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THE GLEAMING ARCHWAY

By

A. M. STEPHEN

Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
Tennyson.

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CHAP.

CHAPTER I

THE CAVE MAN

A strip of dusty road flung like a sinewy arm through a rippling ocean of green leaves—the flash of scarlet berries against the gloom of bracken and dense undergrowth—slender trunks of alders and scarred pillars of the firs, supporting sombre masses of foliage which hid the sky, seemed a bit of heaven to the eyes of Craig Maitland, reporter. These things served to render distant all memories connected with the editorial rooms of the *Daily Telegraph*—the endless clicking of typewriters and the jarring undertones of street-cars which permeated the stuffy air of the offices where the public pabulum was manufactured. Space had to be filled, but trees were preferable to type as fillers, while peace, with time to think for oneself, was a boon beyond price. So intent was he upon letting the July day work its miracle upon his tired nerves that he was almost unaware of the other occupant of the buck-board in which they were making their way up the main road into the Squamish Valley. With a mild interest, as of one lazily reclining in the lap of sunshine and contentment, he turned to look at the man by his side. Then he looked again.

The driver, who sat hunched in the wooden seat while the reins dangled from his gnarled hands, was no ordinary lumberman or farmer. Maitland had noticed him but casually in the bustle of landing from the little steamer. At the wharf, which was the point of contact between the Valley and the outer world, an unkempt figure had pushed through the crowd, asked his name, seized his grips and had deposited them in a rickety carriage. At that moment, only the man's bulk had impressed itself upon him. Now he found Bud Powers, his host, more worthy of study than the wonder of the summer day which glowed about him.

Used to the types on the water-front of a seaport, and to the loggers who crowded its saloons, he realised that this man was of a species new to him. A friend, knowing his need for a holiday, had said, "Go up to the Squamish. Stay at Bud Powers' for a week. Get him to take you about. He's a cure, that chap is. He'll get you back to Nature ... a regular cave man!"

A cave man! Looking at his companion, Craig saw that he was of huge size. Like the ungainly brown horse he was driving, the man seemed to fit awkwardly into his place. Hair, iron-grey in colour, started to grow within a finger's width from his shaggy eyebrows, and extended back to a point somewhere between his reddened shoulder-blades. Eyes, black and furtive, gleamed from beneath projecting brows, while a grizzly stubble, partially hiding sensual lips stained by tobacco, covered his heavy jaws. He was coatless. A greasy undershirt of wool, suspenders stiff with dirt, blue denim overalls and logger's boots comprised his costume. Now and then, when Powers leaned aside and raised a spurt of dust from the road, the young man noticed that he spouted the brown juice with the precision of long practice. Craig wondered about the man's house. He wanted an outing, but he felt that he must have clean food and unsoiled bed-linen.

They were now climbing a slight rise, and the rattling of the buck-board had somewhat subsided. Turning a bend in the road, the timber opened to the right, disclosing a little clearing where tall grass and purple fireweed surrounded a

cluster of stumps and a dilapidated log cabin. A fence made of upturned roots, covered by brush and vines, separated the homestead from the highway.

"This land must be pretty hard to clear," Craig roused himself to say. He wanted to hear his companion's voice.

Powers glanced at him patronisingly. His smile showed a row of strong, yellow-stained teeth.

"If you're lookin' for a life job, kid, take a homestead in these parts."

"This fellow is just starting, I suppose," ventured the newspaper man.

"Startin'!" The man spat vigorously and shook the reins. "He's been here for twenty years. What's the use of workin'? There's plenty of salmon in the river and lots of deer in the hills. Them guys don't work—only enough to get a sack of flour and a side of bacon. Then they den up till it's gone."

"That's too bad. It must be fine land," said Craig.

"Oh, I dunno. What's the use of workin' for other folks anyhow? What's the use of workin' to make some darn capitalist richer? That's the way I look at it." Bud's voice trailed into a growl and a defiant look crossed his face.

"An ugly customer. I'd as soon tackle a grizzly." The thought, in Maitland's mind, checked further remarks.

A song-sparrow trilled its careless notes from the roadside. A glimpse of the blue waters of the Squamish River flashed between the trees to their left. The road entered the stillness and the cool twilight of the big timber again.

Why should discord—the echo of industrial discontent and strife—enter the seclusion of this beautiful valley? It seemed out of place here. And yet, Craig knew that the propaganda of the Labour Party had been carried into the logging-camps all along the British Columbian coast. In fact, he had heard that a Socialist local had established a branch in this district. He had been interested in the news because, only recently, he had been drawn by an ardent sympathy into more than an academic study of the struggle between the submerged classes and the established powers. Long ago his views had been coloured by a schoolboy's admiration for Shelley and, as time went on, his idealistic temperament had naturally led him to espouse causes which were humanitarian.

Glancing at the ill-shapen bulk of the man who had just echoed the discontent of the workers, Craig found himself thinking of the protean-like monsters, the distorted human flotsam and jetsam which had been thrown up during the French Revolution to crush the thoughtless butterflies of wealth and fashion. Could revolutions ever be good? Was it ever the part of wisdom to stir the uncharted deeps in man or to loose the primitive savage from the bonds of law or communal control? Quickly he banished the thought. Problems were to be left behind him for a time. Here was Earth, the kindly mother, calling to him from moist thickets of fern and moss to rest from labour—to let her ministering hands draw the fever from his brain and share with him her unviolated peace.

Gradually the road became more uneven. Logs had been laid in the softer places during the rainy season. The buck-board jolted and bumped uncomfortably over the projecting timbers in the path.

Then, without warning, the heels of the big colt struck the dashboard. The harness had slipped, causing the whiffle-trees to touch his legs. He was frantic with fear. The seat, which was not fastened to the sides of the vehicle, was overturned and, to escape the flying hooves of the animal, both Craig and his companion had to scramble to the back of the cart. Powers, crouching, exerted his strength to control the terrified brute, who seemed determined to smash his way to freedom. Maitland forgot his own danger in watching the struggle which followed. The horse was no more a picture of mad, unreasoning fury than the driver, whose great hairy chest laboured and whose muscles bulged and stiffened as he pitted primitive strength against strength. For what seemed a considerable time to Craig, the fight continued while he clung to the swaying buck-board. At last, the horse reared. With a terrific jerk upon the tightened reins, Powers actually bent the head of the plunging creature until it touched its shoulder. The animal collapsed amid a tangled heap of broken shafts and harness.

As the cart came to a standstill, the young man was startled by a low, inhuman cry at his side. Powers leaped from

his place and, rushing at the horse, which was floundering helplessly, he began to kick it about the head, trampling upon it with his heavy logger's boots. Scrambling over the end of the cart, Maitland shouted, as he reached the ground, "Damn it, man, stop it! Stop it, I say!" Bud's face, working convulsively, was turned towards him for a moment. The man's expression was horrible in its ferocity. Craig believed that he would have to fight for his life. Then the big fellow took himself in hand. He trembled as he wiped the perspiration from his brow with the back of a grimy hand. Looking furtively about with reddened eyes, he tried to assume a friendly countenance, but remained merely sullen and apologetic.

"Sorry I lost my temper, kid. But, you see, I know this darned brute. This is the second time he's acted up this way, and I gotta break him."

Craig spoke coldly, disgust apparent in his voice. "I'll help you to get the harness loose and we'll give him a chance to stand up."

They worked rapidly and silently, and then moved aside while the animal, too dazed to attempt escape, struggled to its feet. Craig placed his hand upon the colt's neck and, while he petted it, he noticed the blood trickling from cuts about its eyes and ears. Involuntarily his hand clenched. He was about to swing upon his companion with an impulsive announcement that he would go back to the wharf to seek lodging at the hotel there.

"I'm sorry—plumb sorry! I don't know when I ever let loose like that before. I bought that horse about a week ago and he's mighty nigh killed me twice in that time. But, I shouldn't have got mad."

Maitland sensed the whine in the man's tones. He looked contrite and thoroughly ashamed—a big, hulking boy ready to take his whipping. His huge frame seemed to express dejection and a sort of dumb helplessness in its drooping lines. With one hand he hitched up his trousers with a nervous gesture. Then it was that the newspaper-man noted the startling length of the arms protruding from the dingy woollen sleeves. Hanging at his side, they almost reached his knees. Maitland had never been interested by ordinary people. He preferred freaks to the characterless nonentities turned out as grist from the educational mills. Powers fascinated him. Was he really a "throw-back"? The man standing in the chequered shadows cast by the great trees seemed strangely akin to the gnarled Titans of the forest. Like them, he held the mystery and silent strength of a past age which knew only a savage will to ravage and destroy.

Craig said doubtfully, "Can we patch up the rig?"

"Sure," replied Powers, with a show of cheerfulness. "There's some wire in the back of the cart. Gimme some hay-wire and I kin fix most anything."

While Maitland held the colt, his host busied himself with the shafts and harness.

"It'll last till we git to my place. 'Tain't far."

The horse trembled and shied, but finally a start was made. They drove slowly, allowing the animal to make its own pace.

The road wound through big timber skirting the bank of the river. Occasional open spaces permitted them to see across to the rampart of wooded mountains which formed the western boundary of the valley. Shimmering in the air of a July noon, these densely forested slopes reached up to a cloudless sky. Here and there, a ledge of grey rock broke the green and, over it, a waving banner of silvery foam marked the course of a waterfall. They passed several clearings—little rifts in the timber revealing cabins roofed with moss-covered shakes. Then they emerged into open country which was more thickly settled. Passing a hop-ranch with its serried rows of golden-green vines, they turned into a lane which led to a large house built of unpainted lumber. The size of the place indicated that it might be a hostelry. It was evidently new, the boards still unstained by the weather. While the carriage-wheels crunched over bits of wood and shavings scattered about the door-yard, two dogs of nondescript breed rushed to meet them.

Maitland was glad that the journey was over. Since the incident with the colt, his host had preserved a shamefaced silence and had offered no comment upon the places they had passed. However, when they drew up to his door, he turned to Craig with an attempt to be genial.

"Well! Here we are. Not much of a dump, but there's lots of grub. The old lady's some cook. Down, Snap! Down, Towser! There's the missus. Here's your new boarder."

Powers was already engaged in unhitching the horse from the buck-board. Craig Maitland, climbing down from his seat, confronted his hostess. Instantly his dread of unclean food and squalid beds vanished. This trim little woman in her starched calico gown was as spotless as a bit of newly-scoured porcelain. Her light brown hair was pulled into place and held with Puritanical precision by the modest, old-fashioned coil upon her crown. Her face was plain to the point of homeliness, the wide and generous mouth contradicted by extremely thin lips, the pale blue eyes those of a nervous child. Arms a-kimbo above her white apron-strings, she welcomed Maitland. The lilt on her tongue was Irish, and her guest, being a Celt, warmed to it.

"Shure, it's hot and dusty you must be. Come right in, Mr. Maitland. I'll show you up to your room. An' I'll have a cup of tay waitin' when you're freshened up."

She talked while Craig gathered his grips and started towards the doorway. Not a word of greeting did she vouchsafe to her husband. Craig refused her offer of assistance with the bags and followed her inside. The invigorating smell of newly cut fir pervaded the place. They passed through a dining-room, where several deal tables stood covered by snowy linen; then, up a crude stairway they climbed to the upper story of the house. Mrs. Powers ushered her guest into a tiny room tucked beneath the rafters. The walls were half-finished, the studding exposed, and tar-paper gleamed dully between the boards of the roof. However, it was clean. Sheets, peeping from below a bright patchwork quilt, were white as sunshine and starch could make them.

"If there's annything—a bit more hot water or annything—just let me know, Mr. Maitland."

Voice, figure, every movement of her was that of a little spinster already caged by the years and contentedly happy if undisturbed in her own secluded world. She gave Maitland a prim, friendly smile when she turned to go downstairs.

"How in the dickens did that big brute get hold of a decent woman? How can she stand him?" Maitland's thoughts recalled her smile. She had displayed the pink edges of a plate of false teeth. "Probably—dear knows how long ago—she may have been pretty. How women crumple up—like dry leaves—if Life passes them by!"

From the kitchen below him there sounded the coarse booming of the man's voice mingled with the high-pitched tones of his wife. They were engaged in an altercation, but he could not overhear their words. Having washed off the dust and put on a clean collar, Maitland went down to the dining-room.

Through an open doorway he caught a glimpse of the shining metal of a kitchen range, and the glint of sunlight upon polished pans and kettles. Seeing a place set at one of the tables, he moved over to it and, as he did so, Powers appeared, his big frame almost hiding the stove and the glittering vessels behind him. Maitland could not restrain a smile. His host was covered from chin to knee by a clean white apron which bulged rebelliously in places. The grimy undershirt was not in sight, but cambric sleeves rolled back revealed the hairy hands and arms, which seemed ludicrously large for their present task. Upon a tray they held a teapot of Rockingham ware, a dainty cup and saucer, and a creamer.

"The missus says I make a swell waiter, but I need some fixin' in places, an' she's gotta keep an eye on her dishes."

Powers was grinning like a schoolboy. Apparently he enjoyed being considered queer, and the half-puzzled look upon Maitland's face gratified him. His wife stood in the kitchen, her hands braced upon her hips—silent.

She watched her husband with an air of proprietorship while he clumsily deposited the tray upon the table, and watched, too, while he arranged the tea-things before their guest. When he had safely accomplished this, she turned away to busy herself with the pots upon the range. Maitland was glad enough to see Powers draw out a chair and seat himself with one elbow gingerly resting upon the table-cloth. He wanted further opportunity to know this man, who was decidedly of a different kind from those found in the editorial rooms of the *Telegraph*.

"Mrs. Powers makes wonderful tea."

"She sure does. That's why I built this ho-tel. City folks are beginning to find out that we've got a great country up here, and I says to myself, 'We'll get in on the ground floor.' The wife's cookin'll fetch 'em. I ain't no slouch at cookin' myself. Done lots of it round camps in my time."

"You have followed logging, Mr. Powers?"

The man looked deprecatingly at Craig.

"Call me Bud, son! I ain't used to Mister. We're goin' to be pals. Jimmy Kearney, he heard you speakin' at a Socialist meetin' in Vancouver, and he says you're all right. We're a good bunch up here—solid—red as they make 'em. Hope you'll be able to give us a talk before you go away."

Craig looked his surprise. "You don't mean to say that most of the people up here are Socialists?"

"No," replied Powers, "I should say not. Just round the camps farther up the valley. The rest of 'em are moss-backs, remittance men, dyed-in-the-wool Tories, most of 'em. Have some more tea? They're wage-slaves and don't know it. They won't know it till their bellies hit their backbones. That's what I say."

Mrs. Powers appeared again in the doorway. "Whisht!" she said. "Let the gentleman drink his tay. He's not wantin' to listen to your blathers."

Embarrassed, Maitland glanced at his companion. A rather ugly look flashed across the man's face. He gathered up the tray and rose to his feet.

"The missus ain't wise to runnin' a boardin'-house." He winked at Craig. "While the guests are talkin', they ain't eatin'."

In spite of the young man's hurried assurance that he was enjoying the chat, Bud retired to the kitchen. The domestic atmosphere was tense and Maitland had no desire to precipitate a storm by an inadvertent move. He finished his light lunch in silence. He could see the pair moving about their work. The woman was apparently on edge, in some subconscious way, like a trapped animal whose sole satisfaction was obtained by biting at the stick which her tormentor held towards her. In little, sudden, snappy bursts of words, she attempted to assert her wifely instinct to manage her partner. She wanted to possess him, and although she writhed beneath his physical mastery she was attracted to him by some strange bond deep-hidden in her woman's soul. Wanting a husband, she had unwittingly taken to her heart an untamed savage incapable of any of the loyalties or graces. "Caveman!" Maitland recalled his friend's remark. Why—this woman's mate should have been a tradesman, honest and law-abiding, who filled a pew on Sunday mornings and who kept his Bible upon the parlour table during the rest of the week! Was human life a tragedy when viewed casually—a comedy when seen in proper perspective?

Outside, the sun was still dozing in the tangle of bracken, salmonberry vines, and salal which encroached upon the clearing. Its languor crept into the little dining-room. The buzzing of a bluebottle fly upon the window-pane intensified the warmth and stillness.

"Mrs. Powers, I am going to my room to lie down for a while—to rest up a bit." Maitland rose from the table and moved languidly towards the stairway.

"Shure, and it's quiet enough about here. Sleep if it comes to ye. I'll wake ye for dinner."

The little woman spoke carefully, choosing her words. She would impress her guest with the fact that she had known better days. She liked him, too. His tall, lithe figure, dark eyes, and sensitive features made him a general favourite with women.

Upstairs, he glanced out of the one small window in his room and saw Bud Powers walking across the clearing to the shake barn in the rear of it. He shambled with his knees slightly bent, chin thrust forward and head sunk between his massive shoulders. Beast or man? His body seemed akin to the knotted fir stumps about him. Like them, he seemed in place close to the earth—a fragment of its terrific power deep-rooted in the clinging soil. Turning, Maitland picked up

some pamphlets in red jackets which lay upon a table near at hand. "*Wage, Labour, and Capital; The Communist Manifesto*." He read the titles. Then, without undressing, he lay down upon the coverlet of the bed and went to sleep.

CHAPTER II

MAITLAND MEETS A DERELICT

Craig Maitland awoke from a confused dream, in which Tarzan-like monsters were writhing in the latest mazes of a modern dance, to the realisation that he was not in his hotel-room. For a moment he listened, expecting to hear the grating clang of wheels or the noise of street traffic, feeling, in the meantime, vaguely disturbed by the peace which surrounded him. Then his eyes, half-opened, saw the yellow rafters and the rough knotty boards of the roof with black strips of tar-paper showing between them.

"Mr. Maitland! Oh, Mr. Maitland! Supper!"

A thin voice from below reached him and completed his awakening.

"I surely needed a rest. That was a real sleep—the first for goodness knows when!" he thought, as he dashed water upon his face and dried himself upon a red-bordered bit of towelling which hung from a nail driven into the studding. He was eager to meet his host and hostess again. They were interesting—even more so than the odd types he had contacted in the Labour circles of the city. His idealism had persisted through all of his acquaintance with the "proletariat," as they like to style themselves, and he felt that, in spite of their crudities, they possessed sincerity, and were willing to suffer and sacrifice for the sake of a visionary future that held greater possibilities of wisdom and beauty. But just where, in the Commonwealth, would Bud Powers fit in?

Down in the dining-room he found himself the only guest, and did not regret the prospect of eating his meal in quietness. Savoury scents issued from the kitchen. Mrs. Powers was giving directions in regard to the soup—her husband grumbling like a hungry mastiff while she did so. He appeared presently, once more in his cumbersome livery as waiter, and with a hearty "Howdy!" deposited a plate of steaming broth before the guest.

Just then a shuffling step sounded without and, at the front door, between the sunlight and himself, Maitland saw one of the strangest human figures he had ever encountered. Were there no normal people in this weird valley? To his astonishment, he found himself gazing at an old man who wore a brown Turkish fez, much the worse for wear and shiny at the rim, which fitted tightly over the straggling hair beneath it. A grey beard, trimmed to a point, partially concealed a face of sickly whitish hue which was peculiarly repulsive. The colour of the skin drawn over the cheek-bones reminded Craig of a corpse. From behind a cheap, metal-rimmed pair of glasses, deep-sunken blue eyes peered out, but saw nothing. They were the eyes of a bookworm still intent upon a written page—oblivious to the outside world of solid things. A celluloid collar holding down a dirty black tie, an ancient morning coat of some musty undecided shade, and grey trousers, also of undetermined age, completed the outward symbols of an eccentric soul. The old chap started, paused, and blinked when Bud's voice announced, "Mr. Featherstone, this is Mr. Maitland from Vancouver. He's a newspaper man—come up for a holiday."

Craig rose to meet the new-comer, who raised a trembling hand while he said, "Be seated, Mr. Maitland. I am very pleased to meet you. Yes—ah—yes, soup, Bud. Thank you."

He noted the ultra-English, Oxford accent and the grace, making due allowance for years, which showed in his movements. Fingers, long and slim, stained by cigarettes, tucked a napkin into the space between the hard collar and his neck. Having tasted his soup, the old man continued, "Is this your first visit to Squamish, may I ask?"

"Yes, Mr. Featherstone, but not my last, I hope. It is a lovely spot."

"Very lovely, indeed—delightful! Quite the place for a rest, I hope that you will like it." With a lifting of his eyebrows, almost imperceptible, he glanced towards the kitchen. "You are not—pardon my asking—you are not a Socialist, by any chance?"

Craig blushed, then smiled. "Why—yes, I believe that I am."

The old man's shaking hands adjusted his knife and fork. He did not look up in answer to the young man's questioning gaze.

"Ah—sorry—sorry! Pardon me!"

Powers arrived with the old gentleman's second course, so that further remarks were checked for the moment. When he had gone, Craig opened the conversation again.

"May I ask, Mr. Featherstone, why you are sorry that I am a Socialist?"

"Certainly, sir. One longs, at times, to hear about something else. Most of the guests here are of that ilk. I feel a bit cut off—used to live in London, you know—have travelled—some years ago that was—but I am too old for that now—knocking about, I mean."

"I can assure you that I shall not talk Socialism to you," said Craig. "I would much rather hear about your travels, if you care to tell me about them. I have never been in the Old Land."

The tone in which the last sentence was uttered seemed to please the old gentleman.

"Well, well, we shall see! Come over to my place for a smoke and a nip. I have a little store, you know—trade with the Indians a bit. The British mail has just arrived. You might care to look at the papers—what?"

The usual amenities occupied the time until the meal was finished. When the old man had gone, Maitland turned to his host, who was removing Featherstone's dishes from the table.

"Queer old chap, isn't he?"

Bud paused to take a firmer hold upon the things which he had heaped upon one broad hand and wrist.

"You're right, kid. He's a queer bird, that. The old man's been some 'toff' in his day. You maybe wouldn't believe it, but he was a Member of Parliament over in England. He went out to Arabia on some Government job—knows all about them parts. That's why he wears the skull-cap. If he invites you over, you go! He knows good whisky."

"I presume he's not a Socialist, Bud?"

Powers chuckled. "Right again! He's a Tory—dyed in the wool. They all are—his breed—after they git to Canada, anyhow. There's his store."

Bud moved to the front door and Craig went with him. Over the litter of lumber in the dusty yard, they looked towards the roof of a log cabin which was almost hidden from sight by the growth of salal and salmonberry vines. The place was only a stone's throw from the hotel.

"Three of 'em stay over there," continued Powers. "There's the old man and his son, Reggie—a chip off the old block. He don't know enough to come in when it's wet. Then there's the Duke. He's the limit. Looks like something the cat dragged in, most of the time. Seems like he was ambassador or something in one of them European courts. He got into a mix-up with a countess and has been three sheets in the wind ever since. We had 'em all to dinner the other night. The wife's stuck on the gentry. She's from the Old Country and it's in her blood. You shoulda seen them three settin' there as if they'd been at the Trocadero, in London, with the old lady fussin' round 'em as if she was waitin' on his Majesty. They sure had their appetites as well as their table manners with 'em. I know. I washed the dishes. They was all as clean as the day they was made."

So engrossed was Craig in Bud's picture of the Featherstone household that he was startled by the woman's voice at his elbow.

"An' it's other things ye'll have to do besides gossipin' about your betters, Bud Powers! Shure, if they were Socialists, never a worrud would ye have to say but good about them."

He turned quickly to look at the indignant little wife. She was bristling—her face flushed and her eyes snapping. With the corner of her apron she wiped the perspiration from her face while she darted a belligerent look at Powers, who had smiled broadly and had winked at Maitland. The young man felt embarrassed and annoyed at the fellow's rudeness, but he could not find a ready excuse for withdrawing before the domestic storm broke.

"No use your gettin' hot under the collar, missus. I'm not takin' orders. What's more, me and this young gentleman's goin' to a meetin'. He's a Socialist, if you want to know somethin'. Better get in line, old lady. 'Tain't no use buckin'." He turned apologetically to Maitland. "I plumb forgot to tell you that Bob Tacey—the 'Old Man,' you know—is talkin' to the bunch up at Devaux's camp to-morrow night."

The woman was all a-tremble. Some suppressed anger seemed to be raging within her. Her tones became shrill, high, and decidedly unpleasant. "You're not going, Powers. I say you're not going. I'm tired of sitting here in the evenings and waiting for you."

"Don't sit! Nobody's astin' you to."

Maitland interfered. "Really, Bud, I hardly know whether I want to go yet or not. Thank you, just the same. I would like to see Tacey, though, before he goes back to Vancouver. I haven't met him yet. I heard, a few days ago, that he'd come over from Nanaimo. I believe that he is going to run the Labour paper in the city."

The sound of the younger man's voice seemed to act like oil upon the troubled waters. Mrs. Powers said, quietly and courteously, "Shure, it's sorry I am if I have been uncivil. If it will be a pleasure to ye, I'll let Bud take ye to the meetin' to-morrow night."

Craig smiled inwardly. The idea of Mrs. Powers possessing her husband was amusing. "If you are quite sure that you will not mind, Mrs. Powers?"

Bud stood stolidly. He seemed like a bit of primeval granite against which his wife's nervous energy dissolved like water in futile foam and spray. The newspaper man felt that, if he had not been present, the man would have crushed her by some act of physical violence. The air was tense—ominous as the calm before thunder. He saw a look of terror creep into the eyes of the woman as she looked at her husband. Then she turned towards Maitland.

"I think you had better go, Mr. Maitland. I'd be better pleased if ye did."

Powers started towards the kitchen. "I've some chores to do," he said. "I can't waste time fussin' with a woman nohow."

Hurriedly excusing himself, Craig hastened upstairs to his room. There he gave himself up to the disturbing thought that he had been misled into imagining that the seclusion which he needed could be had in the Squamish Valley under Powers' roof. It would be impossible for him to remain away from his work for more than a few weeks. Nerves, over-strung and threatening to plunge him into a veritable hell of physical suffering, could not be expected to recover in this atmosphere where his presence alone prevented the open display of jealousy and cruelty.

He lay down upon his bed, lighted a cigarette, and tried to relax completely. The soothing weed accomplished its work so that he felt no trace of the strain that had almost overpowered him while he stood between his host and hostess. Then the memory of Featherstone came to him like something out of a child's story-book, wherein he had read about a queer, desiccated old bookworm who had withered away until he disappeared from mortal sight, to be later discovered pressed dry and flat between the leaves of a dusty tome. The man seemed to be an embodied reminiscence—an astral shell which had retained its earthly clothing long after its contemporaries had crumbled into dissolution and oblivion. There must have been a past in which this entity had moved in its own environment, commanding whatever of respect or

affection it merited before drifting afar upon some wind of fate. Now, it had settled to await its end in this remote and silent valley.

Moved by a curiosity to know more of the old chap—perhaps it was the journalist's instinct which was aroused—Maitland rose and listened. He could hear no sounds coming from below. Powers was somewhere about the barns or the back lot, while his wife was not stirring about the kitchen. When he passed through the dining-room a few moments later, his hostess nodded to him from where she sat in a chair by the heater. Beside her, upon a corner of the table, lay a heap of rough working-man's socks while, in her hands, she held the darning-needle which she was threading in preparation for her evening task. Without stopping to do more than return her silent greeting, Maitland passed out into the door-yard and started towards the clump of shrubbery which partially concealed Featherstone's store.

With the approach of twilight, the heat of the summer day had abated and a pleasantly cool breeze was blowing up the valley, so that Craig breathed deeply as he picked his way forward. A mass of odds and ends left over from the building material used for the hotel lay scattered in front of the place. A red-brown rooster, his plumage glittering like metal in the yellow light, called a note of warning to his harem, which scuttled to shelter in the rank growth of weeds between the stumps. The young man, who had been raised on a farm, felt a warm glow of restfulness. The coolness and the alluring shadows of the firs and alders across the high road called to him, but, intent upon seeking the strange old man who occupied his thoughts at the moment, he resisted the impulse to explore woodland paths. Pushing his way through the salal and vines which separated Powers' yard from the store, he stepped out upon a strip of greensward before the little building.

For city dwellers especially, all log shacks have a strong attraction. Those people to whom the modern comforts of plumbing and radiators are indispensable are always prone to rave over "the simple life." It would hardly be fair, however, to say that Craig Maitland possessed merely a sentimental attachment to primitive things. He was essentially of the soil, but had been suborned by life into an acceptance of ways that were not naturally to his liking. The neatly-constructed cabin, before which he was standing, satisfied him as a piece of handicraft. Upon it there was the mark of a man instead of a machine.

The logs, carefully selected as to size, were neatly laid, and were fitted at the corners of the building so that very little chinking was necessary, while the new roof of shakes, which thatched it securely from the rain, gleamed in the evening sunlight, a bright patch of golden colour among the surrounding green. The fragrant, resinous scent of the wood still clung to the air about the place.

Whatever of charm was possessed by the outside of the store was dissipated, however, by Maitland's first impressions after he crossed the threshold. The interior was as unkempt as the old man who put down his newspaper at the sound of the visitor's footsteps. Featherstone rose from his seat upon the edge of a box of canned peaches, brushed past a sack of sugar which stood open at his elbow, and scattered the ashes from his cigarette over his coat and vest lapels.

"Ah—Mr. Maitland—delighted! Come in, sir! Come in!" He stooped stiffly and pulled forward an empty grocery case. "Please be seated, sir!"

A glance showed Craig the meagre nature of the stock which formed the store. A few boxes of canned fruit and vegetables piled against the wall, a pitifully small assortment of tins and bottles upon wooden shelves affixed to the sides of the room, a counter formed of rough lumber supported by empty barrels, comprised the visible equipment. A fire sputtered in a cast-iron heater near by, while a glimpse through a half-opened door behind the stove revealed the inside of a lean-to, apparently a sleeping-room which had been added to the main building. An occasional snore emanating from this place bespoke the presence of some other member of the household. Featherstone noticed Maitland's eyes directed towards the inner doorway.

"My son, Reggie, is having his nap," he said. "Tuckered out. He has been working on his claim all day. I want you to meet Reggie. He will be glad to have some news of the city and all that, you know. It is a bit dull for a young man up here."

When his guest had been seated, the old man shuffled over to a shelf attached to the log wall. There he picked up a

metal box of Players' cigarettes and placed it upon the counter and then, from behind a pile of gunny-sacks in another corner of the store, he produced a bottle of Scotch whisky. Upon his tip-toes, he stole into the room where his boy was sleeping, and presently appeared with two rather grimy-looking tumblers in his hands. He was about to invite Maitland to have a drink when the sleeper in the lean-to behind him drew a long, snuffling breath and, rising, brought his stockinged feet down with a thump upon the floor. The ghost of a twinkle flickered in Featherstone's eyes.

"Come on, then, Reggie," he called over his shoulder. "I said the right word to waken you—what?"

The young man, thus adjured, strolled leisurely out of the bedroom and was introduced to Craig. He was a tall, well-built youth, who looked as if he could easily hold his own on a football-field. To Maitland, his athletic figure was apparent even under the loose-fitting corduroy trousers and grey flannel shirt which he wore. His clean-cut but weak features proclaimed him "the chip off the old block" to whom Powers had slightingly referred. Stifling a yawn, the younger Featherstone drew a box towards the heater and seated himself, stretching his feet out to the warmth of the fire. When the Scotch was passed to him by his father, he poured "four fingers" for himself with cool deliberation.

"I say—ah—I say, Reggie!" The old fellow's exclamation was accompanied by an expostulatory cough.

"Have one yourself, governor. There should be plenty left. I opened that bottle this morning, you know."

His father coughed again. "I have had a few more customers than usual to-day. Some chaps from the Upper Valley dropped in this afternoon. However, that is neither here nor there. We shall open another in Mr. Maitland's honour if necessary."

Craig was about to say that he was not a drinking man—that a nip was all he ever cared for—when a shadow fell across the floor near him. He looked towards the door, half expecting to see Bud Powers. His glance encountered the snaky black eyes of a Siwash who stood upon the threshold. The sparse growth of hair on the Indian's upper lip was trembling with barely controlled anger as he glowered at Featherstone. Maitland, his curiosity aroused, noted that the man was a dirty-looking fellow, clad in a brown cotton shirt, a pair of greasy overalls, and brogans. One of his hands twitched nervously at the spot where his collar chafed the sweaty line of hair growing low down upon his neck, while the other grasped a battered felt hat. The man's appearance would have held the interest of the journalist, but with his coming there was a sudden tenseness in the atmosphere of the little store which was disconcerting.

Featherstone senior stepped forward upon his unsteady old limbs and placed himself so that his coat-tails intercepted the glance which the Indian had fastened upon the bottle of whisky that stood upon a crate near the stove. Reggie, a rather uneasy look upon his face, sat up quietly in his place.

"You no belive George, huh? To-morrow him bring money—plenty chickamun. George, him good man—no lie."

As their visitor ended abruptly, Featherstone coughed in a placating manner.

"My dear fellow ... I say ... you might as well be going along. I can't sell you whisky, sir. It's against the law." His voice rose until it was high-pitched and peremptory. "I say it's no use standing there, you know."

The Siwash looked bewildered. He smiled at the old man as if he understood that a joke was being played upon him and, with an ingratiating grin, he stepped into the room. Craig was startled by the sound of Reggie's box-seat being overturned. The young Englishman strode up to the native, who hesitated, a puzzled expression deepening in his eyes.

"Go along, you d—n brute!" young Featherstone snarled. "Not a word, or I'll beat you black and blue!"

With these words he seized the Indian roughly by the shoulder and shoved him out of doors. Dazed by the sudden attack, the man turned and looked up into the face of the young bruiser who stood over him. Something he noted there, emphasised by the fact that he saw two clenched fists ready for action, decided his next move. Retreating towards the shelter of the tall shrubbery which bordered the yard, he pushed his way through the bushes to the high road. Then, with the veil of the hedge between himself and his antagonist, he vented his feelings in an outburst of profanity couched in Chinook and English. Down the highway leading to the Sound, he proceeded, cursing and yelling his threats of vengeance, until his voice became inaudible in the distance.

Nonchalantly, and without so much as a glance in Maitland's direction, the youth strolled back to the fire, seized and righted his box, and once more stretched his limbs towards the warmth. His father, however, seemed to be strangely agitated, so that his feeble frame trembled with excitement while he poured forth profuse apologies and explanations. These beastly Siwashes were becoming a public nuisance. He would write to the Government Agent—this very night—so that the letter might go out in the next mail. Indians had a nose for liquor—could "smell it a mile away." Doubtless they had spotted a case upon the wharf which was consigned to the store—had been hanging about ever since. "Awkward as the deuce, don't you know! A bit dangerous, too, if Reggie happened to be away!" He chattered and gesticulated like an aged anthropoid discovered in possession of a stolen coco-nut. With shaking hands, he proceeded to pour drinks for Craig, the boy, and himself before he concealed the bottle carefully beneath the sacking once more. With his back to the others and bent above his treasure, the old man continued his anathemas against all natives until, so suddenly that it seemed as if he feared an attack from the rear, he straightened up to glare at his son.

"Sir?" he said.

"Very well, governor. I shall repeat it. Shut up!"

Featherstone's features were twitching nervously. A weak sort of rage in him struggled with a desire to remain dignified and self-possessed. Maitland looked at the boy, Reggie, with ill-concealed contempt. The brutal coarseness of the young man's tone when addressing his father had been that of a bully. Craig made an impulsive decision and rose hastily.

"Oh, by the way," he remarked, "have you any cigarettes for sale? I really did not drop in for a visit this time, but will do so some evening, if I stay on here. I am going to turn in early. Must get a rest after the trip. I'm a bit done up."

He felt that he had seen quite enough of the storekeeper's firstborn. From the journalist's point of view, a talk with the old gentleman might hold a deal of interest, but the prospect of listening to another family row did not attract him.

Out in the little clearing before the cabin, he found that twilight was beginning to weave its shadows over the valley while the dusk of a summer evening was filling the spaces between the great trees which stretched away to where the river crooned its way towards the sea. Only in the faint colouring above the distant hills was there hint of the sun which had disappeared. The irritation which had possessed him momentarily when he had sensed the strain in the Featherstone household gave way before the peace that was gradually stealing down with the night wind softly feathering the fir boughs overhead. He determined that the succeeding day should be spent in the open, in his own company and away from houses. To-morrow night would bring the "meeting," and Bud Powers' domestic difficulties would then be thrust upon him again. In the meantime he must not forget that he had come to the Squamish for rest.

Through the bracken and salal he pushed his way, and emerged into Bud's yard. Upon the porch before the house, Maitland saw the trim, bestarched figure of his hostess, who was standing rigidly while she looked out towards the highway. Rounding a bend which would hide him from sight, he saw the slouching figure of her husband plodding stolidly in the direction of the wharves and, as the young man stopped for an instant to release a branch which he had held aside, the voice of the woman rose in a heart-broken wail:

"Powers! Powers! Oh, where are you going, Powers? Shure, and I didn't mean a word of it. Not a word did I mean!"

He saw her turn and go in, wringing her hands as she went. Very quietly, with the influence of the evening's beauty waning once more, he crossed to the front door, but, as he slipped noiselessly towards the stairway, he passed within a few feet of Mrs. Powers. Sitting in her low rocking-chair by the stove, she did not see him and apparently did not hear him. Her apron, thrown over her head, was stifling the sound of her sobbing while she swayed back and forward as mothers do when keening for a child that has gone astray.

CHAPTER III

AMONG THE "REDS"

In the cool twilight after a July day, Craig Maitland and Powers set out to attend the meeting to be held in the cook-house of a logging-camp some miles up the Valley. Bud had intimated that it was a poor road which led through the woods to the place, and that they would have to walk. His guest suspected that the brown colt was in no condition for the trip, but kept his thought to himself.

As they entered the fragrant dusk of a trail which wound through dense undergrowth interspersed with tall timber, the silence, characteristic of the British Columbian forests, enveloped them in its languorous embrace. Occasionally a woodmouse rustled the dry leaves in the thickets on either side of the highway, or the stillness above them was broken by the soft whir of wings where a flock of crows or wild pigeons struggled for places in the tree-tops.

Maitland welcomed this contact with the open spaces. Civilisation, to him, had always seemed more or less of an excrescence which deformed the realities of life. His nature was essentially that of a dreamer, but his nervous temperament and superabundant physical energy had led him into the swirling activity which marked urban society and, from day to day, he found himself further bound by a ceaseless routine. He greatly doubted the value of the things which he was doing, yet, as a newspaper man, he was a success. He had imagination, which expressed itself in terse, vivid English that made his articles outstanding, while his intense interest in human beings and his gift of leadership had resulted in his having to fill many positions of prominence in the organisations to which he belonged. Moreover, behind all of his work there was a desire to be of real service. For this reason he had continued his study of economics, begun in college days, and had tentatively affiliated himself with the Labour Party.

Now he was tired and, in such moments, he longed for a closer touch with Nature. He took off his cap and let the evening wind play about his temples. With every breath he drank in a keen delight. His companion was so much a part of the sombre shadows and the silence of the forest that he was almost forgotten. Powers was carrying a brown mackinaw coat over his left arm while, in his right, he grasped a crooked branch of dry fir which he had trimmed to act as a staff. This stick, fully six feet in length and of considerable weight, looked as if it had been recently torn from the trunk of a tree and, in the man's hand, seemed to complete the picture of simian strength which he presented. His overalls, fastened by a leather strap which served as a belt, hung loosely from his hips to where his great feet, clad in heavy brogans, shuffled through the dust without being apparently lifted from the ground. His knees worked stiffly after the manner of a gorilla. One felt rather than saw the presence in him of an elemental force that was sub-human.

Again Maitland was aware that, in spite of the man's coarseness, there was something fascinating about his personality. He was like the call of the jungle which took men, lured them away from civilised paths and held them in its Circean embrace, insidious and unrelenting. The journalist thought of Whitman's question when confronted by the savage: "Is he waiting for civilisation, or is he past it, and mastering it?" The primitive man might be temporarily coerced into becoming a cog in the communal wheel, but—for how long? Always he had broken the chains which bound him, and then there had begun once more the long, laborious task of rebuilding religions and political codes to hold in check his instincts and impulses.

A bird swooped across the road before their eyes, and Powers struck at it with his stick. The gliding wings swerved before the rush of air.

"Strike one!" chuckled the man. "If it had ever hit him, he wouldn't sing no more!"

The thoughtless barbarism of a young hoodlum armed with a dangerous weapon! Maitland's lips were compressed grimly, while Bud continued, "You ain't talkin' much, kid. Thinkin' up somethin' to tell us to-night, eh? I guess there won't be much time for that. The Old Man's pretty long-winded. Say! He's a wonder. Hits right and left when he gets started. The Liberals and Conservatives are scared of him. Don't dare to hold joint meetin's with him."

"I believe he is a good speaker," said Craig. "He used to be a railroad man. Am I right?"

"Yep."

"Is that how he lost his arm?"

"Lost it in a wreck," retorted Bud. "Best thing ever happen him. He took to readin' books and pretty soon went in for Socialist work altogether."

They trudged on without speaking for a time. The road, which had been fairly good to this point, narrowed and finally merged into a trail. Here the boughs of the trees far overhead almost touched each other across the path, shutting out the grey light, except where patches of sky began to show a few white stars. It was so dark that Maitland found difficulty in keeping to the beaten way. Powers noticed his stumbling.

"You keep in close behind me, boy. I kin see in the dark. I was never lost in my life—in the woods, I mean."

"That's rather a remarkable record for a woodsman, isn't it?"

"Well," answered Bud, "I guess so. Not that I haven't been in some tight places, though. But THEY always looked after me."

"*They* looked after you?"

Both men had been swinging along at a high speed upon the road. Bud stopped so that Maitland was precipitated against him and, in the darkness, he was almost overpowered by the scent of the man's perspiring flesh. Powers' voice was low and held in it a note of mystery. He was either in earnest or indulging in childish histrionics.

"I said *they* ... didn't I? There's lots more things than most people kin see or hear. I'm givin' it to you straight." He turned and pushed forward along the trail. "'Tain't no use of talkin' about it. We're almost there now. We'll hear the boys in a minute or two."

The grating ring of a file upon a saw, a merry whistle, and the sound of talking soon proved that Powers had gauged the distance correctly. After a few more minutes, in which Maitland followed the shadowy bulk of his guide, they emerged into the clearing about Devaux's camp. Craig had been busy with the thoughts engendered by Powers' strange revelation of a belief in the supernatural. The incident had added to his curiosity in regard to the man's psychology. Now his reflections were interrupted.

The camp, which consisted of two roughly built bunk-houses and a cook-shack, stood in a patch of great stumps which were quite as high as the eaves of the buildings. Roofs of tar-paper, bulged into blisters by the sun, were visible, while the ruddy light from the little windows shone brightly where not intercepted by the charred snags. In the full radiance streaming from the opened door of the dining-room, a man stood engaged in filing a cross-cut saw. A splendid specimen of young manhood, bronzed and handsome as a Greek god, he was dressed in the lumberman's garb of sleeveless undershirt, overalls, and calked boots. When he turned at the sound of the approaching footsteps, Maitland's eyes shone with admiration. The face he saw was intelligent and frank, the smile engaging and suggestive of sunshine in open spaces.

"Hallo, Bud! You mak' it early, you!"

"Sure. Always on time, Frank. Meet Mr. Maitland, Mr. Devaux."

Craig looked straight into a fearless pair of blue eyes. The man's grip was good, too—in a class apart from the conventional touch of flabby finger-tips. Devaux moved towards the open door.

"Plaintee time! Plaintee time! Come in!"

"Where's the Old Man?"

In answer to Bud's query, the young foreman pointed to one of the bunk-houses. "Who is dat? De Ole Man? Wat? *Mon Dieu!* w'en hees stop for talk——" He raised his hand in an eloquent gesture.

Bud halted on the threshold. "Guess I'll go over and root him out. It's about time for the meetin'."

While Powers departed, Maitland followed his host into the rude dining-hall. Long deal tables ran the length of the room, leaving little space for other furniture. The oilcloth coverings on these shone white and spotless under the light shed from two kerosene lamps.

