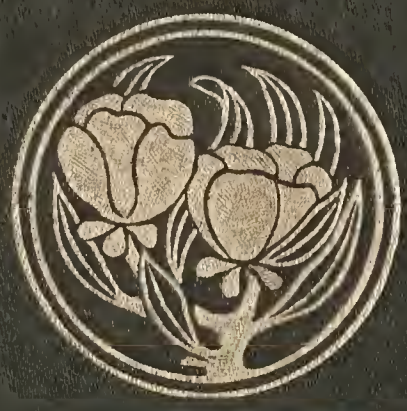

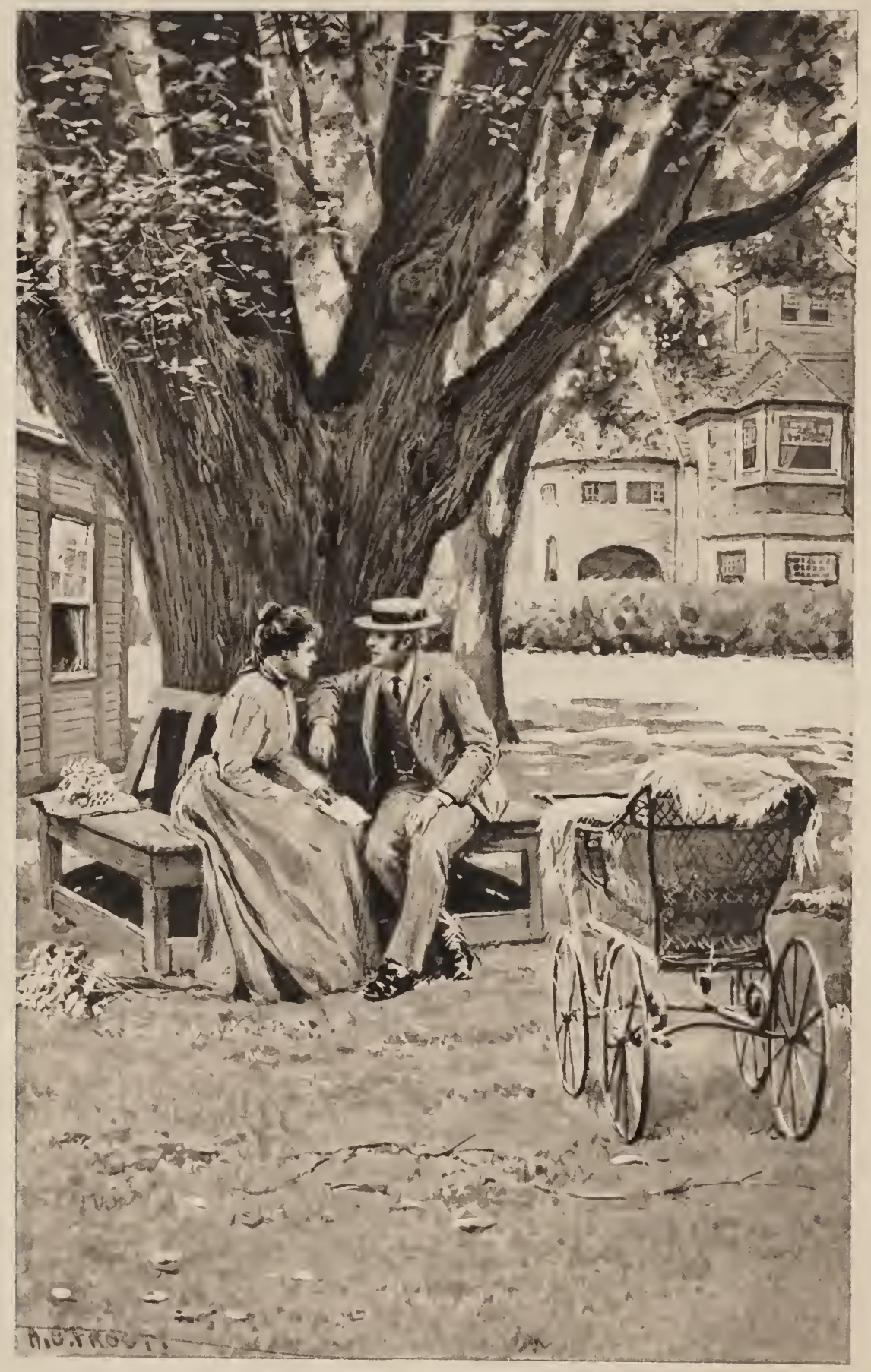

"Then together they conversed for a few minutes."

From a drawing by A. B. FROST.

"Then together they conversed for a few minutes."

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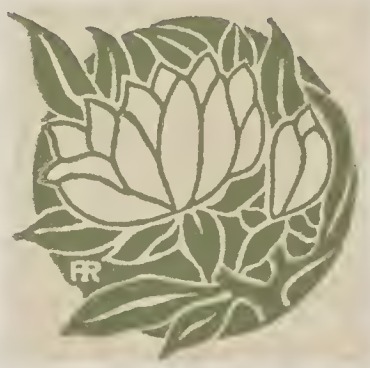
THE NOVELS AND STORIES OF
FRANK R. STOCKTON

THE SQUIRREL INN
THE MERRY CHANTER



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THE SQUIRREL INN

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THE MERRY CHANTER

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THE SQUIRREL INN

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CHAPTER I

THE STEAMBOAT PIER

THE steamboat *Manasquan* was advertised to leave her pier on the east side of the city at half-past nine on a July morning. At nine o'clock Walter Lodloe was on the forward upper deck, watching the early passengers come on board, and occasionally smiling as his glance fell upon a tall man in a blue flannel shirt, who, with a number of other deck-hands, was hard at work transferring from the pier to the steamer the boxes, barrels, and bales of merchandise, the discouraging mass of which was on the point of being increased by the unloading of a newly arrived two-horse truck.

Lodloe had good reason to allow himself his smiles of satisfaction, for he had just achieved a victory over the man in the blue shirt, and a victory over a busy deck-hand on a hot day is rare enough to be valuable. As soon as he had stepped on board, he had deposited his hand-baggage in a place of safety, and walked forward to see the men run on the freight. It was a lively scene, and being a student of incident, character, and all that sort of thing, it greatly interested

him. Standing by a strangely marked cask which had excited his curiosity, he found himself in the way of the deck-hand in the blue shirt, who, with red face and sparkling forehead, had just wheeled two heavy boxes up the incline of the gang-plank, and was about to roll them with easy rapidity to the other side of the deck; but Lodloe, with his back turned and directly in front of him, made it necessary for him to make a violent swerve to the right or break the legs of a passenger. He made the swerve, missed Lodloe, and then, dumping his load, turned and swore at the young man with the promptness and accuracy of a cow-boy's revolver.

It was quite natural that a high-spirited young fellow should object to be sworn at, no matter what provocation he had given, and Lodloe not only objected but grew very angry. The thing which instantly suggested itself to him, and which to most people would seem the proper thing to do, was to knock down the man. But this knocking-down business is a matter which should be approached with great caution. Walter was a strong young fellow and had had some practice in boxing, but it was not impossible that, even with the backing of justifiable indignation, the conventional blow straight from the shoulder might have failed to fell the tall deck-hand.

But even had Lodloe succeeded in stretching the insulting man upon the dirty deck, it is not at all probable that he would have stayed there. In five seconds there would have been a great fight, and it would not have been long before the young gentleman would have found himself in the custody of a policeman.

Lodloe's common sense was capable of considerable tension without giving way, even under a strain like this, and, although pale with anger, he would not engage in a personal contest with a deck-hand on a crowded steamboat. But to bear the insult was almost impossible. Never before had he been subjected to such violent abuse.

But in a flash he remembered something, and the man had scarcely turned his empty truck to go back to the pier, when Lodloe stepped in front of him and with a wave of the hand stopped him.

Two nights before Lodloe had been sitting up late reading some papers on modern Italian history, and in the course of said reading had met with the text of the *anathema maranatha* pronounced by Pius IX. against disbelievers in his infallibility. The directness, force, and comprehensiveness of the expressions used in this composition made a deep impression upon Lodloe, and, as it was not very long, he had committed it to memory, thinking that he might some time care to use it in quotation. Now it flashed upon him that the time had come to quote this anathema, and without hesitation he delivered the whole of it, fair and square, straight into the face of the petrified deck-hand.

Petrified immediately he was not. At first he flushed furiously, but after a few phrases he began to pale and to turn to living stone. Enough mobility, however, remained to allow him presently to raise his hand imploringly ; but Lodloe had now nearly finished his discourse, and with a few words more he turned and walked away. The deck-hand wiped his brow, took in a long breath, and went to work. If another

passenger had got in his way, he would not have sworn at him.

