THE BIRD IN THE BOX

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THE BIRD IN THE BOX

BY

MARY MEARS

Author of "The Breath of The Runners"

TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS

October, 1910

To
THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER
"NELLY WILDWOOD"
THIS BOOK IS DEVOTEDLY INSCRIBED

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The soul of man at birth is immured in a

prison. It is like a bird singing in a cage, heedless of the bars that confine it. But later the soul knows its bondage.

Panting with a desire for liberty, man tries in two ways to attain it, through his ability to labour, through his capacity to feel.

He has need of freedom, hence the poem, the ship, the engine, the thousand cunning and gigantic structures for annihilating space, for chaining the forces of nature.

He has need of freedom, hence the universal outpouring of his affections, the glory and the emancipation of his highest love.

June, 1910

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BOOK I

THE BIRD IN THE BOX

CHAPTER I
THE LONG JOURNEY AND THE LONGER ONE

The new vessel, gay with swelling scarves of bunting, ornamented from stem to stern with floating flags that kissed the breeze, rested easily on the stocks. The ways under her had been greased, the space before her in the river cleared. High on the prow her name *Merida* shone in gold letters. Every eye was upon her.

Grimy faces looked from shop windows. The windows of the bending-shed, the blackboard-shed, the pipe-cutting shop, the sheet-iron shop, the joiner-shop, the brass-foundry,—all were filled with countenances blackened by labour. Similar countenances peered from the masts of vessels still in the slips, and from the heights of the immense travelling cranes and floating derricks. These gigantic and uncouth machines seemed to await the launch with an eagerness of their own. Had not each, in its own way, helped to fashion her—this marvel of a new ship?

The contrivances for drilling, chipping, caulking, blowing rivet-heating fires seemed to hold their breath, so unwonted was their stillness at this hour; while the mammoth pontoon, whose duty was still to be performed,—that of transporting the eighty-ton boiler a distance of one hundred feet and depositing it, a living heart, within the vessel, —the pontoon seemed to be lost in speculation.

The stocks gave no sign. Amid all the

excitement of the yard, these great mother-arms of wood awaited stoically the instant when they must release their burden. All the morning a swarm of workmen had been busy loosening their tenacious hold on the new vessel.

"She'll go out at the turn of the tide," remarked a reporter; "that chap over there with an eyeglass will give the signal. He's launched over a hundred vessels, and never a hitch."

The newspaper artist to whom these remarks were addressed, scarcely heeded them. He was busy with his sketch. But an old man, standing near, caught the words and shivered ecstatically.

"She's a Ward liner to be used in the fruit trade between New York and Havana," continued the reporter. "Look, there comes the launching party now," he cried. "The messenger boy has the flowers,—and that's the girl who's to do the christening! She's the granddaughter of the owner. Rather good

looking, don't you think?"

The old man turned squarely about. His stick shook in his hand. Excitement gripped him by the throat. He smiled broadly. The girl, accompanied by a bevy of friends, came forward. She was a slight thing, dressed in grey, and had about her neck a white feather boa, which fluttered in the breeze. Escorted by a man wearing a high hat, who helped her over the obstructions, she approached the new vessel, lifting blue eyes to the imposing height. A platform, reached by a slant of stairway and bright with red, white and blue bunting, had been built against the boat's bow. The girl's slim fingers grasped the railing, and followed by the rest of the party, she lightly ascended the steps.

Immediately there was a commotion. A score or more workmen, like elves, swarmed beneath the immense swelling sides of the boat, and with rhythmical strokes of sledge hammers, drove in wedges and removed the long pieces of timber placed in a slanting position against the ship. Thus lifted, the

Merida rested completely on the greased ways. Only one log now restrained the six hundred feet of her impatient length. Was it the mother's lingering hold?

Red below the water-line, black above, her new anchor turned to silver in the sunlight, the *Merida* was without blemish, save for the spots left when the shores were hauled down; and these spots workmen, carrying long-handled brushes, touched rapidly with paint. At last all was in readiness and the dull sound of a saw passing through wood could be heard. The silence grew so deep that the word given by the man wearing the eyeglass was heard by the spectators. He spoke quietly; the saw passed through the log. The girl with the fluttering boa was seen to raise her hand; there was a shattering of glass, and with one plunge, one impulse of superb motion, the new ship slid down the ways. Swiftly, smoothly, she glided forward and the laughing water seemed to rise to meet her.

Instantly from an hundred throats a shout went up. The boats watching from the river

began to whistle, the locomotives on the surrounding railroads shrieked shrilly. The workmen threw their caps into the air and followed as fast as they could along the line of the deserted stocks. The girl in the white boa waved her handkerchief. But the boats on the river had their own way. Shrilly, loudly, continuously, they tooted; while those still in the slips,—double-turreted monitors and squat battleships,—without bells, without whistles, without cannon,—by the very eagerness with which they seemed to await their turn, added mystically to the commotion.

Free! This was the one thought expressed on every side. It was as if man, by the intensity of his craving to escape bonds, communicated this desire to the objects of his creation. The impulse of the launching had carried the new ship to the middle of the stream, and there, hailed by the enthusiasm of the shore and the river, she floated, half-turning as if looking back coquettishly at the land; while over her a flock of birds, little specks in air, circled in an abandonment of

freedom.

Amid all the tumult only one figure had remained without stirring. The old man with the stick in his hand was a stranger; until that day he had never been seen in the place. Yet, at the moment of the launch, he alone reached the highest pitch of exultation of which the human spirit is capable.

No longer conscious of his body, he laughed while great tears rolled down his cheeks and lost themselves in his beard. Suddenly, however, he looked at the ways covered with tallow which lay in folds now, —wrinkled like the flesh of the very old,—at the stocks lifting empty arms to the sky; and a change came over him. The sparkles died in his eyes, the eyes themselves seemed to sink back in his head. He lifted his hand. Then, after a wavering second, the hand fell.

"Ships," he quavered, speaking half to himself, half, it would seem, to the deserted stocks, "ships is like sons. There's no use clutchin' 'em or hangin' on to 'em. It's their

nature to go exploitin' over the world. All we can say is, the Lord bless 'em, the Lord reveal his mighty wonders to 'em. Amen."

After this quaint speech, his spirit, which was the eternal youth within him, revived. Chuckling to himself, old David Beckett started on his homeward journey to Pemoquod Point on the Maine coast, a day's and a night's travel, by water and rail. His pilgrimage to Philadelphia, from every point of view but his own, had proved unsuccessful.

Five months before, David's son, Thomas Beckett, had disappeared from the Point and had gone to Philadelphia to work in the shipyards. Beyond the bald statement of this fact, which he left scrawled on the back of an envelope, young Thomas had never written a word home, though once he had sent a draft for a small sum of money. His was an impatient, gloomy spirit, easily depressed and easily excited. Life, indeed, either blazed in him like a devouring flame, or died down to a flicker which left him frozen and taciturn,

with never a word on his thick, handsome lips, and no feeling in his heart, save, apparently, that of a fierce caged thing. In this mood when at home he had been wont to go about for weeks, leaving the care of the lobster pots entirely to his father, while he nursed his insensate wrath. Then, suddenly, the light would come. He would set about his work with savage joy, and with painful eagerness would read every book that came to his hand, from the Bible to a ten cent translation of a French novel. He would sing, he would lay plans. It was in this mood that he had gone to Philadelphia. When, however, his father followed him, bearing urgent news concerning the young fellow's wife, Thomas had again disappeared. Two weeks before, so old David learned, he had shipped as a sailor on an out-going vessel he had helped to build. But the father understood.

"I tell ye, Zary," he proclaimed the following evening in Old Harbour, as he clambered into the cart of his friend Zarah Patch, blandly ignoring the question in the other's face, "Philadelphy's changed since the

days when I used to work in the car shops at t'other end of the town. There wa'n't any sech vessels built then. Double-turreted monitors and iron-clad battleships and cruisers that blaze with lights at night jest like floating hotels, all gilt furniture and white paint. Times has changed. Why some of them ships, when they was finished, they told me, would have as many as four engines apiece a-beatin' inside of 'em, to say nothin' of cylinders and twin-screws; and the fightin' ships would jest bristle with breach-loading rifles and Gatling guns. Think of the commotion they'll make when they're once finished, all them ships!" he concluded gleefully. "Yet there they stood, each in its stocks, quiet as lambs, helpless as babes unborn."

As David uttered the last words, Zarah gave him a sidelong glance, though he made no comment other than the sharp flap he gave the reins on the mare's back. He was not given to speech. Zarah owned a bit of ground on which he raised vegetables which he delivered to the summer hotel. He also carried what travellers there were from Old

Harbour dock to Pemoquod. To-night David, the lobsterman, was his one passenger.

It was about seven o'clock of an evening in late summer, and across that bleak, barren bit of land the sun was just setting. As they drove along, it sparkled on the window panes of the houses and lit up the cross on the Catholic church; beyond the village it seemed to confine itself to the rocks by the wayside. It turned them a dull soft gold. A strong salt breeze was blowing.

Bony with boulders, the land reached like an eager arm into the sea, as if it would obtain somewhat. But beyond the dories of the lobstermen clinging close in shore and visible as the road ascended to a slight eminence, nothing told of any garnering whatsoever. On every side were wastes of long brownish grass, low shrubs and clumps of pines, that stood up stark by the roadside. Beneath the dark shade of the trees mushrooms and little clumps of shell were embedded in moss.

Of farms, strictly speaking, there were none, though the houses that revealed themselves occasionally as the road dipped and turned, had each its poor attempt at a garden. It was frankly a land of bleak striving, bordering closely on want, of roistering storms and sweet, enveloping fogs.

As David Beckett talked he raised his voice to a piping treble. Ships and the building of ships, this was his theme. And exalted beyond time and reality, he gave himself up to it, so that at last even Zarah was influenced. Its poetry began to work in his slower brain and his lips relaxed into a smile.

As the sun neared the horizon, the wind increased, and in every direction the shrubs bent before it with a writhing movement; and as far as the eye could see, an agitation ran through the coarse grass. From the sea came the steady moaning of the surf. It was as if the earth emitted heavy sighs; but for these two ancient men the burdens that weigh upon human life had ceased to exist.

The house before which they presently stopped was a gaunt frame structure with scarcely a trace of whitewash remaining upon its clapboards. Cold and exposed it turned its front door away from the road with New England reserve. A lilac bush grew under one of the windows. With every breath of wind it sawed against the sill. As David possessed himself of his carpet-bag and turned in at the gate with a wave of the hand, the sun, which until that moment had shone full upon this window, disappeared. Shadows and the old man entered the house together.

Flushed like Ulysses returned from his adventures, old David deposited his grip-sack in the entry and then cautiously approached his daughter-in-law's room. She lay there in a great bed with four posts, and in her thin fingers, she held a leaf of the lilac bush—a leaf like a green heart.

The old man peered in at her, pursing up his lips. He thought that his story would "liven Laviny up," and he was enjoying the prospect of relating it, when she turned toward him.

She half lifted herself on her elbow. Her face was ghastly, her eyes shining. She looked past him; then fixed her eyes wildly on his face. But he shook his head at her and began speaking with soft jocularity.

"No, I didn't bring him, I couldn't; let me tell you how it was;" and he advanced smiling into the room. "Day after day as Thomas seen that ship he was at work on, grow up taller in the stocks; as he fitted them pieces of red tin unto her sides,—for Thomas was what they call a 'fitter-up', Laviny,—he had his thoughts. And you an' me, knowin' him, we know pretty well what those thoughts were. The long and short of it was, he couldn't stand bein' tied by the leg no longer. He thought how she would glide through the water, that great ship, of the lands she'd visit, of—Laviny!" he cried sharply, as with a gasp, she fell back on the pillow.

"You hadn't ought to act so," he expostulated; "you know he wa'n't marked the way he was fer nothin' with that little spot on his left cheek under the eye. His mother

marked him that way before ever he was born, and we often spoke of its bein' jest the shape of the continent of Africky; and it's to Africky—"

A hoarse rattle drowned his words. He peered more closely at her with his aged eyes. And at that moment a faint thin wail came up from the other side of the bed.

He seized her arm while his tears fell on her wrist, which never quivered under their hot touch. "Laviny!" he cried, "Oh, he hadn't ought to have done it! Don't leave me alone with *it*—the little one!" he shrieked. "Why didn't you tell me it was here? Oh, Laviny, Laviny girl!"

But Lavina Beckett paid no heed. She had embarked for a stranger port and over stormier seas than any her husband had dared. The sound of the old man's sobs brought a woman to the door. Her figure surged with fat. One of her teeth projected when her face was in repose. She hastily approached the bed, but even she was awed.

"Don't make sech a noise," she said finally. "It ain't no use. You can't call her back now. If you could've managed to bring *him*, it would've been different likely. But you didn't. You never did manage, I guess, to do anything you set out to."

But the old man paid no heed. He sat with his hands on his knees, his head dropped forward, inefficient, old, broken down by grief, and a thin low wail for the second time broke the silence.

CHAPTER II
THE WAITING OF WOMEN

Lavina Beckett lay in the front room of the old house, and people passing glanced askance at the closed blinds. Recent death inhabits a place more completely than life, and Lavina's personality seemed to lurk in the panels of the grey door, in the branches of the

lilac bush, and even extended to the road.

All through the day neighbours came to offer condolences. Then, shrewd-faced, with the marks of child-bearing, hard work and a harsh climate in every line, these respectable wives of lobstermen took their way home in little groups. In the house they had borne themselves somewhat awkwardly, and once outside, their pity for the dead woman appeared tinged with resentment. Little was known about her at the Point.

It was after nightfall when a woman wearing a shawl over her head, knocked timidly at old David's door. A boy of six years clung to her skirts. When she was admitted, she slipped furtively into the room of death, and the boy, with difficulty restraining his tears, waited for her in the kitchen. He was afraid of the fat woman with her face bound round with a handkerchief, who was washing dishes at the sink. She made a great clatter. When she stepped to a cupboard, the candle threw an exaggerated portrait of her on the opposite wall. The ends

of the cloth around her face stood up in two points, like horns; from between her flabby cheeks, projected a nose like a beak. A fork in her hand became, to his gaze, the size of a pitchfork. Once, when she passed near him, she held back her skirts, muttering under her breath; and he saw the same aversion in her eyes that he knew to be in his own, save that in her look there was a mingling of scorn and in his, a mingling of fright. It was a strange look to be directed toward a child, but it was one with which the boy was familiar. Presently his mother reappeared and they went out again. She walked very rapidly and now and then she wiped her eyes with a corner of her apron. The boy had to run to keep up with her. When they struck into a rugged path leading to the lighthouse, he paused and looked back.

Under the light of a full moon the Beckett house shone with a quite peculiar radiance. And yes, there it was! as they had said. It stood near the tumble-down cow-shed. The funeral was to take place in a village some miles distant, and an early start in the

morning was necessary. The undertaker had gone, but the driver, with the hearse, would remain the night. He was eating his supper now, waited upon by the ugly woman. Meanwhile it stood out in the yard and the moonlight glinted on the four sable urns that decorated its corners, and sparkled on its glass sides and peeped between the black hangings without hindrance. The moon, indeed, to the child's thought, seemed to be as curious as he. Beads of perspiration started to his forehead, and, grasping his mother's skirt, he stumbled on at her side.

As the boy had pictured, in the Beckett kitchen the driver of the hearse was eating his supper, washing it down with a drink of whiskey. Then he disposed himself as best he could on two chairs, and fell asleep. Nora Gage finished the preserves the man had left on his plate, ate a quarter of a pie and went to bed in a room conveniently near the pantry. By eleven o'clock old David was alone.

He entered the front room, and very softly approached the coffin. The light from a

candle wavered over the dead face. Leaning his elbow on the coffin lid and his chin in his hand, old David inspected the face. The first shock past, he wondered that he did not feel more poignant sorrow, but there was something almost impersonal in Lavina's expression. There were violet shadows under the eyes, and the lashes, as they rested on the cheek, were somewhat separated. The small mouth was closed rigidly, the cheeks showed hollows. Young as she was, her delicate feminine countenance already bore upon it the world-old legend—*The waiting of women*. The look did not belong to her individually—twenty years of life could not have branded it there. It was inherited from the first woman who had loved,—the first mother. It was the woman-look, and David recognized it. But he was almost seventy years old, and he sank into a chair and was soon nodding.

The candle spluttered, and the faint significance of the woman's days on earth for the last time blended confusedly with the silence, the night, the wind blowing in the moonlit sedge-grass. When we bury the body

we cut off the last light of a jewel already dimmed by death.

In life Lavina had borne about her a faint suggestion of learning; it was said that on arriving at the Point she had brought with her a box of books. Some of the neighbours believed that she had been a schoolteacher; others that she had been reared by a relative who dealt in books, since the volumes she brought were all new. But Lavina never told them anything, and nothing was known about her, save that she came from a village thirty miles distant, which was on no railroad.

A gust of wind flickered the flame of the candle and a drop of tallow fell on the coffin.

Was it this supposed learning that had attracted Thomas Beckett, or the coiled braids of hair, or the nose, the nostrils of which used to expand slightly, as is the way with people who feel things keenly; or was it, perhaps, the sensitive hands, crossed now so patiently? In any case, whatever the attraction, it had ceased to hold Thomas after the third month;

and once more in the grip of his black mood, he had been seen striding over the rocks, with the hair clinging to his forehead and his eye glowing as if from drink; and finally came the night when the old man and the young woman, both sleeping now so quietly, knew that they were deserted.

Again the draught from the window reduced the light of the candle to a mere blue tongue, and a shadow fell across the woman's face. It blotted out the lips which had been on the point of revealing their tender secret when the blow fell; it still further shrouded the eyes, which through the succeeding weary months gazing from the windows of the alien house, had noted the rags of mist that went floating by and vanished—like human hopes. It blotted out the hands, eloquent of agony, heavy with ungiven caresses. For an instant the shadows obliterated the whole slight frame that until recently had carried beneath its heart another life. Suddenly the candle flame brightened, and simultaneously a cry, small, sharp, almost impudent, broke the silence.

The old man started from his sleep. The cry was repeated. A smile so triumphant that it was sly, spread itself across his wrinkled visage. Seizing the candle which lit the room of death, he trotted into the room of the creature just born.

Outside, the hearse stood in the moonlight. And over yonder at the lighthouse a boy tossed restlessly on the bed beside his mother. In his imagination he still saw the hearse and it filled him with dull questioning. Lifting himself, he laid a hand on the shoulder of his drowsing parent.

'Why were they going to take the woman away?' he asked.

'Because—why because it was necessary.'

'Were they going to put her in the ground?

'Yes, that also was necessary.'

'But wasn't it dark under the ground, and wouldn't she be afraid?'

The mother sighed in her sleep.

The boy regarded her for an instant. Then propping his head on his hand, he fell to listening to the beat of the surf. Gradually his fears ceased, for each silver-lipped wave seemed to be speaking not alone to him, but to the dead woman.

"*Rest, rest,*" they seemed to say, "*rest, rest.*"

CHAPTER III
THE SUN

Old David Beckett, though he never spoke on the subject, was haunted by memories of a childhood passed amid scenes of refinement and wealth. He had a hazy impression that his father had been a gentleman of local distinction in a Canadian town. However, with his father's death had come a change in the fortunes of the family. Its members had

drifted apart, and David himself, at the time scarcely more than a child, had gone to Philadelphia. Year after year he had worked in the car shops until the lead in the paint had affected his health. This break-down had occurred after his wife's death, in his fiftieth year. Reduced in strength he had come to the Point where one of the owners of the shops, in recognition of his long and faithful service, had given him a little house and a bit of land. This change David had welcomed, but it had engendered in his son Thomas a brooding discontent which had increased with the years.

Brought up in Philadelphia until his tenth year, Thomas Beckett had received a rudimentary training in the public schools, and this training, after coming to the Point, he had managed to eke out with haphazard reading. But the cheerless surroundings had fostered in him a tendency to indulge fits of melancholy. Without visible cause, he would become taciturn. When he was twenty-one his father urged him to marry and settle down, but domestic life had small attraction

for Thomas, and it was a surprise to the old man when he finally acted on the suggestion. At the time of his marriage the young lobsterman was thirty years old, tall and broad shouldered, with bold intelligent eyes gazing out from beneath heavy brows, and a moustached lip that, as he spoke, lifted slightly, showing the tips of the white teeth. One raw day he had sailed away from the Point with a cargo of lobsters, and a fortnight later had returned with the meek and fragile Lavina.

During the short period of her wedded life the young wife had contributed to the house of the father and son an air of comfort. Geraniums had bloomed at the windows and the curtains of the front room had been kept white; all the beds had been covered with bright patch-work quilts and the dishes had been washed as soon as used and arranged in gleaming rows in the cupboard. But from the hour of Thomas's desertion, Lavina had relaxed her care of the house. Now, after her death, the change in it was complete. The curtains were dingy, the plants dead, fish-

heads from the dog's dish littered the kitchen floor and flies buzzed about the rich messes Nora Gage was constantly preparing for her own consumption. The deterioration in the home suggested a picture by Hogarth.

David Beckett was bewildered. He would have preferred absolute solitude to the presence of Nora Gage, but the fat woman had established herself with the intention of remaining and he was too old and too ineffectual to know how to get rid of her. Often, from a distance, he would stare at the house with a look of indecision, then, with an oath, he would start on a rapid trot for the kitchen. But once in the presence of the woman, his courage forsook him. With one glance from her little crevice eyes, Nora dominated him.

However, she had one virtue. Though she ignored the appeal of hanging buttons and refused to patch his clothes, she fed him. For that matter, it was her custom to feed every living thing that came under her notice, the dog, the chickens, even flies. For the flies she

had been known to scatter sugar grains, leaning heavily on a substantial elbow to watch the progress of the tiny meal. To old David's food she gave especial attention. His teeth suggested isolated stumps in a clearing; therefore she prepared soft foods for him, porridges and soups, and, while he ate, she was wont to watch him. Her jaws would move in sympathy and in profound contemplation she would even lick her lips.

On Sundays Nora rolled out of bed at an early hour, and, with her prayer book clasped in her pudgy fingers and her too plump bust visibly undulating, she proceeded by slow stages to Old Harbour, where she attended both early mass and vespers in the ancient Catholic church. This church was none too well thought of by the majority of the townspeople, who in the latter years had turned Protestant. Though placed solemnly in the very centre of the town, the edifice was entirely nautical in character, and many were the sympathetic quiverings of its bell when there was a storm off Pemoquod. It seemed to be sounding a requiem for its invisible

congregation of sailormen of every port and clime. Perhaps it was the sight of an occasional sea-faring stranger with a bold look in his eyes that attracted Nora. Or perhaps it was the nearness of a certain little eating-house in a side street, owned by a friend, Katherine Fry.

The hours not occupied in divine worship, Nora was accustomed to spend with Katherine in a room curtained off from the public gaze. There, the one buttressed with unwholesome fat, the eyes playing in her countenance the part of little, gleaming, deep-driven nails, the other, lank as a skeleton, in a shawl the fringe of which suggested her own cookery, the friends were wont to regale themselves, Nora with rich cakes and pastry, Katherine with the quarters and dimes her customer unwillingly relinquished to her. Quarrels were frequent, for each had a spiteful understanding of the other's vice; but greed united them.

"I tell ye," old David would remark when of a Sunday he had undisputed possession of his

lonely grey old house and with Zarah Patch could enjoy to the full the pleasures of a pipe before the kitchen ingle—a pleasure denied him during the week—"I tell ye, Zary, I thank the Lord Nora has religious inclinations! As for me," he would add, hanging his head with a sudden change of mood, "I'm old and filled with wickedness; the wickedness of the world has got to the very marrow of my bones. I ain't fit to bring up no child, Zary."

However, he did bring up the infant literally by hand. Puny, touching, defenceless, the tiny creature, surrounded from the moment of its birth with these oddly unfavourable conditions, asserted at once its independence. It screamed and squirmed every time Nora Gage took it up, so that the care of it devolved entirely upon the grandfather. But far from complaining, he was secretly flattered by this preference. "She feels the tie of blood," he would explain, "but don't you mind, Nora, she'll outgrow these little ways." The woman, however, laughed straight in his face. She was not particularly anxious that the baby should outgrow them.

The infant early became a tyrant. She was not a very pretty child. From beneath a high rounded forehead peered forth two eyes dark and restless. They had the furtive look seen in the eyes of some animals, save that the pupils had a way of expanding suddenly with inquiry. Even before she could speak, her crowing had a strong note of interrogation. "Eee?" she would pipe, raising imperceptible eyebrows, and the old man, as well as he could for chuckling, would answer in the same cryptic language. She had, moreover, a very amusing and energetic way of creeping.

When the times for her feeding arrived, she was always close beside the door; and there old David found her when, big silver watch in hand, he came hastening up from the dory. He carried the odour of the lobsters, and before he could do anything else he must wash his hands. Then the bottle must be scalded and rinsed and the milk warmed. All the wrinkles of his face drew together, such was the care with which he performed these operations; and eager-eyed, occasionally fretting if he were late or particularly slow,

the infant watched him from her place on the floor. Presently he lifted her; then what a picture of peace!

With both hands she clutched the bottle and a soft gurgling, similar to the purring of a cat, filled the room. She laughed, and the look of rapturous content which filled her face was reflected in the countenance of the grandfather. They looked oddly, touchingly alike. Occasionally it was necessary for him to draw the bottle away in order that she might take breath, and at such times she either pursued it with her rosy, clinging mouth, or, being partially satisfied, turned to thrust her fingers between his lips or to pull his beard. Weary as he was from the labour that had occupied him since four in the morning, nothing could have prevailed upon him to relinquish these ministrations to his granddaughter.

When she was nine months old, he had her christened in the Catholic church before a figure of St. Anthony, which seemed to his anxious mind to be of a friendly mien. But it

was with no idea of turning her over to the church. Her religion when she grew up should be a thing of her own choosing. Meanwhile he hearkened to the persuasions of Nora Gage, and the child was baptized Rachel Beckett in honour of his dead wife. After that event, however, the housekeeper lapsed into her former state of indifference; and, neglected on the one hand, and foolishly indulged on the other, the child's life flowed on until her fifth year. When she was five years old a change dawned for her. In the care of the boy from the lighthouse she went to the district school, where she was enrolled as a pupil.

Lizzie Goodenough never abbreviated her son's name. She called him boldly André Garins. But when he gave this name at school, the older boys put tongue in cheek. He was an exceedingly handsome lad, with a woodsy grace. Moreover, his ears were slightly pointed like a fawn's; nor did the likeness end there, for his eyes under the thick mat of hair had a wild and impenetrable look and his soft arched lips seemed formed

for other speech than that of human beings. When addressed, he would either twist his fingers in a kind of wordless agony, or take fleetly to his heels. He was considered an "innocent" by the folk of the Point.

He led Rachel to the school, her tiny cold hand resting noncommittally in his, and left her stranded before the teacher's desk. But that brisk person frightened the child and she became as restless as a little trapped animal. She refused to learn her letters, she refused to learn to count; André Garins, stealthily on the watch, was ashamed of her. But one day she heard the teacher explaining a point in geography by means of a map on the wall and her eyes suddenly dilated. All at once those monotonous recitations, to which she was wont to shut her ears, those garbled descriptions of mountains, oceans, and climates, assumed a startling significance. In that map grimed by smoke and the breath of generations of children, in that square of painted canvas, with its spots of blue for the water, its spots of yellow and pink for the land, its black veins for rivers, and its fuzzy

lines, like caterpillars, for the mountains, she beheld what was an actual vision of the actual world. And this brilliancy of the imagination, this power to touch with life and colour any fact that penetrated her brain at all, proved to be a special gift. But she was too young to understand the liberation that comes through books.

The schoolroom seemed to her the one point of stagnation in an active world. She longed to the point of tears for the sight of trees of which she was temporarily deprived, and for the smell of the outdoor air. The teacher finally in despair left her alone. With something disconcerting in her extraordinarily intelligent eyes, she gazed about her at the other pupils as if she dimly recognised herself as belonging to a distinct and lonely species. Perhaps some subtle power of reasoning underneath the dark hair which grew in a point on her forehead, revealed to her that their needs were not her needs. As instinctively as a plant, she selected from the atmosphere surrounding her what she most required for growth; and idleness

offered opportunity for observations, shrewd, penetrating, constant.

Lizzie Goodenough's son was the one child admitted to her friendship. In winter she permitted him to drag her to and from school on his sled, and in summer she allowed him to string thimble-berries for her on a long grass, which could be smuggled under the desk out of sight of the teacher and eaten at odd moments, when one stood in such dire need of refreshment in the dry country of learning. But, strictly speaking, she had no companions.

For her grandfather a warm strong love beat in her little heart. Often she would clasp him about the neck with one thin arm, and with the other hand against his cheek, would gaze intently upon him until a simultaneous gleam of laughter shot into both their faces. Then she would nestle to him, quivering with a divine mirth which was the mask of diviner tears.

For Nora Gage, Rachel entertained a silent

dislike that expressed itself in manoeuvres to keep out of her way. If Nora entered a room, Rachel, if possible, left it. If the housekeeper, in her flapping slippers, shuffled out into the yard and cast herself down on the seat beneath the apple tree, where Rachel was playing, the child immediately gathered up her pebbles and shells and gravely sought another place. She spoke no oftener to the housekeeper than was necessary, and when she did speak, a weight of scorn trembled in her voice as if some feeling were silently gathering power. Nora Gage looked upon her with her little eyes, which were shrewd and meditative, exactly as a pig's are shrewd and meditative, and was apparently indifferent. But it was inconceivable that she did not hate her.

A part of a battered wreck and a figure-head were, in the truest sense, Rachel's companions. Both were rooted fast where they had come ashore, but before they had reached that expanse of sand, the sea had had its way with them. They were by no means parts of the same craft, but torn, hurled,

gnawed, they had been brought, by the rollicking mood of the ocean, past the fierce skirting of rocks outside and dashed there together on the shore of the bay, to become the playmates of a little child.

Timber by timber the wreck had been washed small, and sometimes after a storm streams of rusty water that resembled blood trickled from its various bolts. Rachel, climbing out upon the wreck, sometimes felt the shallow water sucking between its timbers urging it to put to sea again; and, conscious of the tremble of eagerness in the poor maimed thing, she would pat the beams in passionate sympathy, and lay her cheek to them. Often she tried to dislodge the great hulk by placing her shoulder against it, and once, when the sea sucked off a plank and the tide flung it on the shore several rods away, she spent the following morning in hauling the dissevered portion back to the wreck and trying to hammer it into position. There was in her a curious susceptibility to the pathos of things.

Here and there about the wreck vestiges of

paint appeared, and a faint assemblage of letters formed the name *Defender* on what had been the prow. This paint Rachel brought to temporary brightness by rubbing it with a corner of her apron dipped in sea water. The sand that clogged the ribs of the wreck she removed daily with a shovel. In brief, no waning sovereign, already in the clutch of death could have been waited upon by a trusty handmaiden with more patience and love. In her day she had sailed many a stormy sea, that ship, and without doubt had made many a difficult port; but now in the days of her nothingness to be loved with a love passing that of sailor or captain (for in such affection there is ever something of the seaman's pride in the capabilities of his craft), to be loved, forsooth, with a deep feminine tenderness,—surely, if comfort were possible to those broken bolts and spars, the wreck was comforted. And, testifying to the gallantry inherent in every timber, all that remained of her responded to the thrill of the child's spirit. It was as if the wreck heard commands summoning her to deeds of spiritual daring. The stumps of her masts she

lifted to the sky with an air of defiance, she resisted the encroachments of the sand; and in the upward sweep of her lines toward her broken bow, there was indomitable courage and pride invincible. Valour answered valour and the sun shone gently on the incongruous playmates, on the wreck whose earthly voyages were over, and on the child whose life's journey had scarcely begun.

For the figure-head, Rachel entertained a somewhat different sentiment. It was evidently a bit of German carving, and represented a robust goddess with face lifted to the sky. Full waves of hair blew back from the face; the chin was gone, the nose was gone, but in the gaze of the eyes was blank, unquestioning triumph. She was clad in swirling drapery and a breastplate of overlapping scales, and in the one arm that remained to her she carried a sceptre tipped with a diminutive crown. Rachel admired the way the figure-head stood proudly erect, even strained backwards, and sometimes grasping a stick, she paced the sands in grotesque imitation of the wooden woman. But more

often she sat before her lost in silent contemplation. She saw her fastened to the prow of a vessel, "great-kneed, deep-breasted," with lips and eyes stung by the spray; she saw her bowing deep into the trough of a wave, her gaze as she sank still intrepidly lifted to heaven; and she saw her rise again, dripping, all gilded by the light of the sun. The exhilaration of life and hope were still in the figure-head, wrought into her with the carving, it would seem, and these qualities her later experience in the brine had heightened to a kind of glory, so that now, unmindful that she was stranded, she stared out at the dawns and the evenings and the far-away twinkling stars with the same undaunted look of conquest.

This look, branded upon the figure-head and smitten into her round staring pupils, had its effect upon the child. Often and often when there was a storm off Pemoquod and the green water ran fifty feet high with the spray twice as high, grinding and pounding over the rocks and even entering the bay, until its strong death-fingers reached her very

feet, Rachel stared at the waters while a fierce exultation swelled her little heart.

Persistent in her childish desires, imperious when they were crossed, at all other times gentle and tractable, Rachel up to her ninth year comprehended no force superior to that of which she was conscious in herself. Her grandfather she could sway by a word, and there were ways she knew of compelling Nora Gage; as for André, he was a slave, to be ruled by kindness for the most part and blows when necessary, blows aimed straight at his wild dark face. In her domain she tolerated no insubordination. But one night the pettiness of this domain and its purely human limits were revealed to her.

When whiskey got the better of Captain Daniels at the lighthouse, and this happened occasionally, Lizzie Goodenough, with a strong arm, could draw the oil and tend the beacon. If truth were told, it was because he had recognised her possibilities for usefulness in this direction, that the captain, sixteen years before, had taken pity on the girl and

her newly-born infant. At the time he was just recovering from what he termed "a bad spell," and Lizzie appealed to him as capable and sturdy; moreover, she was very handsome, with a frown set squarely between her brows and an ominous light in her glance. He had never married her. Now that her boy had grown large enough to go on watch at a pinch, the arrangement was even more advantageous.

On the night in question, Rachel, after much worrying of her grandfather and Lizzie, obtained their consent to go on watch with André. She mounted with him to the lantern.

The immense corrugated lenses flashed diamond tints of inconceivable brilliancy. There, in rims of living colour, in circles of crystal, that white gush of light that flooded the rocks below, was born. There was the glitter and clash of its nightly cradle. The tower creaked and the sea thundered like cannon, ghostly finger-tips tapped now and then on the glass; a night bird, allured by the radiance, beat out its brains on the costal.

Presently André descended to the whitewashed room just below the lantern and Rachel stumbled after him.

"The plunger won't need windin' again till morning," he told her; "we can rest now."

But Rachel, squeezing her hands together, sat bolt upright, given over to a mighty, new, inspiring sensation. She was intoxicated with a sense of the power of man. Finally she laughed aloud; then she glanced at André. But, forgetful of all responsibility, the lad sat with his head against the wall, while the breath passed peacefully between his lips. Instantly Rachel was on her feet. She trembled all over. How about the ships at sea now! He could just talk big about the lighthouse, but he couldn't keep it,—not he! Then on a sudden she craned toward him, and from the vital, virile, little face the gleam of anger disappeared, for on the lad's forehead, beneath his mat of hair, and on the chin where it jutted in below the mouth, she saw that look of helplessness with which a relentless Fate sometimes brands her

children.

Actuated by an almost maternal impulse, Rachel divested herself of her bit of shawl and laid it over the shoulders of the sleeping boy. Then she resumed the watch, and with every hour ticked forth by the clock on the wall, her sense of responsibility increased till the flame in the lantern was duplicated by another flame alight in a little human heart.

It was toward daylight when she stepped out on the balcony which encircled the tower just below the lantern. But the world she looked out upon was no longer the world with which she was familiar. At that hour a mysterious, quiet influence was abroad. Far below to the northward she descried her grandfather's house, grey, closed, silent; and she saw the silver loop of the bay. Inland the pine trees were arranged in dark, meditative groups, and the rocks, no longer formidable, in that wan half-light appeared like cattle that had trooped down to the water to drink. Here and there, perched on the loftiest crags, were the sentinel crows. These, solitary,

motionless, accentuated the universal air of waiting.

All at once she held her breath. Across the clear blue of the sky lay, like lines of smoke, two or three filmy clouds. From a light pink these were turning to rose. Gradually the stars, one by one, paled—went out. Then an abrupt happening. A curve of crimson appeared above the horizon; this widened until it resembled an eye; then a full glowing countenance swung clear of the ocean and rays sprang from it. The whole sky began to blush. The ocean, a moment before a dull grey, flushed, and tiny ripples covered its surface; ships, hitherto invisible, appeared on its gently agitated bosom. And this infusion of vitality reached inland, quivering to gold in the tree-tops, trembling to crimson in the coarse grass, invading with radiance the most secret recess of the tiniest shell on the sand. The whole shore was illumined with the lavender and gold of the dawn; and simultaneously, from every quarter, rose the crows with their raucous *caw caw* in greeting to the oncoming day.

Suddenly through the weary frame of the child surged tides of exultation; it was as if, after the dreary watch, the sun rose in her. She stretched out her arms, and, for an instant, the sun and the child stared at each other. Then its fierce glow overpowered her, its fiery shafts blinded her; and covering her eyes, she stumbled below, whimpering, conscious of a dull ache, a shame, a sullen fear which she could not comprehend. Something hitherto unconquered was vanquished in her heart, so that never afterwards did she move with quite the same feeling of supremacy.

CHAPTER IV
AMID BLEAK SURROUNDINGS

Pemoquod lighthouse is on a point projecting into the ocean. Standing in the lantern of the lighthouse and looking toward the east, one beholds the ocean with nothing

between him and Europe except an inconsiderable island or two; looking toward the west, one beholds John's Bay. On the ocean side of the Point is a long line of broken cliffs ranged for a certain distance in tiers, like the seats in a vast amphitheatre. Then abruptly this formation ends and the cliffs tower up into separate crags,—monsters that forever contemplate the sea with rage. There between the water and the rocks is a constant contest. The rocks are like giant animals; the sinuous waves, leaping and roaring, like unearthly reptiles. Between the rock-beasts and the wave-reptiles is unabating feud. After each conflict the waves seem to hiss with fury, the rocks to drip with gore by reason of the masses of red seaweed with which they are covered over.

It is curious to rise from a seat in the amphitheatre where you have been lulled by the light touch of the wind and the soft lapping of the waves, to contemplate two or three rods beyond this scene of mighty wrath. It is more curious still to stroll through expanses of sedgegrass to the other side of

the Point and behold the bay. A quiet little bay it seems, with its diversified edge of sandy beach and tumble of small rocks, with its lobstermen's sheds clinging to the shore and further inland the houses. From the bay only the blank walls of these houses can be seen, for the women, with reason, regard the sea as an enemy to be ignored during peaceful indoor hours, and hardly a window of the modest dwellings looks toward the water.

During the summer and part of the winter, the bay is sprinkled far and wide with the sails of fishing dories. Into this pocket of the sea, always conveniently open, nature brings food for man in the form of marine creatures, —lobsters, crabs, and a clutter of fish. The bay, with its air of mild domesticity, is man's domain; the sea outside, God's alone.

Never the less the region in winter is harsh and unfavoured. The wind pipes down the chimneys and clamours on the crags and fairly howls in giant witch-fashion on the ocean. The people go about their duties with

shoulders shrugged up, with purple noses and freezing toes. In the houses, they can scarcely hear one another speak on the windiest days, and conversation is impossible anywhere near the Point; this life fosters in them a solitariness of the soul.

With motley garments, sometimes quilts and shawls, strapped and buckled around them, the few who pursue lobster-fishing as a vocation fuss around their pounds or, out on the bay, haul their pots and swear. Their oaths mingle with the gale and the dashing waters and even freeze in mid air to come to land later and form icicles. At least, this was Rachel's fancy, and when she saw the bits of ice at the window ledges, she reached forth an arm and plucking them, dissolved them in her soft warm mouth, as if she would dissolve at the same time her grandfather's probable wrath. This wrath, being so justified, however, had something righteous in it, which Rachel was not slow to admit. Certainly it was not right that a man's living should be so hard a thing to win, and what was there for it but to exorcise these demons

of wind and tide with language harsh enough to fit the occasion?

David Beckett, despite his gentleness, was a prodigious oath maker; indeed, some of his oaths were so picturesque as to have come into general circulation, a fact which afforded Rachel not a little satisfaction. To be able to invent such oaths, she felt instinctively, required an imagination of no uncertain order.

In winter her cheeks grew ruddy from the wind, tears caused by the cold sometimes stood in her eyes and the skin on the backs of her hands cracked until the knuckles bled. But she was very hardy and healthy. She had a fondness for mingling the impressions of form and colour and scent which bespoke a very sensuous temperament.

The old man's delight in her was boundless. Whenever she approached him a wonderful tenderness illuminated his face; his blue eyes sparkled and a set of wrinkles, entirely new, shot out from their corners like rockets. On

her part the child returned his feeling with a depth of affection, startling and almost tragic in one so young. She seemed to give the old man something of the vigour of childhood, while into her passed a little of the seriousness of age.

They were constant companions. Sometimes in order not to be separated from her, David took her out in the dory. There, while the boat rose and sank and rose again, and Zarah Patch's nephew phlegmatically set or hauled the pots, the old man sought to answer her numerous questions, suggested for the most part, by her chance study of the family Bible.

"Does God raise up the lobsters?" she asked one day, "the lobsters we kill."

The old man grinned. "No, I never heard that he did," he answered; "lobsters ain't much 'count save as they feed man, I guess," he added.

The child relapsed into a sulky silence.

After that she began putting back into the sea half-dead fish that she found on the shore and patiently straightening out the legs of flies discovered in webs. "It's man alone that's saved," she thought with a pang.

CHAPTER V
THE BARNACLE

When she was ten years old Rachel left the country school, and when she was eighteen she graduated from the High School in Old Harbour. Her course of study in that institution had been protracted by reason of the frequent spells of bad weather which, for weeks together, had kept her a prisoner at the Point. These interruptions she had accepted philosophically, for she had preferred to gain knowledge in an unhampered fashion, to look about her, to ask questions, to read the books of her own choosing. She was an exceedingly headstrong creature and had anyone wished

to manage her he would have experienced great difficulty. However, apparently, no one had such an unreasonable wish.

Her lean little face was charming. With its broad forehead and high cheek bones it suggested a type of the Renaissance. The expression in her eyes was candid and thoughtful. Her nose was straight, her upper lip short, her mouth full and handsome in line, though, in meaning, asleep. Activity of the mind gives character to the eye, activity of the emotions individuality to the lips, and Rachel Beckett had not lived emotionally. She was still chained heavily by her youth, for youth has its shackles as well as age.

It was about this time that André Garins approached her with an important proposition. He came leaping down the path from the lighthouse and found her seated in the lobsterman's door. In the kitchen Nora could be heard scolding. Occasionally the words were drowned in guttural sobs.

"It's her pork pie," Rachel explained. "I got

to reading and the fat just bubbled up before I knew. Now I'm going to Old Harbour to get her another," she added in a louder voice, "Want to come along?"

André nodded. He had attained his full height without losing the slimness of adolescence. "There's something I want to talk to you about," he said shyly.

But he did not broach the subject at once; instead he said tentatively as the two breasted the high wind which was all alive with the tang of the sea, and in which the girl's garments rattled like the rigging of a ship, "It's good of you to get her another pork pie; why do you do it?"

"Because," Rachel answered with spirit, "people once in a while ought to have what they want—if it's only pork pie."

André regarded her beautiful face with dull curiosity. "Then you're not doing it because you're sorry for her?" he asked.

"No," she answered shortly; "principle."

But the abstract had no meaning for André; he always thought in straight lines and his thoughts were convertible into actions. Now he took up the matter which had brought him to her.

"Mother thinks you and I could set up shop together," he said. "She thinks I can paint what are called 'souvenirs'; you know I paint very well, and you could take charge of the candy and fruit. She thinks we might get quite a little trade from the hotel people all about here, if we opened a shop in that unused barn of Shattuck's."

The proposition appealed to Rachel mightily. Now that the schooldays were past she found herself much too frequently in the presence of Nora Gage and quarrels were constant. If the young girl had had her way she would have bundled the so-called housekeeper out of the door and have done the work herself, but old David was fastidious in the matter of her hands and cherished the

idea of one day seeing her a "lady." André's plan seemed to offer scope for her energy, she hailed it joyfully. A week later the youthful shop keepers were established in their odd quarters.

The situation of the unused barn was magnificent. It stood on the top of a high turfy hill which overlooked both the ocean and the bay. On going around it a narrow path, almost hidden by the tall grass, was discovered, and this path led directly to that bit of the bay shore where were the figure-head and the wreck. The door of the barn commanded the road. There was something in the bleakness of the situation that took hold on the fancy. The barn had long been an object of popular interest. It was toned by the weather to the beautiful grey of a dove's wing. It leaned lightly to one side. Its two front windows were like empty eye-sockets. As one approached it, climbing around the crumbling foundation of what years before had been a house, he imagined it the retreat of birds of prey.

The only steeds housed here were the horses of the wind, in the pauses of the storms that swept the Point. The barn was supposed to be haunted. Therefore the scene that greeted the first curious visitors, struck pleasantly on their sight.

A bit of sail-cloth bearing the inscription: *Souvenirs And Confectionery* appeared over one window, and a little trail of smoke issued from the other. Just inside the door was Rachel. She stood behind an improvised counter of new boards on which was ranged a file of golden oranges. Oranges and girl, how they lit the gloom! When not engaged in waiting on a customer, and her duties in this direction were of the lightest, Rachel made a pretence of sewing, though oftener than not the sewing was abandoned for a book. The range of her reading at this time was remarkable. Like her father, she read everything that came her way with a kind of tragic eagerness. Frequently closing the book and leaning her elbows on the counter, she would gaze straight ahead, while the questioning look deepened in her eyes. In the

background where a ray of light fell André painted the lighthouse in garish colours on the bosom of a heaven-tinted shell.

What a pair they were, to be sure! What a bouquet of innocence, youth and utterly worthless endeavour!

The enterprise brought in little, though during July and August people came from the Ocean View House and even from remoter hotels on outlying islands. At this André laughed in his heart, but after the novelty had worn off, Rachel was less pleased. The money that she earned bought her a new dress and hat; but it was not sufficient to lighten the burden on her grandfather's shoulders. Unable longer to bear the hardships of lobster-fishing, old David had sold his pots. Taking part of his scant savings he had bought four cows. He now peddled milk from one end of the Point to the other. Rachel sometimes looked at him with sudden fear, though their poverty she realized but vaguely, never having known anything different. She mended his clothes and lavished upon him

every care. She opened her heart to him, and in spirit he dwelt there as in a wide, sunny room. But, though he knew her heart, neither he nor anyone else, knew what was passing in her mind. Sometimes with a vigorous motion she would clasp her hands behind her head while she stared through the doorway of the barn; then she would slip away, taking the winding path to the bay, and remain there for hours.

The groups of rocks on the bay shore differed from those fronting the ocean. They were more sad than threatening in form and were covered thickly with seaweed, like enormous heads with hair. In this hair sparkled iridescent drops left by the receding tide; these drops resembled jewels. The rocks, indeed, were decked like the heads of women, and by reason of the long tresses of seaweed that trailed from them and that undulated on the surface of the water, an uneasy restlessness seemed to pervade them.

Rachel would eye them gloomily: then, flinging herself down, she would observe the

various forms of life in the little pools of water where floated crabs and jellyfish. In the prominent eyes of the crab she saw the desire for its prey. Looking upward, attracted by the sinister screech of gulls, she saw them fluttering about the nest of a sanderling which they pillaged of its eggs. Letting her glance fall again she studied the little bell-shaped barnacles, like tiny huts, which everywhere adhered to the rocks in settlements. As the water approached, one after another of the doors of these wee huts opened and a hand, vaporish, white as light, reached forth and gathered in the necessary provender. Everywhere, everything received what it needed to sustain life. She alone was starved.

With these thoughts surging in her brain, Rachel would make her way back to the barn. There, with cheeks puffed out, stooping over his work, she would find André. One day when she entered the barn he greeted her with a gleeful announcement: he had sold five little shells and one big one during her absence. She turned away. She had often watched the faces of the summer people: they

bought the shells out of pity for André, or perhaps, because they admired his handsome face. As art, she suspected, the shells were nothing. Why could he not see?

"You have no ambition," she said surlily, "there are schools where one can learn to do this sort of thing, I suppose. You ought to want to get away and study."

Amazed, he looked up at her. "But the shells sell all right," he remarked. "I paint well enough for that."

She made no answer and sparks of some sort glowed in her eyes. She shook her head at him.

"You're just like a barnacle," she cried passionately, "*it* clings to a rock, *it* lives in a corner; everyday when the tide comes in, *it* opens its door and gathers in food. In the same way every morning you wait for the city people. You open your door, you reach out your hand—like this, and you take in the pennies. Bah! is that enough for you?"

"Well, isn't it?" he asked, and in his eyes, as he looked at her, dawned a certain yearning softness.

But she turned away. "Then stay on your rock," she flashed out; "I want more."

He came up to her and laid his hand on her arm.

"What do you want?" he asked.

She looked at him and seeing tears in his eyes, she turned away sullenly. "I don't know," she answered, "but I want life—more'n what the sea brings me."

Then suddenly she broke from him and darted into the twilight.

CHAPTER VI
THE FIGURE-HEAD GAINS AN

ADMIRER

The field where old David put the cows to pasture lay a comparatively short distance from the house, in the direction of the bay. But Rachel, leading a large white cow by a rope, had elected to go round by "the barn."

"Come along, Betty," she cried, as she turned into the main road dragging the surprised animal after her.

A dense fog obscured every landmark. Looking backward, she could just discern the placid light of the cow's eyes below the sickle of its horns; looking downward, she could make out her own feet and the stalks of grass and flowers beside the road. Moisture clung to the grass in pendant beads, and there was a fugitive flash of colour here and there close to the ground. All else was sheeted in the white pall. Groups of firs looked like spectres, the bushes covered with fluffs of mist looked like phantoms; Rachel herself appeared like a ghost.

The sea hurled itself against the cliffs. Now and again when it suspended its roar, the moaning of the fog bell could be heard. In these intervals of comparative quiet the surging fury in the girl's heart gave way to waves of melancholy. She had quarrelled with Nora Gage that morning and the colour was still high in her cheeks. Presently she came to a pause, stamping on the ground; the next moment, however, she was moved to laughter. In a sty beside the road a group of pigs was nozzling in a trough. One sat up and looked at her with Nora's eyes.

Somewhat improved in humour, she went on up the road. When she came opposite the barn, she clambered around the ruined cellar foundation, and after tying the cow, entered the little shop. A fire had been lighted in the battered stove and sent forth a cheerful flicker. Early as it was, André was already at work; he was decorating a smooth egg-shaped stone from which he had first removed its wrapping of seaweed. He glanced up and a light leaped to his eyes. He looked at Rachel with smiling intentness as if

to satisfy himself that she had not changed in any way over night. Finally he spoke:

"If you'd come a little sooner, Rachel, you'd have seen something."

She spread her fingers above the stove and turned her neck from side to side with a slow and graceful movement as the heat rushed into her face.

"What would I have seen?"

Jumping from his stool, André poured some coffee from a pot into a cup; then he offered the cup to her.

"You look cold," he said, gazing directly into her eyes; "are you cold?" And taking her shawl, he shook the moisture from it. There was always in his attitude toward her a kind of awe.

"What would I have seen?" she repeated without glancing at him.

"Why, a stranger was here. He'd been

making a sketch of the figure-head; he showed it to me."

"I don't see what right he had to draw it without my permission," she murmured jealously. "Was it a good picture, André?"

The lad looked doubtful. "It was all little scratchy lines," he said.

Rachel brooded for some minutes over the stove; then she rose. "There won't be anyone here this morning," she announced, "so I sha'n't come back. I've got to take Betty to pasture. Buttercup—all the others—got hold of some sorrel; they're sick."