Devaux looked at Maitland with a genial smile. "De Ole Man—he stand dere." He pointed to the farther end of the room. "De res' dey kin sit on de bench or de oil-can, mebbe. You're Socialiste?"

Being answered in the affirmative, he nodded gravely and extended his hand. "Good! I'm glad for hear dat—me. Shake!"

One of the big lamps was smoking, and Devaux darted forward to adjust the wick. The free movement of his body was good to see. Lithe as a lynx, there was nevertheless a driving power and a precision behind his most simple action which showed perfect co-ordination of mind and muscle. Maitland was suddenly reminded of the fact that this young French-Canadian had figured in a newspaper story of a rescue on the waterfront in Vancouver. A boom-tender had slipped upon the logs, and had disappeared into the water beneath the floating timbers. Devaux, diving without hesitation, had gone under the boom and had brought the man safely to shore.

The sound of voices was now heard through the open door, and they turned to see Bud Powers shambling into the room with the speaker of the evening beside him. Tacey, a big man, almost as bulky in his way as Maitland's host, was carrying his coat upon his arm and mopping his face with a blue bandanna handkerchief. Shrewd but not unkindly eyes under shaggy, grey eyebrows, a head so bald that the roundness of its contour was accentuated, and the shoulders of a heavy-weight champion were the outstanding features of the man who was the idol of the Labour Party in British Columbia. The stump of his left arm, bulging at an odd angle beneath his white cambric shirt, suggested a torso in keeping with his leonine head. Strength, relentless if aroused, paternal and generous as earth itself in its ordinary moods, was there in abundance. Throwing his coat carelessly upon the table, he grasped Maitland's outstretched hand.

"Glad to meet you, comrade. I've heard of you from the boys."

He waved his hand towards a man who had come in behind him, and who now stood at his side.

"This is Mr. Kolazoff, Mr. Maitland."

The journalist's instinct in Craig was working at boiling-point. Kolazoff? Why, this was the Russian who had headed a party of refugees from Port Arthur! Peace having been concluded between Japan and Russia, Baron Rosen had given this man and his companions a passage to Canada because of a diplomatic desire to rid his own country of some of its most dangerous revolutionaries.

"Why, yes. I have heard of Mr. Kolazoff," said Maitland.

The Russian showed an immaculate set of white teeth when he smiled.

"Favourably, I hope?"

His English was marked by the slightest of accents. Red hair, a pair of merry, boyish, blue eyes! Most certainly, in this slim young fellow there seemed to be no visible sign of a menace to man or to State. Yet, in the voice, Craig sensed a strain—a hard, metallic chord which hinted of things in leash. He had suffered—was suffering ... but he could smile so that there was no sinister hint in him of the storming depths.

"Well, they seemed to be a bit afraid of you, to tell the truth," admitted Maitland.

Further conversation was prevented by the crowd of loggers who were pushing their way into the room, noisily as urchins. Strapping youngsters in boots and overalls, grizzled veterans of the big timber, men from the shanties of Maine, the rapids of the Ottawa, and the redwoods of California were there in Devaux's crew—a mixed lot, roughened by wind and weather. Well in hand, proud of their "boss," who gave them liberty and, at times, licence to indulge their love for

horse-play, they had all been picked for their qualities of skill and endurance. To Maitland, used to men-about-town, they were refreshing.

In the course of a few minutes the wooden benches at the sides of the tables were filled, and those who were still standing laughingly up-ended oil-cans and grocery-boxes commandeered from the kitchen. To Craig's surprise, Bud Powers acted as chairman. Leaning heavily forward with his great hands spread upon the table before him, he opened the meeting with a fiery denunciation of the capitalist system. His phraseology was the stock pabulum of the proletariat, gathered from their textbooks, but his words flowed smoothly enough, finally acquiring a torrential quality which bespoke considerable natural ability as well as practice. When he waxed grandiloquent under the force of his emotion, the men pounded the floor with their heavy boots.

"Go it, Bud! Give 'em hell!"

Maitland looked inquiringly into the faces nearest to him. Instantly he remembered watching a crowd of schoolboys while they danced and yelled about the battered carcass of a harmless grass-snake. Yes, that was it! The herd instinct, thoughtless, grasping at any opportunity to display its strength and justify its superstitions! Something in Craig, inherited from an ancestry not of the rabble, stood aside contemptuous and aloof. However, he checked his feeling, quickly realising that it was not wholly warranted in the present instance. The men were merely baiting Powers—enjoying his noise.

While Tacey was rising to speak, a sudden gust of wind blew the cook-house door to with a clattering bang. A logger proceeded to fasten it securely and, as he did so, the pattering of raindrops was heard upon the windows. From this the orator of the evening took his cue.

"The atmosphere needs clearing, boys. It's been too all-fired stuffy to breathe. Someone has had a monopoly of the air supply. Laugh, darn you! You think it's impossible? Down in the city they're sellin' you water. It'll be air next—so much per cubic yard. That's the profit system, believe me!"

Despite the tricks of the politician and a catering to the careless vernacular of the working-man, Tacey's address was logical, convincing, and suggestive of a powerful intellectual grasp of the subject of economics. There could be no doubt of the man's sincerity. The gospel according to Marx was his Bible and the idealistic social State was his religion. He would as willingly die for his dream as any martyr for his interpretation of a Scriptural comma. Body and soul, his idea possessed him. Yet, mellowing his orthodoxy, was a glowing humanitarianism—a great kindliness that drew these rough men to him and held them while he chastised them for their own good. "Slaves," "timber-beasts," "working mules," were among the epithets with which he lovingly belaboured them. When he had delivered his last word, they thought that they knew the meaning of "capital," of "class-consciousness," of "bourgeoisie," and of "proletariat." They felt convinced that "the interests of the worker and the employing class were diametrically opposed," and that, to serve their own interests, they must support Labour at the coming election.

The men rose and pushed forward to shake the hand of the "Old Man." He was slightly pale and worn by the emotional storm which had passed through him. A little tired, but with the light of battle still shining in his keen, grey eyes. Devaux stood guard at his side.

"Say! *Sacré*! By gar, de Ole Man he ben tire. Me, I know. He go for sleep, now. In de mornin', plaintee time for chew de rag."

Linking his arm through Tacey's, he endeavoured to move towards the door, but the older man drew laughingly away from him and took the proffered hands outstretched towards him. Maitland, feeling a hand upon his shoulder, turned to Bud, who was buttoning up his mackinaw coat.

"Look, boy! You'd better stay here to-night. It's rainin' like Old Harry. I've gotta go, but Devaux, he'll fix you up."

They could hear the subdued roar of the water drumming upon the roof.

"I'll stay if Mr. Devaux doesn't mind," said Craig. "But—what about you? You'll be soaked."

"My hide's thick," laughed Powers. "It's been wet inside and out lots of times." He touched Devaux, who was passing him. "You kin put Mr. Maitland up, eh, Frank?"

"Sure! Sure! You come wit' me. I tak' de Ole Man to de bunk-house now." He lowered his voice. "Got a leetle good stuff over dere, Bud."

"Naw, thanks, Frank. Gotta hurry," replied Powers.

"Not one leetle drink—no? Say—you're not on de wagon, you?" Devaux looked his astonishment.

Bud adjusted the high collar of his jacket about his ears and drew his slouched hat over his eyes. With an enigmatic grin, he turned towards the door.

"I kin see plenty to-night without any moonshine, me boy."

Through the doorway he stepped out into the darkness, and the slanting curtain of the rain closed about him. Devaux snorted his disapproval of a man who could unceremoniously leave good whisky. "Dat feller, he sure is crazee in de head."

While he piloted the Old Man, Maitland, and Kolazoff to the bunk-house, he kept on talking. Powers' action had irritated him.

"I know heem—dat feller," he said. "By gar, he mus' tink I am one dam fool. Two weeks—ev'ry day, ev'ry night—he go on de big bus'. I ben dere. I know—me." Suddenly he paused, then chuckled softly. "Mebbe he got scare from de ole woman! Ha! Well—dat's hees own beezness. I don't go for marry her. Dat's all right wit' me."

Driving gusts of rain intensified the darkness of the summer night. They were buffeted about, stumbling over bits of firewood and the protruding roots of the great fir stumps, but, after a few minutes of struggling through the warm deluge, they stood dripping in the lamplight within the door of the nearest shack. Bunks, two deep, lined both sides and an end of the room. Several rough deal tables, two or three chairs, and a box-stove comprised the rest of the furniture. While his guests were divesting themselves of their wet clothing, Devaux set a match to the fuel in the heater and, reaching below the mattress of a bunk, he drew out a bottle of Dewar's Scotch whisky. Glasses were produced from another cache and, presently, beside a crackling fire, the little party seated themselves in comfort. Maitland, in his turn, poured a tablespoonful of liquor into his tumbler. He started when Tacey's big voice boomed:

"You don't go very heavy on the hard stuff, eh, Mr. Maitland?"

Craig smiled into the eyes which were entirely friendly now that the fight with Church and State had been laid aside.

"I don't drink much," he said.

"Good!"

He turned to see Kolazoff looking at him approvingly. The man had spoken with more force than seemed to be necessary, but, as Maitland looked at him and noticed the long white fingers nervously tapping upon the edge of the table, the wisp of damp red hair lying along the curve of his sallow cheek-bone, and the quiver of a sensitive nostril, he knew that the Russian was moved by sudden impulses. He was a dreamer. Craig felt him to be one of his own kin.

"Vodka is the curse of our proletariat in Russia," he continued, smiling at Devaux. "This is politics, Frank. I like a night-cap (isn't that what you call it?) myself."

"Things are bad enough here, but I guess they're worse over in Russia. You chaps could teach us something. We only talk about revolution here," said Tacey.

Kolazoff smiled, drew a sharp breath, closed his eyes, opened them, and drew a cigarette-case from his pocket,

which he opened and laid upon the table. While the Old Man reached for a smoke, he nodded his head slightly towards Maitland.

"Might do no harm for our friend to know some of the things you told us. He don't get that kind of news from the Associated Press," he murmured.

"Mr. Maitland is not a revolutionist?"

Although the young Russian looked searchingly at him, Craig met his eyes frankly. "No, I am not," he said emphatically. "I believe in evolution but not in revolution."

Slim fingers closed on the cigarette-case and shut it with a snap.

"Shall I tell you why I am a revolutionist?" replied Kolazoff. "You are lukewarm in this country. Yes—you talk. You do not act. You read books and vote—sometimes. It is not a matter of life or death with you." He leaned forward, his lips twitching slightly. The shadows in his eyes were lighted by little fires that glowed, flashed, and glowed again. "Yes, I will tell you. You are a young man. You have brains. We need you. Humanity needs you and—you have a heart."

Outside, the marching columns of the rain halted. A piece of wood turned in the stove and fell, scattering sparks upon the floor. Devaux rose to shut the iron door. Maitland felt relieved. He disliked histrionics. The Russian's appearance and gestures were suggestive of the theatre. If he would only quit that eternal drumming of his bony fingers upon the table! The other two men were silent.

"Ordinarily, a man doesn't talk about this sort of thing. But, she is not mine now. She belongs to Russia—to the Cause. Do I need to tell you that the name of Marie Lansky is spoken reverently in my country? Well—here is the story!

"She was a school-teacher—north of Odessa, in a little village which was a garrison town—head-quarters for a regiment of the Czar's watchdogs. But she did more than teach school, although she did that so well that she was worshipped by children and parents. She had looked and listened, and she had read—oh, much—oh, very much, for one so young ... and she was one of us. Her whole life—her fresh, blossoming womanhood—was laid upon the altar for the sake of the workers who stumbled blindly in darkness like patient oxen bound to the wheel of a merciless master. So it was that she risked her life daily in spreading the light.

"Her mother baked loaves of black bread, which were sold to the garrison, and into these, which were distributed among the soldiers, Marie put little leaflets and tracts which told them how the bread was produced by the toilers and how, when their brothers starved, it was because others reaped where they had sown. Good fortune favoured her for a time. Hundreds of loaves went into the fortress from the surrounding district, and her mother's batch, tumbled into the bins with the others, evidently reached friendly hands. But it could not go on so.

"One warm, summer afternoon, while the village drowsed in the sweltering heat, it was rudely awakened by the trampling of horses' feet. With the sunlight flashing from their lances, a troop of Cossacks, turning neither to left nor right, rode straight to the little school-house. Marie had gone. Her day's work was ended, but the little ones had remained to play. The troopers surrounded the children, herded them together like frightened lambs, and held them while the building was searched. One and all, the Cossacks were filled with vodka, drunk and red-eyed with jungle lust—hungering for blood. Baffled, they were raging fiends from the pit. Will you believe it—you who live in Canada, where such things are not possible? The returning troop stormed back through the streets with the bodies of these little innocents spitted upon their lances or dragging at their horses' heels as shapeless, piteous bundles of human flesh."

Kolazoff's voice was tense, vibrant with feeling ... his eyes wide as if the horror had passed visibly before them. He heard Maitland's muttered exclamation, "Good God!" but he did not turn his head. He was seeing beyond his hearers. Beyond the barrier of walls and outer space, he saw the vision of his country, bound by an inexpressible Terror. His words, listless and colourless now, trailed on mechanically, his tones grinding unpleasantly like steel upon stone.

"Later, they found Marie. There's not much to tell. It was soon over. The usual thing happened before Heaven took a hand in the game and she found a weapon with which to kill herself. It happened on the day which we had set for our wedding."

Life had ceased, in the sense that we know it, for Kolazoff upon that day of which he spoke. Maitland did not have to be told that. The man who had loved Marie Lansky was dead. Another being, relentless, indifferent to life or death, animated by desire for a day of vengeance, was sitting by Devaux's fire, telling them the story of a worker's tragedy. The recital had proved too much for the young Frenchman. He had turned in his chair so that his back was towards the others and was covering his emotion by pretending to fix the fire. Tacey's face was not good to see. But these things were not noticed by Craig, who was completely in the grip of his feelings. He, no older than this man, had given nothing but a fragment of his leisure to the cause of humanity, while the Russian had seen what was dearer than life swept away for the Cause and had still lived to work for the dream of ultimate brotherhood. He broke the silence:

"I think I understand now, Mr. Kolazoff—why you are a revolutionist."

Maitland looked about, a little perturbed by the absolute stillness. A gust of wind shook the bunkhouse. Fingers of a tree tapped at the window and then ceased. He felt that he was alone—that his companions were part of a dream through which he was passing—some inner experience which had to do with his own soul. He heard Tacey speaking near him—the driving force of will behind his utterance.

"Hell! Talking won't help. What are you going to do about it? Things'll always be the same unless we change them."

He found himself standing—reaching his hand across the table to the Old Man.

"I'm with you," he said.

CHAPTER IV

MORNING AND A GIRL

A summer morning in the British Columbian forest. A golden silence, broken only at intervals by the flute-like call of some solitary bird, pervaded the great cathedral aisles whose pillars were the majestic firs and whose roof was the blue sky fretted with carven lace-work of green boughs. A tenuous veil of blue vapour was drawn between the lower branches of the big trees and, through this, the sunlight filtered as shining threads woven into some fabric of dream-like texture. Below this enchanted air, the tropical luxuriance of the undergrowth glistened, wet with the dew which still clung to the glossy salal leaves and the tapestry of braided ferns.

Looking ahead at the winding trail through the woodland, Maitland wished that it might continue endlessly, leading him deeply and more deeply into its inviolate peace. His mind was still struggling with big problems—the issues which were confronting all thinking men and women at the time. Where man had built there was unrest. Cities were seething vortices of conflict where the rule of tooth and claw prevailed as truly as in some primeval jungle. But here, untouched by human selfishness, the air was clean, and free from the depressing atmosphere of feverish strain and fear. Fear! Ah—that was the great enemy where the struggle for existence was most in evidence! The knowledge that, in a moment, the savings of a lifetime might be swept away, the job that meant food for those near and dear be snatched from one's hands, the spectre of disease or death overtake the worker and deliver him to charity or silent suffering—this was the Terror which put the haunted look in men's eyes and brought old age before its time. Well—he had made his decision. He would fight, so long as life remained, to free his brother and his sister from the grip of the Iron Age. With the enthusiasm of youth and the courage of the dreamer who sees the sunlit heights while the valleys are still in darkness, he was rejoiced at the thought of his part in the great conflict.

Meanwhile, he was enjoying, through every tired nerve, the peace and beauty which surrounded him. He did not hurry, but rather determined that he would make the most of the distance to Bud Powers' place. At Devaux's camp he had rolled out at some indeterminate hour between dark and daylight to the tune of the cook's gong. With the loggers, he had been hustled into the dining-room, where the savoury smell of coffee and bacon filled the air, and then, declining the foreman's hearty invitation to spend the day at the camp, he had said good-bye to Tacey and Kolazoff. They intended, so

they said, to rest up a bit before returning to the city.

Again the dream-like peace of the forest invaded his mind, bent upon the struggle from which he had sought a temporary refuge. It seemed as though sunlight, wind, and the beauty of earth's silences had spread a veil of enchantment over the valley ways through which he was wandering. Yet, with his highly sensitive nature, given to strange moods in which the mystic and the dreamer touched the realities hidden below the surface of things, he was aware of a brooding tenseness under the radiance of the morning. It was as if Nature had exerted all her art of line and colour to conceal from the casual observer the conflict of sinister forces that was impending—nay, was in actual progress in the soul of this sequestered place. Inevitably—as certainly as a swimmer caught in the undertow beneath smiling waves—he felt himself being drawn forward and into events larger and of more moment to himself than any that had hitherto entered his life. Like a runner poised before a starting-signal, his mind half-consciously was held in expectation of some sudden appearance, some explanation or clue to the meaning of his own mood.

So preoccupied was Maitland that he was startled by the sound of a horse's hooves upon the road before him. A bend in the highway prevented him from seeing the approaching rider, but, involuntarily, he quickened his pace. He disliked being caught when he was idling. Then, his day-dreams were effectually banished. He heard a little, terrified scream. The soft thud of the horse's feet ceased and there followed the noise of the animal galloping at full speed. The man broke into a run, and in a few seconds had turned the curve in the path which lay ahead of him. Beyond the ditch flanking the narrow road, from amidst the tangle of fern and bushes where she had fallen, a woman was slowly rising to her feet. In his excitement, Craig did not immediately notice the trim riding-habit of dark blue serge, but he was aware of the instant flash of sunlight upon golden hair.

She was standing in the road when Maitland reached her side. Her eyes widened and she drew her breath sharply as she turned to face him.

"Oh! You frightened me!"

"I beg your pardon," said Craig. "I should have spoken. I heard you scream, you know. I am glad you are not hurt—badly, I mean."

She answered his anxious look with frank, blue eyes, which held the hint of a smile in them while she put her hand up to her hair. The man noted the rich tones of her voice and the English accent as she replied, "Fortunately I tumbled into a bed of bracken. Nothing serious. A bit shaken up, though. Sorry I screamed, but one never knows. I might have fallen into the ditch."

Maitland looked down the brown road winding among the trees. "Your horse——?"

"Is on his way home, I think. The nasty brute! He belongs to a man at the wharf—the hotel man. A rabbit dashed across the road and he bolted!"

She started forward, but halted after the first step.

"Dash it! Oh—I beg your pardon! I believe I have sprained my ankle."

"Let me lend you my arm!"

Craig blushed when the girl looked at him rather distantly. Her face was that of the aristocrat—clearly cut features and an indefinable air that was a barrier against intimacy. He was not quite so much at ease with her as he would have been with a Canadian girl of equal fineness.

When she took his arm, he saw that she was not nearly so tall as he had thought her to be. Her slight figure, in the long riding-habit, had given the impression of height. He found himself comfortably happy because she had not hesitated to accept his help.

"I am staying at Powers' place," he said. "It is not very far. If you can manage until we reach there, he can take you down to the hotel."

The girl's brows contracted in a slight frown.

"I would rather not ask him, if you don't mind. One of the farmers, farther on a bit, may have a cart to rent."

Evidently she was not an entire stranger in the neighbourhood. She knew Powers.

"Really, I don't mind walking," she continued. "If it were not for this ankle which is tingling, I would walk to Squamish. It is a glorious morning."

Craig glanced at her quickly, and then banished a slight feeling of elation. She was not thinking of him. He smiled at himself good-humouredly. He was spoiled and knew it. Women usually appropriated him without very extended preliminaries and, always, he had taken their interest for granted. But this one was different—not exactly of his world. Although he admired them, he had found English girls puzzling to him, and this woman's voice was unmistakably English, although there was a quality in it which was less familiar—something caught in Paris or other European capitals.

"You are fond of walking?" he ventured.

"I love it. I do not often take a horse, but this morning I wanted to go farther than usual. I have never seen anything finer than these British Columbian woods. In a few years these magnificent trees will be cut down, and made into boards and things. What a pity!"

Craig warmed to the friendliness in her tones. A morning made for the gods, and a beautiful girl to share it with him! Yes—she was more than pretty. He would be proud to have her upon his arm in any gathering of distinguished people. Her hair was a glory in the soft light that was sifting through the network of branches above them. Thoughts of industrial strife and economics, the class-struggle and wage-slavery had vanished into some limbo of forgotten things. Beauty was here, distracting as ever, and potent to banish pain. The reformer retired to give place to the poet.

"It will be a crying shame," he found himself saying, "for these great silences are needed to preserve our faith in life. When we are tired of the little fretful worries of every day, we can retire to them assured that our belief in the greater things will be restored to us. Nature is, first of all, the Healer, and a visible sign that Beauty is the one reality."

A stray sunbeam, piercing the green tangle of boughs, illumined the profile of her face. Maitland drew a quick breath. It was as if he had seen a familiar picture in a book long laid aside but taken up again in an idle moment. A rustling sound, as of old lace and the swish of silken robes—a fragrance of gardens and deserted manors of romance—from somewhere near her, these were borne in upon his consciousness.

He had spoken impulsively, thinking aloud as he walked. Then, aware of what he was saying, he blushed and looked aside to search his companion's face. He wondered if she thought him a sententious fool. A faint smile was flickering about her mouth, but her eyes were serious. Conventional reserve was not so apparent in her manner.

"You say it very nicely," she murmured. "I think that I shall keep silent and let you talk about the morning."

He came to earth safely. In a light, impersonally pretty fashion, he answered, "I hope that I have not deserved to be punished too severely. I admit that I was slow, but then I ran as fast as I could. I arrived too late to be of much use."

"Please do not feel rebuked," retorted the girl. "I really like to hear you expressing my thoughts for me. I have lots of them, you know, but I can't put them into words. I have been here for some weeks now and have taken every chance to become acquainted with these wonderful woods. They grow on one and—they do help."

She spoke earnestly—just a hint of strain in her voice.

"Do you write, Mr.——?"

"Maitland." Craig supplied the required name. "Yes, I write reams of piffle in order to make my bread and butter. Literally thousands of kitchen ranges are lighted every morning with the paper I have helped to spoil."

"Oh, then you are a newspaper man! How interesting!"

"I was a newspaper man," corrected Maitland, "but I have quit my job very recently—only last night, as a matter of fact."

The girl looked her bewilderment.

The man continued: "You are the first to know about it. My employers will be informed of their loss when I return to the city."

"Oh! I fear that I do not quite understand. I should have thought that writing for the papers would be quite fascinating."

"Only to those who view it from the outside. Really, Miss——?"

"Mrs. Paget."

There was silence for a moment.

"Thank you. Mrs. Paget, I have decided to be something ... something that counts."

Her eyebrows were lifted almost imperceptibly, and then her glance wandered from him to the vista before them. The sun had finally conquered in its struggle with the morning mists and was shining with a pleasantly warm glow through the big timber. Only beneath the gnarled limbs, where the festoons of grey Spanish moss were hanging, were there lingering shadows and stray wisps of white vapour. A new day had begun, and the feathered and furred creatures in the thickets were busy with their little tasks. A robin, with, a wriggling worm in his beak, hopped across the road, and a squirrel, chattering noisily, slipped down the bole of a cedar, his pouches bulging with the results of his foraging.

Just ahead of them the bushes were waving, and the back of the horse showed where he was quietly engaged in cropping grass by the wayside. Mrs. Paget checked her exclamation while Maitland crept cautiously forward in the direction of the runaway. After some manoeuvring, the animal was captured and, leading it by the reins, Craig returned to her.

He helped her to mount, taking more time than the injured ankle actually called for. The horse seemed quite gentle, and walked along quietly while Maitland, to assure himself of its intentions, kept within easy reach of the bridle.

Jocelyn Paget looked down at the light young figure at her side and covertly, after the manner of her sex, appraised his appearance. His grey tweed suit gave him the advantage of seeming stouter than he really was, and yet she knew that he was slight from the long, slim fingers which held his cloth cap. He moved gracefully, with a quick, nervous tread which had the resilience of tempered steel. His voice, which had attracted and stirred the woman in her, was of unusual quality, while the whole bearing of the man bespoke impetuous youth and a dynamic energy that was a challenge.

The ingenuous way in which he had made her his confidante had startled her. Maitland himself would have been at a loss to explain why he had done so. He had yielded to a boyish impulse—a frequent occurrence with him. The crises in his life had arrived as a result of this trait, which led him to act without following the ordinary thought processes.

The horse stumbled slightly, so that the toe of a dainty riding-boot jogged the man's side.

"Oh, I am sorry," said the girl.

He smiled brightly at her. "I need to be awakened from my day-dreams."

"I thought that I heard a bell just then. Was I mistaken?"

Again he looked up at her. "A cow-bell," he said. "We are coming to the clearing at Bud Powers'."

She looked more relieved than seemed to be justified by the prospect of his having to take his leave of her. He was

taken aback—hurt a bit.

"The open road is not so beautiful as this," he continued. "I mean—I like the big timber and the solitude best, don't you? Houses and people remind one that these splendid forests are doomed—that there will be no way of escape—no place for dreaming."

She detected something beneath his words which made her say, "I am really sorry to leave this path and the morning and everything. I am glad to have met you, Mr. Maitland. We live very quietly here, and to meet someone from the big, outside world, where things are happening, is an event." She paused. "I believe that my saddle is slipping. It must have been loosened when I fell."

She reined in her horse. Her surmise in regard to the saddle was correct for, as he helped her down, she was thrown forward into his arms. There was a moment of embarrassment during which Maitland felt the hot blood tingling. A tress of hair, unbelievably soft, and a faint perfume like that of wild flowers, brushed his face. Then he turned to the business of tightening the girth.

"Thank you so much. How quickly you did that! I am a bother."

She chattered vivaciously for a while after remounting.

He began to feel quite at home with her. Then, suddenly, she became very silent again. Glancing at her, Craig saw that the chill of her reserve was about her again as an invisible cloak.

"Just a few more yards to Powers' place now, Mrs. Paget. Perhaps you will permit me to accompany you to the hotel."

She replied formally. "Thank you very much. The horse seems quite all right now. I really think that I can manage."

They were now emerging into the clearing about the store and Bud's house.

"It would really be no trouble, I assure you," ventured Maitland once more. "My time is my own and, if the horse should give you trouble, there is your ankle, you know."

"Really—no. I thank you. I shall be quite all right." Her reply was polite but decisive.

The man found himself resenting her aloofness, but he was given no opportunity to continue the conversation. The two big curs that had heralded his approach upon the day of his arrival, dashed forward barking loudly, while from the door of the house Powers himself appeared. They were now well within the door-yard and easily within hearing distance. Bud relieved himself of some tobacco-juice over the edge of the veranda and, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, strode forward to greet them. He ducked his head towards the woman beside Maitland.

"Howdy, Mrs. Paget! Where did yuh meet up with this youngster of mine? We've been wonderin' what was keepin' him."

Craig noticed that his companion bit her lip. He hastened to speak.

"Mrs. Paget has met with a little accident. Her horse threw her and, fortunately, I happened along just then. Would you like a glass of water, Mrs. Paget?"

Mrs. Powers, in the doorway, heard his question, and spoke in her warmest tones. "Shure, an' I'll fetch ye one. But won't ye light and come in, Mrs. Paget? Is it hurt ye were?"

"I'm not in the least bit hurt, thank you. I would like a glass of water, indeed, and then I must go on."

Maitland heard a suppressed chuckle and, turning, saw Powers looking towards the path which led to Featherstone's store. Along this little, beaten trail, the old man was advancing as rapidly as his uncertain steps could

bring him. His fez was in his hand, his spectacles resting above his forehead. A pair of dilapidated carpet slippers flapped in the dust of the door-yard.

"Ah—Mrs. Paget—an unexpected pleasure, I am sure. I chanced to see you coming. Here are some of the late papers—the *Spectator* and some of the others, you know."

"Thank you, Mr. Featherstone."

She leaned over and took the bundle of papers from his hand, which was eager and trembling. Hemming and hawing, his grimy face wrinkled into the semblance of a smile, he stood like a bashful schoolboy at a loss for words.

"Delighted—ah—delighted, I assure you." His voice trailed away into a mumble of polite nothings.

"Yuh come pretty near not seein' her this time, paw," Bud remarked, grinning broadly. "Mrs. Paget's horse stumbled and ditched her."

"Oh—ah—I say! How very unfortunate! I sincerely hope that you are not hurt, my dear."

"Not at all, Mr. Featherstone, thank you." Jocelyn Paget might have been speaking to a high dignitary of Church or State. It was easy to see why the old man was her slave. He craved this deference from his own kind, and the romantic chivalry of a past age was awakened in him by the sight of her poise and beauty. "I must hurry on now. I have some letters to write before the mail goes out."

She touched her horse lightly with her riding-whip, again thanked Maitland for his assistance, and, nodding to the others, moved out through the yard to the highway. Craig felt discomfited because she had not permitted him to accompany her, but this was not sufficient to account for the wild desire to chance another rebuff by asking her again, nor did it explain the sudden little wave of pain in his heart. Some of the brightness of the morning seemed to have gone with her.

The old man, near him, stood gazing after her as long as she remained in sight. Then he turned and shambled back to his cabin, the tails of his faded morning coat drooping disconsolately behind him as he went.

Bud chortled, "Kin you beat it! The old guy's dead gone. Talk about yer second childhood! Say! You otta see the potery the old duffer writes and sends her in boxes of candy, and God knows what else he doesn't do. The old sayin's right, 'No fool like an old one'—all over a lazy skirt——"

A grip like steel upon his arm stopped him.

"Powers, will you shut up or do I have to make you?"

The big fellow was too dumbfounded to speak. He stared, in a bewildered way, into Maitland's face. He could see that the young man's lips were white, his eyes flashing. Craig strode past him into the house. Powers wiped his forehead. At last he found words:

"Well, I'll be damned!"

CHAPTER V

PLAYING WITH GHOSTS

Sitting in his bedroom, Craig could hear the clatter of dishes and the voices of Bud Powers and his wife, who were

preparing his dinner. He had not seen his host at lunch. The lady of the house had waited upon him with more than her ordinary solicitude for his comfort. She had in truth succeeded in making him extremely uncomfortable by her persistence in trying to forestall his needs. She had even attempted to apologise for her husband's delinquencies.

"It's a good heart he has, Mr. Maitland, but he has the manners of a brute bear and he's not intirely to blame for his upbringing."

Craig, who was repentant because he had lost his temper in a moment when he was in the grip of his emotions, had soothed Mrs. Powers' apprehensions.

Now, he was waiting for a chance to meet Bud. The man had meant no great harm when, after the manner of his kind, he had spoken of Featherstone and Mrs. Paget. He did not want Powers to think him a fool.

Answering the call to dinner, he went downstairs, and was immensely relieved to see the big fellow grinning at him from the kitchen doorway. Before seating himself, Craig went over to Powers and extended his hand.

"I made a fool of myself this morning, Bud. You mustn't mind me. I fly off like that every now and then."

"Sure. That's all right," replied Powers. "I had no call to say nothin' about the lady. The wife's dead right. She says how I'm always puttin' my foot in where it don't belong. Sit down, me boy! Sit down!"

He hovered about Maitland, arranging the dishes and silver-ware. Then seizing a great pitcher full of water he swung it up and, with a flourish, poured out some of its contents into a thick glass tumbler.

"Some bar-keep—eh, kid?"

A shrill voice piped from the kitchen, "Don't you go gettin' smart, Powers. You'll be breakin' some more of my dishes. Mr. Maitland's soup's waiting."

Like a small boy reprimanded for playing at the wrong moment, Bud shuffled out and presently returned with the order. The young man, to assure his host that he harboured no resentment, endeavoured to enter into the facetious mood of the big chap. But, while he kept up a merry conversation with Powers, subconsciously he was living over again the morning hour with Jocelyn Paget. That hour had expanded until it filled his day. Kolazoff, Tacey, his decision to throw himself whole-heartedly into the class-struggle—these had faded temporarily into a nebulous background of events which were the setting for a vivid picture of a golden-haired girl in a riding-habit. He was drifting more deeply into complete preoccupation with his thoughts of her, when Powers roused him to attention. One huge, hairy hand touching the back of Maitland's chair and the other flat upon the table, he was leaning over so that his whisper carried only to Maitland's ear.

"Say. I want yuh to come with me to-night to a little meetin'. I ain't lettin' everyone in on this."

Craig glanced towards the kitchen and noted that Mrs. Powers had stepped out into the back-yard.

"What kind of a meeting, Bud? Socialist?"

"Naw. This is somethin' special. It's a séance. You know what that is, I reckon?"

Maitland looked properly astonished.

"A séance? Are you a Spiritualist?"

"You remember what I told you last night," murmured Powers. "Well, I mean it. There's more things than most people kin see. You mebbe don't believe it, but I'd like to show you just the same. 'Twon't do you no harm and it'll help pass the evenin'."

Maitland felt uneasy. The bulk of the man, the glittering black eyes that peered through half-closed eyelids, the

earth-smell from coarse, perspiring flesh, suddenly oppressed him with a certain repugnance. It seemed the weirdest possible thing to imagine Powers, the primitive animal, dealing with anything ethereal. His breath, at close range, was like that of some prowling marauder of the forest.

"I thought I'd ask yuh just to show I ain't holdin' nothin' against yuh since this mornin'."

Slowly rising, Craig stepped clear of his host. Powers did not move, but the suspicion of a smile flitted across his face.

"Yuh needn't be scared. An' yuh might learn somethin' to help yuh later on."

The young man roused himself. "Sure. Certainly. I'll come. Thanks, Bud. When do we start?" He moved towards the stairway leading to his room.

"I'll let yuh know," said Powers. "Needn't say nothin' to the old lady. I'll fix that."

Upstairs, Craig put aside his instant annoyance at the idea that he was being led unwillingly into his host's private affairs. There would likely a row between the man and his wife before she consented to spend the evening by herself. Powers a Spiritualist? Was it the superstition of a savage or was he really possessed of some uncanny knowledge because of his kinship to elemental things? Some clue to the enigma of the man's personality might develop during the evening, and Craig still admitted the fascination which the fellow carried as an atmosphere about him. Undoubtedly he was a force which was felt without the confines of this little valley, for his name was well known in the trade unions and other Labour organisations in Vancouver.

The one window in Maitland's room was a half-sash swinging upon hinges, and he opened it to let out the warm air which had gathered beneath the tar-paper roof. The summer twilight was deepening over the fir-clad hills which rolled back in billowing ridges to the sky, which was now sparsely dotted with the first stars. Like the suggestion of a shadowy thunder-cap a mountain peak seemed to float upon the nebulous line where the forest ended and the upper air began while, over all the dark expanse of the wooded slopes, there was flowing downward a warm fragrant wave—the untainted breath of the open spaces. The young man filled his lungs with the elixir. It was like new wine, full of the vigour of the vanished sun. The clearing, wherein stood the out-buildings, was in deep shadow, the stumps looming like protean monsters shouldering through an ocean of shade.

Under the porch beneath his window, Craig heard a woman's voice, quick and thin-edged, and then Powers' answering growl as he lurched out into the back-yard. He was searching for something and, as he hunched over with his long arms stretched forward, his form seemed one with the weird shapes bulging through the darkness. With a sudden rush of wings, a night-bird swooped, almost touching the man's head. He stood erect for a moment and then stooped earthward again. Quietly, Craig drew the window to him and closed it.

Tossing back the white counterpane, he lay down. He had come to Squamish for rest and thus far there had been an unceasing succession of events which were not of the kind to further his purpose. The nervous strain incidental to a newspaper office had been an insidious foe which had undermined his physical health while it kept him buoyed up by a false sense of well-being. Friends had reminded him that steel might lose its resilience even if it could not be broken. Reluctantly he had yielded to their advice. He smiled grimly at the thought of their astonishment could they have known the mental and emotional storms which had swept through him during the few short hours since his arrival at this haven of rest. Others of his acquaintance had found this little valley unique in its seclusion and serenity, but he, fated to sense more deeply the undercurrents of life, had found it to be seething with force—a reservoir from which was supplied much of the power that lay behind one of the most aggressive political movements on the Pacific Coast.

His real friends might also have secretly considered it to be for his good that he should be away from women for a time. Again their intentions had been smilingly set aside by Fate, for, within twenty-four hours after his landing in the valley, he was in love. Perilously and foolishly in love with a woman—who was married. For one brief moment there had been a pause in his emotional life, when he had been made aware of the barrier of the conventions which removed her from him into a region inaccessible except to the reckless or unwary. Then, reason was checked by impulse. Now, he only knew that he was obsessed by a driving desire to know more of the woman whose fineness and beauty seemed so

foreign among the primitive clods who wrung a living from the soil in this wilderness. Who was she? What had been her past? Why had she chosen to conceal information as to her reason for being in the Valley, whether as a transient or a permanent resident? Powers' remark that morning had closed the possibility of asking him questions. Featherstone? No. The old man might divine something if Craig seemed anxious to meet Mrs. Paget. People in love seemed to be possessed of a sixth sense.

Powers called to him from the foot of the stairs. Reaching for his cap, he pulled his tie into place and, without bothering further about his appearance, joined his host. Bud had thrown a brown mackinaw coat over his undershirt. Maitland wondered if the under-garment had ever been washed. It seemed to be as much a part of its wearer as his skin.

Together they stepped out into the warm, fragrant dusk, and groped their way among roots and timbers to the roadway which ran down towards the wharf. The sky was overcast, only a few stars here and there throwing a dim light Through the haze, and, for a time, Maitland was forced to follow the dark form of his companion without attention to the path before him.

"Is it far to the place, Bud?" he asked.

"'Tain't far—no."

Powers' tone did not invite further remarks. Soon, to their left, there appeared the twinkling lights in the windows of a farm-house. They were passing a hop-ranch, and the pungent smell of the vines came to them over the fence of uprooted stumps which was quite hidden by ferns and brambles. The air was close, burdened by the tang of green, growing things, and was alive with a keenness unknown in more arid regions where there exists only unfulfilled desire. Here there was plenitude and fruition and a rank growth of both good and bad things. It seemed not unlikely that elemental forces should be here present in more or less tangible form working their wild will to endless development and endless destruction. The ungainly form which moved before Craig might easily be imagined to be an embodiment of the blind strength of Nature, cruel as a thoughtless child, loving darkness and taking a delight in the exercise of its limitless lust for vivid experience.

Shortly after they had passed the hop-fields, Powers swerved to the right, entering an overgrown trail through the dense underbrush. Both men had to use their hands to push aside the tangle of canes and foliage as they proceeded. The sound of water became audible—the ripple of a stream over shingly bars—and Maitland knew that they were working their way towards the Squamish River, which lay between the main road and the hills that bordered the valley to westward. The darkness was suddenly broken by a beam of light when they emerged into a tiny clearing about a cabin.

In the dim light Craig could see that the building was of the most crude description. Rough clapboards, so loosely thrown together that the lamplight shone through innumerable chinks, a dilapidated roof of ancient, moss-covered lumber, and a bit of rusty stove-pipe projecting through a ragged piece of sheet-metal made a passable excuse for a dwelling. There was a musty, stale scent about the place, strongly suffused by the odour of fish. Powers strode forward and tapped at the door, which was sheltered by a rickety porch. Maitland heard a woman's voice.

"Is that you, Bud?"

"Sure it's me! Open up before I push yer darn door down," he answered.

A cackling laugh followed. The door swung open.

"I got a friend with me," continued Powers. Maitland reached out his hand to the woman, who looked at him in a half-frightened way. She was plump and dirty, although her ruddy cheeks and bright black eyes betokened health. Her oily, dark hair, drawn tightly back from her forehead, was shiny and smooth as sealskin. She spoke with a Cockney accent.

"Blime if I know if I should let yer in!"

She cast a coquettish glance at Bud and then turned to his companion.

"Come in, sir. 'E's always like that. Must 'ave 'is little joke."

She bustled back into her little box-like room, and shoved forward two rickety kitchen chairs. The men stepped inside. A big deal table, upon which stood a tin of evaporated milk and some cracked dishes, and a ramshackle cook-stove almost filled the place, which was lined with newspapers pasted to the rough boards of the wall. Maitland was taken aback by the bold familiarity with which Powers greeted the woman. There was evidently a relationship here which could be hardly possible if the facts were known to the little Irishwoman whom Bud called wife.

The big fellow shed his mackinaw and laid it over a chair. He winked at the woman while he nodded towards Craig.

"Needn't mind, Dolly. He's all right. He's a friend of mine. Guess that's enough said."

The woman stood looking into Powers' face. Her eyes held adoration, fear, and also a sort of helplessness which was pathetic. She backed away when he stepped forward, but she was not quick enough to avoid the great hand, which seized her and drew her into his embrace. He kissed her, and then, drawing up a chair, sat upon the edge of the seat. Her face flushed and hot, she stammered and then giggled foolishly.

"Sye! Wot's gone wrong with yer? Yer crizy. This 'ere gentleman'll think I'm a rum 'un."

It was an embarrassing moment for Maitland. Powers sat grinning like a schoolboy who had done something smartly impudent. The younger man felt a wave of disgust and then, suppressing his first impulse, he decided to see the thing through.

"Where's Jimmy?" Powers shot the question at their hostess.

"'E's at the store. 'E's liable to be 'ere most any minute," she replied. "We'd better wite for 'im before we start—if we're going to do anythink to-night. 'E's been getting good results litely, Jimmy 'as. 'E's developing fast."

"Good," chuckled the man. "We'll wait if it ain't too long. I want my friend here to find out some things. He ain't converted yet, Bessie."

She seated herself at the table and, composing her voice, which was still excited and high-pitched, spoke to Craig:

"Yer not a Spiritualist, sir?"

"No; I am not, Mrs. Kearney," he said.

His reply, coldly courteous, brought the flush to her cheeks again. She darted a vicious look at Powers.

"It'll be best to pye no attention to Bud, there," the woman declared. "'E's no more responsible, w'en 'e gets going, than nothink. Begging yer pardon, 'e don't mean nothink, 'e don't."

Maitland looked at Powers. The fellow was smiling good-naturedly, evidently enjoying the younger man's uneasiness. The whole atmosphere of the place reeked with bestiality and the degrading influence of minds obsessed by vicious forces over which they had no control. Craig knew enough of mediums of the ordinary kind to be aware that they were usually victims who paid the price of moral ruin for their precarious powers. In the woman before him he recognised one of the unfortunates, who had opened the doors of her being to the denizens of the psychic jungle. Her subjection to Bud Powers, who possessed her, was physical—the attraction of one animal for another. Her mind and soul, however, belonged to even more dangerous and irresponsible entities.

Maitland was relieved from the necessity of replying to her remark by the sound of a footstep upon the porch without. The woman winked at Powers. The door opened and Jimmy Kearney entered, scraping his feet heavily upon the battered threshold. He was an unshapely little lump of a man, of nondescript pattern. His watery blue eyes blinked in a furtive manner at the visitors.

Bud did not move from his seat. His manner of speaking seemed to indicate that he wanted Maitland to know that he was master of the situation.

"Come in, son," he said to Kearney. "Yer holdin' up the meetin'. This here's Mr. Maitland—one of the gang. He's a friend of mine from Vancouver."

Craig rose to shake hands with the man, and found more of honesty in his grip than he had felt since coming into the house. While he stood, looking into Jimmy Kearney's face with a growing feeling that he would like the man, Bud's voice rumbled:

"It's pretty late. Let's get goin', Jimmy. We can chew the rag afterwards."