Therefore it was that, gently pleased by the sensations of victory, Walter Lodloe sat on the upper deck and watched the busy scene. He soon noted that passengers were beginning to come down the pier in considerable numbers, and among these his eye was caught by a young woman wheeling a baby-carriage.

When this little equipage had been pushed down nearly to the end of that side of the pier from which the passengers were going on board, it stopped, and its motive power looked behind her. Presently she turned her head toward the steamer and eagerly scanned every part of it on which she could see human beings. In doing this she exhibited to Lodloe a very attractive face. It was young enough, it was round enough, and the brown eyes were large enough, to suit almost any one whose taste was not restricted to the lines of the old sculptors.

When she completed her survey of the steamboat, the young woman turned the carriage around and wheeled it up the pier. Very soon, however, she returned, walking rapidly, and ran the little vehicle over the broad gang-plank on to the steamboat. Now Lodloe lost sight of her ; but in about five minutes she appeared on the forward upper deck without the baby-carriage, and looking eagerly here and there. Not finding what she sought, she hastily descended.

The next act in this performance was the appearance of the baby-carriage, borne by the blue-shirted deck-hand, and followed by the young woman carrying the baby. The carriage was humbly set down by its bearer, who departed without looking to the right

or left, and the baby was quickly deposited in it. Then the young woman stepped to the rail and looked anxiously upon the pier. As Lodloe gazed upon her it was easy to see that she was greatly troubled. She was expecting some one who did not come. Now she went to the head of the stairway and went down a few steps, then she came up again and stood undecided. Her eyes now fell upon Lodloe, who was looking at her, and she immediately approached him.

"Can you tell me, sir," she said, "exactly how long it will be before this boat starts?"

Lodloe drew out his watch.

"In eight minutes," he answered.

If Lodloe had allowed himself to suppose that because the young woman who addressed him was in sole charge of a baby-carriage she was a nurse or superior maid-servant, that notion would have instantly vanished when he heard her speak.

The lady turned a quick glance towards the pier, and then moved to the head of the stairway, but stopped before reaching it. It was plain that she was in much perplexity. Lodloe stepped quickly toward her.

"Madam," said he, "you are looking for some one. Can I help you?"

"I am," she said, "I am looking for my nurse-maid. She promised to meet me on the pier. I cannot imagine what has become of her."

"Let me go and find her," said Lodloe. "What sort of person is she?"

"She isn't any sort of person in particular," answered the lady. "I couldn't describe her. I will

run down and look for her myself, and if you will kindly see that nobody knocks over my baby I shall be much obliged to you."

Lodloe instantly undertook the charge, and the lady disappeared below.

CHAPTER II

THE BABY, THE MAN, AND THE MASTERY

THE young man drew the baby-carriage to the bench by the rail, and, seating himself, gazed with interest upon its youthful occupant. This individual appeared to be about two years of age, with its mother's eyes and a combative disposition. The latter was indicated by the manner in which it banged its own legs and the sides of its carriage with a wicker bludgeon that had once been a rattle. It looked earnestly at the young man, and gave the edges of its carriage a whack which knocked the bludgeon out of its hand. Lodloe picked up the weapon, and, restoring it to its owner, began to commune with himself.

"It is the same old story," he thought. "The mother desires to be rid of the infant; she leaves it for a moment in the charge of a stranger; she is never seen again. However, I accept the situation. If she doesn't come back this baby is mine. It seems like a good sort of baby, and I think I shall like it. Yes, youngster; if your mother doesn't come back you are mine. I shall not pass you over to the police or to any one else; I shall run you myself."

It was now half-past nine. Lodloe arose and looked out over the pier. He could see nothing of the young

mother. The freight was all on board, and they were hauling up the forward gang-plank. One or two belated passengers were hurrying along the pier; the bell was ringing; now the passengers were on board, the aft gang-plank was hauled in, the hawsers were cast off from the posts, the pilot's bell jingled, the wheels began to revolve, and the great steamboat slowly moved from its pier.

"I knew it," said Lodloe, unconsciously speaking aloud, "she hadn't the slightest idea of coming back. Now, then," said he, "I own a baby, and I must consider what I am to do with it. One thing is certain, I intend to keep it. I believe I can get more solid comfort and fun out of a baby than I could possibly get out of a dog or even a horse."

Walter Lodloe was a young man who had adopted literature as a profession. Earlier in life he had worked at journalism, but for the last two years he had devoted himself almost entirely to literature pure and simple. His rewards, so far, had been slight, but he was not in the least discouraged, and hoped bravely for better things. He was now on his way to spend some months at a quiet country place of which he had heard, not for a summer holiday, but to work where he could live cheaply and enjoy outdoor life. His profession made him more independent than an artist—all he needed were writing-materials, and a post-office within a reasonable distance.

Lodloe gazed with much satisfaction at his new acquisition. He was no stickler for conventionalities, and did not in the least object to appearing at his destination —where he knew no one—with a baby and a carriage.

"I'll get some country girl to take care of it when

I am busy," he said, "and the rest of the time I'll attend to it myself. I'll teach it a lot of things, and from what I have seen of youngster-culture I shouldn't wonder if I should beat the record."

At this moment the baby gave a great wave with its empty rattle, and, losing its hold upon it, the wicker weapon went overboard. Then, after feeling about in its lap, and peering over the side of the carriage, the baby began to whimper.

"Now, then," thought the young man, "here's my chance. I must begin instantly to teach it that I am its master."

Leaning forward, he looked sternly into the child's face, and in a sharp, quick tone said:

"Whoa!"

The baby stopped instantly, and stared at its new guardian.

"There," thought Lodloe, "it is just the same with a baby as with a horse. Be firm, be decided; it knows what you want, and it will do it."

At this instant the baby opened its mouth, uttered a wild wail, and continued wailing.

Lodloe laughed. "That didn't seem to work," said he; and to quiet the little creature he agitated the vehicle, shook before the child his keys, and showed it his watch; but the wails went on with persistent violence. The baby's face became red, its eyes dropped tears.

The young man looked around him for assistance. The forward upper deck was without an awning, and was occupied only by a few men, the majority of the passengers preferring the spacious and shaded after-deck. Two of the men were laughing at Lodloe.

"That's a new way," one of them called out to him, "to shut up a young one. Did it ever work?"

"It didn't this time," answered Lodloe. "Have you any young ones?"

"Five," answered the man.

"And how do you stop them when they howl like that?"

"I leave that to the old woman," was the answer, "and when she's heard enough of it she spanks 'em."

Lodloe shook his head. That method did not suit him.

"If you'd run its wagon round the deck," said another man, "perhaps that would stop it. I guess you was never left alone with it before."

Lodloe made no reply to this supposition, but began to wheel the carriage around the deck. Still the baby yelled and kicked. An elderly gentleman who had been reading a book went below.

"If you could feed it," said one of the men who had spoken before, "that might stop it; but the best thing you can do is to take it down to its mother."

Lodloe was annoyed. He had not yet arranged in his mind how he should account for his possession of the baby, and he did not want an explanation forced upon him before he was ready to make it. These men had come on board after the departure of the young woman, and could know nothing of the facts, and therefore Lodloe, speaking from a high, figurative standpoint, settled the matter by shaking his head and saying:

"That can't be done. The little thing has lost its mother."

The man who had last spoken looked compassionately at Lodloe.

"That's a hard case," he said. "I know all about it, for I've been in that boat myself. My wife died just as I was going to sail for this country, and I had to bring over the two babies. I was as seasick as blazes, and had to take care of 'em night and day. I tell you, sir, you've got a hard time ahead of you. But feedin' 's the only thing. I'll get you something. Is it on milk yet, or can it eat biscuit?"

Lodloe looked at the open mouth of the vociferous infant, and saw teeth.

"Biscuit will do," he said, "or perhaps a banana. If you can get me something of the sort I shall be much obliged," and he gave the man some money.

The messenger soon returned with an assortment of refreshments, among which, happily, was not a banana, and the baby soon stopped wailing to suck an enormous stick of striped candy. Quiet having been restored to this part of the vessel, Lodloe sat down to reconsider the situation.

"It may be," he said to himself, "that I shall have to take it to an asylum, but I shall let it stay there only during the period of unintelligent howling. When it is old enough to understand that I am its master, then I shall take it in hand again. It is ridiculous to suppose that a human being cannot be as easily trained as a horse."

The more he considered the situation the better he liked it. The possession of a healthy and vigorous youngster without encumbrances was to him a novel and delightful sensation.

"I hope," he said to himself, "that when the coun-

try girl dresses it she will find no label on its clothes, nor any sign which might enable one to discover the original owners. I don't want anybody coming up to claim it after we've got to be regular chums."