She went to the door. The fog was so thick that it looked like cotton. The wild roses that bloomed here and there made delicate pink patterns on this white. From the barn the sea no longer could be heard, the complaint of the fog bell could be caught only faintly. Overhead, through the mysterious whiteness, could just be discerned the pale disc of the sun. The girl made her way through the mist

as through a tangible substance. She took the path to the beach and the cow followed her placidly, the tall wet grass striking against its sides and its udder swinging like a pendulum. Rachel slipped along the wet path and climbed stealthily to the top of the first rock.

There, sitting on the wreck near the figure-head, was the stranger; but he was not sketching. Instead, his head, from which the cap had fallen, was bent forward and he was carefully burying in the sand what appeared to be the scraps of a letter. When he had finished this operation a kind of humorous relief was manifest all over him. A passenger boat steamed down the bay; a line of smoke followed it. The vessel was invisible, but the smoke lay in the fog a trail of black. The young man turned his head to observe it, and at that instant Rachel started and the cow behind her made a movement.

He looked up.

Poised on the summit of the rock, with the horns of the cow up-curving about her feet,

with the fog clinging to her dress of faded blue and undulating about her in clouds, she resembled a figure of the Virgin in a crescent moon.

The pupils of the stranger's eyes, which were of a living, magnetic black dashed with fiery sparks, dilated; and two perpendicular lines, which started from the root of his nose, deepened to grooves on his forehead. He got to his feet, his massive head with its hair thrown back upraised toward her. Touched all over with a subjugating power, a grace more penetrating than beauty, he stared, a sort of animal.

As for Rachel, something of his excitement was communicated to her. For another instant she paused, held there by the mere force of his gaze. Then she turned and descending from the rock, led the cow round into the open space. A close observer might have seen that she wavered slightly, like one who tastes of wine for the first time.

The spell, however, was broken for the

stranger. Unconsciously, with his lightning glance, he saw that there was a scratch on the back of one of her hands, that their flesh was rough and that there were freckles across her nose. She was just a strong, healthy, handsome lass; and, with the fickleness of a child, he abruptly turned his attention elsewhere. With excessive care he moved a small box, to which a telephone was attached, to a position of greater safety.

Rachel watched him warily. Growing within her was an odd sense of defiance, and this feeling triumphed finally over her natural shyness.

"Did you sketch the figure-head?" she asked all in a breath. Then a wave of colour rose in her cheeks. She stood before him in a trance of noble embarrassment.

"Why yes, I did," he returned. He took a book from his pocket, opened it to a certain page and presented it to her. The book was filled, all but that page, with drawings of little instruments.

She slowly approached leading the cow. He turned to her his face, framed in its curling beard. "I'm a pretty poor excuse for an artist," he began.

"That figure-head belongs to me," she interrupted, handing the book back.

A second time he fixed his attention upon her and two tiny stars of laughter shot into his eyes. "Does it, indeed?" he remarked; there was almost a caress in the words.

"Yes, my grandfather saved it and set it up here," she affirmed. She breathed quickly and every moment her shyness and her anger deepened.

"It appears to be an interesting bit of carving." Stealing over this great giant as he frankly studied her was something of the air of a lazy lion. "I should say someone carved it who loved to carve," he added. Then, with an idea of giving her a chance to recover countenance, he considerately turned his gaze in the direction of the bay.

"What—what are you doing now?" she asked quickly; for her spirit was roused and it behooved her to recover dignity.

"Well, I hoped to be able to get some of those fishermen to take me out in a boat for a certain purpose, but they can't see my signal and the fog doesn't lift."

He seated himself on the wreck and began to touch up his drawing of the figure-head, then he fell to making a tentative sketch of the indistinct figures in the dories out on the water.

Had he made the slightest effort to detain her in conversation, Rachel certainly would have turned on her heel; as it was, drawn on by her curiosity, she moored the cow with a stone on the rope, and came nearer.

"All this is out of my line," he explained, "but I like to try my hand at it once in a way." And, indeed, he looked hugely pleased with his effort, as he held the paper at arm's length to study the effect.

Rachel watched him and now and then her eyes travelled to his face with the clear dispassionate gaze of a child. His cap lay on the sand at his feet and his dishevelled locks moved in the wind above a face that was simple and bold. His finger-tips were stained with acid, his clothing was a bit careless; a spray of Prince's Feather, freshly picked, trailed from the button-hole of his coat. About them was complete silence except for the plashing of the waves and an occasional muffled cry from the almost invisible lobstermen. The fog wrapped them round.

Presently he reached a point beyond which he was unable to carry his sketch, and, abandoning it, he began turning the pages of the book at first slowly, then with increased attention. At last he paused. His eyes narrowed and the perpendicular wrinkle on his forehead deepened. He read over some notes. He struck out a word here, inserted another there; then commenced to write rapidly on the margin of the page and for several minutes the scratching of his pencil continued. It was apparent that like a hunter

he was running down his quarry, and leaping over many a ditch and rock in his excitement; it was apparent, too, that he had entered a world in which woman was unknown.

Finally, Rachel's interest expressed itself in an involuntary sigh, and he raised his head with a dawning consciousness of her presence. Tiny drops of moisture, like diamond dust, glittered in her hair. He studied them; then met the brightness of her oval-shaped eye.

In his turn embarrassed, he hitched his shoulders and laughed.

"I forgot that you were here," he said.

Until that moment she had not resented his indifference, but now, when he voiced it, she felt a hot sense of chagrin. He had, she considered, been pointedly lacking in courtesy. Moving away, she took up the rope of the cow.

He got to his feet. "By Jove, I don't see how

it happened," he said simply.

It was the touch required. She halted and stood playing with the rope.

"I got to thinking of this," he continued, and he laid his hand on the box to which the telephone receiver was attached. "It's something I've been working out. I want to test it. It's a fine coast for the purpose. Plenty of submerged rocks, I should say," and he gazed about him.

She also swept the rolling leagues of misty emptiness, but with the glance of one who is familiar with them, then her eyes, wistful and unutterably intense, went to his. There was something about the life and mentality of this man that startled and stirred her, something in his appearance that seemed to speak of a nature unshackled, gigantic.

"I asked that boy at the old barn up the road where I could get hold of a boat and someone to row," he continued, "but he didn't tell me."

She turned from him. "I'll take you," she volunteered, "this afternoon."

At this the stranger showed a row of brilliant teeth. "Why that—that's fine," he said. Once more his manner was gentle, almost caressing.

To demonstrate his gratitude he tore from the book the sketch of the figure-head and presented it to her.

She took it without exhibiting any emotion. Then, leading the cow, she disappeared around a boulder. A moment later, however, she appeared on its summit, and the cow pushed up behind her so that his first miraculous impression was repeated.

"What time," she asked, "do you want to go?"

He moved his lips without speaking; a magical light had dawned on his world.

"Why, about three o'clock," he answered,—

pausing between the words.

And the next moment she was no longer there. The fog had closed over the spot of the vision.

CHAPTER VII
CONCERNING ALEXANDER EMIL ST. IVES

In the make-up of this Alexander Emil St. Ives, who carried his name like a flaunting feather, his father played small part. During the life of the elder St. Ives, the family had lived on a farm in Rhode Island and the father, a dour, narrow man, had laid his commands upon the soil and had tilled it with his will as with an agricultural implement; in bad seasons often he had been the one farmer in the neighbourhood who harvested crops.

There were two sons. The elder boy, Edgar,

resembled the father, though built on smaller, neater lines, with a face shaped like an egg. He had much of the father's obstinate force united to a faculty for grasping and retaining what seemed to him worth while. The younger son resembled the mother.

Mrs. St. Ives, timid, valiant creature, was incapable of not loving. For her first-born she entertained an affection purely maternal; for Emil, however, she harboured a feeling almost worshipful. The fact that she had borne him was to her a miracle ever new. He woke heaven in her heart and his love opened her soul as the sun's ray opens the flower. Neither husband nor elder son ever suspected the exquisite quality of her nature.

Edgar was a lad of fifteen when Emil was born. From the first he turned a cold face on the mite, and as time went on grew jealous of him up to the eyes. There was something august about Emil even in his ugly, defenceless childhood. He was of a singularly inquiring turn of mind and years afterward his mother delighted to relate how, when he

was two years old, he had crawled a mile and a half from home, lured forward by the curiosity that later became his salient characteristic. His energies spent, he had rested on a flat rock. While his tiny body grew warm in the sun, his infant mind had lost itself in inarticulate reverie. If he could go on quite to the end of everything, even to that hazy, far-away point where blue met green, what should he find? It was this speculative tendency that gave his hair its wild aspect; that kindled in his eyes their roving, searching glance; that already, young as he was, made him look at life with an air of keen astonishment.

When he was eleven years old, his father died and the reins of management fell into Edgar's hands. That young man, being in no sense a typical farmer, immediately exchanged the farm, which the elder St. Ives had bequeathed him, for a large country store. By dint of shrewd management, he soon became a successful merchant. So rapidly did he rise that by the end of the second year, he had built himself a house and installed in it a

shrewish wife who lost no time in presenting him with a swarm of children. He also placed in the house his mother, and the poor lady dwelt there under the lash of the wife's tongue, like a servant in constant fear of dismissal. In righteous mood, Edgar even went so far as to extend the protection of his roof to his young brother. In a tiny chamber over the kitchen the lad's first tentative inventions saw the light.

But between these two natures a gulf was fixed. If truth were told, they had not a trait in common. Edgar was provident and saving, Emil the reverse. Long ere he had obtained his majority, he had wheedled from his mother the little money she held in trust for him from his grudging and disapproving father. To be sure, the sum was very meagre and could not be stretched, by any calculation, to cover the technical training the lad coveted; therefore he had expended a part of it for scientific books and the rest had gone little by little into materials for his constant experimenting.

For the precious little inventions which cluttered Emil's chamber and sometimes found their unwelcome way into other parts of the house, Edgar had a withering contempt. He never missed an opportunity to have a fling at them and his scornful words entered the mother's heart like barbed arrows. However, in his nineteenth year Emil produced an apparatus for freshening sea water which it seemed must prove of inestimable value to all sea-faring folk. The mother in a flutter of excitement and even with tears, besought him to take his brother into his confidence. In fact this was necessary, if he wished to secure the use of an abandoned and much coveted granary for a shop. But the lad held back. The apparatus, despite its undoubted usefulness, seemed to him of trifling importance. The mother, however, foreseeing fortune ahead of him, urged the step and at length the boy consented. True to her prediction, after his first scornful inspection of the contrivance, Edgar admitted that it might have possibilities. Like most of the boy's experiments, this device was beyond his

comprehension, but he could grasp the fact that sailors and fishermen, with the chance of shipwreck forever staring them in the face, might have use for it. He therefore offered to get it patented, then took steps to secure the patent—in his own name. As it chanced, the papers, bearing his signature but otherwise carefully copied from those which Emil had submitted for his inspection fell under the boy's eye.

The night following this discovery, a light appeared in the granary. Edgar, peering from his chamber window, perceived a demoniacal figure, smashing and demolishing everything the little shop contained. Even as he looked, it lifted a small instrument, which represented months of patient labour, and threw it with a crash to the floor. Instantly Edgar was out of the house. He scampered across the yard, his night gear fluttering in the light of the pale moon. Emil at that moment caught up the sea-water device and sent it crashing through the doorway. Being made largely of glass, the instrument shivered into a million minute fragments. Edgar and his wife and children,

who had flocked to his side, covered their eyes. When they looked again, through the dust that still hung in the air, they beheld a bent figure, lit up by the gleam of the lantern, still moving in a whirl of rubbish.

Edgar in his scant raiment danced up and down.

"Thief!" he hissed.

For an instant the boy paused in his diabolical work:

"Thief!" He burst into terrifying laughter.

With one final wrench he brought down the work-bench and flung it across the pile; then kneeling, he applied a match to the mass. Crackling flames leaped upward. He got to his feet and stood with his figure silhouetted against the red glow. In that hour he had destroyed something more precious than his inventions, his books and all his little workmen's kit in which he had taken such pride. That which had gone down in flames

hotter than those which raged around him, was the essential quality which is youth. Such searing emotions are the death of adolescence. He was visibly trembling. The hair was matted above the eyes which he lifted. Without a word he darted past them and disappeared into the night.

A quarter of a mile from the house he met his mother. She was waiting for him in the darkness. Quivering all over she took him in her long arms. But his anger had already subsided and he felt stealing over him a new and gratifying sense of release.

"Don't, Mother," he whispered hoarsely, "it was bound to come,—and you'll see—I'll soon send for you."

Her tears distressed him. For this cheated, baffled, frail and suffering mother who asked but one thing, that his ambition be gratified, Emil's feeling was fiercely paternal. It was the solitary oasis in a nature devoid of all other affections.

He caressed her with his hands, but presently he held them up before her. "With these," he whispered, "and with this," and he touched his forehead, "I'll do something. You'll see. The world needs me," he cried.

The world needed him! At that moment he felt that he could grasp the universe, instinct with unknown laws, and plunging his mind into it could drag forth some hitherto undiscovered force.

The world needed him! Poor, foolish, misguided, highly-gifted youth! Certainly he was more valuable to Society than its rickety children who would never grow up, its infirm old men, sick with alcoholism, its base and unworthy charges; yet for all these, he soon discovered, the great New York, glancing indifferently from her million windows, provided asylums; but for him, who had in his head that which should bring the world to his feet—for him nothing.

In turn he worked for a photographer, a printer, and an engraver, but as he failed to

pay attention to his duties and urged upon his irate employers devices for improving the processes used in their work, he remained only a short time in each situation. By the third year, however, he drifted into a place that promised to be permanent.

The conservative lithographing establishment of Benjamin Just and Richard Lawless was in need of an apprentice. Being by this time much reduced in health and spirits, with all the fiery currents of his being at low ebb, Emil accepted this berth. For upwards of a year he worked with commendable sobriety; in fact, became no more than a pivot, a screw, a tiny whirling wheel in the life of the factory. But at the end of a twelvemonth his old fever broke out in aggravated form; the trivial bit of mechanism became a madman or a genius over night.

Waving some papers above his head, laughing naïvely and applauding himself, Emil approached the head draughtsman one day and exhibited a little model. But the draughtsman into whose hands all the choice

work of the establishment fell, swore at him. 'The art of lithography,' he gave him to understand, 'was an old and honourable one; and as for cheapening the work, heaven knew, enough had been done in that line!' And he briefly consigned the young fool and his new-fangled process to hell.

Thereupon, Emil, nothing daunted, approached the two owners. Trembling all over with eagerness, he fixed them with his eyes in which a flame seemed to be leaping up and down.

"Just a thin flexible sheet, that is what I propose," he cried;—"a sheet which has all the qualities of the finest of your lithographic stones, but which is superior because cheaper and lighter and the possible supply unlimited. How's that? A sheet, which after one preparation for printing, will continue to yield clean proofs without dampening or resetting for a much longer time than the best of your lithographic stones," he continued.

"But how do you print from this precious

sheet of yours?" inquired Mr. Lawless, a fat red man, who tried to look scornful and only succeeded in looking ridiculous. If truth were told, the partners, while appearing to have little faith in the scheme, felt in the pits of their stomachs an excited feeling similar to that produced by high swinging; indeed, their phlegmatic pulses beat to the same excited measure as the young inventor's.

"With a specially constructed cylinder press, that's now I'll print," answered Emil.

As a result of the conference, the owners, although professing scepticism, consented to give him a small room in which to perfect his invention and, in their generosity, even guaranteed to continue the payment of his former meagre salary.

From that day, Emil began to live a particular and intensely nervous life.

He was now one of a large army, consisting of press men, lithographers, zinc men, clerks, artists, stenographers, bookkeepers. The

majority of these men did their work methodically and as a matter of duty. When they quitted the factory at night, they forgot the labour that had occupied them during the day. With Emil, however, it was otherwise.

In a tiny room, reeking with heat and dust and clamorous with the rumble of the presses, he worked, scarcely taking note of the passing of one day and the birth of another. Often he sought the factory at night. The general manager, a man with a forceful presence and a shrewd eye, scornfully shrugged his shoulders. He distrusted such enthusiasm; but the owners were more hopeful. At night they had a door left open for the erratic inventor.

Unconscious that he was observed, Emil hurried through the streets and bounded up the steps to his den. Then how he caressed his invention, how he stared straight before him with eyes that saw nothing, while his brain drew from the surrounding ether a crowd of images wonderful for their reality and vigour. Sometimes in these nights of limpid

contemplation, he became as beautiful as an angel. At other times, inspiration was capricious and the particular idea that he sought must be pursued. At such times he would crack his fingers at the joints, wave backward and forward like a tree in a storm, rock like a ship on an angry sea. Somehow, he would wrest his idea from the vast Unknown. And when he had succeeded in fixing it, smiling peacefully, he would go to sleep like a child; go to sleep and dream of some far land where invention was not torture. Before his work-bench, exhausted, he was often discovered in the early dawn by Ding Dong when he came to sweep out.

Half-witted, deaf and dumb, with a face so hideous that caricature could not exaggerate it, Ding Dong had received his nick-name from some bookish artist or other. With a fat tongue useless in his wide mouth and ears like sails, though they served to convey no sound to his meagre brain, Ding Dong ate habitually of the food thrown away by saloons, drank the dregs left in whiskey glasses, and, with the agility of a little cat,

accepted the stumps of cigarettes which the clerks good naturedly threw him.

Between him and Emil, existed a peculiar friendship, and many were the novel breakfast parties held in the little workroom at the hour when New York was just waking to life.

Ding Dong procured rolls and made coffee; then three partook of the meal, for there were always three, the inventor, Ding Dong and, to furnish the feminine element, Lulu, a tiny South American monkey. Pinched and sad Lulu seemingly was not devoid of coquetry, for she wrapped herself in a bit of bright flannel which she held together beneath her chin with one small black hand, while she peeped out from between the folds with her little mournful eyes.

Of all the prisoners in the great building, none was more miserable than this little monkey. A present to the wife of one of the partners, who detested her, she had been brought down to the factory where she led a

truly miserable life. In order to be out of reach of the furnace man, who had once treated her cruelly, she ran up among the asbestos-covered pipes, and there remained, save when she suffered herself to be lured down by Ding Dong. It was as if these two touching creatures, the one so nearly bestial and the other so nearly human, strove to lessen each other's profound loneliness.

As Emil pulled at his long pipe, resting after his exertions of the night, something of his serenity stole over his companions and wrapped in the same mood of abstracted dreaminess, they watched the dawn together.

When the department overseer appeared, a shudder ran through the building. The presses rumbled and boys began to feed them with great sheets of paper. The band of pale, dispirited youths in the art department etched their designs. With dust, sweat, oaths, grinding muscles, shriek and thunder of machinery,—the day began. Hour after hour the passionate clamour increased to a poem, a hymn, a pæan to the God of Work.

At twelve o'clock the tension relaxed. Men from the different departments poured into the streets and sought the cafes and restaurants of the neighbourhood. A few, however, always remained in the building. For that hour they were no longer slaves. The head bookkeeper, an old man, stretched his legs, glad to get down from his high stool; one of the stenographers, with flying fingers resumed her work on a little red jacket for Lulu. Even Emil was affected by the sudden contagion of idleness that swept the building. Leaving the model of his press, he took time to stare from the windows at the roofs of New York. But despite his interest in his work these surroundings were beginning to tell upon him. One day in July, unable to bear the heat, he staggered out into the passage to get a drink from a pail of water that stood there. He was lifting the dripping dipper to his lips, when a pair of eyes met his with a sort of shock. When he stumbled back into the little den, Annie Lawless, springing up from a chair in her father's office, followed him.

"What's the matter?" she cried sharply, as

he sank down with his head bowed on the work-bench. She started to summon someone, but a second glance at his pale face with tiny beads of perspiration around the nostrils, caused her to change her mind. She passed swiftly to the door and closed it. Then, detaching a jewelled smelling-bottle from her belt, she held it under his nose with her little shaking hand. When Emil came to himself, he saw bending over him a delicate face shaped like a pear, the cheeks white almost as his own. This face was furnished with soft open lips, like an infant's, and, by contradiction, with two blue eyes which, for the moment, looked into his with an almost maternal solicitude.

"Are you better?" The question was blended with the odour of violets, subtle and overpowering, with the gleam of diamonds, with the touch of a soft fabric, warm with life, beneath his cheek.

The next instant he sat up, flushing all over. And Annie Lawless blushed too.

"Yes, I'm all right, perfectly right," he muttered, and tried to laugh. "It's only this infernal heat," supporting his head in a strange fashion as if he feared it would drop off.

"Yes, it is awfully hot," Annie answered. "Is that the model for the cylinder press?" she asked presently. "I've heard Father speak of your inventions."

Emil, whose head was still giddy, had a childish wish that she would come near him again and put those hands, covered with rings, on his brow. He looked at her as she stood speaking. When she turned sidewise he noticed dreamily how small her waist was, he believed he could span it with his two hands; and her nose was slightly hooked, which combined with her quick movements, gave her somewhat of the appearance of a bird.

"I've heard Papa say that he thinks your press is going to be a big thing," she continued, "but I should think he ought to give you a better place to work in."

At these words Emil roused himself. He had not known before that Mr. Lawless believed in the press. "Why yes, if I had a decent place to work in—" he began.

"Papa ought to pay you more money," she said with conviction. "Why, he used to have a man who invented things and he gave him special rooms and a fine salary besides. Papa says a man with the inventive bee in his bonnet isn't fit to look after himself. But that man was," she concluded, "for he left Papa one day in the lurch and went to inventing things on his own account, and since then he has made a pile of money. You'll do that too if they aren't careful."

The upshot of the matter was that she began making plans for the relief of the stranger who, with his extraordinary air, seemed more interesting to her than anyone she had ever known.

"It may take a little time, but I'll manage it somehow," she told him as she left.

And she did manage it.

She saw Emil several times, arousing a perfect furor of gossip among the artists by the temerity of her visits. When she knew that her father and his partner were out of the building, she slipped in to see Emil, and, more than once as the summer advanced, she met him at an appointed place on his homeward walk.

Finally, acting on her advice, he sent in a written protest to his employers, stating that it was impossible for him to complete the work at his present salary and setting forth his desire for a more fully equipped workroom. In conclusion, he intimated that if his requests were not acceded to, in view of the services he had already rendered them, he should feel free to quit their employ.

The day following this step, Annie appeared with triumph written all over her face.

"It's all settled," she announced. "Mr. Just

and the general manager were at our house last night. They talked about you and I listened at the library door. Papa made Mr. Wakefield admit that he'd been wrong in his estimate of you. And then Papa went on to say that he thought they might as well, first as last, offer to grub stake you. Do you know what that means?" she cried, laughing. "It means that they will pay all your expenses and give you rooms somewhere like that Mr. Pennyworth I told you about. He said already, by the different improvements you'd made on this and that machine, you'd saved the firm thousands of dollars. You didn't know that, I guess. He said you were too valuable a man to lose. And that's not all," she went on to cover her embarrassment, for Emil was staring at her, "you're to have a few weeks somewhere in the country if you want them, and I'm sure you need a vacation badly enough."

"How did you manage it?" he asked, speaking with difficulty.

"Oh, I just kept Papa thinking about you by

the things I said. One day I said that the factory was horribly stuffy and I should think the artists, and you particularly, would just die. And then I asked him carelessly if he thought your press was going to be any good, and he said, 'Good!—well, if he can be got to finish it, that's all we want. The man's a genius!' And I laughed and told him he'd better look out or his genius would have sunstroke. I explained to him that you were probably so worn out that you couldn't finish it. I said a thing here and a thing there, mere nothings, but I made him uneasy, and then came your letter throwing up the whole scheme before it was completed. Oh I knew he'd do it, if it was managed all right!" she exclaimed gleefully. And then changing her tone: "Are you glad?" and she wrinkled her brow into anxious furrows beneath her light summer hat.

Emil took one of her little hands timidly. He turned a ring round and round on her tiny finger, staring at her, endeavouring to find words. Suddenly two arms were laid about his neck and all quivering in the storm of her

own emotions, like a bird seeking shelter, she fluttered against his breast. Her hat had slipped to her shoulders. He felt that she was sobbing violently, and scarcely knowing what he did, he clasped her closely in his arms and muttering unintelligible words which he himself did not understand, he pressed his lips again and again to her small blond head.

But the plum that tumbles into our lap without the asking is seldom as fine as the fruit we climb for, strain for, spend hours in thirsting after. Three weeks—and this fierce agitation of the senses had subsided. It was an excitement, a fever, which at the time had been augmented by so many equivocal influences; by the noise of the presses which had seemed to keep time to his pulses, by the gleam of the girl's jewels, by the softness of her attire, by the fact, more than all else, that she was his chief's daughter.

A whiff of sea air and Emil looked back on the affair with utter weariness. Without a conscience, he was accustomed to follow simply the dictates of his own nature. The

memory of the girl irked him, therefore with heavy sighs like a weary horse, he destroyed her letters. However, the phantom of love had passed very close, and it was not in vain that all the electric currents of his being had been set in motion. He was awake now to another world than that in which he had hitherto dwelt,—awake, with his great inquisitive eyes, attentive.

It was at this juncture that Rachel Beckett dawned on his horizon. When she came round the rock leading the cow, a novel sensation convulsed that strange uncultivated heart of his. A man's heart is a garden in which, before the coming of death, many flowers of emotion bloom; and the history of these flowers is the history of his life.

CHAPTER VIII
IN THE CAUSE OF SCIENCE

Since the night of Emil's departure, which had brought such terror to her heart, a divine serenity had fallen upon Mrs. St. Ives. His frequent letters, filled with the vitality of his genius and all radiant with love, were to her a second baptism of youth. Palpitating with enthusiasm, she carried them to her room where she read and reread them. Sometimes she wept over them, and for days after the receipt of one, she went about with an expression of utter peace. But when, for some reason, a letter failed to arrive, then in that house far removed from the scenes among which he dwelt, she would clasp her hands in silent agony, she would be given over to anxiety, glancing about her, more nervous than any bird; she would rebuke the teasing grandchildren and fiercely demand the letter which, she imagined, her daughter-in-law kept from her. Then became evident in her no longer the triumph of youth but the tragedy of age.

Without doing anything to deserve her special affection, both Edgar and his wife were jealous of her absorbing love for Emil.

They ridiculed this worship. And no one except the singular object of her devotion comprehended the extent of her suffering. Vague and unsatisfactory as he was in all other relations, where she was concerned he was gifted with an insight that might have done credit to a woman. Full well he comprehended that she was living her life in his, and, for that reason, he strove to make it gorgeous for her. Poor devil of an inventor, with his toes all but through his boots and his head in the clouds! He would often brood over her situation with tears in his eyes. He cherished the hope of one day having her with him, and, in the event of her coming, planned like a lover, to greet her royally. But once plunged in his work, it must be confessed that for days together he incontinently forgot all about her. Then, perhaps, a feeble scrawl would arrive, announcing a headache or some trifling woman's worry, and contrition would be rampant in him. Rousing himself, he would write her one of his long, characteristic letters, fairly pouring out his life on the page.

As may be conjectured, his being sent to Old Harbour to rest and, incidentally, to add the finishing touches to the metal plate and cylinder press, was subject matter for a glowing epistle, which brought to the mother a wealth of happiness and sent her to bed night after night with touching prayers of gratitude on her lips. Once settled in the hotel at Old Harbour, however, Emil abandoned the work in hand and fell to making a *depth indicator*. How think of anything else with the sea out there waiting to be plumbed? In vain Annie Lawless hinted that her father was anxious to install the press and counselled haste, as has been related, Emil destroyed her letters and went feverishly forward with his self-appointed task.

On the afternoon of the day of his meeting with Rachel he was in fine feather. The presence of the girl and the prospect of testing his invention filled him with animation. At moments, as he tinkered at the boat's rim, he whistled so shrilly that the sea gulls paused in their wheeling to listen; and this complicated energy, this unusual virility,

was as much a tribute to her who sat in the grey nest of boulders, as a testimony of interest in the work. And so she understood it.

With her slight figure relieved against the skyline, she waited for him to complete his preparations. Now and then her eyes travelled, with unerring directness, to the mound of sand where he had that morning buried the letter. What did those hard-packed grains of sand conceal? Instinctively she played with the question and its import sat deep in her eye. As if by a stroke of art, she had placed herself in direct line with the figure-head, so that no one glancing that way could fail to be struck by the dissimilarity between image and maid. Mobility and an ardent capacity for a rich and varied existence were written all over her; that something which is the potency of womanhood itself seemed to have awakened suddenly from the torpor of youth in that little heart and to have come abroad for the first time experimentally. There she sat, and whenever he turned his head, he was struck anew with her, so that he must needs look again and yet again.

She had covered her feet with her skirts and her hands were clasped decorously in her lap. Her brow had a male gravity, as distinguished from her chin which was softly-turned and exceeding feminine. Her hair was parted and trained in two shining unbroken portions and tucked away behind her ears, something as a curtain is looped back from a window. The sphinx-like mystery of Leonardo's *La Gioconda* was alive in her eyes.

Even while the girl, in her essential self, remained superlatively innocent and unconscious, there looked out from her little virgin countenance at Emil, gravely selecting him, the 'Genius of the Species.' Her glance proclaimed sex and intellectual detachment.

Presently Emil turned his face over his shoulder and beckoned to her; and his laugh was repeated by the water coursing up the beach and curling round the boat in white-lipped waves. The fog had disappeared and the sun was now shining joyously.

Rachel grasped the oars, rowing with long

even strokes, and Emil sat in the bow. To one side of the boat and projecting into the water, he had attached a bell, which gave out when struck a special, sharp, short note; and on the other side of the boat he had placed a telephone receiver connected with a small box.

"And inside that box is another still smaller of metal," he told her, "and that contains the secret of the whole device. Did you ever hear of the microphone?"

She shook her head.

"Well, it's a tiny affair no larger than a pea, and will so magnify sound in connection with an electric current and a telephone receiver, such as I have here, that the footsteps of a fly on a sheet of paper sound about like the tramping of an army. It's so powerful," he continued, "that if I were to place it in the end of a tube and point the tube, say, toward that island out there, any noise going on—-a wagon rattling along the road or a child naming—I should be able to hear on this side,

provided I had arranged the microphone so as to shut out all intervening noises. For instance, this microphone here is sensitive to no sound but that of the bell and the vibrations that I hope may be reflected back from the sea bottom. But we'll soon know whether it will work," he cried. "Row about twenty rods farther and then I'll tell you not only the depth of the water at that point, but the character of the bottom and whether it will be safe for our big liner to advance."

He was trembling all over and Rachel reflected his interest. She sent the boat forward a few strokes, then rested on the dripping oars. Nature, it seemed, was in her most approachable mood and at a hint of coaxing would reveal her secrets; yet the girl was conscious of something in the phenomena of the sea implacable and resistant to the efforts of man. Concealed promontories, hidden shoals, submerged headlands, treacherous peaks, drowned under the ceaseless rushing of waters—would the Voice come back bearing tale of all this?—or, if mud, weeds, fish, incrustations of shell—

would the Voice proclaim safety, and the inventor know the very thickness of that rolling, beauteous mantle of mystery?

Nothing of the poetic significance of the test was lost on the girl, and she felt the hand of pity at her throat when she witnessed Emil's disappointment manifest all over him like a blight. Then she gloried when she saw him repeat the test.

Come what might, it was clear he had faith in himself.

Tenaciously he passed from one test to another. He contorted himself, stooping in the bottom of the boat, his eyes bright with the steady flame of his determination. He took off his coat and, flinging back his hair, listened with the receiver at one ear while he covered the other with his free hand. At last he was able to hear: first, the muffled stroke of the bell, then the extremely feeble sound vibrations reflected from the sea bottom through the microphone-telephone; and by the period of time which elapsed between the

bell stroke and the return impulse, he was able, after innumerable experiments, to estimate closely the distance which the sound travelled before being sent back.

The afternoon advanced and waned, twilight approached, and, by his complete absorption, he revealed to Rachel the toil, the cautious experiments, the days and nights of labour expended for such meagre, very meagre results. He became, all at once, in her imagination, a figure exalted and pathetic. But it was plain that the unsatisfactory test had consumed a portion of his existence. At last, with an abrupt gesture, he directed her to put back to the shore.

The darkness had fallen and the waves wetted the beach indefatigably, the ocean murmured incomprehensibly, and from the heavens poured the imperturbable light of the stars. The stars threw their calm radiance over the figure that, silent and absorbed, leaped out of the boat and without a word made off around the rocks.

A shadowy presence, which immediately disclosed itself as a boy, emerged from among the boulders and scowled after the retreating form. "The next time he's for rowing round in such crazy fashion, I'll take him." And with his strong arms, André helped Rachel beach the boat.

She flung down the end of rope and faced him. "You'll do nothing of the sort," she cried; "you'll mind your business, do you understand?"

These words, spit out upon him, made him open his eyes in astonishment, but before he could find speech, she likewise had disappeared in the gloom.

CHAPTER IX
THE OLD FASCINATION

In spite of André's interference and her

grandfather's mild questionings, in spite, even, of Nora Gage's curious and sly looks, Rachel continued to take Emil out in the boat every day. But on the fifth day when she went to the beach, he did not appear. For a time she waited in acute loneliness, then, with a magnificent effort, she returned to the house, deliberately donned her best dress, and, haughtily, under Nora's little inquisitive eyes, started for Old Harbour. Some powerful law of existence was at work driving her blindly forward to realize a distant idea in the face of the challenges of her maidenhood.

She walked rapidly until she gained the main street of the little village. Then her steps flagged, and with her head turning idly from side to side, she noticed, as if for the first time, the names over the doors of the storm-beaten shops:—"Old Harbour Yacht Yard," "Ship Chandlery and Hardware," "Paint, Cordage and Boat Trimmings."

In her dainty trappings, with the shadow from her hat in her eyes and folds of her crisp muslin dress in one sunburnt hand to keep it

from the soil of the road, she might have been a stranger on a first stroll through the curious little town that smelled rankly of fish, instead of a maid born and bred in those parts. Finally she paused before a window where yellow oilskin coats were grotesquely displayed, together with lanterns and canvas pails and other objects of signal interest to one of her sex and age; and at that instant Emil, lounging in the door of the hotel opposite with a pipe planted between his lips, spied her.

For two blocks she walked rapidly, and when she did permit him to overtake her, she scarcely gave answer to his greeting. As if by mutual consent they turned their steps in the direction of the old Burying Point, a rocky promontory at the town's edge where for two centuries Old Harbour had persistently discovered graves for its dead among the boulders. Rocks and bones of men disputed the place, and yet, what more fit than that they should be laid to rest there, those staunch old captains and brave wives, whose very spirits had more in common with rocks

than with flowers? Yet flowers bloomed there in scanty elegance, and sprays of 'lady's ear-drop' and 'Queen Anne's lace,' testifying to some feminine grace hidden away in neighbouring graves, caught and clung to Rachel's dress as she passed.

Emil, who was frankly pleased to see her, kept laughing loudly as he switched off the heads of the tall grass: but Rachel turned away her face and bit her lip; now that she saw him, she was indifferent to him. She was not thoroughly aware of her own actions until they were accomplished. Constantly something vast fought within her. Indeed, in this scrap of a girl was manifest one of the greatest desires, the greatest volitions of the universe.

Reaching the edge of the cemetery where it ran out in a jutting cliff that commanded a view of extended range and beauty, she sank down on an old seat and cast a challenging glance at Emil.

"Is the *depth indicator* complete?" she

asked. "I did not know that you considered it finished."

"Yes, it's practically finished," he answered; "anyhow, I shan't be able to do anything more to it for the present. I've got to finish my lithographic outfit. They're hurrying me. I'm heartily sick of it, but there's nothing else to be done."

"Of course you must finish it," she agreed quickly, and the last little cloud vanished from her eyes.

With instinctive tact she began making more attractive to him the duty that lay before him. She made him explain the salient features of the lithographic improvement and she nodded her head sagely at each point as if she understood. Then she praised its ingenuity. Finally, having divined his feeling for his mother, she hinted at her pleasure in his success.

"Your mother must be excited these days," she said, "and proud, too."

The glow in his glance had been deepening, and pride was visible all over him, but at the mention of his mother his expression changed.

"Yes, it must go through for her sake," he said soberly. "Oh, I'm a queer devil," he continued, hitching his shoulders in some impatience; "I've a brain exactly like one of the monkeys in the Zoo—attracted first by this thing, then by that, just like one of the monkeys in the Zoo. I say, you're coming to-morrow?" he asked, as she rose. "If I'm to finish in time, someone's got to bring me to account."

He stood smiling at her, the sun lighting up his rough locks and causing him to half close his questioning, eager eyes in which there was a touch of anxiety.

She lifted toward him her sensitive and responsive face.

"Will you come?" he insisted. His eyes held hers.

Her brows rose ingenuously, her lips parted, though no word passed them. Then, with a mute gesture of assent, she turned away.

Reaching home, she deemed it expedient to conceal her towering spirits. But even so, it seemed extraordinary that her grandfather did not surprise the thought that informed her cheeks, her eyes and every curve of her body with witchery. In Emil's presence her bearing had not been what she could have wished, but now it was that of a queen.

At bedtime, before her mirror, she arranged her hair after a new fashion. She stared into her bright soft face. Standing in her nightgown she hugged closely to her breast her happiness that was young and young and once again young.

Borne forward in obedience to an irresistible command of nature, she continued to meet St. Ives. In spite of tears and passionate revolts and innumerable petty hypocrisies by which she strove to put

another face on her actions, that was awake in her which would not be gainsaid. And, thanks to her sex which so readily can blind itself, her movements for the most part remained superbly instinctive and unconscious.

When she set out of an afternoon for Old Harbour she caught and held every eye, like something bright and sparkling. Nora Gage observed her and malignity appeared to deepen the creases of her fat; while Lizzie Goodenough longed for the temerity to give warning to the motherless slip. All unmindful of them, Rachel, with such bravery of raiment as she could command, pursued her course. And her accoutrement, which was always the same, was by no means inconsiderable. The dress was of yellow barred-muslin and the skirt swayed as she walked like the corolla of a drooping flower. The waist fitted her closely, save at the bosom where there was an over-lapping fulness and in this surplice front was pinned carelessly, surely with the height of art, a cluster of evening primroses. These frail flowers, constantly agitated by the mad beating of her heart, drooped finally, as if in

sheer delight at their enviable position. Fastened beneath her chin was the ribbon of her flower-decked hat. This ribbon, passing round that little smooth face and seeming to hold it in a dainty embrace, was a triumph of coquetry: it had life and spoke, calling attention to the down on the cheek, to the lift of the upper lip, finally to the eyes, innocent as a stag's—eyes that never the less revealed in this ardent, complex, highly-spiritual creature intense aspirations towards a fuller existence.

One afternoon on arriving at the cemetery she seated herself on a certain flat-topped tomb, and there some minutes later Emil joined her. The look from under his rough mane came at her diagonally, as with head lowered on his hand, he sat beside her. His eyes shed on her admiration; his moustache leaped against his cheek as he smiled.

"It's good to be near you."

Rachel glanced at him askance, and one little hand trembled so on the other that she

had to intertwine their fingers strongly. Though she drank in these words like wine, she did not know how to prolong the moment. Instead,—O perverse instinct that frequently dominates helpless youth!—she inquired about his work. For interminable hours she had longed for this very moment, yet here she was shortening it!

Emil rose joyously to her question. Not only did he reply to it, but he amplified his explanation and finally launched into a detailed description of the instrument on which he was then engaged.

Once started on the subject, she knew he would not abandon it until she rose as a signal that the interview must end.

Happiness was diminished, but for an instant only. Disappointment was drowned in pride. It was something to have demonstrated to her her value as a confidante. To her imagination this stranger dropped by Fate at her feet, was all that the childish André was not. He appealed to her by reason of his

stronger magnetism and his greater mind. Not only did he seem to her to possess every quality of the ideal lover, but,—and the discovery completed her subjugation and was essential to it,—he was the eternal child of genius whom she longed to protect.

The moment came when they had to part. Sometimes they separated at the gate of the cemetery; sometimes, if dusk had overtaken them, Emil walked home with her. Frequently, at the moment of parting, he caught her hand and looked fixedly at her eyes and mouth. Though judging from the expression of both eyes and mouth, the permission he sought was not absolutely withheld, the firm, round face fronting his in the evening light seemed to mask a host of imperious possibilities. Its look, on the whole, was equivocal. Scarcely aware of what restrained him, he pressed her trusting little fingers and let her go. Rachel was one of those fortunate maidens who are never treated with levity by men.

After the young girl had disappeared in the

house, the spell she had cast over Emil's restless heart was in a measure dissipated. He straightened his cap, thrust his hands into his pockets and swung away, his thoughts once more on his work.

But for Rachel there existed no such opposing interest. Each day, through the hours of separation, she lived on the exhaustless, ardent vitality absorbed during their last interview. But it was not long ere the glory of her dream was partially eclipsed. The guileless disturber of her bliss was a certain Lottie Loveburg who caught up with her one afternoon as she was striking into the road for Pemoquod Point. As she had parted from Emil some minutes earlier, Rachel was not averse to Lottie's company.

"I'm going your way, at least as far as Mr. Patch's," Lottie announced with a panting breath. "Mother wants me to get a mess of pease for supper. Bliss and Mason are all sold out."

The two girls went on side by side.

Lottie was a few years older than Rachel. In school she had been considered an out-and-out stupid, but once released from school she was acknowledged a belle. She was a large full-bosomed lass with a head of heavy blond hair. The one misfortune of her face was the slight crossing of the blue eyes. As far as possible, she remedied the defect by a frequent lowering of the lids, though the precaution was one which she did not trouble herself to take when walking, as at present, with one of her own kind. From this big lazy girl there issued a compelling and entirely innocent charm that attacked the opposite sex. To the absorbed and dreamy Rachel she was as cornet to flute, when both blow the same ravishing air.

For a space the pair followed the road in silence. Had any observer been present, he might well have asked himself how much of the hope depicted on the countenances of these two young creatures was destined to be fulfilled. Were they destined to be mothers of sons and daughters who, in turn, would inhabit this desolate coast?—or was it written

that something of their superabundance of dream and romance be realized? It was significant that they set their faces toward the immense infinite ocean, suggestive that their skirts, whipped to the side by the breeze, seemed waving a farewell to the rude life of the land.

Though their shoulders touched, for sometime each seemed unconscious of the other. Lottie was the first to speak.

"Well," she cried, "here we are at Mr. Patch's and I haven't said a word of what's weighing on my mind."

Rachel started and glanced sideways at her. She feared some allusion to her meetings with Emil.

But Lottie was too much engrossed in her own affairs to give a thought to her companion's. "Yes, I think I must tell you," she continued with a sigh that was a frank announcement of vanity. "Well then, Mr. Forebush intends to fight Jim Wright. He's

going to follow Jim as he goes along home past the cemetery, and when they reach a lonely place, he's going to drag Jim in behind the wall and settle things."

"The cemetery?" cried Rachel sharply. The cemetery was her territory.

"They won't be disturbed there—that's all Mr. Forebush is thinking of. He travels for a New York shoe firm, you know, and he says he's sick of finding Jim hanging round our house every time he comes to town."

"Then does Mr. Forebush—does he like you?" Rachel questioned. Though she made free use of a warmer term in her meditations, she hesitated to pronounce it.

But the more experienced Lottie had no such scruple. "Like me!" She threw her hands apart with an expansive motion. "Why he loves me!" And to cover her embarrassment she burst into laughter.

Rachel crimsoned. "Yes, but how do you

know he does?" she persisted.

Lottie continued laughing. "Oh, you queer child! You understand nothing!" Then, as the other darted an angry look at her,—"Why, doesn't the fight prove it, even if he hadn't said it? But he has said it. I wouldn't take stock in him if he hadn't. No looks and kisses without words for me! But I'm leaving you here. Wonder if Mr. Patch is at home." Then, as she was passing in at the gate she added with a return of the sentimental manner, "I'm sure I hope Jim won't hurt Mr. Forebush; he's some bigger, you know."

Rachel did not remain to discuss this possibility. Instead, she threw over her shoulder a curt "good-bye" and pursued her course.

When she was with Emil what did he talk about? Try as she would she could recall no topic on which he dwelt save his own work. Ideas for new inventions, for wonderful instruments jostled each other on his lips. He explained them with fire;—plans, details, he

mapped them all out before her. "Fine to do!" he would cry, and while the words came forth in the most ringing tones of his voice and his eyes constantly sought hers, conscious that he revived in her presence his courage and light-heartedness, she herself was tricked into contentment. But now she questioned the extent of her power over him.

Until she had covered the distance from Zarah Patch's to "the barn," her feeling was nicely balanced between dejection and hope. But from "the barn" onward to her grandfather's house, hope flagged. Presently, in the privacy of her own room, she succumbed to despair:

"It may be that I'm not good-looking enough!"

This was the thought that caused her the most exquisite pang. If she failed on that score, as well yield up all hope at once. And in fancy she ranged herself beside this spinster and that of her acquaintance until the consciousness of the contrast between

eighteen and fifty brought a smile flickering to her lips. But did she fail in the matter of looks? When dressed in her best, didn't she look as well as Lottie Loveburg? To be sure Lottie had a rope of hair as big as your arm, but then, there were her eyes!

To glance in the mirror over her bureau at her own resources of face and figure was a natural action for a young thing in such harassing doubt. At present, however on the subject of her looks, Rachel had all of a child's ignorance. She was no more capable of appreciating the sensitive changeful beauty of her colouring and expression than a canary bird is of appreciating the beauty of its yellow plumage.

Turning from the mirror to a window, she lost herself in reverie. Her thoughts returned again and again to the vision of two eyes that entered audaciously into hers,—two eyes with a mind in them,—two good lips laughing and talking from the covert of a curling beard; and as she studied the exciting vision, the gloom lifted from her face. It was

indeed a great honour to be the confidante of such a man, she assured herself; and once more was isolated by the realization on a dizzy eminence above all her girl companions.

CHAPTER X
IN WHICH A KISS IS GIVEN AND REGRETTED

Unconscious of the grim humour that lurked in the fact of their having selected it as a place to foregather, Emil and Rachel continued to meet at the old Burying Point. No other lovers came there, and as deaths were infrequent in Old Harbour and a funeral pageant an event, they were practically secure from interruption. There, where the wind bent the grass above the graves with a sound that struck pleasantly on the ear and the insect world was all abroad on busy wings, they

found the isolation their spirits craved. The place was, at most, but a setting for their two selves, for their sweet, intoxicating emotions.

Emil would look at Rachel pensively, almost appealingly. She stirred in him depths of tenderness and often he would have been tempted into some indiscretion had not her Arcadian innocence disconcerted him. With a shrug of the shoulders and a sigh, he would turn away from her as if offended at something. Though neither of them guessed it, what raised the level of the situation and decreased its dangers, was the unflagging interest she exhibited in his work. A woman's interest in his achievement is always fruitful for a man. For the exuberant and egotistic inventor, it was as fuel to flame. It immensely increased his powers.

Had anyone, prompted by curiosity, troubled himself to spy on the pair, he would have discovered an enthusiastic young fellow ranting on matters scientific and a slip of a girl sitting nearby with delight and despair depicted on her mobile countenance. The

delight, he would have remarked, was a fluctuating emotion; the despair in danger of becoming a lasting one.

The two had been meeting in this way for upwards of three weeks and the lithographic sheets and press were all but ready for triumphant shipment, when Rachel's patience came unexpectedly to an end. Her change of front was due directly to the weather. The temperature of Pemoquod on a particular afternoon in late August made the wearing of the muslin dress seem out of the question, for the day, while bright, was distinctly chilly and by the time she quitted the cemetery according to all reasonable calculations, the air would be cold. She therefore made no change in her dress at all, but in her every-day frock, with an old drab silk shawl, which had belonged to her mother, over her shoulders and a book from the circulating library under her arm, she took her way to Old Harbour, her prospects for a pleasant interview considerably damaged. In this dull attire she would forego Emil's lightning glances of pleasure, "For he might as well

look at a rock or a stump," she told herself disconsolately, "as look at me the way I am to-day."

The weather beside the sea is nothing if not capricious, and by the time she reached the cemetery, the air had become warm. It was between four and five o'clock and the sun was sending long level shafts between the graves, as if looking for something, when Rachel took her accustomed place on the flat-topped tomb and let the shawl slip down her back till it lay about her in a semicircle of rippling folds.

"Just my bad luck!" she soliloquized. "It's warm enough for a gauze dress if one had such a thing. But I'd like to know what's the sense of all this?" she resumed indignantly. "It isn't fair that he should judge me by my clothes entirely and I'll not have it. I've a mind as well as he!"

Now there was no evidence that Emil had judged her as lacking this particular endowment, but she was in no mood to

adhere closely to facts. She began turning the pages of her book at random. She was engaged in reading, with most imperfect attention it must be confessed, a glowing description of the sphinx, when he arrived.

From a distance he spied her and she appeared to him to light up with her grace the whole desolate place. For eight hours he had devoted himself solely to work; now like one who receives but his just reward, he drew near with a jovial smile on his lips. Rachel, though she was conscious of his approach in every fibre of her being, was all for concealing the fact. Partly through resentment, partly through coquetry, she kept her eyes to her page. Suddenly Emil halted. Of a truth, there was material enough in the picture she made, perched there on the old table-tomb, for twenty conquests.

Dressed in the famous muslin, the rarest quality of her beauty, a certain lurking mystery, was lost amid furbelows which simply emphasized her youth. Now clothed in a sober little frock that appeared to be as

much part of her as its smooth bark is part of a sapling, there was nothing to divert attention from her actual self. There she sat with her book open on her lap, a kind of sibyl, while about her hummed and buzzed and fluttered tribes of nimble-bodied insects. Great blundering bees pilfered rude kisses from the willing lips of some pink phlox swaying at her knee, a butterfly came to rest on the tomb and even crawled with curious, quivering antennae toward the hand outspread on the stone. A thrush poured out its heart from a little whip of a tree over her head. In the midst of this place of death, she spoke compellingly of life.

"I've come!"

Emil's voice trembled. The blood beat in his temples.

"How long have you been here?" he questioned, as he opened his hand grudgingly and released her fingers. "How much have I missed of you?"

She ignored the form of the question. "Oh, I've not been here long, I think," with disconcerting calmness, "though when I have a book I lose all track of time."

At this unexpectedly repressing manner, he moved a few paces off.

"What is your book?" he inquired after a pause.

"'Impressions of the Nile Country,'" and she made a motion as if to hand him the volume. But he kept his face away. Thereupon she plucked a spear of grass and placed it carefully between the pages, while a peculiarly significant and feminine expression played about her mouth.

"Oh," she sighed with sudden fervour, "how I should like to travel! particularly how I should love to travel in Egypt."

"But why Egypt?" and he swung round.

"The sphinx;" she explained briefly. "It sits

there gazing before it forever and forever, and it never reveals the secret of the hands that fashioned it, while the sun scorches it and the sands blow over it and will finally throttle it, I suppose, but it will never tell."

With her arms crossed on her lap, she was staring at a near-by shrub. It was a starved old rose-bush which had long since ceased to bear, but she seemed to see in it a vision, for a smile unclosed her lips and narrowed her eyes. She looked up at him and her bosom lifted.

"Yes," she repeated softly, "I should like mightily to see the sphinx."

He was regarding her with a strange, fixed attention. Now he thrust his hands into the pockets of his jacket with a convulsive movement.

"You're something by way of being a sphinx yourself," he said unsteadily.

Reaching behind her she slowly drew up

the shawl until straight folds of the material fell about her face. Then she extended a hand on either knee and gazed before her. The imitation was admirable. Not a feature or limb stirred. The sun penetrated the worn silken shawl and vaguely defined her round little form. It gilded her forehead and chin and traced a line of humid light along the lids of the eyes the pupils of which were so obstinately contemplating Eternity. But what that celestial body could not accomplish with its bold steady gaze, was given to a mortal to achieve with a single glance. St. Ives bent over her.

The sphinx was lost in the woman.

Throbbing with delicious dread, Rachel gave him her eyes. She returned look for look, while her breathing ceased and her little hands, still stretched along her knees, trembled. Lower and lower he bent his head, higher and higher she lifted hers, to the length of its delicate, palpitating throat. At the very brink—an ecstatic, troubled, reeling pause, then—their lids sank, their lips met.