"Sure, Bud. What you say goes with me," assented the other. Dropping Maitland's hand, he disposed of some groceries which he had brought from the store, moved the big, round-topped, deal table nearer to the centre of the room, and placed chairs about it at regular distances. Powers took his seat facing the door, while Mrs. Kearney sat opposite to him. Her husband sat across the board from Craig Maitland.

After he had lowered the wick of the kerosene lamp, Bud directed them all to place their hands, palm downwards, upon the bare wood of the table. The woman was calm now, slightly more pale than usual, assuming an air of gravity which sat grotesquely upon her plump, childish face. A glance at Kearney told Craig that the little man regarded the proceedings as a religious ceremony. His lips, under his stubbly brown moustache, were decorously compressed, and his nervous eagerness to adjust himself properly betrayed an earnest desire to lend every assistance to the stage-setting for the séance. Powers spoke solemnly.

"Let us all be perfectly still, now. Mebbe the spirits won't come right away seein' that there's a stranger in the circle, but we'll see. Quiet, now!"

Maitland was not entirely a sceptic in regard to spiritualistic phenomena. He had read a great deal of literature which dealt with the subject, and had also experimented, at times, to such an extent that he was convinced that there were realities mingled with the "hocus pocus" which caused the derision of the unthinking and material-minded. At the moment, he was chiefly interested in Bud Powers, whose personality alternately attracted and repelled him. Was he a superstitious fool in his attitude towards things he did not understand, or was he really possessed of a psychic "flair" because of his primitive mind and his excess of crude elemental strength and magnetism? In the dim light, hunched at the head of the table, with his great hairy hands stretched out before him, he looked sinister enough to be the embodiment of some protean force, blindly and cruelly evil in the pursuit of its ravening desire.

There ensued a silence which was broken only by the intermittent crackling of the fire in the kitchen stove. They were no longer in the shabbily furnished room in Kearney's shack, but were enveloped in a darkness that might have been anywhere, although a rancid, kitchen smell kept Craig from forgetting his surroundings. In the intense stillness, he felt himself struggling to retain control of his will, which was wavering like a candle in a steadily increasing draught of foul air. Sensitive to these things, he felt that there was a psychic atmosphere about him that was no mere figment of his imagination. There was a gathering force and strain. Then the big table beneath his hands began to vibrate, gently at first, and soon with increasing strength, until its corners rose and fell with a dull tapping sound upon the boards of the floor. Mrs. Kearney drew a deep audible breath. In a low monotone, she said:

"We are glad you are 'ere. Is there anyone who 'as a message?"

Three distinct raps followed, and then the table stood still.

"Is there anyone ye're wanting to speak to?"

The corner of the table rose and fell three times as before.

"Who is it ye're wanting? Mr. Powers?"

Two taps.

"'Tain't you, Bud," whispered the woman's voice. "Mebbe it's you, Mr. Maitland. Is it Mr. Maitland?"

Three taps.

He heard Mrs. Kearney murmur, "It's you they're wanting to speak to, Mr. Maitland. Go ahead. Is there anythink ye're wanting to know?"

A slight chill passed over Craig. He was surprised and not a little disconcerted at the sound of his own voice, hollow and seemingly far away. With an effort he framed his brief reply:

"No. Nothing."

In the darkness, his eyes were turned towards Powers. The man's features were invisible, so that only the outlines of his head and shoulders and his projecting arms showed dimly in an indistinct silhouette. But Maitland fancied that he saw about him a dull glow, a lambent emanation, blue and sinister, that paled and deepened alternately. With an involuntary start, he noted that the fellow's bulk had seemingly increased until he looked like a tremendous shadowy form merging with the darkness about him—part of that darkness—a fragment chiselled out of it by an unseen hand. He found himself struggling against a desire to rise and break away from it all, but fear of what his companions would think held him bound. He would await developments. His attention was instantly centred upon the table, which was undulating now with a new motion. Violently, as if being shaken by a powerful hand, it thrilled with force so that Maitland felt his chair being shoved to and fro.

"Gawd, Bud, stop it! Stop it, Bud!" He heard the woman's frightened exclamation.

The lamp on a shelf near the stove, within reach of Powers, flickered and went out. The place seemed to be rocking now with an elemental fury. Maitland rose, but could not remove his hands from the table, to which they clung as if he were holding the handles of a powerful electrical battery. A fetid smell filled his nostrils, while he sensed about him struggling forms which lunged, parried and tore at each other in a frenzy of conflict. Suddenly there was a peal of laughter, deep and inhuman. The table stood still. A bead of sweat trickled into Maitland's eye.

Powers struck a match. Leaning towards the shelf, he gingerly removed the hot lamp-chimney. In the dim light Kearney was standing, his face white and his eyes blinking as if he had just been awakened from a swoon. But he was looking neither at Craig nor at Bud Powers. His whole attention was directed towards his wife who was still seated at the table, her hands glued to the edge of it, her face as immobile as if carved from stone, while her gaze was fixed as that of a dead person. A coral necklace looked like a sinister scar upon the whiteness of her skin. Powers shambled round the table and, laying a hand upon her shoulder, shook her roughly.

"Here! Come back, you. None of that. Wake up!"

His voice was shaking slightly. Slowly the life returned to the woman's eyes and a faint touch of pink began to show in her cheeks. She raised a hand and feebly attempted to remove Bud's fingers.

"Bud! Oh, Bud! Don't! Lemme go!"

"Don't wake her too quick," muttered Kearney.

"Hell!" growled Powers. "I guess I know what I'm doin'. Mind your own business."

The husband remained silent while Bud shook the woman more roughly than before. She rose, staggering a little at first, and then smiled apologetically at the men—quite herself again.

"What the dickens did yuh want to go into a trance for?" Bud lashed out furiously. "You bust up the whole works. There won't be nothin' more doin' to-night, Mr. Maitland." With the latter statement he turned towards Craig. "Come on. We might just as well light out. I ain't goin' to set chewin' the rag. I come down here to learn somethin' and it's all upset. Might as well fergit it." He looked savagely at Mrs. Kearney.

"Won't you stay for a bite?" she said.

"Nothin' doin'," Powers snapped ungraciously. He reached for his felt hat, which lay upon a chair. "Thanks just the same. Mr. Maitland kin stay if he wants to."

Craig declined in words intended to dull the edge of his companion's rude outburst, and took his leave in the wake of his big, ungainly form. Just before they entered the bush trail which led to the main road he felt Powers' hand upon his arm.

"Keep away from her, kid. She's bad medicine when she likes you—bad medicine—for you."

"You needn't worry," said Maitland.

CHAPTER VI

YOUTH FOLLOWS THE GLEAM

During the next two days Craig Maitland tried to obtain some of the rest for which he had come to the Squamish Valley. He slept late between the snowy sheets, laundered by the little Irishwoman, and avoided his host in the intervals between meals. Powers waited upon him at table with no show of resentment at his silence, and merely smiled enigmatically at his obvious attempts to make it clear that he wanted to be left alone. Craig was trying to banish the man from his mind. He suggested problems, and Maitland wanted to avoid the unpleasant things in life until he was forced, once more, to meet them. After all, he reflected that Bud Powers was a big, unscrupulous brute, whose life was unclean and who used his personality to dominate those weaker than himself, so that Craig felt that his influence in Labour circles could only be inimical to the cause. While the young man had determined to take an active part in socialistic propaganda, he had firmly resolved that he would oppose, with all his strength, the elements of brutality and ignorance which could only wreck any attempt to establish a new order. The time might easily come when he would have to meet this man and break him or be broken. Meanwhile there were other thoughts more absorbing with which to occupy his leisure.

While he lazed in the sunshine of the summer day, somewhere in the same valley Jocelyn Paget breathed the same air and brightened the hours because she was alive. Craig Maitland had played with life heretofore, taking lightly the pleasures which lay close to his hand as one would pick luscious fruit that tempted touch and taste. He had been loved, but now he had to face a new possibility. To want something more intensely than he had ever desired before or had realised that he could desire, and to find that it was beyond his reach, was a disturbing prospect. The pain which had suddenly gripped him, when he had parted from her after their chance meeting, was for him an unusual experience, and it flashed home to him a message from an unexplored world. Impetuous, confronting life as an exhilarating adventure, he had drifted merrily from port to port on a sea of sensation that sparkled bravely in the sunshine, but he now felt the stirring of a wind which boded storms. The memory of her voice haunted him like a strain of music that had died out along the green aisles of an enchanted forest. He had met her as in a dream. She had left him like a reminiscence of some forgotten life which had touched the fringe of consciousness, and had then passed back into the shadows of oblivion—and she was married or had been married. The sooner he knew the precise nature of the barriers—if any—between himself and his objective, the better it would be for his peace of mind. He could wait no longer. He had no inclination to seek further information about her from anyone at his present lodging-place. Well—his holiday could be spent quite as pleasantly in the hotel down at Squamish, for it was a pretty spot, and really as restful as might be wished.

On the morning of the third day after the séance at Kearney's Craig announced his intention of leaving. Mrs. Powers' face plainly expressed her regret.

"Shure an' we've done our best to plaze ye, Mr. Maitland. I'm hopin' ye've not taken offence at annything at all?"

"By no means, Mrs. Powers," said Maitland. "I have enjoyed myself very much, but I am restless away from the office. Probably it is just a little too quiet and comfortable for me here. I may stay at the wharf for a day or so before going down to the city. We'll see. I'll come again sometime when I have more leisure and have a real holiday. Can Bud take me down this afternoon?"

"Shure and he can do that. He's out at the barn now. I'll just run out an' see that he doesn't be makin' anny other plans."

She paused to look back as she went through the door to the kitchen. There was a wistfulness in her voice that touched the young man.

"I was hopin' ye'd stay. It would be good for Bud—it would that; and the bye has a good heart an' all if he had a man's help. There's no woman can hold him, I'm afraid."

"Sorry," said Maitland. He meant it, and a tear sprang in answer to the sympathy in his tone, and glistened on the little woman's eyelashes. She compressed her thin lips tightly and went out without more words.

Craig walked to the front door, and looked out into the sunshine of the morning that was resting peacefully upon the tangled masses of green foliage lifting against a cloudless sky. Under the serenity—conflicting forces, the interplay of love and hate which existed wherever there were human souls! Maitland knew that Bud was considered to be the leader of a certain element in his political party. In this brooding solitude he was like the debris on some remote mountain-side. An unwary step might unloose a blind torrent which would sweep ruthlessly through the valleys where men had built, in fancied security, walls to shield their hoarded gains. There were Kearneys a-plenty and women of his wife's breed to follow recklessly where such a man would lead.

In the afternoon Powers hitched his brown colt to the buck-board and, at a leisurely pace through the silence of the big timber, they made their way down the valley. During the trip the men said little to each other. When they were approaching the hotel, a sea-breeze, keen with the coolness of the snow-caps and the blue reaches of the bay, met them, and Bud walked the horse along the dusty road which ran close to the dikes protecting the farms that bordered upon the water. The houses of the hamlet, which lay where the long pier jutted out into the waves, were built upon piling to lift them above the mud and shingle. To their left, as they came to the end of the valley, stood a tall cliff famous for its markings and called, because of them, "The Pictured Rock." Upon its dark surface could be discerned white, indistinct figures which imagination could construe into the likeness of men and animals. Fir-clad mountains sloped to the upper air and formed the shores of Howe Sound as far as eye could reach.

A few steps from the beginning of the pier, Bud drew up before the porch of the Squamish Hotel, a square wooden structure without grace of any kind except an air of cleanliness imparted to it by white paint. To the right of the main doorway was another entrance, over which the one word, "Bar," extended its invitation. Through the screen door of this buffet Maitland could see two or three men standing with foaming glasses of beer before them. The proprietor left his task of serving drinks in order to meet the new-comers. He was red-faced, bald-headed, and fat. Something in his manner suggested the farm rather than the saloon as his natural environment. He shook hands with Maitland when Bud introduced him, and then reached for the grips which had been deposited upon the steps of the veranda.

"Mr. Maitland's been stoppin' with me. See that you treat him right, Dick, old-timer. Who's in there?" said Powers, tipping his thumb towards the bar.

Dick Garland lowered his voice. "Just the Perfesser an' some of his chums. They're takin' on a load before hikin' up the valley."

"All right, bo." Powers moved towards the door. "Have one on me."

Within the bar-room Maitland met Mr. Boggs, the Professor, and his companions. From anyone interested in unusual specimens of humanity, Boggs deserved a second look. Dressed in a working-man's clothes, his cultured accent and keen blue eyes, which glimmered nonchalantly through a screen of red whiskers, proclaimed him to be more at home on Piccadilly than upon the Squamish dikes. He drawled out a perfunctory, "Glad to meet you, don't you know," and

proceeded to introduce his comrades quite as if the ceremony were taking place in a drawing-room. At Bud's invitation he ordered whisky. Garland, the hotel-keeper, glanced at him through narrowed eyelids.

"Better go slow, Perfesser. It's a long ways to bed."

"Oh, I say! I like that. I shall leave the matter to these gentlemen." He turned to Maitland. "Am I drunk, sir? Come, what do you say?" When Craig failed to answer promptly, the man leaned over the bar towards Garland. He was polite—painfully so.

"I say, Garland," he continued, "you've insulted me. Would you mind—er—that is if you can spare me a moment—er—would you mind stepping outside while I blacken your eyes?"

The hotel-man chuckled.

"Drink up, fellers! Here's yer whisky, Perfesser. I ain't lookin' for no trouble. It's too darned hot to fight."

He chuckled once more. When the drinks had been disposed of, Maitland immediately excused himself upon the plea that he wanted to go to his room and wash up a bit. As he followed his host up the stairs to the hall bedroom, he could hear the sounds of the altercation which the Professor had started in the bar.

"Darn these remittance guys," muttered Garland, while he put Craig's bags into the room. "No use to themselves nor to nobody else. Money from home's worse'n cholera. Not many has insides strong enough to stand it. While they've got the coin they ain't half bad, but they keep hangin' around so long as they can bum a drink offen annybody."

Maitland smiled at the fellow's crude but refreshingly frank attitude towards his customers. When he was left alone, he rid himself of the dust of the road and then, drawing a chair to the window, looked out over the blue expanse of Howe Sound, which rippled in the light of a summer afternoon. There was no break in the stillness except the far-away murmur of voices in the bar-room and the occasional shrill scream of an angry gull disturbed at his meal by a scavenger crow.

Somewhere—in all probability beneath this same roof—was the woman who had so completely taken him by storm. He wondered what she would be like in street clothes or in an evening gown. Then, in the quietness, came the realisation that he had plunged in a ridiculously precipitate manner into this new experience. How could he know the depths of his own emotions since they were not unlike the waves which glistened before his eyes in ever-changing curves and crests? Yet, more strongly than ever, he felt that this was more than a passing fancy. "The one girl, out of all the many whom I have known, who completely fulfils my dream of perfect womanhood." He had said that to himself a few hours after his first sight of her. Out of the frame of an August morning, gold and green, she had stepped, as a painting might have come to life. "In the gallery of your past, a forgotten chamber thick with dust and cobwebs, I have waited for this moment. I am yours even if you do not claim me—a part of you without which you are incomplete." She might have said that, and it would have expressed the indefinable interest which her every gesture had for him when viewed in retrospect. Such were the ways by which his imagination had obsessed him. The cold facts were that she was married, or had been married—was a total stranger to him and would, in all likelihood, remain so.

He rose hastily and, opening his grips, pulled out some writing material, and proceeded to fulfil promises to several friends whose good wishes had followed him upon his holiday trip. Then, too, there was some copy to be done for the *Telegraph*. Work was the best antidote to day-dreaming. He must clear the way for all that lay ahead of him. A hint from Tacey had assured him that his assistance would be welcomed upon the staff of the Labour weekly, and might lead to a partnership. That was good enough for a start towards his objective. He wrote steadily until the dinner-bell roused him to a sense of time.

While Craig laboured furiously to forget her, Jocelyn Paget sat at an opened window upon the opposite side of the hotel. The wind rustled gently through the leaves of a book which lay in her lap. She had been reading, but now she turned to look at her husband, who lay upon a couch within reach of her hand.

Major Paget was an ex-officer of the Anglo-Indian army. Stockily built, square-jawed, clean-shaven, he nevertheless needed a uniform to render him impressive. A loose lower lip denied the strength otherwise proclaimed by a good forehead beneath his carefully-brushed dark hair, and by the thick neck muscles which flowed down to a sturdy

torso. He had just removed a folded towel from over his eyes. His wife rose and, pouring some ice-water from a pitcher, moistened the cloth and replaced it upon his head.

"Thanks, Kitty, my dear." The major's voice was colourless.

His wife resumed her seat at the window. Her white fingers drummed nervously upon the arm of her chair. Her husband continued querulously, "I wish to goodness, my dear, that you would stop that infernal tapping."

"Oh, all right, Reginald. Would you rather that I went to my own room?" She asked the question casually.

"No, certainly not. At least, not now. Don't be silly. Will you mix me a whisky and soda, my dear?"

Mrs. Paget looked absent-mindedly out of the window. She had the air of repeating words worn by daily use.

"If you will promise me that you will not take any more until after dinner. Will you do that?"

"Oh, certainly, certainly, my dear. Just a little nip. I'll be right as ever, after dinner, you know."

Quietly she mixed the drink at a table near by, and handed it to him. He gulped it quickly and breathed a sigh of relief.

"Not so bad," he said. "Ah—really, you know—well! Run along, Kitty dear. I am going to dress for dinner. Oh, by the way, where did you put my neckties? Have I a clean shirt? Did the laundry come in? Dash it! Living in this hole isn't living at all. I say, let's go down to the city for the week-end. What?"

"Not yet. Not for a while yet, Reggie. Do you know that you are looking ever so much better since we came up here? You must keep quiet for a few weeks longer ... away from people and noise, I mean to say. There's a dear, now. Don't think of it. Forget all about it and try to sleep. It is early yet. I shall call you for dinner."

She might have been speaking to a five-year-old son who had over-eaten and who was suffering from his indiscretion. Picking up the decanter of Scotch which she had recently used, she moved towards the door.

The major protested feebly.

"Oh, I say! Kitty!"

She did not reply, but moved silently out of the room.

Before her own mirror she paused to glance at her reflection. Jocelyn Paget had the gift of eternal youth. A flame of life which refused to be dimmed by circumstance danced at the heart of her, except when illness temporarily extinguished it. Her figure, in blue *crêpe de Chine*, was trim as upon the day when her parents had persuaded her to accept the suit of Major Paget, home on leave from India. A French refugee of the Old Regime, living in a London garret upon the rapidly dwindling funds obtained by selling the family jewels, possessed, in a pretty daughter, his sole hope of regaining a measure of the luxury he had known in Paris. So it happened that Madame Villard had tearfully acquiesced in the sale of their one asset. They had all suffered so! It would be heaven to feel clean linen again, and, after all, marriages were made that way in France. Women entered blindfold into matrimony and, if the "bon Dieu" proved kind, children helped them to forget.

She walked over to the window which faced the western hills bordering the valley. At her feet lay a steamer trunk and, upon it, a pair of dusty riding-boots. She picked them up, holding them at arm's length to keep from soiling her gown, and deposited them in another place. A faint flush suffused her face while she was tucking them out of sight in her clothes closet. Then, listlessly, she began to dress for dinner.

Craig Maitland had finished his soup and was waiting for the next item on the well-thumbed bill of fare. He was the one and only occupant of the big dining-room of the hotel when the little half-breed waitress took his order. The white linen and cheap glassware upon the tables about him glittered pleasantly in the soft glow from the gas-lamps that were

suspended from the ceiling upon chains hidden by red and green whorls of tissue-paper. Between the spotted muslin curtains of a window near him, a sleepy canary twittered at intervals from its brass cage. The bird and a few nondescript prints in cheap gilt frames were the sole decorations intended to distract one's thoughts from the business of eating. Craig hoped that the waitress would return speedily. The place felt stuffy and bleak, as if it were used only occasionally, and then by people to whom dining was a task to be accomplished quickly and in silence.

His eyes were aching slightly and his temples were throbbing because he had continued to write too long after daylight had gone. Now his thoughts were released to wander at will. As if in answer to his one desire, he heard a voice —English, with the subtle hint of a foreign tongue—speaking to someone in the hallway near him. He heard, too, a man's reply in the rising inflection of the English manner, and then Jocelyn Paget, with her husband, entered the room. He glanced up—caught the quickly concealed flash of surprise and the recognition in her eyes.

"Oh, Mr. Maitland!"

Craig rose, was introduced to Major Paget, and hoped that they would sit at his table. They did. Soon he was mechanically lifting food to his lips while he kept up a running fire of small talk. Paget said little. "Yes," and "Ah, indeed," were his only condescensions to interests removed from the dinner itself. While Maitland chattered and listened, enjoying every modulation of her voice as one who is thrilled by music, a storm was rising somewhere in the depths of him. She was married. This chunk of clay was her owner. She was a chattel that could be moved about at the whim of another, and, upon her finger—he noticed it now—was the golden band which betokened her servitude. The metallic symbol was more comfortable than if worn upon the ankle, but the meaning and intent were, nevertheless, there. Doubtless this woman would, after the hereditary manner of her sex, abrogate her mental superiority to listen with respect to the inanities of her husband, and would invest him with a thousand virtues existing only in her imagination, which was motivated by the maternal instinct. She had even surrendered her name, with other birthrights, to this man in return for food and clothing. How, in God's name...? A shell of what had never attained to manhood, bloated by indulgence, intact merely because he had been sheltered from life by the possession of money! It was monstrous. Life was a cruel farce. He might as well forget. Ships that pass in the night...!

He left the dining-room with them. At the foot of the stairs he looked into her eyes, and hoped that his own were as impersonal. She hoped that they might see more of him if he stayed. The politeness of his reply masked the cold indifference which possessed him. While Paget and his wife retired to their rooms, Maitland strolled out upon the porch before the hotel and, going to a corner remote from the bar, lighted a cigarette, sat down and—smiled at himself.

He had no illusions in regard to his own weaknesses. As clearly as most men see faults in others, he could stand aside and, careless of the result, could pass judgment upon his own actions. He suffered and enjoyed, revelling in the experience harvested by a rich, emotional temperament, but, apart from the self that stumbled and soared again, there was the real man who went steadily forward towards an ideal of human service. Now, he reflected, he had fallen and bruised himself upon the rocks. Well, the pain would pass. Everything did—except the Watcher, who went on.

Across the delta before him the afterglow of the sunset was softening the rugged outlines of the hills. A sky, washed with lavender and pale green, merged with the dark masses of the thickly wooded slopes and rested like a veil of beauty above the brow of the Pictured Rock. At the base of the cliff, where there were reedy marshes and mud-flats, flocks of gulls were swirling up like white wraiths against the gathering shadows. It was a favourite feeding-ground and resting-place for the birds. Craig watched them long. He was not thinking now—only feeling the unwonted loneliness that gnawed at his heart.

The mystic in him was soon in command of the drifting tide of fancies, tinged by emotion, which held him silent and finally rendered him oblivious to the varied loveliness of the scene before him. Romance—that intangible glamour that lies just below the surface of life—had touched him upon the morning when he had first seen Jocelyn Paget. All the material of dreams had seemed to be suggested by her speech, the glint of sunlight in her hair, the sense of her nearness to him. In some way, not to be entirely explained by Reason, she held an invisible thread, which following, he was led into the faery realm that is our common heritage. Helen, Deirdre, Iseult ... what had they been if not symbols of the Beauty which has been all men's quest and undoing? And there were still women—few, but more precious than fine gold—whose rose-leaf flesh veiled all of the ancient magic of fire and air.

He was aroused by voices in the bar-room. Garland was speaking.

"No. Now, look here—I mean it, Major! I can't do it. No, sir. Don't mind givin' you one little drink, but—a bottle—no, sir! I promised, and I ain't goin' to break my word."

"I say! What bally rot! Damn it, man...." Paget lowered his tone, so that Craig did not hear the remainder of his words as he expostulated angrily with the hotel-keeper.

"Might as well go on. I'm closin' up fer the night," he heard Garland say as he slammed the door of the saloon behind him. In the hallway could be heard the shuffle of feet and other doors banging while the proprietor retired to the rear of the house. Paget's step, muffled and heavy, sounded upon the rubber treads of the stairs.

Maitland reached into his pocket for a match and tilted back his chair. He did not strike the match. A short, sharp scream brought him to his feet. In another instant he was standing in the hall, peering up through the darkness. Somewhere above him a door was opened. He heard Jocelyn calling, "Mr. Garland! Oh, Mr. Garland!" Terror quivered through her voice, although it was lowered so as not to attract undue attention. Craig, all his impetuous youth driving him forward, took the stairs two at a stride.

There was a light in the upper corridor, so that he saw her standing, leaning for support upon the railing about the landing. A nasty, red mark upon her left cheek glowed more brightly because the colour had deserted the rest of her features. Her eyes widened, in a frightened way, when she saw Maitland. He paused.

"Pardon me, Mrs. Paget. What is it? Can I be of any help?"

"Oh, I am sorry——"

There was a tense moment while they stood looking at each other.

"It's quite all right, I assure you," she faltered. "I mean, I am all right. I shall not need Mr. Garland."

She moved slowly towards her room. With her hand upon the knob, she turned to Craig, who had not stirred from his place upon the upper stairs. A light in her eyes struck him with a stabbing pain that was most curiously akin to a fierce joy.

"Good night, Mr. Maitland, and—thank you."

He heard her slide the bolt upon the inside of her door.

CHAPTER VII

ONE SUMMER DAY

Freedom—the sea-wind, dallying for a moment in the arms of the alders and then dancing away to bend the stately heads of fir and cedar, and ruffle their flowing gowns of green, sang of it, if one had ears to hear. Freedom—the sunlight, tempered by the spray of waterfalls over ledges where the maidenhair fern swayed softly in the shade of the sturdy bracken, seemed to be filled with its glowing urge. Freedom—this was the rare wine which Craig Maitland had so rarely tasted in his strenuous days, chained to the round of existence. So intent upon living that Life had been delivered bound, a hostage to the Iron Age that murdered youth! Yes, he had been a victim to the years which were speeding up to a tension that would finally end in catastrophe! Only a world war or a complete revolution of the social order could relieve this deadly monotony, wherein men were cogs upon the outer boundary of a gigantic wheel—ever turning but no nearer to the centre where stood the reason for it all—the meaning of the Riddle.

Upon this July morning, however, thought was in abeyance and sensation held the reins. A dip in the surf before breakfast, a solitary but delicious meal of fresh eggs, crisped bacon, and buttered toast, a cigarette, and then a mile of country road that thrilled to one's feet as no pavement could ever do—these had all contributed to Maitland's feeling of emancipation and well-being. He had just left the more open places at the mouth of the river, where all roads ran along the top of the dikes which protected the green meadows of lush grass from the sea. Now he was entering the fringe of the forest, which deepened as it extended up the valley until, in the Upper Squamish, it became an immense stand of splendid timber.

The sunshine was intercepted by the dense foliage overhead, so that he felt slightly chilled, and, seeing a woodland path to his left, he determined to follow it to the bank of the river. There he might discover the sparkle of sun upon water and shelter from the cold tang of the salt breeze.

Brushing aside the overhanging boughs of an elder-bush which flaunted its scarlet berries above the ferns, he found red-brown earth beneath his feet, and the soft, crumbling wreckage of decaying wood sent up its earth-smell to delight his senses. It was all so different from the reek of human bodies in city streets. Clean and primal it was, awakening the natural man, who had been cramped and stifled by clothes and houses. The pale, golden cups of the skunk-cabbages glinted through fretted work of vine-maple branches and, in the cool gloom of their hiding-places, they looked not unlike a fairy brood squatting, silent and furtive-eyed, until he had passed on. A rabbit, its velvety ears a-quiver, peeped at him from behind a mossy knoll and then disappeared like a brown shadow pursued by a sunbeam. The man was smiling now, drinking deeply of the keen fragrance and the dew-washed air.

Emerging, he found a space covered by fine, dry gravel. Beyond this unshaded bar there was a line of boulders and then the rippling expanse of the river. Upon a log, once the trunk of a mighty giant, he stretched himself at length and, with the murmur of water in his ears, closed his eyes the better to enjoy the feeling of air and sunshine against his body. However, if he had confessed truly, he would have admitted that he had not come here merely to absorb the beauty of the morning. There is a more subtle lure for the eternal heart of youth than the impersonal attraction of the four elements. Blue skies are better seen in the depths of human eyes; sunshine is more potent when caught in the coils of silken hair; flowers never yield their elusive odours so alluringly in forest glades as they must do from satin flesh aflame with the soul within. Meeting and parting with Jocelyn Paget, he had drunken of the cup which Pan has formed for his votaries from all the witcheries of objective nature. Oh, he could wait now! Time did not matter and space would be a phantom dividing him from his heart's desire. Insidiously, the silvery tinkling of the river over its shallows stole into his brain, so that his eyelids were soon weighted and his breathing became quiet and regular. Craig did not dream about the social revolution nor of a world rebuilt upon Marxian models.

Fortunately for this sleeping youth, a stone was dropped suddenly into the starlit depths of his dreaming. Its echoes awakened him so completely that he did not realise that he had been asleep. Turning his head in the direction of the disturbing sound, he was in time to see a woman poised for flight. She stood with one hand grasping a bough of cypress, which she had drawn down for her support when the stone had rolled treacherously beneath her foot. In another moment, aided by the branch she held, she would have climbed the bank behind her, and must surely have disappeared in the thickets of fern and salal that fringed the river-bed.

Startled and embarrassed, Jocelyn Paget was a picture to delight an artist. A clinging gown of pale green, golden hair, grey eyes that were shaded by lashes dark enough to enhance their lights and shadows—she embodied Spring and its Dionysian graces. But this was July. Again Craig knew that time did not matter. All that was worth considering was the probability that she might vanish if he were tactless or in too great haste.

He straightened out his long limbs, pretended to rub his eyes, sat up quietly, but without delay.

"Can you forgive me? I have startled you so many times now." He held up his fingers while he counted. "Three times—ah—three! That is always a lucky number for me. Please do not disappoint me. I was dreaming—am still dreaming. It is dangerous to awaken a man too suddenly."

"I had no wish to disturb you, but—you were sleeping on my log."

"Sorry. I did not know, of course. Probably that may account for——" He paused, dropping his playful tone and

speaking quite seriously. "If you must have it so, I shall go away. I feel that I have been trespassing. I can find another place somewhere. But, if you don't mind too much, I would like to talk for a little while before I go."

"Remember that you are still dreaming, then." She laughed, letting the cypress bough spring back with a leafy rustle. "Dreams are easily—in fact, can be conveniently—forgotten." Picking her way daintily over the rocks, she seated herself upon the smooth surface of the log.

Maitland felt suddenly embarrassed, foolish, awkward as a country yokel alone with a girl for the first time. It was a new sensation for him to experience and it puzzled him while it irritated his pride. If he had not loved, there would have been none of this glamour that made her seem different from the millions of other women. As it was, she seemed mysterious, aloof, possessed of an other-worldliness which aroused his worship and the dim feeling of a wonder that transcended speech. Her nearness dropped veils in his inner consciousness. He was certain that he had seen her before their first meeting in this lonely valley. Her every gesture seemed familiar—intimately interwoven with memories which were a part of his being.

"You were going to talk to me, you know."

He blushed. "I suppose that I am not fully awake yet. I shall be all right presently."

She looked down meditatively at the slender tip of her shoe that was tapping upon the sand.

"Sometimes, Mr. Maitland, it might be better to continue dreaming," she said.

No longer entirely disconcerted, he was studying her closely. Music, poetry, a picture, had, in the past, affected him in the way that this woman was stirring him now. He plunged recklessly.

"Last night I dreamed that I might be of some assistance to you."

"It would make me happier if we did not awaken to realities just yet," she answered quietly. There was silence for a moment while he thanked his nebulous gods that she had left her hat at the hotel. The morning sunlight ... but that was forgotten when she looked at him directly.

"You were telling me about your plans—your work. Won't you tell me some more about them?"

"I am afraid there is not much more to tell," he replied. "It is all rather misty yet—the path that has been opened for me. Another dream, perhaps. I have imagined that I can help to make the world a better place in which to live."

"Is it not a beautiful world just as it is?" murmured the girl.

With an exquisite turn of her head, she watched the flight of a bird that was crossing the river. The flash of blue fire on its plumage was dimmed by the cool green of the shadows where it vanished from sight.

"Ah," he cried, "it is in these moments when we catch a fleeting glimpse of beauty that we do realise what is lacking. Here is order, harmony, and, best of all, freedom to know and to enjoy. How to bring all of this"—his hand swept out in a circling movement—"into our lives that are stifled and twisted by what we call progress—that is the problem, isn't it?"

"Yes, I suppose so," she said. "That is, if people want it. However, I do not see why grand opera should be given to those who prefer popular ballads. Even if forced by law to listen, I doubt whether all would grow to like Bach or Beethoven."

She was frowning now. Problemising, upon a sunny morning, was not to her liking. Jocelyn Paget could think, but she preferred to live.

"What are you going to do?" she continued.

"Education is the key to it all," answered Craig emphatically. "I feel that it may take time, but it is worth trying, and I want to do my share. I feel that there are great changes coming—more rapidly than we imagine. Money has too great power over life. We are machines for the most part, or rather parts of a machine, running along grooves into which we must fit or perish."

"Yes—yes," said the girl impatiently. "But what are you going to do—when you go back to the city, I mean?"

A mild surprise began to stir in Maitland. He had not, in his thinking, connected Jocelyn Paget with things practical. After all, it might not always be so easy to dream in her presence.

"As a free-lance, I could live well enough," he said, "but I shall seek employment on the Labour papers and plunge into the battle for a new order."

She made no immediate reply. Her eyes were bent upon the movement of a large ant that was toiling over the uneven surface of the log.

"A writer," she said reflectively. "To be able to express one's self must be wonderful. I have often longed for that. I feel beauty. It troubles me because I cannot put it into words. Why"—she looked up at him wistfully—"if you can do this, you can change the world—remake it as you will."

Craig looked his bewilderment. A moment ago she had brought him to earth. Now an indefinable change had come over her. It might have been the light that was playing lovingly in the waves of her hair, or the magic of wind and water, which produced the effect of making her seem more ethereal than most women. Again, it might have been that the man's worship was translated into a vision outside of himself. He felt the sense of mystery about her as he had known it for a passing instant upon the road to Powers' place. A flavour of some old enchantment—lavender and lace—nights heavy with the scent of roses, made his heart beat unsteadily as he leaned towards her.

"Just what do you mean, Mrs. Paget?"

She smiled. "It's a big thought which comes to me and overwhelms me at times. Everything has to be created before it can be at all. Is it not so? Everything must first be a dream-figure in someone's mind. Then, the men of affairs catch the idea from the pages of the poet or the artist in prose and proceed to make it visible in the outer world. It's something like that—my thought. It has been said—I don't know by whom—that God and the poets are the only creators."

Craig was carried away by the stream of her enthusiasm. That she was Mrs. Paget, wife of Major Paget of the Anglo-Indian army—this was forgotten. For the moment she was a voice and a presence that drew him to her, awakening a new desire in his heart. The longing in him was not so much for her as it was for the beauty of an ideal which she embodied. He felt that she was all that was best in himself, incarnate in a rare loveliness that lured him towards a quest more worthy than any he had heretofore known. Breathlessly he listened while she continued:

"If a man could do this thing would it not be more than if he were a ruler in kingdoms which pass away? The world, you say, is hungering for change? Is it not because it has lost itself in illusions and has mistaken the shadow for the reality? Voices are needed which will sound, above the wheels of speed, the message that is old—old as these eternal hills—that truth and beauty are always with us if we will but open our eyes and ears to them. Politics—economics—what are they? Is any country as well governed as a humble bee-hive, where there is the loveliness of law and order—a harmony that is never disturbed except by accident or death? Would you call bees educated or cultured animals when compared with our humans? Yet with all our apparatus, invented by science, our ships will go astray while the bee wings its unerring flight to its home. The bee feels and does. We think and blunder. You must live, Mr. Maitland, and write ... but first, you must live."

The girl paused. She let her glowing eyes drop before Craig's steady gaze, while the colour suffused her face. Then she laughed nervously.

"Here I have been day-dreaming out loud to you. I can't remember having done that before." She stood suddenly upon her feet. "I must go. It is time that I put in an appearance at the hotel."

Maitland rose and stretched out his hand to help her across a weedy little pool which lay before her.

"Do you believe that I can possibly do one-thousandth part of what you think should be done by a man, Mrs. Paget?"

With her hand still in his, she replied, "You can do a great deal, I believe." She spoke quietly and very sincerely.

They were entering the woodland path now. Craig was in the act of drawing back a clump of salal which barred the entrance to the trail.

"You give me faith in myself, Mrs. Paget. If only——" He paused.

"Yes?"

"If only I could hear you day-dreaming again ... that would help."

The grey depths of her eyes were inscrutable.

"Almost every morning, when it is fine, I come here," she said. "It is a very good place to dream."

"I have found it so—most certainly."

Seeing him hesitate, she spoke quickly: "Thank you. I shall not take more of your time this morning. I shall be all right. It is sometimes better to do the expected thing."

In his boyish thoughtlessness, he had forgotten her position and the ubiquitous Mrs. Grundy. He flushed, extending his hand. Jocelyn left it tingling with the faintest suggestion of finger-tips when she disappeared amidst the dense undergrowth.

In the succeeding moments, one who watched Jocelyn's flight could easily have imagined that she had been thoroughly frightened. She was trembling as she dashed recklessly through the thickets which impeded her way. Before reaching the open road leading to the hotel, she halted, leaning for rest against the moss-grown bole of a great alder whose swaying branches upheld the tapestry of yellow-green moss that brushed her hot cheeks with cool hands.

While the hungry years had passed since her marriage, she had become more and more a recluse, living in a world built by her imagination that glowed brightly, at times with an unearthly light because of her native tendency towards mysticism. The Breton blood in her had brought with it the rich, Celtic heritage of a thinly veiled vision which frequently was clear enough to hold reflections of the unseen universe about her. She had brains, had read widely, and, as she was forced more and more to take refuge in thought, she had formed ideas of her own upon many subjects. Art, literature, and even the mazes of modern psychology had claimed from her a secret devotion. In any circle of cultured people she would have been called brilliant, had she expressed in words the conclusions to which her mind, aided by intuition, had led her.

Denied by the fates anything approaching perfect comradeship with a man, she had built for herself a world of fancy in which only ideal relationships existed. The transmuting and ennobling power of a great passion had impressed her while she was revelling in the pages of romance and poetry. Woman was to be the mate and comrade of man—a creator who inspired to action, receiving her reward in coin of the spirit and in the knowledge that her gift had borne immortal fruit. If, by any chance, the great love should come to her, would she accept it or, obeying the world's voice, would she turn aside? In the lonely nights she had whispered this question to her pillow and, in her heart, found that there had been no fear. She knew now that she had always been waiting. Would he know—when he came? Would it be to him but a passing affair—one amongst others? Where would it lead—this morning which smiled at her through a tangle of gold and green and the silence of this woodland place?

Drawn by some mysterious power, she had spoken to Craig Maitland as she would have done to one of the imaginary characters of her dream-world. And he had understood.

Once out upon the highway, she walked briskly, enjoying to the full the keen, salt wind which held in check the increasing heat of the day. In a meadow to her right two children knelt in the dank, green grass, where they were

gathering mushrooms. They waved their hands to her and, with a happy smile, she returned the greeting. Presently she met a solitary pedestrian striding as if each step meant a glow of well-being. Gaunt-featured, reddened by sun and wind, he looked as if more accustomed to mountain slopes than to these lowland levels. His keen eyes glanced at her—there was a flash of admiration which the woman noted—and he touched his hand to his cap in passing. Graham, whom she remembered to have heard addressed as "the Laird" about the hotel, had avoided her after their introduction to each other. Secretly she had not been sorry. There were tales about his intimacy with a Mrs. Kearney, who was condemned by the valley gossips as a baggage. Men—unlike women—found it hard to wait for the greater thing. This was something which had always puzzled her.

Jocelyn hoped, as she neared the hotel, that she could slip into the hall and gain her room without being observed. The landlady, a stout old busybody, usually tried to engage her in conversation when opportunity offered. Several buggies and a buckboard were drawn up before the veranda of the place and, as she stepped upon the porch, the sound of clinking coin came to her through the open door of the bar-room. While she passed on, a glance revealed to her the square figure of the major, elbows upon the polished counter, his blunt, red finger-tips caressing the slender, fluted stem of a wine-glass. He was giving a toast to the gaping yokels who endured his company because he had money to buy whisky.

Pausing upon the threshold of the main entrance, she could hear the thick, unsteady voice of her husband chanting:

"Come fill the cup and in the fire of spring
The winter garment of repentance fling—
The Bird of Time has but a little way..."

He stopped—repeated the last line, in a vain attempt to force his liquor-sodden brain to obey his will. The echo of a burst of drunken laughter followed her as she fled up the stairs to her room.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STORY OF A PRINCESS

A July day upon the Pacific Coast is fraught with languorous delight. It flows softly and with a wave-like ease from the first white light of morning to the shimmering afterglow of the sunset that settles upon the dreaming hill-sides. In its slow-moving hours, there is given time to gather up the threads of the past and also moments in which to weave them into the pattern of the present, so that events are seen, as it were, in a true perspective only possible when we forget the hurry and clangor of existence.

With a most willing heart, Craig Maitland surrendered himself to enchantment. In the morning there had opened up an alluring vista of possibilities—a new adventure, and yet one that was very different from any of the passing gifts of life which had hitherto been his to know, to taste, and then to forget.

He returned after the sun had risen well into the southern sky, to prepare for luncheon and to wait for another glimpse of the woman who had so strangely roused the dormant energies in his being. Economics—the scientific salvation of the race—had not seemed so potent or infallible when faced by her creed of beauty. Subtly she embodied something which must be the flowering of the evolution which his ardent comrades of the proletariat talked about in terms of wages and capital. Yet, without an ideal commonwealth to nurture her, she had attained to strength and loveliness. She was an enigma—still, most assuredly, a daughter of Eve.

He ate his midday meal alone save for the stout and rather frowsy landlady, who acted as waitress in the absence of the maid-of-all-work. She vainly strove to draw him into conversation, offering him titbits of gossip with his soup and vegetables, but she finally retired discomfited by his sullen preoccupation with the business of eating and thinking.

Ensconced upon the hotel veranda, perfunctorily engaged with a copy of the *Cosmopolitan*, he spent some restless hours during the afternoon—walked to the end of the pier and day-dreamed while the seagulls revelled before him in a world of blue and gold—then returned to dine once more in solitude sombrely lighted by expectation. Disappointed, he retired to his room, and gave himself up to the task of writing letters.

Twilight had deepened into darkness when he arose to shut his bedroom window. The blind and curtains were billowing and flapping in a strong wind which was blowing up from the sea. A glance into the night showed him a sky partially overcast by dark strips of cloud, between which a few stars were beginning to twinkle with a cold brilliance, while the surf was pounding now, in long rolling reverberation, upon the shingle that lay within a stone's throw of the hotel. From the lower windows of the house light was streaming out into the darkness and, as Craig lowered the sash, a hilarious shout reached him from the front veranda.

In the bar-room Dave Garland, beaming from his background of bottles and decanters, knew that it was a good evening for him. A hot day had brought thirst to the men who toiled on the Government road, in the hop-fields, and upon the little farms scattered through the valley. Now they were arriving in batches of three and four, all bent upon "liquoring up" to the extent of their means or credit. The shout overheard by Craig had greeted the appearance of Bud Powers and Jimmy Kearney. The brown colt, with the ramshackle buck-board, had just been made fast to the hitching-post before the saloon.

Powers, bare-headed, his brawny arms showing to the elbows of the grey flannel shirt covering his familiar, grimy underwear, received the tribute of the "gang" as if accustomed to it. As he came to a mock salute, his bulk filled the doorway for an instant, and then he slouched towards the bar and drew some bills from his pocket.

"Have one on me, everybody!"

Kearney, behind him, protested. "Look here, Bud, this otta be on me. I lost my bet that the colt couldn't get here under forty minutes. Come on, put back yer long green!"