When the boat made its first landing the two men who had given advice and assistance to Lodloe got off, and as the sun rose higher the forward deck became so unpleasantly warm that nearly everybody left it; but Lodloe concluded to remain. The little carriage had a top which sufficiently shaded the baby, and as for himself, he was used to the sun. If he went among the other passengers they might ask him questions, and he was not prepared for these. What he wanted was to be let alone until he reached his landing-place, and then he would run his baby-carriage ashore, and when the steamboat had passed on he would be master of the situation, and could assume what position he chose toward his new possession.

"When I get the little bouncer to Squirrel Inn I shall be all right, but I must have the relationship defined before I arrive there." And to the planning and determination of that he now gave his mind.

He had not decided whether he should create an imaginary mother who had died young, consider himself the uncle of the child, whose parents had been lost at sea, or adopt the little creature as a brother or a sister, as the case might be, when the subject of his reflections laid down its stick of candy and began a violent outcry against circumstances in general.

Lodloe's first impulse was to throw it overboard. Repressing this natural instinct, he endeavored to quiet the infantile turbulence with offers of biscuit, fresh candy, ginger-cakes, and apples, but without

effect. The young bewailer would have nothing to do with any of these enticements.

Lodloe was puzzled. "I have got to keep the thing quiet until we land," he thought, "then I will immediately hire some one to go with me and take charge of it; but I can't stand this uproar for two hours longer."

The crying attracted the attention of other people, and presently a country woman appeared from below.

"What is the matter with it?" she asked. "I thought it was some child left here all by itself."

"What would you do with it?" asked Lodloe, helplessly.

"You ought to take it up and walk it about until its mother comes," said the woman; and having given this advice, she returned below to quiet one of her own offspring, who had been started off by the sounds of woe.

Lodloe smiled at the idea of carrying the baby about until its mother came; but he was willing to do the thing in moderation, and taking up the child resolutely, if not skilfully, he began to stride up and down the deck with it.

This suited the youngster perfectly, and it ceased crying and began to look about with great interest. It actually smiled into the young man's face, and, taking hold of his mustache, began to use it as a door-bell.

"This is capital," said Lodloe, "we are chums already." And as he strode he whistled, talked baby-talk, and snapped his fingers in the face of the admiring youngster, who slapped at him, and laughed, and did its best to kick off the bosom of his shirt.

CHAPTER III

MATTHEW VASSAR

In the course of this sociable promenade the steamboat stopped at a small town, and it had scarcely started again when the baby gave a squirm which nearly threw it out of its bearer's arms. At the same instant he heard quick steps behind him, and turning, he beheld the mother of the child. At the sight his heart fell. Gone were his plans, his hopes, his little chum.

The young woman was flushed and panting.

"Upon my word!" was all she could say as she clasped the child, whose little arms stretched out toward her. She seated herself upon the nearest bench. In a few moments she looked from her baby to Lodloe. She had not quite recovered her breath, and her face was flushed, but in her eyes and on her mouth and dimpled cheeks there was an expression of intense delight mingled with amusement.

"Will you tell me, sir," she said, "how long you have been carrying this baby about? And did you have to take care of it?"

Lodloe did not feel in a very good humor. By not imposing upon him as he thought she had done, she had deceived and disappointed him.

"Of course I took care of it," he said, "as you left it in my charge; and it gave me a lot of trouble, I assure you. For a time it kicked up a dreadful row. I had the advice of professionals, but I did all the work myself."

"I am very sorry," she said, "but it does seem extremely funny that it should have happened so. What did you think had become of me?"

"I supposed you had gone off to whatever place you wanted to go to," said Lodloe.

She looked at him in amazement.

"Do you mean to say," she exclaimed, "that you thought I wanted to get rid of my baby, and to palm him off on you—an utter stranger?"

"That is exactly what I thought," he answered. "Of course, people who want to get rid of babies don't palm them off on friends and acquaintances. I am very sorry if I misjudged you, but I think you will admit that, under the circumstances, my supposition was a very natural one."

"Tell me one more thing," she said: "what did you intend to do with this child?"

"I intended to bring it up as my own," said Lodloe, "I had already formed plans for its education."

The lady looked at him in speechless amazement. If she had known him she would have burst out laughing.

"The way of it was this," she said presently. "I ran off the steamboat to look for my nurse-maid; and if I hadn't thought of first searching through the other parts of the boat to see if she were on board I should have had plenty of time. I found her waiting for me at the entrance of the pier, and when I ran toward

her, all she had to say was that she had made up her mind not to go into the country. I was so excited, and so angry at her for playing such a trick on me at the last moment, that I forgot how time was passing, and that is why I was left behind. But it never entered my mind that any one would think that I intended to desert my baby, and I didn't feel afraid, either, that he wouldn't be taken care of. I had seen ever so many women on board, and some with babies of their own, and I did not doubt that some of these would take charge of him.

"As soon as I saw that the steamboat had gone, I jumped into a cab, and went to the West Bank Railroad, and took the first train for Scurry, where I knew the steamboat stopped. The ticket agent told me he thought the train would get there about forty minutes before the boat; but it didn't, and I had to run every inch of the way from the station to the wharf, and then barely got there in time."

"You managed matters very well," said Lodloe.

"I should have managed better," said she, "if I had taken my baby ashore with me. In that case I should have remained in the city until I secured another maid. But why did you trouble yourself with the child, especially when he cried?"

"Madam," said Lodloe, "you left that little creature in my charge, and it never entered my mind to hand it over to anybody else. I took advice, as I told you, but that was all I wanted of any one until I went ashore, and then I intended to hire a country girl to act as its nurse."

"And you really and positively intended to keep it for your own?" she asked.

"I did," he answered.

At this the lady could not help laughing. "In all my life," she said, "I never heard of anything like that. But I am just as much obliged to you, sir, as if I were acquainted with you; in fact, more so."

Lodloe took out his card and handed it to her. She read it, and then said:

"I am Mrs. Robert Cristie of Philadelphia. And now I will take my baby to the other end of the boat, where it is more sheltered, but not without thanking you most heartily for your very great kindness."

"If you are going aft," said Lodloe, "let me help you. If you will take the baby, I will bring its carriage."

In a few minutes the mother and child were ensconced in a shady spot on the lower deck, and then Lodloe, lifting his hat, remarked:

"As I suppose two people cannot become conventionally acquainted without the intervention of a third person, no matter how little each may know of said third party, I must take my leave; but allow me to say, that, if you require any further assistance, I shall be most happy to give it. I shall be on the boat until we reach Romney."

"That is where I get off," she said.

"Indeed!" said he, "then perhaps you will engage the country girl whom I intended to hire."

"Do you know any one living there," she asked, "who would come to me as nurse-maid?"

"I don't know a soul in Romney," said Lodloe, "I never was in the place in my life. I merely supposed that in a little town like that there were girls to be hired. I don't intend to remain in Romney, to be

sure, but I thought it would be much safer to engage a girl there than to trust to getting one in the country place to which I am going."

"And you thought out all that, and about my baby?" said Mrs. Cristie.

"Yes, I did," said Lodloe, laughing.

"Very well," said she, "I shall avail myself of your forethought, and shall try to get a girl in Romney. Where do you go when you leave there?"

"Oh, I am going some five or six miles from the town, to a place called the 'Squirrel Inn.'"

"The Squirrel Inn!" exclaimed Mrs. Cristie, dropping her hands into her lap and leaning forward.

"Yes," said Lodloe, "are you going there?"

"I am," she answered.

Now in his heart Walter Lodloe blessed his guardian angel that she had prompted him to make the announcement of his destination before he knew where this lady was going.

"I am very glad to hear that," he said. "It seems odd that we should happen to be going to the same place; and yet it is not so very odd, after all, for people going to the Squirrel Inn must take this boat and land at Romney, which is not on the railroad."

"The odd part of it is that so few people go to the Squirrel Inn," said the lady.

"I did not know that," remarked Lodloe; "in fact, I know very little about the place. I have heard it spoken of, and it seems to be just the quiet, restful place in which I can work. I am a literary man, and like to work in the country."

"Do you know the Rockmores of Germantown?" asked Mrs. Cristie.

"I never heard of them," he answered.

"Well, then, you may as well stay on board this steamboat and go back home in her," said Mrs. Cristie. "If you do not know the Rockmores of Germantown Stephen Petter will not take you into his inn. I know all about the place. I was there with my husband three years ago. Mr. Petter is very particular about the guests he entertains. Several years ago, when he opened the inn, the Rockmores of Germantown spent the summer with him, and he was so impressed with them that he will not take anybody unless they know the Rockmores of Germantown."

"He must be a ridiculous old crank," said Lodloe, drawing a camp-chair near to the lady and seating himself thereon.

"In one way he is not a crank," said Mrs. Cristie: "you can't turn him. When he has made up his mind about anything, that matter is settled and fixed just as if it were screwed down to the floor."

"From what I had been told," said the young man, "I supposed the Squirrel Inn to be a free-and-easy place."