About them the insects continued their aggressive activity. A bee, greedy for the last drop of honey, lit on a purple aster and the whole light spray of blossoms swayed to his weight. The butterfly that had lately visited Rachel's hand, joined its mate high up in the thin blue air. From the branch of a sapling the thrush swelled its throat once more in a joyful song. Ignorant that those two motionless heads announced creatures differing in aught from themselves, the host of creeping and winged things enrolled them for the nonce in their lists.

Rachel was the first to recoil from the caress. She drew back,—sweetly ashamed, shyly-radiant, with that in her eyes a man would have died rather than lessen.

But on Emil the shock of the caress had a contrary effect.

"In Heaven's name!" he cried, without looking at her, "forgive me." The words leaped forth from his very heart. He wasn't half worthy that kiss and he had the

astonishing grace to know it.

As though any apology were necessary, however, as though events could have happened otherwise! The kiss had been as sure to come as the imminent meeting of evening with deep dark night. And so Rachel, by her manner, seemed to say. In an anguish of expectancy she looked up at him—ready to be assured, or ready to be stricken in her pride as never maid was stricken before.

Before Emil could answer, Zarah Patch appeared round a turn of the roadway. Concealed by hedges and clumps of shrubbery, his approach had been unnoticed by the pair. Now he brought the white mare to a halt while he shot a look at the girl. Some inkling of the gossip concerning his friend's young granddaughter had reached even his old ears.

"I'm going back to the Point directly, Rachel," he called, "be ye inclined to come along?"

She sent a mute, tremulous question to Emil. His eyes were rivetted on the ground. A powerful struggle was taking place within him. A desire for love had flamed in his heart and, with his lips on hers, for one brief fiery instant he had tasted the sweetness of his power over her. None the less, what he now experienced was an intolerable sense of shame. It set the seal of dignity on his ardour, if she had but understood. But she totally misread him.

Pride sent up its secret cry: Perhaps he regretted the kiss, perhaps he had no right to kiss her?

"Want to come along?" urged Zarah. "I've been hauling sod and the cart is some muddied, but if yer'e keerful gittin' in, ye won't hurt yer dress none."

Rachel suddenly signified her assent.

Emil raised his head in a singular and wild fashion. He made an imploring gesture. But it was too late.

Under cover of a manner of perfect nonchalance she rose to the supposed situation. Haughtily, under his fiercely-miserable eyes and the curious eyes of the old man, she proceeded to the cart.

Emil strode forward. He looked passionate. But she ignored his proffered hand and accepted Zarah's assistance into the cart. Once perched on the high seat, she nodded proudly in the direction of him whom she had so lately kissed.

Like many another woman if she could have erased the tender incident from the scroll of her days, if she even could have told herself with honesty that Emil had been the only moved one, she would willingly have given half her life.

"But I kissed him back—I did! I did! and there's no use pretending otherwise," she confessed in helpless stony abasement.

And throughout the night, in intervals of sleeplessness, she continued to sigh because

of the torturing memory.

CHAPTER XI
AT THE OLD BURYING POINT

By the next morning the incident just recorded had taken on to Rachel a somewhat different tinge. Her sense of humiliation had so far abated as to admit of her entertaining a feeling of pity for Emil. He certainly had appeared a disconsolate and astounded figure as he stood there gazing after her as she drove away. She wished now that she had not left so precipitately, or, at least, that she had not declined his proffered assistance when mounting into the cart.

By an altered reasoning the apology which had offended her yesterday, now gratified her. As a gentleman who had been guilty of the grave misdemeanour of kissing a lady, he could not have acted differently; for she now

thrust the entire blame of the incident on his masculine shoulders. "It certainly was his fault in the first place," she argued. And, having shifted the ground of resentment from the apology for the kiss to the kiss itself, she resolved to forgive the wrong-doer.

The greater part of the day she spent in wandering on the shore of the bay. Whenever she went there, instinctively she glanced at the mound of sand where, on the occasion of their first meeting, she had seen Emil bury the torn scraps of a letter. Not that she would have touched the mound for the world, but the strictest would not censure a glance of curiosity in that direction. Owing to its protection from the wind, the little grave, strangely enough, had remained intact. But this morning a scrap of paper appeared on the beach bearing, in what was incontestably a woman's handwriting, the single word "Dearest."

Scarcely cognizant of what she did, Rachel, like a feminine Crusoe, hovered over this bit of evidence on the sand. Like the legendary

hero her consciousness of being alone was destroyed, but with different effect, for instead of an expression of surprise not unmixed with fear, her look was one of suspicious misery.

"That letter was never from his mother," flashed through her mind. "Old ladies don't make D's that way, so big and round,—but small and trembly. No, whoever she is, she's young. Of course," reason suggested, "the letter may have been written by some relative—by a cousin, perhaps." The supposition was barely tenable.

With the keen brightness of eye that betokens jealousy, she remained poised for the briefest fraction of time above the tantalizing find, then she turned and pranced away. The instant devoted to the scrutiny had been so short as to admit of scarcely more than half a heart-throb, so short as scarcely to be termed a look at all, yet a sense of dishonour was not lacking in her suffering.

She walked, stopped to think, shed a tear or

two, and eventually grew calm. What comforted her was the thought that Emil cared so little for its writer that he had torn the letter into bits.

By afternoon her anxiety to forgive him for the misdemeanour of the day previous had grown to such proportions as to drive her to the place of meeting much earlier than usual; and waiting there still further increased the feeling. When she saw him coming, she rose. Her arms, hanging down her sides, trembled. She was all languor, all expectancy; she was the desire for reconciliation incarnate. Yet even from a distance, she knew that something was wrong. She turned upon him a look of inquiry as he drew near with his hands sunk in his pockets and his head lowered.

His face was clouded, his moustache curved downward, though when he lifted his eyes to hers, into them flashed a warm and intensely grateful smile. But the expression was succeeded by a gloomy one.

"Well, it's all over," he announced. "No need for me to have slaved so. I'm thrown aside and someone else goes ahead and reaps the profits."

"What do you mean?" she gasped.

"Mean? Why I mean that my delightful employers have stolen the press, the sheets, the whole scheme. I wasn't quick enough and they got someone else to finish the thing and applied for the patent."

"How do you know?"

"Oh, I've been informed all right," he said and from his pocket he drew a letter.

Involuntarily Rachel extended her hand; then her face went white. On the sheet that fluttered in his fingers she beheld the same childish chirography that had appeared on the scrap of paper on the beach. Her hand dropped.

"It's always the same," he went on, without

noticing the change that had come over her. And seating himself on the tomb, he took out his pipe. Having filled it, he commenced to smoke, his eyes widely opened, full of profound thought, fixed on vacancy.

"Not that it makes any difference," he continued philosophically after a pause. "The world gets the benefit of the invention; as for me, I've plenty of other things in my head. I'm not crying over spilt milk," and he looked up at her and laughed while the shining returned to his glance. Reaching out toward her he tried to take her hand. This movement, while bold, was not destitute of an appealing grace. It was a mute reference to the kiss, to their changed relations; it was also a demand for sympathy.

At any other time Rachel would not have resisted it, but now she stepped out of his reach. "Who is it that informs you?" Her voice was implacable.

He hesitated. "The daughter of one of my employers," he said in a low tone. "She's

stood by me from the first," he admitted. "She's been in fact a—little trump." And then he sighed.

Rachel turned away her head. "I should think you'd go to her at once," she said. "I don't see why you wait here. There's a train at six."

Disconcerted, he got to his feet. Their eyes locked. He glowered upon her.

"You might be able to protect your rights," she continued in a stinging voice. "Then I should think, on *her* account, if not on your mother's, you'd make the attempt."

She saw the visible pang the mention of his mother occasioned.

"I will," he cried, "I'll go." And he held out his hand.

She saw that he shook from head to foot, and she knew that she had hurt him mortally. But every force of her passionate nature had

become negative to all appeal from him. She could but stand with an impassive face and bid him go, lest he court worldly failure instead of success.

And so they parted like strangers.

When he had passed from her sight, Rachel sank in a little heap on the tomb. She bent her face on her knees. She felt as if a sounding-instrument had gone to the very depths of her heart and explored there among ambiguous weeds and mud, and as she listened to the message that came back, she rocked backward and forward in a very ecstasy of barren grief and shame. It seemed to her that she had reached the burying point of life, and her sobs, quick with the agony of youthful living, sounded small and piteous in that quiet place of the dead.

CHAPTER XII

THE MIGRATORY INSTINCT

During the first weeks succeeding Emil's departure, Rachel looked feverishly for a letter. It seemed to her the intensity of her longing must cause one to appear. But none came, and finally she realized that none would come. She went about with a curled lip and a scornful eye. Nora Gage might run the house as she chose and cook as many savory dishes as she pleased, the girl did not care; she was indifferent even to her grandfather; but let the one or the other cross her will, and her anger blazed forth. These violent outbursts were nature's defence.

In the painful upheaval that separated her dream from the reality, that which was the very centre of her higher life, suffered to such an extent that she must have become inert, had it not been for the responsibility felt by all the ruder faculties of her hardy young being. She had sought love, struggling albeit unconsciously, toward a supposed freedom; and driven back on herself, she would have become like a prisoner at the bottom of a

cellar—bleeding, discouraged, without further hope—had it not been for the nerves that proved insurrectionary, for the temper that refused to be thwarted. The activity of these rescuers gradually amazed the girl herself and drew her from the contemplation of her trouble. But the experience, long after the actual pain of it had given place to a general dissatisfaction with existence, left its trace upon her face; and this tempestuous beauty, wrought from within, played around her lips in a smile of tragic comprehension and increased the range of her youthful and expressive eye.

At home Nora dragged her slippers over the kitchen floor with a flapping sound, and at "the barn," where even the occasional customer had ceased to appear, André played wild airs upon his fiddle. Both these sounds were intolerable to Rachel and, to escape them, she fled to the cliffs. There, even as the cold weather came on, she sat for hours, with her chin buried in her hands and her eyes on the ocean—the ocean which, unfathomable and perpetually active, built itself into

gigantic walls that broke against the rocks with a reverberating report and were sucked back emitting long murmurs.

Old David, thinking that he discovered in this preoccupation with the sea a likeness to her father, approached Zarah Patch on the subject and from a distance, screwing up their eyes in the sunlight, the two ancient men observed her.

"It's her father's blood," explained old David, "often and often I seen him look the same way."

"It's jest female feelings," Zarah affirmed, "she ain't rightly found her rudder yet, and she's young. It's always so with women;"—a remark of unusual length and penetration for Zarah.

Finally old David hit on a plan for diverting her, a plan, however, which was destined to increase her malady rather than to cure it. In the Old Harbour paper that once a week found its way to the Point, there appeared an

account of a private car fresh from the shops which, for the purpose of conveying his family and friends to their home in the city, had been brought to Old Harbour by a wealthy summer resident. The car was stalled on a side track, and old David proposed to his granddaughter that they go and see it.

It was a fine clear afternoon, and as the visit was in the nature of a pleasure expedition, they drove beside Zarah Patch in his cart. As they bowled along the road, the ruts of which were slightly stiffened by the frost, old David talked continuously and Rachel found herself listening.

"You know I used to work in the car shops at Philadelphy when I was a young chap," he explained. "It was an immense sky-lighted place covered with tracks and filled from one end to t'other with cars, some old to be repainted and some entirely new. Winter was the time when the old ones used to come troopin' back to us all faded and travel-stained; they used to seem like old women whose finery was a little gone-by, who came

back to see how young and spruce they could be made to look. And in the summer we fitted out the new ones, and they of course was like young things jest preparin' fer their first venture into the world.

"I tell ye," he continued, "I used to feel about them jest as if they were human creatures. The men who worked there was called 'liners,' 'sign-writers,' 'hardwood-finishers,' 'decorators,' and 'rubbers-down.' The 'rubbers-down' worked with emery-cloth and water, and oh my, didn't they have to be careful about savin' the gold paint on the old cars, though! For the letters and lines of gold on a car are always left to stand, bein' as you might say, her jewellery," he added, with a cackling laugh.

But when the little party descended at the station, the magnificence of the new coach dazzled old David. He had never seen anything like it, though this fact he strove to conceal.

"They used to decorate 'em more," he said,

"they used to paint scrolls along the sides, and between the winders they put on yaller tulips; and to my mind, the cars was handsomer."

The ticket agent ran across the tracks to open the new coach and the old man, to demonstrate his knowledge of the subject, began enumerating the different classes of common cars. "'P.K.' is the best of 'em," he proclaimed, "'P.K. Wide Vestibule'. But of course this car is something a little extry."

When, however, the ticket agent had left them and they once more stood looking up at the coach, he broke forth into lyric praise of it.

"'Tain't hardly been on the tracks, remember," he cried, "but think of the miles and miles it has to run, through what different kinds of country. It'll be like a good soldier followin' the leader! But the engine! Oh, that's the master of 'em all!" he continued; "great, shinin', pantin' master, that's what the engine is, the master."

Rachel looked at the car as at a traveller who is about to start on a long journey. Once she had seen the wife of the owner with a party of friends, and she began filling the seats of the new coach with these people. Oh, the ladies, the softly-turned heads; the nicely-dressed children—no common folk were to ride in this car! And she imagined how they would be carried forward, the rolling of the wheels growing ever swifter and swifter; and then how they would arrive at that spot, glimmering with a million lights, tumultuous and confused, the city containing great homes.

On the drive back to the Point, she closed her eyes the better to pursue her thoughts, and her grandfather's words mingled with them like something heard in a dream.

"Sometimes, not often, I used to paint station signs," he said, "and after I'd finished the name of a place—maybe it was Kingston, or maybe it was only Smithville,—I used to think how the sign would be hung at the end of a long platform or perhaps jest posted

against a little shed of a buildin' in the midst of a great prairie, and I used to think of the rain and the snow that'd blow against it, and most blot out the letters, and the little birds that would perch on it; and somehow I felt as if I had been to the places jest through paintin' of the signs."

Rachel pictured the earth webbed with tracks like veins, and she saw the ships following certain appointed routes over seas; and again, as in the past, it appeared to her that she was the one stagnant thing in an active creation.

"But the signs I liked to paint best," resumed her grandfather's tremulous voice, "were the *Stop-Look-Listen* signs, and the *Railroad-Crossin'—Look Out For The Engine*. They are made of cast steel now and the letters are raised, but in my time they was of wood, tall white posts with a pointin' arm, like ghosts givin' warnin'."

It seemed to the girl that at all costs she must set herself free and become a part of a moving and active world. But how transgress the law that had placed her there on the Maine coast, without experience and without outlet for all the various capacities of her being? From that time she began to coax her grandfather to leave Pemoquod.

"The president of the car shops who gave you this house," she began one evening, winding her arms about his neck, "if you looked him up—"

"Nicholas Hart ain't in Philadelphy no longer," objected the old man. "I seen in the papers years ago about the car shops failin' when he had 'em, and then about his movin' to New York City."

"Yes, I know that," she assented, "now if you looked him up, he'd probably get you a nice easy position in New York. But I don't intend you shall work much longer," she continued, "and that's just the point; I ought to be doing something to support us both. But

what can I do here?"

In vain old David protested that he did not wish her to work, she overruled him, the more easily because his ever-youthful heart was pleased with the idea of a change. Then, too, he was lapsing into his second childhood and as time went on he allowed himself to be guided more and more by her.

Nora Gage was no match for the pair. She had conceived a fondness for the kitchen, for the stove, for the very pots and pans; moreover, the food that she was able to get in this house was to her liking, especially now, when secure from observation, she fried, stirred and seasoned to her heart's content. No longer driven to eat these supplementary luncheons in the privacy of her own chamber, surrounded by her mice like St. Francis by his birds, she ate when and where she chose, even under the eyes of the abstracted girl. It must not be concluded that she was ignorant of any detail of the plan that was on foot. No one knew, better than she, through listening at the cracks of doors, what was going

forward. And anon she would be servile before Rachel, through sheer apprehension, and again would rage inwardly to think that the coming change in her fortunes was due to a brat of a girl. The grandfather, by the force of that will which existed in the depths of her being like a seldom-used sword in a scabbard, Nora could have managed; but Rachel was beyond the range of her power. However, when the announcement of the great news was finally made to her, her plea was ready.

"And what's to become of me, miss?" she demanded. "For more years than ye've lived I've served yer grandfather faithful, and now at a word from ye I'm turned off with no place to go."

Rachel, sitting on the arm of her grandfather's chair, regarded the housekeeper coldly. "Why can't you go back in the meat-market with your cousin?" she asked; "grandfather says you used to be there."

"Yes, but his son's growed up now and he don't need me," and Nora began to turn a

corner of her apron over one stodgy finger. "It was jest as my friends warned me," she whimpered, "they said I'd be sorry if I stayed on here after yer mother died. I've sacrificed everything for ye two and ye don't seem to know it." She ended with a guttural sob.

Rachel scanned her with a swift glance from head to foot. "What have you sacrificed for us?" she asked. "Haven't you been paid?"

"Yes, but there's some things that can't be paid for," Nora muttered. "A woman can't stay in a man's house the way I have without its costing her dear."

The girl stared, then the clear colour stained her face. "Nonsense!" she cried.

"It may seem nonsense to you, miss," Nora retorted, "I can well understand that it do—actin' as you did awhile back. But it ain't nonsense to the world. I might as well be like that poor thing at the lighthouse 'stead of the decent woman I am, as far as the world knows. I've give up everything for ye two,

that's what I have, and this is the way I git treated," and she began sobbing in earnest.

The old man gazed from one to the other in bewilderment. He saw his granddaughter rise and heard her draw a sharp breath, and he saw the housekeeper cower and drop her eyes.

Rachel passed to a window and stood there for some seconds; then a whiff of cookery from the kitchen stirred in her a kind of pity. Through a crack of the door was revealed that for which Nora struggled and schemed. To have food in plenty, greasy, rich food, this was the one desire of Nora's life.

"Grandfather," she said softly and a little wearily, without looking at the woman, "if you are willing, we'll take Nora with us."

Of all this interesting parley which betrayed itself in the late-burning lamp at the Beckett house, André Garins caught not an inkling. He slept above in the lighthouse, or, when chance favoured, below in his bed; and cut

off as he was from news, he remained ignorant of the proposed flight.

Occasionally, after he had polished the crystal lenses and the brass trimmings of the lantern, his duties over for the day, he tapped at the Beckett door; but Rachel was too busy to see him: and to escape the belligerent eyes of Captain Daniels who drank secretly but heavily as the cold weather came on, he betook himself to the deserted barn.

Blown upon by all the winds of heaven, with whisperings at every crack and meanings in its loosened timbers, "the barn" was André's retreat. Far from finding it dismal, he had only to light a fire in the cracked stove and whip out his fiddle; and henceforth, it became a cheerful and friendly abode. He was too close to nature to be rendered unhappy by mere loneliness. The booming of the sea against the cliffs and the sighing of the wind in the vastnesses of the sedgegrass, but lit in him a fiercer gayety.

Up to this time André had resembled one of

those unobtrusive plants which encumber the highway, but which are apt to escape notice until the flowering season. He was as handsome as an animal, a child or any other natural thing, and of the primitive soul at the bottom of him, his large and rolling eye revealed little. But the hour comes when the humble flower arrests our attention, if only for the fraction of a moment, by opening a corolla of exquisite perfection.

It was on a day in late autumn after the first snow had vanished from the earth, leaving it wistful and half-chastened, that Rachel sought out André. It was to be expected that her schoolfellow would feel sharp regret at her news, and for this reason she had delayed enlightening him until the last moment. They stood some distance from "the barn" in the pale sunlight and as she began to speak, he looked straight into her eyes with a kind of uncomprehending terror. Scarcely had she finished when he sank to the ground as if felled by a blow.

"Say you didn't mean it," he moaned, and at

her dress she felt his clinging hands while his forehead rested hot against her feet.

She lifted his head and saw his mouth twisting like a child's, while from his eyes poured two steady streams of tears.

"Why André!" she cried, and with a movement of almost maternal compassion, she put her arms about him. Thus drawn against the sky, the young pair vaguely suggested the group of Niobe and her child.

"Say you won't leave me," he moaned, "say we'll be married and you'll never, never leave me."

Softly she stroked his hair while gazing straight before her. Through a sort of prescience she knew that this humble and suppliant love was sweeter and more fathomless than anything that would come to her again.

"No, André dear," she said finally, "I can't stay just living on day after day, and all the

days just alike; I can't because there's something *here*," and she touched her heart, "that won't let me. All the same," she continued, "I'm not sure that you're not wiser. You'll stay here patiently, and, after a fashion, you'll be happy, I suppose. But it won't be that way with me," she added, with a prophetic shake of the head; "I shall not be patient and so—"

But André comprehended nothing save the fact that the innermost hope of his being was in ruins. He was sobbing now with even more abandon and through the texture of her dress Rachel felt the pure warmth of his tears.

"Look, André," she said, "do you see that they are burning wrecks down there—the lumber of those fishing boats that came ashore last spring. Why are they doing it?"

He raised his wet eyes and followed the direction of her pointing finger.

"It's because they want to use the iron bolts that screw them together," she continued. "In

just the same way, life treats us—like wrecked barks, and the flames sweep over us, so that at last all that is left is the iron strength of us." She finished almost in a whisper, as if she had forgotten him.

It was clear that André's soul would continue to cling to her soul like the lichen to the wood, the ivy to the tree. And this he knew, even while he mourned the material separation.

Presently more matter-of-fact words brought him to himself. He ceased weeping, and rising, stood at her bidding.

"You'll see about the trunk lock," she said, "right away; and you'll meet grandfather and go with him to buy the tickets. I'll see you again in the morning, but this is the real goodbye."

His face was as calm as hers now, even the longing in it had died. Seeing him thus—being no Spartan, but soft woman every inch—her arms went about his neck and her lips

met his. While the two young creatures stood thus the sun, faintly pink, sank into the sea and a cold wind blew over the land.

Rachel had disappeared but André had gone scarcely a hundred yards when he flung himself face downward. With his hands knotted among the sedgegrass, he wept without sound. A locust that had been lured from its retreat by the warmth of the day, looked at him from the stalk of a plantain, then changed its location to less violently agitated quarters; only the shaking of some denuded stalks marked where the boy lay.

Because of the insubmission, bravery and perseverance of a young girl, the old weather-beaten house of the former lobsterman was forsaken. No more would its rooms echo to the sound of voices, and footsteps would no more pass its thresholds; its doors were closed. The sunlight would penetrate into its unused rooms and trace the accustomed pattern on floor and wall; no one would know. And on roof and steps the rain would beat its old friendly reveille. Sagging in roof

and beam under the drifted snow of winter, denuded in summer of shutter and shingle, gradually the abandoned house would disappear from the landscape; little by little it would vanish like a nest that the birds have forsaken.

When the hour for the departure arrived, several of the good wives of the Point appeared. They formed a little group around Rachel. One of them straightened her hat, another retied the scarf around her neck; then they shook hands with her gravely, looking at her with dimmed eyes. Rachel strained her gaze in the direction of the lighthouse and saw Lizzie Goodenough standing with a parcel in her hands. Instantly the girl darted up the rocky path and the two embraced, while the others exchanged glances.

Old David, all eagerness to be off, had clambered into the cart in which a quantity of household gear had been packed, and sat there holding the reins; while Zarah Patch helped André bring out the one trunk and several bags and boxes. At last all was in

readiness, when Nora Gage discovered an important item of luncheon unprepared for transportation. Several baskets were offered, and in the confusion, Rachel made her escape.

Arrived at the bay shore, flushed and panting, she stooped with a graceful movement and laid her cheek against the wreck, while with her hand she patted that shadowy collection of letters that still in washed out reds and blues formed a name no wind nor tide could efface. *Defender*! Warped, dislocated, destroyed, its tarry timbers pierced with innumerable holes, its dismal hulk filled with the last lamentable cargo of seawrack and sand, the wreck lifted its broken ribs like arms toward the girl. From what would it restrain her? From what did it seek to defend her?

Rising, she approached and stood before the figure-head, and the figure-head looked back at her and, as it were, over and beyond her. With a timid movement, Rachel kissed this old comrade also. Then she ran away, and a

moment later she looked back, and there she saw her—that "great-kneed, deep-breasted" Goddess of Hope—with her face set toward the Unknown,—valiant, free!

BOOK II

CHAPTER I
THE STREET OF MASTS

"He saw you in the shop that time long ago, Grandfather, and understood that the paint had affected you?"

"Yes, it were the lead in the white paint that poisoned me," agreed David; "I'd been paintin' cattle cars pretty stiddy, which was a job most on 'em tried to skip."

"I see, and the superintendent told Mr. Hart how faithfully you'd worked and the result was that he sent you this letter with a deed for the house at the Point. It shows that he thought a great deal of you; and even if we shouldn't be able to find him," she continued with a shade of apprehension, "it seems to me

this letter, old as it is, ought to help in getting you some sort of a position, just temporarily."

"But it ain't *some* sort of a position I'm wantin'," the other objected, "it's a railroad position; and though railroad corporations is one thing," he continued, "and car shops is another, still they do business together constant; and I guess we'll find the Big Middletown people know all about Nicholas Hart when we ask 'em."

And so these two, the one so lately emerged from childhood and the other just reëntering it, started on their quest, and from their eyes looked out the same innocence, ignorance and unquenchable hope.

"I'll feel safer about Grandfather when he's occupied," thought the girl, "but it must be light work, I'll insist upon that; and then directly I'll find something to do myself."

Since their arrival in the city a fortnight before, old David had manifested a growing irresponsibility. Deprived of his accustomed

occupations and transferred to the streets of the metropolis, he had become like a ship without a rudder. So far, his driftings had been as pleasant as they were aimless, but more than once he had been lost, more than once, following the lead of his errant curiosity, had barely escaped serious accident. And there was no telling how soon the threatening dangers of the new existence might overwhelm him. Insensibly, in the midst of his delight, he looked to the young girl for guidance. She it was who had settled them in their present quarters, three small rooms at the top of an old building in lower New York, rooms selected because of their cheapness and because two windows overlooked a wharf at which foreign ships were tethered while a third window looked toward the west. She it was who had added to their meagre stock of house plenishings at push-carts and cheap shops. Indeed, she it was who had assumed entire responsibility for the undertaking.

Nora Gage, who now received a lower wage than formerly, and in consequence

performed only such duties as she chose, grumbled constantly. The poor fare on which Rachel and the old man subsisted filled her with disgust, and she would have gratified her gastronomic preferences out of her savings of twenty years, had it not been that the queer foreign foods, in which the markets of the neighbourhood abounded, were not to her taste. Even old David at moments was inclined to be fractious, and Rachel, who had wilfully played the part of Fate to these two, was forced to listen as patiently as she could to their criticisms.

On the afternoon in question when she emerged from the house with her grandfather, the old man scowled; for the street was dank with mist and clamorous with the roar of the nearby "elevated."

"This ain't a nice street," he complained, "I don't like the smell on it, and with everything swallowed up in the fog so, we can't see the only thing worth seein'—the ships."

"But perhaps we can later; when we come

back the fog may be gone," Rachel comforted him. However, a touch of the cold and damp seemed to threaten her own heart.

By dint of timid inquiries, at the end of two hours' weary searching, the bewildered pair found themselves in a Broadway office of the Middletown road. But the clerk to whom they made known their quest, shook his small, well-combed head at them.

"It's to Philadelphia you ought to have gone, Uncle," he said, while a smile wrinkled the flesh beneath his prominent eyes. "We know nothing about your car shops here. As for this letter, it's a bit ancient," and he handed it back.

Rachel flushed. "My grandfather wishes to obtain work in New York," she said. "We showed you the letter merely as a credential, thinking perhaps you might know Mr. Nicholas Hart—if he is still living," she added with a pang of fear.

The man glanced at the handsome girl and

the boldness, the indestructible animation of sex, flashed in his pale eyes. "I'm sorry," he said in a voice which he strove to make respectful, "but I do not know him. However, I've no doubt if you go—"

"Is it Nicholas Hart you're speaking of?" interrupted an older clerk who had been an interested listener to the conversation. "Yes, he's still living, I think. Years ago he used to be one of the owners of the car shops in Philadelphia; that's right. If I'm not mistaken he's living now with his son Simon Hart who is a jeweller in some street in the Thirties. Here, I'll look him up for you. The residence is near Washington Arch," he added, returning after a moment; "I've written the address on this card."

Rachel thanked him and, ignoring the younger clerk who ran officiously to open the door for them, she passed out, followed by old David.

"Now wasn't that the slickest thing ye ever saw," he exulted, "I told ye how folks,

especially the older ones, would know all about Nicholas Hart. We can walk there, can't we, Rachel?"

"We can walk part of the way," she responded with a sigh.

From childhood she had been taught to look upon Nicholas Hart as a benefactor and in her dreams it had been to him that she had seen herself appealing for advice. Now the fact that Nicholas Hart, in case they were fortunate enough to find him, would be an old man, entered her mind for the first time.

Young and serious, she walked on lost in meditation, merely keeping a restraining hand upon her grandfather, who threatened every moment to quit her side. His eyes under his white tufted eyebrows shone like sapphires and an innocent and childlike delight radiated from him. More than one jaded pedestrian turned to look after the refreshing pair who, in that crowded Broadway, suggested a hooded violet and a slightly withered buttercup blowing in the sun.

When they reached the space in front of the Herald building, old David planted himself on the walk and insisted on waiting until the two bronze figures above the clock struck the hour; but when they reached the Farragut statue he sank down on the architectural seat.

"These pavements don't give none," he said plaintively.

"We'll just rest a minute," Rachel soothed him.

With a tender movement she placed the end of her worn scarf around his neck and forced him to lean his head on her shoulder. Almost at once he fell into the light slumber which is nature's most beneficent gift to infancy and old age.

Under the rays of the February sun the mist had disappeared and in the air there was a springlike warmth. Rachel, turning her head, read the words of the inscription traced on the back of the seat; then her eyes travelled upward to the Admiral, who, by his staunch

and determined air, seemed to convert the stone base into the deck of a vessel. And immediately the city ceased to terrify her and bravery rose in her in a flood.

The Hart house had once been a cheerful mansion, but its home-like aspect had long since given place to an air of cold and pathetic reserve.

The knock was answered by a smartly-dressed maid with a crafty yet heedless air. On Rachel's inquiring for Mr. Nicholas Hart, the girl eyed them with sharp suspicion.

"Mr. Hart don't ever see anyone," she said.

"He once showed my grandfather a great kindness," Rachel explained, "and I thought perhaps he might remember—"

"He don't remember much," interrupted the other; "but I suppose you can go along up," she admitted, after a further scrutiny of the pair from whom, it was clear, there was nothing to fear. "He remembers faces

sometimes; you'll have to climb the stairs though," she added maliciously.

Rachel helped her grandfather up the three flights of stairs and the servant rapped on the attic door.

"Come in," piped a voice which sounded like the note of a cracked flute. And old David and Rachel entered.

The attic was wide and sunny and in the recess of a gable window stood a very little old man with a face fair and pink as a child's and with a skull cap on the back of his white head. He turned with one delicate hand resting on the barrel of a microscope. On perceiving the servant his eyes grew round with fury.

"Get out of here!" he shrilled, and, ignoring the strangers, he flew straight at the maid, skipping over the floor with remarkable briskness, his coat-tails moving like the wings of a maddened bird. The girl retreated with a laugh.

Old David presented his letter. In the presence of his host, who was as airy and, seemingly as fragile-lived as a figure traced upon a window-pane of a frosty morning, old David appeared endowed with the sturdiness of youth. "Years ago when I was a paintin' of cars," he began; but Nicholas Hart sent the letter, from which he had not removed the envelope, whirling across the floor.

"Cars," he cried, "run on wheels, but look at these wings,—" and with a finger shaking with excitement he pointed to the microscope. "Don't they beat all the wheels in creation?" he demanded.

In answer to his gesture, old David peeped timidly into the instrument; then he straightened himself and the face which he turned toward the other expressed a world of simple wonderment.

"Eh, what did I tell you?" exclaimed Nicholas exultingly. "And look here! and here!" he cried, placing one slide after another under the lens.

Finding herself forgotten, Rachel left the absorbed pair and went downstairs to wait for her grandfather. Her glimpse of Nicholas Hart had convinced her that no help could be expected from him.

"I told you he wasn't used to seeing folks," commented the maid who appeared in the hall. "He's touched here," and she indicated her head. "He thinks I mean to destroy a book he's writing about the house-fly, because once I mixed up his papers. Your grandfather's all right that way, is he?" she asked.

"Certainly he is," responded Rachel, and after a few further remarks that elicited no reply, the servant retreated. But from the dining room, where she rather obviously engaged herself with some sewing, she kept strict watch over the stranger.

Rachel, seated on a low settle, threw an indifferent glance about her. Then, almost insensibly her attitude changed. She was seized with an indefinable feeling. This house, with its purely masculine furnishings,

for some reason suggested to her mind the image of a life darkened and repressed. The hall, the drawing-room, the dining room were like a succession of gloomy thoughts. Portieres, rich in texture but indeterminate in hue, outlined the doors with their dismal folds; and the drawing-room chairs and armchairs were upholstered in rep of the same shade.

In the drawing-room the mantel-piece was adorned with an ill-assorted collection of candle-sticks, match-safes, inlaid boxes; and in the centre was an elaborate clock of an elegant modern design, violently at odds with the homely daguerreotype of a woman which flanked it on one side and a vase of an ugly pattern on the other. A nude figure, atrociously modelled, supported the vase in the form of a flower and might have been kissing a hand to the patient becapped countenance in the daguerreotype; otherwise the various objects bore no closer relation one to another than the articles on the counter in a shop. On the floor, before a pier-glass, was a plate on a support of twisted wire. Household

gods were present in abundance, but chilly, silent, they imparted no charm of life to the vastness of the apartment.

In the dining room, however, this effect was slightly modified. It was the room apparently where the master spent most of his time when at home; and, as if in preparation for his arrival, a discreet fire had been started in the grate. Unlike the more material accessories, the fire did all that it could to impart its own peculiar charm to the room. It leaped as high as possible; its beams were reflected in the polished case of the pianola, its rays were caught by the glass doors of the cupboard which contained the records, its gleams were imprisoned in tangled rainbows in the cut glass and silver of the sideboard. The laughing light, indeed, like an impolite guest, seemed, in the absence of the host, to occupy the table laid staidly for one, and delicately to help itself to the wine, to the fruit, to all that the board held, with rosy, caressing, immaterial fingers.

Toward this distant point of comparative

cheer Rachel turned her eyes with troubled interest. To the finely organized there are in life few, if any, absolutely unheralded events. Now she hung over the problem of the personality suggested by these surroundings with a tremour of premonition—a fact which she recalled later with amazement.

Presently a latch key grated in the lock and the street door was opened with extreme caution. A gentleman entered wrapped in a long overcoat. He did not immediately perceive Rachel. Divesting himself of the coat, he blew imaginary particles of dust from its sable collar and hung it on the rack; then he removed his hat and disclosed a long head, bare on top, and trimmed with a sparse fringe of hair. This hair he proceeded to smooth into place with quick motions of his hands; he even drew his fingers through it. Then he turned round.

Her scrutiny was older than his, and the prophetic, vague apprehension had mounted, mounted. She glanced aside; he could not.

There are moments when surprise stirs a mind like a stick thrust into a pool. The ordinarily clear surface of the water reveals sodden leaves, mud, perhaps even shrinking plants; the eye usually enigmatic, unfathomable, reveals hidden weaknesses, sins, temerities. When he beheld her, a young girl, seated in his hall, in Simon Hart's hollow cheek the blood slowly mantled. He was as clean-shaven as a monk, save for the barely indicated line of a moustache above the narrow lips. His nose was handsome, though pointed; his chin was cleft. One ear was a little higher than the other.

After a perceptible pause he passed her, bowing slightly, and proceeded through the drawing-room with his soft tread. His legs were short, but his shoulders and head were imposing. He was like a building begun by a carpenter and finished by an architect.

In the dining room he approached the sideboard and poured some liquor from a decanter. He did not, however, drink the liquor, but stood holding the glass. And this

vision of him was reflected in the dining room mirror, caught again in the small mirror above the hall-rack and repeated indefinitely in the bevellings. Rachel was unfamiliar with Piranesi's series of engravings in which the artist is represented climbing an everlasting staircase, or this multiplied vision of Simon Hart, continued through one room after another, until he disappeared with his glass in the border of the last mirror, might have suggested to her a similar allegory. She directed toward him a second glance, wistful, unconsciously searching, and at that moment her grandfather descended the stairs and the servant appeared to show them out. In the open Rachel straightway forgot all presentiments and the meeting wore in her memory an aspect ordinary enough.

Old David was elated. "I tell ye, I never see anything like what he's got up there," he cried. "There's butterfly wings all sparklin' with jewels, and mosquito legs—"

Rachel taking his arm, guided him toward a car. Not an allusion to the real object of the

call fell from the old man's lips. All memory of their purpose had apparently escaped him on the instant of his introduction into that sphere of ideal beauties. His face shone like a child's. Looking at him Rachel smiled a little sadly. How absolutely irresponsible he was, and how she had erred when she had withdrawn him from the simple duties which had acted as an anchor for his fantastic mind. Yet was not that which he expressed the highest poetry? The essence of an abstract delight was in him and shone through him, transforming his aged frame as an elixir transforms the delicate goblet that contains it. His eyes blazed, his lips were wreathed in smiles, and suddenly he no longer seemed to her an old man entering the drear regions of second childhood, but a seer, a bard, a singing poet, chanting a chant of Beauty, which is immortal. And because she was spirit of his spirit as well as flesh of his flesh, she nestled to him; and, seated side by side, they were conveyed rapidly through the city which resounded with the unparalleled bustle and confusion that precedes the subsidence and comparative silence of the night.

When they descended from the elevated station and turned into the "Street of Masts," as old David termed the alley in which they lived, he paused, "Jest—look a there!" he said, and extended a finger.

The sun shone on the muddy pools beside the road and into the inexpressibly weary eyes of horses. It glinted on the hair of the ragged children swarming in the doorways and put an added blush on the cheeks of apples swinging by the stems at the doors of tiny fruit shops and on stands. It made the outlines of factory stacks indistinct, enveloped in a haze. The sun, shining through streaks and trails and plumes of smoke, made the city appear to be waving flags of glory—the glory of a dream.

"And the ships—let's go and see what they've brought in," whispered the old man, and, in a kind of awe, the two approached the wharf where were ranged those patient, graceful visitors from foreign ports.

Their masts towering against the sky, the

ships suggested a fantastic forest, or a chimerical orchard, for the undulations of the water imparted to them a gentle motion, so that they seemed to be in the act of shedding their gracious and varied fruits on the wharf. There were skins of mountain goats from Switzerland, and elephant tusks from Egypt; there was oil golden with the sunlight of Italy and there were winecasks bursting with the purple sweetness of her vineyards. There were bales of textile fabrics from China, there were strange-leaved plants, with their roots bound tightly in canvas, from the isles of Bermuda. It seemed to Rachel that all these fruits from every land and clime were treasures poured bounteously into the lap of a mystical city; and the last vestige of that fear, so foreign to her nature and so little to be harboured there in all the coming years, vanished from her heart. Were they not, she asked herself, in the land of fulfilment, in the city of realized dreams?

CHAPTER II
EMILY SHORT—TOY-MAKER

When the bells of St. Joseph trembled into motion, Emily Short opened her eyes; when those inverted cups of bronze began to move faster, flinging their summons over the roofs, tossing it in at open windows, emptying it into narrow courts, she arose. When the parish father, still half asleep, donned his robes and straightened his stole, she put the last pin in her collar and tied on her apron. When he began to say mass, she began to hum a tune; and as the high-sounding Latin escaped through the trefoiled windows, her artless warble escaped through the attic casement, and together the two strains, the one from the heart of the Church and the other from the heart of a woman, ascended straight to the throne of the good God and who shall say they were not equally acceptable?

Outwardly Emily was no friend of the church. Its frequent services, she declared,

were disturbing, and a room on the other side of the house with a view of the ships and the wharfage would have been a deal more to her mind. However, it was noticeable that whenever one of these rooms fell vacant she held her peace and abode in her attic as tightly as a limpet in its shell when danger is toward. It must be confessed that she clung to the church very much as a limpet clings to its chosen rock. For forty years she had lived close to the church, for forty years been keenly alive to its spirit of consolation. Though unencumbered with a creed, Emily was a staunch reformer and the church represented a strong ally.

On a summer morning, by merely craning her neck, she could peer down through an open window and learn who were present of her special following. If she spied the old charwoman, whose honesty was not above suspicion, or Dan, who stole grain on the wharves, she nodded her head with satisfaction. It was more than possible, she considered, even if the priest's exhortations were lost on their befuddled minds, that the

pure strong notes of the organ might reach their consciences, the beautiful colours of the windows cause some expansion of their dwarfed souls. So she completed her survey like an inquiring angel, then settled to her work of the day.

Emily trimmed hats, furnishing them for a Division Street milliner, and earned a very comfortable livelihood; for she trimmed with an abandon, a daring, a freedom that no other trimmer could equal. That she might have full scope for the expression of her individuality, she was granted the privilege of working at home instead of under the eye of her employer. She was regarded as an artist, and more than once her creations had changed the prevailing styles in that section. If Emily, canny soul, had her own ideas about the beauty of her hats, she kept them to herself and it is not for me to reveal them. It was sufficient that the hats suited the heads they were intended to adorn. Humming under her breath, she curled and looped and tied and twisted with such swiftness that the room was filled with the shimmer of satin, the flutter of

laces, the darting of wings, the bursting of flowers; and so unremitting was her industry that by night the wire frames, delivered to her in the morning, had been converted into veritable traps for the captivation of men's hearts.

Working away through the long hours, all the vanity that had never found expression in her own life, flew into her needle; she placed feathers at an irresistible angle, sewed buckles and bows in telling positions. When she fared along the streets, quiet and demure, carrying her great pile of boxes, who would have guessed that she was a great matchmaker? Yet such was the case. And when she met one of her creations, brave and flaunting as youth itself, accompanied by a male hat, she knew that her work was succeeding. When the hats proclaimed a maid and a lad, her spirits rose; but when they proclaimed an errant wife and her admirer, her spirits clouded.

For once they had left her hands with all their potency for good or evil, Emily had no

more control over her hats than a parent over the children that have quitted the hearth. Sometimes her pangs were so sharp at what she witnessed that for days she trimmed with a sobriety, a propriety that was the despair of her employers. Indeed, she fairly sewed a sermon into the hats until a protest of loud-voiced dismay stayed her hand. Thereupon the full tide of her remorse was diverted into another channel.

All who came to her she helped, as was her custom, with money, with food, with influence; but her lectures, always forcible, now became inspired. She rated them eloquently, and such an admiration did she exhibit for virtue, and such detestation for evil, that the indigent, the drunken, the lazy, went away not only consoled but strengthened in the "inner man."

Emily's philosophy was comprehended in one word. Work for brain and hand, body and soul,—work was the world's salvation, she declared; and right staunchly, in her own life, did she demonstrate the truth of this theory.

Nor did her labours cease with the hours of daylight.

The setting of the sun witnessed a change in her occupation. With the lighting of the gas all the hats that had not been delivered, went to roost, like an array of tropical birds, behind a curtain; and from a corner where it had stood neglected all day, came forth her little work-bench. Forthwith Emily began the practice of the cunning craft that was to her the highest of the arts. Between the fine ardour of the youthful Cellini, as he approached his delicate metals after an irksome day in his father's shop, and Emily's grave exaltation as she seated herself at the bench, there was not the difference of a jot. The thing that we create matters nothing, the divine desire to create is all; and whether we design a medal for a pontiff's honour or a toy for a child's delight, the object is but a little door through which the soul wings to freedom.

Emily had a dream, an ambition. Her ambition was to make toys and one day to see

a whole army of them performing on the walks of the popular uptown districts where shoppers throng. To this end she twisted wires with her claw-like fingers, and, as she lacked the proper tools, her fingers were often bruised; to this end she soldered together and hammered into shape. And right fairly did her toys represent her, for, disgusted with the laziness of humanity, Emily endowed her race of tiny men and women with a perfect passion for industry. They seemed obsessed with the notion, and though the work that engaged them would still be unfinished when the spring of their life ran down, was not this the crowning fact in the history of all brave effort? So Emily continued to announce her theory even through her toys.

On a certain sultry morning she had barely settled herself near the window and carefully threaded her first needle, when she dropped the work in her lap.

"There, I haven't made the acquaintance of that child yet," she murmured. "Judging from the smell of cooking they have enough to eat.

But something's amiss and I must get her to tell me what it is."

Chance favoured Emily, for that evening as she was starting forth with a load of bright-coloured bandboxes, she encountered her youthful neighbour. The girl was mounting the stairs languidly. The warm weather had sapped her vitality, already undermined by the air of the city. Emily nodded cheerily, and purposely let fall one of the boxes. Rachel turned.

"Here, I'll pick it up for you," she cried; then, after a moment, "Won't you let me help you with them? I can do it as well as not."

Together they emerged into the lighted street.

Though she looked about her with a kind of wistful wonderment, the sordidness of the scenes through which they passed, did not seem really to touch Rachel. Emily kept glancing at her and marked how her childish passionateness was mingled with a suggestive

reticence. It was clear that some saddening experience had already come to her. "Poor lamb!" muttered Emily. When a man with a lurching gait passed too close to Rachel, Emily nudged him savagely with the boxes; and when they turned into Division Street, not one of the crew of strident women who solicit trade for the shops, dared to accost her young charge. Not a few of these poor creatures, recognizing Emily, ceased long enough in their chant of "Nice hats! pretty hats!" to give the popular trimmer "good-evening."

Joseph Stedenthal's "Emporium" boasted a millinery department, of which his wife had charge, and a general merchandise and furniture department over which he himself presided. Everything the push-carts furnished, he furnished a little cheaper—at least a penny cheaper; and this stock, as proclaimed by his advertisement, was "displayed to invite the refined mind."

Joseph Stedenthal, staunchly backed by his wife and daughter, expressed a profound

scorn for the push-carts and for all who bought and sold therefrom, and never in the bosom of his family was it hinted that he himself, in a not too remote past, had prospered finely as the owner of a cart. Now he had a dignified air of superiority, and only women who did not go bare-headed, came to his shop, women who made some pretence to style. His was the "exclusive" shop of the street.

Mrs. Stedenthal was in her husband's part of the shop when Emily and Rachel entered the "millinery section." Emily seated herself on a high stool and motioned Rachel to do the same. Joseph Stedenthal's voice came to them from a distance. He was thundering with wrath.

"Shame upon you, talking mit the salesmen! Go you up-stairs, I tell you!"

A young girl with flaming cheeks flashed by the door and ascended the stairs.

"I ain't talking to him. I just asked him how

much he sold it for," she screamed back.

"You were talking mit the salesmen! All times you talk mit them. And that I will not—I shall not have!"

His tirade was interrupted by the teasing voice of a woman.

"There, there, Joseph, give me one little kiss! You know how much you lofe me."

There was an explosion of wrath and a woman, rolling in flesh, shaking with laughter, entered the millinery shop. She nodded to Emily, still smiling; but in spite of the merriment that convulsed her, she examined the hats attentively and counted the money very carefully into the other's hand. One of the hats she declined to pay for until the trimming was changed.

"All times you make 'em too dark, Miss Short,—too dark, like a hearse," she remonstrated affably; "put a little more red on it."

When Rachel, following Emily, once more gained the street, her tender face was clouded.

Men, women, children; hats, socks, coats; candles, worn-out books; dirt, dirt, dirt! Men, men, men, bearded, unkempt, bedraggled, saddened, stupid, hungry! Under each coat, each gown was a living heart, struggling to keep its life. In every eye was a demand; in too few hands were the coppers to buy—not the pears, the grapes, the oranges that grow in Hester Street as in an orchard—but the great black loaves of bread, round, twisted, covered with a strange kind of seed. Coppers were lacking to buy milk for the starving, anemic baby, dirty-faced, struggling over the floor of the tenement; lacking for the shoes,—thirty pennies enough—for the shoes of little Johnnie that he might go to school: pennies lacking for the whiskey and the beer,—pennies that must be cheated for, thieved for, murdered for,—the all-necessary pennies for the drink.

Separated from the life about her, Rachel

was yet united to it, she was a part of it, and she drew her breath sharply. But should she be less brave than these others? Emily, who divined what was passing within her, came to a decision.

"You've been a great help with the boxes, Miss Beckett," she said cheerfully when they reached the house and mounted the stairs; "now you come along in for a cup of tea."

To the lonely girl the little toy-maker's room wore a grateful air of comfort. Emily placed her in a rocking-chair where she could see the windows of the church; then she bustled about preparing the tea. She had just handed a cup to Rachel when there came a rap on the door; before Emily could open it a pretty light-haired girl stood on the threshold. She was dressed in a starched waist and a plaid skirt and the eyes under her smart hat showed red rims.

"It's all over," she cried, ignoring Rachel's presence. "I've got to leave my position, Miss Short. It's all along of Tom. The president

called me into his office to-day and said right out, either I could stop letting his son come to see me, or I could leave. He gave me my choice. And you better believe I wasn't long choosing. I told him I'd see whom I pleased, and if Mr. Colby liked to come and call on me perfectly proper, like any other gentleman, I shouldn't stop him. So I got notice."

The girl blazed with defiance, but, in spite of her bravado, she was once more on the brink of tears. Her bosom rose and sank tumultuously, her full red lips gathered into a pout, her little hands, dimpled like an infant's, rested on her hips. She was a child too soon imprisoned in the rich envelope of womanhood. On every lineament of her pretty, pathetic, excited face potential weakness was stamped.

Emily scrutinized her for a moment in silence. Still without expressing an opinion, she replaced the kettle on the gas stove; then she looked at the new-comer gravely:

"Miss Beckett, this is Miss Holden. Have you anything else to turn to, Betty?" she asked.

The other shook her head. "I haven't, but I'm going to an agency to-morrow. I thought I'd just stop in and tell you. No, thanks, I won't wait for tea. Tom's coming this very evening," she added with an audacious smile.

When she had gone, Emily poured Rachel another cup of tea; then taking a chair directly in front of her, she looked at her shrewdly:

"Have you got any work?"

Rachel raised an anxious face. She had been seeking work for many months.

"Can you do anything special?" Emily demanded.

Rachel was dubious. "Unless it was to trim hats," she ventured.

But Emily shook her head. "There's no chance in that line," she said decidedly. "Did

you ever paint any?"

"No, but I could do it. I've seen it done—that is, little things, like roses and lighthouses."

Emily gave the other's hand two or three approving taps. "To-morrow I'll bring you the materials from a place I know."

The next day she appeared with a supply of silk and paints and patterns. Rachel's work was to paint garlands of roses on candle-shades, but as she lacked even a rudimentary knowledge of colour and drawing, for a time the work went ill. Even Emily, when she compared Rachel's copy with the pattern, was less optimistic.

"It's a knack, though, they say," she encouraged her; "and one can learn to do most anything if one goes about it firmly enough."

A week later, Emily, in a state of repressed excitement, summoned Rachel to her room to

see a mechanical toy she had devised. Rowing his tiny boat over the waters of a tub was a wee figure dressed in sailor costume.

In Emily's cheeks was a spot of crimson and in her eyes, which ordinarily resembled little dark berries, was a peculiar brightness.

As she looked at Emily the colour even left Rachel's face with the strength of her longing. When she returned to the garlands, the roses blossomed under her fingers. "So much for work!" she thought, and there arose in her a new and virile sensation of pride and joy.

CHAPTER III
SIMON HART TO THE RESCUE

As the summer advanced she refused to accept the dealer's verdict that the demand for all sorts of hand-painted trifles languished in the summer; painting was her one means of

support, and with magnificent courage, if with small practical sense, she continued to paint. But when she carried her work to the dealer, though he admired it, he refused to buy it, and she came home again and again as empty of pocket as when she had started out.

She said nothing to Emily Short about her difficulties. Barring a glimpse which she caught of her now and then she seldom saw the little toy-maker, for during the hot weather Emily was unusually busy.