Powers put out his big hand and checked Kearney's attempt to reach for his money.

"Say, who's doin' this? This one's on me. Keep yer roll, son, till it's needed."

Jimmy's lips moved as if he were about to assert his rights again, but a glance checked him.

"I'm doin' this, I tell you," continued Bud. Bar-room generosity was dominant in his tone but, nevertheless, there was the attitude of the bully thinly concealed beneath it. Before these men he would be obeyed, and he would let them know that Kearney must succumb to his will. So Jimmy quietly mingled with the crowd, obliterated by the presence of the boss. At the end of the line farthest from Powers, he gave his order, and filled a tumbler until the red rye threatened to overflow.

"Say, do you want a bigger glass, Kearney?" sneered the man at his side.

"What's bitin' you?" he growled in reply. "You ain't payin' for it."

"Gee, but yer sociable!" The fellow, a hop-yard labourer, bony and bleary-eyed, looked solemnly at the whisky which Jimmy was lifting to his lips. "Waal—I kain't say as I blame you much. Yer right, feller. He's payin' fer it, and, if I was you, I'd make him pay—I sure would."

Kearney had drained his glass, neat and without the flicker of an eyelid. He set it down rather hastily and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, but his eyes, usually blandly mild, were lighted by a question.

"What do yuh mean, Bates?"

"Waal—yuh ain't deaf, I reckon, and this valley ain't very big at that. I guess yuh know what I'm talkin' about. But 'nuff said. Here's another drink comin' up. Let's fergit what I said."

The bar-tender placed a bottle and fresh tumblers before the men. Jimmy deliberately poured out a drink that caused his companion to raise his eyebrows once more. Reflectively, and as if absorbed by thoughts which were far removed, he stroked the glass with his finger-tips while Bates went on.

"Fergit, says I—that's the thing to do." The man's blond moustaches, discoloured by tobacco, trembled as if he were enjoying the flavour of a memory. He swayed, when talking, like a withered corn husk in the wind—a ghost of some richer season. "Fergit—yessir—that's best. I once seed a man go crazy over a woman. He's doin' time now. He went and killed her, he did, with his own hands——"

Kearney tossed off his whisky. "This one's on me," he said. He signalled to Garland. Then, lowering his voice, he looked directly into the eyes of the man standing beside him.

"Just what in hell are you talkin' about, Bates? Come on. I want it straight. We're pals. You know that."

"Sure, sure, Jimmy—sure, we're pals." The man glanced furtively down the bar to where Powers was leaning against it. Although drunk, Bates had still a modicum of caution. "I'm sorry for yuh, old-timer. Powers is a bad one to get mixed up with. I ain't sayin' nothin', mind yuh. I never said nothin', remember that. 'Twasn't me started the talk that's goin' round. No, sir. Fact I've done all I could to set on it. You see yer away so much, Jimmy, when the fishin' season's on. But it ain't right—dammit, it ain't right, says I—that Jimmy shouldn't know about it——"

The story was never finished. Kearney's fist landed squarely upon the fellow's jaw, driving him back against the next man, who was in the act of raising a glass of beer. Before those near realised what had happened, the irate fisherman had repeated the blow, beating his man to the floor and kneeling upon him while he continued the punishment. An insensate fury seemed to possess him—a lust to expend the force of some pitiless fire that was raging within him. Nor did he desist until Bud Powers, seizing him by the collar of his shirt, lifted him bodily to his feet. Kearney's face was distorted by passion as he faced the man who had interfered with his vengeance.

"Take yer hands off me, Bud Powers," he screamed. "He's gettin' what you otta be gettin'."

Swinging round, still in the big man's grip, he struck out viciously. A smothered curse left Powers' lips as he felt the impact of Kearney's knuckles upon his cheek. There was a breathless silence in the room for an instant, and then a crashing sound as Jimmy's body was propelled backward over a pile of wooden cases containing empty soda-bottles. In the debris of overturned boxes and broken glass, he lay huddled, moaning, "Gimme a gun! Gawd, gimme a gun! Won't somebody gimme a gun!"

Uttering a hoarse cry like that of a beast, Powers was about to rush in upon his victim with calked boots ready for action when he was stopped by the proprietor, who had hurried from behind the bar. Garland threw his arms about Bud's waist. Turning, the boss grappled with his assailant, and their swaying bodies cleared a space in the centre of the excited crowd.

While the two men struggled there was a tense stillness again. All were waiting, fearfully, the inevitable end when Powers would mercilessly crush his opponent. No one had courage enough to interfere. Garland's breath was coming in short, choking gasps, which proclaimed his agony as the long, hairy arms twisted his body backward. Then it was that a shrill scream drew all eyes towards the hallway which opened into the bar.

Clinging to the banisters of the stairs, that were close to the open doorway, stood the proprietor's little girl, Jean, a child of eight. In her white night-gown, her flaxen ringlets partially hiding the terror in her eyes, she looked like some tender flower torn from another sphere and cruelly awakened to the stress and storm of earth-life.

"Daddy! Oh, Daddy!" her cry rang out again, and then a quick step was heard upon the steps above her. Maitland, clad in a dressing-gown, gathered her into his arms and bore her upward out of sight of the men in the saloon.

In the narrow passage between rooms on the floor above, the young man was met by Jocelyn Paget. She, too, was in *négligé*—-a blue silk kimono—her hair partially undone and her feet encased in fur-trimmed slippers. She also had been called into instant action by Jean's cry. The little one was trembling, shaken by sobs, as she clung to the man who held her. Jocelyn placed her hand upon the child's brow in a soft caress.

"There, there, Jean!" To Maitland: "Whatever shall we do? Her mother went down to the city this afternoon. Come, bring her to my rooms. I'll keep her there."

With the little girl in his arms, Craig followed her into the sitting-room which, with a bedroom upon either side of it, made up the Pagets' suite. A reading-lamp, with a dark green metal shade, cast a circle of light upon a round centre-table littered with books and magazines. The rest of the apartment was in shadow. At Jocelyn's command he laid Jean upon a sofa near the window. The woman deftly adjusted cushions and threw a light rug over the child before she knelt beside her and began to talk soothingly—assuring her that her father was safe—that she must be quiet—that he would come up to her soon. Jean, still weeping, thrust aside Jocelyn's hands and reached our her arms to the man.

"I want my daddy," she wailed.

Mrs. Paget looked helplessly at Maitland.

"I shall be back in a moment," he said as he turned quickly away. They could hear his footsteps upon the stairs. To the woman it seemed an interminable time before he opened the door quietly and entered in response to her call. Jocelyn rose, giving him her place by Jean. Craig took the tiny hands into his own.

"Listen, little one. They are not fighting now. Daddy is all right. He wants you to go to sleep like a good girl. You must be brave. He sent me to tell you a story—that is, if the lady will permit me."

He looked up at Jocelyn, who smiled. "The lady would like to hear the story, too," she said. The major had departed on a fishing-trip to the Upper Squamish, and she knew that he had whisky enough with him to last for several days. So she seated herself comfortably in a chair by the table, her face shaded from the light. Craig drew a hassock forward, upon which she rested her feet. In some inexplicable way, it seemed to him the most natural thing in the world to be at home with her. Still, he trembled slightly when a bit of lace touched him for a fleeting instant. She was very beautiful as she reclined gracefully, eyes smiling when he turned back to the sofa and seated himself beside Jean, who tendered him a hand to hold.

"This," said Craig gently, "is the story of a princess who was lost and was found again. Once upon a time there lived a boy who vexed his parents and all who knew him because he was always dreaming. He dreamed at night, which was perfectly proper; but, I am sorry to say that he also dreamed by day, which was not at all such a good thing to do. Not that the dreams were bad. They never were. They were mostly good and beautiful dreams, but they kept him from working at the things which his father and mother wished him to do.

"One dream, which was the most wonderful of all, came to him often at first, and then began to fade away and to come but seldom as he grew older. Later on I may explain why he lost this vision, but I must tell you how it appeared to him when he was still a little boy. In the dark hours of the night he used to feel very lonely at times. A great aching would rise in his heart until he would stir in his sleep, and a tear would often trickle down his cheek to wet his pillow. Then it was that he felt that he was a wanderer in a strange land, bleak and cold, where everyone was chasing grey shadows that mocked those who stumbled and strained after them. In his hand he held a little candle whose beams shed a tiny patch of light before him; but it was only a feeble flame and, in the fierce winds which blew over his weary world, it flickered sadly, and yet he knew that if it went out he would be lost. It was always when he feared most for his light that he would awaken to find a beautiful princess bending over him.

"She was so strangely lovely that it almost hurt the boy to look at her. Her golden hair, falling over her white shoulders, gleamed like sunlight upon the snowdrifts where he played on winter days. Her eyes made him think of blue woodland pools which he had found embowered in the cool green gloom of ferns. There were little dancing shadows in them, and hidden fires like those in his mother's brooch—the opal one—which he liked best of all. The princess would bend over him so that he imagined a shower of rose-leaves had fallen upon him. He felt her warm kiss upon his forehead long after she had gone away.

"He always felt very strong for a while after he had seen his good fairy. He did everything for her. For her sake he would be brave, would not complain when things went wrong, but did all his tasks with a joy at heart because it made him feel worthy of her comradeship. Having read many books of romance and adventure, he would imagine that he was

her knight, her token bound above his brow, and, that being so, he battled valiantly against the dragons within himself.

"Then, gradually, the walls of the big world closed about the boy. He had grown up to be a man. Now he was too busy to have time for day-dreaming, and at night he was too tired to awaken even if the princess had come to him. In his sleep others came, but they were reflections of mortals whom he had met during his days of work, and they were not nearly so beautiful as the Shining One who had been his boyhood's dream of all that was lovely and to be desired. His loneliness grew upon him so that he was ever searching in the eyes of the women whom he met for the queen who had aroused the hero in his soul. His friends despaired of him at times and whispered among themselves. 'Foolish,' and 'wild,' were words that came to his ears at times. They, his companions, could not know that he was looking in flesh for the beauty which had once been his—that his candle burned no longer in his hand and that, until it was relighted, he must wander in darkness."

Jean's head, with its yellow curls, had fallen slightly to one side. Her breathing was deep and regular. Her sobbing had ended. Craig bent forward to discover that she had fallen asleep. Without turning his head towards the girl who sat silently beside him, he continued, "Then, one day, the princess came to him again. It was a wonderful morning hour, alive with sunshine and fragrant with the tang of the sea and the good earth. She had fallen from her horse."

Craig heard a faint rustling in the chair by the table. He paused, turned to look at Jocelyn, and said, "I believe that the little one is asleep."

Very gently he drew the rug about Jean's shoulders and stood erect, looking down at her. Then, as he faced the light, he was conscious of white hands tightly clasped, the shimmer of blue silk surrounding them like the sky about a cloud, and the beating of his own heart.

The scarlet of Jocelyn's lips and the shining of her eyes were in vivid contrast to the whiteness of cheeks shaded by the dull gold of her hair. She was like a crucible of delicate porcelain, through which there seemed to glow a light from some hidden flame. Slowly she rose and came towards him. Craig took her outstretched hands and then, acting upon the impulse of a will that suddenly blended with his own, he drew the girl into his arms. Upon the brink of their Rubicon they stood for an instant before Time was forgotten.

CHAPTER IX

THE MYSTIC CITY

Caught in the undertow of desire, men are unwittingly drawn to the places where the great tides swing under the spell of an inconstant moon. Chart and compass are for those who ride gaily upon the glittering surface of the waters, but avail not for others who are carried in the depths of the wave.

Craig Maitland lingered in the Squamish Valley many days beyond the time he had set for his return to the city. He felt, although no word had passed her lips, that Jocelyn was willing that their dream should be tangible enough to remain fixed in memory. The inevitable parting would come. Each would re-enter the grey world of shadows which some call life, and yet there might linger with them a light to illumine the loveless hours. To feel that he was near, actually within reach of her voice, filled her life with a measure of contentment which it had never before known. Yet, at heart, she felt a foreboding pain. The long walks through the winding, woodland trails in search of beauty, the golden hours when she shared his enthusiasms and listened to his plans for the remodelling of the world, her joy in his fine perception of spiritual values in art and literature—these she might find hard to abandon in the days to come.

Major Paget was not perturbed by her friendship for the young journalist. Her preoccupation afforded him an opportunity to drink, which he did persistently, until he was a sodden wreck upon the verge of a breakdown. Stricken suddenly by a sense of guilt and responsibility, Jocelyn reserved a ward in a Vancouver hospital, and hastily began to pack her trunks for an extended visit to the city. For the two days before they were ready to sail, she tortured Maitland by

giving all of her attention to the major. During this time he had seen her only once while they met at luncheon, and then her eyes had been hard. Her whole being seemed to be turned from him towards the duty which she had neglected in the wonder of a new experience, and he had felt helpless before the quiet, unflinching strength of the maternal instinct which could, quietly and coolly, put the man aside while the child was in need of her attention. Not knowing women, he went through a hell of agony.

Rebellious, but yet with the intention of remaining near to be of assistance if needed, he travelled to Vancouver upon the same steamer as Paget and his wife. A brief word, a glance which held some hint of the old comradeship, were his rewards when he parted from her at the Union Steamship docks. She hoped that she might have time to see him soon. He was unresponsive—indeed was conscious only of the pain that held him bound in its relentless grip. Ah, well ... there was much to do. In toil he could find a sedative and the numbing fatigue which would mitigate the ever-present, gnawing hunger of loneliness.

In the weeks which followed Maitland sought work with the avidity of a dipsomaniac giving way to his secret craving. Tacey gave him a place upon his staff. The labour situation in Vancouver was passing through a tense period when the contending forces were active and aggressive. One wing of the party was demanding industrial action—the other counselling prudence and constitutional measures which would find expression at the polls. Filling his daily space in the columns of *The Beacon*, attending committee meetings, lecturing upon economics and science, conferring, advising, guiding the workers through the dangers of disaffection to a greater sense of unity—these occupied every moment of his days. His nights were either an instant of oblivion between retiring and rising or a fire of anguish in which he writhed until work brought forgetfulness of self.

Then, one day, a messenger-boy brought her note to the office. She wanted to see him. She would be alone. The suite number and the name of an apartment-house appeared upon the letter-head. Half an hour later he was standing in the corridor before her rooms, his heart beating heavily as he listened for the sound of her approaching footsteps. She opened the door—a vision in white and gold. Behind her the light was pouring through windows which faced the sunset, and again he found himself yielding to the spell of her voice. It was no longer a sound caught and lost in a dream, but nearer to him than the throbbing of his own blood. Its delicious warmth seemed to surround and pervade his being. Jocelyn led him to a seat which overlooked the house-tops and permitted a bright blue glimpse of the sea beyond them.

With a pang he noted the drooping lines of her slim form. She was looking away from him, avoiding his gaze, and he followed her glance, which was directed over the red and brown roofs to the evening sky. Out there the shadows were gathering on the Dream Hills which form the northern shore of Burrard Inlet. White wraiths of mist floated like down shed from great wings upon the dark slopes which were delicately tinted with vibrant colour. Saffron and dull gold, near the sea-line, melted into pale green barred and curtained by masses of purple clouds, whose edges were glowing with the dazzling brilliance of molten metal. A wind, cooled somewhere by the snows in the recesses of the hills, ruffled the shining pathway of the sunlight across the bay, and came up to them like the breath of a spirit untouched by the passing strife in the city's lanes. From the unwitting loveliness of earth and air, he turned to the woman at his side.

Had she called him to her only to say in words what he had read in her eyes and in her every gesture during those last hours in the Valley? Why had he come? In the silence the beating of his own heart was audible, and yet, to her, it could matter little. Women were like that. They revelled in emotional crises—fed upon joy and pain as wind-flowers upon light and air. She sat crumpled upon the window-seat, one hand holding the yellow silk curtains aside, the other, with her wedding-ring upon it, limp upon her knee. Her curves were appealing. Like a pale rose, bent by the storm, she was striving to regain her place in the sun. Presently she spoke.

"I tried—twice—to get you by telephone. Each time they told me you were out. I wanted to hear your voice. I wanted to explain," she said.

"Is there anything to explain?" Maitland rejoined slowly.

"Yes," she went on. "There is more to be considered than just our own desire. We would not be worthy of love—deserving—if we ignored others. That is true, is it not?"

The man replied more quickly, "Why did we not think of that in the beginning?"

He saw her wince and was sorry.

"Was there a beginning? You said that we must always have belonged to each other—that it was reminiscence—the revival of a bond forged in other lives. Then, too, you said that if it was love it could not be wrong. And I believed that—still believe it." She paused abruptly.

"And I still believe that," he said. "But why did you turn away from me—drop me, as if I had never existed, into some place beyond a wall? Never a word! Merely a frigid silence. That was not easy to bear, you must admit."

"My world would blame, I know. I gave way, without reserve, to my impulses, and yet I felt——" She stopped and looked at him. A suspicion of tears moistened her eyes. "I felt that it could not hurt Reginald ... or anyone. I felt that I had love enough to spare——"

"Good God, woman! What are you saying?" Maitland broke in impetuously. "You cannot love two men at the same time and expect either of them to be happy. You told me that you had never loved this man ... that you were his wife in name only." He rose and reached for his hat. The room swirled dizzily about him. Anger and humiliation swept over him.

With a swift movement she laid her hand upon his arm. "Wait, Craig! You do not understand. Perhaps—I do not know—if I—if there had been children, it would have been different. For years he has been dependent upon me for companionship, for counsel, for help, and when sober he has been unfailingly generous and kind. He has never wakened the mating love in me. I have never loved—in that way—until I met you. But I cannot leave him to drift. It is an obligation laid upon me."

Her unflinching honesty was appalling. Most women would have played the game differently. He was disconcerted by her absolute unsophistication. With pain and bewilderment struggling for place in his mind, he answered, "Love! Yes, it is a big thing—love! And there are many gradations in it—as many sorts, I suppose, as there are minds and souls and moods. You are a strange girl—the strangest I have ever known!"

"I do love you, Craig! Is that strange?" Almost coyly, she smiled at him through her tears.

Impetuously he turned and, taking her hands, he lifted her to her feet. Then he drew her close to him.

"Jocelyn, this can't go on. I love you—need you. I cannot share you with another and be happy, and, to do my work in the world, I must be that. I have not much to offer you, but you will not want, and success will come if we work together. You must decide. Now."

The ticking of a little ormolu clock upon a stand near them sounded loud in their ears. As they stood in each other's arms, the air seemed to grow warm with the fragrance of lilies—a heavy atmosphere in which light and sound were merged in something more ethereal, which seemed suggestive of another dimension. He bent over her, his voice trembling with the intensity of his will.

"Jocelyn, you must decide!"

The air about them, palpable and charged with force, was suddenly cleft by a faint sound, clear and unmistakable, which startled Maitland to immediate attention. The far-off chime of bells, like a silver thread of music, wove its way into his consciousness. The rhythm rose and fell, fading and growing, as if a wind were breathing in gusts of melody.

Jocelyn had withdrawn from his arms. Her face was pale, her eyes dilated in a gaze that denoted wonderment and alarm. With her right hand she pointed outward through the window which faced the western sky.

The cloud bastions based upon the waters of English Bay had piled themselves together into a confused mass, which was rapidly taking a startling form. From the shimmering levels of the sea floor to the jade-green depths of the upper air, there rose, tower upon tower and arch above arch, the outlines of a dream-city, walled by darkness and illuminated by gleaming battlements and a bewildering array of shining spires and domes. It was as if some divine magician had cast his glamour upon the screen of time, building these mystic palaces and temples from the fragments of his own creative imagination, and projecting their illusory splendour into one golden moment of eternity. While the man

and the woman watched, breathless and silent, the glory was born, lived its brief nebulous life, and then slowly began to dissolve while the sun dipped below the horizon.

With a quick catch of his breath, almost a sigh of regret for the beauty that had passed away, Maitland whispered, "Jocelyn! Jocelyn! What is it? What does it all mean? Speak to me, dear!"

"The Bells of Ys!" She turned to him swiftly, a sob of excitement and terror in her voice. Then, more calmly, "It is an old tradition in my family. And now you have seen and heard too. It is all too amazing. I feel a bit faint. Let us sit down."

Tenderly he helped her to adjust the cushions on the divan beneath the great windows. The light had faded now and grey shadows were softening the outlines of the furniture in the apartment. Only a bowl of red roses, on the mission table in the centre of the room, seemed to have caught and held some of the magic that had invested the evening skies. The flowers seemed to palpitate, glowing like a smouldering brazier which might, at the slightest draught, leap into flame. Craig's hand was trembling while he made the girl lean back against the couch which he had prepared for her.

"Thank you," she murmured. "I am glad you are a Celt. You will understand. It is the Breton blood which has bequeathed this legacy to me. Always, at a crisis in the affairs of our house, the towers of the hidden city appear or the bells are heard. This time they came together. Just before my marriage to Reginald I heard the bells. When my father was dying I saw the mystic city from the western windows of my little bedroom in our London flat."

"But what does it mean, dear? Do you know that?" he asked.

"That I must decide—as you have said, Craig. I must not compromise or delay. In that there would be only pain—and tragedy as well."

The man bent his head. "Yes. I am waiting. Strike quickly."

Even the love in her voice failed to penetrate the black barrier of despair which lay between him and the world he had known.

"I must go to the end, dearest," he heard her say. "It may be long before I am free; and, again, it may be that freedom is near. I shall not ask you to watch with me nor to wait. But this I promise. When my duty is fulfilled—then it will remain with you to decide"—her voice broke—"that is, if you still want me."

Maitland rose from his seat. Promises, pleadings, passionate words thronged to his lips, but he repressed them. Mechanically he found his hat and gloves and moved towards the door. She followed him quietly. With his hand upon the knob, he turned to her.

"Good-bye, Jocelyn."

She did not immediately answer, but seemed as if waiting. A swift movement towards her was checked—she heard the door close behind him—and then, overcome by the dumb pain of a wild, wounded thing, she groped blindly for support.

CHAPTER X

FOR THE CAUSE

"They'll never let us get away with it, Tacey."

"We're goin' to stage it just the same, and be d—ned to them."

The Old Man's hand struck the top of the desk before him with a solid impact, scattering the ashes in a tray close to his elbow. With the square ends of his big fingers he brushed the burned matches and grey powder to the floor. Craig Maitland picked up a ruler and tapped nervously with it upon the arm of his chair. He was gathering force for his next remark.

"It will mean a clash with the police in all probability. Lots of publicity, just when we don't want it. How are you going to get the money we raise over to Russia when they're watching every move? It's bad business, I tell you."

Tacey's bushy eyebrows came together. His tone was decisive.

"Publicity? Huh! It's about time the world knew what's goin' on over there. If some poor workin' stiff takes a shot at a grand duke, the capitalist press features a picture of the 'bloody assassin.' When hundreds of innocent men and women are butchered in cold blood at the Czar's command, it is merely 'a stern necessity' to preserve the State. As for getting the money across to help our brother slaves, I guess Kolazoff will put us on to the ropes. He's been in some pretty tight places and he's still breathin'."

Maitland relaxed. At the moment it seemed foolish to offer further resistance to the will of the man beside him. Through the months past, when he had laboured with all the energy in him to advance the cause of Socialism, he had found himself the centre of conflicting forces which threatened the disintegration of the movement while they drained his own nervous strength. The battle of principle against principle seemed to be waged as much within his own soul as in the arena of action where others jangled over creed and shibboleth. Labour seemed to be a blind Titan awakened from centuries of slumber, dreamily conscious of its own terrific powers, but driven by a thousand warring desires and passions and hungers, under whose whips it stumbled forward towards the light of a dawning intelligence. In the maelstrom of this social unrest, Craig Maitland, the individual, was lost in the motion of the mass and, like a floating straw upon a torrent, was borne in directions and to ends of which he had not the slightest knowledge. He had found himself drawn to the moderate wing of the party, the Social Democrats, and yet when their mild policies failed repeatedly to obtain more than a crumb from the legislative tables, he was forced to see the reason for the inflexible orthodoxy of the Reds, who believed that only revolution could overthrow the power of money.

The first mutterings of the storm which finally resulted in the Russian revolution were now reaching the ears of the workers in Canada. "Bloody Sunday," when the Czar's rifles had mowed down the defenceless peasants who came seeking bread from the Little Father, had come and gone. The presence, in Vancouver, of refugees like Kolazoff, meant that local Labour circles were stirred into a frenzy of class hatred. Tacey, as leader of the extremists, at once planned to hold a mass-meeting and to take up a collection of money to be forwarded to the revolutionists in Russia. Merely from the point of view of expediency, Maitland opposed the idea of an open demonstration. In his heart, however, there was the most complete sympathy for the down-trodden masses under the Czarist regime. He now realised that resistance to Tacey's will in the matter was futile.

"All right. Go ahead. You're the doctor." He smiled good-humouredly as he drew a pile of proof-sheets towards him and busied himself with the coming issue of *The Beacon*. The cubby-hole which they called their office was built in at the end of the printing shop, which was itself but a tiny room facing upon Pender Street. The light from the large window at the front was not sufficient for the whole place, so that a green-shaded lamp hung above the flat-topped desk at which the men were seated. Files of exchanges bulged upon the wooden walls, and a shelf above Tacey's head supported a dictionary, *Wage, Labour, and Capital*, by Karl Marx, and a miscellany of Socialistic books and pamphlets. In the outer room stood the printing-presses and, near the front door, was the stenographer's little table, fenced in by a wooden railing as a gesture towards privacy. Miss Brett had insisted upon the railing about herself and her typewriter.

Maitland, glancing through the opened door of the office, had a full view of her back and the mass of her wavy black hair as she bent over her work. Her plain dark shirtwaist was brightened by a touch of scarlet at the collar. "I wonder if she wears it because it is the Socialist colour or because it is becoming?" thought the man. Just then the street door opened and Kolazoff entered.

Miss Brett glanced up from her machine when he leaned over the railing to speak to her. There was a whispered

conversation for a moment. The girl turned to her desk, the typewriter clicked rapidly, and Kolazoff entered the editor's room, his face flushed and a light in his eyes. Tacey rose ponderously to meet him. The Russian took his outstretched hand.

"Just the man we're looking for!" boomed the Old Man.

Kolazoff laughed. "Where have I heard that before? It has a familiar sound."

"Well, they haven't got you yet!" smiled Tacey. He added, more grimly, as he took his seat, "And, by the gods of war, they're not goin' to—not while the Old Man's on the job. I was just tellin' Maitland, here, you could look after yourself. He's got cold feet about the mass-meetin' for next Sunday."

Craig flushed hotly. "Hold on, Tacey! Not too fast! I am taking my chances with the rest of you, and I'll be there if there is a mass-meeting, and you know it. But I have a right to my opinion. It is a mistake to stir up the public and the authorities just now. Making a fuss will not help the Cause."

The editor's stern smile was tempered by a kindly note in his deep voice. "Tut! Tut! Darn it, Maitland, I know you're all there. Nobody knows it better'n I do. What do you think about the meetin', Kolazoff?"

The Russian hesitated, and then spoke slowly, as if weighing his words. "There is something in what Maitland says. However, I happen to know that mass-meetings will be held all over the world, in every city where there are organised workers, and all for the same purpose. We must awaken the conscience of the people as to what is going on in Russia. Things are going to break there some day, and the Western world must understand the reasons. I believe that my country will lead the way for the world-wide social revolution. In helping the Russian people we are helping the world."

"A revolution does not always mean a step forward," said Craig. "It may mean untold suffering and, if it fails, worse conditions than before."

"You don't understand," retorted Kolazoff quickly. "You don't think in terms of revolution here. We do—in Russia. Believe me or not, the revolution is there already. We have the republic organised so thoroughly that, if the change came to-morrow, the wheels of the State would keep on turning smoothly, as if nothing had happened. We have the whole machinery of government prepared secretly, from the national departments down to the town council of the tiniest hamlet—all ready to step in and keep things going, when the present system goes to smash. Now you can see that it's not a dream. It took years to perfect our system, and countless lives have been sacrificed. It is built on blood and tears, but its foundations go down to the deeps of the soul, which lives on after all forms have passed away!"

The Russian had drawn himself up to his full height. He had worked himself into a white heat, his pale cheeks contrasting vividly with his mass of red hair. His blue eyes were hard and cold as the skies above the steppes on a winter night. Maitland thought that he saw in him the spirit of a great race, eager and volatile, essentially a thing of fire and air, but nevertheless possessed of a primitive elemental strength born of the rugged soil and the vast, lonely spaces. Awakened, what potentialities might leap into action from the soul of this people, so misunderstood and so long considered reactionary by the progressives of the Western world?

There was silence in the office for a few moments.

"We ought to have everyone in on this," said Tacey. "Even the Social Democrats." He smiled as he looked over the table towards Maitland. "Think Dorothea will get the women out for us?"

Maitland grinned. Dorothea Barrett was a standing joke in the party. A spinster at forty—a fading leaf reluctantly preparing to fall from the tree of life—she had married a fuzzy old dreamer who kept a second-hand shop when he wasn't talking Socialism. Their household was as frowsy and unkempt as a bush-rat's nest, and served them only as a temporary shelter when they were not attending meetings and lectures. They were both vegetarians, spiritualists, and ascetics devoted to things of a higher dimension. Yet a boundless energy, born of repressed but very human desires, had made the lady secretary of innumerable organisations, for which she did the hack-work and carried the burdens.

"Surely," said he, "that is a good idea. She is in touch with them all. What about speakers?"

"We must have Jimmy Parry over from Nanaimo," replied Tacey. "The miners are red-hot stuff, and he'll give it to 'em straight. We'd better write him a letter."

He rose and called, "Miss Brett!"

When the stenographer, notebook and pencil in hand, entered the office, Maitland gave her his chair. He noticed the quick, upward glance of her dark eyes as she brushed past Kolazoff. Six months before this, those same sombre eyes, with their deeps of slumbering passion, would have held the young journalist and disturbed his sleep. Now he was numbed by a pain which held him in an iron grip. He avoided women as persistently as he had sought them out before he had met Jocelyn Paget.

Madge Brett was below the average height, her head seemingly bent forward by the weight of her luxuriant black hair. Full red lips and an elf-like face, piquantly interesting, were framed by this unusual wealth of hair. Her movements were slow, deliberate, as if she were carrying a burden of restrained force, and when she spoke there was no lightness of spirit to relieve the depths apparent in her voice. It was startlingly rich in tone—as distinctive as the massed darkness of her hair. That Maitland had not been caught in these feminine toils was proof that he had been seared by the red brand of suffering.

Kolazoff, however, was not indifferent to the girl. His eyes followed her while she took her seat and adjusted her book upon the desk before her. In Labour circles it was taken for granted that he was her lover. Tacey surmised that it was only a matter of days before the time when he would have to look for another assistant. The idea annoyed him, for this young woman would be hard to replace. She was devoted to the Cause, efficient and faithful, but then—Kolazoff and she would be a mighty force in the movement when they were working together as man and wife. It was fated and all for the best. He had already adopted a fatherly tone towards the Russian and his fiancee. "God bless you, my children," was in his gesture now, as he stood erect and placed his hand upon Kolazoff's shoulder. The Old Man's glance rested upon Miss Brett. His speech was forestalled by Maitland.

"Another thing has to be settled. Two men have volunteered for the job of taking this money through to Russia. We need three at least. One is not enough to draw the police off on a false trail, and we must remember that the Czar's watchdogs are not easy. There may be some of them in the city—in our own ranks if we only knew it."

"You are right, my friend." The Russian spoke seriously. "We cannot be too careful. Who are the men who have offered to go?"

He leaned over the desk to see the names which Tacey scribbled upon a writing-pad and shoved towards him. With a quick gesture Kolazoff laid a finger on the paper.

"Not that one! I know him. No! He would never get out of the city, I tell you."

The Old Man drew forth a bandanna handkerchief and mopped the perspiration from his forehead. His grizzled jaw snapped.

"Eh? What's that you say? Is that right? Have you got the goods on him? Well ... I guess you otta know. What about the other one, eh?"

"Jimmy Kearney?"

Tacey shot a warning glance at the speaker. Kolazoff smiled.

"You needn't be so fussy about Miss Brett," he said. "She knows more than most of us do, right now. I am not sure about Kearney."

Madge Brett's rich, low voice broke in, "Better take a woman's advice and leave him at home. He's Bud Powers' man."

The men looked at her in surprise. She sat quietly, head bent over her notes, sharpening a pencil, nor did she look

up when Tacey growled, "Bud Powers! I should think that would be about the best sort of recommendation I know. Powers knows where he's headin'. What's the matter with Kearney, anyway?"

There was no change in the level, full tone of the girl's voice. She spoke as if the matter were of no particular moment. They would suit themselves but, in the meantime, she would have her say.

"I don't know anything against him, but I don't like Bud Powers."

The Old Man chuckled. "He's not a han'some brute, I admit. But, by the Lord Harry, he's got backbone, and he ain't afraid of nothing that walks on shoe-leather."

"Maybe," replied the girl. "Try him out on a dark night—near a graveyard."

"Shucks," grunted Tacey. "I know he fools round with Spiritualism, but——"

Maitland interrupted gently but with conviction. "I am inclined to agree with Miss Brett. She has an idea—shall we call it an intuition? Anyway, we cannot afford to take chances."

"Well, who's goin' to do it, then?" retorted Tacey irritably. "We can't spare the men that are leadin' things. Someone in the rank and file has got to do it."

"Are you quite right there, my friend?" said the Russian. "We are all in the rank and file. It is the movement and not the individual that counts. You know that. You wouldn't deny that for a minute. Getting out of here is fairly easy, but when you come to getting through Europe—ah, that is different! It will need a European then, and a Russian at that. I am going to take home that money to my friends—myself!"

An exclamation from Madge Brett centred their eyes upon her. Her hands, white at the knuckles, grasped the edge of the desk. Across from her stood the man who had just spoken. Adoration, mingled with terror, was in her eyes, which were searching Kolazoff's face.

"No..." she faltered. "No ... not you! They would kill you. No, Ivan!"

The refugee's lip quivered slightly, but he threw back his head with a resolute gesture. Oblivious to the presence of the other men, he moved round the desk to the girl's side, and placed his hand upon her shoulder.

"Surely, I must go. It is my duty. The Cause! Does anything else come before that? I will come back—never fear."

Madge let her hand flutter for an instant over his as if seeking strength to hold him, and then she hid her face in her arms as she bent forward upon the table. Kolazoff leaned over and touched the dark hair.

Tacey's huge bulk struggled towards the door.

"Time we were gettin' out of here, Maitland. Come on!"

CHAPTER XI

THE MAN FROM CALIFORNIA

The celebration of Bloody Sunday had passed without any of the turmoil which had seemed to Maitland unavoidable as a result of flinging an open challenge in the face of the authorities, to whom Russia was the source of all anarchy. Kolazoff had disappeared. Apparently he was missed only by his comrades in Labour circles, who were used to seeing him at their meetings. Somewhere on the routes which link East with West, he carried a tangible message of

sympathy to those who faced death in order that their dream of human brotherhood might be realised.

Had Maitland not been so completely submerged in his task of conquering pain by strenuous work, he would have noted the brave struggle going forward in the office of *The Beacon*. Miss Brett was even more efficient than usual. She came to work earlier and stayed later, finding extra labours which prevented the necessity of returning to her own hall bedroom. It might have been only the natural weariness after her long hours that took the vivid colouring from her cheeks and subdued the light in her eyes.

Craig came to depend upon her, especially in the preparation of his MSS. and the notes for his speeches. He was now looking forward to an opportunity to interest the Labour Party in the matter of educational reform—-to him a fundamental necessity. There was to be a joint meeting of the factions, in order to listen to an orator from the United States, and on this occasion he would launch his programme for the reconstruction of the school system. As the big evening drew near, his heart beat high with expectation.

* * * * *

A sea of faces! Like sentient waves, filled with shadows and crested by fragmentary lights, they receded before him in a great tide which flowed from the pit to the galleries of the dingy old theatre. Craig Maitland, from his seat on the stage, looked out, with mingled feelings of exhilaration and misgiving, at the raw material out of which he hoped to build a new heaven and a new earth. Near him stood a plain deal table upon which were placed a heavy pitcher of water and a tumbler, while at his side were the speakers scheduled to address the workers of Vancouver on the intricacies of economics and social evolution. One of these, a dapper little man, with a cherubic face and soft fair hair, was Hewlett Young, a disciple of William Morris, and a late candidate for the Governorship of California. He was billed to tell them about the San Francisco fire and earthquake and its effect upon labour conditions in the Golden State. Looking at his natty, tailored clothes, his white, carefully manicured hands, Maitland was not a little puzzled to know what had drawn this scion of culture into the ranks of the Socialists. Mentally he resolved to spirit Young away for a quiet chat after the meeting was over. In the meantime he gave himself to a quiet enjoyment, sensing the feelings of the complex mass of humanity whose gaze was directed towards the platform.

This stimulation, experienced by all who lead a strenuous public life, had been for him a fairly effective anodyne to relieve the pain and loneliness at his heart. Hurled suddenly from the heights of wonder which had been his while Jocelyn Paget was by his side, he was struggling to retain his grip upon life. One part of his being was a dead weight, a corpse which he dragged at his heels, while the other smiled automatically, and talked and worked among shadowy people who seemed, in some inexplicable manner, to be enjoying a world from which he was an exile. He did incredible feats, labouring without rest by night or day, simply because he had no thought of his body, which had become a machine to be driven by a will outside of itself. Unhesitatingly he would have accepted any risk, any martyrdom that might have fallen to his lot, not heroically but with the stoical indifference of the savage. He was regretting, at this moment, that he had not gone with Kolazoff upon his perilous adventure. The refugee's argument that only a native of Russia could successfully undertake the mission was all that had deterred Maitland from uselessly sacrificing himself for the Cause.

He was aroused from his day-dreaming by a disturbance in the gallery of the theatre. A crowd of roughly dressed men had gathered upon the landing, and were deploying between the upper seats. The clatter of their heavy boots and boisterous talk caused the audience, already in place, to turn in their direction. Foremost among the new arrivals, Maitland saw the stooped shoulders and ungainly bulk of Bud Powers and, as the man seated himself near the centre aisle, he noted that he wore the mackinaw and woollen undershirt which had been his favourite garb in the Squamish. The "cave man" had made no sartorial concessions to the fact that he was in town. A few moments later Craig caught his eye, and received in answer one of Bud's enigmatical grins—half boyish and frank, half the leer of a hungry satyr. Then the chairman rose to open the meeting.

Hewlett Young spoke first. His easy manner and his histrionic ability drew repeated applause. With the skill of the trained orator, he played upon the emotions of his audience while confining himself to the stock phrases and textbook jargon of proletarian economists. Maitland found himself mentally questioning the sincerity of the man. Was Young, the scented dandy of the San Francisco clubs, simply gratifying his love of approbation, or was he really aiming an earnest blow at his own class and their privileges? Was politics a recreation for him, with slightly more exhilaration in it than golf and somewhat less than that in wine and women? When Young finished with a rhetorical flourish, Maitland's

bewilderment was absorbed by other sensations more immediate, while he rose to his feet and found himself saying the usual nice things to the street-car conductor who had introduced him as "our brilliant young editor and comrade."

For the space of twenty minutes he spoke passionately and fluently upon a subject near to his heart—educational reform. When he "slammed" the present system a murmur of approval came up to him from the crowd, but when he went on to deal constructively with ideals and proposed measures to remodel the outworn structure, the audience slipped from his grasp. When he retired to his seat he felt strongly that they were applauding him rather than the things he had said. A sense of failure depressed him, and a wave of pain and the old weariness swept over his being. He repressed a cold shivering which seized him as he watched the next speaker shambling towards the footlights. A dark, ill-fitting suit of clothes, a shiny strip of celluloid collar, a head no thicker than the neck, and two ears which protruded in a primitive manner, outlined themselves between him and the sea of upturned faces. An arm, in a baggy sleeve, shot out, displaying a hairy hand with thick knotted joints.

"Eddication! Did yuh hear that, fellahs? I ain't never had an eddication; and, as the Salvation Army says, 'Thank Gawd!' What do they eddicate yuh for?—that's what I'm wantin' to know! To be a cog in their darned machine! To grind out dollars and cents fer some lazy stiff that never did a lick of honest work in his life!"

A roar of applause started in the galleries, and was echoed through the lower part of the house. Maitland glanced at Hewlett Young. A faint flush had spread over his smooth cheeks. His head was bent slightly forward, while the suspicion of a smile flickered over his face. For a space Maitland was forced to remain seated, while the crowd howled approval of the ranting nonsense flung at them by the leather lungs of the man who talked their own language and expressed their own repressed desires. Sick at heart, he kept his lips tightly closed while the *Marseillaise* was sung at the conclusion of the meeting.

He started to push his way through the crowded wings, when a hand upon his arm checked him. Turning, he looked into Young's eyes. There was a sincere friendliness in them, an honesty which Craig had failed to feel in the man's oratory.

"Come, Mr. Maitland, let us slip off somewhere for a cup of coffee! I am famished. You must have some places—decently clean and comfy, you know."

Cleanliness and comfort! There was magic in those two simple words. Yes, that was what he wanted.

"Thanks! Oh, yes—we have some good places."

The audience was surging in the passages and aisles, talking and gesticulating. "Highbrow stuff," "straight goods," "class-consciousness"—he heard the phrases, trite and threadbare, his daily pabulum, being flung backwards and forwards over the shoulders of the men about him. The stifling scent of perspiration and human breath filled his nostrils. In the lobby, a draught of air from the theatre entrance was cool and moist with rain, and he inhaled deeply of its freshness. Tables covered with Socialistic literature stood near the exits and, at one of them, Madge Brett was selling a red-backed pamphlet to a longshoreman, who seemed to be more interested in the girl than in the booklet which he slipped into the rear pocket of his overalls. A scarlet ribbon in her black hair, and a red silk scarf tied sailor fashion beneath the collar of her dark shirtwaist, made her an exotic splash of colour in the throng about her. Hewlett Young pressed through to her side.

"Will you come with us for a cup of tea, Miss Brett?" he said. "Someone else—perhaps—can carry on. What do you say?"

Before the girl could reply to Young's invitation a familiar voice behind Maitland called, "Go ahead, kid! I got a bunch of fellahs here'll eat up all them books. They're dead hungry for 'em. Go ahead. I'll do the sellin'. Go ahead, with the gentlemen."

Bud Powers especially emphasised the last word, and a titter of laughter rose from the crowd near him. Miss Brett, with a quick gesture, picked up a light raincoat and threw it over her arm. She shot an angry look at Powers.

"I wasn't waiting for your permission, Mr. Powers. You can have the job and welcome. See that you turn the money

in to Mrs. Sanderson, at the next table over there."

Powers grinned like a delighted schoolboy because he had drawn her fire. He extended his hand to Craig Maitland.

"Shake, Mr. Maitland! Were plumb tickled to see yuh decoratin' a platform to-night. Just a tip in yer ear. Give us more economics—talk down to 'em, boy. No use talkin' about book-learnin' when a man's hungry. It don't help an empty stomach none."

His eyes were mischievous in a friendly way, but something in his handclasp repulsed Maitland's first impulse towards comradeship. The man reeked fumes of whisky and the stale odour of a bar-room. Craig choked down a rising irritation which might have precipitated trouble.

"All right, Bud," he replied. "Glad to meet you. Come up to the office, if you are staying in town. Meet Mr. Young, Mr. Powers."

"Sure." Bud swung about, to meet the steady blue eyes of the Californian. He hesitated.

"Have I had the pleasure before?" Hewlett Young's voice was gentle but insinuating.

Powers took his outstretched hand and shook it heartily. "Welcome, stranger," he said vociferously. "First time I've ever seed yuh but I sure hope to meet yuh again. Yuh hit the bull's-eye. Guess the earthquake wakened you fellahs up down there."

With Madge Brett between them, Maitland and his companion broke away from the crowd, and directed their steps toward a restaurant. Miss Brett refused—in rather an ungracious way, Craig thought—to be helped into her raincoat. She struggled into it unaided, while they walked through the drizzling rain which deposited a shining net of beadwork upon the masses of her dark hair. She was hatless, and they were not provided with umbrellas, so that they found it necessary to hasten to keep from being wet through. Rather breathless, they found seats in a box of the café nearest to the theatre.