"It is, after you get there," said Mrs. Cristie, "and the situation and the surroundings are beautiful, and the air is very healthful. My husband was Captain Cristie of the navy. He was in bad health when he went to the Squirrel Inn, but the air did him good, and if we had stayed all winter, as Stephen Petter wanted us to, it would have been a great advantage to him. But when the weather grew cool we went to New York, where my husband died early in the following December."

"I will take my chances with Stephen Petter," said Lodloe, after a suitable pause. "I am going to the Squirrel Inn, and I am bound to stay there. There must be some road not through Germantown by which a fellow can get into the favor of Mr. Petter. Perhaps you will say a good word for me, madam?"

"I don't know any good word to say," she answered, "except that you take excellent care of babies, and I am not at all sure that that would have any weight with Stephen Petter. Since you are going to the inn, and since we have already talked together so much, I wish I did properly know you. Did you ever have a sister at Vassar?"

"I am sorry to say," said Lodloe, "that I never had a sister at that college, though I have one who wanted very much to go there; but instead of that she went with an aunt to Europe, where she married."

"An American?" asked Mrs. Cristie.

"Yes," said Lodloe.

"What was his name?"

"Tredwell."

"I never heard of him," said the lady. "There don't seem to be any threads to take hold of."

"Perhaps you had a brother at Princeton," remarked Lodloe.

"I have no brother," said she.

There was now a pause in the dialogue. The young man was well pleased that this very interesting young woman wished to know him properly, as she put it, and if there could be found the least bit of foundation on which might be built a conventional acquaintance he was determined to find it.

"Were you a Vassar girl?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Cristie, "I was there four years."

"Perhaps you know something of old Matthew Vassar, the founder?"

Mrs. Cristie laughed. "I've heard enough about him, you may be sure; but what has he to do with anything?"

"I once slept in his room," said Lodloe,—"in the Founder's Room, with all his stiff old furniture, and his books, and his portrait."

"You!" cried Mrs. Cristie. "When did you do that?"

"It was two years ago this spring," said Lodloe. "I was up there getting material for an article on the college which I wrote for the 'Bayside Magazine.'"

"Did you write that?" said Mrs. Cristie. "I read it, and it was just as full of mistakes as it could be."

"That may be, and I don't wonder at it," said the young man. "I kept on taking in material until I had a good deal more than I could properly stow away in my mind, and it got to be too late for me to go back to the town, and they had to put me into the Founder's Room, because the house was a good deal crowded. Before I went to bed I examined all the things in the room. I didn't sleep well at all, for during the night the old gentleman got down out of his frame, and sat on the side of my bed, and told me a lot of things about that college which nobody else ever knew, I am sure."

"And I suppose you mixed up all that information with what the college people gave you," she said.

"That may be the case," answered Lodloe, laughing,

"for some of the old gentleman's points were very interesting, and made a deep impression upon me."

"Well," said Mrs. Cristie, speaking very emphatically, "when I had finished reading that article I very much wished to meet the person who had written it, so that I might tell him what I thought of it; but of course I had no idea that the founder had anything to do with its inaccuracies."

"Madam," said Lodloe, "if it had not been for the mistakes in it you never would have thought of the man who wrote the paper; but you did think of him, and wanted to meet him. Now, it seems to me that we have been quite properly introduced to each other, and it was old Matthew Vassar who did it. I am sure I am very much obliged to him."

Mrs. Cristie laughed. "I don't know what the social authorities would say to such an introduction," she answered, "but as baby is asleep, I shall take him into the saloon."

CHAPTER IV

LODLOE UNDERTAKES TO NOMINATE HIS SUCCESSOR

It was late in the afternoon when the Romney passengers were landed, and Mrs. Cristie and Lodloe, with a few other persons, repaired to the village hotel.

"There is a sort of stage-wagon," said the lady, "which takes people from this house to the Squirrel Inn, and it starts when the driver is ready; but before I leave Romney I must try to find some one who will go with me as nurse-maid."

"Madam," said Lodloe, "don't think of it. I have made inquiries of the landlord, and he says the roads are rough, and that it will take more than an hour to reach the Squirrel Inn, so that if you do not start now I fear you and the baby will not get there before dark. I prefer to stay here to-night, and it will be no trouble at all for me to look up a suitable person for you, and to take her with me to-morrow. It will be a good plan to take four or five of them, and when you have selected the one you like best the others can come back here in the wagon. It will be a lark for them."

Mrs. Cristie drew a long breath. "Truly," she said, "your proposition is phenomenal. Half a dozen nurse-maids in a wagon, from whom I am to pick and

choose! The thing is so startling and novel that I am inclined to accept. I should very much dislike to be on the road after dark, and if you have planned to stay here to-night, and if it will not be much trouble—"

"Say not another word," cried Lodloe; "project your mind into to-morrow morning, and behold a wagon-load of willing maidens at the door of the inn."

When Mrs. Cristie and the baby and an elderly woman who lived in Lethbury, a village two miles beyond the Squirrel Inn, had started on their journey, Walter Lodloe set about the task he had undertaken. It was still hot, and the Romney streets were dusty, and after an hour or two of inquiry, walking, and waiting for people who had been sent for, Lodloe found that in the whole village there was not a female from thirteen to seventy-three who would think of such a thing as leaving her home to become nurse-maid to a city lady. He went to bed that night a good deal chagrined, and not in the least knowing what he was going to do about it.

In the morning, however, the thing to do rose clear and plain before him.

"I can't go to her and tell her I've failed," he said to himself. "A maid must be got, and I have undertaken to get one. As there is nobody to be had here, I must go back to the city for one. There are plenty of them there."

So when the early morning boat came along he took passage for the nearest railroad station on the river, for he wished to lose no time on that trip.

The elderly lady who was going to Lethbury took

a great interest in Mrs. Cristie, who was to be her only fellow-passenger. She was at the hotel with her carpet-bag and her paper bundle some time before the big spring-wagon was ready to start, and she gave earnest attention to the loading thereon of Mrs. Cristie's trunk and the baby-carriage. When they were on their way the elderly woman promptly began the conversation.

"I think," said she to Mrs. Cristie, "that I've seed you before."

"Perhaps so," said the other, "I was in this region three years ago."

"Yes, yes," said the elder woman, "I thought I was right. Then you had a husband and no child. It now looks as if you had a child and no husband."

Mrs. Cristie informed her that her surmise was correct.

"Well, well," said the elderly woman, "I've had 'em both, and it's hard to say which can be spared best; but as we've got nothin' to do with the sparin' of 'em, we've got ter rest satisfied. After all, they're a good deal like lilock bushes, both of 'em. They may be cut down and grubbed up, and a parsley bed made on the spot; but some day they sprout up ag'in, and before you know it you've got just as big a bush as ever. Does Stephen Petter know you're comin'?"

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Cristie, quite willing to change the subject, "all that is arranged. I was so pleased with the place when I was here before, and Mrs. Petter was so good to me, that I quite long to spend a summer there with my child."

"Well, I'm glad he knows you are comin'; but if he didn't, I was goin' ter say to you that you'd better go

on to Lethbury, and then see what you could do with Stephen to-morrow. It's no use stoppin' at his house without givin' notice, and like as not it ain't no use then."

"Is Mr. Petter's house filled?" asked Mrs. Cristie.

"Filled!" said the elderly woman. "There's nobody on the place but his own family and the Greek."

"Greek!" exclaimed Mrs. Cristie.

"Yes," said the other, "he keeps a Greek in an outhouse, but what for nobody knows. I think Stephen Petter is gettin' more oncommon than he was. If he wants to get custom for his house the best thing he can do is to die. There ain't no other way, for Stephen's not goin' to do no changin' of himself. My niece, Calthea Rose, the daughter of Dan'el Rose, who used to keep the store,—she keeps it now herself,—goes over there a good deal, for she's wonderful partial to Susan Petter, and there's a good reason for it too, for a better woman never lived, and the walk over there is mostly shady, or through the fields, to both of which Calthea is partial, and so she knows most things that's goin' on at the Squirrel Inn, which latterly has not been much, except the comin' of the Greek; an' as nobody has been able to get at the bottom of that business, that isn't much, neither."

"I think I remember Miss Calthea Rose," said Mrs. Cristie. "She was tall, wasn't she, with a very fair complexion?"

"Yes," said the elderly woman, "and it's just as fair now as it was then. Some of it's owin' to sunbonnet, and some of it to cold cream. Calthea isn't as young as she was, but she's wonderful lively on her

feet yit, and there ain't many that could get ahead of her walkin' or bargainin'."

"And she keeps the store?" asked Mrs. Cristie.