Emily was a famous nurse, and during the season when sickness was rampant among the children of the slums, she put aside her toys and hats and fought bravely for the little lives. She scrubbed faces and cleaned floors and administered doses of medicine, and more than once Rachel had met her at the edge of evening, bringing home an infant in her arms. To see her depositing it where the breeze came in through the open window, cooing to it, directing its wandering attention to the sights and sounds of the church, was enough to bring tears to the eyes. Fate, so

prone to interfere with the plans of nature, wins at best but a superficial victory when she attempts to extinguish the motherhood in certain women. Deny them offspring she may, but dam up the love in their hearts, she cannot. Fate makes spinsters, but God makes mothers. And what is a mother but a being that looks with tenderness on all that is weak, with delight on all that is young? To such a being, an infant is ever a bud of promise to which she longs to be the sun. In the most radiant and satisfying sense, Emily Short was a mother, and not a waif in the quarter but knew it. Those who could walk, flocked after her on their little bare feet, clinging to the folds of her dress with their grimy fingers; and those who were too small to walk, looked at her with fixed, unwinking eyes, apparently beholding nothing, while in reality still seeing the something beyond this nothing, their state being one of celestial preoccupation rather than one of dormant thought.

Rachel, aware of the burden Emily carried, hesitated to add to its weight. If truth be told, as long as old David did not lack for food,—

and so far he had not gone hungry—as long as the rent was paid for a week ahead, a subject more tyrannical than poverty engrossed her thoughts. In some women the love that has once stirred them, never becomes extinct; it is a flame that never completely dies, a fire of which some sparks always linger among the dead ashes. At a breath from that far-off source of all existence, a breath that quickens alike grain and fruit and human hearts, this spark leaps to renewed life in the sensitive, wounded and restless soul.

With the disingenuousness of a woman in love, with the timidity of a little mouse, Rachel had established herself under the eaves of an obscure garret in lower New York. For a time, following the change, her heart had beat more tranquilly, for now the same sky covered her that covered that egoistic remarkable being who had once played so important a role in her life.

But gradually the sombreness of a storm was created within her; though when she

thought of the inventor she experienced little of the chagrin of a woman whom a lover has deserted. Rather, what she felt was a surprised resentment of soul. Emil St. Ives was ordained to understand her, and behold he had forsaken her! With eyes as clear as a child's, though shadowed by indefinable emotions, she often watched from the window the pigeons circling on pointed wings over the house-tops, and they seemed to her like a flurry of white letters tossed by a derisive hand through the sky.

"Why had he never written her?"

At the thought her melancholy was crossed by anger; but at other moments she remembered that it was she herself who had sent him away. Oh, if he had only looked at her with his mind as well as his eyes! But, enlivened continually by the astonished happy perception of the inventor's mastery of the expedients he employs in his tests, joyful with the joy of a creator, Emil had never really seen her. His love for his mother carried him backward into the past, his love

for his work carried him forward into the future, until it actually seemed to her he had no present, no to-day.

And she reflected that under one of those million roofs he was working on some foolish instrument for which the world, as yet, did not recognize its own need. The world, therefore, in all probability, was leaving him alone, to live if he could, to starve if he must. Meanwhile, the sound of his drilling, his hammering, above all, his loud-voiced singing, was doubtless causing a commotion among the stars where the important is recorded before it is heralded on this commonplace earth.

Although she did not wish to remember the inventor, the thought of him constantly returned and gradually she began to extract a kind of pleasure from this involuntary analysis which she carried on for hours together. Then roused by some sound from the street, with the languor which results from power held in abeyance, she would resume work on the shades.

One heavy morning toward the end of August, Rachel made the unpleasant discovery that there was scarcely money enough in the house to cover the needs of the day. To increase her dismay her grandfather, leaning his head on his hand, refused his breakfast. Even the newspaper with its sensational headlines failed to arouse him. She brought him a glass of water, but with a weak gesture he motioned her away. Thoroughly frightened, Rachel flung her arm about him and coaxed him to return to his bed. Old David grew first red, then white, but gradually the natural look returned to his face and he fell into a sound sleep.

Instructing Nora Gage to keep a close watch over him, Rachel started for the shop where she had formerly disposed of her wares. She was intoxicated with her own resolution. Though it was the third time within a fortnight that she had made her appearance there, she spread the shades on the counter with confident movements; then she looked up.

The clerk with his delicate salesmen's hand swept them toward her. "I have told you that we have no call for these things," he said and impatiently turned on his heel.

For some moments she seemed not to comprehend these words; presently his voice, bland and seductive, reached her from another part of the shop. Then she gathered up the shades, returned them to her handbag, and walked slowly to the door. She made a movement to open it, but at that instant she heard a step behind her.

When he lifted his hat, she recognized Simon Hart. He was looking at her attentively with his weary, enigmatic eyes.

The salesman had followed him in a little rush.

"Perhaps you'd better leave the shades after all, Miss Beckett," he began, "this gentleman —"

"I will give the young lady the order," the

other said. And he held the door open for Rachel.

Once in the street, she looked at her companion in surprise. She thought she detected in his face covert satisfaction.

"I beg your pardon, but you called to see my father several weeks ago—Miss Beckett? Thank you. The maid wasn't certain of the name. Well, Miss Beckett," he continued in an embarrassed voice, enunciating his words with distinctness, "it happens that I have just been requested by a relative to get her some candle shades," and in a few words he explained the commission, even producing from his pocket a sample of the silk from which the shades were to be made. It was essential that they should be finished in three days.

"And when you deliver them to Miss Burgdorf," he said, scribbling an address on a card which he took from his pocket, "you might speak to her in a general way of your work, if you care to do so. For my part," he

concluded, "I'm very glad to know of someone who does this kind of thing."

Before he left Rachel, he inquired where she and her grandfather were living and the odd look of gratification deepened on his face.

"I needn't have told him, I suppose," she thought regretfully as she walked home; "he may come there."

CHAPTER IV
THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENS

A pompous-looking butler escorted Rachel through a vestibule, and pointed her to a seat in the dining room. It was evident from his manner that she should have applied at the basement entrance.

A group of workmen were busy setting up

an immense table. They kept pushing the sections together and drawing them apart. The polished surfaces of the wood filled the room with reflected light. A maid who stood by looked appealingly at the butler.

"It isn't the table that was ordered," she moaned. She glanced at a clock which seemed, with its fluted columns and Gothic spires, a sardonic spirit in that rich and disordered room. Its monotonous tick-tock, tick-lock, scattered confusion, bewilderment, madness.

"Eleven!" she cried in tones of deepest tragedy, "and not a flower!"

Other servants entered bearing silver and glass. A footman came in with a great palm, and bending, with shoulders on the strain, placed it directly in the path of a hurrying maid. Some one dropped a goblet; that showered into a million minute particles like shining tears. Every movable object was shifted countless times and remained, according to its nature, glittering, wavering,

quivering for some instants thereafter. A bronze Narcissus exhibited his grace at an unusual angle. In such a time of rearrangement who has not observed how art objects gain in beauty?

"Miss Burgdorf will see you now. Please step this way."

Rachel followed the servant up the staircase. The woman lifted long strings of motley-hued beads strung in such a manner as to form a semi-transparent curtain, passed through a sitting room and tapped on a door. Julia Burgdorf was seated before her dressing-table in a robe of flowing silk. She was having her face manipulated by a slim masseuse in a long apron. The faces of the two women, as they rolled their eyes inquiringly toward the door, were exceedingly feminine. Woman is ever most natural when engaged in making herself artificial.

Julia Burgdorf extended her hand with an imperious gesture. "Let me see the shades,"

she cried.

She was a powerful, dark-skinned, handsome woman, with her mind in her eyes. Forty years of life had polished and embellished her until now she resembled a jewel of many facets. Her throat suggested a singing bird's, her shoulders were beautifully curved, her hands and arms perfect. She scarcely glanced at Rachel but examined the shades intently. Then once more she yielded her face to the masseuse.

"Thank goodness, child!" she sighed, "they're lovely! and I'd just given you up. All these lights will be very hot, but they'll look like a forest of tropical blossoms; that's what I wanted. Here, give me that purse."

She counted out thirty dollars in bills, and handed them to Rachel and then rang for the butler.

"Has the sherbet come?—Bring this young lady some. Here, sit down," she added, "you look tired."

Rachel seated herself on a brocaded divan, still holding in her fingers a shade which had been slightly crushed and which she had repaired. She held the shade like a flower, and her face above it was severe and pale.

"Heavens, child! someone ought to catch your pose just as you sit now. She doesn't need any of your cream, does she, Henley?"

The masseuse looked at Rachel and her face quaked into an hundred little wrinkles. These played round her eyes like forked lightning, then instantly and miraculously disappeared, leaving the skin like an infant's.

"It wouldn't do her any harm, Miss Burgdorf," she said, bridling. "Our cream is such a preservative. Sister and I think ladies can't begin too early."

Her voice and manner suggested lotions; and this persistent artificial youthfulness, superadded to the tiny creature's evident acumen, was not without charm. In her long apron, tied behind with strings like a

pinafore, she would have passed very well for a child had it not been for the lightning.

Julia Burgdorf rose and stretched her arms above her head, then let them drop heavily while she stood for an instant in a listening attitude. Though no word was brought to her of the perturbed state of affairs below stairs, there was knowledge of it in the very air.

"The butler has broken the last cup," she declared with conviction, "and the cook has gone off in a rage. I can see everything. Oh, what a fool I was to leave the cool country and bother with that club of cackling women at this season of the year! But charity before comfort. Leave your address, please. My cousin, Mr. Hart," she went on, with a droll screwing of the lips "wrote me about you. I may be able to get you more orders." And with these words she passed on to her bath.

Now that the work which had engaged her for three days and a night was finished, Rachel felt disinclined to move. She lingered over the sherbet the butler had brought her

and watched the masseuse putting away the little delicate instruments of coquetry. All at once it seemed to her that through the cool silence she heard the malicious ticking of the great clock in the dining-room, and she recognized the timepiece as a remorseless tyrant dominating not only the servants, but the beautiful mistress of the house. Though instinctively conscious of Julia Burgdorf's fear of age, Rachel was too young to experience any real sympathy for her. Instead, what she did feel was a keen sense of her own triumphant youth. A miniature of a young man stood on a dressing-table. "He looks like Emil," she thought; and, to quiet her agitation she fixed her attention on the masseuse, who, with a little silver pencil, was marking the date on an illuminated calendar. Rachel stared at this calendar, and the blood slowly left her cheek.

Nothing so conclusively proves the existence of an intelligent, if somewhat perverse Fate, acting in the affairs of human beings, as these potent stirrings of the memory, which she causes by the simplest

means. Does a woman require a bit of information? Incidentally Fate enlightens her at the most opportune moment. Rachel attempted to avert her eyes from the bit of cardboard, but the two names which were almost lost in the design of the border and which certainly would have escaped the casual glance of another, in a moment had evoked all the sweet and irritating scenes of her past:

"*Benjamin Just & Richard Lawless, Art Lithographers, Lafayette Street.*"

Symbolizing all the events of her meagre romance, these names, with all the accompanying address of which she had hitherto been ignorant, had the effect of maturing in Rachel all that is most imperious in human love. How little is required to move a woman's heart. The longing to see Emil took possession of Rachel like a fever.

The one o'clock whistle sounded a last melancholy note, and she inspected eagerly every figure that entered the factory. Why

had she assumed that Emil was still employed there? As the stream of men grew less and presently ceased, the curve of her mouth became scornful. "How idiotic!" she whispered. She was turning away when a young girl emerged from a side door over which appeared the word "*Office*." She came out impetuously. The fact that she was weeping arrested Rachel's attention. Her slight frame shook with sobs. She took a few steps, then paused to extract a handkerchief from a bag she wore at her belt. She pulled out the handkerchief and a letter fell from the reticule, but in the excess of her grief she went on without perceiving her loss.

Rachel crossed the street and as she picked up the letter, she involuntarily noticed its superscription. Written carelessly on the blue envelope was the name "Mrs. E. A. St. Ives." She faltered—staring at it. She stood still and something seemed to strike her in the breast. Yet she was conscious that surprise had no part in her feeling. After a few seconds, she forced herself to walk on. At the next corner she overtook the girl.

"Is this yours?" she asked. And her voice sounded strange in her ears.

The girl wheeled, showing a face disfigured with tears. "Oh, yes," she said, "it's mine! Did I drop it?"

Rachel continued to look at her without stirring. She passed her hand once or twice across her forehead. "You are Mrs. Emil St. Ives?"

"Why yes, I'm Mrs. St. Ives." The other was now gazing at her with curiosity.

So this was the girl who had helped Emil in the past, who helped him now,—the girl he preferred to her. Disdainful, she swept round. As she moved, she lifted her shoulders as if she would rid herself of something, but the action spoke forlornness.

"Why do you ask?" questioned the other, pursuing.

Rachel paused. "Nothing made me ask," she

said, "only the name was familiar."

She was walking on when the girl caught her arm.

"Perhaps you know my husband?" she persisted. "Do you?"

Once more Rachel stood still. "Yes I know him—slightly."

"I knew you did," and a note of incipient jealousy sounded in the other's voice. "When did you know him?" she asked, and she fixed sharp eyes on Rachel's face.

"It was last summer in Maine," Rachel answered. "I took him out a few times in a boat to make some experiments. When I saw the name I recognized it." Her indifference, the sudden cold and remote expression of her eye, which was like a thrust of the arm, deceived her questioner.

"Oh, I see," she said, meekly. "Was it the *depth indicator*! Oh I know it was," and at the

mention of this instrument, she returned to her original grievance. "It's that *depth indicator* that's been at the bottom of all our troubles," she explained; "if it hadn't been for that, Alexander would have finished the lithographing press and then everything would have come out different. But now Father—Oh, I can talk to you, can't I?" she interpolated. "I must talk to someone. I've been treated so—you don't know!" and she began to sob again in a helpless, childish fashion, with the unrestrained grief of a nature, hysterical, feverish.

But one thought burned in Rachel: Emil's marriage. Her pain, however, was not new; she felt that she had lived through it before, for it is a characteristic of suffering that it never comes as a novel experience and herein it differs from joy. The disconnected explanations of her companion, mingled with the repeated request to be allowed to confide in her, gradually roused Rachel. Her eyes travelled over Annie. She noticed the once tasteful dress, which was now badly worn, the little pear-shaped face with its peaked

nose and babyish eyes.

She was about to reply haughtily, then, moved by Annie's beseeching look, altered her intention.

"Yes, you can tell me if you want to," she answered softly and dully.

Involuntarily the two girls turned their steps in the direction of a square, a triangular breathing place in this densely populated section. They seated themselves on one of the benches and Annie poured out her story. But her words scarcely penetrated Rachel's brain. She stared at some clothing drying on a fire-escape, and it struck her that the antics of the clothing fastened to a line were no more grotesque and absurd than the antics of human creatures fastened to life. Inwardly she rocked on the wide sea of misery.

The dramatic features of her situation were not lost on Emil's wife. As she described her life in her parent's home, contrasting it with her present mode of existence, it was clear

that Annie viewed herself in a romantic light. Never the less her misery was real, and more than once she had recourse to her small damp handkerchief.

"When once we were married I felt sure Father would forgive us," she concluded, "but he says I shall never, never come home until I leave Alexander. Father's terrible when he's angry. All the same, this isn't the first time I've been to him," she explained. "At first he wouldn't see me, and when he did, he wouldn't listen to a word. He said Alexander was utterly irresponsible and the lithographing press and the rest of it had been as good as made over on an entirely different principle. But finally when I teased and teased he said if Alexander wanted to accept the position of expert examiner with the firm, they'd take him back at a salary. Not a very big salary, but still something regular. And I was so pleased," she added, "I felt there was a chance for him if he worked hard and didn't make trouble; I thought he'd soon rise to something better. But what do you think? Alexander refused! He roared like a madman

when I told him. He said he wanted to do independent work, and never again would he sell his brain, his soul, his very life-blood to my father. And I went to the factory this afternoon to tell Father, and though I toned down Alexander's words and explained just how he felt as tactfully as I could, Father not only refused to make him another offer, but he threw open the door and pointed for me to go." And at the memory of the indignity, she covered her face with her hands. "Oh, whatever is going to become of us?" she wailed.

Rachel said nothing, and this continued silence quieted the other. Presently with an air of finality she lifted her head.

Opening her bag she returned the handkerchief to its depths.

"But I promised to stand by Alexander and I'm going to," she said in a low voice. "Somehow, he makes you feel that you want to stand by him."

Still Rachel said nothing.

"I must go now," Annie cried, tipping her face back, "see, it's going to storm, and I'm so afraid of lightning."

And indeed black, threatening clouds were coming up rapidly.

"I'd ask you to come and see us," she added as they fled from the square, "only the place is so horrid. You see, Alexander not only works there, but we live there, too," she continued, while they stood waiting for a car with the wind whipping their dresses about them. "Alexander has a workshop, that's all he cares for, and I have a room about three feet square; and then he has a horrid deaf and dumb creature who helps him. Oh, if I'd known he was going to have *him* live with us!" and her voice broke. "You've been so good to let me go on in this way," she cried, as the car stopped. "I'll tell my husband I met you. What name shall I say?"

But Rachel did not answer. She merely

nodded as the other, in a tremour of fright, stepped on the car.

"You'll get caught in the rain!" Annie called after her.

Rachel smiled grimly.

The rain descended at first thin and fine as if poured through a sieve; then it increased in volume till the gutters ran yellow torrents, till the sordid brick buildings looked like drenched, warty frogs of a giant growth, till the slender trees in the squares fairly bent to the ground. But Rachel was caught in the vortex of a storm even wilder.

It was two hours later when she slowly climbed the steps of the tenement house. Emily Short's voice reached her from an upper landing:

"There, don't you go looking him up again, will you, Betty? There ain't a man in the world worth running after."

Rachel halted and a fierce denunciatory light flamed in her eyes. Then she pulled herself together.

When she opened the door of the outer room Simon Hart rose to greet her. He felt that he had taken her by surprise and, in embarrassment, smoothed his hair.

"It's going to clear," he said and glanced toward the window which let into the tiny room the slowly increasing light.

Rachel swept a look in the same direction. "Yes," she repeated, "it's—clearing."

In the sky, visible beyond the clutter of wet roofs, appeared a strange arrangement of gold bars, and above the bars huddled the thunder clouds like a herd of newly-tamed animals.

CHAPTER V

SHOWING THAT SACRIFICES ARE NOT ALWAYS APPRECIATED

To cast a glance backward,—it was with a mixture of surprise, chagrin and growing indignation, that Emil St. Ives took his way from the Maine coast to tumultuous, brain-inspiring New York. In the hotel at Old Harbour he lingered over his packing, confident until the last moment, that some word would arrive from Rachel. She surely would not allow him to go without seeking to effect a reconciliation. No word came and, once seated in the train, he stared out at the landscape with sullen fierceness. But there, in scraggy rocks, stumps of trees, water, meadows, salt marshes, wind with a tang in it, gold beams poured from rifted clouds, mist, storm, rolling fog—there was Rachel, the girl herself. She was dancing, scudding on ahead of the train, wrapped in a veil. Now he saw the gleam of her eyes; now her serious mouth! now the curve of a wrist; now a fleeing ankle! Remaining behind, she yet

went with him! Deuce take it, he felt her breath on his face!

He was conscious of an immense weight of sadness in his breast, but it lessened neither his pique nor his astonishment. Full of mastership, his ideas of womankind were based chiefly on the devotion accorded him by his mother, by Annie Lawless, and, until then, by Rachel herself. Such whole-souled devotion he accepted as his rightful due. Therefore Rachel's downright and uncompromising attitude astounded him. Her anger, when she learned that another young lady was interested in his affairs, was justified, he admitted. He had not been open with her. What he could not overlook, however, was her allusion to his mother's disappointment if his plans with the lithographers failed to materialize. If she had cared for him, she would have spared him that barbed thrust which even in memory caused his nerves to tingle. If she had cared for him she would have prevented his going. But she had allowed him to go without a hope of ever seeing him again.

He began to laugh bitterly; presently lifting his long frame out of the car seat, he went for a drink of water. He stood with the cup in his hand, forgetting to drink. He could not endure that a woman should scorn and repudiate him. The quarrel with Rachel shook him all the more violently, as, with his habits of mind, he was unaccustomed to such tempests. He returned to his seat and fixed his eyes once more on the flying landscape.

She had shone upon him like sunlight, and passion had awakened—passion and interest and something besides. She had stormed at him like a tempest and finally had mystified him with a fog, best proof of all that hers was the womanhood for his manhood. But did he understand? The pebble rolling down a hill has as much comprehension of the force that summons it—indeed it has more, for the pebble obeys the force and Emil St. Ives did not obey. Instead he set himself squarely about and took his way back to New York with a smouldering eye; but a fierce, surprised bird whose pinions had been clipped might have worn just such a look, and

he kept ruffling the feathers of his vanity, for the wings of his egotism drooped.

Presently he produced paper and pencil, but still boiling, it was sometime before he could control his thoughts. Finally, he began to sketch roughly a plan for an instrument; the next day his humiliation had so far abated as to permit of his working steadily on the scheme; and when he reached New York his complacency was practically restored. On alighting from the train he found awaiting him a little eager, flushing, paling being in the shape of a woman.

When Emil saw Annie Lawless peering at him from the midst of the crowd on the platform, a certain new sensation, strong, sweet, but somehow malign, sprang to life within him. At least Annie was not indifferent to him. His chagrin disappeared and a desperate hardihood took its place. It is soothing, as most people will agree, when a golden apple has been denied us, to have offered for our acceptance a little rosy plum. Is it amazing then, that Emil stood ready hand

and mouth for the plum, all the more as he reckoned its flavour, on the whole, rather pleasant? With his worn suit-case in one hand and his precious *depth-indicator* in the other, he swung down the platform, and Annie, followed by the ungainly figure of Ding Dong, advanced to meet him. Then Emil set down the suit-case and the *depth-indicator* and received Annie's timid anxious glance in his own dark orbs. In it plunged, that little maiden look, and the earth for Annie rocked, though for Emil it merely oscillated very slightly,—no more than when one has taken a sip of wine, piquant and a little heady.

Ding Dong gathered up the traps and fell submissively behind the young couple, and Annie pressed against Emil and clung to him. What more natural than that, finding himself unencumbered, he should bend down and encircle her little figure with his arm? A rosy plum, a sip of wine, a little bit of a woman with no wits at all and her heart in her face, such was Annie.

As for that puzzling mid-region between

mind and heart, which was the region affected in Emil, one might as well attempt to mark out paths in a wilderness as to set up guideposts there. Every thought is tinged with feeling, every feeling is sullied with thought, and the ways are hopelessly mixed. But it is a region which stands in no need of description, for in the range of emotional experience, few people ken anything beyond this vast temperate zone. And yet they declare, at the last, that they have lived! Pathetic misapprehension! Nothing is more uncommon, more unspeakably rare, than a life actually lived. Only a person who is at once an intrepid explorer and an inexhaustible artist, appreciating ever the value of extremes and of contrasts, in short a genius on every side, is capable of life.

Though Emil had a measure of this capacity, he was hopelessly adrift in a maze of stupidity; for men, save at exceptional moments, are such a very small part of themselves. So he encircled Annie with his arm and, bringing his face close to hers, kissed her. And Annie did not utter a

reproach. She forgot the words that would have formed it. She forgot every word in her vocabulary, except one little word that all but escaped from the hot panting region of her heart.

But she had formed a plan which she remembered. Dragging Emil into the waiting room, she indicated two chairs in a quiet corner. When they were seated, she put one little gloved hand for a moment over his and pressed it down hard in order to hold his attention, though this manoeuvre was not in the least necessary, for she was far from unpleasing to look upon. The colour kept chasing the white on her cheek, for she was frightened by what she had to say and at a loss how to say it; the sweet peas, pinned in a bunch on the breast of her jacket, threatened to fly away like a bevy of butterflies with her tumultuous breathing, and a fascinating little pulse fluttered in her neck just above the lace of her collar, and Emil, watching it, knew that it indicated the wild movements of her heart.

What wonder that he almost recovered his

wonted spirits in the air of adoration that breathed from these two humble people? For Ding Dong, with his ears like huge excrescences and his legs that seemed to bend under the weight of his squat body so that he resembled nothing so much as a grotesque from a cathedral niche,—Ding Dong hung on his look with exactly as much attention as Annie. Despite the feeling of sadness that lurked far down in the depths of his being, Emil perceived afresh that it was a very good sort of world and that New York was a marvellous city. And his egotism began to spread its wings and his eyes to flash good humouredly. Being now well beyond the larva stage, admiration was necessary to him, —it was an air without which he was unable to exist.

"But how did you know that I would come on this train?" he asked gently; and, clasping his hands about his knees, he stared at Annie with a peculiar concentrated interest.

She looked up at him with a faint suggestion of reproach. "I didn't know;

though I was prepared to wait until you did come," she said. "The fact is, Alexander," she continued, "what Father has done is shameful. It isn't right, and as he's my father, it's only just—well, I hope you won't take it wrong—but I have a little money which was left me by an aunt to do with just as I choose. I've got it all here, see, in this bag," and she opened the drawstrings. "It isn't much, only a thousand dollars, but I thought perhaps—perhaps you would take it until you could invent something."

To save his life Emil could not prevent the joy that flashed in his eyes. To be free to invent, even for a brief space! It was an unexpected glimpse straight into Paradise. He peeped in—just one peep; then greatly to his credit, considering how little of an ordinary man he was and how much of a genius,—who resembles a bird of heaven in his freedom from a sense of obligations,—he shut the door on the Paradise forcibly.

He bent forward and took both of Annie's hands in his. Slowly, very slowly, he shook

his head.

"Oh, please!" she supplicated, and her face puckered. As she looked straight into his eyes with her own, he saw them suffuse with tears. The sight of these tears perturbed him so that he was no longer master of himself.

"But see here, I can't!" he said, and the blood darkened his cheek, "I can't take money from you; you're mad!"

"Oh, if that's the way you consider me—just like a stranger!" And Annie turned sharply aside and buried her face in a scrap of a handkerchief from which ascended an odour of subtle feminine appeal.

In their excitement both had risen and Emil spread his massive bulk to screen her distress from the few people who were seated in the waiting-room. Never had he been driven into such a net by his own emotions.

"See here," he cried, bending over her and breathing the words into her ear, "I consider

you my only friend"; and his ardour was augmented by his remembrance of Rachel.

This was devotion, this!

"Friend?" she repeated, lifting her head and gazing at him through her tears. "I'm more than that. There isn't anything I wouldn't do for you, and I thought—I thought—"

For an instant Emil saw her judicially. "So that's it?" he reflected, but the next instant the male in him was completely glamoured.

For the last time some positive seduction in Annie overcame him. Love will polish even a plain woman to something approaching brilliancy, and Annie was by no means plain. Her hair gave out a delicate odour; the pupils of her eyes, usually small, spilled their black over the blue of the irises; her little mouth emitted a whole troop of sighs; the stuff of her waist crackled, as if, though it fitted her body, it compressed her heart. In truth, that which was the heart in her, the soul in her, was striving mightily to come to him, and

being a man he did not refuse it.

"Do—do you mean that you would marry me?" he hazarded unsteadily, "without prospects—nothing? You can see for yourself, everything I put my hand to turns out wrong," he added argumentatively.

She nodded. A look of ecstasy overspread her face.

What he experienced chiefly was a profound astonishment.

He moved back a step in order to study her. That she felt in this way toward him was no news, but that she was ready to take the decisive step now, when his whole outlook was altered.... In his gaze there grew a peculiar gentleness and simplicity.

"Yes, but what about your father, what will he say?" he inquired, dallying dreamily with the consideration.

"Father, oh, he'll bluster at first, but he'll

forgive us. I know him. Besides, hasn't he stolen your invention?"

"So it's only fair I should steal his daughter; is that it?" This question, like the other, was an idle playing with the subject, as though, for the moment, his will went in leash to hers.

Annie lifted her face with a laugh which stirred him strangely. Her eyes rested questioningly upon him and he was conscious of an ambiguous emotion of pleasure and confusion. He had a desire to say tender words to her, to touch her hair; none the less he sighed heavily.

And Annie all at once took his attitude for granted. Timid, yet with that potency of appeal which belongs often to the weakest women, she clasped his hand, glancing up at him in such a way that he felt all resistance expiring within him.

"That poor fellow over there," she went on happily after a moment, during which she pressed his fingers once or twice, "every time

I'd go to the factory, he'd make the strangest signs, and at first I couldn't understand what he wanted. But after a little, I made out that he was asking about you. And when Father got in that new man to work on your machine, Ding Dong, as they call him, just went wild and raged. He tried to stand guard over the machine and he locked the door of your shop. But finally they got in and he acted so, they had to get rid of him."

Emil, who had been admiring the vivacity of her face, caught only the last words of this speech.

"Ding Dong you say! Yes, a fine fellow," he agreed with a sparkling smile.

"Well, between us we've got everything planned," Annie continued. "We've found a little apartment—"

He started.

"Where you can work and invent," she added in a voice scarcely above a whisper.

"Invent," he murmured, for she sidled and slunk closer to him so that with difficulty he resisted an impulse to seize her to his breast.

Explain it who can: in one short hour all the judgments of this man were reversed. Though he was influenced by selfish motives, he did not recognize them. Annie was his friend, the one most necessary to him and to whom he was necessary. It was really downright amazing how much she cared for him, and seeing her through a mist of gratitude which he mistook for love, he compared her to the cold Rachel to the latter's disadvantage. In love consciously with neither the one nor the other of these two women and only obscurely aware that his feeling for Rachel was capable of assuming the character of a dominating passion, he was really concerned in but one object, his work. He therefore yielded himself readily to gratified vanity, egotism, enthralled senses, those potent agents for the smothering of the masculine will.

They were on their way to the office of the Mayor when abruptly Emil ordered the driver

of the cab to halt, while he questioned Annie anxiously. Did she think it wise—what they were doing? Had she sufficiently considered?

For answer she put her hands on his shoulders and drew his head to her breast so vehemently that he had difficulty in breathing.

After that he spoke no more until their destination was reached, but stared out intently at the people, who passed in carriages and on foot, with a smile in which there was an uneasy melancholy.

A week later any scales he might have had over his eyes had vanished. Memories of Rachel obtruded themselves and he turned from them with stifled sighs. He was ill at ease and his conscience troubled him. He was penitent before Annie and redoubled his caresses. But she was not essential to him, and as time went on he buried himself in his work.

In the choice of the apartment the young girl betrayed the fundamental practicality of her nature. The rooms were inexpensive and at the same time attractive and homelike; but at the end of a month, Emil discovered a sky-lighted loft in the lower part of the city into which he wished to move. The place would be a more convenient one for his work. Thither Ding Dong, in the capacity of assistant to the inventor, accompanied the pair. With him he brought the monkey Lulu.

Largely because of his affection for her, though partly because of his hatred of his former employers on whom he thought absurdly to revenge himself, Ding Dong had stolen the little creature from the factory. He made her a cage, which she seldom occupied, her favourite station being the sill of the window where Emil had his work-bench. There she crouched among the tools with her little, worried, half-human face turned to the inventor, and now and then she reached out a black hand and laid it questioningly on his sleeve. Seeing his pet thus safely cared for, Ding Dong was free to spend himself in the

service of his new master. He ran errands, bustled about in a flurry of often useless activity, and even fitted up the tiny room set apart for Annie. At first the young wife agreed to everything.

Crushed by a stormy interview with her father in which he had forbidden her to cross his threshold, in the early days of her marriage Annie accepted the privations of her new mode of life without a word. She thought to endear herself to her husband. But Emil, far from sympathizing with her position, was honestly unconscious of it. Carried away by the interest of his work, he forgot her. When made aware of her, bitterness filled his soul. He felt himself guilty toward her. Never the less, her tears, her letters to her mother, which he was forced to read and approve, her constant efforts on his behalf with her father, above all, her insistence that he go back and accept the situation of expert examiner, which was finally grudgingly offered him,—all this irked him in the extreme.

"Go back there—after the way he's treated

me?" he cried,—"you ask it?"

"I thought—I thought—" murmured Annie, "we are very miserable."

"Well?" His significant tone seemed to imply, "Who's to blame?"

He now perceived clearly that she hampered him, that he could have got on very much better without her.

"You are not interested in my work," he cried, blaming her; "a woman is always like that. No detachment with them is possible. I ought to have understood this."

Then Annie broke down, and contrition overcame him. He took her in his arms where she cuddled like a little kitten.

"I'm no one for you," he whispered, while a fierce sigh rent him.

But convinced that he suffered by the arrangement more than she did, he cherished a grudge against her because she interfered

with him. Fearing to disquiet his mother, he allowed several months to pass before he wrote to her of his marriage. Viewing it coldly, he felt much cause for shame in the situation.

Quarrels were constant, and as the sight of Annie disquieted him, he shut himself off from her more and more. He worked, slept and ate in his shop, and Annie inhabited her lonely little room, weeping and staring out over the house-tops in acute disgust. As Emil had said, devotion to an abstract ideal was impossible to her and she was jealous now of his work as of a rival, so that they had no topic about which they could talk when together. Everything furnished a subject for dispute, even Ding Dong and his pet. Ding Dong disgusted her by his outlandish appearance, and the monkey, she declared, made her nervous.

The day following her meeting with Rachel, Annie spoke of the encounter.

"I met someone you know yesterday," she

said; "a girl from Maine."

Wrinkling up his brow, Emil paused in his work.

Something in his expression excited and angered his wife.

"Well," she cried sharply, "do you remember her? What's her name?"

But Emil, despite his desire to know more, resumed his work without answering, and the eyes he cast down held the look of a child that dimly perceives in its suffering the result of its own act.

CHAPTER VI
DESPAIR AND DESOLATION

As she stood in the attic room with its sloping roof and dormer windows, her little

dark head almost touched the ceiling. Old David surveyed her with pride; then cast a glance at Simon Hart. The driving rain had modelled the stuff of her dress to her arms and shoulders in winding folds. As she lifted her hands to remove her hat, from which drooped the straight lines of a veil, she resembled a Tanagra figurine. But there was no antique serenity in her expression.

Convinced that she was disconcerted by his presence, Simon Hart began to explain that he had brought her another order for candle shades. Then, as her lack of sophistication grew upon him, he ended by inviting her and her grandfather to dine with him.

But Rachel looked at him with vague, unseeing eyes, until David nudged her elbow.

"We'll like to go very much, won't we, Rachel?" he said in a voice which quavered with delight.

Then she understood and forced a smile to her lips.

"But don't ye forgit to say something to Miss Short, will ye?" the old man reminded her. "You see," he added, turning to the visitor, "Miss Short expected to go somewhere with us to-night for a little celebration, because of that order—the first one you got, Rachel—and it's most kind of you, too, to take such an interest."

The other waved these last words aside. "Now about this celebration," he said, "what do you say to asking Miss Short to go with us?"

Again Rachel forced herself to express pleasure.

When Simon Hart went out to call a carriage, she entered the inner room.

After ridding herself of her wet dress, she sat down before the cracked looking-glass and began arranging her hair. But almost immediately she folded her arms on the bureau, bowed her head upon them and fell to weeping. In the depths of her soul she felt

that nothing could alter her despair. Henceforth the knowledge of Emil's marriage would lodge there like a rock heaved into the midst of a stream, and the current of her life would eddy around it. The approach of Nora Gage caused her to lift her face and continue coiling her hair.

Simon Hart was not a worldly man. He confined himself closely to the supervision of his business—the manufacture and sale of jewellery. At night he returned to his austere house in Washington Square. Of a painfully reticent disposition, he made few friends, his fastidious and slightly ironical manner effectually cutting him off from companionship.

The only beings who played any sustained part in his life were the gaunt mysterious female who served his meals and arranged his drawing-room as she chose, his old father who moved optical instruments over the floor of the attic; and, at the shop, Victor Mudge, who designed special settings for gems. For Victor Mudge, Simon entertained a particular

regard, though he felt sensitively that the goldsmith disapproved of him. The truth was, these two friendless men,—the one living in his well-nigh empty house, the other in his hall bedroom,—criticized each the other's lonely condition.

The diversion created in the jeweller's life by the persons just named was no more than the gnawing of a bevy of mice in an otherwise quiet cellar. Painfully aware of this, he attempted to enrich his existence by extending the scope of his intellectual pursuits. He took up the study of social economics and pursued it diligently. In the same way, during the season, he forced himself to attend the opera with conscientious regularity, although he had no real musical taste and much that he saw and heard was in reality distasteful to him. He felt a constant need to check in himself a tendency to indulge feelings that were deeper than those apparently experienced by other men.

Only once had a person penetrated his reserve. Several years before he had made the

acquaintance of a scholarly lady who brought to his shop for suitable setting an Egyptian scarab. In the course of filling this simple order Simon had called upon her several times. Subsequent developments, however, had revealed the fact that the scholarly lady had a husband, and the acquaintance had languished; though for some time after the incident he had kept her photograph on his pianola where he had been in the habit of studying it while he had pedalled evenly. This photograph had fallen behind a stationary bookcase, and at present the one brightness in his life was the gleam of the gold and the jewels in his shop.

Now he stood helpless at the corner of the street. Trusting to her unique charm to atone for any discrepancy in her dress, he would have risked Rachel's appearance in one of the more fashionable restaurants. But the others? He shook his head.

More keenly sensitive to observation than a man of wider social experience, he shrank from the attention the group would be likely

to attract. Presently he came to a decision. He would take his guests to a restaurant in the vicinity of his house, where he made a practice of dining when the weather was particularly oppressive.

As they quitted the tenement rooms, Nora Gage padded softly out on the landing in her heelless slippers. Her enormous bust undulated more than usual and her hands at her waist disappeared beneath overhanging folds of fat. "Well, I hope you'll have something good to eat," she remarked meaningly. Rachel, her head high, ignored these words; but old David nodded with smiles and gestures toward his pocket.

Like a child he expressed his delight openly. His white locks moved in the air, fine as cobwebs, and his face was wreathed in continual smiles which prolonged the wrinkles at the corners of his eyes and deepened the lines about his mouth to quivering crescents of laughter defining the rosy hillocks of his cheeks. With a shaking finger he pointed out the sights in the streets

to Emily, who nodded decorously the plumes of her elaborately-trimmed hat. The hat was destined for one of Mrs. Stedenthal's customers, but Emily had borrowed it for the evening. The very novelty of the situation diverted Rachel; she became aware of a dual consciousness—a self that suffered and a self that was vaguely amused.

In the restaurant the waiter uncorked a bottle of champagne and Simon begged the young girl to taste it. She lifted it to her lips, then played with the glass.

Simon watched the slim thumb and finger that encircled the fragile stem of crystal. With unostentatious movements he repeatedly filled his own glass. Occasionally he ventured to lift a glance to Rachel's face.

She wore a skirt of dark silk, and a little flowered scarf over a waist of sheer muslin. The brim of her drooping hat, whenever she leaned forward, cast its shadow over her shoulders and her scarcely-indicated breast. When she straightened up, however, it was as

if a cloud lifted and revealed the glow of her cheeks, the line of her lips, the depths of her eyes where some gloomy thought constantly hovered; for, strive as she would, summoning to her aid all her furious pride, she could not conceal the misery and despair that were consuming her heart. From her round wrists her sleeves fell back in ample folds and the pale yellow of her scarf repeated the colour of the champagne.

As the dinner progressed Simon refrained more and more from looking at her. He did not ask himself what was troubling this young girl, he did not wish to know; perhaps he shrank from anything so absolutely youthful as her despair. On the other hand, the costume she wore, in that it was probably of her own fashioning, filled him with a kind of tenderness. Many trifling peculiarities of people, scarcely noticeable movements, awakened in him this feeling. It was a kind of pitifulness in his nature, though he had rarely been moved to the same degree by so slight a detail.

Life takes on to most men, who by middle age have attained any measure of success, the character of a long meal of many courses. But to Simon Hart it seemed like the meal which the traveller takes in a gloomy way station. Now Rachel appealed to him like the unexpected nuts of a dessert, the unlooked for "riddle in ribbons," for he was keen enough to suspect the riddle hidden in this little smooth-skinned girl.

The thoughts engendered in Emily Short, as she quietly observed the pair, were as foreign to her mind as the food was to her palate. In the pauses between the courses she wove a shining romance about Rachel and her companion and finally installed them in a castle similar in architecture to that which decorated the china of the service. Old David, remembering Nora, occupied the moments while the waiter's back was turned, in secreting various tidbits in the pocket of his coat. So slyly did he do this that no one observed his manoeuvres, and he tucked away crackers, olives and finally a portion of ice-cream which was served in a little box.

Meanwhile the waiters, bearing steaming viands, hurried to and fro. They lifted silver dish covers, which reflected the light, and revealed the red claws of lobsters surrounded by green garnishings, and fowls steaming in gravy. Leaning between the shoulders of the diners, they poured out water and wine; and every moment, as they skilfully avoided trampling the dresses of the ladies, which flowed in rippling folds around their chairs, or cleared with heavy platters balanced on their hands the black shoulders of the men,—they cried, "Your pardon, madam!—In just a moment, sir!" and nothing could equal their dexterity or the softness of their cat-like tread. Through the restaurant swelled the penetrating, complicated music of the orchestra. At one moment a shower of gay notes seemed to be falling, falling everywhere, and the people broke in upon it with the loud clapping of hands. At another moment waves of melody, unnoticed, mounted insidiously like a tide and finally bore with them, like spume and tangled seaweed, something of the emotion from each overcharged heart.

Turning her head aside, Rachel felt on her cheek the cool freshness of the night which entered over some plants in a window-box. For moments together as she listened, it seemed to her that her misery was expressed poignantly by the music. Then as the *motif* altered, insensibly her mood changed. She thought of André from whom she had received a letter the week before. Captain Daniels, whose animosity toward the lad increased with the years, in a fit of drunken temper had broken André's fiddle. She resolved, as soon as she could, to send him another. Then Zarah Patch sent word that Buttercup, the cow he had purchased from David, mistaking the moaning of the fog bell for the crying of her calf, had floundered into the bay and been drowned. "Poor Buttercup!" she thought; then—"Poor André!" And, across the miles of space that separated them, she seemed to hear again the breathless words in which the boy had told her of his love.

The orchestra was now executing a fantasy composed entirely of runs with the repetition of one bass note, and suddenly, without

warning, her agony was once more upon her. Once more, distraught, breathless, she held that horrible envelope in her hand;—she read its superscription. The men in the orchestra, puffing at their horns, fingering their flutes, drawing their fiddle bows, were executing that final wild movement, not on their instruments, but on her heart.

She looked up and encountered Simon Hart's eyes. Instantly averting his gaze, he proposed that they leave the restaurant; when they were outside, he suggested that they walk through the square which perfumed the air with the odour of its great trees. But no sooner had they entered the square, than old David evinced a distaste for locomotion.

"I don't feel jest like myself somehow," he confided in a whisper to Emily Short. "Let's jest sit down here a minute." And the little toy-maker, who had her own reasons for wishing to leave the couple to themselves, readily complied.

Simon and Rachel walked on. At last, they

also seated themselves on one of the benches. It was after ten o'clock and the square was deserted. The moon, in its first quarter, caused Washington arch to throw a black shadow athwart the path; and now and again the swaying branches of the trees brought out traceries of leaves on Rachel's white shoulders and on her sleeves. With his arms folded across his knees so that his head was on a level with hers, Simon began telling her about a recently published history of jewels that partly covered the field of a work he had long been engaged upon. As he spoke she noticed that since dinner his eyes had lost something of then weary look and that his nervousness had abated. He spoke with the masculine deliberation which women ordinarily find so irritating, but which, owing to the state of her nerves, calmed Rachel.

"However, my book," he explained, "deals almost exclusively with the legends connected with jewels. My aim is first and foremost, to restore to them their lost poetical significance. Plato, for instance, and the Egyptians, for that matter, believed that they

were veritable beings produced by a sort of fermentation which was the result of a vivifying spirit descending from the stars. Look up there," he exclaimed, pointing to the sky, "then look at this, and tell me if it doesn't resemble star-gold condensed into a transparent mass;" and from his finger he drew a ring and placed it in her palm.

She was more and more comforted. As he enlarged on the theme, which was evidently a favourite one with him, she watched the gyrations of the fountain. Outlined to her vision, she beheld a life which seemed to her infinitely more tranquil than her own.

On their return to the Street of Masts, Emily assisted old David up the stairs and Rachel remained in the doorway waiting for Simon Hart to finish an interminable sentence. Weighty, carefully worded, laborious, his peroration, for the most part, fell on deaf ears. Never the less she was conscious of an involuntary attraction to him. When at last he extended his hand, she felt that he was stirred by some emotion he wished to conceal.

"Now that we have celebrated our newly-formed friendship," he said with an attempt at gallantry, "I shall expect you to call upon me should any matter come up in which I can serve you. Will you promise?"

The kindness was unexpected, her state forlorn. Her lips worked sensitively. "Yes," she said.

He lifted her hand to his lips; at once something penetrating and tender enveloped them.

At that moment the voice of Emily Short reached them from the upper landing. "Miss Beckett—Rachel!" she called, "come—come right up here! Your grandfather—something's wrong!"

In the room under the roof the flaring gas showed old David half sitting, half lying upon the couch.

Rachel darted to him. "Grandfather—what is it?" she shrieked; and winding her arms

about him, she tried to centre his wild and wandering glances on herself.

But moaning incessantly, incoherently, he pushed her away with one hand while clutching her tightly with the other. Constantly his eyes questioned her—only to reject all help that she or any other could give him.

To her tortured sense it seemed an eternity before those half-human cries of his were silenced. In reality scarcely ten minutes elapsed before Simon Hart returned with a doctor.

Without hesitation the physician pronounced old David's attack a paralytic shock affecting both the lower limbs, though the disease, he said, might shift at anytime.

When they removed the old man's clothing, from the pocket of his coat rolled a few nuts and a little box of half-melted ice-cream.

CHAPTER VII
STOP—LOOK—LISTEN

Old David was going to die. The sunshine knew it and danced over him caressingly, touching his hands, his face, his hair each day, as if for the last time. It spilled pretty pools of gold on the floor and painted the walls with golden patches. And the plants at the window ledge knew it, two primroses and a pot of yellow jonquils, and for that reason they bloomed constantly, perfuming the air with a delicate freshness.

Old David was going to die, but because those who watched him practised an art of cheerful concealment, it was a very happy time for him, quite the happiest time he had known since boyhood.

Propped up in bed, he watched all that went on about him, and he looked at the flowers in the window. He knew who had sent the

flowers and, when he appeared, Simon Hart had to bear the scrutiny of a pair of old eyes that surveyed him unwaveringly from the pillow. When Rachel brought the visitor around to the bedside, a look of sly satisfaction radiated from the old man's features. Interest and an eager zest for life still flourished in him; though Death held him hand and foot he was too true a poet to heed the approach of so material a guest. The last days of his life were enveloped in ineffable peace. Wrapped about in comforts, he had no knowledge of the tragedy of Rachel's existence, but rested in the serene belief that Heaven itself provided him with doctors, medicines, luxuries. His poor darkened brain worked with incredible slowness, and it was touching to behold him enjoying a dainty meal that Rachel had contrived to provide for him. Smiling and fresh, with a napkin tucked under his chin, he would point out such food on the tray as appealed to his fancy; then she would lift it to his lips, feeding him as one feeds a bird. And often the poor child's face was far paler than his and her hands trembled with hunger.

Only her absorbing, desperate love for him sustained her. For this grandfather, who in the enthusiasm of his heart was so like a little child, Rachel willingly would have laid down her life. No sacrifice was beyond her; and as the old man's soul was enveloped in that atmosphere of rare and delicate perceptions that heralds the final liberation, her soul, through its love, was permitted entrance into the same region of mysterious joys; so that up to the last moment they bore each other company.

Sometimes, troubled by the thickness of his speech, old David looked at his young companion with piteous eyes; but the condition was the result of weakness, she assured him; later the words would come. To amuse him she searched the papers for humorous anecdotes and even invented funny little stories of her own. Then how they laughed together! The room reëchoed with such merry peals it seemed Death took the hint and kept at a distance. Indeed, the old man entering that world of which we know nothing, and the young girl surrounded by the

evils of this, by their very innocence and helplessness held at bay all the menacing powers of darkness, and under that attic roof, in the midst of a sordid city, they lived a life more profound and universal than its thousands of passionate men and women thronging the streets below.

When Simon Hart called, as he did every evening, it seemed to him that all the needs of the sick man were met. He sent flowers and fruit for old David, but a sense of delicacy kept him from offering Rachel financial assistance. Though he had disliked particularly asking a favour of his cousin, Julia Burgdorf, through her influence he was able to obtain for the young girl piece-work in an establishment that made a specialty of hand-painted trifles. This appealed to him as the most considerate way of helping her. Little did he realize that nursing left Rachel scant opportunity for the painting which required concentration. But by forcing herself to do without rest and almost without food, by employing every spare moment in doing all sorts of simple, ill-paid work that could be

carried on at home, such as the directing of circulars and envelopes, mending and sewing for the neighbours, the impossible thing was accomplished. In quarters, half-dollars, dollars, the necessary money was swept together to cover the needs of the sick man. It was one of those prodigious, superhuman struggles constantly attempted by love. But of this struggle, though he came daily to the apartment, Simon Hart realized little. With the instinctive dread that characterizes persons of supersensitive nature, he had trained himself not to see to the bottom of things, not to investigate hearts too deeply. While watching Rachel with melancholy, ambiguous eyes, he was practically blind to the difficulty of her situation.

His sense of loneliness, always painful, was aggravated now, and in her presence he was tormented by an inexpressible need of intimate companionship. He could not bear to have her leave the room; he was jealous of the doctor and Emily Short, since they took something of her from him. And how little he received!—a word when he came and when

he left and now and then a smile. When Rachel cast on him a smile from swiftly-parted tremulous lips, a smile that vanished ere it had scarce taken form, Simon's restlessness increased and his desire for affection became a feverish demand. Fortunate for her that it was himself rather than another who saw her placed as she was. And reflecting that many a man of the ravening-wolf type, in his place would have sought to take advantage of her poverty, of her unprotected state, he grew hot with anger. But she stood small chance of meeting such a one, and after all Emily Short was a defence. Then the idea of marrying the girl presented itself, looming mirage-like on the horizon of his mind, and he felt that he was becoming ridiculous. He saw himself with the eyes of that world in which Julia Burgdorf and his business associates were the chief figures. The victim of a little unknown waif—not merely her victim, her slave. In order to break the spell he forbade himself to go to see her, and, that he might keep to the resolution, he started without warning on a trip to Bermuda.

At first Nora Gage, influenced by shrewd calculations, acted in an unexpected fashion. During the fortnight that old David lay between life and death, Nora each day doled out a little money to Rachel. But later, as the invalid began to improve, she stole into his room a hundred times a day and noted the gathering life in his face with eyes as watchful as a snake's. Sometimes she even extended a hand and tested his pulse. Devotion to comfort was the ruling motive of Nora's life, and, foreseeing a future wherein comfort was threatened, fear seized upon her very vitals; and an agitation spread outward through the whole bulk of her flesh. Nor was her situation undeserving of sympathy. In vain Emily Short promised to reimburse her for all expenditures on old David's account when the fall trade in hats should open; Nora was sceptical of the security, as she was sceptical, finally, of Simon Hart's intentions.

"He don't mean a thing, I'm sure of it," she muttered. "The idea of thinking he'd marry her! I've been a fool." And Nora sighed heavily as the alluring vision of the

permanent home she had intended to demand in Simon Hart's house, in return for the assistance she had rendered old David, vanished in thin air.

Her generosity came abruptly to an end. The doctor might order new medicines and old David, with the innocent egotism of the sick, demand the comforts to which he had become accustomed, Nora was unmoved. Gloating, she waited for Rachel to make an appeal. But the other, aware of the nature with which she had to deal, was silent.

"Proud—proud to the end! Well, let her starve," Nora soliloquized, and took herself to the public parks,—anywhere to escape the atmosphere of gloom and terror that for her pervaded the apartment.

Simon Hart's continued absence awoke in Rachel a troubled amazement, the more, as her grandfather constantly asked for him and she had to invent excuses for his non-appearance; but she had little time for reflection as the household in the Street of

Masts was now put to sad shifts. Poor folk are ever separated from want by the meagrest of protections. They are like soldiers cowering behind a crumbling embankment. Time, bringing the ever recurrent needs, is their indefatigable enemy, and when these needs are multiplied, as in sickness, with small chance for patching the wall, they can ill withstand the siege. Finally there came an evening when Emily Short, with a look of shame on her open countenance, repaired to a certain shop around the corner, and thereafter no day passed when old David lacked for any comfort, as no day passed when some article was not missing from the bare little rooms.