When their orders had been given, Hewlett Young looked admiringly at the girl. She was glowing with colour—a wild rose, rather more deeply tinted than those of the woodlands. He opened a silver cigarette-case and held it towards her.

"Russians. They are my favourite smoke."

Miss Brett's head was bent forward momentarily—just enough to hide her eyes.

"Thank you," she said. "A cigarette is just what I wanted."

"Who is this fellow Powers?" Young flung the question suddenly at Maitland.

There was a silence, during which the Californian glanced quizzically at his companions.

"Perhaps"—Maitland hesitated—"perhaps Miss Brett can tell you. I really know very little about him. Met him while I was on a vacation in the Squamish Valley. He lives there. Queer sort, isn't he? Something elemental about him that is interesting."

Young flicked the ash from his cigarette. "He's worth watching, I think. A fellow of that kind is always looking for trouble. We've had some big strikes in 'Frisco. Always it was his type that cast discredit upon the movement. Do you know him, Miss Brett?"

"No. I knew his wife, though, before he married her. She was a widow with a bit of property. Powers was broke when he met her. One year after their marriage the little woman's house and lot were gone. Powers drank up the proceeds of the sale."

"You know Mrs. Powers?" exclaimed Maitland. "Why does she stay with him?"

A hard note sounded through her reply—also a trace of weariness and resentment.

"Why do women always do what they do? That big, slinking hulk of clay awakened the mother-heart in her——"

"Bud certainly doesn't look as if he needed mothering," smiled Craig.

"That's a man's way of thinking," replied Miss Brett. "What do men know about anything except politics and making money and a dozen other ordinary things? What do they know about the necessary things—about life, for instance?"

"Neither Mr. Maitland nor I can possibly tell you all we do not know, Miss Brett," assented Young. "You are right—you are right. Powers reminds me of someone down south who caused us a lot of worry—had some fool scheme to capture several of the millionaires on Nob Hill and hold them as hostages in case the soldiers were not called off during the big strike. Just a shadowy likeness. I'm mistaken, of course. There are always the Marats in the time of revolution, you know." He turned towards the young journalist. "That was a fine speech you made to-night, Mr. Maitland. Been long in the movement?"

"Several months—in one sense of time. Always—in another. Er—thank you! I am sorry that the audience did not share your opinion, Mr. Young."

"Oh, you mustn't mind that!" The American waved his hand airily. "Not at all! Not at all! I've been talking to them for ten years now. It's always the same. My friends wonder why I keep on. I'm a joke at the club. Millionaires tap their heads knowingly, wink at each other. 'A bit off! Poor Young! A darned clever chap, just the same!' However, they keep on shooting their business my way. I'm a corporation lawyer, you know."

"Working against your own interests to-night, weren't you?" Miss Brett ventured.

Hewlett Young poised a bit of salad upon his fork. "Dear lady," he said, "when the social revolution happens, I'll be out of a job—ruined. I shall have to seek employment upon a Labour paper. Keep a place for me on *The Beacon*, won't you, please?"

Across from the lawyer a pair of black eyes flashed dangerously. "It's a serious matter for a man, tramping the streets for work while his wife and kids are starving!"

Young's smile vanished. He spoke quietly and very earnestly. "Right again, Miss Brett. Blame it on the climate of California. We take life more easily there—more on the surface. Up north here you seem to be a solemn people. The crowds are as cheerless as those which assemble in a Scottish kirkyard before the sermon. You never let go. My persiflage was a reaction after my speech in the theatre. Really—I assure you that a mob of working people always affects me more deeply than anything else in life. Life's tragedy is summed up in our American poem, *The Man with the Hoe*." He looked admiringly at the girl. "May I tell you, Miss Brett, that you are an artist? That touch of red—your eyes—your hair! Quite a wonderful picture, if I may be permitted to voice an opinion!"

Madge Brett looked her embarrassment. The plain, blunt facts of life, its ugliness and cruelty, were her daily companions. Working men, among whom she laboured, concealed admiration for the opposite sex beneath rough and uncomplimentary remarks about their women.

"Thank you." She looked straight at him. "That is, if you mean it. Red is a good colour."

During the next few minutes Young devoted himself entirely to her. His light banter evidently annoyed and, nevertheless, pleased her. She seemed to be resolutely resisting his attempts to draw her out of her mood, which was impersonal and aloof from the world about her. Instinctively Craig knew and understood her unspoken loneliness. Numbed physically by suffering, she was fighting to retain a place of refuge in an inner world from which she barred out all the ordinary reactions to life. For a moment or two she fenced awkwardly, half angry with the man who regarded her as a woman. And while she did so, Maitland discovered that he was interested in her, and was drawn out of himself so that he temporarily forgot his own problems. Sex finally asserted its power. He had only known Madge Brett, stenographer and social worker. Now he saw another woman, primal, nimble of wit, subtle-tongued, using her natural weapons against the man who had challenged her. The Californian's colour heightened, his eyes shone with the

excitement of the game. It continued while they arose and, having paid the bill, went out into the hurrying throng upon the wet pavements. Maitland, a dull sense of resentment gradually possessing him, walked beside them—a silent third—while they swiftly traversed the short distance to Miss Brett's rooming-house. When he had tipped his hat in response to the flutter of a glove as Madge disappeared through the doorway, Young turned sharply on his heels and linked his arm through Craig's.

"Great girl—great girl, that!"

Maitland vouchsafed no reply. After one swift look at his companion's face, the lawyer extricated his arm and reached for his cigarette-case.

"Have one, old man?"

"Thanks."

"Say, you could fire a cannon down this street and not hurt anybody. You haven't any night-life in this town, Maitland. We're only waking up in 'Frisco at this hour."

Ahead of them, her sodden skirts bunched about her hips and a ragged shawl pulled tightly across a bundle of newspapers, a woman croaked hoarsely, "Pypers! Speshul! Pypers!"

The street-lamps blinked uncertainly through the mist-like rain, making golden lakelets of the puddles and casting black shadows across the slippery sidewalk. Suddenly the woman collapsed in a soggy heap. Hewlett Young threw his lighted cigarette behind him. An instant later he had his arms about the old newsvendor, regardless of the fact that her muddy hands and wet clothes were making a mess of his clean linen.

"Quick!" he called to Maitland. "There must be a drug-store near. 'Phone for the ambulance. I think she's hurt. There—there, now! Don't try to stand, my good woman! Just lean on me."

When Craig returned, the man was still supporting the old crone, who was moaning feebly. Together they watched by her side until, with a noisy clatter, an ambulance drove up and halted at the curb near them. The men who leaped down and came to their assistance stared in amazement.

"What are you gaping at?" Young snarled. "There's your money." He deposited a shining twenty-dollar gold piece in the hand of the driver. "And there's my card. You take care of her ... see! Doctor and everything, mind. I'll be up in the morning."

Speech had deserted Maitland. After the ambulance had departed he walked silently beside the Californian until they reached the entrance to the Vancouver Hotel. There was a choking sensation in his throat. He was about to reach out his hand—about to act upon a quick impulse to apologise for having formed an unwarranted opinion. He was checked by a low chuckle.

"A great girl—a great girl! Come up and have a night-cap, Maitland. I've a nip left in my room."

There was a twinkle in the blue eyes which looked at Craig, and below them were two cherubic dimples in glowing pink cheeks.

"You don't like my line of twaddle, eh, old man? Sorry."

"I feel—somehow—that I owe you an apology," said Maitland. "I am not good company. I know that. Frankly, women do not interest me. I'm not much of a sport. I don't think I ought to come up. Thanks, just the same."

Young's face wore a quizzical smile. "Please don't think me impertinent, Mr. Maitland. How old are you? Somewhere in your twenties? Am I right?"

Craig frowned, but forced a smile.

"What the——?"

The Californian turned and tripped lightly up the steps, not in the least aware of his muddy trousers or his dishevelled raiment. He turned to wave to Maitland.

"Au revoir! See you at the office in the morning."

CHAPTER XII

EMBERS OF DESIRE

Over the western wall of Capilano Canyon the sun was dropping rapidly, so that its motion was visible through the latticed screen of the dark fir-trees. Above the ragged outlines of the sombre forest the sky was a glory of rainbow-tinted clouds—strata of flaming jewels that lay embedded in the green and blue matrix of the upper air. Down the sides of the mountain barrier a filmy aura, shimmering and tenuous, extended to the depths, where dun shadows and curling mists concealed the gravelly reaches of the river-bed and, as the sun disappeared, a wind, keen and cool, flowed upward and brought with it the faint murmur of the flowing stream.

To Craig Maitland, standing upon the edge of Grouse Mountain plateau, it seemed that he had paused for a moment upon the brink of some dream-world which was built of the aerie substance of imagination—a perishable palace of beauty wrought of star-dust and moonbeams. To the north there loomed the snow-clad Lions—twin sentinel peaks whose glittering forms presided over the wilderness of silent hills, like scarred stone images of the past brooding over Egyptian silences. Grandeur, magnificence upon a scale that was almost oppressive, mingled with a beauty of colouring that brought a catch to the breath and a mist to the eyes. Only when one looked towards the city, which lay like an aeroplane map unrolled to southward, did one realise that Man, the microcosm, had entered and had changed this universe of the Titans and had placed these puny structures in contrast with nature. Almost at his feet, so clear was the mountain air, Craig could in fancy touch the busy wharves that fringed the shores of Burrard Inlet, which was now a gleaming strip of silver dotted by the miniature forms of tugs and ocean liners. Beyond the city, wherein the sunset had kindled a myriad signal fires which were flashing from every window, he could see the shadowy outlines of distant ranges mingled indistinctly with the cloud-forms in the sky. To westward the gleaming arm of the harbour broadened out into level reaches of the bay, which reflected the beauty of the evening light.

From the wonder of water and air, he turned slowly to the girl at his side. Madge Brett, sensitive to the loveliness about her, had become a focal point through which it was individualised for him. Her khaki outing costume was of the same colouring as the sunburned moss at her feet, while her glowing cheeks and bright eyes, the waves of her hair and the curve of shoulder and arm, held the same primal lure that was calling to Maitland from the earth upon which he stood.

"A great girl"—the frank exuberance of Hewlett Young recurred to him. The Californian, in whom the avidity of the artist was heightened by a Latin view of life, had seen what Maitland had missed because of his blinding, self-centred pain. In the most ingenuous manner imaginable, Young had recommended to the young man a closer acquaintanceship with Madge. "Eating your hearts out—both of you—lonely—in a world full of sunshine and happiness. Get together. You can help each other—it will be better for the work." Craig had taken the older man's advice. He had asked Miss Brett to accompany him to shows, had taken her for an occasional walk or a boat-ride on the inlet. She seemed glad, in a boyish way, to have a chum. She was, by temperament, the sort of girl who had few women friends—who depended entirely upon men for comradeship. Domestic affairs, cookery, fashions, were not in her world. Gossip, interest in the personal matters affecting her acquaintances, had no place in her mind. She looked upon life very much as men view it who are busy with practical problems and the realisation of ideals in action.

Altogether, Maitland was glad that he had profited by the friendly wisdom of the American. His hours with Madge

Brett had been worth while. Sex had not asserted itself except in the inevitable fact that she was a woman, so that listening to her point of view in conversation, feeling her presence by his side, gave him an undefinable sense of pleasure and completeness which he could not have derived from friendship with men.

When their glances met now, he read in her eyes the truth that the beauty of the scene before them meant the same to her as to himself.

"Isn't it great?" he said.

She smiled, adjusted her knapsack, and moved forward into the beaten trail that led from the plateau to the slopes below.

"Don't let us talk about it. That would spoil it," she replied.

Madge was carrying her own blankets as well as her share of the camp equipment. She had insisted upon this. It was a part of her religion. She resented any inference that her sex was the weaker one. "If we cannot walk abreast—and carry our share—then we should not ask for equal rights." This, in regard to women, was her credo.

Leaving the bare rocks which formed the comparatively level place upon which they had been standing, she led the way into the mountaineers' path, which wound through the wooded slopes of Grouse Mountain to the little town of North Vancouver. With the disappearance of the sun, the shadows began to gather in the dense evergreen thickets that screened the trail and, after the warm day upon the summits, the coolness was so pleasant that they strode forward with long swinging steps, heedless of the weight of their packs. A solitary squirrel chirred from a tree-top still touched by the fading glow of day, while the occasional flash of a bird's wing alone betokened the presence of life in the stillness beneath the overarching boughs of fir and cedar. Maitland was prone to give way to moods of loneliness suggested by the silence of the British Columbian woods, but now he was saved from their spell by the lithe little figure that trudged before him, a glint of scarlet showing where she had wound a sprig of mountain berries in the coils of her dark hair.

After the first steep descent from the rim of the plateau, the trail led through a patch of dense timber which effectually shut off all view of the surrounding country. A turn to the right, a sharp struggle through a tangle of scrubby underbrush, and they emerged upon another bare promontory overlooking the great canyon. Here they paused for a while to watch the white mists gathering in the ravine below them. In billowing folds, outspread like a chill shroud over the lowlands, the fog was creeping in from the sea and reaching with ghostly hands through all the shadowy recesses of the hills. The waters of the inlet were hidden. The lights of the city glimmered faintly now through a veil of mingled smoke and vapour.

With a final sigh of regret because their way must lead them away from the peace of the mountains, Maitland and his companion turned down into the first semblance of a trail. They had not proceeded very far before a sense of uneasiness took possession of him. It was some time since he had been in the hills and, in the interval, he had forgotten much about the various routes pursued by "hikers." He now had an instinctive feeling that they were not upon any path which was familiar to him, but he reflected upon the obvious fact that they were at least descending towards the valley, and he tried to content himself because the direction was approximately right. If they were upon the trail which he dimly remembered, they would reach the open spaces before the daylight had completely faded. Taking any way of much greater length would mean being overtaken by darkness. Until he was absolutely certain, he would not speak to Miss Brett about the possibility of having to retrace their steps.

They had just emerged from the woods upon the upper edge of a fan-shaped rock-slide spreading for several hundred feet through the timber below them.

"We are off the trail, Madge," he said. "I am sorry. I have not been up here for a long time, as you know. Perhaps you had better rest here while I explore a bit. I remember one slide like this which was directly above the mountaineers' trail. I'll go down to the foot of this one, and, if the path is there, we are all right."

"Some guide, you are!" She smiled at him boyishly. "Go ahead. I wanted a rest anyway. I was too stubborn to say so."

Maitland released his knapsack and set it against a boulder.

"Here, this will be softer to lean against than that rock. Really, I am sorry. I won't be away long. It's better to be sure."

He felt annoyed that his leadership was at fault. She would rally him about that during the coming weeks.

"There are cigarettes and matches in the top of my pack," he called, as he lowered himself over the edge of a tiny cliff and set his feet upon the jagged shale of the slide. In the fading light he found it necessary to proceed carefully. The soles of his heavy boots, set with hobnails, gave him no security upon the slippery moss-covered fragments of stone which rolled and shifted as he stumbled downward along the slope. Soon he was out of sight and hearing of the girl who rested in the shadow of the forest above him. Then there succeeded a steeper descent, where he was forced to use his hands, which were soon rendered sensitive by the abrasion of the sharp-fanged, jutting bits of rock to which he must needs cling. A sudden twinge of pain—his ankle bent beneath him—a swift movement sidewards to escape some boulders that, loosened from their place, bounded dangerously near to his head—and he found himself lying prone on a mossy ledge at the foot of the sharp declivity. He cursed softly. Nice luck, indeed! A sprain was as bad as a break. He felt his ankle swelling beneath the leather, and realised that it might mean spending a night on the mountain-side. Miss Brett was anxious, he knew, to be at the office in the morning.

He stood erect, tried his weight upon the injured limb, and found that his fears were fully justified. Slowly and painfully he began the ascent.

"Well? It's rough going, isn't it? Want a hand up?"

His companion's cheery voice called to him when she heard him scrambling below her on the slide.

"I'll need a hand, I think. Rotten luck. I sprained my ankle down there."

He dragged himself over the rim of the ledge upon which she was standing.

"Sit down," she commanded. "Pull off your boot. Wait. I'll unlace it."

Rather impatiently he refused her help, and began to undo the thongs of his logger's boots.

"You needn't be so darned independent, Craig. I know you're not a lounge-lizard. Needn't put on manly airs with me. We're pals, aren't we?"

"Sure. It's my fault that we're stuck up here, though. I know that you want to be at the office early."

"Oh, stuff! I'll be glad to have an extra hour or two away from it. There's water in my canteen. I'll make a fire and heat some of it. You ought to have a hot cloth on that ankle."

While he was taking off his boot, she went to the edge of the timber and gathered dry twigs and bark. Soon the crackling of a flame caused him to turn his head to watch her. She was bending over the fire, pouring water from her canteen into a tin "billy-can." The yellow flare from the burning wood threw into sharp relief her piquant face framed by the luxuriant tangle of dark hair that had fallen over her shoulders. Her light silk shirt, tucked in at the top, revealed a glint of warmly tinted bosom—an arresting curve of breast and shoulder.

The water being at the right temperature, Madge extracted a soft bit of white cloth from the depths of her own pack. She dipped it in the hot water, wrung it out and applied it to the injured ankle. Maitland bent forward to assist her.

"You are not supposed to look at this bandage, sir," she said reprovingly. "Oh, well—men know that ladies wear undervests. Is the water hot?"

He scolded her for making a baby of him—insisted upon moving nearer to the fire and attending to the matter himself.

"Don't be such a crank, Craig Maitland." She adjusted the packs and made him recline comfortably while she proceeded with her ministrations.

The fire, leaping higher, cast a ruddy circle of light which illumined the moss-covered ledge, the grey face of the cliff behind them, and darkened the fringe of forest that walled them in. They were ringed in by darkness—their world comprised within the few square feet of mountain-side lighted by their camp-fire. Maitland surrendered himself to a pleasurable sensation of comfort as he leaned back and watched the deft, white hands bringing relief to the swollen ankle.

Dreamily he listened, and as listlessly replied to her playful chatter. He seemed to be awakening from a spell of separateness that had held him bound. Her tenderness was slowly but surely alleviating something deeper than the physical pain which was negligible when compared to the thing which had gripped and held him ever since the evening when Jocelyn Paget had closed a door. Never for a moment had he questioned the wisdom of the decision that had left him to face the world alone. In matters involving the eternal triangle, he knew that compromise could only prove fatal. Endless suffering and tragedy, indeed, lay in any attempt to reconcile love with duty once their paths had diverged. With all his inherent strength of will, he had tried to forget, but, at heart, an ever-present realisation remained that life would never again wear the colours of spring for him. Some intangible hand had robbed sensation of its first keen ecstasy and had banished wonder, leaving the hard fact of existence to be met and mastered.

Now, for reasons which he did not stop to analyse, he felt the stirring of the old vitality that had faced living as a joyous adventure. The girl, having placed a fresh cloth upon the sprained joint, was sitting beside him—so near that he could feel the warmth of her. Her features were hidden from him by her hair. Then, as she turned to speak, red lips and dark eyes flashed dangerously close to him. Acting upon a swift impulse, he kissed her.

She sprang to her feet and turned her back upon him. He could see a small hand clenched tightly at her side. Then she strode away and vanished into the shadows of the great trees at the edge of the forest.

"Madge! Oh, Madge!" he called. She did not reply. Sitting up suddenly, he wrenched his injured limb so that he swore beneath his breath. "Fool! I am a fool—worse than a fool! I ought to be kicked. Heavens, what made me do that?" he muttered.

As he struggled to rise, he saw her coming back to him. She walked slowly, as if weary, her head bent forward so that he could not see her face. Without speaking, she quietly sat down upon the ground on the opposite side of the fire.

"I am sorry, Madge. I'm not a cad—really. It was just a mad impulse. Can you forgive me?"

Without looking at him, she said, "You needn't be cut up about it. I am sorry you did it, though. I don't want to hurt you."

"Hurt me? What do you mean?" exclaimed Maitland.

"Just what I say. If you had ever been hurt, you would know what I mean."

He felt just a little annoyed. The girl had rather a high opinion of her power.

"Oh, you needn't worry about me," he retorted. "If you are quite certain that you are not hurt, I assure you there is nothing else to disturb your mind about."

"You think I acted like a schoolgirl," she flashed back. "Well, I didn't. If I had not liked you, I would have tried to kill you. We're pals, aren't we?"

"Yes," he replied gravely. "That is why I felt mean about it. I want us to go on being pals. I never thought of you as a woman—I mean in the usual way—until to-night. You are pretty. I acted upon an impulse. There isn't much more to be said except this. I won't kiss you again."

Miss Brett rose to her feet and brushed away the bits of dry moss clinging to her clothing. She looked up, casually,

at the sky, which was now a dusky velvet curtain set with countless glittering jewels.

"The stars seem so near, don't they? This mountain air is magical," she murmured.

A sudden breeze stirred the embers of their fire into a flurry of smoke and flame. He watched her, silently, as she dragged forward some dry branches and piled them upon those which were rapidly crumbling to ashes. Presently the new fuel caught and crackled vigorously, so that they had to move some little distance away to avoid the heat. The girl opened and spread out the contents of their packs and, retaining the blankets, put the other equipment aside. After carefully wrapping Maitland's ankle in a dry cloth, she made him pull on his sock. Then she arranged his blankets, made him lie down and submit to being tucked in as if he were a sleepy child. Rolling herself in her own coverings, she lay down beside him.

Punctuated by the snapping of the fir boughs in the fire near them, their conversation drifted far from the mystery and the beauty of the night to the affairs of men and women whose lives were barren and joyless. Then, drawn by a hint from the stars which moved above them, they talked of the big questions that have always troubled the minds of thinkers in all ages. There was, to Maitland, a delightful freshness and frankness in her attitude towards life. It was the point of view of the few women, in the vanguard of their sex, who demanded emancipation from time-worn things and who, fearlessly, were pressing forward towards an ideal of freedom and strength which would revolutionise the world. "Less guarded, but more guarded than ever." Whitman's phrase came to his mind as he listened to her hopes and aspirations. These new women would be creators, comrades of men, lifting sex from the gutters of our civilisation to its true place as a regenerative spiritual force?

The fire died down, while a cold wind, having its source somewhere in the snow-clad silences above them, crept down over the wooded slopes and stirred the tremulous black tapestry of the tree-tops near them. Hard and scintillant in the keen mountain air, the stars now shone with a steel-like lustre against the dark vault of the sky. Maitland felt the girl shivering, and then realised that she was moving closer to him for comfort. He hesitated, then reached out his arm and drew her close to him.

"You must not mind. It is the sensible thing, Madge. You are not strong, you know. Remember, you told me about your lungs."

He was suddenly startled by the sound of sobbing. Her body trembled, shaken by a burst of uncontrolled weeping. In amazement he leaned upon his elbow and bent over her.

"What is it, Madge? What is the matter, girl?"

She lay still for a moment, then, in a voice vibrant with suppressed emotion, she murmured, "I didn't know—oh, I didn't know that I would ever want another man's hand to touch me again."

"Another man's——" Icy fingers were laid upon Craig Maitland. Like a sputtering candle, desire, ready to break into flame, flickered and went out, leaving grey ashes of remorse. With a few deft movements he wrapped her blankets tightly about her and, disregarding his ankle, rose and cast more wood upon the fire. Gruffly, when she stirred, he ordered her to remain covered. When he was settled in place again, he quietly removed one of his own blankets and, without her knowledge, it was placed about the girl's shoulders.

It was the dawn, keen-edged but sparkling, when he next spoke to her. He was intent upon holding a frying-pan over the fire, which was burning briskly. A delicious scent of bacon filled the air. The girl stirred, drew a blanket from over her head and face, and peered out at him with sleepy eyes.

"What do you mean by all this? Why didn't you wake me up? What about your ankle?" She sat up and looked at him reprovingly through the wild disorder of her hair.

"Tut! Tut! Ankle's all right. First call for breakfast, young lady!"

Madge drew his steamer rug about her shoulders and, drawing up her knees, clasped them with her hands while she blinked at him.

"Some cook! Please explain why you led me to believe that you were a cripple last night!"

"Oh, that's easily explained," he retorted gaily. "I like being petted. Most people do."

"False pretences in order to get what you wanted? Was that playing fair?" she queried.

"I think so. Yes, if my memory is not at fault, my conduct was justified." His light tone changed without warning. He wheeled upon her so suddenly that her eyes opened with a quick start of inquiry.

"You love Kolazoff?"

She looked fixedly into his eyes for a moment, and then dropped her gaze before him. "I don't have to answer that question. Yet—I am going to. Yes."

"Fine," said Maitland. "Haven't heard of him since he went away?"

"No."

Craig knew that the Russian had returned safely from his mission and, for reasons unknown to his friends, was remaining in concealment somewhere about the waterfront in Vancouver.

"All right. Let's have breakfast. I'll go off a bit while you get ready." He limped away and, after a few minutes, returned.

Madge had made the coffee. They ate and drank with a keen zest. Then they arranged their packs and stamped out the remnants of the camp-fire.

"Some day I am coming back to visit this spot."

Madge had shouldered her pack. "Why?" she asked.

"I won a good stiff fight here."

She looked up at him. A flush heightened her colour. Her long black lashes were wet with tears.

"Both sides won, Craig!"

CHAPTER XIII

THE CAVE MAN AGAIN

"You're right. I'm with you. Kolazoff ain't treatin' the kid the way he ought to. No, sir. Dead right."

The Old Man glanced fearfully through the glass partition which walled off his office from the press-room of *The Beacon*. Then, clumsily, he rose and closed the door. Certain that Miss Brett could not hear him, he continued: "Wish I could help you out, Craig. I sure do. But I don't know much about the 'underground' stuff. The party give me this paper to run and I'm runnin' it. Keeps me so doggoned busy that I can't keep track of other things. I know Kolazoff's round town somewheres. Some of the fellows told me they seen him, but he ducked before they could talk to him. You see, he's in with the Russian colony on business of his own or, at least, business that has to do with them and the revolution back in Russia."

"That is all right." Maitland spoke impatiently. "It is quite possible that he may have crossed wires and may have

some business of his own to keep clear of the Czar's secret-service men. We all know they are here and, doubtless, a man of his calibre will be watched. However, he owes it to the little girl to tell her that he arrived back safely. She has been eating her heart out worrying about him. Now, if someone tells her that he is in Vancouver——"

"I know. It'll break her up," said Tacey. He leaned forward, chin in hand, his homely face lighted by sympathy. "I can't understand the fellow." Suddenly his eyes gleamed beneath their shaggy brows. His big fist, clenched, came down softly upon the table. "By Gad! Powers is your man. What's the matter with me, anyhow? Sure—Powers'll know. He's in on all that waterfront stuff. Runs back and for'ards from the Squamish. Engineers most of the dirty work we have to do in order to keep goin'. He smuggled in the special edition of *The Appeal to Reason* that was barred outa the mails. Knows all the ropes and has a crowd of hangers-on ready to do most anything when it comes to dodging the police. Sure. You see Powers. He kinda took a shine to you. I can't leave the paper. You go ahead."

"Are you sure it isn't leaving too much work on your shoulders? I want to do my share, you know," said Maitland.

Tacey rose from his chair and placed his hand upon the younger man's arm.

"Now, look. When it comes to work, I'm used to it. A little extra won't hurt me." He jerked his thumb in the direction of the outer office. "She won't mind some extra work, neither—not just now."

Upon the day following Maitland, unannounced, arrived at Powers' hostelry in the Squamish Valley. Bud's wife, who appeared in response to his knocking, was tremulous with delight at seeing him again. She patted her hair, began to untie the strings of a checked gingham apron which was slightly soiled, and fluttered about him with maternal solicitude. Maitland made excuses for his unexpected visit and, turning to the driver of the cart that contained his luggage, paid his bill and took charge of his grips.

It was a grey day, with damp clouds of fog blowing up from the sea, and he hastened within doors, glad of the cheery warmth of a fire which was burning in a sheet-iron heater in the Powers' dining-room. Without removing his light overcoat, he stood for a moment with hands outspread above the stove. A heavy step sounded upon the porch at the rear of the house, and an instant later Powers, clad in oilskins, lumbered into the room. Maitland caught the gleam of surprise —a hint of fear, he thought—in the big fellow's eyes. So transitory was the flash, quickly hidden by a glance of welcome, that Craig inwardly vowed himself mistaken. Bud could have no inkling of the purpose which had brought him to the Squamish.

"What the h——, Bill?" Powers turned, with a grin, towards his wife. "Excuse me. I plumb forgot my manners." He reached out a hand to the visitor. "Shake. This is sure some surprise. Put the kettle on, ma—if it ain't on already. You'll want a cup of tea or something warm."

The little woman ignored her husband's remarks. "Is it tay or a cup of coffee you'd like, Mr. Maitland?"

"Tea, thank you, Mrs. Powers."

She bustled out to the kitchen. Taking off his sou'wester, Powers slapped it vigorously against his trousers.

"This fog's worse nor rain," he said, while he stooped to stir the fire in the heater. From under a wisp of shaggy hair, which had fallen across his eyes, he looked up into Maitland's face.

"What's stirrin' down in the big burg?"

"Nothing much," answered Craig. "I just came up to have a quiet chat with you about some things."

"Ugh-huh! Well"—he lowered his voice and glanced towards the kitchen—"can't talk much round here. There's a party on to-night down the valley. Want to come? We kin talk goin' an' comin'." Noticing Maitland's hesitation, he half whispered, "'Tain't a séance. I gotta go. The boys—some friends of mine—meet for a little game and a smoker. Or maybe you kin wait till to-morrow?"

Craig had planned to return by the next day's boat. "Sure, I'll go," he replied.

Inwardly he felt ashamed that he was a party to some deception involving the woman who now appeared in the doorway with a tray bearing a pot of tea and sandwiches. The edges of her corset showed plainly through her clean calico gown, boxing in her flat little figure, which seemed to have shrunk like a sensitive plant before a rough hand. Here was affection, simple but honest and true, that was withering and hungry, wistfully wondering why it found no response to its homely need. Her face glowed with a pleasant motherly light as she carefully placed a cup and saucer and poured the tea. Bud compressed his bulk into a chair between the table and the stove, keeping his back turned to his wife. His oilskin jacket was open at the breast and from an inner pocket there protruded the corner of a newspaper.

"Bud!" Mrs. Powers' voice was sharp and peremptory. "I say, Bud! Give me that paper."

Maitland, startled, looked up from his plate. Slowly, his face distorted by the semblance of a smile, Powers drew forth a copy of *The Appeal to Reason*, and laid it upon the table. He winked covertly at the young man. Leaning over, the woman gingerly picked up the offending sheet between her thumb and forefinger and, holding it away from her person, flounced out to the kitchen. A stove-lid banged. Powers chuckled softly. He was absolutely silent during the remainder of the time which Maitland consumed in drinking his tea. He played, most admirably, the rôle of a hen-pecked husband, meek and helpless while his better half revelled in gratifying her inferiority complex. Mr. Maitland must see that she had, at last, attained to mastery in her own home, and in her whim Bud Powers acquiesced with a comic placidity. So that when her husband announced that he was taking their visitor down to the wharf on business about a timber-claim—papers which had to be signed that evening—she had reached the state of self-satisfaction wherein it was easy to be gracious. Maitland swallowed hard at the deliberate lies which Powers adduced as reasons for going out but, perforce, was silent. Aside, he smiled as the big fellow grumblingly submitted to having his slicker buttoned tightly by her hands before they stepped out into the front yard.

While they were stumbling through the litter towards the highway, Powers snorted, "Wimmen are queer cattle. Hell, it ain't no use scrappin' all the time. Gotta have a little peace, now and again. Got too many things on my mind right now to bother wearin' the pants at home. Lord, this is some night, kiddo!"

The Squamish Valley lay buried beneath chill layers of dense fog strung between the rocky ledges of the mountains which formed its walls. Wind and sun were felt only upon the upper slopes of the encircling hills, where the dark forms of fir and cedar pierced the curtains of vapour that clung in tenuous folds to their drooping branches. Below this veil of impenetrable mist suspended over the lowlands, silence was unbroken save by the muffled roar of the river which, swollen by rain, pushed its way through the tangle of the forest. Like that of some blind, struggling monster on its way to the sea, its voice could be heard—a hollow echo, the only movement in the stillness that betokened life. Its grumbling filled the pauses in the conversation between Maitland and Bud Powers, who were groping their way along a trail leading to the bank of the stream.

Craig, like his companion, was clad in waterproof clothing, which only partially prevented the moisture from reaching his body. In spite of his raincoat the fog made itself felt, so that he longed for the warmth of the fire in Mrs. Powers' big box-heater. Somewhere in the path before him, Bud's legs, enswathed in unyielding oilskins, swished and rattled like dry branches rubbed together by the wind. He followed the sound while he tripped over roots and logs and slipped upon the sodden brown mass of leaves beneath his feet. Once again, the enigma of the big fellow's personality had him in its grip. He had seen him under control, holding his primitive strength and ferocity in leash, while he permitted his wife to bait him with her innuendoes and childish prickings. But memory also held a picture of the uncurbed brute who had belaboured a helpless animal into trembling submission to his will.

Maitland, with a strange sense of foreboding at heart, realised that this man, possessed of a savage elemental power, irresponsible as a child, was nevertheless a factor influencing the destiny of the Labour Movement on the Pacific Coast. It was certain that he had a following not only in every logging camp from Vancouver to Prince Rupert but also among the longshoremen, the fishermen, the freight-handlers, teamsters, and other labourers who formed a large portion of the party. No man aspiring to leadership in the ranks of Labour could afford to ignore his position of acknowledged authority. No one but he knew so well the inner working of the organised forces which united but rarely and then divided again to resume their bickering over non-essentials of creed and policy.

At a warning cry from Powers, Maitland threw up his arm in time to intercept the lithe limb of a vine-maple, which slashed backwards showering him with spray. Ducking his head, he pushed his way through an almost impassable jungle

of salmonberry bushes, and emerged upon a gravelly strip of ground near the water's edge. Only a few feet ahead of him, through the wall of the fog, he could hear the river tumbling and lashing its way through the grey silences. Beside his companion, he moved forward until they almost stumbled over the gunwale of a boat which lay where it had been hauled up beyond reach of the stream. Untying a chain wound about the trunk of an alder, Powers began to drag the craft into position, head pointed riverward.

"Won't have time to talk when we're rowin', son. What brought yuh up to the Squamish?"

Bud, his big frame swathed in mist, stood for a moment with his back turned to Maitland.

Without preliminaries, Craig shot the question at him, "Where is Kolazoff? I want to see him."

The man swung about and faced him. "The hell yuh do! How do I know where he is? He's supposed to be in Russia, ain't he?"

"No, he isn't. He's in Vancouver."

"Who told yuh he was in Vancouver? Bunk! If that's all yuh want to know, come on. Let's get away."

Together they launched the boat. Craig seated himself and adjusted a pair of oars, while Powers swung the stern clear and leaped into his place. The turbid brown waters gripped the craft and drew it, as if it were a floating leaf, into the current. Maitland felt helpless when he dug his oars into the swiftly flowing tide that was surging under him. The bank faded out and, walled in by the fog, they shot forward at a bewildering speed.

"'Tain't a cinch—eh, kid?" Powers shouted in order to be heard. "I'll make a real riverman outa yuh, if yuh stay with me. Needn't be scared. I know this old river like a book."

Seeing that the river itself was apparently bearing them in the right direction, Maitland made only a faint pretence at using his oars. He watched the great shoulders in front of him as the man deftly kept the craft headed as he willed. The rush of waters, the brown spume and floating white turrets of foam which swirled past them made him giddy and, for a while, he remained silent. In places, eddies carried them inshore and they passed beneath the overhanging branches of evergreens and alders that drooped, heavily laden with moisture. At other times they were in the main current, without compass in a chill grey sea of vapour which swept past them in billowing waves. Then, suddenly, they seemed to be climbing a sloping hill of water and, an instant later, the boat ground and came to a full stop against the trunk of a tree. Powers cursed.

"Overflowed. We're out on the flats. Darn the luck! Sit still. Don't budge, I tell you."

They were in a precarious position. Being actually wedged against the giant alder by the force of the current behind them, a slight movement in the wrong direction would capsize the boat. Bud stood upright very carefully and tried to reach the tree with the tip of his oar. Failing, he swore again and commanded Maitland to sit tight.

"You don't understand this stuff. Sit quiet," he growled.

The young man watched him while he stretched his arm upward and grasped a twig dependent from a branch above his head. Slowly, feet a-straddle to hold the boat steady, he pulled the limb down to him. It was about the thickness of a man's wrist, green and supple. Maitland's eyes grew wide with amazement when he saw Powers take a firm grip of the branch and twist it as if it had been a rope of straw. Without moving the boat beneath him to any perceptible degree, he tore off a portion long enough to act as a pole and, still standing poised, stripped it of smaller branches and twigs. Then, with his improvised pike, he shoved the boat clear of the tree.

"Heavens, man, your hands must be made of iron!" Craig gasped.

"Ugh-huh! They ain't hands. They're paws, son." Powers chuckled as they shot out into the stream once more. Simian strength! Small wonder that the man was feared and worshipped in the camps and waterfront saloons! "I want yuh to do some rowin' now," he continued, while he began to head the boat across the current.

Maitland bent to work and, in a few moments, their keel grated upon a shingly bar. Powers clambered into the water. Craig followed, and they pulled the boat up the beach and made it fast. With water sloshing in their boots, they struck out through the underbrush, and found a trail littered in places with newly made chips and bits of shakes. Through the fog, a black bulk loomed ahead of them and a light glimmered faintly. Then the outlines of a cabin appeared. Powers knocked on the door, which was opened without delay.

"Oh! Ah! I say, gentlemen! Come in!"

Greasy fez in hand, his grey pinched face twisted into a courteous smile, Featherstone, ex-M.P., stood aside to permit them to enter. A strangely pathetic bit of old London he seemed in his long-tailed coat, green with age, and his baggy trousers, patched at the knees. Whiskers carefully trimmed after the manner made familiar by certain royal personages and their relatives among the grand dukes—someone had whispered that the old man was a descendant of George IV by virtue of that monarch's indiscretions—served to hide the absence of a collar.

The air in the cabin was uncomfortably warm. The place, which consisted of one room, was so small that there was barely space for the box-heater and the table at which were seated two men with cards in their hands and piles of poker chips before them. One of the players Maitland recognised as the "remittance-man" whom he had met at the Squamish Hotel upon an evening still fresh in his memory. He nodded to the Professor, and smiled as he thought of the polite tones in which he had invited Dave Garland to have his eyes blackened. The other man, to whom he was introduced by Featherstone, was tall and bronzed, with aquiline features and a closely trimmed black moustache. Craig did not immediately catch all of his name as the old man muttered the usual formalities. "... the Laird—familiarly known as the Laird, Mr. Maitland." This latter part of a sentence he heard, and he realised that a blue flannel shirt and overalls could not conceal the fact that this man would be equally at home in kid gloves and spats. He remembered the glance of these keen grey eyes when, later on, he learned that the man was the most noted big-game hunter in the province. The Professor's weak face and watery blue eyes were in sharp contrast to the clean strength of his partner's features.

Powers, divesting himself of his oilskins, smiled affably as he rubbed his hairy hands together and warmed them at the stove.

"How's the game goin', fellahs?"

The Professor tilted back his chair and yawned. "I am—er—what do you call it?—cleaned. Oh, I say, perhaps Mr. Maitland would like to take my place? It's about time for a drink—eh, what, Featherstone?"

"Play?" Powers turned to Maitland.

"Sometimes. Certainly, I'll take a hand." Craig felt that he wanted to become acquainted with this strangely assorted company.

The old gentleman, clearing his throat with much ado, produced a bottle of Scotch whisky from a locker nailed to the bare logs which formed the cabin wall. After drinks all round, he seated himself opposite to Maitland and shoved a pile of red, white, and blue chips towards the young man. Poker held a fascination for Craig Maitland. It was not love of gain but the psychological element which entered into the game that had always held a lure for him.

Silently, except for the necessary ejaculations, the play went forward. The Professor, acting as bartender, kept everyone supplied with liquor. Powers gulped his whisky without diluting it; Featherstone used water, sipping it with much smacking of lips and appreciative breathings; Graham, "the Laird," drank his "two fingers" neatly; the Professor's glass was filled to the brim and tossed off—the drink sank into him as rain into a sandy soil. Maitland was the only one who occasionally missed a round. He was absorbed in watching the faces of the players, which were pages to him from the most interesting book in the world—human nature.

Rarely, he knew, did men gamble for the love of money. In a world which was, at best, a puzzle without an answer, the race had found that a divine carelessness was necessary in order to get the ultimate stimulus out of living. All was transitory—flowing—ever-changing. Wealth, fame, friends, love might disappear overnight. But, in all the bewildering flux, something had to remain static and unmoved while it watched the smaller self being tossed into confusion by

accident and misfortune. Not over-elate—not over-depressed—"detached from the fruits of action"—ah, that phrase, better than all others, expressed it! Some Hindu sage had declared this to be the highest wisdom. In games of chance, did human beings unconsciously seek the development of qualities to be used in the greater adventure wherein mighty forces contended for the triumph or defeat of an immortal soul?

The atmosphere in the little shack grew suffocatingly warm and surcharged with blue haze from pipes and cigarettes. After an hour had passed, fortune deserted old Featherstone and Maitland. Their chips were in Bud's possession. A "jack-pot" was declared. Holding four cards, Graham opened the play. Powers stayed. He gave the Laird one and drew to three cards while his eye measured his opponent's pile and his bet covered all of Graham's stack. Without a moment's hesitation the big-game hunter came in with his entire wealth in chips. Cards were laid on the table. The other man gasped as Powers' big hand shot forward and raked in the winnings. Four aces had beaten four kings. A flicker of amusement danced in the Laird's eyes and his lip curled in a smile as he reached for a cigarette.

"Well—that's that," he said.

A chair scraped upon the floor at Maitland's side as the Professor rose and stood, his knees wobbling beneath him as he blinked angrily at Powers. His thin face was flushed, but his eyes, usually timid and vacant, were bright now with a valour imparted by the whisky which he had soaked into his body.

"Egad, sir! I am drunk—but wideawake, sir—wideawake," he sputtered rapidly. His voice rose to a shriek as his clenched fist descended upon the table. "This is a gentleman's game, sir!"

Bud Powers heaved himself to his feet, grasping the edges of the table.

"What the hell do yuh mean?"

All eyes followed the Professor's hand, which was pointing to a mirror hanging upon the wall above the Laird's shoulder.

"That is what—hic—what I mean! Take that mirror down—hic—and put that 'pot' back on the table, Mr. Powers."

The table was lifted from the floor, scattering chips and cards, as Powers' clenched fist drove straight to the speaker's face. Like a limp sack of sawdust, the Professor's body collapsed in a heap against the wall, striking the studding with a sickening thud. His neck muscles swollen and his brutal features distorted with rage, Bud stood over him for an instant, and then raised his foot. The iron calks in the sole of his boot were within a foot of the prostrate man's face.

"Stop!"

Like a pistol-shot the Laird's voice ripped through the air. A bracket-lamp upon the wall threw a ray that sparkled on the nickel-plating of a revolver held in his hand.

"All right, Powers. I've got you. Put on your coat and get out of my house." Graham's hand tightened upon the handle of his gun. "Come on! Move!"

With a snarl like that of a trapped animal, the big fellow turned and glared through bloodshot eyes at the Laird. Then, slowly, in a silence so tense that the ticking of an alarm-clock sounded like a small trip-hammer in the room, he reached for his hat and slicker and moved towards the door. With hand on the latch, he looked over his shoulder.

"Yuh know me, Graham. It's a long road without——"

The Laird cut him short. "That's enough," he snapped. "Keep that to frighten your wharf-rats. Better git. My hand's none too steady."

Powers stepped out, foregoing further speech.

Maitland was leaning over the fallen man, who stirred and groaned feebly. Featherstone stood, steadying himself by means of a chair. His face was a sickly white in colour.