"Yes," said the other, "she keeps it, and in more ways than one. You see, when Dan'el died—and that was two years ago last March—he left everything to Calthea, and the store with the rest. Before he died he told her what he had done, and advised her to sell out the stock, and put the money into somethin' that would pay good interest; and this she agreed to do, and this she is doing now. She wouldn't consent to no auction, for she knew well enough the things wouldn't bring more'n half they cost, so she undertook herself to sell 'em all out at retail, just as her father intended they should be sold when he bought 'em. Well, it's took her a long while, and, in the opinion of most folks, it'll take her a long while yit. You see, she don't lay in no new goods, but just keeps on sellin', or tryin' to sell, what she's got on hand.

"It was purty easy to get rid of the groceries, and the iron and wooden things got themselves sold some way or other; but old dry-goods, with never any new ones to lighten 'em up, is about as humdrum as old people without youngsters in the family. Now, it stands to reason that when a person goes into a store and sees nothin' but old calicoes, and some other odds and ends, gettin' mustier and dustier and a little more fly-specked every time, and never a new thing, even so much as a spool of cotton thread, then persons isn't likely to go often into that store, specially when there's a new one in the village that keeps up to the times.

"Now, that's Calthea Rose's way of doin' business.

She undertook to sell out them goods, and she's goin' to keep on till she does it. She is willin' to sell some of the worst-lookin' things at cost, but not a cent below that, for if she does she loses money, and that isn't Calthea Rose. I guess, all put together, she hasn't sold more'n ten dollars' worth of goods this year, and most of them was took by the Greek, though what he wants with 'em is more'n I know."

"I am sorry to hear that there are no guests at the Squirrel Inn," was Mrs. Cristie's only reply to this information.

"Oh, you needn't give yourself no trouble about loneliness and that sort of thing," said the elderly woman, "before to-morrow night the whole house may be crowded from cockloft to potato-cellar. It never has been yit, but there's no tellin' what Stephen Petter has a-brewin' in his mind."

CHAPTER V

THE LANDLORD AND HIS INN

STEPHEN PETTER was a man of middle age, who had been born on a farm, and who, apparently, had been destined to farm a farm. But at the age of thirty, having come into a moderate inheritance, he devoted himself more to the business of cultivating himself and less to that of cultivating his fields.

He was a man who had built himself up out of books. His regular education had been limited, but he was an industrious reader, and from the characters of this and that author he had conceived an idea of a sort of man which pleased his fancy, and to make himself this sort of man he had given a great deal of study and a great deal of hard labor. The result was that he had shaped himself into something like an old-fashioned country clergyman, without his education, his manners, his religion, or his clothes. Imperfect similitudes of these Stephen Petter had acquired, but this was as far as he had gone. A well-read man who happened also to be a good judge of human nature could have traced back every obvious point of Stephen Petter's character to some English author of the last century or the first half of this one.

It was rather odd that a man like this should be the landlord of an inn. But everything about Stephen Petter was odd, so ten years before he had conceived the notion that such a man as he would like to be would be entirely unwilling to live in the little village of Lethbury, where he had no opportunity of exercising an influence upon his fellow-beings. Such an influence he thought it fit to exercise, and as he was not qualified to be a clergyman or a physician or a lawyer, he resolved to keep a tavern. This vocation would bring him into contact with fellow-beings; it would give him opportunities to control, impel, and retard.

Stephen Petter did not for a moment think of buying the Lethbury "Hotel," nor of establishing such a house as was demanded by the village. What he had read about houses of entertainment gave him no such motives as these. Fortunately he had an opportunity of carrying out his plan according to the notions he had imbibed from his books.

Some years before Stephen Petter had decided upon his vocation, a rich gentleman had built himself a country-seat about two miles out of Lethbury. This house and its handsome grounds were the talk and the admiration of the neighborhood. But the owner had not occupied his country home a whole summer before he determined to make a still more attractive home of it by lighting it with a new-fashioned gas of domestic manufacture. He succeeded in lighting not only his house but the whole country-side, for one moonless night his mansion was burned to the ground. Nothing was left of the house but the foundations, and on these the owner felt no desire to build again. He

departed from the Lethbury neighborhood and never came back.

When Mr. Petter became impressed with the belief that it would be a good thing for him to be an innkeeper, he also became impressed with the belief that the situation which the rich man had chosen for his country home would be an admirable one for his purposes. He accordingly bought the property at a very reasonable price, and on the stone foundations of the house which had been burned he built his inn.

This edifice was constructed very much as he had endeavored to construct himself. His plans for one part of it were made up from the descriptions in one of his books, and those of another part from the descriptions or pictures in some other book. Portions of the structure were colonial, others were old English, and others again suggested the Swiss chalet or a chateau in Normandy. There was a tall tower and there were some little towers. There were peaks here and there, and different kinds of slopes to the various roofs, some of which were thatched, some shingled in fanciful ways, and some covered with long strips or slabs. There were a good many doors and a good many windows, and these were of different forms, sizes, and periods, some of them jutting boldly outward, and some appearing anxious to shrink out of sight.

It took a great deal of thought and a good deal of labor to build this house; which was also true of Mr. Petter's character. But the first-named work was the more difficult of the two, for in building up himself he consulted with no one, while in planning his inn he met with all sorts of opposition from the village workmen and builders.

But, at the cost of all the time that was needed and all the money he could spare, he had his house built as he wanted it; and when it was finished it seemed to exhibit a trace of nearly everything a house should possess excepting chronology and paint. Mr. Petter had selected with a great deal of care the various woods of which his house was built, and he decidedly objected to conceal their hues and texture by monotonous paint. The descriptions that he had read of houses seldom mentioned paint.

The interior was not in the least monotonous. The floors of the rooms, even in the same story, were seldom upon the same level; sometimes one entered a room from a hallway by an ascent of two or three steps, while access to others was obtained by going down some steps. The inside was subordinated in a great degree to the outside: if there happened to be a pretty window like something Mr. Petter had seen in an engraving, a room of suitable shape and size was constructed behind the window. Stairways were placed where they were needed, but they were not allowed to interfere with the shapes of rooms or hallways; if there happened to be no other good place for them they were put on the outside of the house. Some of these stairways were wide, some narrow, and some winding; and as those on the outside were generally covered, they increased the opportunities for queer windows and perplexing projections. The upper room of the tower was reached by a staircase from the outside, which opened into a little garden fenced off from the rest of the grounds, so that a person might occupy this room without having any communication with the other people in the house.

In one of the back wings of the building there was a room which was more peculiar than any other, from the fact that there was no entrance to it whatever, unless one climbed into it by means of a ladder placed at one of its windows. This room, which was of fair size and well lighted, was in the second story, but it appeared to be of greater height on account of the descent of the ground at the back of the inn. It had been constructed because the shape of that part of the building called for a room, and a stairway to it had been omitted for the reason that if one had been built in the inside of the house it would have spoiled the shape of the room below, and there seemed no good way of putting one on the outside. So when the room was finished and floored the workmen came out of it through one of the windows, and Stephen Petter reserved his decision in regard to a door and stairway until the apartment should be needed.

The grounds about the Squirrel Inn were very attractive, and with them Stephen Petter had interfered but little. The rich man had planned beautiful surroundings for his country home, and during many years nature had labored steadily to carry out his plans. There were grassy stretches and slopes, great trees, and terraces covered with tangled masses of vines and flowers. The house stood on a bluff, and on one side could be seen a wide view of a lovely valley, with the two steeples of Lethbury showing above the tree-tops.

Back of the house, and sweeping around between it and the public road, was a far-reaching extent of woodland, and through this, for the distance of half a mile, wound the shaded lane which led from the highway to the Squirrel Inn.

At the point at which this lane was entered from the highroad was the sign of the inn. This was a tall post with a small square frame hanging from a transverse beam, and seated on the lower strip of the frame was a large stuffed gray squirrel. Every spring Stephen Petter took down this squirrel and put up a new one. The old squirrels were fastened up side by side on a ledge in the tap-room, and by counting them one could find out how many years the inn had been kept.

Directly below the bluff on which the house stood were Stephen Petter's grassy meadows and his fields of grain and corn, and in the rich pastures, or in the shade of the trees standing by the bank of the rapid little stream that ran down from the woodlands, might be seen his flocks and his herds. By nature he was a very good farmer, and his agricultural method he had not derived from his books. There were people who said—and among these Calthea Rose expressed herself rather better than the others—that Mr. Petter's farm kept him, while he kept the Squirrel Inn.

When it had become known that the Squirrel Inn was ready to receive guests, people came from here and there; not very many of them, but among them were the Rockmores of Germantown. This large family, so it appeared to Stephen Petter, was composed of the kind of fellow-beings with whom he wished to associate. Their manners and ways seemed to him the manners and ways of the people he liked to read about, and he regarded them with admiration and respect. He soon discovered from their conversation that they were connected or acquainted with leading families in our principal Eastern cities, and it

became his hope that he and his Squirrel Inn might become connected with these leading families by means of the Rockmores of Germantown.

