

At the end of the hall Mrs. Wingate stopped him. Her manner was unaltered; it was business-like and cheerful; her plump hands were clasped over her dress.

“Now,” she said, “no more violence! You’ll hardly knock down a woman, I suppose?”

“Forty, if necessary.”

He thrust her against the wall, and began trying the doors. There were three of them. Two were locked. As his hand touched the third, Mrs. Wingate came to his side, and opened it promptly and quietly.

“No one has ever wished to prevent your entrance,” she said. “Your violence has been unnecessary—the violence of a boor!”

Paul laughed in her face.

There was no one in the room. But there was a second door. He opened it. And took Eve in his arms.

THE END.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK JUPITER LIGHTS ***

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