"Now, Mr. Featherstone, you know what I think of your—shall I say—friend," Graham said quietly.

The old man's lips flickered. He endeavoured to clear his throat, but it was dry. Words refused to come at his command. The Laird stepped to Craig's side.

"I must apologise to you, Mr. Maitland. Rather a nasty evening to have forced upon you. Will you stay over-night? I can fix you up, you know."

"Thanks," said Craig. "I don't know my way round in the fog. I'll be glad to stay. I have to see Powers again before I go back to Vancouver."

Graham, kneeling, was examining the Professor's face.

"Oh, you do?" There was a sharp edge to his voice.

"Yes. He knows—at least I think he does—where a friend of mine is concealed."

"In Vancouver?"

"Yes, along the waterfront."

"In case you don't want to see Powers again after to-night, may I suggest that you see a friend of mine down there? I'll give you his address, if you like. I don't want to butt in, but if there's anybody knows the 'underworld' along the waterfront it is this same chap."

"Thanks."

The Professor winced as Graham's fingers touched his cheek. The Laird stood erect, his lips compressed grimly.

"That brute has a hand like a gorilla. However, no bones smashed. Pour me some whisky, Featherstone."

CHAPTER XIV

CRAIG MAITLAND BEGINS A NEW CHAPTER

When Craig Maitland returned to Vancouver he was accompanied by the Laird. During his trip through the picturesque scenery of Howe Sound, he found the man a delightful travelling companion. Graham knew and loved the mountains with a passion which had taken him away from the ordinary paths wherein men strive for success. He had become a part of the rugged fastnesses, imbued with their strength and some of their serenity. As in the hills, there were in him hidden torrents and unviolated glades, sunshine and shadow upon spaces larger than those possessed by the average man. He closed avenues of conversation which might have revealed knowledge of the social forces that, personified by Powers, were secreted in the Squamish Valley. But of his own experiences, the lure of camp and trail, he spoke volubly and in a fascinating manner.

The sun was sinking when the little steamship made its way through the opalescent waters of the gulf and entered the narrows between the wooded cliffs of Stanley Park and the delta of the Capilano. Before them, like fairy torches swung by unseen hands, the lights were beginning to twinkle from the heights, and to sparkle through the vapour shrouding the shore-line of the city. Amidst the green shadows lying beneath the rocky foreland, they slipped gently upon the tide that

shouldered its way through the entrance into Burrard Inlet and the harbour while, behind them, stretching in an unbroken expanse to the far distant shadowy outlines of the mountains, the waves caught and held the sunset's colours. The western sky was a glory. Terraces of beaten gold, winged flames that spread tremblingly across gulfs of emerald and saffron, rose from the sea-line, which was marked by a cloud of violet mist. Together the men watched the beauty of the evening glowing and fading—a soundless symphony that thrilled them as only great music would have done. Graham's comment, as they turned inshore towards the wharves, was characteristic. He threw his overcoat across his arm and turned to face the city.

"Let's hit the grit. Life's hell, but they can't take beauty away from us. It's always there ... eh, what?"

Moving forward, they collected their baggage. When they emerged upon deck, the steamer was grating against the dock, and men were making fast the lines to draw her into place. Standing in the crowd pressing towards the gangway, Maitland lowered his voice.

"Will you let me put you up at my place? It's central."

"Thanks," said the Laird. "I am afraid that would not fit in with what I have in hand at present. Awfully good of you, just the same. I can bring Hardy around any time, though. To-night, if you like."

Maitland handed a card to his companion. "If you're sure it won't interfere with your evening? I'll wait in for you."

The Laird looked at his watch. His lips wore a dubious smile. He flashed a look at Craig.

"Possibly. Yes, I think we can do the two tricks to-night. We'll see."

They were standing apart, out of the moving stream of passengers. Graham continued, "I might as well tell you, Maitland. I'm after Jim Kearney's wife. Powers has got her down here somewhere. I'm going down to Chinatown to-night to look for her. I'll bring Hardy up before we go. What time will be convenient?"

"Any time. I'll be in all evening."

Opportunity was not afforded Maitland to voice his surprise or to comment upon the Laird's revelation. They were pushed forward to the gangway and, a few minutes later, they shook hands and parted. Graham took a street-car, while Craig proceeded to walk to his apartment in the West End.

Always sensitive to beauty, the young man found a strange power drawing him apart from the crowd, which seemed oblivious to the lure of the evening sky and of the sunset light that poured its level rays along the grimy thoroughfare. Hastings Street, to westward, might have been a cleft in a mountain wall which opened out into a valley of colour and tremulous fire. A thousand windows blazed like crimson shields hung in serried rows upon tapestries of brick and stone, while, down the side-streets and alleys, twilight shadows veiled the hard outlines of the buildings. Beauty laid soothing hands upon the hurry and strain of life which impelled the throngs bent upon the never-ending quest for happiness. Maitland, in a way which was peculiar to him, flowed with the moving crowd, feeling himself to be a drop in an ocean —not wholly an individual but rather part of humanity and at one with it.

He was still in a day-dream when he reached his rooms. Mechanically he washed and donned bathrobe and slippers. Still feeling rather than thinking, he seated himself in an easy chair before the French windows in his little living-room, and lighted a cigarette. Before him, over the clustered roof-tops of the city, the afterglow of the sunset chastened the rugged line of the hills which formed the northern shore of the inlet. In a sky from which the vivid tints had faded, strips of cloud still held some remembrance of the light that had illumined the western gateway to the sea. A strip of shimmering water lay beyond the farthest houses along the shores of English Bay.

Maitland was keenly conscious of a growing sense of depression. As the twilight deepened, shadows with chill grey hands seemed to be reaching from the Valley where he had left Powers to direct the elemental forces which might easily affect the destiny of Canada. This man seemed, in essence, the terrific strength of stubborn earth, dark and passionate, which had always opposed the upward flight of the spirit that sought to build a fitting temple for its habitation. Idealists, saints and seers, prophets and poets, had dreamed, from time immemorial, of brotherhood and the

undisturbed reign of truth and justice, only to find that, when the new dispensation seemed certain, the conflict of light and darkness dragged the brute in Everyman into the arena. While men talked loudly of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"—then it was that lust and cruelty, swarming from dive and slum, sated their desires and wrought disaster. Then, once more, the strong hand of autocracy had to restore order from chaos in order that "government be made safe for the people."

Nor, in the long journey from savagery to civilisation, had man conquered the primal beast. Incest and cannibalism were the only crimes abandoned by the race. And yet—this must be the material out of which he and his brothers who dreamed should mould a thing of strength and beauty—a commonwealth of kings, living together under the one law of the Golden Rule. Vain imaginings! Surely as night was enveloping the landscape before him, would darkness submerge his vision of an earth reclaimed. Then, while his eyes strained to retain the sharp outline of hill and tree merging into the creeping shadows, the marvellous thing happened as it always does for those who keep their sense of the wondrous.

Some tenuous wreaths of cloud above the glittering sea-floor were taking form upon the horizon. Silently, as if moved by invisible hands, the vapours flowed together in the shape of tower and turret and battlement until, a grey phantom against the darkening sky, pierced here and there by a solitary star, he saw the faint reflection of the City Beautiful—the vision that he and Jocelyn Paget had seen on the evening when he had parted from her. For a moment the misted folds of the dream kept their place, and then slowly dissolved. Involuntarily Maitland had risen from his chair and stood, grasping the curtains of the window. Through the opened casement a cold wind entered the room, and caused him to shiver. As he lowered the sash, a desolating sense of loneliness swept over him. In his heart was the eternal cry of the lover—"She is mine—mine only. Without her, life is an agony to be endured—a dream to be forgotten."

Behind him the door-bell rang. The hunger was still in his eyes when he greeted Graham and a stranger whose face was partially concealed by the collar of a dark blue mackinaw. The Laird's voice, redolent of the open places, brought Maitland down to earth with a thud.

"Meet Captain Hardy, my friend, Mr. Maitland. Lord, man, it's stuffy in here! Pardon me! Really, you look white, Maitland. May I open a window?"

Maitland smilingly assented to the request while he grasped the hand of Graham's companion. Two hawk-like eyes, keen and restless, held him for a moment, then glanced quickly about the room, taking it at one rapid appraisal. The man's closely-cropped grey hair belied the youth in his nervous grip and the ruddy colour in his clean-shaven cheeks.

"I have heard of you from Mr. Graham. Pleased to meet you."

"The Laird knows too much about me, sir—too much, I'm afraid," said Captain Hardy.

"Well, what I do know is all to the good, Cap," laughed Graham. "I haven't told the Captain what you're after, Maitland, but, since it is within reason, you may be sure that he will come through. He's a good-natured cuss though he doesn't look the part."

Hardy grinned boyishly. Craig drew forward some chairs and passed a box of cigars to his guests. Lighting the Captain's smoke, he said quietly, "There isn't much to tell. I simply want to find a man, Kolazoff, a Russian who is in hiding on the waterfront. Mr. Graham said you might know the fellow."

"Got you!" The Captain quickly crossed one leg over his knee as he shot the phrase at Maitland. "Got you! Red-haired, wiry, pale-faced chap—sorta dreamy-eyed as if he used dope—eh? Sure! He's hangin' out—part of the time—at Ah Mee's joint on Dupont Street." He looked across at the Laird. "Maybe your bird is around about the same district, eh, Graham?"

"Not likely. If you haven't run across her there, she's more apt to be in some rooming-house. She drinks, but I do not believe she is hitting the pipe. Not yet. Jimmy has combed Chinatown. Poor little beggar, he's knocked out completely. Funny thing—he won't believe that Powers is to blame. Thinks the evil spirits have lured her away."

"Spirits! Huh!" grunted Hardy. "I'd like to see some of 'em. Been up against most everything else. Never seen one—there ain't none! It's a dirty mess, Graham. Better keep out of it."

"I can't." The Laird flicked the ash from his cigar, started to speak, coughed, and then stood up suddenly. "I owe Jimmy Kearney a lot. He saved my life, up the coast, one winter. We were trapping together."

The seaman rose and, keeping his eye on Graham, reached for his hat, which lay on a sofa near him. "Darn you! Why didn't you say so before? What are we doin' in port when there's a good wind—eh? Come on!" He was all alert, ready for action.

The Laird smiled and looked apologetically at Maitland. "That's the Captain! Clear decks! Well, if you can come with us, we'll get under way. Perhaps," he continued slowly, "I should say that I am not dragging you into this, Mr. Maitland ... I mean my affair with Powers. We will look up your man, Kolazoff, first, and then go about our business. You see, I know that you are a Socialist. Mrs. Powers told me so after your first visit to the Squamish. I do not know your relationships within the party, but I could see that you were not enamoured of Bud's company that night at my place. You seemed glad enough to get away from him. So I offered the services of my friend here. I always call on the Captain when I need anything within a mile of salt water. He's a walking encyclopædia of knowledge in regard to shady places in most every port on the map."

"Got you!" The sailor's eyes gleamed good-naturedly. "You want me to be a guide to this little party, in consideration of which you slander me by way of advance payment. Right-o!" Swinging sharply upon his heels, he looked straight into Maitland's eyes. "The Laird says you are all right. That's good enough for me. You think it's queer that Kolazoff hasn't been to see his little lady-love? Now, let me tell you something about this bird. He's a dreamer—a boozy-eyed dreamer. He don't need dope. He's easy pickings for anyone who wants to use him. See! It was this way. Coming back from Russia, someone hands him a nice, innocent-looking little package, and says, 'Will you please give this to a friend in Vancouver?' Your Russian was polite. 'Oh, certainly! Certainly!' Well, what was in the package? Opium. Now the police are looking for your friend. It'll blow over, but for a few weeks it's good business on Kolazoff's part to be missing. He didn't have time to get a message to his girl. He had to duck and do it quick."

Maitland spoke with decision. "He might have told her without any fear of her giving it away. She would understand."

"Say!" the Captain snapped. "It wasn't himself Kolazoff was thinking of. The Laird here says the man has been mixed up with some underground stuff for the Reds. Maybe he doesn't want to explain his movements to the court. That's not my affair. You want him. I'll find him. Get me?"

While Craig dressed and found his hat, Hardy paced the floor nervously, whistling a dance tune. Within ten minutes after his guests had entered his apartment, the trio were making their way towards Vancouver's Chinatown.

The quick plunge into action, following the Laird's appearance, had effectually roused Maitland from his mystical reveries. Alert now, keenly alive to physical contacts, he was quite as normal in his interests as the two men who walked at his side. He listened intently while the Captain, in his jerky, vivid way, sketched an experience in the Philippine Islands. For a period, during the Spanish-American embroglio, he had gratified his piratical instincts and had lined his pocket-book by running arms and ammunition for the insurgents. Eventually his boat had been captured and sunk by the authorities. The adventurer in the young journalist was stirred by these men, who had faced life as an experiment and who still possessed the zest for living at high speed.

Turning south from Hastings Street, they soon found themselves in the Oriental section of the city. It merged with the area given over to the underworld and, like a semi-tropical parasite, seemed to thrive upon the atmosphere of lust and crime emanating from the dives and gambling-places. The pungent odours, unpleasant to Western senses, from the quaint little wooden shops and markets filled with weird foods and picturesque bric-à-brac, mingled familiarly with the scent of stale beer and the ethers from the whisky-soaked idlers who crowded the sidewalks. Loggers in high boots and mackinaws, miners in flannel shirts and rough clothing, labourers and railroad "stiffs," sailors and longshoremen, rubbed elbows with the Chinese and the "tin-horn" sports who formed the resident population of the district. Above the high-pitched jabbering of the coolies, the discordant squeaking of a Chinese fiddle rose from the interior of a building which might have been a bit of old Canton. Red posters, splashed with hieroglyphs in black ink, glared at them from door-posts before evil-smelling dens. Gorgeous mandarin gowns, encrusted with gold embroidery, and coloured silks, tenuous as cobwebs, flashed at them from shop windows as they were pushed along by the moving throng.

Following Hardy, they turned info an alley-way and climbed a flight of rickety steps which led to the upper story of one of the buildings.

In answer to the Captain's knocking, the wooden door at the head of the stairs was cautiously opened. A yellow face and two beady black eyes surveyed them coldly, and then the leathery countenance wrinkled into a smile. Bowing profusely, his claws tucked into the wide sleeves of his silken jacket, the Chinaman ushered them into a small room, sparsely furnished and lined with unfinished lumber. Behind a counter which extended across one side of the place there sat a stout, elderly figure, crowned by cap and pigtail, who was engaged in handing out slips of coloured paper to several whites and Chinese who stood without his enclosure.

The doorkeeper continued to bow unctuously. "You likee short dlaw, mebbe?"

Hardy disregarded the capper's attempt to draw them to the counter.

"No—no—black-jack to-night, Jim. Hop along!"

The Chinaman, still bobbing, tapped upon a door which led into an inner room. They heard, the noise of heavy bolts being shot backward. The door swung silently inward, making a narrow space through which, in single file, they pushed their way into a larger chamber. Behind them they heard the thud of ponderous iron bars being shoved into wooden sockets.

Through a blue haze of tobacco-smoke, Maitland saw before him a long deal table, covered with grey felt, about which sat ten or twelve men and women. A card game had been interrupted by their entrance, and the faces of the players were turned towards him and his companions. The features of the men were for the most part sinister or sallow. The women, powdered and rouged, looked at them with eyes unnaturally bright by reason of their painted lashes. For an instant the light of the big oil lamp, which swung upon chains above the head of the table, blurred Maitland's vision and then, with a start of surprise, he recognised a man who rose and came towards them, still holding his cards in his hand.

"Kolazoff!"

He grasped the Russian's outstretched fingers. A growth of sandy-coloured beard added a touch of age at variance with the man's flashing blue eyes. The refugee shook hands with Hardy and was introduced to the Laird. Then he turned to Craig.

"What's the idea? Why did you dig me up? Or am I presuming in the thought that I am the reason for your visit?"

Maitland glanced towards the table. "You are right," he said. "I looked you up. But—we can't talk here, can we?"

Kolazoff smiled. "I have a good hand and I need the money. They're waiting for me."

Craig placed his hand upon the Russian's sleeve, at the same time nodding towards Graham and the Captain.

"My friends here," he said in a low voice, "don't know our business or why I came. I just want to say that a certain person in my office cannot be kept in ignorance much longer. If that person finds out that you are here—have been here for weeks—there may be a suicide. That's why I am here."

Kolazoff flushed, but his eyes, looking straight into Maitland's, were entirely friendly.

"I am willing to take your word in the matter, Mr. Maitland. I can't explain to anyone except to—the person. Thanks. It is very good of you. Look! I'll give this hand to somebody else or something——" He swung impatiently towards the table.

Captain Hardy reached past Maitland and seized the Russian's wrist. "Belay there, mate! Why throw away a good hand? I'll play it for you. You go ahead if you want to."

Kolazoff laughed, acceded to the sailor's request, and then turned to Craig.

"Same number? I mean—the person?"

"Yes—same number."

"Good. You'll excuse me, won't you?"

Graham stood watching the man appraisingly. Something about the Russian seemed to fascinate him. He noted Kolazoff's every movement while he snatched his coat and hat from a hook on the wall and, with a lithe motion of muscles under perfect control, threw back the heavy bolts of the door with his own hands.

"Chain lightning and as straight as they make 'em," he murmured as the man disappeared into the outer room. Then to Maitland, "Let us sit into the game for a while. The Captain'll want to play his hand out at any rate."

They moved forward to the table. There were some vacant chairs, from which they appropriated two and waited for cards in the next deal. Craig glanced with interest at the players about him. A lean youth, wearing a red vest and flashy jewellery, held a cigar in his mouth at a rakish angle. Two or three rough-clad, bearded fellows bore the unmistakable stamp of the woods and the hills. Then, as he surreptitiously studied his companions about the board, he noticed a woman whose eyes were searching him above the cards which she held before her face. Her slim, white hand arrested his attention by reason of its beauty. It had no need of enhancement by the burden of costly rings which glittered in the lamp-light. The hand was sufficient in itself. However, it was the marvel of her hair that caught and held him.

In it was the passion of a sunset—molten gold caught and looped in shining strands filled with brown woodland shadows and soft hints of soothing darkness. Maitland stared and then, inwardly, smiled at himself. Hair of that kind was supplied by the trade. However, he permitted some of his smile to appear outwardly. The hand which held the cards was lowered and he caught the answering curve of her lips. Then the dealer called to him.

From that moment the game became to Maitland a secondary consideration which called only for mechanical effort upon his part. His thoughts ran through rhythmic mazes, guided by the thread of the card play. Only the voice of the dealer and the replies of the others kept him aware of time and place. "Pass ... her eyes are coloured to match her hair ... no—her hair is coloured to match her eyes ... I'll stay ... they are actually red and brown with glinting golden flakes in their depths.... Hit me! ... no—it isn't the paint and powder ... her features are exquisite, and look at her hand and arm ... she's only a kiddie.... Come again! ... slim as a young birch-tree ... the curve from the neck ... honey-coloured buds ... it was Browning said that, wasn't it? ... Black-jack! ... I wonder how tall she is ... that shade of green silk ... fire and water ... that's it ... sunset caught in a wave ... Neptune's daughter ... Bride of the Sea ... Venus ... no—Venus was stout ... too maternal...." Thoughts and emotions were mingled in an arabesque of Oriental opulence.

The scraping of a chair against the floor near Maitland roused him to a realisation that there were others in the universe besides himself and the girl. Captain Hardy's voice rang out, big and with the tang of a sea-breeze in its sharpness.

"Come on, Graham! Let's get busy. Can't stay here all night!"

The three men rose from their seats at the table. The girl stood with them. From the back of her chair she picked up an opera-cloak, a silvery thing trimmed with black fur, and adjusted it over her shoulders. When they moved to the door and waited for a Chinaman who released the fastenings, she was directly behind them and passed with them into the outer room. Graham glanced backward over his shoulders and, as he did so, he raised his eyebrows. In another few moments, all four stood on the sidewalk at the entrance to the alley.

Captain Hardy extended his hand to Maitland. "Good night," he said, in a hearty voice. "Glad to have met you. You'll excuse us. We have a date with a lady."

Graham, a suppressed twinkle in his eyes, swung out into the crowded street with his comrade. When they had disappeared from view, Craig turned to the girl, who stood silently in the shadows behind him. He caught a faint fragrance of lilacs.

"Well, I think I'll go home," he said. "Unless you would like to go down to the Savoy for a bite to eat——"

Her voice startled him. It was absolutely the sort which he had always imagined as belonging to her exotic type of beauty.

"I would rather go home, too."

He hesitated. "If I may"—he knew that he was blushing and despised himself for it—"I'll see you home. Where ... how far ... I mean, where do you live?"

The girl's head was suddenly bent forward so that he could not see her eyes. There was nothing of the street—only wistfulness in her answer.

"Wherever you live—if you want me."

CHAPTER XV

A HAVEN AND A GATHERING STORM

"I am sorry."

Craig Maitland's fingers took a tighter grip upon the telephone receiver which he was holding to his ear.

"Yes. Yes. Oh, I haven't any excuse. None at all, Tacey."

He tapped nervously with, his free hand upon the side of the telephone.

"Really—I did not know things were as bad as that. Sure. I'll be with you this morning. Absolutely."

Gently he replaced the receiver upon its hook and, with jaw firmly set and knitted brow, he stepped from the narrow hallway of his apartment to the living-room. In a wicker chair near the window sat the embodied reason for his absence from the office of *The Beacon*. The sunlight was making a golden aureole of her hair. Incidentally, Maitland had discovered that beauty parlours were not responsible for its lure. A black silk kimono, edged with a plain band of green —yes, she knew what to wear! Stella Shannon was an artist in colour as well as in the more intimate matters of life. Regrets? He had none. Like a sparkling fountain she had reclaimed the desert places of his being. He was warm and human now, whereas, only a few short days before this, he had been a machine driven by a will.

When she heard his footstep upon the carpet behind her, the girl stretched her arms upward. He paused, leaning forward to place both of his hands in hers. She drew his head down until it rested against her cheek.

"What is it, dear? Trouble?"

Maitland released her hands and drew up a chair.

"I know what you are going to say, Stella."

"Do you?"

"Yes. I should have been at work every day during the past week."

She looked at him anxiously. "I was scared to say anything," she said. Her hand slipped into his. "Maybe I was too happy to remember much about other things."

"I asked for a holiday," Maitland assured her. "But my boss has found out that I am in town, and he needs me.

There's a big scrap on and I should be in it. When I tell him that I am married, he'll be all right. He's all heart. He will understand."

For a moment or two the girl looked out over the roof-tops to the sky beyond them. When she turned to him there was a suspicion of moisture upon her eyelashes.

"Maybe he will," she murmured.

Craig threw an arm about her shoulders. "Not another word, little girl. The past is dead as far as I am concerned—if that is what you mean. Nobody else matters ... only you and I."

With a quick movement her lips touched his fingertips. "You've got that wrong, dearest. It is only you that matters."

She rose from her chair and assumed a business-like air while she glanced archly at him.

"Coffee or cocoa?"

Some few minutes later he heard her humming happily in his kitchenette while she prepared breakfast. Maitland lighted a cigarette and picked up a copy of *The Literary Digest*. Very perfunctorily he turned over the pages. At this instant of time world events seemed of minor import.

Although she was happy, Stella Shannon's mind was not free from care. Life had speeded up its vibrations in her short career until, at twenty-five, she had acquired the experience of a woman of the world. Her knowledge of men and women had not been procured from textbooks on the subject of sex psychology. Through it all—ever since she had run away from a drunken stepfather on a "hard-scrabble" farm, to make her own way in the city—she had preserved her soul inviolate. Her energy had been too superabundant, her emotional life too rich and keen, to permit her to remain within the boundaries set by convention. She was not afraid of the things which women usually fear. After desultory attempts at common drudgery, a gambler's instinct—an impulse to live dangerously—had drawn her into the underworld. There she had played poker and the ponies with a luck which was the despair and envy of professionals who had devoted years to the pursuit of "easy money." Drink, dope, or mere sensual gratification held no lure for her. Clothes—the appurtenances of wealth which enabled her to keep her body beautifully groomed—these were her carnal gods. Power—a woman's prerogative in matters of affection—this had served as an outlet for a devotional nature which demanded that love and worship be one. Some day—such had been her dream—she would meet her man, and then life would be richer for her surrender.

She had met him at the moment when his heart was filled with a great hunger for another woman. She had taken him as ruthlessly as a huntress, using the ancient weapons of her sex. What many good women do not know about the most important business of life was to her instinctive and, in addition to her femininity, she possessed a fund of information learned from her sisters who lived luxuriously because they studied and knew the needs of men. Craig, to his dying day, would never know of the battle which had been fought in her heart when, completely in her power, he had insisted upon an immediate marriage. She loved. Without a moment's hesitation she would have given him up for his own sake, and would have been content to preserve the memory of their hours together as her most precious possession. Yet, facing the stern facts of life and the inevitable reactions which might embarrass him, she had yielded to his boyish impulse.

Apparently she had acted in a selfish manner. In reality she was partially guided by a maternal instinct which would, at the cost of her own life, protect her boy amongst pitfalls of which he was ignorant. Her greater worldly wisdom might be of service to him in his career. However, aside from this feminine trait, she had a secret which justified her action. This she kept in the recesses of her own heart. It was this hidden thing which put the song upon her lips while her hands flew busily among dishes and silverware at the breakfast-table.

The tempting aroma of coffee—a rich voice that held the suggestion of a caress—these together called Craig from his reverie by the window. He rose to his feet with a feeling of abounding happiness and strength. Life was a glorious adventure. It held no fears for him nor any obstacles which his manhood could not meet and conquer. At the door of their tiny breakfast-room, he put his arms about her and, for an instant, allowed the fragrance of her hair to possess him utterly. Its luxuriant folds were to him a fulfilment of all his hunger for the intangible allurement of womanhood. Something

within him—incomplete and ever restless—had always desired to take and absorb this mystery which separated the other sex from his own. More than the soft warmth of her body, this wealth of red-gold hair met the unsatisfied want in his being.

"I have made a discovery," he announced when he took his seat at the table and allowed his glance to wander over the white linen and the dainty touches given to the meal by her hands.

"Yes?"

"I thought that I was not domestic. A home never had an appeal for me. Now——"

"You are not domestic, dear boy. You never will be."

Maitland looked his surprise. Her tone was decisive.

"So certain," he smiled. "Why?"

She patted his hand. He was too much infatuated to note the maternal in her which took his youth for granted.

"Oh ... I know men," she replied.

Catching the shadow flashing across his face, she added, "At least, I know one man because my eyes are wide open now. Before—well, I only thought that I knew."

Still unaware that his inmost thoughts were an open book to this girl, he held her away from him tenderly after he had donned his overcoat preparatory to going out. Looking deeply into her eyes, he repeated the words which all women love to hear.

When the door closed behind him, Stella Shannon crossed to the window overlooking the city and the gleaming waters of the harbour. With her hands tightly clenched before her, she murmured, "He does not love me. He never will, but—he needs me."

As Craig boarded a street-car which would take him near the office of *The Beacon*, it seemed to him that he was entering a world mysteriously rejuvenated. It was a warm, bright world that welcomed him with outstretched arms. Everyone about him appeared to be in abounding spirits, eager, tensely interested in vital things. Not a shade of remembrance dimmed the plenitude of his present, and from no recesses of his consciousness did there rise a thought of Jocelyn Paget to reprove his unfaithfulness to a cherished ideal. With the vision of her City Beautiful had come again the desolating pain of a loneliness that was too great to bear. While he writhed in his agony of separateness, there arrived a woman who was waiting to fill the empty places in his heart. He drank the cup which the gods held to his lips and was refreshed. Thirst was quenched and, with it, the cause.

When he passed through the doorway of the newspaper plant, Madge Brett's bright smile was answered by a cheery greeting. Only when he opened the door to the inner office, and met Tacey's eyes, did he realise that all was not sunshine in the universe of men. The Old Man's face was flushed, while his square jaws were set in a line of desperate determination. He looked reproachfully at Maitland over a pile of papers and correspondence. The young man held out his hand.

"Congratulate me, Tacey. I'm married."

"You're what? Look here, this ain't the first of April. What are yuh springin'?" He glared belligerently at Craig, who stood with outstretched arm.

"I mean it," said Maitland quietly. "No smaller reason could have kept me away from work. I know you needed help and I know how you felt about it. I'm hungry to buckle down to the toughest job you can give me. Call it square?"

Tacey rose clumsily, with a noisy shuffling of his arm-chair. His rough, hairy hand shot forward. "There, darn yer

young hide, shake! Don't expect a steady old plug like me to follow yer sky-rocketing. That's about the way I thought ye'd do it some day. Who is the lady, if it's a fair question?"

"We'll talk about me later, if you don't mind." He glanced at the litter of letters and telegrams before his chief. "Now—what's the trouble?"

"Close the door, Maitland. Thanks."

The air was poisonous—blue with tobacco fumes, but Craig complied with the order. He drew up a chair and faced the Old Man across the table.

"This is the biggest thing we've ever been up against," Tacey declared, his voice tense with excitement. "I'm tellin' yuh! The I.W.W. are aimin' at something like a 'massen' strike this time, all right. They're tryin' to tie up all the transportation and shippin'. There's ten thousand of 'em on the way here now, and all the jails from here to Winnipeg are full up with 'em. The Mounties are comin' from the east to-morrow. There'll be hell poppin'. Get me?"

Craig's dream world, sparkling with sunlight, vanished. In its place the Iron Age substituted harsh realities. There were people who hungered for food; homeless waifs with no shelter but pitiless skies; ragged children in a land where dogs were paraded in warm blankets and ribbons, and where cats basked upon silken cushions. The submerged classes were a rising wave, fraught with the silent sufferings of countless generations and dimly, like half-awakened Titans, they were beginning to feel their own strength. Outside of the building, the grinding wheels of the trolley-cars and the roar of the city traffic seemed a din created to drown the cries of the victims who perished beneath the Juggernaut of civilisation.

The young man spoke sharply. "Good heavens! Why didn't you let me know? Pardon me—you couldn't. I didn't even look at a newspaper. What a shame! Left you to face it. Look, Tacey! It may sound queer. Why didn't we know about this weeks ago? Not a hint, was there?"

"No," answered the Old Man, "not a hint. You see," he said, with a suggestion of pathos, "they don't trust their best friends—not yet. I'm not in on everything. The Reds think I go in too strong for political action. I believe that Bud Powers is behind this move as far as this town goes. He's comin' in to see me this mornin'."

"He is, eh?" Craig's fingers drummed nervously upon the table. "Well, you know where I stand. We have built the beginnings of a political party here that, in time, will send its members to Parliament to fight the workers' battle. That is my line of action, too. These clashes with Money get us nowhere, and the I.W.W. crowd is not the one that suffers. Those stiffs have nothing to lose." The young man shifted suddenly in his chair. "Where's the Laird? Seen anything of him?"

"I have not," admitted Tacey. "At least, not this week. He came in last Saturday lookin' for you. Huh! I said you had gone off for a rest. I don't know the man very well. Do you? I've heard the bunch up in Squamish talkin' about him. Looked as if he'd be a bad one to tackle if riled, and he sure seemed to be upset about something or 'nother. You haven't been crossin' his game, I hope."

"He put me on to where to find Kolazoff," said Maitland slowly, "and he's white clean through. I have reason to know that he hates Powers."

"The dickens you say! I'd certainly have handed him a cigar if I'd known. Might as well tell yuh, there's been another wedding in my family. Saw Mrs. Kolazoff when yuh came in, didn't yuh?"

Craig gasped. Then he smiled at the Old Man, who returned his look with a quiet chuckle.

"No, no, my boy! You're not any worse than the rest of 'em. I'm the only single wheel in this machine now. Hanged if I don't think it's my turn to go crazy. I'm fed up with work. Need a holiday."

He grinned mischievously, while Maitland felt the warm blood flushing his face. The younger man felt a warm glow of affection for his chief at that moment. Rugged as a bit of granite, stern and uncompromising in his devotion to humanity, his driving will was tempered by a great kindliness and was rendered strong by loneliness which sought refuge

in incessant action. The Old Man, he remembered, had slept, homeless and penniless, under the hall wherein he had first discovered his power as an orator. The "masses" had pennies for beer, but very little to spare for those who sacrificed comfort to bring them a message of hope and freedom. It was indeed a long hard road which this man had chosen for himself. Craig leaned towards him and placed a hand upon his coat-sleeve.

"Now, what would you like me to do?" he asked.

"Scout around and get a line on what is doing. The longshoremen are talking of going out first—then the teamsters. I'm goin' to slam this proposed strike in my editorial to-morrow and I'm goin' to hit it hard." While his companion rose and reached for his hat, he added, "Be sure to be in about noon. Powers will be here then. We might as well have it out with him."

Glad to be active once more—a part of the big movement—Craig Maitland swung out of the office with a jaunty step. He leaned over the railing about Miss Brett's desk and whispered, "I wish you much joy," in a low voice. A quick flash from her black eyes, just the hint of moisture in them, told him that she was his comrade still—a friend upon whom he could depend. He did not wait for her to speak, but strode through the front entrance without looking back.

He spent the next few hours in visiting the offices of the various unions, in looking up the walking delegates whom he knew, in interviewing his old friends among the reporters on the daily newspapers, and in dodging about the saloons and billiard-rooms on the waterfront. A motley army of transients thronged the drinking-places and the streets before the cheaper hotels and rooming-houses. The legions of the unemployed, the hoboes, "knights of the rail," were gathering in from south and east and, among the sullen-browed mob in overalls and nondescript second-hand clothing, blue-coated policemen walked quietly, vigilant and ready to take in charge those whose tongues grew too violent or demonstrative. Down Hastings Street he caught the glint of sunlight upon the gold braid and scarlet tunics of the North-West Mounted Police. A newly-arrived troop of them passed uptown on the way from the Canadian Pacific Railway depot to the barracks.

He found it difficult to get definite news, but everywhere there was suppressed excitement, threats open or veiled, a sense of impending trouble. The workers, as well as the hosts who eschewed "wage slavery," seemed to be convinced that the great day was at hand when they would strike a blow which would awaken the authorities to a realisation of the power of Labour. There did not seem to be specific grievances beyond those ordinarily alleged: of agreements broken by employers, long hours, and insufficient wages; but there was, nevertheless, a new note in the attitude of the rank and file. The idea of industrial action—the "massen" strike—pounded into them by the disciples of the German Socialists of the Bebel school had done its work. To paralyse the wheels of industry, to tie up the transportation system of a nation, was a big dream, and would be a satisfactory demonstration of inherent power. Even "sabotage," the wilful destruction of property, seemed justice to minds inflamed by the slogans of a class warfare.

Down Granville Street, which sloped gently to the waterfront, Maitland caught the gleam of sunshine on sparkling blue waves and, beyond the tangled masts and smoke-stacks of the shipping, he could see the green expanse of the foothills rising to heights beneath a cloudless sky. Serenity and beauty there. Here, at his hand, where man had changed the unbroken peace of the wilderness to a noisy modern Babel, there were ugliness, hatred, and the threat of tragedy.

He dashed into a drug-store, telephoned to Stella to let her know that he would be late for lunch, and then, with a strange foreboding, he walked at a leisurely pace in the direction of *The Beacon*. When he entered the plant, he found that the printers had gone for their midday meal. Madge was not in her place. However, a glance towards Tacey's office showed him the top of a soft black hat through the dusty panes which admitted light to the sanctum. He knew that Powers was there. When he tapped lightly upon the glass panels of the door, he could hear Tacey pushing his way between chairs and the desk.

Presently the Old Man's face confronted him, while a cloud of tobacco smoke swirled out over his head. "Come in." The chief jerked his thumb towards the man seated at the table. "You know this gentleman. No need to introduce yuh."

Bud's bulk was squeezed into an office chair, so that he seemed wedged between the table and the wooden partition behind him. He was unshaven, his black and grey hair running in straggly lines down the coarse red skin of his neck to mingle with the thicker growth upon his chest. His hat-brim shaded his eyes, which were bloodshot as though he were

recovering from a prolonged debauch. He looked up, his lips twisted into the semblance of a smile, when Craig entered.

"Yer just in time, Mr. Maitland. Me and the Old Man's been havin' a little argyment. Mebbe you kin shoot some horse sense into him." Powers paid no attention to the scowl upon Tacey's face, and continued, "I want him to come out strong fer this strike. See! We're supportin' this paper, and it's a mighty queer thing if it ain't got a good word for us right now when we need it."

Tacey's fist landed upon the table with a resounding thump. "Bunk! Bunk, I say! This paper's run for the worker first, last, and all the time. But—I'm runnin' it and it don't belong to the I.W.W.—not by a jugful!"

"Yer runnin' it, eh?" There was a nasty sneer in Powers' voice which was intended to irritate. "Mebbe you'll have to run it with the capitalists fer subscribers, if yuh keep on. We're not goin' to stand fer no double-crossin'."

If the man had not been drinking it is hardly probable that he would have dared this insinuation before the old lion of the Labour Party. Its effect was startling. Before Craig could interfere, Tacey picked up a massive iron inkstand near to his hand and hurled it at the head of the speaker. A quick movement of Powers' head saved him, while the missile crashed through the glass behind him and landed upon the floor of the printing-shop. With an oath, Bud struggled to his feet. Maitland sprang forward to seize his hand, which had swung backward to his hip pocket. Just then a quiet voice sounded from the doorway beside them:

"Well! Well! Gentlemen, I am sorry to interrupt, but——"

No ordinary force could have arrested the animal in Bud Powers in that instant. Yet, with his hands grasping the table before him, he stood silently gazing at the Laird, whose tall spare figure leaned carelessly against the half-opened door. In one hand Graham held a cigarette delicately poised between his fingers, while the other hand was concealed in the pocket of his grey tweed jacket. His eyes, cold points of light, scintillant as steel, held the big lumberman helpless as a child.

"I've been looking for you, Powers."

"Yuh have, eh? Well, I reckon I'm here."

Graham's next words were uttered very slowly, but were tempered by a deadly hardness. "I want to ask you a question ... but not right now. It'll wait. Meantime, you've a chance to square yourself. You know what I mean."

Powers' face twitched, then settled into a scowl of hatred.

The Laird continued, "If these gentlemen are willing, I would like a word alone with them."

Tacey fairly spluttered in his haste to say, "You bet your life, I'm through talkin' to Mr. Powers. Got no more business with him nor his kind. What's more, I'm goin' to run my own paper, while it's mine, in the interests of every son-of-a-gun that's earnin' his salt and eatin' dirt. See!"

While Bud rose and passed out, Graham stepped back a pace or two beyond arm's reach.

Pausing an instant, while he glared at the three men, Powers snarled, "Yuh asked fer trouble. By the gods of war, yer to blame if yuh get it. Don't fergit that."

There was silence. The Laird arched an eyebrow. A moment went by before the door to the street banged behind the man from the Squamish. Tacey rose ponderously and held out one hand to Graham while the other reached towards a pile of correspondence at his side.

"Shake. I don't know yer game, but yuh certainly got my good wishes. Glad to see yuh, Mr. Graham."

He turned his attention to the letters which he had picked up, and rapidly ran through them, jerking forth a telegram, which he laid upon the table before the two men. Maitland, lifting it, read:

"Keep watch on B.P. Has record down here. Know him now.

"HEWLETT YOUNG."

The young man glanced at his chief and then handed the wire to the Laird, whose brows contracted momentarily in a look of bewilderment. Then a smile broke out, banishing the sternness from his face.

"Good to see that someone else has his number," he said.

CHAPTER XVI

THE RED FLOWER OF PASSION

A light rain had swept the dust from the greensward below Dr. Perley's office-windows. In the heart of the city, he was fortunately placed where his eye, turned from human suffering, could rest upon trees, grass, and flowers in the square at the junction of two main thoroughfares. For the moment he had commandeered a breathing-space for himself. In reply to the nurse who announced that his waiting-room was crowded, he had said that his head was aching and that he must not be disturbed for the next half-hour. Stout of form and sunny-tempered, he was nevertheless human, so that the ailing and depressed mortals who sought his help left him arid at times—a quivering bundle of tired nerves. He stood before his window, hands locked behind his back, while the sunlight of the late afternoon drove the shadows from beneath his kindly blue eyes and lent stray gleams to the mass of silvery hair that seemed to suggest the artist rather than the man of science.

"Miss Shannon says that she cannot wait, doctor. Will you see her?"

The nurse had opened his door quietly and her voice was apologetic.

"Miss Shannon?" The doctor spoke querulously. "No—well—yes. Miss Stella Shannon, is it? Show her in, please."

Turning his back to the outer office, his fingers beat impatiently upon the casing of the window. The frown which contracted his brow disappeared when he faced his patient. The doctor was not indifferent to women, although hundreds of them made him the repository of their intimate confidences. However, few men could resist the subtle lure of Stella Shannon's personality. Many women disliked her instinctively. She gave them a sense of insecurity which threatened their tenure of certain property rights in the male sex; but men turned to her as to a promise and hope that life sometimes fulfilled dreams and desires. She was a red passion-flower, outblown from the heart of life, whose fragrance stirred strange winds in the unfilled spaces in men's hearts.

A sealskin coat enhanced the hint of golden-bronze hair beneath her jaunty street hat. A breath, caressing and warm, fraught with a suggestion of lilacs, filled the office as she unloosened her wraps and drew off her gloves.

"I hope that I am not intruding, doctor. I have only a short time to spend away from home to-day. There is a special reason for wanting your verdict, now. Will you spare me a moment?"

The sunshine broke from behind grey clouds and flooded the little room. A sparrow chirped gaily on the stone sill without the window. These other women who had thronged his office earlier in the day—sheltered and yet nursing their petty ailments—stagnant with the lethargy born of desuetude—these, with their repressions and evasions and pretence—how could they be compared with this woman whose voice was filled with the joy of living while she stood in the

shadow of ...

"Yes. Yes. Certainly, Miss Shannon." He looked at her quizzically, a smile upon his lips. "I believe that I may have to reverse my last report." Then, more gravely, "Been following orders?"

"As usual, I have disregarded all of them ... with one exception."

"Yes. What was that?"

"I have been very happy."

There was laughter in the eyes which looked at the doctor from under long, curved lashes. He stood regarding her with paternal solicitude. His composure, resulting from many years in which he had been father-confessor to her sex, was being ruthlessly swept aside by this girl. She had puzzled him, inspired him and, at times, stimulated him to a renewed belief in life. Now she was enjoying his bewilderment.

"Yes. Y-e-s." The doctor, toying with a paper-knife on his desk, spoke doubtfully, as if asking for confirmation of her assertion. Happiness, he seemed to imply, was a rare enough thing in these days—probably a fiction of the youthful imagination at best. Yet, behind him, the sparrow upon his window-sill chirped joyfully and—there was the sunshine, that illumined the walls of his office and touched a red-gold tress of hair until it shone like a bit of living fire.

"I'm married, you know," she said.

"Married! Good God! Miss Shannon—why—don't you know...?" His voice trailed off into a murmur of amazement. Then a smile irradiated his face. "Well," said the doctor, extending his hand, "I wish you much joy. Who is the lucky man?"

"Oh, you need not offer me a chair! I'll just take one, thank you. Your old elevator has broken down and I walked up five floors. Thanks, and all that. I knew you would be surprised, old dear, and sympathetic, as usual. Now, will you be my doctor? How long have I got to live?"

"Well, I'll be——"

"No, you won't. You'll just give me an examination, take my money, and tell me the truth without flinching." Her voice was gentle, and had in it just the hint of coquetry which seemed part of her as inevitably as her courage and vivacity. The doctor had once said that the tones of it "would make a theorem in geometry suggest roses and moonlight."

"Certainly, certainly, Miss Shannon. I will do as you wish in the matter, even to the point of telling you the truth about yourself. You are marvellous, if I may be permitted to say so—wonderful. I am your friend. I shall not conceal anything from you, but I do hope that I may have to reverse my former judgment. Now—of course"—he paused—"you have every reason to live—to want to live."

The girl laid her hand upon the sleeve of the doctor's coat. He took it into his own, and she let it lie there while she looked up at him gratefully. All trace of flippancy had disappeared from her manner.