As this high-classed family liked variety in their summer outings, they did not come again to the Squirrel Inn, but the effect of their influence remained strong upon its landlord. He made up his mind that those persons who did not know the Rockmores of Germantown did not move in those circles of society from which he wished to obtain his guests, and therefore he drew a line which excluded all persons who did not possess this acquaintanceship.

This rule was very effectual in preventing the crowding of his house, and, indeed, there were summers when he had no guests at all; but this did not move Stephen Petter. Better an empty house than people outside the pale of good society.

CHAPTER VI

THE GREEK SCHOLAR

Mrs. Cristie and her baby were warmly welcomed by Stephen Petter and his wife. They had learned during her former visit to like this lady for herself, and now that she came to them a widow, their sentiments toward her were warmer than ever.

Mrs. Petter wondered very much why she had come without a maid, but fearing that perhaps the poor lady's circumstances were not what they had been, she forbore to ask any immediate questions. But in her heart she resolved that, if she kept her health and strength, Mrs. Cristie should not be worn out by that child.

The young widow was charmed to find herself once more at the Squirrel Inn, for it had been more like a home to her than any place in which she had lived since her marriage. But when she went to her room that night there was a certain depression on her spirits. This was caused by the expected advent on the next day of Mr. Lodloe and a wagon-load of candidates for the nurse-maidship.

The whole affair annoyed her. In the first place, it was very awkward to have this young man engaged

in this service for her; and now that he was engaged in it, it would be, in a way, under her auspices that he would arrive at the Squirrel Inn. The more she thought of the matter the more it annoyed her. She now saw that she must announce the coming of this gentleman. It would not do for him to make a totally unexpected appearance as her agent in the nurse-maid business.

But no worry of this sort could keep her awake very long, and after a night of sound and healthful sleep, she told her host and hostess, the next morning at breakfast, of the Mr. Lodloe who had kindly undertaken to bring her a nurse-maid.

"Lodloe," repeated Mr. Petter. "It strikes me that I have heard the Rockmores mention that name. Is it a Germantown family?"

"I really do not know," answered Mrs. Cristie, "he is from New York."

Here she stopped. She was of a frank and truthful nature, and very much wished to say that she knew nothing whatever of Mr. Lodloe; but she was also of a kindly and grateful disposition, and she very well knew that such a remark would be an extremely detrimental one to the young man; so, being in doubt, she resolved to play trumps, and in cases like this silence is generally trumps.

Mrs. Petter had a mind which could project itself with the rapidity of light into the regions of possibilities, and if the possibilities appeared to her desirable her mind moved at even greater velocity. It was plain to her that there must be something between this young widow and the young man who was going to bring her a nurse-maid; and if this were the case,

nothing must be allowed to interfere with the admission of said young man as a guest at the Squirrel Inn.

Mrs. Cristie did not want to talk any more on this subject. Nothing would have pleased her better at that moment than to hear that Mr. Lodloe had been unable to find her a suitable girl and that business had called him to New York.

"Mr. Petter," she exclaimed, "I was told yesterday that you kept a Greek in an outhouse! What on earth does that mean?"

Here Mrs. Petter laughed abruptly, and Mr. Petter slightly lifted his brow.

"Who could have told you such nonsense?" he said. "There is no Greek here. It is true that a Greek scholar lives in my summer-house, but that is very different from keeping a Greek in an outhouse."

"And he's always late to breakfast," said Mrs. Petter; "I believe if we sat down at the table at nine o'clock he would come in just as we were finishing."

"How does it happen," said Mrs. Cristie, "that he lives in the summer-house?"

"He does not know the Rockmores of Germantown," said Mrs. Petter.

"He is a man of learning," remarked Stephen Petter, "with a fine mind; and although I have made a rule which is intended to keep up the reputation of this house to a desirable level, I do not intend, if I can help it, that my rules shall press pinchingly, oppressively, or irritatively upon estimable persons. Such a person is Mr. Tippengray, our Greek scholar; and although his social relations are not exactly up to the mark, he is not a man who should be denied

the privileges of this house, so far as they can be conscientiously given him. So you see, Mrs. Cristie, that although I could not take him into the inn, there was no reason why I should not fit up the summer-house for him, which I did; and I believe he likes it better than living in the house with us."

"Like it!" exclaimed Mrs. Petter. "I should say he did like it! I believe it would drive him crazy if he had to keep regular hours like other people. But here he is now. Hester, bring in some hot cakes. Mrs. Cristie, allow me to introduce Mr. Tippengray."

The appearance of the Greek scholar surprised Mrs. Cristie. She had expected to see a man in threadbare black, with a reserved and bowed demeanor. Instead of this, she saw a bright little gentleman in neat summer clothes, with a large blue cravat tied sailor fashion. He was not a young man, although his hair being light, the few portions of it which had turned gray were not conspicuous. He was a man who was inclined to listen and to observe rather than to talk, but when he had anything to say he popped it out very briskly.

Mr. Petter, having finished his breakfast, excused himself and retired, and Mrs. Petter remarked to Mr. Tippengray that she was sorry he had not taken his evening meal with them the day before.

"I took such a long walk," said the Greek scholar, "that I concluded to sup in Lethbury."

"Those Lethbury people usually take tea at five," said his hostess.

"But I'm not a Lethbury person," said he, "and I took my tea at seven."

Mrs. Petter looked at him with twinkles in her eyes.

"Of course you went to the hotel," she said.

Mr. Tippengray looked at her with twinkles in his eyes.

"Madam," said he, "have you noticed that those large blue-jays that were here in the spring have almost entirely disappeared? I remember you used to object to their shrill pipes."

"Which is as much as to say," said Mrs. Petter, "you don't care to mention where you took tea yesterday."

"Madam," said Mr. Tippengray, "the pleasure of taking breakfast here to-day effaces the memory of all former meals."

"The truth of it is," said Mrs. Petter to Mrs. Cristie, when they had left the table, "Calthea Rose gave him his tea, and he don't want to say so. She's mightily taken with him, for he is a fine-minded man, and it isn't often she gets the chance of keeping company with that kind of a man. I don't know whether he likes her liking or not, but he don't care to talk about it."

Her first day at the Squirrel Inn was not altogether a pleasant one for Bertha Cristie. In spite of the much-proffered service of Mrs. Petter, the care of her baby hampered her a good deal; and notwithstanding the delights of her surroundings, her mind was entirely too much occupied with wondering when Mr. Lodloe would arrive with his wagon-load of girls, and what she would have to say to him and about him when he did arrive.

CHAPTER VII

ROCKMORES AHEAD

It was late in the afternoon of the day after Mrs. Cristie reached the Squirrel Inn that she slowly trundled the little carriage containing the baby toward the end of the bluff beneath which stretched the fair pastures where were feeding Mr. Petter's flocks and herds. All day she had been looking for the arrival of the young man who had promised to bring her some candidates for the position of child's nurse, and now she was beginning to believe that she might as well cease to expect him. It was an odd sort of service for a comparative stranger voluntarily to undertake, and it would not be at all surprising if he had failed in his efforts or had given up his idea of coming to the Squirrel Inn.

Having philosophized a little on the subject, and having succeeded in assuring herself that, after all, the matter was of no great importance, and that she should have attended to it herself, and must do it the next day, she was surprised to find how glad she was when, turning, she saw emerging from the woodland road a one-horse wagon with Mr. Lodloe sitting by the driver, and a female figure on the back seat.

The latter proved to be a young person who at a

considerable distance looked about fourteen years old, although on a nearer and more careful view she would pass for twenty or thereabouts. She wore a round straw hat with a white ribbon, and a light-colored summer suit with a broad belt, which held a large bunch of yellow flowers with brown centres. She had a cheerful, pleasant countenance, and large brown eyes which seemed to observe everything.

As the wagon approached, Mrs. Cristie rapidly pushed her baby-carriage toward the house. Before she reached it the young girl had jumped to the ground and was advancing toward her.

"I suppose this is Mrs. Cristie," said the new-comer. "I am Ida Mayberry;" and she held out her hand.

Without a word Mrs. Cristie shook hands with the nurse-maid.

"I think," said the latter, "before we have any talk I would better go to my room and freshen myself up a little. I am covered with dust." Then she turned to the driver of the wagon and gave him directions in regard to a medium-sized trunk, a large flat box, and several long packages tied up in brown muslin, which had been strapped to the back of the wagon. When these had been taken into the inn, she followed them.

As Mr. Lodloe approached Mrs. Cristie, hat in hand, she exclaimed in a tone which she was not in the habit of using to comparative strangers, in which category sober reflection would certainly have placed the gentleman:

"Will you please to tell me what is the meaning of this? Who is that girl, and where did she come from?"