"Let me go just this once," Rachel besought one evening early in February, confronting the toy-maker, who was preparing to go out. "If you wait to go around there—you know where I mean—you'll be late at Madame Stedenthal's. You know she said eight o'clock; and you wouldn't want to miss getting that order."

"But I don't like to have you," Emily

protested.

Rachel motioned toward the room: "Run along. Grandfather's asleep; I'll slip out and be back before he 'wakes." ...

She quitted the shop, pressing a hand to her burning cheeks. Then, thrilled by the consciousness of the silver in her pocket, she hurried forward. She had gone only a few steps when someone touched her arm. She turned and saw Simon Hart.

Manifestly he had been following her: on his face was stamped a look of commiseration and embarrassment.

At once her old imperious pride was alive. Shrinking fiercely from the observation and sympathy of this man, she spoke curtly:

"I'm very glad to have met you. Now if you'll excuse me, I'll say good-night; Grandfather is alone."

She swung round so that he could no longer

see her deeply wounded face; he saw only her hat and part of her veil and her long shabby cloak.

"Miss Beckett—Rachel!" he exclaimed, in a note of despairing appeal. "May I not go up to see your grandfather? I have been away—I have just returned. I did not wait; I was so anxious," he concluded. And he looked anxious.

She paused. After all, her grandfather would be pleased to see him. Already her short-lived resentment that he had witnessed her humiliation was merged in bodily languor.

They mounted the stairs and as he saw how she clung to the railing with her hand, Simon Hart was seized afresh with surprise and horror. The pencilings of fatigue under her eyes accentuated her pallor and this morbid diminution in her beauty, lent her a poignant charm. She laid a hand on the door.

Amazed at the change in the dismantled

room, which was no less than the change in her, he stood rooted to the threshold. Then he dropped his head in his hands.

Rachel, who suffered a faint return of embarrassment, refrained from looking at him.

"There," she said nervously, laying aside her wraps, "now I'll go and see if Grandfather's awake."

He was beside her: "Rachel, why—why didn't you let me know?"

"Let you know what?" and she stood back against the wall, striving to repell him with her eyes.

"That you were in want—in need. You could have written—" he floundered helplessly; then swept on almost in tears —"Didn't you know that I would help you gladly—thankfully? Oh where were my eyes! And you have been struggling!—Oh God, forgive me." He drew her bended wrist

against his breast, and the shudders of his frame went to hers.

She tried to withdraw the hand. "I don't understand."

"So thin—" he continued, perusing her face, "so thin; almost starved. And no one to help you—not anyone. And I left you; I didn't even write—"

He did not finish the sentence. He was on his knees, kissing the hem of her dress.

She stared at him in a trance of amazement and at that moment a voice sounded from the room across the passage.

"Rachel, be that ye? Why don't ye come in here?"

Simon Hart rose to his feet. "Let me help you, Rachel."

She moved her lips, though no sound passed them. He threw his hands on her shoulders and his eyes into the depths of hers.

"I ask nothing that you cannot give," he said with mournful softness. "I know that you do not—love me—but later, if you became my wife—"

She shook her head, trying to twist free.

"If you were my future wife," he amended, "I could give your grandfather every care."

He had struck the right note.

Perceiving it, desperately he followed up his advantage. Later he would feel shame, but not now with her frightened breath on his face and her lips so close. His gentleness was transformed into boldness. Love wrought madness in him who had never before known its mystery or its power.—"He should lack for nothing."

At that moment her grandfather's voice, high-pitched, querulous, sounded from the other room.

"I hear ye, Rachel—both of ye; why don't

ye come in here?"

Slowly her frozen look gave place to one of tense questioning. "He shall lack for nothing? you promise it?"

Simon Hart bowed his head: "I promise."

"Very well, then;" and all the life and youth dropped from her voice.

"Shall I go in to him?" he asked, stunned by his victory.

She nodded.

He moved to the door. Then retracing his steps, he passed his arms about her and pressed her to him. "You shall never regret this, Rachel. Oh, how I love you!" he muttered, with his lips on her head.

Pushing the hair back from her temples as if its weight annoyed her, in the silent room she paced restlessly. Presently she paused and looked her problem in the face. She was alone, powerless, penniless. But for herself

she was not afraid!—and she folded her arms on her breast,—but for him who was dying?

Her arms fell.

The doctor had said that he might linger months, even years. And oh the relief, the unspeakable happiness, of being able to give him every luxury! She smiled; then sickened. The very blood in her veins repudiated the sacrifice. It was long since she had thought of Emil St. Ives as she had been accustomed to think of him during the blissful time at Pemoquod Point. Now the memory of him suddenly beat all over her weakened frame. She belonged to her love as the wood belongs to the flame. Wringing her hands together, she cast herself on the couch. And over and over her in a flood waves of pain, of joy, of despair, of triumph, of agony, of gladness, of self-immolation, of selfishness rolled and rolled.

Out of her ordeal she emerged, brought to a sense of the immediate present by hearing her name called. She stood up. But even through

her misery she was conscious of the amazing strength of her grandfather's voice.

She ran to him.

A magnetic current of happiness had penetrated his paralyzed frame, for when she leaned over him, he addressed her with a tongue no longer trammelled.

"I told ye he'd come back," he exulted. "I heared ye when ye both come in and I knew it was him. Now ain't ye got anything to tell me, Rachel?" And he smiled up at her slyly.

"I don't know what you mean, Grandfather," she said.

"I mean—What have ye two been talkin' about in t'other room?" he broke off. "I know it was about somethin' important; and he don't deny it," with a gesture toward Simon.

Simon Hart stood with one hand resting on the table. Rachel avoided his glance.

"He said perhaps you'd tell me," urged the

old man. "Now, what is it?"

She was silent.

"What is it?" he repeated. "Did he ask you to marry him?" and he plucked at her hand.

"Yes, he did."

"I knew it—I knew it," he cried excitedly. "And you said you would, didn't you, Rachel?" he asked, peering at her anxiously. "Somehow I should like to feel as if it was settled," he added wistfully.

Then she understood. In spite of his cheerfulness, old David knew quite well that he was going to die; and so great was his love for her, it had triumphed over the barriers imposed by his disease. With his poor clouded faculties he was trying to make provision for her.

Unable to stand, she rested her forehead on the pillow. He touched her hair and suddenly her heart expanded. All her thought was for

him now. The danger that had threatened him was averted. They could not take him away from her, they could not carry him away and place him in a spotless, terrible ward, on a little bed, to die among strangers. Instead, she would be able to care for him until the end came. It was enough. What more could she ask? And tightening her grip on his sleeve, she wept the tears which the constant, torturing thought of weeks, the unwearying, ceaseless attempts to earn money, had not wrung from her. In an ecstasy of tenderness, she received the old man back from the verge of a lonely, unattended death.

Simon Hart had dropped into a chair. His elbow was among the medicine vials; his hand over his face. Old David looked doubtfully from one to the other; after an instant, exerting himself, he caught at Simon's free hand and placed Rachel's in it. "There!" he sighed, and while they watched him, he settled back on the pillows, his lids drooping. Exhausted, he fell asleep, his parted lips giving to his face the aloof expression of death.

It was as if he had been waiting the consummation of this one hope, for after that he sank rapidly. During the anguished days that followed, Rachel never permitted herself to question the step she had taken. She expected to fulfil her promise, meanwhile she preferred not to calculate the price of her sacrifice. She thought only of her grandfather, and if she had been told to die in order to save him, she would have been dead.

Simon Hart had lost standing in his own eyes. He tried to view the situation complacently, to find in it cause for self-justification. Then came the conviction that he must release her. For the present, however, let the engagement stand. It quieted the old man's fears and left Rachel free to receive at his hands the assistance she otherwise would have hesitated to accept.

Upon his advice a trained nurse was secured and lodgings in the neighbourhood were found for Nora Gage. As the last hours of old David's existence approached, Simon began to nourish timid hopes, for Rachel

appeared to regain confidence in him. In spite of the part he had played, she relied on him, and drew comfort from his eyes in which she detected so much sympathy.

The physician had made his last visit; her grandfather would scarcely last until dawn. His eyes, partly concealed by their flaccid lids, held that look which is not to be misunderstood; his head on its strained and swollen neck lay twisted to the side on the pillow; the fingers of one hand, already cold, plucked constantly at the coverlid with that melancholy, mechanical movement of the dying, as if his spirit, longing to be free, would fain rid itself of all encumbrances. The left side, instead of the right, was now stricken.

A few minutes before sunrise, there came a change. He had lain so quiet for many hours that they thought he slept, but suddenly Rachel perceived that his eyes were wide open and that he was listening intently to the wind whistling in the space between the houses. Its rushing passage produced a last

flicker in the fantastic mind.

"The cars! We're whirlin'—" His mouth opened in astonishment. "Stop, look, listen!" he muttered faintly, turning his eyes to hers. Then the air ceased to undulate, grew quiet, above his still and amazed face.

The first golden beams of the sun peeped in at the windows as old David's soul, in the majesty of its innocence, passed from earth.

CHAPTER VIII
A WOMAN'S CAPRICE—A FATHER'S REPENTANCE—A LOVER'S SELF-CONQUEST—A GIRL'S PITY

When Simon Hart agreed to his cousin's plan, and Rachel, despite her protests, was conveyed from the hospital to Julia

Burgdorf's house, he did not experience the unpleasantness he had anticipated. The personality of his cousin was not agreeable to him. He had never liked her; partly, because he was jealous of a social prestige which he himself had never been able to attain; partly, because he disapproved of her dropping her family name, for Julia, when a child, had adopted the cognomen of a distant relative from whom she had inherited a fortune. But the fundamental reason for his disapprobation lay deeper, concealed in the current of their common blood.

Though diametrically opposed to Julia in character, Simon was able to comprehend in her traits which he especially disliked. They were like two compounds containing different proportions of the same ingredient. In Simon the strain of their common ancestry had been fused with a widely alien current. From his mother, a pale-featured, down-looking woman, much given to keeping her own counsel, he had inherited his air of secrecy, his pallor, as well as his capacity for profound and delicate feeling. But in Julia the

original current of the Hart blood retained all its primitive strength; plainly, she was one whose forefathers had loved "wine and women and wild boars," and in every trait she was more closely related to old Nicholas than was Simon. Though Nicholas now quaveringly sought the beauties of a butterfly's wing, time was when he had pursued woman's glances with the same ardour; in fact, he had been in his day a cup of lusty life. It was the very irony of fate that this legacy of the Hart spirit had passed his own son and descended in all its troubled richness on his sister's child. The only difference between uncle and niece was that which is accounted for by sex. Julia, being no fool, accepted the restraints that hamper the existence of a conventional woman. Like Nicholas she had slight sympathy with Simon. The antagonism of the cousins was mutual. In speaking of Julia, Simon habitually employed an ironical tone; while Julia treated Simon with condescension, and, behind his back, with ridicule. But now one subject united them.

Immediately after the death of old David, Rachel, exhausted and ill-nurtured, was conveyed to a private hospital, a victim of typhoid fever. For a time the outcome of the struggle appeared dubious, but three weeks after the fever declared itself, she rallied. Then it was that Simon went to Julia with the general points of her story and a hesitating request.

The girl was absolutely alone, without relatives or friends. Would Julia visit her? The picture was a pathetic one, and marvelling at Simon's newly developed powers of eloquence, she consented. At sight of the invalid, her curiosity, already lively, increased to a point that assured decisive action. Moreover, she conceived for the young girl, with her forlorn face, one of those superficial attachments with which such women sometimes seek to fill their empty lives.

As soon as Rachel was convalescent Julia insisted, nay, commanded, that she be transferred to her own house. A visit of a few

days in novel and comfortable surroundings, she argued, would tend to hasten her recovery. The fact was, Julia desired further opportunity to study the girl who had made a conquest of her cousin. Simon's ill-concealed interest in her afforded Julia delicious amusement. She had never deemed him capable of falling in love. When he announced that he hoped sometime to marry Miss Beckett, Julia's amazement was complete. Hoped! She gasped, then shrugged. What did he mean by taking that tone, a man of his position? It was mock humility—hypocrisy more disgusting than any of which she had dreamed him capable. But she soon discovered that his lack of assurance was justified.

At first she doubted. The "young person" (for it was thus Julia in thought designated Rachel) but cherished deep-laid plans, holding Simon the more securely by appearing not to desire to hold him. It was clever acting, and notwithstanding that she felt bound to oppose the ridiculous match, Julia could but admire the fair schemer who

used her weakness and illness as additional bait for hooking such a fine fish. Then this theory exploded and she saw the situation in its piquancy:

Rachel was actually indifferent to the entire question of the marriage.

Having made the astonishing discovery, Julia renounced her worldliness for the time. Had the circumstances been other than just what they were, had the stranger been as eager for the marriage as Simon himself, Julia assuredly would have employed every means to frustrate their plans, and would have taken a malicious pleasure in her own manoeuvring because of rooted antipathy to Simon. As matters stood, however, she resolved to do the ignorant and unambitious young thing a service in spite of herself. Instead of a few days, Julia begged to keep the invalid indefinitely, and it was owing to her entreaties, rather than to Simon's arguments, that Rachel finally consented to remain a fortnight.

Then Julia applied herself, with the utmost discretion, to furthering the romance. She attempted to prick the girl to interest by discreetly praising Simon. He was very much looked up to by members of the Jewellers' Association of which he was the president; as a business man, as a member of society at large, he was irreproachable: and she made these statements without a curl of the lip. Rachel listened in silence. Then Julia employed other tactics. She waxed spiteful in her remarks about her cousin; she even laughed at his peculiarities. An oyster was not more secretive, and save for his trick of running his fingers through his hair in moments of agitation or excitement, one would never dream that he knew an emotion. At that, the other raised resentful eyes. She saw nothing ridiculous about Mr. Hart; on the contrary, his manner was unusually dignified. In justice to him she avowed the fact, then would say no more.

As yet Rachel was too weak to consider her situation. Grief had excluded every other emotion; even memory of Emil had flagged.

Ill at ease and oppressed by the luxury around her, she strove to conceal every sign of her desperate sorrow and it was only at night that she relaxed command over herself. Then, convulsed with sobs, she lay in the darkness and, stretching out her hands, whispered, "Grandfather, are you there?" Her despair was the deeper because of the fantastic conceit that old David's simple soul was kept away by the richness of her surroundings. Had she remained in the poor rooms of the tenement, his spirit could have found her readily, descending out of that patch of pure sky visible through the dormer windows, even as the souls of saints and angels descend out of the blue in old pictures.

These woful imaginings, incident to physical weakness, for a time oppressed her; but later, as her strength came, she turned from them. She began to look at life with apprehensive eyes, though she still said little.

Simon felt that she was reading him and agonized under her gaze. Vainly he tried to speak the word that honour, pity, decency

demanded. Could he have beheld her existing without masculine companionship, he would have released her, but the possibility of an unknown rival in the shrouded future, a rival whose love she would return, sealed his lips. Out of her presence the tension of the situation was relieved. When no longer confronted by her helpless and mutely accusing youth, it was a simple matter for him to convince himself that the step he had contemplated was unnecessary. Girls as young as she were material easily moulded; if she did not love him now, she would later. Meanwhile the situation was ambiguous, and for that reason, if for no other, an early marriage was advisable.

Despite these arguments, he began to show the effect of mental torture. The man was passing through fire. At last even Julia was moved by his look. As Rachel was the cause of the unnatural, strained situation, she proposed that something be done to rouse her spirits.

"Give her a taste of pleasure," Julia advised,

"She's a little frozen ghost now, but I've yet to see the girl whose gloom won't yield to amusement and excitement."

With an eagerness almost pathetic, Simon agreed to this proposal. But just what could they do?

The answer came promptly: "Dress her properly and carry her off to some gay resort for the early spring. I will take her in charge, if you say so?"

But before they had developed a plan, the problem was unexpectedly solved. Emily Short was the curative agent.

It was a cold morning in March, and Emily, barring the interruption of the doctor's visit, had been with Rachel for an hour when Simon arrived. As he entered his cousin's hall he met the physician who was just getting into his great-coat. Simon paused to consult him.

"These women are certainly astonishing

creatures," the physician remarked, settling his muffler. "The more experience I have in the medical profession, the more I feel that, owing to their nervous vitality, their recuperative power is prodigious. Miss Beckett has just had some news, I gather," he explained, "and it's done more for her than any amount of tonics. I imagine she knows very clearly what she wants to do, and my advice is, don't oppose her. Good morning, Mr. Hart." And the doctor passed out through the door which was opened for him by the obsequious butler.

Simon felt a sense of gnawing irritation.

"Now does that mean that he advises allowing her to return to that unsanitary tenement, if that chances to be her wish," he asked himself, "or has Julia set something on foot without consulting me?"

It was not without a struggle that Simon had brought himself to trust his cousin; and now, in spite of her continued kindness and avowed interest in his plans, he constantly

dreaded her interference.

It being the usual hour for his visit, he did not have himself announced, but proceeded directly to Julia's sitting room where Rachel usually spent the morning. As he went toward the door, the thick carpet deadened his footsteps and he heard Rachel speaking in a voice wrought to a high pitch:

"I never imagined things happened this way outside of novels. But is Father alive? What do you say?"

"I should hardly say that he is," replied Emily. "If he were merely sending the money to you by this person, who is so afraid of telling his name, he'd have been apt to write and explain things."

"Yes, of course. But I must do what I can to find this John Smith. Oh, I shall get well now! And isn't it providential, all this money, and from my own Father? I can pay my debts now." The tone was jubilant.

Simon Hart, with a sensation of fear and guilt, did not wait to hear more. Pushing aside the strings of beads, the rattling of which jarred intolerably on his nerves, he entered the coquettish apartment. As he approached Rachel, avoiding collision with the divers chairs, screens, tables with which the place was littered, his face revealed little of what he was feeling.

On perceiving him, she half rose. Her breath grew short—or did he imagine it?—her eyes narrowed, then filled once more with the irradiating light of happiness. As their hands met he observed that her cheeks were glowing. Only her extreme slenderness and her cropped head told the story of recent illness.

"Oh, such news!" she cried, striving to repress her excitement. "Here, sit down," indicating a chair beside her own, "and Emily, you tell him." And as the little toy-maker took up the tale, Rachel looked into his face. But hardly had Emily opened her lips than she was silenced.

"No, no, I'll tell him myself. What do you think! *I've heard from my Father*! He has never seen me, I have never seen him, but suddenly he sends some money." Here Rachel's eyes shot a question—or again, did he imagine it?

"But you haven't exactly heard from him," Emily Short interrupted; "you don't know anything positively."

At these words, to Simon's relief, Rachel turned from him. "But I tell you I do know something positively, and that's enough," with a gesture of pride, "if I never hear anything more. He sent this money to my mother. Do you suppose that explains nothing to me?"

All at once she was the incarnation of tenderness and defiance. She had retained from childhood a picture of her father limned in the quaint language of old David. Now she in turn presented the portrait to these strangers. In the light of that mystical tribunal, buttressed so strongly by love and

imagination, Thomas Beckett stood forth a figure vastly human, passionate and compelling; and she defied them to judge him otherwise.

But all at once she ceased twisting the tassels which adorned her girdle and dropped her chin in the cup of her hand.

"Sometimes I feel that it was all owing to the sea," she continued; "had we lived further inland I believe Father wouldn't have left us. For the land is stationary, even the trees are tied to it by the foot; while the sea—every drop is free. It can dash and gnaw its way through the hardest substances. But man is not like the sea. He may hurl himself upon life, yes—" The sentence concluded in a sigh.

At the beginning of this agitated speech Simon had gazed at her with anxious curiosity; then he grew jealous of this father who drew her thoughts so far afield from all he knew or sympathized with. He began to congratulate her.

She did not heed him.

"So you can see how it came about, can't you?" and she looked first at him and then at Emily. "Restless, dissatisfied, tormented, that's what Father was. He asked something of life which life didn't give him, and when the new ship he had helped to build was finished, he simply sailed away in her."

This defence was painful to Simon, and Rachel all at once felt his attitude.

"See," she said in an altered voice, "all this gold; seven hundred dollars of it," and she indicated a box on the table. "It came from a place in Massachusetts. Read this," thrusting into his hand a card on which were printed the words:

"To Mrs. Lavina Beckett from her husband Thomas Beckett."

"And there was no letter of explanation? Do you mean to say that you have no clue as to who forwarded the money?" Simon asked the

question because it seemed to be demanded of him. In reality he was not curious.

"Yes, we have a clue, but there was no letter except one which André Garins, my old school friend, said was written to the postmaster at Old Harbour by a man signing himself John Smith. This man asked if my mother was still living there, but the postmaster is new to the place, and doesn't know much about the people at the Point anyway; so he wrote back that Mother was dead and that André Garins at Pemoquod could probably give him information about the daughter, that is, about me."

"Yes; and just as soon as he gets this letter, that John Smith, or whatever his rightful name is, sends his box of gold post-haste to your friend, and directs on the outside that it be forwarded to you. I tell Rachel that the man, whoever he may be, isn't anxious to have her get in touch with him," added Emily, addressing herself to Simon. "It's my opinion he's keeping back part of the money her father gave him, and I think it's foolish for

her to go and get all keyed up."

Simon was saved the necessity of answering.

"But why, if he's dishonest, did he send any money at all? But that's not the point," Rachel went on; "I shan't rest until I've been to that town in Massachusetts to see what I can learn about Father. Why do you both try to discourage me? Oh, you don't understand!" And suddenly the tears were streaming. She was too weak to combat them further.

Simon could not endure the sight of suffering; even the constant and to a degree superficial tragedies of the lower animals and insects tortured him; for that reason he never went near his father's room where flies, still living, impaled on pins, seemed appealing to him for the help he dared not give. Now his face twitched.

"But I assure you I do understand," he protested, "and I will either go myself and make the necessary investigation, or I will

accompany you when you are sufficiently strong."

At these words she pressed his fingers warmly, though she shook her head: "No, I should prefer—I should rather go alone."

"Rachel!" he cried, and looked his pain.

"Or I will take Emily."

She rose and pausing beside the table turned over a gold piece; then she passed to a window where she stood.

"Grandfather always said that we should hear from Father sometime," she exulted, "and I've a feeling that he knows *now*" and she glanced round at them with a bright, almost crafty expression.

Simon drummed fingers on a knee. What effect would this wind-fall have on their relationship? That she intended to free herself from her financial obligation he gathered from the words he had chanced to overhear.

But as their interests would soon be identical, why did she not ignore so small a matter? unless— He threw an examining, wretched look toward her and took her decision from the independent bearing of her pretty shoulders.

At this point his reflections were interrupted. Julia had just returned from an early round of the most fashionable shops. She came in, briskly ungloving her hands; then stood still. Rachel sprang toward her. The girl flushed, talked with her hands, laughed. At last she had no unenthusiastic listener. Unaccustomed to the sight of gold, Emily Short, ever since the opening of the box, had been fairly awed. To think that she had left it under the bed the night before, and that morning had conveyed it openly through the streets! Happiness at Rachel's good fortune surged high, none the less her impulse was to temper the other's excitement. Julia was wiser. She smothered Rachel in an embrace. Pushing up her veil she kissed her on both cheeks and even shed a few tears over her. At that moment, despite his

dejection, Simon warmed to something like affection for his cousin.

After much argument Rachel was allowed to follow her own course. Accompanied by Emily Short she departed for the mill town from which John Smith had written. She spent a week in a vain search, then giving the matter into the hands of a local detective, she returned to New York.

Simon met the two women at the station. The greetings over, he possessed himself of Rachel's bag and led the way to a cab. She touched his arm.

"Not to Miss Burgdorf's—to Emily's, please."

Each paled. Her eyes as ever read right in.

When she was seated in the cab, she leaned forward: "And you will come this evening?"

He bowed, stiff as a ramrod, strained about the lips.

During the days of Rachel's absence his soul had been a field of conflict. He had written her letters only to destroy them. Why be so certain of her attitude? Women were inexplicable; he might be mistaken. He postponed the decision. Now he must release her; now when the issue was forced, when there was no semblance of generosity in the act. And he despaired of making her believe what he strove to make himself believe, as a last stay to self-respect, that the circumstance of her illness had alone delayed the step. The make-shift engagement had rested on her dire need of money, on his ability to supply it. Why blink the fact?

When the cab containing Rachel and her companion rolled away, he walked toward Fifth Avenue, without realizing what he was doing, stunned as if he had received a blow. For an hour he walked in a sort of stupour. Then he entered a cafe. As the blood circulated sluggishly in his veins, he had fallen into the habit of drinking moderate but constantly repeated quantities of liquor; the stimulant was no more manifest through the

pallor of his countenance than wine that is poured into an opaque vessel, but it seemed to quicken his faculties. Summoning an attendant, he gave an order. He remained in the cafe until evening.

When he entered Emily Short's room, Rachel stood near the table well in the light of the lamp. She greeted him with a touch of constraint. More than usual her eyes kept a watch on him. Her whole countenance announced subtly and triumphantly that she had it in her power to redeem her debt: then, perhaps he would release her! This thought seemed to flash even from her hands.

He looked swiftly at her hands. She was fingering a small packet of which his misery divined the nature. She had wrapped it in tissue paper. This girlish device to render the thing she planned to do less distressful, struck a blow at his heart.

"One word—listen to me!" he cried, keeping an agonized gaze on the packet, "I no longer wish—I realize that to unite your life

with mine—I know the very thought is painful—"

Lifting his eyes, he saw an expression like a darting of light.

Conscious that he was not speaking as he had intended to speak, he drew his fingers through his hair. "You are free," he stammered, "it was never my intention to hold you to your promise. But it is impossible that you should comprehend my struggle—"

He broke off, striving for his usual calm, and this effort to place a mask over his anguish produced on her much the same effect as the concealing piece of paper had produced on him.

Caught in a tide of emotion, she extended a hand: "But I can—I do understand. Haven't you shown your feeling for me constantly? You have been kind—kind!"

He shook his head. "No, no," he muttered, "not kind; helpless. I tried more than once to

release you; I beg you to believe this. But I loved you too much." His face expressed acute suffering; his lower lip trembling so that he could scarcely pronounce the words.

"Can you forgive me?"

No concealment now. A naked, humble, imploring, despairing soul looked from his eyes.

It was not in her to resist such an appeal. Her heart flamed with pity, pity that annihilated all selfish exultation. "There is nothing to forgive."

"But you do forgive me?" he insisted.

"I thank you—I thank you from the bottom of my soul."

Again he shook his head disowning his right to gratitude. His eyes once more watched what she held.

All at once, reading his look, the discrepancy between the nature of her

indebtedness and the sordid return she had planned, struck her. She laid the packet on the table.

He looked up, questioningly.

So repugnant did the action she had contemplated now appear to her that she hung her head.

"I no longer wish to give it to you," she said in a stifled voice. "Grandfather's happiness, my own life—can money pay for such things?"

He took her by the hand.

It was some moments before he could regain command of himself. Then he said:

"I am always your friend, Rachel."

She nodded.

For some moments longer they stood, their hands joined. Presently he touched her forehead with his lips. "Good-bye."

She stood as he had left her, her bosom rising and falling softly and heavily, her eyes betraying all that was passing within her. Never did countenance more plainly announce a struggle. By this final act, he had erased from the scroll any charge against him of dishonour and selfishness. Her instinctive trust of him, persisting in the face of his weakness, was vindicated. The flame of her liking leapt higher. Open-lipped, open-eyed, open-eared, she listened to his retreating steps.

Momentarily the consciousness of her debt to him increased. She was allowing him to go —this man who had aided her in the blackest hour of her life; who loved her, who offered her all a man can offer a woman. She placed him high, herself low. She saw him noble, herself craven. To receive so much and to give nothing! It was contrary to her nature. But one return she could make! Above waves of confusion the thought flashed and flashed.

Was she capable of the sacrifice? Deeply she sounded her heart. Her life was empty,

irretrievably, permanently empty and desolate, she told herself with the sureness of the tragic young. To what better use put its fruitless days? The idea assumed the brightness of a star above troubled deeps. She sprang to the door, calling.

He did not answer, though his step was still faintly distinguishable in the hall.

Bending over the well of the staircase, she repeated her call.

The footsteps halted: then from the darkness below she heard him ascending.

CHAPTER IX
RACHEL—SIMON

Her heroism was of the youthful, purblind, impetuous order. She had reasoned falsely and acted generously. But she was not one to

sink wittingly to a lower level. Later, when she suspected the truth, she did not admit it to her own heart—least of all to her own heart. She was very glad of what she had done.

But she delayed the marriage; there were preparations to make. For no reason that anyone could fathom, she insisted on remaining in the Street of Masts. One concession she made: at Simon's urgent request she consented to retain Nora Gage. The two occupied the old rooms across the hallway from Emily Short.

The money received from her father was sufficient to supply Rachel's needs and even permitted the preparation of a simple wardrobe. Under Emily's supervision she planned and cut out and sewed feverishly for days together. Then abruptly she would abandon her needle. She bought books and endeavoured to teach herself French. She was never idle.

"You are overdoing," Simon remonstrated. "You will make yourself ill with these

things."

She shook her head. Activity was good for her.

With the success of his suit, Simon had recovered poise. His manner was dignified and somewhat stiff. He spoke slowly and in a well-modulated voice. To the world he was as he had been formerly; but Rachel read deeper.

She knew that he desired to be gallant, even witty. And this effort to be all that she wished him to be touched her profoundly. Constantly he was bringing gifts. Offering them to her, he would watch her face to see if he had selected wisely. She perfectly understood this desire to offer something that would afford pleasure. Had she not experienced the same impulse? though she had not been able to gratify it. When she met Emil St. Ives in the cemetery at Old Harbour—how long ago it seemed now—instead of gifts she had been able to give him only an earnest, unswerving attention. This listening on the part of a girl to

his long, often technical explanations, had he valued it, as she valued Simon's presents? But these reflections were checked by a prompt warning from within. Danger lay that way. Memory would prove a scourge if indulged and she did not want to feel.

Notwithstanding the approaching realization of what he had desired so long, Simon Hart still had moments when he suffered. The Street of Masts had always been an obnoxious quarter in his eyes, though for a short period, the fact that Rachel dwelt in it had somewhat modified its objectionable features. But that was before their engagement. Now the entire section stirred in him a positive repugnance. That she, his future wife, should elect to remain in a sordid setting when she might have been surrounded by every luxury, filled him with a dull sense of anger and chagrin. But he was unequal to the task of remonstrating. Whenever he thought of speaking strongly to her on the matter, timidity overcame him. Knowing what her feeling was for him, he shrank from the appearance of urging any claim. Julia

Burgdorf by her attitude increased his discomfort.

Ever since Rachel's refusal to return to her house when she had expected her, Julia, with the childish pique of a woman accustomed to having every whim gratified, had washed her hands of her. Whenever she saw Simon she bantered him on the subject of his prolonged engagement.

"Is the happy day fixed yet?" she would cry, with eye and shoulder play. "No? Is it possible! The headstrong young person hesitates to renounce her freedom? Even the prospect of escaping life in an attic does not influence her? Extraordinary!"

Whenever he went to see Rachel, Simon was beset by the dread that he might meet one of his business acquaintances. What if by chance it became known that he intended to marry a young woman who lived on the lower East side? Things like that easily leaked out. Finally his sensitiveness increased to the point where he shrank even from the

frank gaze of the children in the street, a gaze which singled him out because of his clothes, his gait, his strangeness to their world. More than all else he feared the curiosity of members of his own household. The maid who had admitted Rachel and her grandfather when they called at the house had left his service. When Rachel came there as his bride nothing of her history would be known to the servants. None the less he felt that Theresa Walker, his housekeeper, eyed him shrewdly. Not only this, he was convinced that she had communicated her suspicions to Peter, the coachman. Otherwise, why should Peter, who was old and stupid, wear such a significant look because he, Simon, failed to use the horses, as formerly, for a short time every evening?

However, though he suffered for the reasons just related, he was, on the whole, very tranquil. Nor was his engagement his only cause for satisfaction. He was about to bring out his book on gems. It was a voluminous work, weighty, carefully prepared, extensively illustrated. He awaited

its appearance with eagerness. When the first copy arrived from the publisher he took it the same evening to Rachel.

She had had a trying day. Her modest preparations could not be indefinitely prolonged. Even Emily Short, who had been a most exacting and untiring assistant, acknowledged that three days would see the completion of the wardrobe. Rachel listened and acquiesced. Emotion, out of the depths of her, still sent up momentary, lurid flashes, but Reason smothered the flashes with impetuous arguments. Finally Reason hurled Honour and Duty, a combined extinguisher, on the flame. Though triumphant in her virtuous decision to give Simon the information he had awaited so patiently, she was in an exasperated mood when he arrived. Her mood demanded a tangible grievance and he found her with anger-crimsoned cheeks inspecting a dress.

"I ought never to have trusted it to that ignorant seamstress," she cried. "I ought to have given it to that woman whose address

your cousin sent me. It's my own fault that it's ruined."

"But what's wrong with it?" he asked, taking a fold of the material between a thumb and finger.

She frowned. "Everything's wrong. It doesn't fit for one thing; and it's too long for another. But it doesn't matter. Let us talk no more about it." And seating herself beside the lamp, she took up a bit of hemstitching. She drew the needle through the dainty material, still, however, exhibiting strong signs of annoyance. Everything excited her now.

"Emily and I have accomplished a tremendous amount this week," she said by way of preface to her important announcement. "We're getting ahead finely."

"Ah, that's good," he said. "But remember not to overshoot the mark, Rachel; there'd be no wisdom in that. And now to prove that I've not been idle while you've been slaving with your pretty fingers, I have brought this. You

know I told you that before long I hoped to be able to complete the work."

She did not at once comprehend to what he referred, but she saw that he wished to tell her something flattering to himself, and by means of questions she led him on.

With a smile, he drew the book from its wrappings.

Her needle-work slipped to the floor and she received the volume in both hands. "Oh, Simon!"

"Do you like it?"

"How handsome it is! And how fine these coloured plates are! Oh what it must mean to you to see this work at last in definite shape." For she suddenly appreciated all the joy that lay for him, the author, between those stiff new pages. The last vestige of her ill nature vanished and she looked up at him eagerly.

"And the indications are that it is going to

be well received," he told her, with an air of satisfaction. "I've seen some of the advance notices. They could scarcely be more complimentary."

Like most women Rachel adored in a man power to achieve distinction. She counted it an additional proof of strength. She had been drawn to Emil partly because of his genius which had compelled her to look up. But thus far, though she appreciated his essential worth, she had not been successful in encouraging her imagination to dwell on Simon and invest him with uncommon attributes. A little shiver of excitement ran through her.

The consciousness of shining had called forth a look on Simon's face.

"The *Courier* says it's a work which is bound to attract attention, relating as it does all the old legends connected with gems, besides giving solid facts of their history."

She had no reason for thinking the book

was not what he believed it to be, a work of merit, possibly of unique value. She nodded, so anxious to see him burnished, that she saw him burnished.

"Even the reviewer of the *Messenger*, usually cynical, speaks well of it."

"I am very, very glad." Her voice thrilled with gratification.

"I knew you would be," he returned feelingly. "This copy is for you."

She put out her hand.

He grasped it, folding it against his cheek. "You know how you can best thank me, don't you?" he said. He was not a lover to be inconsiderately treated by any woman. At the moment he was singularly handsome.

With her free hand she turned the pages of the book. An involuntary sigh lifted her breast.

"Can't you tell me to-night, Rachel?" he

urged. "I've waited so long to know?"

She had let her head drop lower. In reality she was impatient that she still had to struggle with herself. At his last words she lifted her face. "I was going to tell you to-night," she said. "Will two weeks from Wednesday do?"

CHAPTER X
THE BIRD IN THE BOX

It was mid-winter, season of the early-lighted lamp. The mortal part of old David had lain in the grave for a twelvemonth. It was as if Heaven itself sought to do honour to his innocence. Contributing flake after flake of snow with the aid of that great artisan the wind, it had built up a gleaming monument to his memory.

But in the city the office of the angels was performed with greater difficulty. Patiently

they flung a mantle of snow over the island. They spread it smoothly in the streets, festooned it over the arches of the bridges, tucked it cunningly away in the bell towers of the churches. They mounted to the tops of the tallest buildings, laying delicate ridges at the window ledges; stooped to the dingiest basement doorways, carpeting them with white. Constantly the mantle was displaced, shovelled aside, melted away; and the city, despite her glitter of lights, was revealed. About every chimney-pot appeared a circle of dampness, along every roof edge hung a row of tears; from end to end of the city was the sound of dull dripping. Manhattan, like a woman of pleasure, wept her sins, and the angels, the angels tried in vain to render her seemly in the eyes of the good God.

The clock on the Grand Central tower was hard on five when the train bearing Simon Hart and his bride drew in at the station. They were returning from their prolonged wedding journey. Rachel adjusted her veil. Though her lips were steady, her eyes were full of tears. Within the hour they had whirled past the

cemetery where her grandfather was buried.

Simon assisted her from the train; then, with his heavy and dignified gait, he led the way through the waiting-room.

"I wired my man to meet us. Ah, there he is!" he exclaimed, as they reached the drifted pavement, and he expanded his chest with complacency.

Peter with difficulty brought the horses to the curb and Simon, after Rachel had taken her place in the carriage, climbed in himself. Then he thrust his head through the door and ordered the man to drive home, but Rachel plucked his sleeve.

"No, no," she coaxed, "tell him to drive to the shop first."

Simon, though he altered the direction, when he settled himself at her side, looked at her with a slightly mocking expression.

"I want to get that fiddle from Mr. Mudge,"

she explained. "In his last letter he said he'd found one and I want Nora to take it to André when she goes. She's starting for Old Harbour at once and will call for the fiddle as soon as I let her know we're here. Then, too," with a side glance, "I'm anxious, if you must know, to learn from Mr. Mudge how that heat-measurer turned out."

"That is, you wish to learn whether he has heard anything from your enterprising inventor?"

"Well yes," she admitted; and they both laughed.

A few days before their marriage, Simon had chanced to remark that an instrument for measuring heat in the furnace in which metals were melted would be an important acquisition to the manufacturing jeweller. Thereupon Rachel had begged him to submit the problem to Emil St. Ives. To please her he had carried out her wish. Bearing a note from her to the inventor (a note in which she incidentally announced her matrimonial

plans) Simon had sought out Emil whom he located readily through the lithographing firm of Just and Lawless. Emil without hesitation had promised the instrument within a week. Now three months had elapsed without a word from him and at any mention of the subject, Simon was wont to adopt a tone of raillery.

"Better give up your expectations along that line, my dear," he advised now; "that instrument will never materialize; St. Ives, judging by his look, is no more to be depended upon than the wild man from Borneo. Besides, if we stop at the shop, we'll miss the overture of the opera, and in Faust the overture is a consideration. Can't you restrain your eagerness until morning?"

But Rachel was not to be swayed: "Tell the man to drive faster."

Since her marriage her restlessness had disappeared; she was calmer, happier, and whenever she looked at her husband, whenever she surprised in his eyes an

expression of doubt and longing, affection rose in her heart. The fact that he did not seek to interfere with her strange friendships filled her with gratitude.

The carriage stopped before the jewellery establishment and the door was opened to them by a boy in uniform. In the shop the electric bulbs were shedding a soft radiance on the glass cases filled with gems. Rachel had been there several times, but this was her first visit since her marriage. Now she experienced a thrill of pleasure as she gazed about her with the curiosity that animates a woman in such a place. The quiet and subdued elegance of the accessories charmed her, and she cast a glance at her husband. The star sapphires, the black opals, the diamonds, arranged on squares of black velvet, lent him something of their own lustre.

A clerk took the news of their arrival to Victor Mudge and a moment later they were ushered into the workshop in the rear of the elaborate showrooms. Here were machines for drilling holes through pearls, a sink for

washing the finished jewellery, a little forge where gold was melted in crucibles. All the workmen had gone home except Victor who often remained until late. Now he hobbled forward with a string of seed pearls and a needle in his hands.

One of Victor's legs was shorter than the other by reason of a fall, and as he walked he swayed like a little dry tree creaking in a breeze; one felt he had no leaves. He was secretly well-pleased by his employer's marriage, but it was a peculiarity of his seldom to address him and to observe toward him a critical manner. Now, after greeting the couple, he looked at Rachel exclusively.

The old goldsmith, besides being something of a musician was an excellent judge of a violin, and at Simon's request he had obtained for Rachel the instrument she wished to give André.

"It's not just what I wanted," he explained, "but neither is it bad." And thereupon he drew the bow across the violin.

"Oh, how well you play!" she murmured, and then fell silent. She regretted that she had withheld from André news of her marriage; she should have told him at once. Now she planned to send him the violin as a sign of her unalterable affection. When Victor handed the instrument to Simon she aroused herself.

"And how is the *pyrometer* coming on, Mr. Mudge?" she demanded with animation. "Have you heard anything yet from Mr. St. Ives?"

Victor shrugging his shoulders, once more took into his fingers the string of seed pearls and the needle. "He was in here about a week ago and left a drawing; and yesterday I received a letter from him saying he'd be in this evening to test something at the furnace. I'm waiting his pleasure now."

Rachel suddenly laughed.

When she and Simon left the shop, when they were once more in the carriage, she leaned to him impulsively and pressed her

lips to his cheek.

That evening she heard her first opera. In order to justify Simon's pride in her and also to gratify her own innate sense of coquetry, she had arrayed herself to great advantage. Whence came this knowledge of the requirements of her new position, whence the pretty dignity of her bearing? Perhaps from her Canadian great-grandfather and his English wife; or this manner of hers may have been a free gift of the gods.

Excited by the strains of music that ascended from the orchestra, she deepened and increased in beauty and in the immediate neighbourhood of her husband's box became the centre of attention. But of this she was only imperfectly aware. If, by chance, she did intercept an admiring glance, she took it as a tribute to her dress of white satin, cunningly embroidered in a design of gold flowers, to her coiffure, her fan, her bouquet, to everything and anything but her own youthful countenance to which the force of her emotions was adding an indefinable

attraction. She made a charming picture; her eyes half hidden by their lashes; her face, her shoulders, even her round arms and her hands radiant with a childlike happiness like sunshine.

Julia Burgdorf, who sat beside her, turning her head, looked at the girl with a half-curious, half-wistful smile in her magnificent eyes; while a man who was leaning on the back of her chair, an architect with a pointed beard and ridiculously small hands and feet, watched Rachel far more than he watched the stage. Simon Hart alone of those near her, seemed unaware of her triumph. Holding his opera glass in his gloved hands, he stared straight ahead of him with his weary, unreadable gaze; and whenever his young wife addressed a word to him, he leaned toward her sidewise without turning his head.

On the stage Farrar, as Marguerite, had just appeared at the window of her cottage after her farewell to Faust. Then as the light faded rapidly over the canvas trees, the spinning-wheel, the garden seat,—Faust in doublet and

cloak, with a long feather in his cap, approached the casement, and there followed the poetic and sensuous fever of the inimitable duet, in which two voices, a man's and a woman's, sigh together those phrases of adoration, rapture supplication, of surprise, terror, yielding. When finally Marguerite's blond head sank on Faust's shoulder, the breath of their kiss seemed to pass over the entire house.

Rachel's hand, incased in its long glove, closed nervously on the edge of the box. She wore a look of troubled amazement; presently she began plucking at the flowers of her bouquet. After the "garden" scene, however, ashamed of her emotion and desiring to escape it, she ceased following closely what went on upon the stage and gave herself up to inspecting the audience.

The sight of the jewels on the heads and breasts of some ladies near her, chained her shy glances. She remembered Victor Mudge and the scene before the glowing forge. It was his cunning workmanship and the

workmanship of others like him that made such marvels possible. And she rejoiced in the thought that her husband had an intimate knowledge of such treasures and had even written a book about them.

A sense of that which is artificial in life was diffused everywhere, and by and by, in that atmosphere of unreality she grew calmer. But when at the conclusion of the performance, she found herself emerging from the crowded auditorium, a part of a variegated stream of jewelled heads, bare shoulders and black coats, she was conscious once more that the irresistible mystery of the music had kindled in her nerves a poetic fever. Suddenly she experienced a fresh impulse of affection for Simon. "I owe all this to him," she thought; and from under the hood of her opera cloak she glanced at his pale profile as he guided her through the richly-dressed crowd.

In the foyer she discovered that she had dropped a little gold pin from her hair and Simon retraced his steps to search for it. They had parted some moments before from Julia

Burgdorf and her companion. Now Rachel strove to remain where Simon had left her inside the great doors, but the surge of the crowd rendered this impossible. Jostled and carried forward by the moving throng, she presently found herself outside where the confusion was even greater.

From the sky the snow still drifted imperturbably. It glistened on the shining backs of the horses, on the black tops of the carriages, on the oilskin coats of the drivers, as, with a flourish of whips, they brought their carriages opposite the brilliantly-lighted entrance and received their precious loads.

Constantly the mellow stillness of the snowy night was disturbed by the ringing voices of the porters as they cried out the numbers of the carriages: "Two hundred and thirty-three!" "Three hundred and forty-eight!" (The voices were urgent, brutal, quarrelsome.) "Four hundred and forty-five!" All at once Rachel was startled by the call: "Mr. Hart's carriage!" And simultaneously a tall figure approached her. Lifting a cap from

his rough locks the man looked closely into her face.

There was snow in his beard, on his hair, on his shoulders. He was smiling in a questioning fashion, and in his eyes, beneath their overhanging brows, was an inconceivable life and vitality.

A look of joy flashed into Rachel's face and she extended a hand which he took in both his. For a space, overwhelmed as two children, they could do nothing but look each at the other.

Then the harsh cry of a porter broke the spell. "Here, drive on, you," he cried angrily to the Harts' coachman.

But Emil St. Ives raised his voice. "Wait a moment!" he called out; then to Rachel,—"I'll keep a lookout for Mr. Hart;" and offering her his arm he conducted her to the carriage.

When she had taken her place in it, the coachman left the line of waiting vehicles and

drove a few paces down the street. Emil followed. As he approached, Rachel succeeded in letting down the glass of the carriage door. She leaned with both arms on the ledge. Her cheeks showed a heightened colour, and her lips, parting in smiles, displayed her little teeth.

"I never expected—" she began unsteadily, "I didn't know that you cared for the opera."

Emil looked at her boldly and joyously, though at the same time with a hint of submission in his eyes. He had waited for her to speak, and at her words he drew a deep breath.

"The opera?" he repeated a little hoarsely. Then he shrugged his shoulders. "That old fellow in your—your husband's establishment, Mr. Mudge, told me that you were to be here to-night, and when I found after testing the heat-measuring device that it worked all right, I thought I'd just stroll round here."

"Then you have been successful?"

He smiled with a touch of the egotism she remembered. "You must see it to judge. You *will* come and see it?" he demanded quickly.

She looked at him for some time without replying; she could not keep the delight out of her eyes. Suddenly she plucked her gaze away. "There's my husband; he doesn't see us. Signal to him, please," she cried.

When Simon Hart saw Emil St. Ives standing in the snow beside his wife's carriage, he approached, looking straight at Rachel. At Emil he scarcely glanced, though when the inventor opened the carriage door for him, he thanked him with a slight inclination of the head. When he was seated, Rachel put a hand on his arm.

"Simon, you know Mr. St. Ives, I believe?" she said. Her voice was unusually soft and she had gone a little pale. "He has come to tell us that the heat-measurer—the *pyrometer*, I should say," she corrected herself, "works

perfectly."

"Ah it works, does it?" Simon repeated, and he looked coldly at Emil St. Ives. "I'm delighted to hear it," he added after a moment. "But I'll see you to-morrow at the factory and will talk over the matter then."

Rachel leaned in front of her husband impulsively. "I'll come too," she said, "for I'm going to claim half the credit of the invention. And then," she went on, "I want to hear all about your other work—everything. You know I met your wife one day. Please remember me to her," she called as the horses started.

"Well I found your pin," Simon said to her, and he handed her the tiny jewelled ornament.

"I'm glad of that;" then, while she replaced it in her hair, "why didn't you show more interest in that heat-measuring instrument?" she asked, looking at him from under her raised arms.

"Why his coming to notify us of the fact that he has succeeded with the device—if you'll excuse my saying so," with an ironical smile, "struck me as lacking in dignity, as a childish action, in fact."

"Of course it was childish," she cried, "but he's an inventor. And just think how hard he's worked to please you," she continued. "He's been weeks and weeks and rejected ever so many attempts; and when he told you—you were so lukewarm. 'I'll see you at the factory to-morrow'—that's what you said to him, just as if he were a little boy to be pushed aside. It wasn't kind of you," she finished.

A shadow passed over Simon Hart's face. "I think you exaggerate," he began, speaking in the slow distinct manner that was habitual with him. "However," he continued, "I'll endeavour to make up for my *lukewarmness* to-morrow." He tried to pronounce the word in a jesting tone, but his whole aspect was serious. In a moment he leaned forward and taking one of her reluctant hands, breathing heavily, he held it against his lips.

The principal gift which he had intended for Rachel, he had ordered from Geneva, and it had arrived during their absence on the wedding journey. Now immediately on reaching the house, without giving her time to lay aside her wraps and stopping only to remove his own fur coat, he conducted her through the sombre hallway to the more lugubrious drawing-room.

"There, my dear," he said, pointing to a small object on the table, "that is for you." For he was anxious to bestow the gift as a peace-offering.

Rachel approached the table, which was constructed of solid mahogany in a heavy ugly pattern, and took the leather case in her hands.

"Open it, my love," he urged.

She sank down in a chair and opened the case.

It contained a Swiss watch set in the front

of a small onyx box ornamented with garlands of wrought gold. Anything frailer, daintier, more coquettish than this little time-piece, fit property for a princess it would be difficult to imagine. It was a triumph of frivolity, a little bit of elegance in inlaid work and jewels. For wind the charming plaything and immediately, from beneath a gold shell on the cover, up sprang a tiny, buoyant bird, with ruby eyes and mother-of-pearl bill. Turning this way and that with flutterings of its variegated plumage, it trilled forth a song, —silver, clear, crystalline.

Grasping Simon's hand, Rachel dropped her head on his arm. And for some reason she clung to him vehemently and he felt that her whole body was trembling.

Congratulating himself that their reconciliation was complete, he caressed her hair. "It's a Swiss novelty," he explained when she looked up.

He had been leaning over the back of her chair, now he straightened his shoulders and

took the morocco case in his hands.

"I used to know this Gellaine of Geneva," he marked. "He is one of the cleverest watchmakers in the world. And now, my dear," he added, "if you'll excuse me, I'll go and prepare myself a toddy; those boxes are such draughty places."

As he moved to the door Rachel followed him with a glance which seemed to beseech him not to leave her. Then, when the door had closed on him, as if she would rid herself of some importunate thought, she examined the little timepiece. The bird had disappeared from view beneath the golden shell. Turning the key twice she replaced the box on the table, and leaning on her elbows, stared at it. But her sight was turned inward.

The unexpected meeting with Emil had plunged her once more into chaos. One glance of his eyes and the curtains of her mind rolled upward. One intense, burning pressure of his hand laid to hers, and she knew life again in its fulness.

Like a lost thing, from out a prison-house, her soul reviewed its past. Across the deep, tragic abyss that yawned between Then and Now, she saw Emil as in the old blissful time at Pemoquod Point. In the effulgence of his courage, his ardour, his genius, he had been the sun and the light of her world. Her heart had called him "Master." And she had matched him for bravery as steel matches steel that has been tempered by the same heat in the forming.

"Together!" her heart had sung, pointing its flight to the farthest star of bliss.

And now.

She leaned forward, her head sunk between her outspread fingers, her gaze riveted on Simon's gift. Intently she watched the wee songster and listened to its tinkling song.

"The—bird—in—the—box!" She said the words slowly. Then repeated them; "*The bird in the box*!"

She lifted clenched hands to her throat.

Suddenly, as if crushed by something she had tried to evade, she put her head down on her arms.

Outside the snow continued to fall. It fell steadily, monotonously, as if seeking to cover with a white mantle something it were better to hide.

BOOK III

CHAPTER I
THE HOUSE IN WASHINGTON SQUARE

A rainy night was followed by a rainy morning. Between the looped curtains of the alcove window the ground of the square could be seen soggy and wet. The marble of Washington Arch showed dark streaks of moisture. Rachel leaned an arm on the dining room mantel. The housekeeper had been complaining of a litter of kittens in the basement which she could get no one to destroy.