"You will understand," she said earnestly. "You have been a dear and a good friend to me. Doctor, I do not want to live—beyond the time you set for me. Listen! No—no—please! You must hear me. I love the man to whom I am married. It may be that I did wrong. Maybe I shouldn't have married him, but it seemed the only way to play the game—to protect him. You've got to take a chance—at least that's my way of looking at things. Anyway, I shall not tie him down long. You know, doctor, it can only be for a few months at the most, I can help him mightily to get upon his feet—to get started on the right road. But I do not want him to regret—to ever discover that I am just a passing infatuation—something which has satisfied a temporary need. Oh, I know men and I know life! I have paid the price and I know. I don't think less of them because I know them. No, I don't mean that, but I do know the unsatisfied hunger at the hearts of most of them, the unrest and the longing for love and understanding. They need affection more than women do, I think, and yet they are so helpless and so dumb—always searching and never finding—passing from one disillusion to another. No wonder that they become hard—hard and cruel, sometimes. Look, old dear, I want this one to be happy in his dream, and I don't want

him ever to wake up. I'll be gone before he finds out. Do you understand?"

A delicate aroma, as of flowers about to fall after having spent their wealth on the summer air, seemed to emanate from the woman who leaned towards him, her great brown eyes filled with a beseeching light. She was the richness of earth, its prodigal life, whose only law was to give of its plenitude and to grow by giving. There were no repressions in her, no reserve, no smallness that would withhold or possess.

Tears stood in the doctor's eyes. Brusquely, to hide his emotion, he patted her hand in a quick, paternal caress and, pushing back a chair behind him, he stepped towards an adjustable table which occupied one corner of his office.

"I have nothing to say. I shall ask no questions. No advice, this time. You know best, dear girl. Come along then. Let us have the examination."

Twenty minutes passed. Doctor Perley dismissed his patient through his private door leading to the lobby of the building. Turning back into his room, he mechanically arranged papers upon his desk, ramming a book upon *The New Psychology* into a pigeon-hole, and sweeping aside the litter of advertisements and correspondence. "God, what a woman! What a woman!" he muttered. Then he moved quickly to the inner door and called to his nurse. She started in surprise at the clear, ringing voice of the man who had complained of weariness.

Outside the rain had ceased, giving way to a pervasive warmth of sunshine. The air seemed clear as the surface of an untainted spring in which were reflected the sharp, clean-cut outlines of tree and shrub, the emerald green of grass-plot and the steaming greys and browns of the rapidly drying pavement.

Stella shook off the last remnant of the depression she always felt when she visited a doctor's office or a hospital. She felt at one with the buoyant spirit of a world newly bathed by sun and rain. Her feet did not feel the sidewalk beneath her. Wings, invisible but strong and vibrant, were impelling her forward. As she passed, men turned to look at her. Women glanced at her with veiled curiosity often mingled with disapproval. Exuberant life was not entirely welcomed by the throng which conformed and sweated and smothered youth under a cloak of pretence. Following the instinct which prompts the hand to capture and crush a butterfly, the world regarded this richly clad, beautiful girl as something to be placed under restraint or annihilated so that humanity might not be reminded that it had been ejected from Eden.

Stella turned from Hastings into Granville Street and, when she did so, she caught sight of a tall, slim figure standing in the entrance to one of the stores. Eyelids were lowered to hide the light in her eyes as she quickened her footsteps. Craig did not need to tell her that he had been waiting for her. His greeting conveyed the ancient message.

"Good news, dear. I'm off for the afternoon."

"Glorious!"

"Let's get away from the streets. What do you say?"

In reply she linked her arm through his and pulled him towards the kerb. "Come on! We'll take the first car—anywhere! Let us get away—as far as we can."

"As far as we can"—yes, that expressed something within him. Craig sank happily into the seat beside Stella. With her at his side, he felt that escape was possible—escape from the self that was bent and twisted and tortured by contact with crowds who did not know and did not care about the things which really mattered. Like all who have latent within them the divine unrest, this man had always felt the devastating loneliness of those who demand more than civilisation can give. The inanities of parlours, the vacuity of lives filled by inanimate things, the complacence of the well-fed and comfortable, the inertia of those who were untroubled by dreams and those whose desires were feeble or non-existent—the trivialities which satisfied the majority of men—whipped him into madness. So it happened that work became for him a saviour who redeemed him from crime or insanity. But ever at his heart, when bodily fatigue failed to numb sensibility, he felt the gnawing pain of a longing for comradeship and the fullness of life. One had come and had gone. Weeks of unremitting, drugging toil—then another had arrived. She was beside him now. Did she really understand? Her face was turned away from him. Between her fur collar and hat-brim there was the glint of sunlight upon chestnut-red

hair. Could anyone ever really understand? There, at least, was no longer the necessity for beating his passion into subjection by over-work. His surplus of affection, of desire to bestow, to cherish, to protect, was not any longer a torturing demon but an archangel who gave royally and radiantly, and in his giving he grew stronger and, in some mysterious manner, came nearer to the heart of all life.

With a jerk the car stopped at the end of the line, and alighting, they walked together up a deserted street bordered with sparsely set cottages. Most of the houses were wooden shacks in tiny plots carved out of the wilderness of fir and bracken. Charred stumps, piles of firewood, brush-piles over which bramble and trailing creepers had cast a robe of beauty, surrounded these humble homes, which were crude symbols of industry and patience and human affection. Two in one—and the third—the eternal triangle—Man, Woman, and Child—upon which had been builded all cities and nations from the beginning of time! The wild and desolate places, without and within the soul, had been often tamed in the name of this Trinity. A wistful look came into the girl's brown eyes as she stopped to look at a little red-roofed nest embowered in green and touched with colour where window-boxes bore a profusion of flowers.

"Just the right size. I would not give the finest house in the West End in exchange for this. Beauty doesn't need space. It transcends it. It is. It's like love."

"You are right, as usual, dearest," assented Craig. "Just two can be a universe."

Where the street ended, they entered a path almost overgrown by elder bushes and salal, and presently emerged upon a height of land overlooking the harbour and the sloping mountain ridges north of the inlet. The sun, nearing the horizon, was throwing long, level rays directly upon the forest-clad foothills across the water. There, from a sinuous shore-line, the northern barrier range swept upward, cut by shadowy ravines and watercourses, to the summits which were now bare of the snow which crowned them in the winter months. Clumps of vine-maple were scattered through the dark verdure of the lower spurs and plateaux. These, in the sunlight, glittered like a shower of rubies scattered by some lavish hand which sowed beauty for some far-off divine harvest in the years to come. The shimmering levels where the ships lay at rest, the trailing clouds of smoke above the town, which seemed distant and dream-like in the hazy autumn air, the variegated wonder of line and colouring in shore and mountain, all conspired to prevent words from utterance. Silently, as they stood, the girl's hand found Craig's and rested in it.

"It is wonderful, is it not," she whispered, "and more wonderful that we can share it?"

Carefully he spread a newspaper upon a grey rounded shoulder of rock which offered a convenient seat, and, when Stella was comfortable, he stretched himself at full length upon the grass at her feet.

"God, it is good to get away from people and problems at times. That maelstrom down there"—his gesture indicated the smoke wreaths behind them—"draws one into its depths. One can't help feeling the groping of the hands in the swirl of it all, and then comes the call to work—to do one's share—to lighten the burden."

"Yes. I suppose that you can't resist. You are built that way." The girl placed a hand upon his head, letting her fingers toy with a wave of hair. "I am different, I know. It doesn't seem worth while to me. Experience—my experience with men has made me very kind to animals. They, at least, don't prate about their virtues. Besides, they are clean, and they don't need manners or clothes to hide their shortcomings."

Maitland glanced up at her in surprise. "You spoke bitterly then, dear. That is not like you. Let us forget our disappointments for a while."

"I don't want to think, boy, of mine. I very seldom do. I'd rather live."

Looking at the soft colour which glowed in her cheeks and into the hot amber depths of her eyes, he believed her last statement utterly. He was content to listen while she continued hesitatingly, "Oh, I am a dreamer, too. I have had visions lately when I have seen you come in pale and worried—when you have told me about your plans to make people happier—to build a new world. But you would say that my dreams have been selfish."

"Selfish, Stella! I couldn't think that."

"Oh, you don't know me," she replied. "I want to take you away—out of it all—away somewhere—to a place where you can breathe and grow as the trees do. There is more inside of you—more that you have not found—than in all the social commonwealths which you build in your imagination. Look!" She opened a little handbag which lay on the turf at her side and, from a maze of manicuring tools, powderpuffs, and weapons of Eve's devising, she produced a scrap of writing-paper carefully folded together. Stella spread it out upon her knees and then handed it to her companion.

"Who wrote that?" she demanded.

Craig looked embarrassed. Then a smile spread over his face.

"Guilty!" he laughed. "I did it. These things keep chiming in my ears and, to get rid of them, I resort to pencil and paper. Nothing to it!"

"Craig Maitland, look up here—at me."

The man looked up. He was perplexed by her earnestness.

"I have one other love besides you in this wide world, boy," the girl resumed, "and that is poetry. When I was hardly out of short clothes, I wrote reams of verse and I read everything that held a dream in words. Then life took me and crushed the song in my heart. For a long time there was nothing in me that danced or rippled in tune to sunshine or blue skies—until I met you. Then, it all came again—without power to find words to express itself. Why, that's my poem, Craig! My heart sang that. You caught the tune and wrote words for it. It is poetry, I tell you. It is the song of my flesh when you touched it and changed it until it was thrilling with the big harmony of life and love."

Frank amazement was in the look which he directed towards Stella. He leaned upon his elbow, turning so that he could see her more fully. This girl of the reckless underworld, where thought was lost in desire, he had known as a splendid woman who loved with a primitive warmth that was tropical in its pent-up power, but he had not associated her with the world of literature or culture. Yet, her fineness, her quick perception of beauty, her clearly cut diction—all were there—had been apparent. Had he been so enamoured of the superb body that he had missed the soul within it?

"I know it's not half bad," he stammered, "but I'm too busy with other things to bother much with verse. It relieves my feelings—that is all. I have other things to do."

Impulsively, the girl kissed him. "You have so much to waste that you throw it away," she chided. "Oh, you are a boy! Now, don't mind. I am older in lots of ways. Women always are. Do you understand why I want you away from all this plotting and conspiring? All your plans will fail and only the dream will remain, and others will have to dream it again and again until, at last—in the centuries ahead of us—it may come true."

Craig drew a long breath while he looked out over the waters of the inlet. The revelation dawned slowly upon him. This woman, whom he loved because of her intoxicating beauty, was a Mind—a Soul that had gone through to the other side of the barriers lying across his pathway and now had returned to him with a message! It seemed incredible. So absorbed had he been in the immediate work which lay close to his hand, his lips quaffing the cup which soothed his fever and his pain, that he had speculated little about what should come after—if the social revolution should prove to be an illusion. No—he could not fail nor could the thousands who worked with him for the coming of the New Order! It was the next step in evolution. Science had proved that—history proved it. Economics were as certain as mathematics. The girl was a wonder. What a mate! But she had not studied the social problem. What did she know of the larger issues confronting statesmen and leaders of thought? He was ashamed that he had been startled by a sudden sense of foreboding.

He rose to his feet and stood over her as she sat with eyes bent upon the ground—silent now that she had unburdened her mind. A warm glow of affection pervaded every atom of his body. He felt drawn to her as a plant toward the sun. Even in her silks and velvets she did not seem out of place when close to earth. There was, in her, more than the lure of the scented dusk in hot-houses of desire where love is forced to strange blossomings. Craig sat beside her and clasped the hand which lay in her lap.

"Look, dearest," he said. "Do you know what my work means to me? It will not fail. From the beginning of things, men have held this vision of brotherhood. It is bound to come. The toiling millions are awakening. They have been

forced to think by privation and misery and the horrors of a commercial age. You, who love me, would not want me to desert my place. Come now, would you?"

Stella gripped his hand tightly. "No—no—I did not mean that. But I am afraid at times. I feel that these people you are trying to help do not understand you. They are ... well—I know them at their worst—when the mask is off. I would rather face savages in a jungle than some of these men when the devils in them are loosed. Craig, there are other things you can do. That poem tells the story. I feel that you could do great things if—the right woman loved you."

"Stella!" He forced her to look up into his eyes. "What do you mean? You know that there is no one but you. You know how much you mean to me. What——?"

Without answering, she yielded to his caresses. Never had the flame of her so completely possessed him; then, suddenly, he felt her trembling in his arms. A hot tear-drop fell upon his wrist.

"Stella—girl! What is it?" he cried.

"I am praying, boy—praying that you have chosen someone who is strong—who is not all woman as I am. Then she will be able to see you go and still live on. For her sake—not for yours—I hope that she cares more for self than for you—then she will not know what I must know."

In an agony of bewilderment, Craig heard her words.

"But—Stella! What do you mean? What are you talking about?"

She drew away from him and rose to her feet. A few paces she walked towards the Woods fringing the hill upon which they were resting, then she turned back to him. She was smiling now. Her eyelids alone showed traces of the storm.

"I am the silliest thing that ever happened. Craig, I've been staying indoors too much and worrying about a lot of make-believe bogies. Forgive me, dear. I meant nothing. It was all nonsense." She placed both of her hands in his as she knelt beside him. "Why, I couldn't leave you, if I wanted to. I'll stay—as long as you need me."

By other means she continued to reassure him. However, into his eyes there had crept the shadow of a misgiving which had entered his heart. To the girl, the pain apparent in his voice was a lash.

In the west the sunlight was still gilding the city and the harbour with its radiance, but, nearer at hand, the world seemed to Maitland to have grown suddenly grey and chill. An agonising feeling of insecurity possessed him. His work and his love had seemed all-sufficient—a solid world of reality. Now, shifting and wavering as a mirage of the desert, he saw the towers of his dream-city shaken to their foundations.

"I think we had better go, Stella. I must have an early dinner to-morrow. Some other time we may come here again—perhaps bring a little lunch and wait for the moonlight."

During every moment of the walk back to the car-line, the girl battled to rebuild the sense of contentment and certainty in which they had revelled. Using the mightiest force of all—for she loved him truly—she won her victory. Despite his fears, Craig was swept once more into the ecstasy of romance. With her favour above his brow, were there any worlds which he could not conquer? Youth assured him that there were none.

CHAPTER XVII

CONFLICT

Home! The wandering spirit that is man clings desperately at times to some apparently fixed point in space. In the heart of Everyman there lurks the desire for a house by the ancient way, where Mary may rest a fair head against his knee while Martha adds a touch of magic to the comforts which restore body and mind. In Craig Maitland there was the minimum of those qualities which make good husbands and good fathers and yet, for a brief period, he was luxuriating in a sense of contentment which threatened to dull the fine edge of his enthusiasm for work.

After they had returned from the outing on Vancouver Heights, where a shadow had dimmed the light of young love, Stella had prepared a perfect little dinner for two. She was naturally mistress of the feminine art which could transform the "loaf of bread" and the "jug of wine" into a poem. Sitting in a comfortable Morris chair drawn up before the windows in the living-room, Maitland smoked while he listened to her light footfall and the tinkle of dinner dishes in the kitchen sink. He smiled when he heard her whistling softly—the latest waltz hit from the vaudeville stage. Then she emerged from the kitchen, playfully avoiding his arms as he rose to meet her.

"Not yet! No flirting with the cook in this house, young man! I'll be out in a minute."

She disappeared, laughing, into the bedroom. Returning presently, she perched herself upon the arm of his chair. A soft, silken *négligé* had replaced the primness of a starched apron.

"Have a smoke, dear?" Craig reached for his cigarette-case.

"No, thank you. I have stopped smoking. For a while," she added, catching his look of inquiry. "You needn't worry. It won't last."

Her nearness blotted out the need for lesser distractions. The man put down his unlighted cigarette. In the dusk of twilight filling the room, he felt all the insidious lure of moonlight, roses, and summer nights. His blood, rebellious and impatient, was beginning to beat madly at the barriers of flesh. Then the telephone bell broke the stillness. Muttering a protest, Craig rose and stepped out into the hallway of the apartment.

When he returned he had a light overcoat thrown across his arm and was carrying his hat.

"What is the matter, Craig?" The girl spoke anxiously. "Does Mr. Tacey want you right away? I hoped that we could have our evening together."

The frown upon his brow did not relax. He tossed his hat impatiently upon a table while he started to put on his coat.

"It isn't Tacey—worse luck! A meeting of the strike committee has been called on short notice. Damn Powers, anyway."

"Who is it?" she said quickly. "Did you say Powers?"

"Yes," he retorted, "Bud Powers. Someone will have to stop that man before he ruins the party."

If Craig had not been more than ordinarily perturbed, he would have noticed the expression upon Stella's face as she walked to the table and stood, leaning upon it, while she looked at him with wide-open eyes.

"Powers—Bud Powers," she repeated slowly and softly, as if to herself. "Are you certain of his name, Craig? But that is a silly question. Of course, if he's in the party, you know him. Tell me. What does he look like?"

"Oh, a big hairy devil—half logger—timber beast—half simian! That's Powers. Why"—he glanced at her in surprise—"you don't know him, do you? How——?"

She moved round the table to his side. "Yes; but I don't quite understand. You spoke as if he were a member of the Labour Party."

"He certainly is, provided he's the man you mean. He is the leader of the worst element in it—the one we have to

fear. He has absolute control over the riff-raff along the waterfront. They worship him—follow him like sheep. But, in Heaven's name, how could you have met him?"

The red colour had mounted to the girl's face. She dropped her eyes and placed a hand upon his sleeve. "You dear boy—you dreamer. Have you forgotten already where you met me—among the 'riff-raff,' as you called them? But there must be some mistake. Powers—Bud Powers—can't belong to the Labour Party."

"Why?"

"Because he is a Government spy."

With a sudden movement Craig grasped the girl's wrist. His breath came in a short, sharp jerk. "No! Here, girl—Stella, dear—sit down. Quick! Tell me what you know."

The girl sank into a chair near by and Craig, his face tense and drawn, leaned over her. Stella did not speak immediately, and his long fingers beat a restless tattoo upon the edge of the table. When she looked up at him he saw that her eyes were suffused with tears.

"It isn't easy to open doors that are locked, Craig. We agreed—didn't we?—to forget all that had passed before I met you. At the card-tables, at the race-track, I met and knew the girls who are down below the line. I had chums among them—better friends—some of them—than I have ever had among other women. However, that's neither here nor there. One night, about two years ago, one of them was sick, and sent for me to come to her. It was the first time that I had entered a 'house,' but I wasn't afraid. I sat with her in her room and talked to her, but it was not easy to help her. A thin partition separated us from another larger apartment, in which a party was in progress. Two men and two girls of the establishment were drinking and playing 'seven-up.' We could not help overhearing their conversation. One of the fellows was an ex-officer of the North-West Mounted Police and the other, so my friend said, was a Government spy. I did not ask her about the men; I was not interested in them. Then, when the liquor got the best of them, the men quarrelled. One, whom the girl called Bud Powers, threatened to kill the other man because of a remark he made. Powers was furious because his loyalty had been questioned.

"'Not likely that an Orangeman, sworn to defend flag and constitution, would double-cross the Crown.'

"I remember that Powers said that while he cursed the other fellow for a d—ned Papist. When I was going out, I glanced into the next room and saw the men who had been scrapping. Powers was abusing one of the girls, who was screaming as she tried to tear herself from his clutches. He was the worst-looking brute I have ever seen and, God knows, I have seen thousands of them. That is all, dear. It is not a pretty picture, but it is part of the hell I came through into the heaven of your love."

Craig straightened himself up to his full height and walked to the window. Against a sky, lurid with the smouldering remnants of day, the hills across the inlet lay outlined in sombre masses which were gathering to themselves the shadows of approaching night. Ridges and ravines could no longer be distinguished. Immovable, silent, vast, the barrier range seemed the symbol of Fate against which men hurl themselves in vain. Before this elemental strength, inimical, mocking, and mysterious, our cloud castles melt away and are whelmed in the darkness of chaotic, primeval things. Powers, the untamed savage, held the fate of Craig's and Tacey's dream in the hollow of his hand. Unmoral, he played a game which no ordinary man would dare. The dull clay of the more brutal portion of the Labour Party responded to his driving power, which roused their sluggish emotions as only lust and cruelty could do. In a flash he saw it all now. Incited to acts of violence by the evil counsel of their leader, the unsuspecting victims would justify reprisals by the "Mounties." Blood would flow—a general round-up would follow in which, under Powers' direction, the best of the party would be flung into prison or deported. The cause of the workers would be discredited and crushed, having alienated the sympathy of all decent citizens who stood for law and order.

The girl, behind him in the shadows, saw his hands clench and his form stiffen. He wheeled and faced her.

"Stella, is it true—this that you have told me?"

His doubt roused a phase of her which had been developed in the underworld. Unconsciously, sharply, she retorted

in the old, familiar jargon.

"Cut that out! We're pals, aren't we?" Her voice was that of the women who battle for existence among wolves.

"Forgive me, little girl. I didn't mean that. But—it takes my breath away—and my senses—to think what a fool I've been—and Tacey, too, and the rest of us."

He gathered her up into his arms and, at the moment, she gloried in his strength.

"Just you and I, girl," he continued. "You are right. We are pals. We'll beat him to it, you and I. There'll be something doing at that meeting to-night."

She clung to him while he put on his hat and moved towards the door. "Be careful, boy. Don't be rash. Don't start anything to-night. That would be foolish. There are other ways."

With the warmth of her still about him, he flung out into the corridor and hastened to the elevator. He was keyed for action, tense as a runner on the starting-line.

Craig, knowing that the committee was to meet in a room at the rear of one of the waterfront saloons, decided to walk to the place. He was not in a mood to wait for street-cars. To him the situation called for decisive measures, although he realised that wariness would be necessary. Because of Powers' influence over the cruder elements in the party, he knew that he himself would have few friends at the meeting. He could only attempt to check any immediate step to incite the workers to violence. He must trust to the wisdom and inspiration of the moment, since he was working in the dark and against forces which were unfamiliar to him. His heart burned at the thought of the few idealists, who had sacrificed their all for the cause of Labour, being treacherously betrayed by a man of their own class—led like sheep into a slaughter-house—for he felt that blood would flow if the incarnate devil in Powers had its own cruel will of them.

Approaching the wharves, he passed through groups of workmen standing about the entrances to the employment offices. Honest and sturdy, or debauched and shattered by loose living, they stood ready to sell themselves in the open market. For a few brief hours they had enjoyed the feeling of liberty, only to realise that they were free to find another master who would coin their flesh and blood into profits. Upon this humanity, blind and hungering, was builded the thing called civilisation—the shadowy structure towards which the politicians waved unctuous hands. To preserve its communal life it had need for policemen, armies and navies, churches and prisons. Sensing the futility of these lives which toiled, suffered and passed on without knowledge of their divine heritage, Maitland felt the call to service.

He passed beneath the bright lights of a gaudy entrance, which opened into the bar of the Metropolitan saloon and rooming-house. The place was a noted one—a resort which was a Mecca and Gomorrah for all the loggers on the British Columbian coast. Here they dropped their "rolls," and from here they went back to exile, carrying a headache and a light heart as souvenirs of a week in town. The yeasty tang of stale beer assailed Craig's nostrils as he pushed aside the swinging half-doors opening into the saloon. Decanters and bottles glittered in the lamplight, which was reflected from the plate-glass mirrors of the buffet, and, coming from the comparative dimness of the street, his eyes were dazzled, so that he saw clearly only the white-coated bar-tenders among the throng before the shining expanse of crystal. He was making his way quietly to a doorway at the farther end of the room when he was arrested by a hand laid upon his shoulder.

"Yer in a hell of a hurry, me bucko. This one's on me. What'll you have?"

Craig turned to face Bud Powers' leering smile. A slouch hat of greasy felt was drawn well down over his eyes, while the upturned collar of his mackinaw hid all but the sinister, sensual mouth and his unshaven cheeks. Before Maitland could reply, he jerked his thumb towards the bar, continuing in a lowered voice, "There ain't no rush. The boys ain't all here yet. Come on. Be a sport."

A perceptible sneer in the man's tones brought a quick flush to Craig's face.

"Not this time, Powers, thanks just the same. It's too soon after dinner for me."

Some of the men, with glasses in hand, had turned from the bar to listen to Bud. None of them, in any circumstances, would have dared to risk the disapproval of the man who had accosted Craig. Altogether, the situation was embarrassing. Quickly he decided the matter by stepping into a vacant place in the line and ordering a small beer. Powers, at his side, filled a tumbler with red-brown rye. He left no room for water, which stood at his elbow in a silver pitcher. Raising his liquor towards his lips, he shot a peremptory look at the young man, and said, in a loud voice, "Here's to the workers of the world!"

Looking past Powers, Craig saw a long row of faces turned towards him. Some were besotted, others vacuous and inert, while a great many were hardy, with eyes made keen by the craft of the artisan and chins squared to meet and conquer the ways of a fate beyond their understanding. This inhuman monster dared to drink a toast to these whom he had betrayed. Overcome by an impulse stronger than discretion, Craig, who had lifted his glass, put it down again very quietly but firmly.

"Nothing doing, Powers," he declared. "If you want my reasons, see me after the meeting. I'll wait for you."

There was a tense silence, in which the thud of several beer-mugs sounded like ominous drum-taps upon the bar. Powers' snarl sounded like the prelude to a storm. "You bet I'll see you. We'll have a show-down. Suits me, kid. Ready to oblige a gentleman—any time."

Craig broke away from the crowd and made his way to the door at the rear of the place. Through this he passed into a narrow passage and then, knocking twice upon another door to his left, he was admitted to a room usually devoted to poker or black-jack. About a round table, covered with dingy green felt, were seated five men, all of whom were known to Maitland as representatives of the unions most interested in the impending strike. The man who was evidently acting as chairman rose when Craig entered. He was a thick-set, sandy-haired fellow, whose brick-red face brought to mind the countenance of the dog, four-square upon the Union Jack, who tells the universe, "What we have, we hold." His shoulder muscles seemed about to burst through the flimsy brown jersey which served him for coat and vest.

"Boys," he rumbled, "we've got *The Beacon* with us. I guess that's all the Press we want here." The man motioned Craig to an empty chair near him. "Did yuh see anything of Bud out there?" he continued.

"Sure." Maitland lighted a cigarette. "Are you waiting for him?" he inquired. "I thought this meeting was for delegates from the unions."

A lean, wiry little Cockney, across the table from Craig, snickered. He represented the teamsters. "W'y, 'aven't you 'eard as 'ow the loggers is organised? Bud 'as 'em in 'and. 'E's a voice cryin' in the wilderness. Gawd, I'll bet that's 'im now!"

There was a sound of heavy boots in the passage without, then two raps, sharp and in quick succession. The man who hastily undid the bolts was brushed aside, so that he bumped violently against a chair. With his eyes still on Powers, he accepted the seat thrust by accident into his hands and sat down. Then, suddenly remembering his duty, he rose silently and made fast the door.

Craig now remembered that this burly fellow who had submissively taken Bud's insolence was noted as an amateur wrestler among the longshoremen. Yes, when he thought of it, he had seen Claxton stripped for a match—a hairy giant of a man. Yet, with an ingratiating grin, the man was sidling up to the table. At a glance from Powers, he suppressed his smile and, in a tone which attempted to be business-like, addressed the chairman:

"Well, I reckon, gentlemen, that we're about ready to begin. We're all here. We knowed that you'd be here on time, Bud."

Powers sat down heavily and, taking off his hat, slapped it down upon the table. Then, reaching into an inner pocket, he produced and lighted a cigar. With his elbows upon the arms of his chair, he looked at the others. His glance ignored Craig's presence.

"Go to it, fellers!" he said graciously.

The chairman coughed. "Self-protection—first law of nature," he began. "Yuh all know what we're here for." He let his eyes rest upon each in turn. "Forewarned—well, I reckon that we are all right. But I'm thinkin' it's even better to be forearmed. It's goin' to be a stiff fight. We've got to consider the advisability of forming an organisation to keep law and order. Get me?"

"Ain't there enough 'Mounties' here to do that?" sneered the man at Craig's right. Paul Kirchner, I.W.W. agitator, was—in the newspaper man's estimation—only less to be feared than Powers. His narrow, projecting brows shadowed eyes which were shifty, dark, and cruel as those of a drunken savage. His tongue was glib, his speech a jargon of the pet shibboleths of the class-conscious Marxians.

"I guess you hit it there, Kirchner," assented the chairman. "They're goin' to start something, and we've got to see that they don't get away with it. Forearmed I said, you know."

"I'm with you on that, Bill," came from the longshoreman who had admitted Bud. "I'd like to hear some suggestion from Comrade Powers, here."

All simultaneously looked towards the man whose name had just been spoken. Craig watched him chewing his cigar and taking it from between his thick lips with a queer feeling that he had, in some fantastic dream, seen a hairy ape remove a succulent root from his mouth before directing his attention to the chattering tribe which did his bidding. Powers shoved his fist, clenched and grimy, forward upon the table.

"Yer a nice lot of birds," he stormed. "Yuh should have done this two weeks ago. Yuh knowed what was coming. We're goin' to tie things up proper this time. Transportation stops when we say the word. Yuh know what the red-coats are here for. Now, if this was Russia, we'd be ready to see that they didn't have it all their own way. Speakin' of Russia—where's Kolazoff?"

"Took his girl out to the park to-night." Parkins, delegate for the street-car men, spoke quickly and was silent.

Powers' bloodshot eyes glared at the man. "He did, eh?"

"Kolazoff's all right," broke in the chairman.

"Well, he otta be here if he is," growled Powers. "He knows the game. What we need is a guard—a Red Guard, like they've got in Russia—formed to see that our fellows keep order and don't give the 'Mounties' an excuse to start."

Just how a crew of men, armed and hand-picked by Bud Powers, would conduce towards the maintenance of peace, seemed quite clear to Craig Maitland. The irony of it was apparent to him, although the others were unconscious of treachery. These minions of the cave man would soon precipitate action on the part of the police.

A gleam of hope came to him when the street-car man said very slowly, picking his words, "Well, comrades, you know me. I don't have to tell you where I stand. I'm all for avoiding trouble where it isn't comin' my way, I am. It always seems to me that, if a man's got a gun on him, he's in more danger than if he left the darn thing at home. We begin by breakin' the law—not as I'm defendin' it—when we go carrying arms. If it gets to be known, they've got the goods on us."

"Who's goin' to know, if you don't tell them," snapped Powers, "unless it gets out through the Press?"

For the first time since he had entered the room he shot a covert glance towards Maitland.

"I don't have to answer that, Powers," flashed Craig. "*The Beacon* has stood by the Cause when others were working hard against it. I don't have to defend it."

Parkins put his hand upon the young man's arm. "Come, come! Comrade Powers must have his joke. We know you're all there at *The Beacon* office."

The chairman moved uneasily in his seat. "Well, comrades, will someone make a motion?" he said querulously. "No use wastin' time. We've threshed this thing out before." The sound of singing in the bar-room reminded him that a long

time had elapsed since his last drink.

Kirchner moved and Powers seconded a motion that an armed guard of the workers be organised to preserve law and order among their own people during the strike.

"Any more discussion before I put the motion?"

Craig had been leaning back, his seat tilted at an angle. The legs of his chair clicked against the floor as he straightened up in his place.

"I move an amendment to the motion," he said. "I move that this meeting adjourn without further action, pending information I will lay before the committee. *The Beacon*—I speak for it—is your best friend. We have just received news that will change the whole situation. You must have this before you act."

"Hinformation?" The teamster broke the stillness which followed Maitland's words. His shallow mind had failed to sense the sudden tenseness in the atmosphere about him. "And w'y can't we 'ave it now?"

"Because"—Craig spoke very quietly, but in a low, ringing tone—"because there is a spy at this table!"

In the pause which followed breathing became audible. Craig Maitland could not see Powers without changing his position, but the man's hands were within his line of vision. Bud had placed them upon the table. One hand, with a quick jerk, flicked the ashes from his cigar so that they fell upon the green cloth. Then they lay motionless again as if carven from rock.

Clearing his throat, the chairman said huskily, "Boys, Comrade Maitland—*The Beacon*—we know they're all right—this is hell if it's true." His voice became steadier. "Comrade Kirchner, stand by at the door." With head lowered and shoulders belligerently squared, the man rose from his seat. Shiny beads of perspiration stood out upon his forehead.

"No need for that." Craig raised his hand to check Kirchner. "Nothing doing to-night. If anyone wants information, I'll be in the office to-morrow morning. See?"

Glaring furtively at each other, the men rose, but Powers remained motionless in his place.

"Beat it, you fellows!" he growled. "Beat it! I'll stay for a little chat with Mr. Maitland—Comrade Maitland, I should have said. Bud Powers don't have to wait. If there's been any double-crossin', someone's got to answer to me before daylight."

Without demur the men of the committee did his bidding, and presently Craig was alone in the room with the man whose rage could terrorise the toughest mob in the waterfront saloons. He found himself strangely cool—alert, but certainly not afraid. Then he thought of Stella and was ashamed. Like a bit of driftwood, he had permitted the waves of circumstance to bring him to the position in which he now stood facing his most powerful enemy. Not the wariness of a skilled fighter but impulse—youthful and reckless—had impelled him to precipitate a clash with Powers.

Bud was standing now. As he saw the man lean towards him, Craig stepped out of reach of the great hands which gripped the edge of the table. Only for a fleeting moment was it given to the young man to see the most startling picture of animal ferocity which had ever darkened dream or waking vision. This face was that of all that is bestial in man—pitiless as the spawn of the nethermost pits of being. Then, with a stunning impact, Powers' clenched fist caught him and lifted him clear of the floor. His body collapsed in a limp heap against the wall of the room, while his head struck the baseboard at a dangerous angle.

With hands writhing and working in a tearing movement, his assailant bent over him for a space, then he unbarred the door leading to the buffet and disappeared. Within a very few minutes he was back again accompanied by two evil-looking loungers. One of the men was carrying, in his arms, a suit of overalls and a pair of old brogans. Craig was quickly divested of his overcoat, his jacket, shirt, and shoes, while over his remaining clothing was drawn the smock and overalls of a labourer. Powers stooped to ruffle his hair and to rub his grimy hands over the prostrate man's face. Then he rose and motioned towards the opened door.

"Take him out the back way, Bill. If yer stopped, yuh know the game. Git a move on, now!"

A policeman, leisurely strolling past the entrance to an alley at the back of the Metropolitan, saw two men carrying between them the form of a third. He stopped them to investigate. "Doped," one of them assured him. "Been mixin' them, too. We'll see him home, sergeant. He's a pal of mine."

The speaker was the man whom Powers had addressed as "Bill." Evidently the officer knew the man.

"All right, Buddy. Stay with him," he said.

CHAPTER XVIII

LOVE'S ALTAR

"The Nest," for various and obvious reasons, was quite an appropriate name for Madge Kolazoff's suite on the top floor of the Cambridge Apartments. Madge herself had named it, probably finding therein the satisfaction of a vague desire. Anything more permanent than a nest could not enter into the nomadic nature which made her a little more domestic than a bird and a little less so than the proverbial Arab. Like her feathered sisters, she believed that there was a season for mating and home-furnishing and a time, longer by far, when one should be free to live as do the winds and flowers. So it happened that her tiny sitting-room looked as if it had been hastily assembled after the manner of a bird's dwelling-place. A few bits of flimsy furniture acquired at second-hand stores, pictures which were alleged to be copies of masterpieces, a faded rug which did not match the wall-paper, a clock supported by a dingy bronze Mercury, a buff leather divan polished by several generations, were thrown together like strangers who faced one another for the first time at a restaurant table. The only thing which appeared to be thoroughly at home was the bookcase, occupying a corner between the radiator and the window-ledge, where some red geraniums glowed brightly against snowy-white curtains. There Upton Sinclair, Jack London and the lightweights contended for space with the heavier tomes of Marx, Engels, and other proletarian gods.

Madge, in a black cotton dress with slightly soiled white collar and cuffs, was trying to look as if she were happily engaged in dusting the small centre-table and the few chairs about it. Kolazoff had eaten a hearty breakfast, swept her into his arms, kissed her farewell, and had then departed for the day. He was volcanic in his morning moods, which were always marked by alternate periods of silence and affectionate demonstration.

There seemed to be no immediate danger that marriage, for Madge, would settle down into the usual round of domestic squabbles and boredom. The interests of neither partner were centred about the hearthstone. She was thinking proudly, at this very moment, of the part which she was playing in the big drama of the social revolution. The helpmate and inspiration of one of the leaders whose youth and fiery enthusiasm were driving forces behind the working-class movement, she felt that, at last, the gods had found for her a place in their universe. From her arms, filled with new life, he went out to battle for freedom, justice, and the cause of brotherhood. The world would be better because they had lived and loved. They were poor—ah, yes—but only in those things which mattered little. Clothes and other luxuries had never held any attraction for Madge. She whistled cheerfully while she picked up the clock and wiped the winged feet of the Mercury.

The girl frowned slightly when a light knock at the door of the apartment caused her to desist from her task. Probably a neighbour who wanted to borrow something. They usually did. When she opened the door, she was hardly prepared to meet the rich softness of sealskin and velvet and the striking beauty of the woman who confronted her. Red-brown eyes with a hint of tragedy in them! Then, quickly, a veil was drawn and the eyes looked with polite inquiry into her own.

"Does Mr. Kolazoff live here?"

"Yes, but he is not in at present."

"Are you Mrs. Kolazoff?"

"I am."

"Then may I come in? I would like to speak to you. I am Mrs. Maitland, Mrs. Craig Maitland. My husband works on *The Beacon*."

Impulsively, Madge decided that she did not like Mrs. Maitland. Nevertheless, she asked her, civilly enough, to come in. Few women understood Madge Kolazoff and she, in turn, thought her own sex to be generally superficial. For some vague reason, which she did not attempt to analyse, the exquisite femininity of her visitor annoyed her. What right had this woman to flaunt her silken sleekness in a world where children cried for bread and strong men were broken? To Madge there was something parasitic in this exotic lure of delicately perfumed flesh. Furtively she watched Stella as she took off her gloves before taking the proffered chair. So this was Craig Maitland's choice among women. Well...

"I will not keep you more than a minute or two, Mrs. Kolazoff. I hope you will pardon my calling at this early hour. I have heard that your husband is active in the Labour Movement."

Madge lowered her eyelids while she replied, "I do not know just how he is regarded by his comrades. But—you should see him. I do not know much about his business, myself ... the party's affairs, I mean. When I was on *The Beacon* it was different. What can I do for you, Mrs. Maitland?"

Stella marked the rich, musical fullness of the girl's voice. Then she went straight to the point.

"I believe that you can and will help me. My husband left me after dinner last night to attend a meeting of the strike committee. He has not returned. He has not been at the office."

A quick look from Madge's black eyes brought a flush to the other woman's cheek as she continued, speaking rapidly, "There was danger for him at that meeting. You will understand when I say that he went there with full knowledge that one of our most trusted men is a Government spy. I fear that something has happened to him."

Madge was silent, her dark eyes scrutinising the face of the girl who sat across the table from her. Her heart was modifying the first thought in her mind in regard to her visitor. Maitland loved this woman. He was still an inspiring memory to Madge. Together they had fought a battle for an ideal and had won a victory.

She was thinking of him as she said, "Why do you think that there was special danger, Mrs. Maitland? Men on business like that, in these days before the strike, never know what duty may demand. It is our place to wait when we can't do better. I would trust Craig Maitland anywhere."

"So would I," responded Stella, "and what you say about duty is almost what Mr. Tacey said to me. I went down to *The Beacon* this morning. But Mr. Tacey was worried, just the same. He sent me up here to see Mr. Kolazoff. He said that your husband knew the waterfront better than he did ... and he said that there was no time to lose. Heavens, don't imagine that I mistrust my husband, but the man he was facing is a fiend—a fiend in human form. Do you know Bud Powers?"

There was a startled cry from Madge. "Do you mean that Bud Powers is a spy?"

"I mean just that."

"But—no—it's not possible. You know——?"

"No matter how I know. I know."

"And Craig"—unintentionally Madge used the familiar name—"went down there to expose him! Lord—I know! He would do it, too. Danger? I should say there is. He was in the worst place in this whole town. If only Ivan were here!

What can I do?"

In her agitation she had forgotten Stella, who gazed at her in astonishment. Barriers were swept away. Madge was no longer wary and reserved, observing her guest's movements with feminine aloofness.

"Pardon me," she went on, "but I knew your husband when I worked in the office. I knew him and liked him. However, although he is a fine strong man, he is just an impulsive boy as well." She was standing now. "And here I am —helpless. Ivan—Mr. Kolazoff—said he would not be back until to-night. There's to be a meeting here at our place. They met at the Metropolitan last night—to-night it will be here in our flat."

The Metropolitan! A light flashed before Stella's eyes. Suddenly she felt faint.

"You say they met in the Metropolitan last night?" she stammered.

"Yes."

"Anything could happen there! It's a dive! Powers could do anything there, I tell you!" As she rose from her chair, the girl was staggering. Up to this moment her colour had been normal. Now she was pale, her eyes filled with the light which Madge had first glimpsed when she had admitted her. It seemed as if her exuberant life had been completely submerged by some inward pain which threatened to extinguish it.

"Come, dearie!" Madge threw her arms about the woman, who stood with her hand pressed to her heart. "You must take off your coat and lie down for a while. You're played out. Up all night, I'll bet, and maybe no breakfast. Look, I'll make you some tea."

Stella smiled feebly. She submitted quietly while Madge removed her coat. Then, "You mustn't," she protested. "I'll be all right in a moment or two. I've got to go. I know the night bar-tender at that place down there. He was a bookie once. I used to play the races sometimes. I know him. He'll tell me what happened."

Madge looked slightly embarrassed but, tenderly as before, she said, "Yes. Yes. But you can't see him till evening. He won't be there until then. You stay here, my dear. I'll run down and get some things for lunch. Good heavens"—her deep voice choked with the intensity of a sudden thought—"why—yes! Powers may be here to-night. If Ivan knows! He's a worse firebrand than Craig. Never mind, we'll think and get it all straight. Meantime, you lie down here."

"It's awfully good of you, Mrs. Kolazoff!"

"Madge, please." The women kissed each other.

"And I am Stella."

When the quivering strings of Life's harp are stretched to the breaking-point, it is not easy to evoke a strong, resonant chord therefrom. Stella Shannon, lying upon a sofa in the apartment of her newly-found friend, strove with an overwhelming sense of shame. Strength she had worshipped as the only god who could bear one through the deeps of human frailty, and now, in the moments when she most needed her familiar deity, he had deserted her. Before this woman who had known Craig she had appeared weak and unworthy of love. In the hour of danger, Madge had taken the helm from her hand.

Tentacles of steel, relentless and cold, seemed to be gripping at her heartstrings. At times her sight dimmed until the red geraniums upon the window-ledge were bits of dancing flame upon a field of snow; the brown and gold pattern of the wall-paper became a whirling maze of glittering serpents writhing through weedy mazes of amber in a shaded pool of water; the grating clang of the street-cars was a rusty knife which hacked at her nerves until she wanted to scream aloud in her agony. Then, upon the rim of consciousness where light and darkness meet, a voice halted her ... a voice young and buoyant, vibrant with the passion of living: "I need you, dear!" Upward, through blinding mists of pain, she struggled—by a supreme effort of will—in answer to the call of Love. Presently the hand upon her breast relaxed its hold, and she lay breathing deeply now that it was no longer misery to do so. Dr. Perley's halo of silvery hair and his kindly eyes flashed before her for an instant. "I can only guarantee your safety while there are no crises—no strain

greater than ordinary." Oh, well—the crisis had passed and she lived—that only mattered—while Love needed her service. Madge would find that she was not a weakling. Powers might be the ferocity of the jungle incarnate, but against him she would pit the might of the spirit.

When Madge stole softly in, her arms filled with parcels, she frowned reprovingly at the girl, who lay with wide-open eyes.

"You should try to sleep, my dear. I am sure that is what you need," she said.

Despite protests, Stella rose, donned an apron, and helped to prepare lunch.