"Madam," said Lodloe, in a deprecatory tone, "I can scarcely pick up the courage to say so, but that is the nurse-maid."

"And you brought her to me?" exclaimed Mrs. Cristie.

"I did," he answered.

"Did you get her in Romney?"

"No," said Lodloe, "there wasn't a girl of any sort or kind to be had there. I was obliged to go to New York for one."

"To New York!" cried the astonished Mrs. Cristie.

"Madam," said Lodloe, "let me propose that we retire a little from the house. Perhaps her room may be somewhere above us."

And the two having walked a short distance over the lawn, he continued:

"I really believe that I have done a very foolish thing; but having promised to do you a service, I greatly disliked not to keep my word. I could find no one in Romney, and of course the only way to get you a girl was to go to New York; and so I went there. My idea was to apply to one of those establishments where there are always lots of maids of all grades, and bring one to you. That was the way the matter appeared to me, and it seemed simple enough. On the ferry-boat I met Mrs. Waltham, a lady I know very well, who is a member of the Monday Morning Club, and a great promoter of college annexes for girls, and all that sort of thing; and when I asked her advice about the best intelligence office, she told me to keep away from all of them, and to go instead to a teachers' agency, of which she gave me the address, where she said I would be almost sure to find

some teacher who wanted occupation during the holidays."

"A teacher!" cried Mrs. Cristie.

"Yes," said Lodloe, "and you may be sure that I was as much surprised as you are. But Mrs. Waltham assured me that a great many women teachers found it necessary to make money during the summer, and were glad to do anything, just as college students wait at hotels. The more she talked about it the more she got interested in it, and the matter resulted in her going to the agency with me. Mrs. Waltham is a heavy swell in educational circles, and as she selected this young person herself I said not a word about it, except to hurry up matters so that the girl and I could start on an early afternoon train."

"Never in my life!" ejaculated Mrs. Cristie.

"Madam," interrupted Lodloe, "I beg you not to say what you intended. It is impossible for you to feel as bad about it as I do. Just to think of it stuns me. Did you see her baggage? She has come to stay all summer. There is no earthly reason to think she will suit you. I don't suppose she ever saw a baby."

Mrs. Cristie's mind was still filled with surprise and vexation, but she could not help laughing at Mr. Lodloe's comical contrition.

"I will see her presently," she said, "but, in the meantime, what are you going to do? There is Mr. Petter standing in the doorway waiting for your approach, and he will ask you a lot of questions."

"About the Germantown family, I suppose," said Lodloe.

"Yes," said Mrs. Cristie, "that will be one of them."

"Well, I don't know them," said Lodloe, "and that's the end of it."

"By no means," said the lady, quickly. "Mr. Petter has on his most impressive air. You must go and talk to him, and it will not do to sneer at the Rockmores."

"If it is absolutely necessary to have credentials in order to secure quarters here," said Lodloe, "I don't see what is to be done about it."

"Come with me," said Mrs. Cristie, quickly, "you have put yourself to a great deal of trouble for me, and I will see what I can do for you."

When Walter Lodloe and Mr. Petter had been formally introduced to each other, the brow of the latter bore marks of increased trouble and uncertainty. From the confidential aspect of the interview between Mrs. Cristie and the young man, the landlord of the inn had begun to suspect what his wife had suspected, and it galled his spirit to think of putting his usual test question to this friend of Mrs. Cristie. But he was a man of principle, and he did not flinch.

"Are you from Philadelphia, sir," he asked, "or its vicinity?"

"No," said Lodloe; "I am from New York."

"A great many Philadelphia people," continued the landlord, "or those from its vicinity, are well known in New York, and, in fact, move in leading circles there. Are you acquainted, sir, with the Rockmores of Germantown?"

Mrs. Petter now appeared in the doorway, her face clouded. If Mrs. Cristie had known the Rockmores she would have hastened to give Mr. Lodloe such advantages as an acquaintance in the second degree might afford. But she had never met any member of

that family, the valuable connection being entirely on the side of her late husband.

"I did not know," said Lodloe, "that you required credentials of respectability, or I might have brought a lot of letters."

"One from Matthew Vassar?" said Mrs. Cristie, unable to resist her opportunity.

"Were you acquainted with Matthew Vassar?" interpolated Mrs. Petter, with energetic interest. "He was a great and good man, and his friends ought to be good enough for anybody. Now, put it to yourself, Stephen. Don't you think that the friends of Matthew Vassar, the founder of that celebrated college, known all over the world, a man who even after his day and generation is doing so much good, are worthy to be accommodated in this house?"

Mr. Petter contracted his brows, looked upon the ground, and interlaced his fingers in front of him.

"The late Mr. Matthew Vassar," said he, "was truly a benefactor to his kind, and a man worthy of all respect; but when we come to consider the way in which the leading circles of society are made up—"

"Don't consider it at all," cried Mrs. Petter. "If this gentleman is a friend of Mrs. Cristie, and is backed up by Matthew Vassar, you cannot turn him away. If you want to get round the Rockmores you can treat him just as you treat Mr. Tippengray. Let him have the top room of the tower, which, I am sure, is as pleasant as can be, especially in warm weather; and then he will have his own stairs to himself, and can come in and go out just as Mr. Tippengray does, without ever considering whether the Squirrel Inn is open or shut. As for eating, that's a different matter.

People can eat in a place without living there. That was all settled when we took Mr. Tippengray."

An expression of decided relief passed over the face of Mr. Petter.

"It is true," he said, "that in the case of Mr. Tippengray we made an exception to our rule—"

"That's so," interrupted Mrs. Petter, "and as I have heard that exceptions prove a rule, the more of them we have the better. And if the top room suits Mr. Lodloe, I'll have it made ready for him without waiting another minute."

Mr. Lodloe declared that any room into which the good lady might choose to put him would suit him perfectly ; and that matter was settled.

CHAPTER VIII

MISS MAYBERRY

ABOUT five minutes after Walter Lodloe had departed for his loft-chamber, Miss Ida Mayberry made her appearance in the front doorway. She had changed her dress, and looked very bright and fresh.

"Isn't this a pretty place?" she said, approaching Mrs. Cristie. "I think I shall like it ever so much. And that is your baby? Is it a boy or a girl?"

"A boy," was the answer.

"And his name?"

"Douglas."

"I like that sort of name," remarked Miss Mayberry, "it is sensible and distinctive. And now, I wish you would tell me exactly what you want me to do."

Mrs. Cristie spoke nervously.

"Really," said she, "I am afraid that there has been a mistake. I want an ordinary nurse-maid, and Mr. Lodloe could not have understood—"

"Oh, don't trouble yourself about that," said the other. "I understand perfectly. You will find me quite practical. What I don't know I can learn. My mental powers need a change of channel, and if I can give them this change, and at the same time make some money, I am sure I ought to be satisfied."

"But it seems to me," said Mrs. Cristie, "that one who is by profession a teacher would scarcely—"

"Perhaps not, years ago," interrupted the other, "but things are different now. Look at all the young college fellows who work during vacation! And we are beginning to do it, too. Now, you will find me just as practical as anybody. Nine months in the year I teach,—moral and mental philosophy are my special branches,—and during vacation I am not going to wear out my brain in a summer school, nor empty my purse by lounging about in idleness. Now, what could be better than for me to come to a perfectly lovely place like this, which I fancy more and more every minute, and take care of a nice little child, which, I am sure, will be a pleasure in itself, and give me a lot of time to read, besides? However, I wish you to understand, Mrs. Cristie, that I am never going to neglect the baby for the sake of study or reading."

"But have you thought seriously of the position in which this would place you?"

"Oh, yes," was the answer, "but that is a disadvantage that has to be accepted, and I don't mind it. Of course I wouldn't go to anybody and everybody; but when a lady is recommended by a friend of Mrs. Waltham's, I wouldn't hesitate to make an engagement with her. As to salary, I will take whatever you would pay to another nurse-maid, and I beg you will not make the slightest difference because I am a teacher. Is that bell for supper?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Cristie, "and perhaps you have not yet reflected that my nurse-maid must take care of my baby while I am at my meals."

"That is precisely and exactly what she is going to

do. Go in to your supper, and I will push him about until you come out again. Then you can show me how to put him to bed."

"Isn't she coming in?" asked Mrs. Petter, looking out of the window, as she took her seat at the table.

"Of course not," said Mrs. Cristie, in a tone which was intended to make an impression on Mr. Lodloe, "my maids do not eat with me."

"But goodnessful me!" said Mrs. Petter, "you can't look upon that sort of a young woman as a servant. Why, I put her in one of the best rooms; though of course that doesn't make any difference, so long as there is nobody else to take it. I wonder if we couldn't find some sort of a girl to take care of the baby while she comes to her meals?"

At this even Stephen Petter smiled. He was pleased that one of his guests should have a servant of such high degree. It was like a noble lady in waiting upon a queen.