"Bring them in here, Theresa," Rachel ordered peremptorily; then with a sigh she cast herself in a chair.

The woman disappeared but presently returned bearing in her hands a basket containing three white and grey kittens. The mother cat, a handsome sleek animal with a plume-like tail and round golden eyes, followed at her heels, alternately mewing anxiously and purring contentedly.

"I didn't know that you were fond of cats, ma'am," murmured the housekeeper in an ingratiating tone. "I suppose they are all well enough for those who likes 'em."

Before proceeding to study the kittens, Rachel drew a small flask from the pocket of her morning-gown. "If there isn't any more whiskey in the house, Theresa, send out before breakfast and get some at the nearest drugstore. Then refill this and take it up to Mr. Hart," she added without looking at the other.

The housekeeper, a tall angular woman—whose flat bust and prominent shoulder-blades suggested the awful idea that her head was put on the wrong way—paused on the

threshold. The bosom of her gown bristled with needles and bits of embroidery cotton clung to her black silk apron. In spite of her unattractive person there was something smart and pretentious about Theresa. She carried her head, covered with its glossy hair, as if it were decorated with an aigrette.

"Shall I take up his breakfast at the same time?" she asked, and lifted eyes of innocence.

"Mr. Hart will come downstairs for breakfast," Rachel answered shortly; then, sinking on the rug, she began fondling the kittens.

She lifted them out of the basket one at a time, and holding them at a distance, looked at their faces, which, three-cornered and mottled light and dark, suggested pansies; at their paws, soft as velvet and harmless as yet; at their short frisky tails and little red mouths which they opened wide as they mewed straight at her. During this pretty play the mother cat sat by the fender and washed her

face. But presently, at an especially distressed mew, she crossed the room and laid a remonstrative paw on Rachel's arm. But the girl held the kitten still higher so that the cat was obliged to rear herself on her hind feet in order to reach it. At that instant Simon Hart entered the room.

"Isn't that rather cruel of you?" he asked, stooping to pat the cat that arched its back under his hand.

"Let her reach it then," Rachel answered.

After several trials, the mother cat succeeded in taking the kitten by the nape of its limp neck, and then hopped nimbly with it into the basket. Rachel looked at her gravely as she began rather roughly to lick the kittens with her little scarlet tongue, covered with tiny cones.

Simon extended his hand, but Rachel made no move to rise. Instead, turning her head which she rested on her palm, she looked at him and across her face flitted a variety of

emotions. He would have assisted her to her feet, but she would have none of him. Then another glance and her mood changed completely. Self-contained and enigmatic as he was on ordinary occasions, he showed now an embarrassment that struck to her heart. She put up her hands, and with a sudden violence of emotion, he lifted her in his arms.

A moment later, she had forced him to release her, and, pale and thoughtful, she left the room.

"We'll have breakfast in a moment," she said, reappearing. "I gave Theresa your flask; she is sending out," she added in a lower voice.

Already Simon had assumed his usual equivocal and aloof manner. At these words, he lowered his eyes.

"That was kind of you," he said, "I required merely a drop and I found what I needed. My cold," he continued, "is no worse; on the

contrary, I shall go to the shop to-day."

Since the night of the opera, three weeks before, Simon had been confined to the house by his dread enemy, the influenza. During this illness he had consumed a great quantity of liquor. If he went without it for any number of hours, he showed the effect. That morning Rachel had been moved by his pale and wretched look.

During the meal he read to her part of a paper he expected to deliver before the Jewellers' Association. But she crumbled her bread, her thoughts wandering. As he was preparing to leave the house, she lingered about in his vicinity.

"Do you know," she ventured, following him to the door, "I'm not half satisfied with what you did about Mr. St. Ives?" and she gave him a direct, almost accusing glance.

"But I sent him a check, certainly liberal in the circumstances, since he is free to go on and manufacture—" Simon began, and he

wrinkled his brow.

Rachel shrugged her shoulders in impatience. "You sent him a check; yes, you even advised him to go on and manufacture that instrument. But he isn't capable of making a practical move. Now if you'd shown any real interest—" She stayed her words, silenced by contrition.

After Simon had gone, she established herself with a bit of sewing in the dining room. It was the only room that did not weigh on her spirits. But she had discovered at once that this house, lonely, silent, forbidding, suited Simon as it was; therefore she had confined herself merely to refitting and converting into a sitting room an unused chamber on the second floor; and to making more comfortable the quarters of old Nicholas Hart. There her efforts had ended. An entire remodelling of the mansion would have been necessary to disperse the atmosphere of depression that, tangible as dampness, emanated from its walls.

It had sheltered in its time, apparently, a goodly number of soft-moving, mirthless people. Its inner doors of dark polished wood, never emitted a squeak; and the occasional sounds that penetrated the plaster of its ceilings, suggested a company of rats that went about their business in hushed, apologetic groups, instead of in scampering hordes. The house had never become reconciled to Simon's pianola, and when he seated himself before the instrument, as he did with conscientious regularity every day after dinner, Rachel often fancied that the house lifted shoulders of aversion.

And the legitimate inmates, she decided, were in keeping with the house. Simon and his housekeeper, Theresa Walker, could have desired nothing different in the way of a dwelling. As for old Nicholas and herself, not to mention the various maids who succeeded one another rapidly (for Theresa was difficult to suit in the matter of assistants) they were merely interlopers.

The housekeeper inspired Rachel with a

kind of horror. She had somehow gleaned the knowledge that this woman, with her crafty smile but undeniable capacity for work, when well launched in middle life, had seized upon the idea of marrying her cousin, a certain Jeremiah Foggs, when the cousin's wife, a forlorn, feckless, half-witted creature, should die. As the wife was little more than a troublesome charge on Jeremiah's hands and he feared leaving her to herself in their village home, he always brought her with him on the occasions of his visits to Theresa. During the premature courting of the hard-grained pair, the poor daft thing sat by the cheek of the chimney with frightened eyes and a shaking chin. Rachel had a theory that with kind treatment, her wits might have returned. But no kindness was ever shown her; on the contrary, Jeremiah and Theresa waited impatiently for the creeping disease to make way with her. Meanwhile Theresa employed the time of waiting to good advantage.

Packed away in a chest in her room was a great quantity of hemstitched linen, doilies,

spreads, embroidered curtains and what not. Indeed, it was a question whether Theresa's means of attraction did not repose solely in her needle; for these products of her skill, which she displayed on every visit of Jeremiah, certainly had a killing effect upon the fellow, with his bullet head. And Theresa, destitute of every feminine grace, gave herself airs on her handiwork as if it had been beauty of person and feature. They were a right curious pair; each with the same air of eager avidity, as if tormented by a keen desire to gain something, each with the same oily and ingratiating manner. Rachel detested Theresa even more than she had detested Nora Gage, and only consented to retain her because Simon seemed to desire it. In truth, Theresa worked in this house as smoothly and briskly as a shuttle in a well-oiled machine.

For a time Rachel pursued her work, but presently her interest flagged and she dressed herself for the street. She was of two minds. Instead of going out immediately she ascended to the top story to take a peep at

Nicholas. At her suggestion the old man's workroom was now on the third floor and it was no longer necessary for him to descend a flight of steps to his chamber. Also, his meals were all served to him in his workroom. Without comprehending the cause of his greater comfort, the old fellow cherished a whimsical and flighty affection for Rachel; while Simon was humbly grateful to her for this interest in his erratic parent. Now the only time Nicholas was obliged to attempt the stairs was when he went for an airing. On certain days of the week, if the weather were fine, a man nurse appeared and conveyed him to the street and remained with him in the Square. From these excursions Nicholas never returned without some token for Rachel. Now it was a cornucopia of popcorn which he had bought from a vender; later, as the spring advanced and grass began to show along the paths, it was a cluster of leaves and buds; not infrequently it happened that he treasured up and presented to her particularly handsome specimens of insects mounted on pins.

If truth were told, little and lithe and still spry, this old reprobate, with his eagerness regarding the habits of the house-fly, his raptures and his rages, came nearer than any other person in the house to being keyed to the same pitch as Rachel herself. If rumour could be trusted, a number of discreditable experiences had made up Nicholas's life. He had gamed and drunk, driven fast horses, followed fast women. He had conducted one thriving business after another, and among them, the car shops that had employed old David. He had made fortunes with ease and lost them with equal facility. Now, in his last years, he was penniless and Simon was engaged in patiently paying the debts Nicholas had contracted; but for this, be it understood, he received scorn rather than gratitude.

As a result of his evil ways Nicholas, in the early years of his marriage, had broken his wife's heart. Her patience had annoyed him, and, had she shown more spirit, her fate might have been a happier one. As it was, she had slipped out of life, mown down with grief

as grass is mown with the scythe. And Nicholas had made scant pretence of regretting her, just as he made scant pretence of approving his son. Simon had early betrayed a lack of zest for life—a trait his father could ill tolerate. Therefore, with taunts and gibes, he had made Simon's life miserable through boyhood and early manhood. At first, it may be, he thought by this method to kindle some spirit in the lad, but failing to strike a spark—for Simon remained through all pale and silent, a human riddle to the father,—Nicholas had continued his jeers for sheer malicious joy in the practice. Even now his wit kindled at the thought of Simon, and sure of an appreciative listener, he would make clever satirical remarks about him to his niece, Julia Burgdorf, whenever she put in an appearance. And Julia would match these sallies. To this joking Rachel, in a storm of anger, had endeavoured to put a stop. Now when the pair exchanged their witticisms, it was out of her hearing.

Though this old man bore not the slightest

resemblance to old David, his age and animation endeared him to Rachel. Then he had once helped her grandfather, a thing she never forgot.

Now his voice, which leaped constantly to a childish treble, reached her before she gained the stair's head. A stuttering of the words of his ditty, decided her to postpone her call. Owing to his excitable heart and his years, liquor was forbidden the old man. Resolving to take the housemaid sharply to task for giving Nicholas whiskey, Rachel descended the stairs. Through delicacy she never spoke to Simon of his own or his father's failing. When moved to disapproval of her husband, as she had been that morning, her only reproach was a look. A childhood passed among fishermen had taught her tolerance for this particular weakness.

When Simon returned at lunch time, she was nowhere about and he was forced to sit down to the table without her. But she entered before he had finished the first course, and taking her place opposite him,

began slowly unfastening her jacket. Wishing to please her, he launched into a description of St. Ives's *pyrometer*.

"We melt up different alloys to get the different colour effects," he concluded, "and the colour and intensity of the light bear certain definite relations—"

Rachel opened her eyes: "Then it's a success, is it?"

Simon avoided her gaze. "Why yes, certainly. In fact," he added, "it's a very ingenious device. A trifling thing, you understand; but it is an instrument for which there is a definite need, and for that reason I should judge he might possibly be able to do something with it."

Rachel nodded. "I see. Now Simon, I'll tell you what I've done; I've just been out and sent notes by messenger to Mr. St. Ives and his wife, and to Emily Short, asking them to come this afternoon and stay to dinner. Tell me, did I do right?"

Without visible effect Simon had tried to shape her to more conventional standards. Rachel exhibited as much independence as before their marriage. Now he replied a little wearily:

"Why of course, though I should have considered that the case scarcely required anything as complimentary, in a social sense, as an invitation to dinner."

"And why not?" she flashed back hotly. "Though when it comes to that, I don't wish to compliment Emil St. Ives; I wish to *help* him. Heaven knows, he's egotistic enough. But you don't realize," she pursued in a softer tone, "how helpless he is. He needs someone to advise him, or he'll spend himself in a thousand useless ways; someone to take an intelligent interest in him."

"He has a wife, hasn't he?"

"I said *intelligent* interest."

"But I assure you, my love," he began, "that

I'm by no means the proper person—"

However, before he left the house he had promised to return earlier than was his custom in order to further his wife's plan.

In the course of the afternoon Rachel received a note from Emily Short explaining that she could not be present at the dinner. The note concluded: "You may remember Betty Holden. I think you were with me one evening when she came in. Poor child! Fortunately her baby never drew breath. She's to be taken this afternoon to Bellevue and I've promised to go with her. I shan't get away early for she's in a great taking and no wonder. The landlady at the place where she boarded threatened to put her into the street. Poor soft defenceless things, besieged both from within and without, there's small chance for the Betty Holdens." This news at any other time would have stirred Rachel, but now she had no time for reflection.

Emil and his wife arrived promptly at five o'clock. Enlivened by hope, Annie was

looking especially pretty. She had arrayed herself in a gown she had so far held in reserve, and had donned her rings which glistened like dew on her thin fingers. But Rachel gave small heed to Annie. She had counted on turning her over to Emily, telling herself that the toy-maker's companionship would benefit the lackadaisical girl. But now this plan was frustrated. Conducting her guests into the chamber which she had converted into a sitting room, Rachel established Annie in a corner and furnished her with several books of engraving. And thereafter, with undisguised eagerness, she gave her own attention to Emil.

She had weathered a tempest.

In youth the blood flows warm, and the unexpected meeting with her former friend when she was off guard, when she was excited by her first opera, had produced a storm. But the storm had passed, the last gleam of lightning and rumble of thunder had ceased and the air was clearer than before. So she was convinced. She denounced herself as

an inflammable creature, and turned with renewed allegiance to her husband, dwelling desperately on her gratitude and esteem. Finally, sure of herself and luxuriating in a sense of renewed activity, she fancied she could serve Emil as simply as she would serve another friend. Nor did she see in the attempt Love in one of its multitudinous disguises.

The room, which was long and shadowy, overlooked the Square. She led the way to a divan under a window and motioned Emil to a place at her side.

"Now," she said, "I want to know just where you stand with your work? Tell me what you have done—what you intend doing—all," with an expansive gesture.

He followed it closely; then glued his eyes to her fingers. For some reason he was displeased at this abrupt buckling to a subject that ordinarily would have received his ready endorsement.

"But are there not other things to talk about —first?" he suggested.

"Not of so much importance."

"No?"

"No."

The gentle rebuke only incited his dominating nature: "But I should like to ask — For one thing, you know you treated me shamefully, Rachel, when I left Pemoquod." He dropped his head to a level with hers. Into his voice had crept the old dangerous and caressing tone.

Amazed at the double temerity of the use of her name and the allusion to the Past, she returned his look, flushing uncontrollably.

"Why did you do that?" he pursued, enjoying her embarrassment.

"I—I do not recall it," she said and flamed yet more to the lie. "And hereafter, please remember I am Mrs. Hart."

She had a grip on the reins and he must heed the sharp tug, though he still chafed under the restraint like a restive horse. "And now we'll speak of another matter—your work;" she continued.

"It's two years since we've seen each other," he remonstrated sulkily.

"It's nearer three," she might have answered, but checked the words. Instead, severely: "You ought to have something to show for that length of time."

"I have something."

"So I supposed. Now tell me."

And gradually with those arts known to woman, she subdued the quondam lover and roused the genius. Yielding to the flattery of her attitude, which was one of keen interest in his work, he was soon discoursing enthusiastically on the subject she had prescribed. A fish in the water or a bird in the air could not have been more at home than

was he in her presence.

Thus they talked till twilight fell and the maid came in to light the gas: and they were still deeply absorbed when Simon appeared.

He stood for a space, his face a blur of white in the doorway; then he came forward into the circle of light.

Instantly three heads were raised, Rachel's and Emil's abstractedly, Annie's with a distinct expression of relief. She had soon wearied of the books of engravings with which Rachel had thoughtfully supplied her, and the volumes were piled on the floor beside her chair; all save one, which she still held listlessly in her lap. She was pleased at the interest Mrs. Hart exhibited in her husband's work, for a word which she caught now and then, had convinced her of the topic of their conversation, and her jealousy had not been aroused. But she was weary and she now stood up with a pretty air of welcome for Simon.

He shook hands with her cordially. Then crossing the room, he shook hands with the inventor.

But Emil scarcely waited to answer his few studied words of greeting; instead, he settled himself immediately at Rachel's side, and rumpling his heavy mane with his fingers, he stared dreamily. "The next thing I completed was the *electrometer*," he said, and Simon noticed that Rachel wrote the word "electrometer" on a tablet she held on her knees.

He returned to Annie and until dinner was announced, he talked to her in his low even tones.

Dinner brought the party into no closer harmony. Rachel, with a carnation blazing in her hair and her dark intelligent eyes speaking more swiftly than her lips, still talked to Emil; and Simon, concealing every trace of annoyance if he felt any, devoted himself to Annie. After the meal, he even proposed playing to her on the pianola, and

Rachel, knowing that he was very fond of performing on the instrument, allowed him to go through two pieces in his usual faithful uninspired manner. Then she approached him.

"Come Simon," she said, laying hold of his hands. "You know why I asked them here," she added in an urgent whisper as he made no move to rise. "He is the inventor of all these instruments," and she displayed a list. "But he hasn't the remotest idea what steps to take in order to get the right people interested. Now can't you give him letters to different men, Simon? Come—you can think up some plan if you try!"

Simon Hart had not the slightest interest in Alexander Emil St. Ives; moreover, in general, he was ignorant of the matters upon which the other required advice. However, he yielded; subsequently he was influenced to the point of going several times to visit the inventor; later, he organized The St. Ives and Hart Company of which he himself was the president. All this he did because of the

imperious, and at the same time, pleading look in a pair of dark clear eyes.

By the end of the year the house in Washington Square had undergone a change. This change had nothing to do with the renewing of bricks or mortar, or the altering of any outward feature; materially the residence remained the same. Never the less, it was now connected with a certain loft in John Street by a subtle, tenuous web. In this web, love,—unacknowledged, innocent, strong as death, thrown out from a woman's heart and returning ever to it,—was the solitary thread.

CHAPTER II
CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF A GENIUS

As might have been foreseen, even after the

formation of The St. Ives and Hart Company, the world continued in ignorance of Emil St. Ives. A few devices composed of shining brass, crystal, and wood occupied a modest amount of space in one of Simon Hart's shop windows, and occasionally men of science, attracted by their ingenuity, made inquiries about them; oftener than not, they returned to watch them in operation, again and yet again. But the great public took no interest and never made inquiries; the great public was interested in improved stove-handles and door-locks and the rescue of discarded tin cans, and gave not a thought to Emil St. Ives's little instruments.

But in heaven, or more properly speaking, the world of complete objectivity which lies close about this and which only gifted minds prematurely penetrate, there was excitement after excitement, all produced by the childlike monster, Emil St. Ives. He had to his credit an instrument for recording colours in the atmosphere, another little instrument for recording the vibrations of the air occasioned by sound, and numerous temporarily useless

devices which were calculated to delight those who came after him, but which were entirely unappreciated and unapprehended by the age in which he lived. None the less, his happiness was extreme.

The John Street loft, to which he and Annie had removed on the first hint of improvement in his fortunes, was spacious; and here, under a sky-light which glistened beneath the sun in pleasant weather and was befogged by rain and snow when the weather was inclement, he lived and worked. He ate irregularly and slept little. When he slept, in order not to waste time he was in the habit of entrusting the problem upon which he was engaged to his subconscious mind. Then after a sleep of a few hours' duration, he would wake, and on first opening his large, speculative eyes, would oftener than not see in mid-air the completed instrument working perfectly.

The loft, which chanced to be singularly habitable, was divided by partitions into four rooms. In order to be removed as far as possible from the sound of the pounding and

drilling, Annie had taken up her abode in the rear room, which, besides the bay in the ceiling, had a large window looking upon a court. Below, in that scrap of earth, a maple tree had taken root and flourished to such a degree that its topmost branches came opposite the window. In the branches of the tree, a robin had built its nest. But Annie paid little attention to the tree or the robin. Though she wept less than in the past, she complained more; her lips drooped and her tongue had acquired sharpness. When with her hands resting on her slight hips, she remonstrated with Emil, her scolding sounded exactly like the chatter of an enraged bird; indeed, she looked more than ever like a bird. Though she occasionally might have managed to buy herself something new, Annie no longer troubled herself about her clothes. What was the use, she argued, since Alexander persisted in living in an attic; and in any case, was it not wiser to save every penny toward the rent, since he was so erratic in his methods of work, and insisted on making impractical things for which he used up all his salary? So Annie, a greater part of the time, lay on a sofa

and sulked. In her inactivity, she was a contrast to Emil.

The corner of the loft in which the inventor spent most of his time was furnished, in addition to a workbench, with a cot upon which he slept, a disreputable-looking chair in which he rested when he was not pacing the floor, second-hand bookcases in which he kept his inventions and his library, a basket for the monkey, and a three-legged stool upon which Ding Dong could perch himself when so minded.

But Ding Dong, day or night, seldom had time to rest; and where he slept was a question; sometimes, without doubt, on a square of carpet outside his master's door. Willing, devoted, pathetic in his resemblance to a dumb brute, Ding Dong was an extra pair of hands and feet for Emil. He could scrub and sweep and make coffee, he could lift heavy machines in his sinewy arms, he could pack boxes and run errands; but he could not drill or hammer or saw with any accuracy. Though the field of his usefulness was

limited, he was invaluable to the inventor.

The atmosphere of unparalleled devotion which this humble creature threw around him was agreeable to Emil; and the same could be said of Annie's love. Whenever he observed it, his wife's faithful affection, contributing to his egotism, helped him to work the harder. And so again with Rachel Hart's intelligent and unwavering interest in his progress; her interest so stirred in him the creative impulse that he sped ahead like a fiery steed under the plaudits of the arena. On the whole, Emil received much from the people surrounding him; and yet, in the last analysis, their devotion was not essential to the "un-named, seeing, acting, produced being" that constituted his genius.

When at work, in the depths of his eye lurked the consciousness of a world; but in his mouth and chin was something less perfect and more human; they looked as if they had been slighted by the sculptor who fashioned him. For the rest, an almost supernatural serenity marked his manner,

despite the often convulsive manifestations of his energy. It was as if a god drove the chariot of his forces. If allowed to emerge gently from this state, he was unfailingly good natured; but if broken in upon abruptly, "care, genius, and hell" distorted and illuminated his face. Pausing on the threshold of that narrow gateway between the world of thought and the world of materiality, Emil St. Ives was a demon. Annie, bent upon some trifling business of her own, had one day ventured so to interrupt him; the offence had never been repeated.

As has been hinted, conscience played no part in him. For Annie, for Ding Dong, even for his employers, when the mood for work was upon him, Emil showed not the slightest consideration. Nor was Rachel, in this respect, an exception. Whatever his attitude was toward her—and he bore himself in her presence at moments with a strange humility, at other times with an ill-concealed turbulent admiration that threatened to break all bounds—her influence at this period had well defined limits. His mother alone had

uninterrupted power over him. At a word from her, even though he were on the eve of inspiration, he would drop everything to fulfil her slightest whim.

Small wonder then that the mother adored him,—that she saw in him a gifted creature not to be approached by the common run of humanity. It had come to be Emil's custom to visit his mother at least once in a fortnight, and, from the moment that they met, those thin hands of hers had power in their caresses to transform him. Under their gentle touch, the fire of his mind dwindled, the warmth of his heart grew; the genius of a world was submerged in the son of a mother. And on Mrs. St. Ives their companionship had an opposite effect. Questioning him about his work, her brain in his presence acquiring something of the agility of youth, she lit herself at the flame that was in her son.

Naturally the neglected Annie was jealous of this love. She never missed an opportunity to pick a quarrel with her husband on the subject of his devotion to his mother, but it

was seldom she could provoke a retort. Emil bore her reproaches indifferently. One morning in May matters reached a decisive point.

At midnight Emil was off, bound for the village that drew him like a magnet, and some hours later Annie sat over breakfast. She sat in one of the interior rooms, which was fitted up with a gas-stove and a few household necessities. Being left by herself frightened Annie. The janitress of the building, a good motherly soul, had orders to look out for her in Emil's absence; but the woman had gone about her duties some time earlier. Now, except for Ding Dong and the little chattering monkey, Annie was alone. Ding Dong, who had taken upon himself the duties of cook in this establishment, tried to tempt her with choice bits of food and Lulu made constant timid advances toward her friendship; Annie would look at neither of them. She saw in them a summing-up of the unusual, wretched and ridiculous situation.

Now tears rolled down her face. Why had

she left home? Why had she married Alexander? This was the constant refrain that beat in her brain. All things considered, the imperturbable inventor could scarcely have chosen a more unlucky moment to appear. The door opened and there he stood.

Smiling, he entered the room, and at the account he gave of his movements, Annie's eyes gleamed with anger and the muscles of one cheek twitched.

"Well," he explained, tossing aside his hat, "Mother was all right. I saw her through the window, and then I managed to get the next train back. You see, it was raining when I got in this morning," he went on, "and had I let Mother know I was there, she'd have been out to meet me, if she got her death for it. So I took only a look at her. There she was with the tiresome brats tumbling all over her, enough to wear her out, but she looked as cheerful as could be. Only six o'clock, and the whole lot of them waiting for breakfast! By Jove, but Edgar's family get up betimes! it's part of his confounded thrift. Breakfast and

lunch at one sitting is more to my mind," and Emil approached the table to pour himself a cup of coffee.

But Annie was quicker. Seizing the coffee-pot, she held it behind her at imminent risk of spilling the contents.

"No, you shan't have it," she cried. "I'm sick of your performances, and I'll not put up with them. You say you went to your brother's? If you did, why didn't you go in openly? Edgar's not a wolf, I suppose. From all you tell me, he lives decently in a house, which is more than we do; and they have nice things. He's a wealthy man and your meeting might have led to something—instead of that, you take an expensive trip, just for the sake of peeping through a window at your mother, when you saw her only a few days ago. And then you come back here, thinking only of her, always of her—and you expect to go on eating and drinking—"

Emil viewed his wife in troubled astonishment:

"And why shouldn't I eat and drink?"

"At my expense;" she finished; "for you owe everything to me. If it hadn't been for me, you wouldn't have even what you've got. And now when I've nothing more to give—" Dashing the coffee-pot on the table and huddling her hands over her face, Annie escaped from the room.

For a few minutes Emil remained without stirring. The look of amazement in his peculiar eyes was succeeded by a slight darkening of his whole face. But he was never actually reached by Annie's flashes of anger. They seemed to him like little storms taking place at a great distance. Now with a shrug of the shoulders he began tranquilly to eat his breakfast.

He could not remain insensible to his brother's continued antipathy; therefore, that he might not be reminded of it, he never put himself in the way of seeing Edgar. What would have been the use? Between the now flourishing merchant and himself, there was

even less in common than formerly. They would not have found a word to say to each other. And his mother, who had at first sought feverishly to bring about a reconciliation between them, now did all she could to prevent their meeting. Had not Edgar told her that he would never receive him, Emil? Had he not warned her that if she tried to foist Emil's presence upon him, he would insult him to his face?

At times Emil was tempted to urge his mother to leave his brother's house and cast in her lot with his own, but remembering his uncomfortable quarters and the openly hostile Annie, he was driven to silence. The one thing that consoled him was the thought that at least his mother was comfortably housed where she was; at least she was happy in her grandchildren. So the pair, kept apart by poverty, continued to meet like lovers. Anything prettier than the eagerness with which the little old woman went to a rendezvous with her favourite son, it would be impossible to imagine. In vain, actuated by a wish to torment her, Edgar's wife and even

the children, put obstacles in the way of the meetings. Now it was a jacket to be mended which was brought to Mrs. St. Ives at the exact moment of her setting forth; it was a sheet to be hemmed, or a stocking to be darned. With every faculty alert, she always circumvented her annoyers, never failing to meet Emil at the appointed spot. This slyness, which is a part of love, brought back her youth.

Had the conditions of her own life been other than just what they were, Annie might have found in Mrs. St. Ives a staunch friend. Now she hated her mother-in-law.

For a time after her angry outburst, she lay face downward upon the bed. But presently, having wept herself into a repentant mood, she was all for running to Emil and putting up her tear-stained face for a kiss. In fancy she pictured him still sitting discomfited; and, trembling with a desire to make peace, she slipped into the passageway. But Emil had quitted the scene of the breakfast, and a glance at the table revealed the fact that he

had eaten his fill. Annie passed on to his workroom and, at what she saw through the door, rage, bitter and stifling, once more filled her breast.

Annie had never said a word to Rachel of Emil's constant shortcomings in relation to his company; "But I'll tell her now, I will tell her!" she whispered. She was convinced that Rachel's belief in Emil could not be shaken; therefore she would gratify her desire to expose his faults without further result than putting him to shame. So she argued. But as usual, where her husband was concerned, she reasoned wildly. As sensibly expect a bird of the air to drop its eyes in acknowledgement of a fault, as expect the inventor to show embarrassment for what he had done amiss or failed to do at all.

As it chanced Rachel put in an appearance that afternoon and Annie flew to her. She caught the other by the hand and drew her into her own room. Then she subsided on the sofa and burst into tears.

"What is it, Annie?" Rachel asked. She had never been greatly drawn to Annie, perhaps for some reason she would have died rather than admit.

Annie was nettled.

"Nothing's the matter. Did you bring any message from Mr. Hart?" she asked, drying her eyes with an assumption of dignity.

"Yes; the telephone at the shop is out of order, and I told him I'd come round and deliver this note. See here, Annie," Rachel interrupted herself, "tell me what's bothering you."

"Oh—it's just Alexander!" returned Annie, and without more persuasion unburdened herself. "You see what my life is here?" she wailed. "And we might live so differently if Alexander wished—if he cared—if he even did the things he ought to do in connection with the Company; if he wasn't a fool, in short. Now take that *radiometer*," she went on, "you know as well as I do that it's

considered wonderful. Well, only yesterday, your husband sent someone from Columbia University to inspect it; the college thought of getting one. Emil was out, so I showed the gentleman the old model, for the new one isn't done, and I was just thinking what we'd make on the sale, when in comes Alexander. 'Oh, that's trash!' he cries. 'That ought to go in the junk heap! Don't take that; I have something else on hand that will put that in the shade completely.' So," she finished in a tone between tragedy and disgust, "the sale was ruined. And if that kind of thing has happened once, it's happened dozens of times."

"But the college will get the instrument eventually?" Rachel asked; and, as she looked at Annie, in spite of her sympathy, she was conscious of an inclination to laugh.

"Possibly, but we'll likely as not be dead, for Alexander goes on perfecting a thing and perfecting it and the people can wait an eternity and he doesn't care. Sometimes," she concluded, "I'm tempted to give it all up."

As she reviewed the situation, Rachel also for the moment was forced into depression. Similar complaints reached her from every side. Scarcely a day passed when Simon was not moved to anger by some shortcoming on the part of the inventor. Now it was his failure to be on hand at a critical moment to sign necessary papers; again it was his mysterious disappearance from the city. In fact, his unbusiness-like methods placed the struggling company in many an embarrassing situation. More than once Simon had threatened to withdraw from the enterprise and it was only her own persuasions that restrained him. His faith in the inventor, never of the strongest, was clearly on the wane.

"And you mustn't think it's just one thing," resumed Annie, putting renewed pathos in her voice, "it's a whole succession of things. Take that Washington matter. You never heard the rights of that, I'll be bound. And I'm going to tell you. You remember, don't you, that time a month or two ago when the Government showed such interest in that

colour wave device, and the Company were so encouraged? Well, your husband thought it would be a good plan for them to send Alexander to Washington instead of anyone else because Alexander could explain the thing eloquently. And he did explain it—to the wrong official. He went there, as I found out afterward from a letter, and demonstrated it to the wrong man. Then he returned home, blandly satisfied with himself, and of course nothing came of the matter on which the Company had built such hopes. But I never said a word to explain it; I was so ashamed."

Looking at Annie's little woe-begone visage, Rachel burst out laughing.

The other, however, stared at her angrily.

"I don't see anything to laugh at. Alexander is enough to try the patience of a saint; and I guess if you were married to him, you'd know it."

Rachel's mirth vanished and the colour flew over her face.

After an uncomfortable pause, she took Annie's hand.

"You look too much on the dark side, try to be patient awhile longer. Things may straighten themselves." She pressed Annie's fingers. "Now tell me, shall I slip this note under his door, or shall I hand it to him. It's important."

"Oh, you needn't slip it under the door, you can just go right in and put it where he'll see it; the door will be open fast enough. A lot of good that special lock does," Annie finished in a burst of scorn. "Mr. Mudge thought we'd better have it put on to protect Alexander from dishonest people who come in and get him talking and then steal his ideas. But do you suppose he leaves the door closed? Not a bit of it. Why only yesterday he had the lock tied back with a string while he poured all he knew into the ear of a man from that screw company across the street. A word of flattery and he forgets everything."

"Don't—don't tell me any more, please;"

and as Rachel turned away smiles rippled over her face. Why could not Annie, Simon, Victor Mudge, everyone, see that the inventor lived in another world and hence was not amenable to the laws of this. Nodding to Annie, who refused to be won from her dejected mood, Rachel traversed the passageway, and paused at the door of Emil's eyrie.

As Annie had pictured, the patent lock was out of commission and the door stood wide open. Placing her note on the corner of a desk where he could not fail to see it, Rachel lingered on the threshold. Had he observed her, she could not have remained, but he kept steadily forward with his work.

It was a rich pleasure to note every detail of the room—the sagging couch, the shabby coat hanging against the wall, the table laden with dust, bottles and tobacco boxes, the long bench, on the lower shelf of which was ranged, with astonishing order, a multitude of tools. She drew a contented sigh.

The sun poured through the skylight and twinkled on the brass-work of his darling inventions, enthroned behind the glass of an old bookcase. Even while he slept, they peered out at him, these children of his active brain. And in every corner some mechanism was revealed, some cunning, complicated thing of joints and prisms.

Rachel completed her inventory, then her brows suddenly rose and her eyes with involuntary devotion fixed themselves upon Emil. It was as if she had saved him until the last for a closer inspection, like a little girl who reserves her chief treasure for a leisurely examination.

Seated on a high stool, before a bench, he was at work, from his head covered with its thick mane, the eyes burning beneath like coals, down to his big feet, planted against a convenient shelf. These feet hinted at a force in him that urged him to make a rift in the wall of the Unknown.

She remained for a long time motionless.

Then with a smile, unfathomable in its freshness, its terror, its confusion, she turned away.

There, rises a mountain peak—in silence, clouds, eternal snows! The sun beats on the snow and the sparkling snow responds to the light. There is the laboratory of genius!

From the mountain roll downward, sometimes small streamlets, sometimes mighty rivers. These streamlets and rivers nourish the valley below and even the cities out on the plain, these rivers nourish the world.

Yet the trees and shrubs at the base of the mountain suffer, for sometimes instead of refreshing streamlets, avalanches of snow come down. At such times the bushes and trees cling together; with their twisted branches and denuded roots, they whisper and moan execrations on the mountain.

Close to the summit—in order to observe what is taking place there—its foot in the snow and its head in the clouds, pushes that imperturbable and daring little flower, the edelweiss.

Rachel climbed close to heaven in order to have sight of her love.

CHAPTER III
THE CONFESSION

One June morning in the second year of the existence of The St. Ives and Hart Company, Emil entered his wife's room.

In order to be in range of the draught from the window, Annie had pulled forward a couch. Clothed in a shabby wrapper, open at the neck, she was curled up languidly with her head on a cushion. Emil gazed at her while something like compunction blazed up

in his eyes. He amazed her by sitting down by her side and drawing her to his breast. Holding her two tiny hands in one of his own, he caressed her hair and even drew a pitying finger over the prominent cords of her poor little throat. Then he strained her to him, sighing as if from a full heart.

Annie burst into tears at this unexpected tenderness. Twisting herself around, she rested her cheek against his.

"You—you leave me to myself all the time, Alexander," she sobbed, "and I've no one at all but you."

"Yes, yes, I know," he responded mournfully.

"And you don't talk to me about your work as you do to Mrs. Hart; and I could understand as well as she if you would take the trouble to explain to me."

"Well, don't cry, little kitten," he said, "I've come to explain something to you now and I

hope it will please you."

"How please me?" she asked.

"Well, I have an idea at last which I think will strike your fancy. I mean it's practical," he explained, "—has commercial possibilities."

"Are you sure?" she demanded doubtfully: "you aren't a very good judge, you know."

"Never the less, I can't help knowing that anything in the line of a novel improvement of a musical instrument like the organ,—in fact, an innovation,—in these days is almost certain to succeed."

"Oh, Alexander, tell me! Tell me what you have in mind!" and raising her head from his shoulder she laid hold of his hand.

"What an excitable little creature it is," he said tenderly. "Well, it's a scheme for increasing the capacity for emotional expression in an organ. I shall manage to

combine the vibrations of strings with those of pipes by incorporating in the organ a complete piano action. Do you understand?"

She nodded.

He laughed. "A pile you do! I shall combine them in such a way, that by a separate keyboard the strings can be used for piano accompaniment, and also can be coupled with the organ keys so that when they are depressed, the corresponding dampers in the piano are lifted from the strings to admit of their free sympathetic vibration."

"Oh!" said Annie, on a long breath. "And you think it might mean a big thing?"

"In a commercial sense, yes; in fact I think it's about certain to be popular. But in order to carry out the scheme I shall have to have every chance for experimenting, you know," and he looked pleadingly into her face.

"Of course;" she agreed, "but this place suits you, Alexander—you always said that it

did?"

"Yes, the place is all right," he answered, hesitating, "but I need an instrument, you see. So I—I've bought one," he added softly.

"Not a pipe organ, Alexander?"

He nodded. "A second-hand one, very small, naturally, only two manuals. But even so, I shall have to pull out one of the partitions before it can be set up."

"How much did it cost?" she cried, and her eyes and her mouth assumed the appearance in her countenance of three little round holes of horror.

"Well, by paying cash for it to the church committee who put it up at auction," he said in a low voice, "I got it for eight hundred dollars."

At these words Annie crossed to the further side of the room and dropping into a chair, leaned her forehead against the wall.

Alexander looked at her with miserable eyes. Her action was a thousand times more disquieting than the volley of reproaches he had expected.

"They've come now, I think," he said after a pause. "They're going to hoist part of it up from the outside, and I hear them on the roof. Don't feel that way about it," he implored. "The scheme really is a good one, Annie, and I'll make a success of it, I promise you. I'll get the eight hundred dollars back and any amount besides."

But Annie continued motionless and he approached her chair. "I suppose it does seem like a lot for us to put into it," he continued with unwonted tenderness, "but it was a tempting bargain and as I couldn't develop my scheme without it— See here," he interrupted himself, "haven't you told me often enough that I ought to invent something that would prove to be a success; that I ought to do it to justify the Company's belief in me, and especially Mrs. Hart's belief?"

Then Annie turned on him. She even rose from her chair, the back of which she grasped with a shaking hand. "And it's to justify *her* belief in you, is it? that you spent all that we'd managed to save? Very thoughtful, I am sure. *Her* interest indeed! I wish you'd never seen her. I hate her, I do, I hate her!"

"Annie!" he exclaimed, for her little visage was twisted out of all semblance to itself.

"I do, I hate her!" she repeated. "As for buying that organ because you needed it, don't you suppose I know you've always hung around organ lofts and even followed hurdy-gurdies on the street? You bought the organ because you wanted it. Alexander, you—you leave me!" she finished hysterically.

Abashed, Emil stared at her; then relieved at this outburst, which was what he had looked for, he went to superintend the installing of his luckless possession. Since concluding the purchase of the organ the wisdom of the step had appeared dubious to his unpractical mind. Now, had it been

possible for him to transfer the burden of ownership, he would gladly have transferred it. But the organ, to another, would have been an undesirable acquisition. It was wheezy of tone and sadly out of order, but this very condition was what had recommended it to him, and he looked forward with exultant joy to restoring it to a sense of perfection.

As no retreat was possible, between ruefulness and pride he lifted the blue and gold pipes from the long coffin-shaped box in which they had been packed. Other parts of the organ, being less liable to damage, were hoisted through the window.

When Annie emerged half an hour later, dressed for the street, the passageway and the two workrooms presented a scene of indescribable confusion. Had she glanced in at the door of the larger room, she might have seen the uncouth monster minus the ornamental front it usually turned to an audience. But she looked neither to the right nor the left. Despite the warmth of the day she had a veil tied over her face. The only

signs of her distress were the damp blotches in the material over the regions of mouth and eyes. She had decided to carry her story straight to Simon Hart.

When Annie reached the house in Washington Square, Rachel was mounting the steps. Simon had only just returned for luncheon and Rachel conducted the visitor to his study, a cool dark room on the second floor, and then stood by to listen to what the other had to say.

And Annie poured forth her tale. Perched on the extreme edge of a huge armchair, she was too carried away by her trouble to heed the presence of Rachel, and as she finished, Simon, with a look of annoyance, was about to express his sympathy when his wife laid her hand forcibly on his arm.

"And why shouldn't he buy an organ?" she demanded, turning on Annie, and it was evident from the light in her eyes that she was angry. "You are insane to look at the matter as you do. Of course he had to have the

organ," she declared. "May not an inventor be allowed the necessary materials for his work? And if the thing should prove a success, as he thinks it may, and as I can see that it may, even from Annie's hazy description, why then you two will be glad enough that he got the organ." And she glanced from one to the other triumphantly.

"But, my dear," her husband interposed, "you heard what Mrs. St. Ives said; the whole point is that they are not in a position to afford it."

"But the Company is," Rachel answered and looked him directly in the eyes. The next instant she was a prey to shame, bitter and scorching.

With a glance of icy disapproval, he turned away from her, and she hurriedly crossed to a window and began nervously to remove the rings from her fingers.

Not a day passed but she thus surprised herself. For the same emotion, ever new, ever

unlooked for, ever commencing afresh, constantly tempted her into enthusiastic championship of Emil's cause. Far from wishing to disguise the feeling, however, now that she herself realized the force of it, Rachel had often desired to speak of it to Simon; and only the fact that he definitely and obstinately avoided the subject kept her silent.

As a result of Annie's visit, the complexion of affairs in John Street took a more favourable colour, while those in Washington Square assumed a more tragic hue. Annie, despite her bitter words about Rachel, was not actively jealous of her. Now she was comforted by Simon's sympathy, which she felt; for between these two unhappy souls there was a bond of shy understanding. Also, Rachel's ill-considered words produced a certain lightness in Annie and she concluded that they would not be allowed to suffer because of Emil's extravagance.

Upon Rachel, the result of the interview was otherwise. Seldom had she experienced a more desperate mood than that which assailed

her after Annie had quitted the house.

More than once she went to Simon's study determined to speak her mind, but the door remained steadfastly closed against her.

As it was Saturday, Simon did not return to the shop in the afternoon, nor did he emerge from the study at dinner time, and Theresa, with a sly rolling of the eye in her mistress's direction, prepared a tray for him. Simon always expressed his anger by an increase of coldness and silence and by shutting himself up in this way. "He's in there," Rachel reflected, "thinking and drinking." And she preferred the liquor, the effect of which she had often noted, to his thoughts, the effect of which she could not calculate. Until a late hour she heard him walking backward and forward with irregular steps over the echoing floor, and it was after midnight when his door opened and he descended the stairs. This was an old-fashioned house with a cellar and there the wine was kept. It was to the cellar she knew he had gone. Determined to seize the opportunity of speaking to him, she threw a

wrapper over her nightdress and hurried after him through the darkened house. He had turned on the light in the hanging electric bulb, and when she came upon him he was standing before a table on which was placed a case of wine. In all probability he had been drinking brandy and was finishing with claret. To her surprise, as if actuated by mere thirsty impatience, she saw him strike off the neck of a bottle. This action in a man of his fastidious habits was big with meaning. He lifted the bottle to his lips, his head flung back. He did not see her until she touched his arm.

"Simon," she cried, "this can't go on!"

Thinking she referred to the liquor, he set down the bottle and regarded her with an abashed and amazed look. His long face, without its usual mask, was fairly pitiful. Later he would not be able to forgive her for surprising him in this way. But she was bent solely on making her confession.

"Simon," she cried, laying hold of the

sleeve of his coat, "I was wrong in what I said this afternoon. I own I was wrong; and I ask you to forgive me. But there should be no secrets between us and I have no wish to disguise anything. Simon"—and her eyes, usually serious and a little sulky, flew to his face and clung there brilliant with appeal —"you must know that my feeling for Mr. St. Ives existed before I ever knew you; it is a part of myself. I can't explain it; but it does you no wrong. And never could do you any wrong."

During this explanation Simon had grown paler than was his wont. Pushing aside her hands and standing off from her, he had begun by drawing his fingers nervously through his fringe of hair; but as she proceeded, he became absolutely motionless and his face assumed the lines of a tragic mask.

"I would not have things different even if I could," she went on; "I am content with you and you know it. But oh,"—and she threw, out both hands in a gesture exceedingly

simple and genuine,—"please do not misconstrue what you cannot, perhaps, understand!"

But at this point he interrupted her with a violent movement that threw the bottle of wine to the stone floor where the contents spilled in a red flood. "Once and for all," he cried, articulating the words with difficulty, "I want you to know that I will not listen to your analysis. I may deplore your interest in—in St. Ives—I do deplore it, but I do not wish to hear anything of it."

He had put a special accent on the word *interest* and Rachel once more closely examined his face. Was it possible that he purposely misconstrued the situation and chose to close his eyes to what he believed—or had he understood her? "For it is possible for a woman, as well as a man," she told herself vehemently, "to love two, and to love each differently." Gallant, courageous little heart! Thus did she disguise the truth even from herself.

The wine pouring from the bottle had splashed the bedroom slippers of light felt which she had slipped over her bare feet. Now with a movement, wholly womanly, she bent and tried to remove the spots by rubbing them with her hand, while the loosened mass of her hair, dropping forward, half enveloped her like a veil.

Simon's eyes gleamed, but he instantly averted his gaze.

"What do you mean by coming down here?" he said harshly. "It is too damp for you. Go upstairs."

Rachel lifted herself and made a trembling movement toward him. He tried to ignore her; then seizing her arm, from which the loose sleeve fell back, he pressed his lips to it once and pushed her from him. "Go upstairs;" he repeated in a voice which she scarcely recognized, and as he turned away she saw that tears were forcing themselves from beneath his tightly-closed lids and running down his convulsed face.

His repulse of her had been so violent that the hand which she flung out to save herself was cut against the rough masonry of the wall. In silence she looked at the wound, and an infinite tenderness and pity replaced the stern and mournful expression on her face. Without a word she mounted the stairs.

CHAPTER IV
HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO STOP LOVING

For six weeks she kept steadfastly away from the place in John Street. When by herself, she would often clasp her hands very tightly and raise them above her head while sounds between sighs and sobs escaped from her breast. But from Simon she carefully concealed every sign of her misery. She strove to exhibit more interest in all that interested him.

Julia Burgdorf dropped in one evening and finding them together at the pianola, pronounced them a model couple. Julia had come to offer them her country house on Long Island during her own absence in Europe that summer.

"Gray Arches is a lonely, remote, romantic spot,—in fact, just the place for a pair of lovers like you two," she declared looking from one to the other with sarcastic amusement.

The place, which consisted of a large house, gardener's cottage, and stables, had fallen but recently into her hands, she went on to explain, and she had learned through her agent that it was somewhat out of repair as it had not been occupied for three years.

"You can understand, Simon, that I don't want to bother about putting it in shape this year," she concluded, "and as Mr. Gunther assures me that the house can be occupied as it stands, I shall count it a favour if you and Rachel will go and live in it as it is."

But Simon had no wish to be under obligation to Julia, and the matter was settled by his agreeing to rent the place, an arrangement that nettled her. When she rose to go her cheeks were flushed.

Rachel accompanied her to the hall and, as she was leaving, Julia turned and laid her hands on the other's shoulders.

"You *are* a model couple, aren't you?" she insisted, with an enigmatical smile in her handsome, dark, heavy-lidded eyes.

This smile, which gave her face a resemblance to Simon's, caused the young wife to colour deeply.

Rachel's confession produced no change in Simon's attitude toward her. He remained as attentive and considerate, and yet as restrained in his manner as before, with the difference that he now made a point of keeping her informed of Emil's progress. The new organ attachment promised so well that the Company were hopeful and the inventor

was supplied with every facility for proceeding with his work. By vibrating the strings of a piano by means of electrical induction, rather than by striking them with hammers, a strange and ethereal result was obtained, and these tones combined with those of a pipe organ produced an effect absolutely novel in musical expression.

As Rachel listened to Simon's attempted description of the complicated contrivance, she was obliged to bend her head over whatever work she held, to conceal the joyous expression of her face. Until Emil should justify the interest shown in him, she could not help feeling responsible, not alone to her husband but to all the other members of the Company which had been incorporated without sufficient capital.

"St. Ives is even growing businesslike in his treatment of us," Simon remarked one morning in a voice from which he carefully excluded all trace of personal feeling. "He telephoned very early to say that he is called out of town by the illness of his mother. If he

finds that her condition is serious, he may be gone some days. So I think, my dear," he concluded, "you had better go round and see Mrs. St. Ives. It must be lonely for her there, and you might take her to drive."

An hour later Rachel showed herself in John Street. Walking along the passage she glanced into Emil's workroom where the organ now occupied half the available space. It was deserted except for Lulu. Crouched on the window ledge, she was pensively cherishing a maple leaf someone had given her. She had removed the substance of the leaf from between the veins, now only its framework remained, and this she held closely to her breast. At Rachel's step she looked over her shoulder and an inscrutable sadness appeared in her little eyes.

Rachel tapped at Annie's door, which was thrown open to her with startling suddenness. Annie was all ready for the street and a suit-case stood on the floor. The room exhibited the utmost confusion.

"Where are you going?" Rachel cried.

"To my father's. He's written me several times saying that I may come home if I'll leave Alexander; and I'm going to leave him and I'm never coming back either." A sob caught Annie's breath as she strove to button her glove.

Rachel took the wrist and fastened the glove. "But you're not going to leave him now when he's in such trouble about his mother, are you?"

"Yes I am. I offered to go with him this morning when he got word of her illness, but he wouldn't let me. He said I'd always been hateful about her and I shouldn't trouble her now she was dying. He insulted me;" and stooping, Annie picked up the suit-case. "Please let me pass," she said with dismal dignity. "You don't know what you're talking about when you advise me to stay with him. I'm no use to him, he shows that every day; and why shouldn't I live comfortable? Besides," she added, and she glanced about

her apprehensively, "I'm afraid here."

Hastening down the passageway, she entered Emil's workroom and pointed through the skylight:

"They've been spying down here with a telescope ever since Alexander left early this morning to see what he's working on."

The neighbouring office building was very tall and in one of the upper windows the round eye of a telescope was to be seen.

"They manufacture organs themselves," Annie explained, "and first one and then another of them has been hanging around here for a long time. Now it's a fair-haired man with a pock-marked face and sometimes it's a little black Jew. They always have some excuse; but I've warned Alexander."

"Why don't you cover up things?" Rachel interrupted her, and divesting the couch of its Bagdad covering, she threw it over the metal plate, strings and sounding-board of the piano

which stood on the floor.

Annie cast a glance over her shoulder. "You'd better cover up those wires that pass through the wall," she said, "they're connected with the battery and that's what they're crazy to find out about."

Rachel adjusted the covering; then she ran after Annie, who had gained the outer door. She caught her by the shoulders and twitched her about. "But why didn't you do it yourself?" she cried. "What do you *mean* by not doing it, you—you little coward? Your husband's a genius; but that's all you care!"

Annie with difficulty rid herself of the other's grasp and backed off. "I don't care if he's a genius a thousand times over," she cried hysterically, "I guess he isn't the only one to be thought of! Oh, he had no right to leave me this way with the janitress and everyone gone!" Sobs rose in her throat.

Turning to the door, she ran out upon the landing; but Rachel's voice, keyed to a pitch

of indignation, pursued her.

"You would leave this place all alone, would you? You are not even going to close the windows but leave everything open?"

Annie made a helpless gesture as she descended the stairs. "It won't be alone; Ding Dong will be along in a few minutes and he'll attend to everything."

Rachel remained staring after her for a moment; then, her eyes blazing with disdain, she closed the door. Pride kept her from bolting it. Returning to the workroom she sat down beside the bench and occasionally she glanced up at the telescope. Though she told herself that Annie had imagined the whole situation, she was relieved to find that the watcher had forsaken his post. As for the quarrel, it must have been of a more serious nature than usual. However, Annie would not remain away for any length of time.