The loneliness of women who are pioneers was the fate of the girl who had cast in her lot with the Russian refugee. She had not entirely laid aside the ideology of the centuries through which her sex had served and had submerged their individuality beneath a mask worn to please their lord and master, Man. Yet, with a determination which was desperate in its strength, she had striven for the freedom of her own soul and, in the process, she had lost as well as gained. She possessed courage, sincerity, and knowledge, but had failed to cultivate the feminine qualities wherein lay her inherent power. In the invasion of Man's kingdom, she had found it necessary to combat crudeness with an equal lack of fineness. To regain her own lost realm, wherein she had appeared in her own true strength and glory, she would have to retrace the steps which had made her less than woman and the copy rather than the complement of man.

A realisation of what she lacked began to dawn upon her during the afternoon when, with Stella Shannon sitting near her, she learned that a woman might be free and still be a woman. Wistfully she marvelled at the unconscious grace with which her companion wore her clothes. Stella's gown, her smart shoes, her smart silk stockings, were not more costly than those which Madge could buy; but here and there were touches of colour, a bit of lace, a suggestion of immaculate *lingerie*, lines that drooped like flowers burdened by no greater weight than breeze or wandering bee, curves which invited the eye to follow their alluring wave to some hidden crest of wonder. Again, Madge's glory of midnight hair looked as if it had little acquaintance with brush or mirror, being wound into a thick coil and so carelessly pinned that it seemed ready to fall into wild disorder at a touch. Stella conveyed the impression that some artist had adjusted each tress and ringlet before recording the picture in paint or marble. The inner beauty was expressed by this girl, who loved Maitland, as the white light of truth in a poem, or the harmony of the ideal world flowing down through the inspired work of a master-musician, and yet, in her thinking, she was of the New Age that faced life as a thing entirely clean and wholesome.

Stirred by a more than passing interest, Madge experimented. She produced, as exhibits, her most "advanced" opinions, watching covertly to see whether her visitor would recoil shocked or angry that any woman should have so far lost her sense of propriety. In every instance she found Stella mildly astonished that people should need to write books about facts which she had known, since girlhood, as matters of ordinary experience. Only upon one point did the women find themselves at variance. To Madge, the child was the end and only objective of every mating of man and woman. To Stella, children were incidental. The mating wherefrom two souls grew stronger and more beautiful was to her the primary thing—the reason for sex.

So engrossed were the two in each other that the sun was setting behind the roofs seen from the apartment windows before they awoke to the task in hand and to the need for immediate action. During lunch Madge had outlined a plan. Stella had agreed to this, and had acceded to her friend's request that they should not talk about their own affairs until the hour approached when they could accomplish something definite. She realised that her strength must be reserved for the events of the evening. She was warned of her limitations by her recent experience. Her heart seemed to be all right now, but...

Dinner over, the dishes were speedily cleared away, and together the girls donned their wraps and set out. Down Granville Street they walked briskly towards the waterfront. Under the glaring lights of the Metropolitan Bar they stepped aside to enter a doorway over which hung a sign; "Ladies' Entrance." Stella felt her companion draw back involuntarily when they entered a little room comfortably furnished with a table and several chairs. The hum of voices and a snatch of song were borne to them through the thin wooden partition which separated them from the buffet. While she unloosened the collar of fur about her throat, Stella turned to her friend.

"Maybe you should not have come, dear?" she said gently. "You are sorry now? I know that you are. We will be only a moment or two, I promise you—that is, if there is no clue."

Madge, her cheeks flushed and her eyes betraying her timidity, responded, "I couldn't let you come alone. Really I don't mind. It's good for me."

She watched with suppressed curiosity while the other girl touched a button near at hand upon the wall. "Sit down," Stella suggested, and Madge took a seat diffidently, trying to look unconcerned and sophisticated. Just then the inner door opened to admit a white-aproned bar-tender, who emitted a cheery whistle of surprise.

Stella took his outstretched hand. "Yes, it's me, Shorty. Now—don't look as if you were going to have apoplexy. It's the first and last time you're likely to see me in this joint." She turned towards Madge. "Me and my friend here dropped in on a little errand of our own—just to see you, in fact."

The waiter, a tub of a man, bald except for a jaunty wisp of hair which was a relic of a virtuous but long-distant youth, rubbed one of his chins with an inquisitive finger. His merry blue eyes had become serious when Stella dropped her voice to a confidential tone.

"Sure—sure thing," he said slowly. "I ain't forgettin' what I owe you, Miss Stella. I'm not that kind. Not on your life! Now—what's up?"

"Do you know Craig Maitland, a newspaper man?"

The bar-keeper shook his head. "I don't," he replied.

"Were you on shift last night, Shorty?"

"I sure was."

"Well then, do you know Bud Powers?"

"Do I know Bud Powers? She says, 'Do I know Bud Powers?' That red-eyed gorilla? Yep. I know him, Miss Stella."

"Good," continued the girl. "Was he in here last night?"

"Yer loggin' now. He wuz in here an', if yuh look the joint over, you'll see his tracks. He wuz on a bat last night, an' I come pretty near havin' to use a piece of lead pipe on him."

"Then he must have been talking. What was he up to? Did he say what he had been doing or what he was going to do?"

Shorty hitched up one trouser-leg reflectively, and placed a foot upon the rung of a chair before answering, "Well, now, that's some question! Come to think of it, he seemed to have been in some mix-up—politics, I guess. Someone musta crossed him or somethin'. He wuz swearin' what he'd do to a guy that butted in on his game."

"Did he mention any names?" Stella asked quickly.

"Well now, Miss Stella, that's more'n I can say. I wuz pretty well lit myself, and that there cuss can talk more'n most men."

"Look here! You're not holding out on me, are you? He didn't mention names and didn't say what he'd been up to or anything?"

"He sure didn't. I'd help yuh in a minute, if I could. Sure, the missus woulda died if it hadn't been for you. I ain't forgettin' nothin'. You know it."

Stella turned sharply to Madge, who had been listening in silence. "Come, girlie. Let us take the first car to the flat. Shorty's on the square." To the bar-tender she said, "Bring in some drinks, Shorty, and have one yourself. Here's the money. It'll save your face. You've been in here quite a while. We'll be gone before you get back. Thanks. Remember me to the missus."

She shook his hand and motioned to Madge to rise. Out upon the street she paused. "Now, dear," she murmured wearily, "I'm through. I'll have to trust to your husband and the others."

"We'll go straight home," replied Madge. Her eyes looked back at the doorway through which they had passed. "I must say I am glad that we don't have to go through any more 'joints'——" She bit her lip and then flushed. "Oh, forgive me, Stella! Please do. I'm a blundering fool! I blurt out things which say anything but what I mean."

Stella smiled. "Now, don't worry. I know just what you mean. This afternoon I was different. We were talking about books and things then. That was the other me. A part of me belongs to this life down here—the warm hearts and the childish minds that are playing with baubles—but, at least, they are spending and not grabbing. The only men I can't stand are the virtuous ones who worship the tin god of respectability."

"You're a queer girl, but ... I like you," Madge conceded; then, "Come on! There's a car. Let's run!"

Kolazoff, in his shirt-sleeves, admitted them to his apartment. He looked tired, his blue eyes dimmed by sleeplessness. A few scattered threads of grey had appeared in his red shock of hair since the time when Craig had first seen him in the Squamish Valley. However, when Stella's story was poured out, all traces of weariness disappeared from his face. He became instantly alert, a dangerous light flickering behind his half-closed lids, his thin hands clenched.

"Thank heaven you came here," he cried. "The beast—I have a feeling—never mind—we must act now. In a few minutes—half an hour at the most—they will be here. Powers will be here. Mrs. Maitland, the Revolution owes much to you. We will not forget. Do not fear. These men of the committee—ah—Tacey may have seen them! Did you tell the Old Man? Does he know?" He paced the floor like a tiger in leash.

"Mr. Tacey knows. Yes. I told him," said Stella.

"In there"—Kolazoff pointed to the door of the one bedroom in the flat—"you will stay with Madge. I may need you, and then—maybe not. He has reached the end of the rope—yes. In Russia we know how to deal with his kind. If it were only Russia instead of this Canada!"

Madge, her great dark eyes glowing with a sudden fear, laid a hand upon his arm. "Ivan! Ivan!" she implored. "You must be careful. He is dangerous. He will be desperate! Wait!"

Impatiently, but tenderly, he shook himself free from her grasp, and strode to the sideboard where stood the winged Mercury surrounded by gaudy bits of china. Opening a drawer, he drew out a revolver and slipped it into his pocket.

"Never fear. I will be careful, my dear. Now, will you go and take Mrs. Maitland with you? I promise you I will act discreetly." He passed his hand wearily across his brow and sat down at the table, leaning heavily upon it with both elbows. "God ... it is always this way! We build for the day of liberty, enduring all, giving all, then—some Judas—and the Redeemer is betrayed! It is the old story—our own hands which drive the nails into the hands of the great god, Freedom! Go now, dear."

Madge, after a shy glance at Stella, put her arm about his shoulders and kissed him. Then, taking her friend's hand, she quietly crossed to the bedroom and drew to the door behind her.

Kolazoff stood long at the window, looking out at the stars in the bare expanse of sky above the houses where lamps were now lighted and human beings were going about their personal affairs, heedless of their neighbours—careless of the fact that they were units in a whole—parts of a structure called civilisation which was being shaken to its foundations. Like Atlas in the fable, the labourer of the despised Shudra caste had upheld the world meekly for these good bourgeois souls during the long centuries. Now the giant was stirring uneasily, rebelliously, half minded to heave the Earth from his shoulders into chaos. He, Kolazoff, who had thought to tame the Titan and to use him as an instrument

with which to refashion the order of things, was sick at heart. When a knock upon the door announced the arrival of the first of the committee, he rose slowly to open it for them.

Parkins and Claxton came in. Kolazoff had barely permitted them to enter when he went straight to the point.

"Powers coming to-night?"

Both men glanced at him sharply. Then, simultaneously, their lips compressed into grim smiles. Kolazoff, then, knew what they had learned at the office of *The Beacon*.

"Sure," said the street-car man. "He'll brazen it out, or I'm a liar."

"Kin yuh beat it! Say, if he's got horse sense, he'll git out before the gang gets wise to him," growled Claxton. "He'll be missin' if he ever shows up on the waterfront, I'm tellin' yuh."

The men removed their overcoats and hats, taking the chairs designated by Kolazoff. No time was allowed them in which to discuss the situation. The other members of the group arrived in quick succession. Some unusual tension had brought them on time. It was as if a common mind had animated them. Powers came in with Kirchner.

An awkward silence, of a moment's duration, ensued. Kolazoff took the situation in hand.

"All here?" he asked tersely, in a tone devoid of any hint of nervousness. "We'd best get down to brass tacks right away. Sorry I missed last night, fellows. You can move a vote of censure on the Chair, if you like."

When he took his seat at the head of the table, he was facing Powers, who sat with his back to the window, shoulders almost touching the flower-pots upon the window-sill. Kolazoff's pleasantry brought the others into line.

Claxton laughed. "Guess you're the right man in the right place, Ivan. You've been through the mill, eh?"

The Russian took some letters and papers from his pocket and laid them upon the tablecloth before him. His face had become slightly paler than usual, while his eyes were entirely hidden as he bent forward.

"There's a lot to do to-night but, first of all, we've got to face hard facts." He raised his head and looked squarely into Bud's eyes. "Powers, I shall have to ask you to leave before we begin."

The others in the room had not been prepared for this precipitate action. They gasped, then all eyes were turned upon the man who had arisen, brushing a pot of geraniums to the floor by his swift movement. For a moment Bud stood erect, then, still grasping the edge of the table with his great gnarled hands, he slowly subsided into his chair. The men beside Kolazoff breathed again.

"I have to leave, eh? That's a good one. Lucky for you, you're still on the inside of this here dump, Kolazoff." He reached into his pocket. There followed a sudden shuffling of chair-legs upon the floor. Powers drew out a cigar, bit the end off it, and, without lighting it, put it into the corner of his mouth.

"Gimme a light, Kirchner." He struck the match. "Now, Kolazoff, we'll hear yuh. What's chewing yuh?" he inquired calmly.

For an instant Kolazoff looked embarrassed, moving the papers before him uneasily. Then his lips thinned and a steady light glowed in his eyes. He looked directly at the man before him while he said, "It is not easy—no. It is hard to accuse one who has been a comrade, but we do not—must not—think of ourselves. It is the Cause. I have information which says that you are in the employment of the Government, Mr. Powers."

The big fellow took the cigar from his mouth. He laughed.

"You have, eh? Who gave you this bum steer, Comrade Kolazoff? I thought you were too wise to fall for the first wind that blows from Government head-quarters. Come on"—he leaned forward suddenly—"damn you, come on! Say

that Bud Powers ever double-crossed the party, and I'll choke the lie down your throat!"

His glance, belligerent and challenging, included the group about the table.

Claxton spoke at Kolazoff's right. "Seems to me Comrade Powers is right, at that. Who gave the evidence? What is it? You can't convict a man on this hearsay stuff."

All eyes turned to the Russian, who hesitated. Looking about him, he saw the question and the wavering in the faces of the committee.

"I wanted to avoid bringing a lady into this. It seems, now, that I shall have to do it." Rising from his chair, he continued, "I'll be with you in a minute, boys. I'll show you that Ivan Kolazoff does not lie."

There were no words spoken while he walked lightly to the bedroom door, tapped, and disappeared from their sight. Almost instantly he came in again, followed by Madge, who held the hand of the other girl clasped tightly in her own. The men stared at Stella, who advanced to the table and stood looking at the Russian. Very slight she seemed, her slenderness accentuated by the clinging gown which she wore. A soft radiance emanated from the lustrous coils of her hair and the lamplight flashed upon a single diamond adorning the white hand which rested near Claxton's elbow. Her eyes, after one hurried, timid glance about the room, remained fixed upon Kolazoff.

He broke the tense silence. "Mrs. Maitland, I want you to look at that man."

Stella turned towards Powers. The big man's face showed unfeigned bewilderment.

"Have you seen him before?" Kolazoff continued.

"I have."

"Did you hear him talking to an officer of the North-West Mounted Police?"

"Yes, Mr. Kolazoff, I did."

"Did you hear this man boast of his loyalty to the Crown, and did you hear him state that he was in league with the Government?"

"Yes."

"If you were in court would you swear to this and give date and place? Can you bring other witnesses who were present and heard the same things?"

"Surely."

Powers was upon his feet now. "Of all the damned bunk," he roared. "Is this yer evidence? I tell you, it's a frame-up. Bringin' this skirt in—say, Kolazoff, what's yer game?"

The Russian's hand shot forward, pointing to Bud's breast.

"I dare you to turn back the lapel of your vest! Show us the button you wear there—the button of the Black Knights of Ireland! Deny that you are an Orangeman, sworn to defend King and Constitution!"

Powers' huge bulk, shadowed upon the curtains behind him, widened as he doubled up. Like a battering-ram of flesh and blood, he launched himself forward. There was a clattering of chairs and the sound of men scrambling aside. A pistol-shot rang out, crashing about their ears like a splintering mountain of glass. Bud stopped and threw a hand to his side. The other arm was outstretched, feeling for support.

Ivan's voice was heard again. "I don't want to kill you, Powers. Quick, tackle him, you fools! Now!"

His breath whimpering like that of an animal in pain, the wounded man turned upon his assailants and fought his way towards the window. It was shattered as he plunged through and, seizing an iron upright of the fire-escape outside, tried to drag himself from the clutches of those who laid hold upon him.

Kolazoff sprang forward, but was halted by a piercing scream. Turning swiftly, he almost struck his wife, who knelt upon the floor above the limp form of her comrade. The report of his pistol, which still vibrated through the stillness of the night, had severed the fragile thread which bound Stella Shannon to her body.

CHAPTER XIX

"MORE THINGS THAN WE CAN SEE"

Fear and physical pain are the only forces which react swiftly upon the Adam of dust—that mass of rebellious clay which we have dragged from the jungle upon our journey to the stars. Powers, stumbling, a dark sprawling shape, in the gloom of the alley behind the Cambridge Apartments, knew only one desire. He must escape the vengeance of those whom he had betrayed. A thick fog, stifling in its chill embrace the remnants of a day of sunshine, had swept in from the sea, filling the hollows between the walls in the canyons of brick and stone. In a dim brute way, the fleeing man was thankful that it covered his movements while he staggered forward, colliding with telephone poles and feeling his way along the dank brick which paved the roadway beneath him. His strength was all in the bulging muscles and the weight of bone which gave him the form of a man. This physical force, he now felt, had suddenly fallen away from him. A warm trickle of blood along his thigh told him that the bullet wound was open, and the dizziness in his head, the empty feeling at the centre of his being, were signs that he was gradually weakening as the life-stream ebbed. Yet it could not be vital—this thing—or he would have gone down in Kolazoff's rooms. He remembered deer which he had killed. At close range before the impact of the lead, they had literally been beaten backward as if by a blow from a sledge-hammer. He had not felt like that.

At the entrance to the alley he drew back into a doorway. An arc-light, ahead of him, was smouldering in the mist. From his mackinaw pocket he drew a flask and emptied it.

Like liquid fire, he felt the glow from the alcohol working inside of him. He could make it now—the houseboat and Dolly—she would fix him up. A few days—then he would get Kolazoff—and Maitland. They would pay. He could see their white faces, their blackening lips, as he gouged the life out of their bodies with his bare hands. The others? Bah! They were not worth killing! The Government would attend to them—deport them. Then, with the proceeds from his round-up, he could go south. In the land of the free there were always jobs for his kind. The States could use him, and he needed their money to buy whisky. The Canadians were half Scotch—tight-wads. Across the line there was money. Yet—perhaps he might have to forgo the killing of Maitland and Kolazoff. They were damned particular, these same Canadians. Gunmen weren't in their line. They had queer notions about justice up here—not yet extinct. Out into the deserted street he swaggered boldly and, pulling his hat well down over his eyes, headed for the waterfront.

Powers, without seeing a familiar face, reached Cordova and then Powell Street, and turned east. Then, for a moment again, his strength failed him and he paused to rest, sitting upon the doorstep of a rooming-house. Fog blotted out sight and sound. He was alone with the demons which were tearing him. As he sat huddled, struggling for breath, summoning the brute will to carry him onward, a dishevelled figure disentangled itself from the grey mists and looked down at him. The man glanced furtively about and then once again at the inert form of Powers leaning against the door-jamb. Quickly he stooped and shook the sitting man, then recoiled with a start. If he had suddenly been faced by a hungry tiger, he would not have felt more terror than he caught from the eyes which held him. They were pitiless, yellow-flecked, and bloodshot, and filled with a primal power which stilled his shaking hand and sent chills tingling down his spine. Bud struggled to his feet.

"You bum," he hissed. "You——"

Before his torrent of profanity, the would-be thief cowered as if under a lash and, turning, broke into a shambling trot. Apparently Powers had released something in himself. He felt more calm and certain now. With a chuckling sneer, he pulled up the collar of his mackinaw coat and proceeded upon his way. If he could only have laid hands upon the fellow! He would have liked the sound of snapping bones when one twisted a human body. Curse this fog! Would Dolly have in a supply of driftwood? She was a lazy slattern ... he could see all right if it weren't for this swirling mist before his eyes ... and the little tongues of flame that danced ... Kolazoff and Maitland ... yes ... he would get them ... all in good time ... he would get them ... he would throw the boots into them...

The grey vapour drove in and enveloped his huge, slouching bulk until he seemed like some protean monster shouldering through an ocean of formless matter—the stuff from which life's first abortive structures were moulded.

At length he found the corner of a shed which told him that a few more steps, along some planks thrown down upon the mud, would bring him to the edge of the wharf beneath which his houseboat was moored. Then, while his foot felt for the first board, he stood still, one hand clutching the corner of the building. Before him was apparent only a dense, impenetrable wall of fog. Yet, behind its tenuous curtain, so near that it could reach forward to grasp him, he felt that there was a nameless Terror, intangible, silent, but nevertheless real and ... waiting. Numbed by the essence of a myriad fears, he stood trembling, only certain that he was facing something more ruthless than his own ferocious soul ... something which would wring from him the piteous cry of anguish that he had so often heard from human lips and from the throats of dumb creatures he had slain.

"There are more things than we can see." ... Ah, he had said that once to Maitland. A thing which his hands could wrench into submission could only cause him a momentary alarm at best, but these unseen forces which were, like himself, lusting to kill and rend—these were different. He feared them with all the might of a superstitious savage. Now he was confronting them, weak and shattered, the brute in him subdued by loss of blood and by anger and humiliation.

If he could only move—cry out! Dolly might hear. She would come and—somehow—she would save him. With all her baseness, Kearney's wife had a woman's selflessness where she loved. When the black moods came on him, only she could hold him—could awaken tenderness for a flickering instant of time. Love? He didn't know the meaning of it, but there was a light in Dolly's eyes, at times, which made him feel safe and warm as he used to do when his mother tucked him into his bed at night.

Once again the grey curtain of the fog became a weird background for wavering bits of flame which resolved themselves into a thousand eyes, burning, mocking, pleading—moving like a restless sea. There—ah—those were the terror-stricken eyes of a helpless wild creature which he had torn from a trap, leaving one bleeding paw between the steel jaws; there were the eyes of a deer, soft, and filled with a fire of anguish as he plunged a knife into the form that struggled in its death-throes; there gleamed the wild eyes of a woman whose breasts were bruised by his hands hot with the lust which raged in him! Then—a great blackness—and the awful presence of the shapeless Fear moved a shade nearer to him. His limbs failed under him and he fell to his knees—an ox, dumb and helpless, awaiting the descending blow....

In the houseboat, Dolly was in almost as great extremity as her paramour. From beneath a tattered paper shade, an oil-lamp dimly illumined the interior of the place which she called home. Worldly goods or comforts had not been her rewards for the sacrifice of home and children. Kearney's shack had been quite as well furnished as the miserable little room in which she found herself trapped. For her eyes, wide with fear and beseeching as they looked at the men near her, were those of a dumb animal suddenly deprived of freedom.

The woman was sitting beside a bare deal table while, one at each side, the Laird and Captain Hardy looked down upon her misery. Graham had just loosened the buttons of his mackinaw, and had taken a seat upon the edge of the table. His fine head and grizzled, short-cut grey hair showed to advantage in the half-shadow cast by the flimsy lampshade. Hardy, still close-wrapped in a blue pea-jacket upon which beads of fog were glistening, stood with arms akimbo. Dolly was speaking.

"I cawn't," she pleaded. "I cawn't do it. Jimmy won't take me back now."

"Better leave that to him," retorted Graham. "He's spent enough trying to get you back. Then there's the children. What about them?"

"Oh, I know," she whined, "sure—there's the kids, bless their 'arts." She sniffed silently into the corner of her skirt. Presently she looked up, fear again in possession of her. "Now look, gentlemen, yer right, y'are. But 'tain't goin' to do no good for Bud to find you here. He's been drinkin'. Last night——"

Hardy leaned forward and pointed to a blue mark which showed beneath her left eye. It was plain that it was not a part of the general unhealthy colour of her cheeks beneath their rouge, nor was it a trace of the cheap cosmetic that had been daubed upon her eyelashes.

"Last night, eh? I suppose he gave you that?"

"No, sir, he didn't. I rammed myself against the stove this mornin'. Bud, 'e didn't do that. No, sir."

A look of disgust crossed the Captain's face.

"Wimmen get my goat. No"—he turned away with a shrug—"you bet Bud didn't do that!"

He directed his attention to a figure sitting so quietly in the corner of the room, where the shadows were deepest, that it seemed to be a part of the fixtures.

"Featherstone, get up!"

The old man, for it was he, jumped as if bitten, and, clearing his throat loudly, moved into the light. The ancient morning-coat, the greasy vest and tie, the grimy celluloid collar, were as they had been in the Squamish. Time had produced no effect upon his clothes. They were now in a rigid state which made immediate dissolution impossible. Like the man in them, they were on the verge of the great change when all would be naturally resolved into its elements. Striving for an air of dignified composure, he said, "Sir?"

"Now look, Featherstone, you are an old man, so I can't say all I want to. I thought you were a gentleman. I want to know what brought you into this dump to-night. What's more, I'm going to know. What is there between this woman and you? Were you a party to her running away?"

The old man shifted uneasily. Then, mustering the remnants of a past which had known honour, he replied, tapping his cane upon the floor to emphasise his speech:

"By what right you assume the role of inquisitor, sir, remains to be seen. I came here upon business—business with Mr. Powers—some days ago, sir. Is that sufficient for you?"

"Business with Powers?" The Laird slid from his sitting posture and stood erect. "Why don't you tell Captain Hardy that you came to get whisky for the Squamish Indians?"

Featherstone's face became, if possible, a shade more grey. "I have the pleasure, sir," he quavered, "of telling you that you are an infamous liar!"

Graham smiled. "You have the advantage of me, Mr. Featherstone. You are an old man. The Captain said it."

The old fellow chattered on, his beard trembling. "Furthermore, I may say that Mr. Powers, of whom you speak so slightingly, is my friend, and a loyal friend of the Crown, as I happen to know. That this unfortunate woman should be temporarily under Mr. Powers' protection is not my concern, but it is not a discredit to him."

"A loyal friend of the Crown!" Hardy laughed outright.

"I happen to know, sir," continued Featherstone sharply, "that he is in the employment of the Government—a trusted servant—and has just averted the worst strike with which we have been threatened in years."

"Lord!" Captain Hardy looked at the Laird, whose lips were set grimly. "Whisky ring—dope ... now, this! Good. The Government is to be congratulated—probably Powers should be congratulated too! Now I know that I am going to wait for him to-night. He's worth meeting again, if only to see so much of the devil under one hide."

Their attention was diverted by the woman, who threw herself back, covering her head at the same time with her apron, into which she sobbed without control.

"Oh—wot's goin' to 'appen to me? Bud'll kill 'im. It'll be murder—'ere to-night—an' me in it!"

She stopped her whimpering and Uncovered her face. Reaching out, she touched Graham's sleeve.

"I'll go 'ome——"

A dull thud sounded from the deck forward of the cabin.

"Wot's that? Did you 'ear that, sir?" she cried.

There was a moment's silence in the little room. No further noise was heard. Captain Hardy moved towards the door.

"I'll take a look about," he said, as he went out.

The Laird bent over the woman, who had sunk back into her chair.

"Home, did you say? Mrs. Kearney, even if you don't care for Jimmy, that's the place until you can get squared away. He won't want to keep you, if you must go. But—tell him. Play the game. It's always best to do that right from the start. Cut out the whisky, too. It's——"

He looked up when Hardy came in, and then, instantly, he forgot his moralising. The Captain's voice was trembling as he half whispered, "It's Powers! But—— Come, let us try to get him in. I can't understand—quite——"

When they emerged upon the few square feet of space which formed the forward deck of the houseboat, the fog prevented them from seeing clearly. In cold, almost slimy folds, it clung to the sides of the boat and to the barnacle-crusted piling to which the craft was fastened. The boards beneath their feet were black and slippery, so that, when the deck swayed gently upon the tide, they had to hold fast to each other for support.

So it was that they nearly stumbled over the dark form of Bud Powers, who crouched upon the wet planks before them. He was sitting, his knees drawn up to his chin and his long arms wound about his legs so that he appeared to be hugging them to his breast. He was hatless, his hair falling in a shaggy mass across his eyes, which blinked stupidly when the light from the opened door fell upon him. In his entire attitude, the man bore a gruesome resemblance to a great simian resting upon the ground. When his gaze slowly shifted to those who stood watching him, they were chilled by the presentiment of some unknown horror. He stared at them with the indifferent glance of an animal—without a spark of the soul which marks those who have passed into the human kingdom. The jungle had claimed its own.

CHAPTER XX

WIDER HORIZONS

The strike had ended. For one week corpulent citizens reduced weight by walking to their places of business, merchandise remained piled in the freight sheds, and ships floated idly beside the wharves waiting for a stevedore's whistle to sound their release. The flash of scarlet was seen daily against the drab colouring of the streets where the

"Mounties" rode, grim-faced and silent, exercising their horses along the main thoroughfares. Then screaming headlines proclaimed the defeat of Labour. Quickly and most effectively, the authorities had delivered their blow. The strike-leaders had been arrested and, upon various charges based upon secret information furnished by spies, they had either been sentenced to prison or had been deported.

"If one of them—just one—had stood to his guns! Yellow—yes, that's the right name! Do you blame the 'powers that be' for despising us? They put on the clamps and we squeal—turn king's evidence—anything to escape facing the music! And this is the stuff out of which some of us darn fools were going to mould a ruling class! Lord!"

The Old Man groaned. He sat in his office chair, an unwieldy spectacle of misery. The clouds of pain within had softened into a permanent rain of bitterness—a remorseful longing for the return of an enthusiasm which he felt had gone from him for ever. He looked older. The light of battle had died out of the grey eyes beneath their penthouses of wiry hair, and the lines of his face were carven more deeply, so that the granite of him seemed chipped and weather-beaten almost to the point of dissolution.

Across from him sat Captain Hardy, his thin lips working as he nervously rolled a quid of tobacco with his tongue. Graham, one leg over the back of a tilted chair, stood, chin in hand, his elbow balanced upon his knee. He flicked the ashes from the end of his cigarette.

"What does it matter, Tacey? The strike was none of your making. They ought to stick to you now. They can see you were right from the first. Buck up! It wasn't you who showed the white feather, you know."

The Old Man impatiently shoved letters and papers from before him and leaned upon the cleared space.

"That's all right for you, Graham! You're not standing where I am. I built this thing—this Party that had chances of representing Labour in the Legislature and of finally winning a majority at the polls. It was only patience that was needed. There'd be a Labour Government in every country in Europe to-day if we'd only headed in right. A fat chance we'll have at the next election! We've lost, I tell you—showed our weakness—played the other fellow's game." His jaw set with a savage determination. "By the eternal gods, I'm through! It'll always be like this. Powers—yep—I tell you there's plenty more like him, and these here working mules will go wherever they're driven. Yuh can't lead 'em."

"Powers won't do much more driving," said Hardy.

Tacey lowered his voice. "He sure won't." He glanced half apologetically at the two men. "Here I am bellyachin' about my troubles when I otta be thinkin' of the other fellow's. Before Maitland gets here I want to get stiffened up. That's why I called you boys in. Just couldn't seem to face him alone. His wife—Lord! Lord!—and he don't know yet that *The Beacon's* wrecked! Powers' wharf-rats made a clean job. Ruined every machine we've got."

"Sabotage"—the Laird smiled innocently—"when it's the capitalist's property. What do you call it when it's the worker's property?"

Heeding a flash from the Old Man's eyes, Graham's face resumed its serious lines.

"No offence meant, Tacey," he said. "I'm not that kind. I am sorry, and I know that it will be a blow to Maitland. He has need of friends—all of his friends—just now. I'm pretty hard, I guess—been out in the wilds a lot—up against some tough luck in my time, too—but I tell you the look in that boy's eyes frightened me when I saw him at the undertaker's parlours yesterday. Why don't you keep him away from here for a while?"

"Good Heavens! You don't know Maitland," retorted the Old Man. "I tried, but he suspected something—insisted on coming down. I was afraid to say too much. He might think I hadn't approved of the girl or the Lord knows what. What could I do?"

"The girl? Huh! Best ever—white clean through—I know her breed—get me?" snapped Hardy.

A noise at the street-door attracted their attention. The big front doors of the plant yielded with some difficulty. Some of the debris of the wreckage had fallen against them, and Maitland, in his haste, had flung them farther open than

was necessary. The dim glow of light through the glass walls of the editor's office illumined the room where had stood the presses and other equipment of *The Beacon*. In the dusk the damage was not all apparent, but there was sufficient to tell Maitland the story. His passage to the office was impeded by the litter of splintered wood and twisted iron remaining after Powers' gang had done their work. He entered the inner room without knocking. Graham stood aside to permit the Old Man to greet his protégé. This he did standing, with outstretched hands.

"Glad you came, boy ... glad you came," Tacey lied. Then his hands dropped slowly to his side when he saw that Craig made no attempt to take them. The young man's face was pale, his eyes wide and unseeing—or were they seeing more than the others could sense? Dead men had eyes like these for a moment after the last agony. His slimness was more apparent because of the well-cut serge coat which fitted him closely. Usually erect, his shoulders were now slightly stooped, as if beneath the weight of an invisible burden. He reached up to remove his grey felt hat and, as he did so, revealed a white patch—the hair shaved away—plaster covering a scalp wound. They had struck him again after he had recovered from Powers' knock-out blow.

From some remote place, his sight returned to look into his chief's eyes.

"What does it mean? What has happened?" he said.

"Powers' gang. They wrecked the plant, night before last. Don't worry. We'll get goin' again. It's nothing. Never fear, we'll get goin' again—that is——" He paused.

"Yes?" Maitland spoke quietly now.

"That is——" The Old Man avoided the inquiry in the eyes which searched his own. "That is, if you want to, son."

While they watched him, Craig remained silent, fingers slipping back and forth along the rim of his hat. Outside, the fog descended in chilling coils, like the grey breath of doom itself, filling street and alley-way until it seemed to invade the place where they stood. The jarring concussion of cars, the crunch of wheels on slippery rails, a foghorn in the harbour, alone proclaimed that life was somewhere beneath the desolate pall of mist which veiled the one window of the little room. Tacey's voice had sounded paternal, filled with understanding. The Captain's keen visage, Graham's lean quietude suggested distant places where one might forget—wide spaces untrodden by human feet—and Craig's one desire was to get away beyond returning—away from himself, if that were possible. If only a door would open outward from his house of pain! But, even if the way were open, could he go on? Was there strength left for that? Was there any reason why he should go on?

"Are you going to carry on?" They were startled by the suddenness of Maitland's question.

"Well, now, I'm leaving it up to you, son. I'm not red-hot about it myself. I'm not as young as I used to be but I'm not a quitter. Guess you know the strike's off. Kolazoff's pinched. That's the worst they did. They're welcome to the rest. They crawfished—everyone of them. Swore they loved the constitution and things as they are. Oh, they're a pretty lot. I'm not askin' you to waste your life on them—see! No, sir, I'm not! You're young——"

He was lashing out now as if he had been humiliated beyond endurance.

His impetuosity seemed to give strength to Maitland, who said, in an even voice, as if mildly surprised, "You do not mean that you are deserting the Movement?"

Tacey sat down heavily.

"Take a chair, Maitland," he implored. "I'm sore, and I'm talking a lot of rubbish."

Graham glanced at the Captain and caught the faint curl of his lip and the twinkle in his eye.

Seated, Maitland listened while the Old Man continued: "It's this way, son. The Movement's one thing. This Party, which we were trying to build in this God-forsaken neck of the woods, is another matter. Nothing can stop social evolution. Nothing can keep back the coming of the social revolution. That's written in the stars. It's the next step

forward. What's more, son, the power of Money over human life has got to be broke. Nobody can do it or will do it but the Labour Party. But I'm sick of trying to go on here. They're not class-conscious here; there's no industrial machine big enough to squeeze them; no autocracy to whip them into line, like there is in Russia. Understand?"

Understand? Yes, Maitland thought that he did. Again he was withdrawn, impersonal, looking beyond the man who, like a gramophone, repeated the ancient catchwords of his creed—the confession of faith subscribed to by the scientific Socialists—evolution, revolution, the Movement, the Party, class-consciousness, the class struggle, capitalist, proletariat! What were these words? All were definitions, forms, symbols, watertight compartments for thought—labels for the bottles which would vainly try to hold the wine of life while it was fermenting.

The salvation of the race by man-made institutions—by the grace of economics? It had seemed possible. Yes—but then, so had all Utopias to all the starry-eyed dreamers since the morning of time. All of these ardent visionaries had overlooked the first essential for the building of heavens upon earth in their failure to understand and to develop individuals. Not by science could there be brought into being the higher men and women. The beast in Everyman was his own problem, not to be solved by anything outside of himself. Powers—yes—Powers, who was the beast in man—had shattered their tower upon the sands.

Maitland tried to shake off the impersonality which he felt towards this man, who had pledged his life to a cause and was not a "quitter."

He said gently, "I am afraid that I must disappoint you, Tacey. I'm not up to a discussion to-night. You'll go on, of course. It's right for you to go on. It's your job. However, I must be fair to you. I'm not interested now. I'm not clear about it all. I want time to think; but I believe I am right when I say that this is not my work. I feel sympathetic—if I can feel at all—but, again, I know you must fight this battle to the bitter end. I never was right and I never will be, if you can understand me. I was just trying to kill something by working like the devil night and day. I've got to find out what it was that I was trying to kill." He stared helplessly into the faces, which were kindly but void of comprehension. Rising wearily, the droop of his shoulders more apparent than before, he reached for his hat, which he had laid upon the table near him.

Graham's hand went to the young man's arm. "Look here, Maitland! I'm going up to my cabin in the Squamish. I'm going to outfit for a long trek into the hills. You come with me. It'll put you right. Nothing like the mountains for that."

Captain Hardy spoke before Craig could reply.

"Easy, mate—easy! This is my man. While you were singing 'What is Home without a Mother' to the Kearney skirt—where was I? Sails set, heading into the wind, looking in every port in this bally town for this young spitfire. Did I find him? I did, and a nice-looking mess he was. Powers' valet had him combed and scented proper, I'm tellin' you. Now, I got him. I've been lookin' for him for nigh on to three years. I got a job for him. South Seas, palm-trees, moonlit beaches, hidden treasure—the biggest story ever penned. He can write it. I can show him the place to find the dope."

Surprise was written upon the faces of those who listened. The seaman was tense, stirred by some inner excitement. He leaned forward, delivering his words like a machine-gun in action.

"Stare, darn you—stare, all of you! I'm not crazy, even if I look it. A chap called Donelly wrote a book about the lost Atlantis. Some people think that he was daft. What about a continent lying beneath the Pacific's rolling blue? I tell you, I've seen it—walled cities—rums of towers and temples—everything! I've got the maps. I can find it again. Maitland is going with me, and he's going to write a book. The skipper will get mentioned in the story. He'll get part of the halo—but Maitland is *it*!"

Through the wall of the fog there stole in the hoarse cry of a horn blown in some distant hollow of space beyond human reckoning. It sounded like the throaty call of a monster of the fire-mists, wallowing in marshes of an age older than man. It buttressed the illusion suggested by the Captain's revelation. A sketch—a few vague hints—but his words drove home because of the conviction behind them. Hardy was no fool. Steel tried and tempered and under control—he was that and more.

Graham broke the silence after the skipper's outburst. "Well, what next? Of all the dew-drenched dreams! Why don't you settle down, you old pirate? I'd thought I'd keep you ashore this time. Here you are ... wanderlust bubbling like champagne! Well, Maitland, I can't offer you anything like this, old man. My feet like the solid ground under them. What do you say?"

"That it is mighty good of both of you," retorted Craig. "I don't deserve such friends. But"—he smiled—"you can't expect me to decide in a minute. Look here, come up to my flat. It's warmer there. We can all sit and talk. I'd rather"—he paused—"not be alone there."

Tacey had risen. He put his hand out so that his finger-tips touched Maitland's hand.

"I know, boy—I know. Not a word, now. I'd like to come, but you fellows had better go without me to-night. I'm going to get some of the sleep I've missed. You listen to these wild-eyed wanderers and then, if you don't like their stories, come in and see the Old Man to-morrow. He ain't dead yet."

At the front entrance they said good night to Tacey, listening while the irregular beat of his cane died away in the mist. Graham linked his arm through Craig's and, with Hardy, they turned in the opposite direction. They were alone in the grey desolation of the heavy vapour.

The Laird said casually to Maitland, "I shook hands with one of our old Squamish friends to-day. Mrs. Paget, you know. She is on her way to San Francisco."

Maitland realised that pain could never numb the heart beyond feeling while body remained knit to soul.

His friend caught only the question, "Mrs. Paget?"

"Yes. Al Stewart, an old pal of mine, brought her down from the Peace River country. The major died up there. Poor little lady—she looked all broken up. Needs a rest and a long one at that. Well, well ... life's a queer game!"

No movement betrayed the fact that Graham's words had fallen like searing fire upon the dulled consciousness of the man beside him. From this young dreamer there had just departed the illusion of a world to be rebuilt according to the heart's desire, and it left him desolate to face a lover's agony following the death of Stella. In her he had found surcease from memory that was pain. Now was added another grief. She had not been the first to awaken the white flame in him. Had his love for her been more than a strong physical attraction and a reaction from an experience which had stirred the deeps of his being? He did not know. He refused to think of it. He must get away.

At a street corner he stopped. "Have you got the charts and notes with you, Captain? I mean the ones about your lost continent."

"No. They're at my room. There is a stack of them."

Maitland hesitated. "I hate to seem ungrateful. The fact is, I am feeling rather rocky. I shall have to lie down for a while and rest. I can't talk to-night. Will you make it to-morrow evening? Awfully sorry. I'm sure you will understand."

They did. He knew they would be like that. Their handclasps told the story. Yes. He must rest. To-morrow night would do.

Graham stood, meditatively following Maitland with his eyes, until he had disappeared around the corner of an apartment-house. Then he turned abruptly to his companion.

"Can you take a passenger for Suva, Captain?"

Hardy's voice was eager. "You mean that Craig will come with me?"

The Laird laughed quietly. "Certainly. I believe that he will. However, that is not all that I mean. You heard me mention Mrs. Paget. Well, she is the one woman in the world for that boy." Hardy started to speak, but was checked by

his friend. "No questions, please! You know me. I like the lad. So do you. It's up to you and me to save him. If I advise her to do so, Mrs. Paget will book a passage with you. Not a word to Maitland ... you understand."

The Captain's lips were compressed in a grim smile. His grey eyes twinkled, while he extended his hand impulsively.

"Put it there! We'll do it," he said.

On the following evening Craig Maitland sat in his apartment with his two friends, Hardy and Graham. The table near them was covered with a litter of maps, pen-and-ink drawings, and notebooks. A bulky roll of manuscript, which lay at the Captain's elbow, contained his ineffectual attempt to reduce the tale of his explorations to book form. He knew that he had failed. He had not the gift of the artist nor the patience of the scientist. Only in action did his qualities of soul and mind find adequate expression, so that there had arisen the determination to find the man who could write the volume which would bring fame to its author, while it brought recognition to the adventurer who had discovered a world as great as that of Columbus. The existing land areas were mapped. Little remained for the daring navigators of to-day but the air and the ocean floor and their mysteries. From the sea there might be recovered the story of a past which had vanished with the lapse of pitiless ages that had swept everything from the feeble memory of the brain.

Maitland, seated so that he faced the windows, was looking out into the wind-torn deeps of sky above the roof-tops. Pale gold, barred by strata of sombre grey which spread like dark wings across the glow of the sunset, the upper air curved down to the clearer tones of English Bay. He was listening in silence to the staccato fire of the Captain's talk, and was building therefrom mental images of the buried city which the skipper had glimpsed in an atoll somewhere south of Easter Island. As if he were gazing into the crystal blue waters, Hardy was drawing rapidly and vividly the picture suggested by the ruins of terraced gardens, towering pillars and porticoes, glittering temples and palaces. The buried city! Dreamily, through Maitland's mind there floated lines from one of his favourite poets:

> In each heart lies a buried city
> More beautiful than Ys.

Even as the echo of the music in the words faded from his inner ear, he caught the old familiar glory of a vision which had been his before. Upon a foundation of cloud, a shadowy island in a sea of iridescence, he saw the rising structure of the city which had twice thrown its glamour for him upon the screen of time. Fearing to be swept into the full ecstasy of the thing, he turned away to look at Hardy.

"When do you sail, Captain?" he said.

"In about a week's time. I have to go to 'Frisco to complete my cargo—then across the Pacific, into the sunset."

Maitland let his eyes rest again upon sea and sky. Beyond the line which lay like a shimmering thread of gold, the waters of desire flowed outward to wider horizons. There, upon other shores, might be attempted once more the building of new temples to the Silent Watcher who stands at the end of dreams.

This time Craig glanced at Graham, who returned his smile.

"I have decided against you, old man. I am going with Captain Hardy."

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