This was the noon hour and owing to a slight diminution in the roar of the city the

ticking of a clock could be heard through the room. For a time Rachel's face wore the scornful look it had worn in Annie's presence, but gradually this expression gave place to undisguised enthusiasm. Taking the tools one by one into her hands, she examined them, wondering about their use. A radiometer on which Emil was engaged in making improvements, stood at her elbow; drawing this to her with both hands, she began patting it after the fashion of a mother caressing the head of a child. Finally she rested her hot cheek against the polished surface and closed her eyes. Lulu, who had been observing her intently from the loftiest pipe of the organ, crept to a position at her shoulder. There, crouched amid a clutter of tools and instruments, she continued to cherish the maple leaf. Had an observer been present, the two might have suggested to his mind a group by Albrecht Dürer; for the sentimental look in the face of the little animal was a droll reflection of the devotion in the face of the woman. Presently a tear stole down Rachel's cheek. She had just lifted her hand to brush it away when she heard a step in the passage.

Thinking Ding Dong had come, she turned to the door; but a large light-haired man with a pock-marked face stood before her.

Both started. The stranger instantly recovered himself.

"Good afternoon, madam," he said, removing his hat with a flourish; "can you tell me if Mr. St. Ives is in?"

Rachel stood up; one of her hands rested on the piano sounding-board. "No, he is not."

"Mrs. St. Ives, then?"

She made no reply.

The man stared at her uneasily. "That is unfortunate," he said after a moment, as if she had replied to his question. "However, it doesn't matter," with a smile, showing two rows of strong yellow teeth; "I'm an expert mechanic and Mr. St. Ives asked me to step round and take a look at a model he's at work on. It's a piano attachment, and there's some

ticklish point about which he wanted my advice. If you'll excuse me," he added blandly, "that is the model just behind you, I think. I'll examine it and make my report to him."

He advanced but Rachel did not alter her position. The colour had fled her cheek, but in her dark eyes a spark had kindled and this grew steadily larger. Until he was within a foot of her, she looked fixedly at the dirty tie that encircled his throat; then as his hand moved to twitch the drapery from the sounding-board, she suddenly lifted a glance in which there was a menacing fury.

His arm dropped and a tremour passed over him similar to the quivering that agitates the hide of an animal unexpectedly checked in a spring. For a perceptible space, while the clock ticked monotonously through the quiet room, measuring off the silence, he stood with his chin thrust forward. Then an ugly expression crossed his face and the veins swelled in his forehead.

"I don't want to touch a lady, of course," he said in an under voice, "but I came to examine that model and I'm going to examine it. As for you," and it was as if an oath spilled with the words, "you stand out of the way. Won't eh?" he exclaimed.

He shot out a hand.

But at that moment he was seized from behind by a pair of powerful arms. Fairly growling with rage, Ding Dong dragged the intruder to his knees and the two rolled on the floor. The confusion caused by the scuffle was terrific. Lulu, scudding to the top of the organ, uttered shriek after shriek as she grasped frantically at her breast with both hands. Skirting the heaving forms, Rachel fled down to the street.

But one idea stood out in her mind. As it chanced, an officer was lounging near the doorway and she plucked his sleeve. "Go—go up there!" she cried, "St. Ives's workroom—a thief has just entered!"

Before she had finished the officer was mounting the stairs.

Her first impulse was to get into her carriage, which, with Peter on the box, was waiting beside the curb. Then reflecting that Ding Dong could not speak a word to the officer, she returned to the scene of the conflict.

Attracted by the sight of the officer, men and boys, scenting excitement, flocked up the stairs from the other floors. When Rachel gained the door of the workroom the intruder was clearing the blood from his face, and the officer, who evidently had accepted a bribe, was swinging his club and ordering the onlookers to depart. Still perched on the organ, the monkey, to the delight of the spectators, continued to chatter with fright. Rachel looked at the officer.

"Arrest that man. Why do you not arrest him?"

The officer ceased smiling. "On what

charge, madam? He says he came here to do some work; well, that's all right!"

"He came here to steal the idea of an invention."

"An idea? I've searched him without finding anything of the kind."

At this fine piece of wit, the spectators, most of them beardless boys, snickered.

"However, madam," the officer continued, "I'm willing to haul them both to the station if you say the word, and I take it you're willing to press the charge, that is, appear against him?"

"No,—I shall not do that," she said, pausing between her words, for the light in which Simon would view the matter came to her. "Is there no other way?"

"None that I ever heard of. If you want a man put in jail,—well, you have to appear and tell why you want it."

She was in her carriage. Sinking into the corner, she ordered the man to drive home. "And Peter, perhaps you'd better hurry," she added after a moment. With that small portion of her brain which was not seething with anger and which persisted in considering that insignificant feature of the affair, it seemed to her that the man who had overtaken her and wished to question her, was in all likelihood a reporter.

And when she reached home, in spite of her gloomy fury at the frustration of her act of vengeance, the small apprehension persisted. The newspaper man, when he learned of her identity from the bystanders, would of course appear to interview her; and however justifiable her action might be, she knew that Simon would not forgive her if any publicity were given the affair. To avert trouble, she decided to take the afternoon train to Julia Burgdorf's country house on Long Island. She had been there twice with Simon and a telegram to the woman in charge would be

sufficient. Going to the telephone, she called up the shop; but Simon was absent, and she urged Victor Mudge to have a watchman sent to John Street. Then leaving a note for her husband, she started at once.

It was late in the afternoon when she arrived at Gray Arches and the sun was nearing the horizon. After dinner, which was set out for her in a glass-enclosed corner of one of the arched porches that gave the house its name, she went to the beach.

The ocean spread out before her with its salt, fresh scent; its vivifying breath blowing upon the beach, piled up little hillocks of sand. Sitting on the sand, propped up on both arms, Rachel steadfastly regarded the ocean and her mind returned to Emil. The next day, being Sunday, Simon would, no doubt, follow her. Perhaps he would have received further news of Emil's mother. If she died, how would Emil bear it? As he had no philosophy, a great grief might wreck him. And what could he hold to? Not Annie,—Annie was a broken reed;—not herself,—

Simon would not permit it.

Love was the powerful, mysterious, secret influence at work everywhere. Undermining, building up, overthrowing, replacing,—it was like a mighty sea penned in each fragile human breast. Locking her hands about her knees, Rachel watched the waves. And the waves approached, grew mighty, curled over, disappeared; approached, grew mighty, curled over, disappeared.

It was about midnight when she rose.

"No, no, it isn't necessary, and I cannot. I cannot!" she repeated, lifting her face to the stars which seemed to rain down upon her a beneficent and vital influence.

She was awakened early the following morning by a tap at her door: "Madam, Mr. Hart is here. As soon as it is convenient, he would like to see you."

Rachel hastily dressed herself. She believed she thoroughly knew her husband, but she

was amazed at the expression of his face when she ran down the stairs. He was standing in the little glass-enclosed end of the porch, where breakfast was laid, and through the small panes she saw the flowers nodding brightly. He was looking toward the ocean without seeing it, his brows contracted, his clean-shaven jaw and cleft chin twitching slightly. In his hand he held a newspaper.

She approached. Another woman might have tried the effect of a warm greeting, for it was a question whether, even in his present state, he would have been able to resist her. But Rachel scorned to make the attempt.

"What is it, Simon?" she asked quietly.

For answer, still with averted eyes, he handed her the paper.

It was folded in such a manner as to exhibit an article surrounded by a blue line. The article was a short amusing account of the incident of the day before, and in it the frightened monkey and all the odd

paraphernalia of the inventor's workshop played an important part. Barring the headline "Jeweller's Wife hastens to protect Invention of Young Genius," there was nothing even remotely offensive in it.

"Well?" she remarked, after running her eye over the article; then she returned the paper.

For answer he twisted it into a ball and flung it from him. "I will ask you to remember hereafter," he said, speaking so rapidly that he stammered, "the dignity of the name you bear. I do not relish having it exploited in this way."

"But what else could I do, Simon? Should I have sat there calmly and allowed that man to steal Emil's idea?"

"*Emil!*" he repeated, flushing with indignation. "Is the protection of that—that device of more importance to you than the protection of my dignity? You considered St. Ives, I grant that: that was to be expected. But you did not consider me."

"I considered you all—-Emil, the Company, you, everyone; and what I did was absolutely right, *absolutely*! I insist upon it."

"For a lady your action was an unbecoming one," he declared icily.

She gazed upon him with flashing eyes from under contorted brows.

"You say this; you believe it? Very well then, misconstrue what I did if you choose, torture me, doubt me!" she began fiercely. But suddenly her thoughts of the evening before returned to her. Something oppressive filled her breast and rose in her throat.

"But I do not doubt you," he said, checked by the intensity of anguish her features exhibited. He even put out his hand.

But seizing her head in both hands, she pushed by him and rushed upstairs.

Her door was not opened until the next morning; then Rachel, all wild and staring,

threw it wide. A low fever had set in. Emily Short arrived with her fund of common sense and her knitting work (she was knitting comforters for her special charges among the children)—and stationed herself at the bedside.

What surprised them all was Rachel's prostration which continued long after the fever had left her. Turning her face to the wall, she seldom spoke. When her husband entered the room, she looked at him sometimes entreatingly, sometimes pityingly; one day, drawing his head down on her breast, she wept over him. Then she put him gently from her, and for a long time after, lay like one dead.

Often in the night, when Emily Short, thinking that at last she slept, bent over her, she discovered her lying rigid and still, with her face bathed in tears. One night in the third week of her illness, when Emily came to the bedside, Rachel looked up at her.

"How is it possible—" she whispered.

Emily bent lower, "How is what possible, dear?"

In the silence of the room the words were breathed rather than spoken, "—to stop loving?"

Emily gave a little start, she scratched her head with her crochet needle; then the work slipped to the floor and she hid her worn face.

Rachel, folding her arms on her breast, stared with the dumb intensity of despair at the circle of light which flickered on the ceiling.

CHAPTER V
LOVE BY THE SEA

The road to Gray Arches runs for part of the way past smart summer cottages, but soon the spaces between the cottages grow longer,

until the road, ambling on through that bright seaside country, suggests a string from which many beads are missing. In fact for quite five miles the road resembles a little empty, dust-coloured ribbon almost hidden in the lush marsh grass. But suddenly Gray Arches appears, the pendant of the ornament of which the railroad station is the clasp. However, the pendant is no match for the clasp; for the station fairly shines with paint whereas Gray Arches is as dull as a piece of old silver; the windows of the station gleam like imitation diamonds, whereas those of Gray Arches are the turbid green of clouded emeralds. None the less, the pendant is a handsome thing of princely value—a real mansion, though an ancient one in a sad state of neglect.

Under a sky littered with huge cumulus clouds fleecy as cotton, the house, in its wide lawn, seemed asleep. But something besides the sea out there, running up in little rippling waves to kiss the curve of the sandy beach, for all the world like children clambering a mother's knees,—something besides the sea

was astir. With his pale and somewhat stealthy look Simon appeared in the glass door. Then he stepped out on the gravel path, and with his dignified and careful tread, he began pacing up and down. Up and down beneath the luxuriant, low-hanging boughs of the evergreen trees that still wore their mantle of dew, he walked. Despite his deliberate movements, a half-concealed eagerness showed itself in his eyes as he glanced from time to time at an upper window shaded by a striped awning. Presently he paused and stooping, picked up a shell. Holding it delicately between his thumb and forefinger, Simon studied it as he would have studied a jewel. But the next moment he tossed it aside. One watching him would scarcely have judged that a singular happiness pervaded his meditations on this particular morning, for his thoughts were written in cipher on his long pale face. He had some news for Rachel and was anticipating her pleasure in it.

Simon's jealousy of St. Ives was now at an end, or so he believed. He had never felt that Rachel really cared for Emil, and now he told

himself with a sigh of thankfulness, that his hatred of the inventor no longer existed. During Rachel's illness, for which he looked upon himself as in a measure responsible, the agony of contrition he had experienced had obliterated the other torture. St. Ives he had never liked, nor did he like him now; but when he learned that the building in which Emil's workshops were located was to be extensively altered during the summer, and that these repairs would make it an inconvenient, if not an impossible place in which to carry on important work, he had acted at once.

In his present state of mind it had been a simple, even a gratifying thing for him to arrange to have Emil and all that pertained to the organ attachment, transferred temporarily to the gardener's cottage on this country estate. This action, defining his own position as nothing else could, had brought with it an immeasurable sense of relief. Morbidly constituted as he was, his own position in the matter was of paramount importance to Simon, and so engrossed was he in this

supposed release from jealousy that Emil and Annie figured as scarcely more than the necessary factors for carrying out a course of conduct he had outlined. That his mood was overstrained; that it was one of those misleading, reactionary impulses to which sensitive peaceful natures are particularly prone, he never suspected. For the sake of maintaining his present lofty attitude, Simon was capable of blinding himself for a time to anything that might again threaten his repose.

By taking down a partition in the gardener's cottage, the organ had been installed, and Emil and Annie were living there now in great comfort. Filled with reproaches and recriminations, the visit which Annie had paid to her parents had been a mistake, but this the young girl did not acknowledge; nor did she confess that, despite her unhappiness with her husband, she was not able to live without him. When Mrs. St. Ives had recovered from the illness which had attacked her, Annie had rejoined Emil very simply; now in these new conditions she was even growing fresh and pretty. Simon, who had not

been unmindful of the young wife when he decided to make the arrangement, could not help seeing that Annie was happier; and, for that matter, that Emil was happier, too. The inventor whistled shrilly over his work, and whenever he heard him, Simon was conscious of the expansive feeling that accompanies a generous action.

Presently there was the grating of a wheeled chair passing over gravel. The chair had been left by a former occupant of the house and Emily had found it, covered with dust, in one of the chambers. Rachel's face was as wan as the face of a martyr in a mediæval picture, though her cheeks caught a tinge from the pink "cloud" wrapped around her head. Her eyes under their slender brows, held the old vivid passionate look, and her mouth resembled a little bit of pale crumpled velvet in which gleamed, all at once, the fascinating white of her teeth.

Simon approached; then, with a glance at Emily, he kissed his wife's little, white, blue-veined hand which dropped so supplely from

its wrist.

"Take me down the path," she commanded. "Oh, how heavenly this air is!—and the sea! Do you know, Simon, illness gives one a new pair of eyes?"

Emily Short looked after the couple uneasily. She had said what she could to Simon to prevent his carrying out his absurd scheme relative to St. Ives; she had objected as strongly as she dared on various pretexts. But Simon, bent on making clear to Rachel how completely he renounced his former attitude toward the inventor, had turned a deaf ear. Now Emily imagined that he was announcing the step he had taken, for from where she stood, she saw Rachel lift her head with a swift, frightened air. Then it slowly sank as though a weight had forced it to her breast.

Standing in the keen sunlight, a little, lean, homely figure with a worn face, Emily sighed. She herself had never known love, yet she sighed and knotted her fingers tightly

together beneath her apron.

It was evident that Rachel did not wish to go in the direction of the gardener's cottage, for they turned into another path. Half an hour later when she knew Simon had left his wife in order to catch his train for the city, Emily went in search of the invalid. She found her drawn up in the shelter of a small, half-ruinous summer-house overrun with vines which stood at one corner of the grounds. As Emily approached, she saw Rachel crane forward, with her hands gripping the arms of the wheeled chair. A wonderful unrestrained tenderness beamed in her face.

Passing not twenty feet away and visible through the intricacies of the wall of leaves was Emil St. Ives. The stuff of his shirt rippled in the breeze and the material clung to his muscular shoulders; his hair was in a tousle, his lips, surrounded by their curling beard, emitted a gay shrillness of sound; he was whistling as a bird sings. Abruptly Rachel dropped back in the chair. Without

looking at Emily, she signified a desire to return to the house.

Emily pushed the chair into the sunlight and the little group crept up the path; while, all unconscious, Emil went leaping down the sands to bathe in the sea.

During her illness, Rachel had been besieged by feverish thoughts. Not a phase of the situation but she had gone over innumerable times. Finally her resolution was taken: she would see Emil no more. The decision was an arduous one and she raged to make it. Love for one man, overmastering love, as Nature wills it, was in conflict with unswerving loyalty to another; and this latter feeling likewise had its roots in the very foundation of her character, so that her woman's heart had been for a season a disputed field, and the conflict had protracted her illness.

But when she rose at last, pitiful tender, heroic,—all woman in that she dreamed she had immolated the feeling that threatened the

peace of her husband—lo, the situation awaiting her put her plans to confusion. Her husband's unexpected move had made her course a difficult if not an impossible one.

For more than three weeks by employing every stratagem, she succeeded in avoiding the inventor, and when the housemaid brought word, as she did on several occasions, that both Emil and Annie had come over to call on her, she pleaded weariness and refused to see them. But as her strength returned, this excuse failed, and she spent many hours with Emily, who had been persuaded to remain and carry on her trade of toy-making in an unused room of the house. Had Simon permitted it, Rachel would have returned to the city, but both her husband and the doctor opposed the move on the ground of her recent illness.

It was a state of things which could not endure.

One morning Emil came upon Rachel sitting on the sand. Worn out by her efforts to

avoid him, beyond turning her face obstinately in the other direction, she made no attempt to escape.

As he advanced he examined her with his laughing eyes. "So I've found you at last!" he cried joyously.

After a moment, because there was nothing else to do, she turned her face to his.

"But you're not much of an invalid, are you?" he cried an surprise, and seated himself not far off. "You look," he said, indicating the sea, "as strong as those waves."

Hot blushes were uncommon with her, but now the unreasoning colour mounted full tide beneath her tanned skin. "Yes," she assented coldly, "I'm quite myself now;" and she began taking the sand into her hands and letting it trickle between her fingers.

"Well, why haven't you been over to see my new workroom?" he demanded in a different tone, as he followed these movements. "You

don't take much interest in your neighbours, it strikes me."

She steadily regarded the sea. "So far I haven't done anything," she said in a low voice, and then added, as if the words were forced from her, "I shall go back to the city when the doctor will allow it."

"What would be the sense of that?" he demanded in amazement. "Why it's fine here! Just the place for you. Is it possible you don't like it?"

Rachel's lip curled slightly. "Where's Annie?" she asked after a moment's pause.

Emil turned his head. "Why she's somewhere about; she came down on the beach a little while ago."

"Won't you find her? I should like to see her."

Nonplussed, he lifted himself from the sand. After staring about, he struck off in

search of his wife. But when Annie appeared by his side, wrinkling up her face in the sunlight and holding out her hand, Rachel had little to say. Immediately afterward she left them.

A few days later as she was crossing the lawn, Rachel met Emil and he accosted her. This time there was umbrage in his tone.

"I say," he cried, and he placed himself directly in her path, "why don't you ever come over and let me show you that organ attachment? I can play for you now, in a sort of way; in fact I'm quite a musician."

Again she avoided his look and attempted to put him off. "I have promised to drive over to the station this afternoon and meet Mr. Hart," she said, "but I will come—sometime."

"But when?" he demanded, scowling at her, and his countenance was no longer good natured but fierce and aggressive. "You used to show some interest in my work, but now you withdraw it all of a sudden—just like a

woman. And I tell you, I can't finish the thing without it," he concluded angrily. "I can't go on alone—you've accustomed me to something else."

A shiver ran through her like that which takes a young bird that feels the air for the first time beneath its tentatively fluttering wings. Her impulse was to sail away in the atmosphere of love his crude unconscious confession breathed about her. She dared not raise her eyes because of the involuntary joy that filled them.

"I'll come over this evening with Simon," she said, softly. And everything about himself and about herself she loved passionately.

Life, by all of us, is felt vaguely to be a tapestry of which we see the under side. But now in a flash Rachel saw the pattern that Fate was weaving imperturbably; a pattern premeditated from the beginning; and well she knew that nothing she could do or he could do, could stay that weaving hand. Though no word of love was ever spoken, the

design in all its beauty was complete, for words and acts are human lumber, unessential to the accomplishment of the spiritual miracle; present, they follow the design inaccurately; absent, the design is seen the clearer because of no gross accompaniment. And Rachel wondered if Emil saw at last what she saw; if he did not now, he would see,—he would! And neither was any more responsible for the fact that filled the world with new meaning than he was responsible for the fact of life. From these meditations she roused herself, emerging as from an enchanted mist.

"I'll come over this evening with Simon," she repeated, and Emil, who had been staring at her, drew himself up and reluctantly accepted the promise.

When he moved away from her, his face wore an expression of astonishment.

As Ding Dong had gone to the city on an errand for Emil and did not return on the usual train in the evening, there was no one at

the cottage to pump the organ, for Simon evidently considered it beneath his dignity to perform so menial a service. He sat in a rocking-chair near a window, and from time to time with a meditative eye, he scanned the walls of the room which were decorated with mottoes and lithographs in colours. He was estimating the probable cost of replacing the partition when Emil should have finished with the cottage.

The inventor, restless and keenly disappointed, went again and again to the outer door, where he remained straining his eyes through the salty darkness, though there was no chance now that Ding Dong would appear until morning. Rachel sat by a little table turning over the leaves of a current magazine with her long fingers; she was impatient with her husband and whenever Emil entered the room, she looked at him, and her face between the loopings of her hair, had a faint, remote, mysterious smile.

Annie issued from the kitchen and going up to Emil leaned against his shoulder, and he

nonchalantly encircled her little figure. Instantly, Rachel grew hot all over with a violent jealousy such as she had never before experienced.

All the way home while she walked by Simon's side and felt beneath her elbow his thin fingers supporting her, her hands beneath her cloak were pressed against her heart. Oh, the intensity of her love and the paleness of his! She had a picture of Life irrevocably linked to Death. With the vision came such a sense of desolation that, turning her face aside, she sobbed under her breath.

The miracle was rapidly accomplishing; she was passing out of herself,—out of her scruples, her pity, her fears.

She was wandering on the sands and knew not where she went, save that the need for movement was imperative. She had left Gray Arches far behind. What matter that from the dun-coloured clouds a slant of rain

descended, straight and fine as the locks a princess engaged in combing her hair? Secretly, noiselessly, the rain touched the sands, save at intervals when a land breeze seized it; then these liquid tresses were torn and tangled into drifting masses as by the hand of a rude lover who violently seizes the locks of his mistress. And the rain hissed as it met the sands and ran away in little curling, twisting rivulets like serpents.

Enjoying the caress of the moisture on her face, Rachel walked on. The vigour of her childhood was in her limbs, the spirit of it in her heart, and she remembered her old turbulent longing for freedom. But love was the supreme liberator. And in an ecstasy, she drew herself together and her craving for this supposed liberation of the spirit was so intense and penetrating, that she wavered uncertainly as if about to fall.

At that instant, a voice, muffled by the falling of the rain and the soft plash of the waves on the beach, reached her. It came to her out of the distance; but the space that

separated her from him who called was so great and the curtain of rain that divided them, at the moment, so dense, that she could not see him. Yet that voice in which no words were distinguishable, quickened and reanimated her. For an instant with her arms curved fearfully above her head, she looked back.

A spot on that barren coast was growing larger, it was moving toward her; and all at once the breeze brought her the message above the wash of the waves.

"W-a-i-t! W-a-i-t!"

Emil was hallooing, he was calling to her with his hand to his lips. Suddenly he broke into a run, and the impulse of flight was communicated to her.

With bated breath she sped before him, and she was conscious that he took up the chase after a momentary pause of amazement.

Across those sands pitted by rain, once

more the old race was run, the exciting elemental pursuit of woman by man. And as if in joy the waves lapped the beach with a sound of applause, and the rain, as if delighted at this return of happy antique life, now baffled and pelted and blinded the pair, and now, in a lull, revealed them each to the other.

Rachel's hair, escaping its bonds, streamed behind her; her skirts impeded her movements; yet wildly, excitedly, across that expanse of sand, she ran. And the blood beat exultantly in her veins and she felt that the goal toward which she was making was that fugitive band of colour that persisted, despite the drifting mist, at the end of the beach. Through this uncertain band of colour, the sky, elsewhere dull and scattered with clouds, appeared to be smiling with huge, mobile, kindly lips. Ah, if she could but bathe in the light of that understanding smile which the sky cast over the beach! A piece of driftwood brought her precipitately to a halt, but instantly she was up and away like a sea-bird.

He who followed with long strides was gaining on her, plainly he was gaining on her. With her skirts and her shorter stature, she was no match for him. Finally, with both hands clasped beneath her bosom, she sank to her knees. Her sight swam, she gasped for breath. They had traversed in this way a distance of a quarter of a mile. The only object in sight was an old fishing-boat, drawn up on the sands. On this boat her glance rested. The next moment she saw Emil. As he ran, something emanated from him.

Instantly she was up; and straight and slim and fleet, she darted across his path and was into the old fishing boat. There was but one oar, and, as she pushed off, a burst of fresh laughter gurgled in her throat and illuminated her face. The tide, in tantalizing fashion, carried her beyond his reach and she saw him stop. Then his eyes, imperative and gleaming, like two fierce lights, sought hers. After that look he waded into the water; then swam.

Two or three strokes and he was beside the skiff. When he grasped its edge with his

dripping fingers, that shone out white and strong in the steadily increasing light, Rachel laid hold of his clothing.

Their heads were on a level—they exchanged a look.

Wild, flashing, dominating, it leapt from his face, all pale and streaming with water, to hers; and all the secret of her woman's heart mounted to her eyes; they were no longer mysterious, but frank as daylight, revealing.

The sun which, like a curious watcher, had cleared the cloud-bank, beat upon the sea in joyous fashion, and the waves beat upon the sand; and all along the beach and in the air and in the waters under the boat, there was a murmur as if Nature, the great mother, sighed in the fulness of her content.

CHAPTER VI

THE INSISTENT PAST

As in death there takes place a loosening, a lifting, a withdrawing of the spiritual part, so, too, in love. The soul, made daring through love, seeks to support a separate existence; but the attempt is pitiful, doomed to frustration; for clamorous and insistent, the ordinary conditions of life make themselves felt. The descent in Rachel's case to the normal state, wherein duties and scruples play their part, was realized at the moment Emil climbed into the boat.

Before starting for the beach she had put on her head a travelling cap that belonged to Simon. It had been almost made way with by the wind; but, still held by its long pin, it had slipped to her shoulders with the mass of her hair. Now, with the oscillation of the skiff caused by Emil's movements as he drew himself from the water, the cap dropped to the seat beside her, and thence was carried by a puff of wind to the floor of the boat. Not a garment of Simon's but closely resembled him; this cap of hunter's green with a tiny

stripe of red in the flannel, was instinct with his personality. As it lay before her, Rachel shuddered and the expression that filled her eyes kept Emil from any indiscretion into which the situation might otherwise have betrayed him. Before the mute appeal of her look he was powerless.

She crouched in the end of the boat and with a motion of the hand indicated that he was to put back to the land. Before obeying, he wrung the water from the sleeves of his coat. He was trembling and as she perceived the power of his love, perceived the amazing and terrifying force leaping out upon her from under his scowling brows,—a sudden pity took her; and she dared not look upon him because of that tenderness which is more disarming to a woman than her fear.

"Well, that was a race!" he remarked unsteadily. "Are you tired?"

"Not very—a little."

"I'll row you home."

"With one oar?"

"There's another on the beach that you didn't see."

"I didn't take the time to look."

As the boat had drifted with the tide, the return to the shore was accomplished with difficulty. When he was once more seated opposite her, rowing with even strokes, he noticed that she shivered and a gentleness softened his face.

"You are very cold, aren't you?"

"The air has changed."

"Here, take my coat; it's soaking, but your dress is soaking too."

"It's—very heavy. I don't see how you ever swam in it; it's weighted down,—" and from the pockets she drew forth first a coil of wire, then a wrench, then several drills.

He watched her and delight shone in his

face.

"I could have swum the Atlantic in armour to reach you. Do you know, you look like a mermaid with your hair hanging down that way." He was laughing now and the old lazy fondness sounded in his voice. Leaning toward her he rested on the oars. "Rachel, why did you run away from me like that?" he asked, smiling confidentially, and suddenly one of his hands went out to hers.

She drew back and for a moment enveloped herself in taciturnity, but all at once, as if compelled, she brought a defiant glance around to meet his.

"Why because you started to run—and I ran, too."

"Well, it's useless; you can never elude me again. Do you know," he continued, "it seems to me that this crazy race has been going on ever since the first time I saw you in the mist? Do you remember the day? You were perched on a rock, I recollect, and the cow—

you were leading a cow—pushed up behind you in such a way that her horns curved up about your feet for all the world like a little crescent moon. I swear it had that look. Lord, but you made a picture! Do you remember the day?"

"Yes, I remember the time, but I didn't know I looked like that."

She opened her eyes very wide and her lips parted with the movement of an expanding flower. Vanity kindled in her face as light kindles in a jewel. There is in a woman's inner nature a sensitive something that constitutes the very essence of her charm, that informs her physical features with vivacity, with seduction. The craving to have this secret attribute recognized, causes her to discover in every compliment a spiritual significance; causes her to wrap herself in its fancied meaning, as in a shawl; causes her to live in it, breathe it in—in short to discover in it an atmosphere of inspiration in which she manages to exist for the briefest fraction of time. Indeed, the longing for the caress of

words addressed to her very soul, is as natural to an imaginative and ardent woman, as the longing for the caress of light is to a flower. And with Rachel, as with many another young girl of New England traditions, the craving had never been gratified. Now Emil's praise of her was so alluring that she was trapped into listening; had he paused for a word, involuntarily she would have supplied it.

But he required no urging to finish his speech which dropped from his lips with all the precipitancy of fruit from an overladen branch.

"You were just like a figure from some church altar," he told her fervently. "Your dress was blue, and the fog rolled about you in clouds. All the same, you know, your expression wasn't exactly saintly; it was too __"

"Too what?" she whispered.

"Well, just what it is now," and with that he

looked at her until she was obliged to avert her eyes.

"I mean that your face is very innocent," he explained, "and at the same time, it is all alive with—well, with a sort of curiosity. But to-day you were Diana of the Chase with your skirts all ruffling around your feet and blowing to the side in folds. However I'm not up in mythology; all I know is, my own, you'll never succeed in fencing yourself off from me again. But don't look at me like that!" And with an indefinable glance at her as she sat, suddenly converted to sternness, he took up the oars.

She observed complete silence, and for some moments all that was heard about them was the ripple of the water as it met the sides of the boat. The waves like a lover approached the boat, touching it lightly, tentatively and timidly caressing it with eager lips. But occasionally waves larger than the rest seized the skiff and upbore it as in the powerful embrace of arms, dipped and sank with it; while a sound of multiplied kisses ran

over the surface of the glancing ocean, which was tremulous as a breast heaving with love. And the influence of that universal caress mounted to the air, which was like a stinging breath crossed with tears of spray; even reached the low-stooping western heavens where sailed largely great cloud masses, like huge embarrassed lovers, that never the less, with a sudden darting of colour along their edges, strange and fiery smiles, approached—melted softly and completely into one.

The sea was a theatre and the play enacted on that broad expanse, in the swiftly falling twilight, for the bewilderment of that pair of human mites,—the play was Love. For Nature, the great scene shifter, who causes the mists to rise above swamps that she may bring about the love and mating of midges, is the artist incomparable when she sets out to glamour and bend to her will the least significant of these struggling, valiant creatures called men, these creatures that dare, with a law opposed to hers, to defy her.

Rachel had crept to the extreme end of the

skiff and when the water rose to the edge it often dashed across her knees. Her head was flung back, but for all that, she saw nothing. She was holding her emotions well in leash and the effort drew from her now and then a sigh. Where the fingers of one hand met the back of the other, for she had them tight clasped, there were white marks on the flesh. She sat before him with the impassive countenance of an image, though internally she was consumed with flames.

Time passed imperceptibly, but all at once she pointed to the shore.

"Emil," she said, in a muffled voice, "there's Gray Arches among the trees. The lamps are lighted. Make haste."

He had been doubling on his course, and, unnoticed by her, even striking out to sea, with the object of delaying the moment of landing. Now the dusk, which had descended insidiously, was close about them.

At her words, he headed the boat for the

shore. But after an instant he leaned forward. "Before I take you in, I want you to tell me when I'm to see you again."

She drew herself up: "I don't know when you'll see me—never, I think." She spoke in a throbbing, suppressed way, exactly as if she were forcing back from the edge of her lips and to the depths of her heart, some secret. "There is the pier; don't you see it?"

The young man nodded. "Yes, I see it all right. Rachel, I'm going to Barbieri Brothers to-morrow to see how that marble-cutting device of mine works. Come there in the afternoon and see the machine with me, won't you?"

She shook her head.

"Very well then," and he began paddling out to sea.

"You think you'll frighten me or annoy me," she cried, moved to scorn, "but you won't succeed. I can swim as well as you."

He laughed and the boat, quivering in a bewildered sort of way, once more approached the land, noisily cleaving the water.

"Rachel, you'll come and see that machine, won't you? I'll never ask you again. But it's an interesting thing, really it is, and they're cutting the figures for the Century Library with it. Can't you understand that I'd like to have you see my work? It isn't much that I ask, and you can get the five o'clock train out here if you like. Promise me you'll come."

Through the gloom on the pier she saw a lonely figure intent on the antics of the boat. She looked at Emil and the impulse of her tenderness carried her beyond the barrier imposed by her will. In one instant she had passed beyond the outworks of her usual self. When she answered him in low, vibrant tones, it was a message, if he had but understood, from the very depths of her heart:

"Yes, I'll come—you've no business to ask me, and I've no business to promise; I'll

come, but there must be no more of this; it's ended." These words were at once an appeal and a command.

But Emil, ignoring the nervous shrinking that came over her, caught her hand under cover of the gloom and held it to his cheek—his lips. Then cleverly, easily, he brought the boat to the pier.

The next instant Rachel was confronted by her husband. Giving Emil his coat, she stepped from the boat, refusing assistance. As she swayed on gaining the pier, Simon took hold of her arm; then passed his hand over her shoulders.

"Why you're wet—you're wet through," he exclaimed, and as he turned to Emil she noticed that he spoke in a manner unusually cordial and spontaneous. "So you were caught in the rain? If you'll just step to the house, St. Ives, I'll give you something to ward off a chill; a nip of whiskey wouldn't come amiss."

But Emil, muttering something about returning the fisherman's boat, disappeared in the twilight and Rachel, stumbling like one who walks in a dream, accompanied Simon to the house.

"The rain won't harm you, my love," he was saying as they gained the porch, "if you change your clothing at once. It's remaining in damp garments that's the imprudent thing."

As they crossed the threshold Rachel caught his hand. "Simon, I—I want to speak to you." And half dragging, half pushing him, she urged him into the front room.

This room was large and shadowy, with a row of French windows commanding a view of the sea. The shades were drawn and the light from a small fire on the hearth sparkled on a glass dome beneath which were placed specimens of sea moss and shells. The dome stood at one end of a long table and a candelabrum hung with glass prisms at the other end; above one candle hung a red spark, —the wick needed snuffing. The room was

damp. As she spoke Rachel, passing her arm behind her, clasped the glass knob of the door.

"Simon—I don't want to stay here any longer."

He confronted her in surprise: "Not stay here any longer? Why, Rachel, you astonish me; I thought you loved the sea."

"So I do—but this coast—it oppresses me. Simon, I want to go back to the city at once, do you understand,—at once; can't we move to-morrow?"

"But you're irrational, my dear. In fact the doctor whom I saw only yesterday, counselled just the opposite course. He said to me, speaking of you, 'the sea air is what she needs; she grew up in such a climate. You keep her on the shore until late fall!"

For a moment Rachel dropped her head against the panels of the door and closed her eyes; then raising her head, she looked

intently at her husband:

"Simon, you asked Mr. St. Ives to come here; you asked him without consulting me and now—I want to go away."

For an instant he studied her, then he crossed to her side and took her hand.

"My dear Rachel," he said, "I thought perhaps you understood without anything being said. Rachel, believe me, I have not the feeling now about your friendship with St. Ives that I once had. That feeling of jealousy, —for it was jealousy—I do not deny it—was degrading to us both, but particularly it was insulting to you. And during your illness it left me; thank Heaven, it left me," he repeated. "And now be generous—don't take from me the happiness I feel. You think I objected to your being out with him, but when I saw you in the boat, I was conscious only of a serene friendship for St. Ives."

A flash of firelight illumined his face and she saw to her surprise that his usually

enigmatic eyes held a look that completely transformed him. The explanation she had intended to make died on her lips. With a bewildered gesture she turned as if to leave the room; and at that moment they were interrupted. There was a knock, and the caretaker questioningly opened the door.

"If you please, Mrs. Hart," she began, "there's a strange young man down in the kitchen who is asking to see you."

"A young man?"

"Yes, a lad. My husband thinks he ain't just right, he's so sort of wild looking; but the boy says he's from your old home and nothing for it but he must see you."

"Why it's André!" Rachel cried in amazement, and, before the woman had finished speaking, she darted from the room.

Simon's voice pursued her: "Your clothing, change it first, I beg of you."

Rachel had vanished.

The next moment she was standing before André. Catching him by the arms, she shook him; then pressed her head to his shoulder. "Oh, André," she whispered, "Is it you—is it really?" And passing her arms about him, she clung to him.

The young fellow suffered the embrace and his hands hung motionless at his sides, though in his great eyes a spark kindled as he looked down at her.

"Tell me," she asked breathlessly, "how did you ever manage to find me—and what brings you, André dear? Explain—tell me everything, but not here," catching sight of the caretaker who had reëntered the kitchen. "Come to the front room where there is a fire. —Simon, this is André," she cried as they encountered her husband on his way through the hall. And taking the young fellow's hand, she placed it in Simon's.

"Yes, I'm going now," she added. "I'm

dying of curiosity, but I'll change my dress first. And do you make André comfortable. I'll be back in a minute," she cried.

Rachel's welcome of her childhood's friend was all the more eager because she looked to him to save her from the difficulties of her situation and from herself. While she dressed, she thought only of André and as she drew on a pair of dry shoes and tightened the crossed lacings with excited jerks, she said his name over and over like a child bubbling with joy.

"Now for the news?" she cried, entering the front room; and seating herself beside André, she took his hand. "Something special brought you, I know it. Now tell me."

The story at any other time would have held her spellbound, but in her present mood she had difficulty in grasping it. Constantly her thoughts wandered, now to Emil, now to André. She drew such profound comfort from the touch of André's strong young fingers.

The facts as he related them were as

follows: A man in the last stage of consumption and calling himself, "John Smith" had made his appearance in Old Harbour a few days before. Desiring news of Lavina Beckett's daughter, he had asked to be directed to André. When he learned from André that Rachel was living in New York city, he had burst into tears. He had declared he must see her before he died. He had persuaded André to accompany him to the city as he feared to travel farther alone. But before leaving Old Harbour he had deposited a sum of money in the bank and had written a long letter which he addressed to Rachel. On the journey he had read and reread this epistle. He was very weak and when they reached their destination, collapsed in the great bustling station. After much parley over the telephone, a station attendant had arranged for his reception at a hospital. Thither he had been taken. The physician who attended him assured him he would be much stronger after a few hours' rest, and on hearing this, John Smith had begged André to find Rachel and bring her to the hospital the following day. "Afternoon's always my best

time, bring her then," he had implored.

"I understand; it's poor Father's friend," Rachel whispered dreamily, when André concluded; "he didn't send all the money Father gave him that time, and now he wants to give me the rest. That's the whole sad story. But André, I can't seem to think about it," she murmured after a moment. "I'll go to the hospital without fail, but now let's talk about you. Do you know, I think you managed splendidly to ferret me out in this way. You went to the house, first, of course, and Theresa told you where I was."

While André's voice ran on detailing the news: how his mother and he now performed every duty about the lighthouse as the Captain was in his cups most of the time (Oh, but the Captain, he was a clever one at concealing the state of things!) how Nora Gage had gone into the shop with Katherine Fry, how Zarah Patch had increased the size of his vegetable garden, and Lottie Loveburg had taken up with Jim Wright after all—Rachel scarcely listened to him. A danger

confronted her, and, try as she would, she could think of nothing but the decisive interview of the morrow,—that battle that must be waged in spite of her own deadly weakness and overwhelming love.

She asked herself a question. Why at this time, rather than any other, were the facts relating to her father's life to be revealed to her? And, as she sat by André's side, she was conscious of a mysterious influence, like a warning, reaching her from the insistent past.

CHAPTER VII
IN WHICH JOHN SMITH UNBURDENS HIS CONSCIENCE

Rachel's mouth was now perfectly formed to express her emotions, as it had not been in early youth. There had come a little added fulness in the curves of the upper lip, a little

added sensitiveness in the line of the lower. With its well-defined corners, melting, when she smiled, into a pair of will-o'-the-wisp dimples, this mouth of hers was worthy to form the lure for many an exciting escapade on the part of her lovers. In her intelligent, sometimes perfervid, often gloomy face, it suggested a series of grace-notes introduced wilfully into a bit of serious music. It destroyed the general harmony of her face and increased its fascination. On the morning following the primitive race across the sands, the grace-notes dominated the more serious expression of her personality.

In the depths of her there was plenty of sadness, but the joy which is inseparable from any confession of love, even the love which battles against insurmountable barriers, glowed through her and informed every fibre of her with sparkling animation. She laughed frequently for no apparent cause.

The wide lawns about Gray Arches still glistened with dew and birds sang in the branches of the trees. The notes mingled with

the plash of the waves on the distant beach, and with that infinite murmur of sounds that came out of the sunshine, out of the grass, out of the shimmering distances of that smiling country, checkered in light open fields and in dark variegated woods. All around, everywhere, was vivid palpitating life.

Rachel with a huge pair of shears that flashed in the sun, was snipping dead roses from a bush of the late-blooming variety. Brown and withered, they fell on the gravel path—mere ghosts of flowers; and, at every onslaught, all the green leaves of the bush shook and all its fresh blossoms trembled and poured forth an intoxicating perfume as if to thank her for the service. Beside her, seated on the grass, André was making the flowers they had gathered into a bouquet. He held in his brown hands nasturtiums, gladioli and dahlias. Occasionally, unable to resist an unusually perfect one, Rachel flung him still another rose.

"There," she said, "that's enough; if I cut any more, I shan't be able to carry them, and

the hospital nurse may not let John Smith have them anyway."

A thorn had scratched her wrist, and she lifted the hand to her lips.

André regarded her with a vigorous gaze. "Do you know," he said at last, "you look like a rose yourself."

She threw him the shadow of a glance from between half-closed lids. In her morning dress of delicate pink muslin, beneath a shade hat with a flapping brim, she did look like a rose; and a wide collar, turned up over her throat to protect it from the sun, heightened the illusion. Against its colour her cheeks had taken a richer tinge and her eyes, between their curling lashes, were unusually deep and liquid. She was amazingly beautiful with a superadded beauty, with that fleeting and ethereal grace, which, independent of features or contours, touches any woman when she realizes that she is loved where she herself loves. Now, as if anxious to divert André's too curious gaze, she began speaking rapidly

and almost at random. The air and the sunlight appeared to intoxicate her.

"Have you ever noticed, André," she cried, "the boastfulness of Nature when she has anything worth displaying? She is for all the world like a woman who takes particular pride in showing off her children, like that Mrs. Polestacker we both knew who was always calling attention to her Katie's teeth and curls. Take that rose bush," she continued, "it fairly swaggers with pride now that it is covered so finely with roses, but once the flowering season is over, and see how meekly it will obliterate itself; it will retire into the background like an old maid at a dance. For who notices the larkspur when its time is past, or the raspberry bush when it is no longer hung with its little crimson lamps? It is the energy that a growing, living thing puts forth that it would flaunt before us, saying, 'See here, *I* produced these flowers—these berries!' and it is that energy which attracts us—the immense energy of being." And throwing back her head, her neck on the strain, her arms falling at her sides, with the

shears in one hand, she gazed into the deep blue of the sky which, bending down over the earth, was like an inverted sea.

Unconsciously, as in the old days, she spoke her thoughts aloud to André. He did not reply; if truth were told, he was in the dark as to her meaning, but that only increased the enchantment.

André was Rachel's senior by six years, but owing to his mind in which the impressions were deep but few, he still looked a youth, almost a child. His beauty, agile, simple, unsettled, with admirable disposition of colouring, was that of a child. High on the cheek bones, under the eyes, the blood came and went with his emotions, and his arched lips under his tiny moustache stood a little open, which gave him an innocent expression. He was difficult to resist, just as a child is difficult to resist. Rachel's feeling for him was almost maternal; but for all that, her comprehension of him failed at one point.

When he had first received word of her

marriage, André had cast himself on the ground, and the earth had seemed to respond with deep tremours to his grief. He had told himself that he would never see her again. As for her husband, he felt that it would be impossible for him to ever meet Simon Hart without yielding to the desire to fly straight at his throat. Yet, he had met him and experienced no emotion of the sort. Something told him that Rachel was not in love with her husband. Still there was that in her eyes which bewildered him. Now with his hands clasped behind his head and his back against a tree, he regarded her with a devotion, a tenderness, a desperation of which none but a pure and youthful soul is capable, and the old agony began to stir again in the depths of his breast.

Ceasing from her ecstatic contemplation of the sky, Rachel looked over at the gardener's cottage. As she did so, all her outlines went to deeper softness. André, sensitively, felt the thrill through her of some ineffable emotion.

"What are you thinking about, Rachel?" he

demanded.

She started and the colour mounted.

"Thinking?"

"Yes; just now, when you turned and looked over yonder?"

"Oh! ... I was thinking of Mr. St. Ives's improvement of the organ. It's really extraordinary what he has accomplished, André; and by such simple means. You must see it. He's carrying on his work over there in the gardener's cottage. And I was comparing his invention and his natural pride in it, to the rose bush and its roses, I suppose."

"St. Ives?" André was sitting upright and rigid. "Is he—is he the one who came to Pemoquod that time?"

"Yes. My husband formed a company to represent his inventions. I always felt Mr. St. Ives had great promise," she went on as frankly as she could, "and I persuaded Simon

to get up a company. Now he's glad he did."

André was wretched. "And he's here?

"Yes; for a few weeks. Mr. Hart was anxious that the work shouldn't be delayed, so he came here while the shop is being altered."

André said no more. And Rachel exerted herself to dispel his gloom. So contagious was the vitality of her mood that he apparently forgot the incident.

Presently, bidding him gather up the withered roses that littered the path, and taking into her own hands the bunch of fresh blossoms, she led the way to the house and André followed. His old dream, in all its simplicity, once more possessed his heart.

When Rachel arrived at the hospital, John Smith was expecting her. In a clean shirt with his grey hair neatly brushed and his gaunt frame arranged under a spotless sheet, he was eagerly awaiting her. The floor nurse warned her that the interview must be a brief one; the

patient could not live more than a day or two.

John Smith's story was substantially what Rachel had surmised it would be, and as he told it with frequent interruptions when the cough racked him, she had difficulty in fixing her thoughts upon him. The vital moment of her own life called her, and try as she would, she could give but a divided attention.

"The fact is, I ain't done just the straight thing by you," he rambled on, "and I'm glad you're as well fixed as you are. It ain't quite the same as if I'd found you in want. However, I've suffered for putting this time off; I've been hectored in ways you wouldn't dream of. Needn't tell me the dead don't take their revenge if you pass over their wishes! I don't mean that they come back or anything of that sort," he interrupted himself, in response to a questioning glance, "but they stick in your mind somehow—you can't forgit how they looked when they told you to do such and such a thing, and you don't do it. But I'll say this much for myself, I meant as much as could be to give you that money

when I reached America seventeen years ago, a month or two after your father's death; but I had a hard run of luck, and I used some of it, and then I used more, until it was about all gone. And it was only when I got this cough about three years and a half ago, that I began to think a good bit about Thomas Beckett. Funny too, so long after his death; but I'd see him when I was droppin' off to sleep, and he'd look at me so! But your father didn't do the straight thing either," he broke off with sudden resentment, "for he left your mother, as far as I could gather, to shift for herself.

"As I was saying, perhaps it was my low state of health, but he gave me no rest; seemed as if he was tryin' to say that you needed that money. And finally the thought come to me that perhaps I ought to give your mother at least part of what was owin' her; so I wrote to Old Harbour and you know the rest. You see," he concluded, "when I learned that your mother had been dead more'n twenty years, I was afraid to make myself known. I was fearful some relative or friend'd get after me on your part. So I sent seven

hundred dollars along, it was all I'd saved, to that friend of yours whose name the postmaster gave me, and then I left. I went away from the town in Massachusetts where I'd been workin' and I found a job as foreman in a mill in another town. And I thought everything'd be all right then; but do you know, I still dreamed of your father, and the upshot was, that I went to a priest and made a clean breast of the story; and as he told me to do, I worked hard and paid it all up. Yes, I've paid it all up," he finished, "for the balance, the eight hundred dollars that was comin' to you, I deposited in your name in the bank at Old Harbour;" and fumbling in the pocket of his shirt, he handed her a sealed envelope. "There's the deposit slip, and the whole story written out ready to be mailed to you in case I didn't manage to see you," he explained.

His face had grown brighter, had regained a faint expression of health, as the load that had long oppressed his conscience was lifted.

Rachel left the invalid holding admiringly in his bony fingers her bunch of flowers. She

reached the door of the ward; then, with a sudden eagerness, she retraced her steps.

"Was my Father a happy man?" she asked, "or did he seem to regret all along what he had done in leaving my Mother?" She waited his answer with bated breath.

But relief was manifest all over John Smith. Had he not triumphantly passed through the ordeal of his confession? At her question his eyes glistened; he laughed a weak, irresponsible laugh.

"No, I don't think he worried much about it till he come to die. It was far-away questions that touched your father more; he was always reading and sometimes he'd argue and git angry. But barring those times, he was pretty jolly as far as I can recollect. It was only when he seen the last port just ahead, that same as me, he seemed to think things over. But, I've done the right thing, and I'm going to git well," he proclaimed.

The same nurse she had seen on coming,

met her in the corridor. Rachel directed her to have John Smith moved to a private room with special attendant; then she left the hospital.

For some reason she was relieved that her father had not regretted his course sooner, that he had remained, almost to the last, a true vagabond. As to her one-time hot defence of him on the score of his loyalty to her mother, the point had lost significance.

All that was mettlesome in her character was aroused. Having promised Emil to go to the marble works, she was going there, in the face of fancied influences from the past; in the face, too, of the vigorous warning of her own conscience. The coming interview was absolutely necessary that she might, once and for all, make clear to him her position. In this juggling with conscience most women are adept. Rachel played the game so well as to be almost self-deceived. However, as the moment of the meeting drew near, she grew faint and a tide of irrepressible joy mingled with and almost dominated her misery. When

she quitted the hospital she was pale with determination, like a soldier before battle, but her eyes, overflowing with light, were the eyes of a woman in love. Her mind was too full of its own matter to allow her to care about anything else. Does not the surge of passion in one's own breast drown the echo of death and despair from another's heart?

She stopped at one of the large shops where delicacies were for sale, and ordered a basket of fruits and jellies sent to John Smith; then, hailing a cab, she drove to the marble works, which lay in the direction of the Bronx on the outskirts of the city.

CHAPTER VIII
THE PLACE OF THE STATUES

"Is Mr. St. Ives here?"

The question fell into the silence of an

office where Barbieri, the proprietor, was writing at a desk.

"Mr. St. Ives? I will send for him. Julian,"—to a boy, who in the doorway was burying his naked feet in the fine white marble dust like snow,—"Mr. St. Ives,—a lady."

"I have come to see the new machine."

"Ah, the new machine? It is very wonderful; it not only points the marble, but cuts it, following the model; and no man touches it. Never anything like it in this country; in France, yes, there is something of the sort, but not perfect like this one."

"As wonderful as that?"

"*Si, si*,—yes, madam, wonderful."

"And will you show me how it works? I want to see it in operation."

"In operation? Ah, I regret, but to-day, madam, to-day is Saturday; there is no power,

no electricity, you understand, no men."

"Then why did he have me come?" she murmured, and caught her lip between her teeth, a trick with her when angry or perplexed.

"Why did you have me come?" she said, addressing the inventor, who with impetuous strides was advancing to meet her.

He paused in his tracks: "I had forgotten that they closed down."

She scanned him with a swift glance.

"Forgive me," he said in an undertone, "really, I had forgotten, Rachel, if I ever knew it. But you must see the place now you are here.—Mr. Barbieri," he added, "I am going to show Mrs. Hart over the works," and he led the way across a narrow court to an adjoining structure.

The marble shop covered an extensive area, and the white light that fell through its glass

roof inundated its farthest corner. In this bath of light, in this silence, unbroken by a single sound; in the midst of casts, dust, artistic litter of all sorts, were the statues. Some scarcely blocked from the rough stone, they rose on all sides. They overtopped the miniature plaster models, like giants overtopping pygmies; they elbowed the grotesque machines that are used for enlarging purposes; they crowded the walls; they occupied every foot of space not reserved for the workmen; some even, with their Titan tread, had passed through the lofty doorway and stood among barrels and rubbish in the garish sunlight of the yard. On every side monoliths of stone were being cut into human shape. There was a torso with the girth of a Colossus; over yonder a hand chiseled from a boulder; beyond that, a monumental figure frowning like a tortured Atlas. All in sections—painful, writhing, some of the statues lacked a head, others an arm or a foot, and others had their limbs still entangled in uncut blocks of stone.

It was like a workshop of surgeons of stone men; like a manufactory of the gods where

were created marble monsters that suffered with the age and immobility of stone, in which petty human qualities of Fortitude, Justice, Fidelity were being stamped. Hewn out of the womb of the earth, the marble was tortured here to wear man's face, his form; finally it would be set up under the sun to testify with the might of marble limbs to the ideals that govern his heart.

As she viewed the stone population, no one could have told what was passing in Rachel's stormy little breast, for if there was a spark in her eyes that seemed to indicate subterranean depths of passion, the rest of her features were astonishingly passive. Her gloves hampered her, and with nervous gestures she began taking them off. Tense and silent and acutely vital, she stood beside Emil, an expression of all that is baffling and mysterious in woman.

Conscious of a dryness in his throat, he kept his eyes to the statues.

"They are said to be the largest figures ever

cut," he murmured. "They are for the pediment of the new Century Library."

"How still they are!"

"Yes, and one rather expects them to speak and move." Suddenly swinging round, he looked her in the eyes. "Oh, my own!" he cried. With uncertain steps he moved toward her.

And swift and strong between them, Fate drew her thread of love; in that electric net of hers, she caught their souls and drew them close together. She took the pair of them, as a fowler takes a bird.

His savage heart dominated by emotion, Emil trembled with a desire to fall at her feet. But she would not own her capture.

"Stop, Emil!" she cried in a suppressed voice; "stop right where you are! I'll not listen to your words! I came here to tell you—"

He looked upon her intently: "You came

because you had to come!"

The speech thrilled with the inspiration of conquest.

"Oh, my love," he cried, "haven't the years we've been separated been dreary enough? Haven't they been empty enough for us both? —For you, on your side, you love me; I know it!"

Instead of answering she drew herself up. But he ignored these signs of rebellion.

"It was a misty day when I first saw you," he pursued, "and yesterday also it was misty and wet, and all at once I understood that I had been carrying the thought of you in my heart from the start. Rachel, you are my heart!" he cried, borne on by the lyric power of his own utterance. "And as I raced after you across that beach, I knew to a certainty it was no one-sided thing. Rachel, that kiss, *your* kiss—it was not a childish impulse; and I dare to tell you so. We took possession of each other, love, at the first glance! Can you

deny it? *Do* you deny it?" compressing her hands. "No, no, you cannot!" he concluded; "and that being true, it is beyond our own power or the power of any creature, to part us now! Oh, sweet!" and his tone changed quickly as he saw that she shook from head to foot, "look around you,—isn't the world beautiful? haven't we a right to happiness?"

Dropping on his knees, he carried her hand to his throbbing breast.

"Happiness?" she repeated, "no, no, not happiness! but peace perhaps, and that comes —it comes—"

He looked up into her face—up at the quivering bend of her lips, up until his eyes found hers, drowned in tears and almost covered by their fluttering lids—and into his glance flashed a subjugating power, an irresistible force.

She attempted to follow the line of her argument, a moment before so clear, but the word "renunciation" died away in a sigh.

She helplessly returned his look.

And the gigantic statues increased her bewilderment; for the one thought that seemed to leap behind the statues' staring eyes, between their huge and rigid lips, in the hollow of their stony breasts, was the naturalness of loving wildly.

Emil dropped his lips on her wrist.

Releasing the hand, she sought to repulse him, but instead, she clutched his hair with a tenderness almost convulsive.

"Oh, you are killing me!" she moaned.

Drawing himself up, he tried to take her in his arms; but with sudden violence, she forced his head downward.

"Oh, you torture me!" she panted.

He grasped her hands;—and once more, before her drowning sight, wavered the statues. In a delirious flash she realized the similarity of their fate. Like them, she was

destined to stand forth under an open sky, testifying to a command contrary to nature, but which had been laid upon her kind from time immemorial.

She pushed Emil from her, and pressing her hands to her breast, fled head down from the place.

Instantly he was upon his feet:

"You are not going?" .....

Among the statues, quiet, watchful, the words trembled and died away; then in sympathy the statues seemed to shudder at that cry of agony and surprise.

CHAPTER IX
THE ENERGY OF BEING

Cabs were an infrequent phenomenon in that quarter and a crowd of small boys,—eager, dirty, volatile, with thin bare little legs and miserable little elbows, were gathered around the knock-kneed horse that dejectedly hung its head. They were feeding the animal with dusty grass plucked from between the cobblestones of the pavement. But at Rachel's approach they fell away as if pushed away. The driver in his tall hat bent to receive her order. She gave it without looking at him.

Mad, uncalculating love, too long repressed, struggled in her with a vague sense of shame. But at first the sense of shame was shadowy indeed. Carried out of every perception but the throbbing one of her loss of self in Emil, for a time she heard only his words "my own." "Yes, yours, yours always," the blood proclaimed, and the soul's contradiction sounded small and faint. Then, as the voice of conscience grew stronger, she turned her head from side to side in agony. Chaste and fiercely proud, she told herself she was a humiliated woman. But not his the blame. All that had happened she had invited.

By her expression she seemed to be saying, "I will not think."

None the less she did think. She went over the scene from which she had just issued, not once, but countless times, and at each repetition she extracted from it the keenest misery, the most poignant bliss. All the mystery and domination of her passion were written on her face and at intervals sighs escaped her, mingled with breathless, half-articulated words:

"Oh,—he loves me—he loves me—and if it weren't for a certain thing we could be happy."

She paused, again borne out of herself by an animating memory. Once more Emil stood before her with his glance, laughing, kindling, melting. Once more he spoke. As she listened to all the mad, foolish, electrifying things that fell from his lips, life seemed to break forth in her in its plentitude. His words were to her panting heart what rain is to the parched earth. She experienced a

feeling at once violent and divine.

And she had repulsed him.

The memory left her almost sobbing. She moved her hands; she lifted her face with its tremulous mouth breathing a caress. For uncounted instants she remained suspended in abysses of tenderness. Then she braced herself with resolution.

"No, no," she said aloud. "It's settled."

The dead, expressionless words voiced finality. Thus the will brought the heart temporarily into subjection.

After innumerable involuntary returns to the scene of the marble works she forced herself to give attention to her surroundings. Feverishly she stared about her with breath suspended and lips a little open like a child after a violent fit of weeping.

As the cab rolled forward, with bare tracts, isolated houses and clumps of trees revealing

themselves on either side, to her superalert mind, the city appeared a million-eyed, million-footed monster. Excitedly she nourished the grotesque fancy, seeking in it escape from deeper realization. With its great legs of brick and stone, with its numberless eyes of glass, turbid and bleary, its voluminous, impure breath of smoke, its voice of inconceivable uproar, the city was encroaching on the innocent country. It was devouring it field by field; it was swallowing down the sweet cottages which disappeared from the landscape with miraculous swiftness; swallowing the brooks, the woods, glutting itself and growing big at the expense of the fresh country that never could be restored in all its natural beauty. "Yes, yes, God made the country but man makes the city," she whispered.

As the cab rolled on over more crowded pavements, her consciousness of the scene through which she had just passed was dulled briefly, as pain is dulled in a patient suffering with delirium.

"Ah, how useless is all this bustle and confusion!" she thought irritably. "Surely man could live more simply. But he is dedicated to vanity, he must make a splurge. What was that I said to André this morning? Oh yes—about the energy of being. Man must make a show, if not for his Creator's satisfaction at least for his own. The Creator!" she murmured bitterly, "He knows nothing of us! We pine constantly for a liberty fuller than any we have ever known, and that accounts for all our unwearying expenditure of force. Poor pygmies! Persisting deep in the soul of man, is a vague, undefined sense, 'I am the heritor of the infinite.' And so he works," she continued, "he produces marvels and he thinks his immediate achievement embraces his entire object. But it isn't so. And he opens his heart to passions; but his object is the same. For back of the least labour into which he throws himself, back of the most depraved emotion in which he loses himself, is a vast, mysterious, subconscious searching; and that," she declared, "accounts for everything."

She was soaring now above herself, above the terror of her problem. She was viewing the situation as the universal situation and her thoughts were transfigured, rendered impersonal by the clearness of her perception. She saw life no longer with the eyes of an inexperienced and impassioned woman, but with the eyes of one made wise through extremity of anguish.

"It accounts for all the good that we do and for all the evil that we do," she resumed. "Each chooses a road of escape, perhaps many roads, and follows them madly. But," she concluded, "we never find that larger freedom. We are tormented by the feeling of its imminence, but it retreats ever beyond us. And finally we come face to face with the eternal, basic fact of existence: *I am a prisoner*. That's what we discover. We learn the truth. I learned it that night after the opera. *I am the bird in the box!*"

For an instant she held her head erect, then shrank, a pained and huddled form, against the cushions of the cab.

"Yes, I have my dream like the others," she whimpered. "But it isn't a dream. Love *is* a mode of escape. It is. It is. And it's my road. But do I follow it?"

The answer was a forlorn shake of the head.

"Emil, my Father, Simon, Emily Short, that girl Betty Holden, even Nora Gage; all—all wiser than I. They follow their instincts, creditable or discreditable, they follow them and they glean at least some satisfaction. While I—"

The full tide of her misery, that which she had tried to evade, inundated her.

"Fool, why am I like that?" she muttered, "for some scruple, which God, if he knows, probably laughs at me for respecting. As Emil said, wasn't it God made us capable of love?"

The tears had not come before. Now she checked them with her handkerchief, but constantly they fell, constantly she gave long deep sighs, heartrending, mournful. Presently

a flaming, defiant thought stood out against the background of her misery. There was relief in action, even in the action that is called sin.

"Madam would like to have me get her ferry ticket?"

The greasy red face of the driver was peering down upon her; the cab had come to a standstill. She had entirely forgotten why she was there and it was only by an effort that she understood what he was asking.

Once on the ferry boat, she leaned her elbows on the railing and, as she listened to the talk of the water, she grew calmer. For it was strange, wise talk with a laugh under it. The little choppy waves seemed to be telling her that life was short and sweet. Grey and blue and dun colour, pink and rose red, the waves shouted and sang together. And above the roofs of the receding city, wrapped in the mists of evening and the ascending vapour of traffic, the dull and yet flaming disk of the sun hung suspended.

A passenger disturbed her and she shifted her position. Important little tugs towing huge rafts, and the arms of derricks being convoyed over the water, like helpless giants, came into view; and for a time the ferry boat passed into the sheltering shadow of a great bridge. Emerging from one confused and sparkling distance and disappearing into another, the bridge appeared like a tangible bow of promise between the two cities. The sight of the cable cars and the tiny moving mites that, like insects, slowly crawled over it, comforted her like a friendly omen.

But when they gained the other shore and she entered the station, the locomotives, emitting great volumes of smoke, recalled to her mind her grandfather's fanciful description; and she remembered with a pang how she used to behold the world in an innocent and beautiful fashion. But now she saw deeper, now she understood all.

The rest of the trip she ceased to think. She had entered that land known to every unhappy lover, that land in which the misery,

longing and fierce passion that consume his heart, constitute the one reality in a universe otherwise cold and dead.

CHAPTER X
IN THE GARDEN

The sight of Annie, arrayed in a freshly-ironed white dress and sitting in the carriage behind Peter, gave Rachel a disagreeable shock.

"Mr. Hart thought very likely you'd come on the Express, and he sent me along for the drive," and Annie moved her starched flounces that Rachel might sit beside her. "Was it hot in the city?"

"Yes, very."

"And did you go to the marble works to see the new machine? Alexander said that he had

asked you."

"Yes, I went there; but it was Saturday and they had closed down."

"Oh—then nothing came of your visit?"

Rachel shivered.

"All the same," the other continued, "it's very remarkable, that machine; and the best of it is, though I don't suppose you'll think so, Alexander is entitled to all he makes on it and he's going to make a good deal. You see, it's this way," she explained, "Mr. Watson, Mr. Hart—none of the Company, in fact, took a bit of stock in that marble-cutting scheme when Alexander outlined it for them. They said: 'There's nothing in it; you go ahead with the organ attachment, don't let anything come before that; and work out the marble-cutting machine on the side and you're welcome to all you make on it.' And Alexander worked out the whole thing and even made the big model on three Sundays and the Fourth of July, which came on Monday. Those four

days were sufficient, and it's proved a triumph—really a great triumph. But I suppose he's told you. He said he was going to; and I thought it would be all right, for I knew you'd be on Alexander's side and would see that what he's done is perfectly fair."

Rachel nodded. "Perfectly fair," she murmured.

She had been asking herself while they had been driving along, what Annie's mode of escape was. Now she knew. "It's the accumulation of things," she told herself. "Annie thinks if Emil can earn enough money so that they can have *things*, she'll be more than she is now."

"If they pay him as much as they promised to, those Italians up there," Annie continued, "I don't see why we shouldn't have a little cottage in the fall on the outskirts of the city somewhere, and Alexander could go in to his work."

"Didn't I say so?" Rachel thought; and she

was delighted at her own astuteness.

The carriage lamps were lighted and by the aid of these and the shining of the full moon, she could see her companion distinctly even to the tiny freckles that covered the bridge of her nose. Freckles and all, however, Annie was looking undeniably pretty in a fresh and innocent, if somewhat meaningless, way. Annie's emotions were those of a child, Rachel told herself, trying to lighten her burden of self-reproach and shame.

They arrived at the gate of Gray Arches which was cut through an evergreen hedge and guarded by two large ornamental lamps, that, being rusty and out of order, were never lighted. The carriage rolled over the sand of the avenue, past some large bushes of rhododendron and arrived before the steps of the glass-enclosed porch. Simon hastened out of the house and helped them to alight.

"So you caught the Express all right?" he cried; then added, in an undertone as he took Rachel's arm, "I sent her to meet you, because

I knew she'd enjoy the drive. St. Ives is in the city to-day and I asked her to dine with us."

A few moments later Rachel stood at the window of her room.

Below in the garden Annie was standing beside Simon. He had picked up a pebble from the path. "Do you know," she heard him say in the tone he always assumed when communicating information, "I've noticed that a great many of these pebbles are of the amethyst variety."

"It's curious," she thought, approaching the washstand, "what Simon sees in Annie. He can't do enough for her, apparently. She's over here all the time now."

She began drawing off her rings, but the wedding ring resisted and she was obliged to hold the finger under a faucet. Her face assumed a moody, desperate expression. The world had shrunk to the round of her wedding ring.

She plunged her face into the cold water. What should she put on? Emil had called her beautiful. Was it true that she was beautiful? She put on a light dress trimmed with insertions of real lace, a dress much too elaborate for the occasion, and went downstairs.

In the dining room the party was awaiting her, and Simon had lit the wax candles in the large candelabra in honour of Annie's presence. In the shifting radiance which is a peculiarity of candle light, Rachel's beauty shone forth triumphantly. Annie in her freshly-starched frock, with her smooth blond little head and her unimaginative glance, looked like a daisy of the kind that grows by the thousand in the fields, beside some rare flower that had opened its petals to their extreme limit. There was no mystery in Annie; but Rachel was all mystery, all passion, all fire. Something unusual escaped from the glances she lifted, and from those she half-concealed. Shadows teased the corners of her mouth and sank into the slight hollow at the base of her throat. Light bathed

her brow. Something that was at once the "joy of her soul" and the grief of her soul trembled from between her parted lips.

André could not take his eyes from her; and, as he looked, an immeasurable anguish mingled with his delight.

"I must catch the train in the morning, Rachel," Simon remarked as they rose from the table, "a note from Theresa says Father is ailing. Nothing serious, I infer, but I shall spend the day in town to-morrow, lunch with him, and then I shall know all I wish. Watch a man when he's taking his food and you can judge fairly of his condition."

Rachel cast a scornful glance at her husband. Everything he said to-night annoyed her. But his next words made her ashamed.

"I wish I could bring Father out here," he added, "but the doctor is against it and perhaps he's right."

She turned impulsively with some idea of

making amends for her thoughts. But when Simon, as they were leaving the dining room, inclined his head toward hers, she sprang aside, giving him a strange look in the face.

Of course she must tell him everything; but not to-night—to-night, she thought, he seemed particularly contented. He had gone now to get his hat. The clouds on the previous day had not emptied themselves. Now they once more drove through the heavens, though the moon, at present, shone victoriously. As Annie feared for her starched dress, Simon was going to take her home at once.

When the door had closed upon them, Rachel went into the front room. André was sitting before one of the long windows, the casement of which lay back against the wall. In one of the upper panes of glass, swimming through a bank of wild clouds, the moon was reflected. It was as if the moon were in the room. The heat had increased; lightning played along the sky, and in the garden, the shrubbery, half shrouded in a silvery mist, was motionless.

"Play something for me, André," Rachel said; and going to the window, she stood with her hands clasped behind her neck. How get through this evening—how get through her entire life?

"I thought out a piece after you left Pemoquod. I will play that for you." And passing to the mantel, André took down his fiddle. "I call it your piece," he added softly.

But Rachel, her eyes on the gleaming garden, did not hear him.

Presently, a mournful and plaintive air, like the voice of a child giving way to grief, began to float through the room. It was instinctive playing, devoid of skill in the technical sense; none the less the sound of the strings was wistful, heart-rending. And suddenly the song gained in force and rang out powerfully; the crude, passionate, beseeching melody flowed from under the nervous, swift-moving bow, and such tenderness and devotion mingled with its flowing, such piercingly-sweet supplication, that Rachel, laying her face on

her arm, supported herself against the casement.

And André, his dark head bent, his cheek pressed to the violin, conscious that she was there before him in her rich dress, played like one in an ecstasy. His body swayed, tears stood on his pale cheeks, but his eyes were closed.

At last, unable to endure the constantly recurring love *motif*, which was sweeter than the moon, more fathomless than the white moon drowned in space, Rachel fled through the long window. With a fierce movement she lifted her arms above her head; then, as if broken, rested her face against a tree. Rising from the ground beneath her feet, floating between the branches of the mist-hung trees, thrilling through all the spaces of the still and waiting garden, ran the fire of that exquisite melody, sounded those strains of pure and youthful love.

Presently a flowering shrub moved slightly. Some branches that overhung a path stirred;

then everything was motionless.

She raised her head, her whole frame quivering like a tightly drawn bow.

Out of the shadows, running rather than walking, Emil was advancing.

With one movement she sprang to him and, uttering a low cry, he caught her.

Each on the lips of the other, their souls were drowned in oblivion; for if he kissed her, she as openly kissed him; and if her cheeks were drenched with tears, they certainly were not all of her own shedding. Tempestuous, tragic emotion overflowed the hearts of both. In the delicious anguish of their embrace, the memory of life with its pitiful conventions dropped from them. Loyalty was an empty word, pity a name.

Their clinging arms its walls, their shining eyes its stars, they stood apart in a universe new-made.

And from the old, old sky the moon that watches over this paltry world of man with his misery and his bliss,—the moon looked down on them. Changing her position on her cloudbank, like a head lolling lazily on a pillow, the moon bestowed on the pair of bewildered children the same glance of remote indulgence she recently had bestowed on the lovers in the Garden of Eden. She threw her brightness over their clasping arms and eloquent faces, and with her radiance mischievously deepened the glamour of that supreme moment in their infinitesimal lives. Then sinking amid the down of her pillow, she temporarily disappeared.

"Rachel, what did you mean by leaving me the way you did this afternoon?" Emil whispered, pausing long enough between his kisses to hold back her head, while he looked down into her eyes with his own which were fierce and wet; "Didn't you know it would be useless?"

His words roused her from the spell that had enwrapped her. Freeing herself with

violence, she turned on him. The crimson had dropped from her cheek like the colours from a mast head.

"Emil, leave me!"

His eyes glowed with a peculiar brilliance:

"Leave you, my own? I'll never leave you! and you'll never leave me again; that couldn't happen more than once!"

And as she looked at him, she understood that he could conceive of nothing strong enough to deter him from following the dictates of his pagan and powerful nature.

"Go away, Emil," she said dully, "if you have any love for me—any pity even." Her brows drew together with hopeless obstinacy. She turned.

With one stride he was beside her and had caught her hand. "Listen to me, love," he cried, and a curious mingling of command, entreaty and supplication trembled in the

words, "to-morrow is Sunday, there is a train in the afternoon at six; I'll wait for you in that little grove near the station. Do you understand?"

"No;" and she stared back at him, all in a blaze.

"Oh, yes you do," he said gently; "I mean that we'll go off somewhere—far, far away. We'll have a cottage on a beach, something like this one here; and we'll have a boat. And there'll be nothing to come between us any more. All that is past. We'll forget it, as if it had never been, and we'll live for each other. And perhaps, later, if you are willing," he pursued, carried away by his visions, "we'll have Mother join us; for you'll take to Mother, Rachel, and she'll take to you. Then, how I will work! I'll astonish you; I'll astonish the world. I'll make you a proud and happy woman, but it will all be owing to you."

"But Simon—Annie—what of them?" she broke in upon him hastily, for she feared this

last argument more than she feared death.

"Well, what of them?" he interrogated, purposely misinterpreting her. "To be sure, Annie scarcely lets me out of her sight these days," he added thoughtfully. "She understands about as much as a humming-bird how such a chap as I has to do his work, and she's eternally standing at my elbow and egging me on. It will be a little difficult to slip away. However, I'll tell her that I'm obliged to see those fellows in the Bronx,—which is quite true," he finished with a brightening smile. "And then another thing that will make my getting away easy, Annie takes a nap now every afternoon, so it can be readily arranged. We'll simply walk away from this, Rachel—we'll leave it all."

She heard in these words the declaration of one who refuses to be fettered by life; who, instead of being hampered by its conventions, rises superior to them. The simplicity of the point of view transfixed her.

Ordinarily Emil would have been swift to

note and follow up the advantage he had gained; but, as he looked upon Rachel, the quality of her resistance struck him for the first time; thereupon that primitive something which in him took the place of conscience stirred ever so slightly. For a brief instant he saw the line of conduct he was tracing so blithely for the pair of them, in a novel and uncomfortable light. A burning emotion rose from the depths of his soul, and in its wake it carried new and troubling questions. He waved his arms vehemently as if to drive this brood of questions from him. But the new emotion persisted, and seemed to fill his breast.

"I don't pretend to know much about any question of right or wrong," he murmured, all at once humble; "but it seems to me, love such as ours is beyond all that. As for Annie," he went on, his confidence in himself restored, "she won't be sorry to be rid of me when she gets over the first surprise. Her parents are forever urging her to come home, and you remember she did leave me a while ago. Ours was a daft marriage if there ever

was one," he continued, "for two unliker people were never yoked together. And the life she'll lead with her parents will suit Annie far better. Poor kitten," he commented with unwonted softness, "she was never made for hardships, and we'll be doing her no wrong. The thing I'm striving after means less than nothing to Annie, and there's where you are different, Rachel. You'll be patient till I do succeed; but I'll not keep you waiting long, sweet, for your presence will brace me so that I can't fail. Then take your husband," he pursued, with a steady glance under her lids, "is he a fit mate for you? Ask yourself? No, no, my own, my darling, we are the fit mates!"

Strongly, in spite of her swift denying, even with sobs, he drew her to his breast.

And through the garden, André's song of love struck on their ears. It wrapped them round like the voice of their own passion. It increased perceptibly in volume as though the player were drawing near. Then, its strains which leapt on a sudden to those of triumph,

ceased:—there came a crash.

Rachel struggled to escape, and she did escape. She retraced the few steps of the path, she entered the house through the long window. Something flashed past her and disappeared in the shrubbery. On the sill she stumbled over a dark object which gave out a faint discordant sound. It was André's violin with its strings still vibrating.

CHAPTER XI
FLAMES

Some hours later Rachel sat at a window of her room with her forehead resting on her hands. The clouds by this time covered the face of the moon; and the darkness was enlivened by patches and scars of lightning, as though the heavens were being laid open with a fiery whip. Rain fell. A fine spray of moisture penetrated the ragged awning.

Rachel never stirred.

A dull lethargy had descended on her. She no longer thought of Emil or of her husband. She had but one sensation—the inevitable had happened. The fury of the storm brought her a sense of relief. At moments she felt herself being carried forward by a dark irresistible current. None the less her determination, like an anchor, held. She never faltered in her resolution to leave Gray Arches; she even heard herself explaining the matter to Simon and she saw his face. His fingers trembled through his hair, his jaw fell, all the blood receded from his cheek. "But why disturb him?" she thought; "why should he be made to suffer?" No, plainly, she must invent some pretext for leaving, then go at once. She must not see Emil again.

Without realizing it, Rachel dropped at last into a troubled sleep, from which she was aroused by a rap on the door.

"Oh, has he gone?" she cried, starting to her feet, and she pushed back the hair from her

face. "Has Simon gone?"

The very possibility that her husband already had started for the city, in view of her resolution, seemed to her a tragedy.

Emily, after a short, sharp inspection of her, laid a pile of freshly-ironed linen on a chair.

"Yes," she answered, "he knocked at your door, but you gave no sign and he didn't like to disturb you. Peter was slow harnessing and Mr. Hart was afraid he wouldn't make the train, but he must have made it or he'd be back by now. It is after eight o'clock."

Rachel sank into her chair with huddled knees. She looked as if she never intended to move again.

Emily took her wrist. "Wouldn't you like your coffee here?"

Rachel looked up at her stupidly.

Emily repeated the question; she even broke into scolding as she brought a loose gown to

the other and insisted on her removing her dress. But once outside the door, Emily extended both hands as if appealing to a protective Providence. "A nice state of things!" she muttered, with an expression of mingled pain, indignation and perfect comprehension.

But when she appeared with the breakfast tray a few moments later she was as stern of aspect as before. After shaking out a table-cloth, she placed the tray on a little stand at Rachel's elbow.

But Rachel turned away. With her head propped on her two hands, she stared in front of her; and nothing Emily could say served to draw her from this state.

That morning the little toy-maker could not work as usual. A tiny parachute was very nearly ruined by an ill-directed movement of the shears; and a piece of green satin for the aeronaut's coat was utterly spoiled by tears, which she scorned to notice, falling upon it. She was so upset that more than once the

utensils of her craft rolled on the floor while her hands dropped to her knees. To herself Emily fiercely denied any attraction in Emil and she praised staunchly every one of Simon Hart's qualities.

About one o'clock Rachel, after refusing luncheon, left the house for a walk; and Emily, having satisfied herself that the other went to the beach, lay down on her bed. "Let her tire herself out; it is the best thing she can do," Emily murmured, and dropped asleep, with a tear standing in a furrow under one eye.

The caretaker, who served in the capacity of cook, in company with her husband and the other servants, was spending the day with friends and would not return until late; even Peter, the coachman, was away for the afternoon. Meanwhile, in this house far removed from the city, the stillness which is peculiar to the Sabbath, deepened.

Rachel walked the beach. She sat down, but immediately rose again. Not only her own

life, but all the life about her seemed suspended.

Emil was on his way to the station now; in her mind she could see him swinging along the road: so robust and naïve was his egotism, he would never question for a moment that she would come. At the thought of his disappointment, she began sobbing with her handkerchief to her lips. All sorts of dark thoughts rose indistinctly from the depths of her soul. Simon, save for one failing, was hopelessly free of faults; he was almost perfect. Scarcely aware of what was passing in her mind, she began picturing what would happen in case of his death. But there was Annie. However, Annie could obtain a divorce; she could return, as Emil had said, to her parents. Rachel arranged every detail of the situation; but these scarcely articulate plans, these involuntary dreams, were accompanied by a physical sensation of shame—revulsion.

She shook herself free of the sorry brood and looked about her. Had she been there an

hour, two hours, five minutes? She did not know. Presently a vesper bell from a distant village sounded intermittently above the plashing of the waves. With her hand pressed to her heart, she listened. Then she sped to the house.

In the hallway the old-fashioned clock marked a quarter past five. Three quarters of an hour more! There was still time to meet Emil! And she pictured him waiting for her in the grove near the station, impatiently scanning the road. Reaching her room, she flung herself into a chair and clung to its arms to prevent herself from answering the summons. Dumb, breathless, distraught, with her head hanging on her breast, she listened to the measured ticking of the clock which reached her from the hall. She could still restrain her body, but she could not control her mind.

"To-day decides my fate; either I go with Emil now, or I remain with Simon forever. To-day decides my fate."

She seemed to have a fondness for the phrase for she said it over and over.

"If I remain with Simon, all will go on as before; but if I go with Emil—"

She closed her eyes. The walls of the room dropped away and she saw a landscape. Sedge grass bordered the road to the station. In it she sank repeatedly and its brown waves washed over her head. But ever before her was Emil. Infinitely multiplied, he smiled at her from the leaves, the grass, the dust. The faces resolved themselves into one face. He drew near; she was penetrated by his presence. All the love in her, all the joy of which she was capable, was revealed. She clasped her hands about his neck, she laid her face on his breast, and the past with its futile struggles, its anguish, like a bad dream, receded from her.

Then she recognized the sunlight striking through the white shades of the room. It was tracing the usual pattern on the floor and glistening indolently on the brass knobs of

the dressing-table.

With a cry she started to her feet. Maddened, she began to heap some articles into a dressing-bag. She was turning from her bureau to the bag when John Smith's letter, which she had not yet read, caught her eye. It was propped against the frame of the mirror. She put out a hand.

With his closely-written pages which she passed over, there was a little yellow note directed to her mother in a feeble scrawl. Leaning against the embrasure of the window, Rachel unfolded the note almost against her will. But the more she endeavoured to fix her attention upon it, the more confused she became.

"My dear Lavina: I ought not to have left you—"

She stared at the words, which trailed off into an illegible run of characters; and the note with its message for another heart, stilled now these twenty years, slipped from her

fingers.

Outside the sunlight danced on the multitudinous leaves and shimmered on the gravel path. Except for the sound of the sea all was silence. A passing breeze fluttered the paper at her feet and the room was filled with the subtle exhalation of that old regret.

She was on her knees. She still saw Emil, heard his voice; and as if grasping something, she opened her arms and carried them back against her heart while her whole frame trembled.

Then the miracle held her spell-bound:

She had been saved from the irretrievable step; she had been plucked back from the rock's edge.

Slowly, slowly the dry heart-flames subsided. As mists rose from the ground in summer after the heat and fever of the day, so something pure as childhood, sweet as the aspirations of early youth, rose from the

depths of her soul. All the treachery, all the longing of purely selfish love was annihilated. It was one of those crises when the heart sets wide its doors; when the emotion that was personal becomes universal.

The shrubbery was alive with insects, murmuring gently; and amid the foliage of the trees, the birds were preparing to go to roost. They had reached those wistful days in late summer, which by the sea fade away in evenings of gold and rose, which fade away into the sea itself. A little wind set all the leaves astir. As she looked toward the sea, a wonderful serenity seemed to fall upon her from that radiant sunset sky, seemed to light on her like a benediction from the dying day.

She turned her eyes in the direction of the gardener's cottage. Owing to a row of large trees and an intervening wall, barely more than its red pointed roof was visible. Buried in greenery, bathed in the calm light, it had, at this distance, an ethereal, unreal aspect, like a cottage seen in a picture. About it nothing stirred. But, as she looked, a trail of smoke

appeared above a rear gable. This doubled angrily upon itself, then spread out in the still air like a fan. It became in an instant an all-enveloping sable mass crossed by licking tongues of red. In the midst of the sweet country, the cottage in utter silence was being destroyed, its burning but emphasizing the surrounding peace.

Rachel's feet scarcely touched the stairs. She was out of doors and crossing the lawn without realizing her own movements. As she ran, she cried for help. But she recollected that all the servants were away. André had not been seen since the evening before; and, except for Emily Short asleep in a distant wing, the place was deserted. She had gone but a few steps when a cry of horror burst from her. *Annie*! Where was Annie? When not engaged in hanging about Emil while he worked, she was in the habit of visiting at the big house. But that day Rachel had not seen her. Then she recollected Emil's words about his wife's habit of taking a nap in the afternoon.

"Annie!—wake up!—Fire!"

Rachel's cries were confused. She was breathless, almost falling; but despite this excitement, the wonderful sense of peace that had come to her remained in her heart like a dove in its nest.

She stumbled once as she crossed the lawn, and once her dress caught on a branch. She wrenched it free. Beyond the wall the longer, coarser grass impeded her steps and the rays of the setting sun, glancing across the grass, seemed coming to meet her.

"Fire! Annie, fire!" she called.

She was near enough to the cottage now to make out that its windows and doors were closed. She sprang up the path and the hot breath of flames struck into her face. She tried the door, it was locked; and she divined what had happened. Annie had feared to go to sleep with the cottage open; when Emil had started for the station, she had locked herself in.

In a frenzy, Rachel beat upon the door with her flattened palms. The vine over her head was fluttering in a keen breeze and all its leaves were curling. She wrenched open the nearest blind and the slat already smoking, scorched her hands. This house of old and seasoned timbers was burning like paper. She climbed over the sill.

Face down, with the skirt of her dress drawn over her head and across her mouth, she groped her way to the chamber. She felt along the bed; it was empty. Then out into the living room where the organ stood, with lurid flashes playing over its keys, she stumbled. And there, lying across the threshold, was something that yielded to her touch yet resisted it. Gathering Annie in her arms, folding her in a spread which she tore from a table, Rachel groped her way back to the window. The walls of the cottage seemed drawing together like the fingers of a hand about to close; but she scarcely felt the intense heat, was scarcely aware of the suffocating smoke, because of that emotion which was more than joy as it was more than

peace.

As she half-dragged, half-carried her insensible burden to the window, she felt the joy of that Freedom of which she had ever dreamed.

Annie's head fell back lifeless, and her arms hung inert; but a slight shiver ran through her body, when, with a supreme effort, Rachel lifted her to the sill. For an instant she balanced her burden there; then, not knowing what she did, blinded by the smoke, the flames that all at once darted out upon her from every direction, she thrust the body through the window.

She had a sense that it was received—that someone, in a frantic dear and well-known voice, called her name. She tried to follow, to struggle into the sweet air, where beyond the smoke and the flames, she knew the leaves were still dancing. But something heavy, inflexible, struck her head.

She fell back into the darkness.

Some minutes before the flames made their appearance above the surrounding trees, a sombre scene took place on a slight rise of ground at the rear of the cottage.

As Ding Dong, carrying a pail of milk he had secured at a neighbouring farm, sauntered unsuspecting toward his master's dwelling, he felt himself seized from behind by the waist and shoulders; his arms grasped, bent, wrenched, his feet thrust from under him. Dumfounded, he sprawled on the ground with fingers of steel at his throat. Athwart a reddish haze he saw the livid countenance and bloodshot eyes of the young man who had made his appearance at Gray Arches a day or two before.

With writhings and twistings, Ding Dong tried to wrap his assailant in sinewy arms, to close with him, to crush him in a mighty embrace; the other fought with the strength of desperation.

Finally, pinning Ding Dong to the earth, André flung a look toward the cottage. The flames were now mounting above the trees. A savage joy distorted his face.

He laughed.

At the same instant Ding Dong, hurled him aside. Seeing the flames, the fellow started for the cottage with André after him, but he had gone but a short distance, when he halted and lifted his arm.

A mournful procession was slowly crossing the open field in the light of the waning day and André, rigid, his head advanced, caught the flutter of a familiar dress, saw a deathlike face.

The locked doors and windows had deceived him. Believing the cottage deserted, he had sought to destroy the organ which, in his blindness, he thought recommended the inventor to Rachel's favour; and he had destroyed instead the object of his own devotion—his own love.

The flames leaping into the sky revealed all the impotence of that act of jealousy and revenge.

CHAPTER XII
LOVE CONFRONTS DESPAIR

"No, we might disturb her, and she appears to be resting quietly. In her case it's a little natural exhaustion. As for Mrs. Hart—the spine, I'm afraid. She rescued this one, I understand. Well, she paid the price. As for the young man, he couldn't have been in the water above half an hour. Yes, a tragedy."

The steps, which had merely paused at the door, passed on.

Annie sat up in the bed.

It was true then; that strangled awakening, that battle with the smoke, Rachel's voice

faintly heard. In her dream—or what she had been striving to believe a dream—Rachel had saved her; and the dream was truth.

The impatient, not quite friendly Rachel throwing her own life away to save hers! Annie's stunned mind failed to grasp the novel vision. A lamp stood on a chair. Judging by the amount of oil remaining in the glass receptacle, the lamp had been burning there for many hours. Annie stared at the light; then, a little ball of misery and bewilderment, she wept against the pillows.

Presently the instinct awoke in her to find the one who was her natural comforter.

Slipping from the bed, she stood up on her feet. At first she swayed dizzily. Then she managed to dress herself and quitted the room.

She reached the lighted passage. The entire east wing of the house, she discovered, was brightly illuminated. She steadied herself against the wall and peered in the direction

whence came a muffled sobbing. Outside Rachel's door Simon Hart stood with his face in his hands.

"Oh be careful!" he implored as she approached.

He had heard somewhere that in cases of injury to the spine the least jar to the patient was sometimes fatal. He looked at Annie without recognizing her and the tears which he made no effort to conceal, streamed down his face from his eyes which were filled with blank, inconceivable despair.

At that moment the door of the chamber opened; a physician emerged. Simon caught him by the arms.

"Is there no change, Doctor?"

"Not yet. There—there, my poor fellow, have courage."

"But I may go in for a moment? I don't ask to remain."

"Yes, if you will be calm."

"Oh, I will be calm, quite calm. You can trust me for that. But wait—this trembling—" And with his massive shoulders bent forward, Simon stole into the room.

"What, you?" And the physician caught Annie's elbow.

She looked at him.

He released her.

Between the muslin curtains, the night entered in its freshness. Every breeze bore tree odours, vine odours, flower odours. In the subdued light the bed gleamed an island of bluish white.

They had placed Rachel on a flat mattress, not venturing even to braid her hair. Instead, those rich and heavy locks that of late had breathed so poignantly a youthful beauty and pride, were spread over the linen where they framed the poor pallid cheeks. As she lay on

her back, the lines of her mouth appeared slightly accentuated. Her arms were laid straight to her sides. Never did Death more completely express detachment. At the bed's foot stood Emily Short, her apron to her lips. A nurse in a starched cap noiselessly altered the position of a screen.

The thrilling brave act was apparent. Annie stood a figure abashed and small and unworthy.

Simon was unable to restrain his sobs. The physician laid a hand on his shoulder and he obeyed as unquestioningly as a child. Bending over Rachel he kissed her forehead; then followed the doctor out of the chamber. Annie kept at their heels.

The physician began to consult Simon about some matter and, unobserved, Annie passed them. She descended the stairs. Under the door of the front room there appeared a streak of light. She rapped: there was no answer; someone was in there who could not answer.

Filled with a confused memory, conjured terrors, she hastened down the hall. Very carefully and with great difficulty she opened the heavy front door and stepped out on the porch. In the light that streamed from that east wing, she saw Emil. He was standing with his shoulders against a tree. Her impulse was to run to him; she checked it.

Beneath his disordered mane his face was wild and haggard, and his eyes, raised to a certain window, were filled with an agony no tears had come to relieve. Occasionally his chest lifted with a sigh.

Seized by the selfish anguish of love, Annie thrust out her chin.

He did not belong to her, he belonged to Rachel! She had always suspected.

The next instant, however, the memory of what was flashed before her and like a flame for which there is no fuel, jealousy died in her breast. And what remained? A disconcerted self that wept under its own examining eyes.

"I never could have done what Rachel did," she thought forlornly; "I never could. And Emil knew she was different from me, he knew she was strong; and he loved her. I don't blame him," with a low catch of the breath,—"No, I don't blame him. How could he help it?"

Hour after hour, sick and weak, she clung to a pillar of the porch conscious only of an intensified confusion, a profound loneliness. Gradually, as she listened to those long deep sighs, she ceased to think of herself and longed to console Emil. But henceforth he must hate her as the cause of Rachel's death. The realization sent her into deeper shadow.

So they stood within a few yards of each other and only when dawn began to show faintly over the water, did Annie enter the house.

She saw no one from that east wing but the doctor, who took her wrist, feeling the pulse.

"Not the thing yet," he said, "though a

decided improvement over yesterday. But you must show a better face than this."

She asked after Rachel.

He pretended to consult his watch.

She stepped in front of him, "Is there any chance for her, Doctor?"

He met her eyes then gravely. "There is about one chance in a hundred of her recovery; but go and get something to eat. You will find the servants about. I am going to the city now; I shall be back again on the noon train."

Annie went to the kitchen; she found the cook who gave her steaming coffee. She did not drink the coffee, but carried it through the house and out into the garden. She understood that Emil, fearing to betray his grief, had moved away at the doctor's approach. She went to the tree by which he had been standing and placed the coffee on the grass.

A few moments later he returned. He did not notice the cup until he had upset it; then he stared at the stupidly rolling china, and immediately struck off toward the beach.

Obscurely afraid of bringing shame on her who was dying, he shunned everyone. He remained on the beach, alternately watching the house from a distance, and pacing up and down.

At noon Annie ventured in the direction he had taken. He was no longer in sight. She went only a short way, then placed a basket of food where it could not escape his eye. Her preoccupation with her husband kept her from dwelling on more tragic matters.

The next day, when she was taking his dinner to the shore, Emil spied her. She set down the basket hastily and started to run. But he beckoned to her and then called.

She went to him, lifting up a suppliant face.

His eyes as she drew near, held the look of

an animal that consciously awaits slaughter:

"How is she?"

As she did not answer at once, not knowing how to say what she must say, he caught her shoulder in a grip that spoke the madness of torture. "*For God's sake, tell me!*" he almost shouted.

"There is one chance in a hundred, Alexander," she said; "but there is one chance."

His head went up and his hand dropped.

Presently, with a convulsive breath:

"I've been a coward. I've dodged the doctor—couldn't ask him." His hands clenched. "Does she suffer?" he asked, and swung a look on her.

"No, she does not suffer," Annie answered. "She lies there very still as though she were asleep; and her husband stands outside the door and will not let anyone move in that part

of the house. And in the front room, that strange young man who came the other day is lying dead. It seems he was sort of unbalanced, and it was he who set the fire; Ding Dong knows he did, for he tried to keep Ding Dong from giving the alarm. And then he drowned himself."

But her husband was interested in no one but Rachel. Haggard and unkempt, he stared at the water.

"I don't know anything about a God," he said slowly, "about a Creator, but if He—if she lives," he amended, "I'll take my oath to give her up as she plead with me to. I'll never trouble her again though it tears my heart out. I ask only that she shall live."

"There is one chance, Alexander," Annie said bravely.

He looked around at her; then took her hand.

They sat down side by side and stared at the

waves.

CHAPTER XIII
THE ESCAPE

Annie waved one hand aloft. When she spied her husband on the beach, she waved the other hand. Her movement suggested flying.

"Conscious!" she cried, "she's conscious; she's going to get well!"

Emil gazed at her as at an apparition. His knees bent, he dropped in a heap on the sand.

Annie stooped to him: "It's life—life—life, Alexander!" she panted; "not death—life!"

His arms went about his head.

Annie knelt and put an arm around his

heaving shoulders. She flung back her hair, lifting her face. "Life, life, life!" she whispered.

And it was life.

Early on the morning of the third day following the catastrophe, the doctor spoke cautiously of an improvement in the patient; there was unquestionably a favourable change. But it was only when Rachel followed the first vague opening of her eyes with a stirring of her hands, that he spoke heartily of recovery. No injury to the spine, that was clear. Merely a brain concussion, as he had hoped. But any excitement coming to her now—the doctor closed his medicine case with a snap.

There was the difficulty. How to keep his wife in a state of perfect tranquillity, this was Simon's problem. Hour after hour his vigilance did duty in her chamber; but when they came, those questions of hers, so weak he had to lean to catch them, yet charged with eagerness, he knew not how to stem the tide.

Her first word was of Annie. To Simon this question, after the long stillness, was like a star trembling out of complete black night. He could have wept on hearing her.

"Is Annie safe?" she murmured, and followed the inquiry with a beseeching glance; "is she well?"

Mindful of his task, he lifted an admonishing finger, while answering her strongly in the affirmative.

"Annie," he said, "is safe and sound; she's as right as possible."

She smiled up at him, a picture of peace and thankfulness. But a few moments later anxiety spoke in a soft contraction of her brow: "Emil—is he well?"

"Yes, he's well; we're all well, and all of us in high spirits because of you, dear. But you must obey the doctor."

Once more Rachel exhibited a face of

repose; but almost immediately her eyes flew wide.

"All?" she echoed, "you said all?"

Simon repeated his words stoutly.

"André too?"

He bent his head with a stifled "yes."

At something in his voice, she managed to lift herself, and as she looked at him a colourless and piteous smile came upon her lips.

"Not André," she said.

"Why do you say that?" and, settling her on the pillows, he affected to laugh at the fancy, but her changed aspect alarmed him.

"Because of your face, because I did not see André after—" Her features seemed hidden beneath a veil of dumb suffering. Then her whole countenance shut on a thought; an immense concentration chained her. Directly

she felt for his hand.

"André is still here?" she asked.

"Yes."

"May I see him?"

Simon's look wavered and his eyes sank under hers. His attempt to deceive was manifest, plain as the Writing on the Wall.

"Oh not now," he said, striving for an air that should restore her confidence, "you can't see anyone now, you know."

But her suspicions were past allaying, though she swerved swiftly to another question.

"The fire," she demanded. "Do they know what caused the fire?"

"Oh, some carelessness, doubtless. Mrs. St. Ives may have dropped a match."

Once more Rachel half lifted herself. She

shook her head, scanning him fixedly.

"Annie was asleep—the cottage locked. Simon, is it known who set that fire?"

He gasped, unable to believe the astonishing thing: she was actually taking the facts from his mind. He opened his lips, but she needed no answer.

"Oh," she whispered, on a long breath, "I understand. And *now*—now where is he?" and her fingers closed on his convulsively. "*Now?*" Her voice rose.

Helplessly Simon met her look and his jaw hung.

"He is dead," she said, and relaxed her hold.

Seeing that she had guessed all through the marvellous second-sight of love, Simon told her the story briefly, striving, however, to lessen its sadness by relating it in a voice soothing as the ripple of a stream.

"And directions came to-day from the

mother," he concluded, "so St. Ives can start with the—the boy, to-morrow morning early. There's a milk train passes through here at five; it will be flagged. In that way St. Ives will make good connections. As for Mrs. St. Ives—" Simon might have been telling her any news, save that he hastened his speech a little as he struck into this new subject—"she goes along too. She will stop in the city, however, for the John Street place is all ready for occupancy and it seemed wisest— My darling Rachel! my own reasonable brave girl!" he cried. "You know you always said the lad was not quite right mentally and he certainly had that air; the servants all remarked it."

From her closed eyes, over her white cheeks, her tears rolled steadily. "Poor, poor André," she whispered.

She knew—she guessed all. She remembered praising the organ attachment to André. And later he had witnessed that mad meeting between her and Emil in the garden. As she imagined the boy, lost, wandering,

inflamed with jealousy; remorse intolerable and overwhelming filled her. She had driven him to the desperate act.

Never the less Simon's gravest apprehensions were relieved. Almost with the first glimmer of returning consciousness she had divined the truth and it had not wrecked her, for after that first rain of tears, the strange and lofty look of peace returned to her face. André had been unhappy; now he was no longer so. His need of her guidance had been imperative; now that need no longer existed. Dear heart, dear, simple, clinging soul! And the comforting comparison struck her of a little lost child with its hand safely locked at last in the hand of the All-Father.

She spoke no more until evening; then, as if pursuing a subject that had just been mentioned:

"And Emil will go with him? He will see André's mother?"

"Yes, dearest."

"And he will tell her the truth? For you must explain to Emil, Simon, that he need not hide the truth from Lizzie. Any fiction about André she'd see through: she's his mother. And Emil is to say that I will write and that soon I will come."

"Yes, he will tell her."

"And before they start, Emil and Annie,—they will come here?"

She was so bent on seeing them it seemed unwise to oppose her.

When Simon leaned over her bed in the morning, he knew from her expression that she was alert to the muffled commotion below stairs—to those sharp hammerings, those stealthy treads, those silences—throbbingly alert, although there was no diminution in the radiance of her eyes.

"They have come, dearest," he said, and left the room.

Emil and Annie came forward. Never before at any time had they seen Rachel as she appeared to them now. The courage of her strong young face was mingled with a look of unutterable sweetness. She reached a hand to each.

Instantly Annie was on her knees and Rachel had her head in the curve of a feeble arm. She pressed Annie's head to her breast with fingers tremulous with blessing as a mother's. They said nothing—no words were needed.

Rising, Annie stole to a distant window.

Rachel had kept her hold on Emil. Now once more she looked at him with a smile that expressed more love than she had ever shown him before. Such complete, such utter tenderness, he had never dreamed eyes could hold. And yet in those soft depths so earthly-sweet, he saw renunciation shining through devotion.

He blanched.

In a voice in which there was a tremour she could not control, Rachel spoke of his work and of herself as watching his progress with eagerness.

"For I long, I long more than you can realize to have you make the best possible use of your life. I have set my hopes on you, such high hopes, Emil; and you will not disappoint me."

Finally, panting a little but with electrical energy, with exquisite passionateness, she spoke of the open vision of love. "It is," she said, letting her eyes dwell wistfully in his, "the forgetting of ourselves and—and the abandonment of our self-seeking. This is the soul's way out. And it is the only way out," she insisted.

At first he did not understand, but gradually as he listened, helpless in his grief, her words opened out before him like a pathway that led somewhere into peace.

He looked down at her, his eyes flaming as

if all his life had centralized and focused within them. Then he bent and laid his forehead on her arm.

What with weak souls requires time, even long years, powerful natures achieve at once. In the silence Emil's oath was fulfilled.

Summoning Annie, Rachel kissed her; and the other, with timid impulsiveness, slipped a little hand in that of her husband. So they left Rachel. But at the door they turned. She was still gazing after them with a mute, almost mystic concentration. Meeting their look, however, she suddenly smiled and in her eyes was the splendour of some newly-discovered truth.

Something she had long wished for had been gained. She felt a sense of supreme restfulness and this sense deepened and increased even as she lent an ear to the sound of the wheels on the gravel, those wheels that were carrying from her, through the stillness of the morning world, the two who had loved her wildly and whom she had loved.

When Simon returned, he found her leaning on her elbow. The nurse had carried out the night-lamp and the chamber was filled with a wan half-light.

"The box, Simon, will you hand it to me?"

He did not know at first to what she referred; his brow flew up in wrinkles: then he brought the little Swiss clock from its place on her dressing-table.

"Now wind it," she said.

He wound the pretty plaything, and placed it on her raised knees.

Lying back on her pillows, her hands folded across her breast, Rachel listened to the tiny bird, and as she listened, a little, tender, understanding smile touched her lips.

When the golden shell had closed over the performer she looked up at her husband:

"Its song is the song of freedom, isn't it?"

But for Simon these words had no meaning. He had not slept for several nights, and as he replaced the box in its former position, he stumbled. He took a chair beside the bed and his head sank. Lower and lower it sank until it rested on the pillow beside hers. She laid her hand on it.

And ever the day waxed stronger. Now as the mist began to lift, the wild birds awoke in the garden. Here and there from a tree sounded a tentative chirp. The air moved in currents of keener freshness. Everything breathed of the dawn. Rachel turned her eyes to the sea and on her face was the light of her inner vision.

Thus Love solves all the problems that torture the soul of man; through beauty and through silence, it speaks to the heart of a Freedom beyond all its earthly dreams.

THE END

[The end of *The Bird in the Box* by Mary Mears]