"She shall be entertained," he said, "according to her station. There need be no fear about that."

"Upon my word," exclaimed Mrs. Petter, "if here isn't Mr. Tippengray! Well, sir, I don't know when I've seen you on hand at regular meal-time!"

"Perhaps it is a little out of the common," said the Greek scholar, "but, after all," he continued, looking out of the window, "it appears I am not the last one to come in." And then, glancing around the table, he asked, "Am I taking her place?"

"Oh, no, sir," said Mrs. Cristie, "that is my maid."

Mr. Tippengray again looked out of the window; then he helped himself to butter, and said:

"Have you ever noticed, Mrs. Petter, that the pre-

vailing style in wild flowers seems to vary every year? It changes just like our fashions, though of course there are always a few old fogies among blossoming weeds as well as among clothes-wearers."

The next morning Walter Lodloe came to Mrs. Cristie on the lawn.

"I have been waiting for some time," he said, "in order to tell you that I am ready at any moment to repair the unpardonable blunder that I made yesterday, and to escort back to New York the very unsuitable young woman whom I forced upon you."

"Oh, you need not think of doing anything of that kind," said Mrs. Cristie. "The young person is perfectly satisfied with the situation, and intends to stay. She gives me no possible excuse to tell her that she will not suit me, for she takes hold of things exactly as if she remembered what people did for her when she was a baby. She doesn't know everything, but she intends to; that is plain enough. At present she is washing one of baby's frocks with my *savon de rose*, because she declares that the soap they gave her in the kitchen contains enough lye to corrode the fibers of the fabric."

"Then you think she may suit you?" said Lodloe.

"Oh, she will suit; she intends to suit; and I have nothing to say except that I feel very much as I suppose you would feel if you had a college president to brush your coat."

"My spirits rise," said Lodloe, "I begin to believe that I have not made so much of a blunder, after all. When you can get it, there is nothing like blooded service."

"But you do not want too much blood," said Mrs.

Cristie. "I wish she had not studied at Bryn Mawr, for I think she pities me for having graduated at Vassar. But still, she says I must call her Ida, and that gives me courage."

There then followed a contention, in which Lodloe was worsted, about his expenses in the nurse-maid affair, and, this matter being settled, the young man declared that, having shown what an extremely undesirable person he was to work for others, he must go and attend to his own work.

"What sort of work do you do?" asked Mrs. Cristie.

"I write," he answered—"novels, stories, fiction in general."

"I know that," said she, "having read your Vassar article; but I do not think I have met with any of your avowed stories."

"Madam," said Walter Lodloe, "there are so many people in this world, and so few of them have read my stories, it is no wonder that you belong to the larger class. But, satirize my Vassar article as you please, I shall never cease to be grateful to it for my tower room in the Squirrel Inn."

CHAPTER IX

THE PRESERVATION OF LITERATURE

WALTER LODLOE set out to go to his work, and on his way to the little garden at the foot of the staircase which led to his room in the tower he saw the Greek scholar sitting on a bench outside his summer-house smoking a large cigar.

"Good morning, sir," said Mr. Tippengray, "do you smoke?"

The tone of these words implied not only a question, but an invitation, in case the young man did smoke, to sit down on that bench and do it. Lodloe understood the force of the remark, and, drawing out a cigar, took a seat by Mr. Tippengray.

"Before I go to my work," said the latter, "it is my habit to sit here and enjoy the scenery and a few puffs. I suppose when you come to a place like this you throw work to the winds."

"Oh, no!" said Lodloe, "I am a literary man, and I came here to write."

"Very glad to hear it," said the other, "very glad that that tower room is to have the right sort of occupant. If I had not this summer-house, I should want that room; but I am afraid, however, if I had it, I

should look out of the window a great deal and translate a very little."

"What do you translate?" asked Lodloe, with interest.

"At present," said Mr. Tippengray, "I am engaged in translating into Greek some of the standard works of our modern literature. There is no knowing what may happen to our modern languages. In the course of a few centuries they may become as useless to the readers of that day as the English of Chaucer is to the ordinary reader of our time; but Greek will stand, sir, and the sooner we get the good things of the present day into solid Greek the better it will be for them and the literature of the future."

"What work are you translating?" asked Lodloe.

"I am now at work on the 'Pickwick Papers,'" said the scholar, "and I assure you that it is not an easy job. When I get through with it I shall translate it back into English, after the fashion of Sir William Jones—the only way to do that sort of thing. Same as a telegraphic message—if it isn't repeated you can't depend on it. If I then find that my English is like that of Dickens, I shall feel greatly encouraged, and probably shall take up the works of Thackeray."

Walter Lodloe was somewhat stunned at this announcement, and he involuntarily glanced at the gray streaks in the locks of the Greek scholar. The latter perceived the glance, and, knocking the ashes from his cigar, remarked:

"Did you ever notice, sir, that an ordinary robin is perfectly aware that while squirrels and cats are able to ascend the perpendicular trunk of a tree.

they cannot climb the painted pillar of a piazza, and consequently it is perfectly safe to build a nest at the top of such a pillar?"

Lodloe had noticed this and a good many other intelligent traits of animals, and the two conversed on this interesting subject until the sun came round to the bench on which they were sitting, when they moved to a shady spot and continued the conversation.

At last Lodloe arose. "It must be nearly dinner-time," said he. "I think I shall take a walk, this afternoon, and see some of the country."

"You ought to do it," said Mr. Tippengray. "It is a beautiful country. If you like, I will go with you. I'm not a bad guide; I know every road, path, and short cut."

Walter Lodloe expressed his satisfaction at the proposed companionship, and suggested that the first walk be to the village of Lethbury, peeping up among the trees in the distance.

"Lethbury!" exclaimed the Greek scholar. "Well, sir, if it's all the same to you, I prefer walking in any direction to that of Lethbury. It's a good enough place, but to-day I don't feel drawn to it."

"Very good," said Lodloe, "we will walk anywhere but in the direction of Lethbury."

About half an hour afterward, Mrs. Petter, having finished carving a pair of fowls, paused for a moment's rest in serving the little company, and looked out of the dining-room window.

"Upon my word!" she exclaimed, "this is too bad. When other boarders came, I thought Mr. Tippengray would begin to behave like other Christians, and come

to his meals at the proper time. At supper last night and breakfast this morning he was at the table as soon as anybody, and I was beginning to feel real heartened up, as if things were going to run on regular and proper. But now look at that! Isn't that enough to make a housekeeper give up in despair?"

Mrs. Cristie, Lodloe, and Mr. Petter all looked out of the window, and beheld the Greek scholar engaged in pushing the baby-carriage backward and forward under the shade of a large tree, while, on a seat near by, the maid Ida sat reading a book. Now, passing nearer, Mr. Tippengray stopped, and with sparkling eyes spoke to her. Then she looked up, and with sparkling eyes answered him. Then together, with sparkling eyes, they conversed for a few minutes, evidently about the book. After a few more turns of the carriage, Mr. Tippengray returned to the maid; the sparkling eyes were raised again from the book, and the scene was repeated.

"He has lent her a book," said Mrs. Cristie. "She did not take that one out with her."

"There's a time for books, and there's a time for meals," said Mrs. Petter. "Why didn't he keep his book until he had eaten his dinner?"

"I think Mr. Tippengray must be something of a philosopher," said Lodloe, "and that he prefers to take his books to a pretty maid when other people are at dinner."

"My wife does not altogether understand the ways of scholars," said Mr. Petter. "A gentleman giving most of his time to Greek cannot be expected to give much of his mind to the passage of modern time."

"If he gave some of his time to the passage of a

good dinner into cold victuals it would help his dyspepsia. But I suppose he will come when he is ready; and all I have to say is that I would like to see Calthea Rose if she could catch sight of them this minute."

Mr. Petter sat at the end of the table where he had a view of his flocks and his herds in the pasture below.

"Well," said he, "if that estimable young woman wants to catch a sight of them, all she has to do is to step along lively, for at this present moment she is walking over the field path, straight to this house, and, what is more, she is wearing her bonnet and carrying a parasol."

"Bonnet and parasol!" ejaculated Mrs. Petter. "Fire in the mountains, run, boys, run! Debby, step out as quick as you can to Mr. Tippengray, and you needn't say anything but just ask if Miss Calthea Rose told him she was coming to dinner to-day, and tell him she's coming over the field."

In about one minute the Greek scholar was in his place at the table and beginning his meal.

"Now, Mr. Tippengray," said Mrs. Petter, "I don't suppose you feel any coals of fire on your head at this present moment."

"Madam," said the scholar, "did you ever notice that when squirrels strip the bark from the limbs of trees they are very apt to despoil those branches which project in such a manner as to interfere with a view?"

"No, I didn't," said Mrs. Petter, "and I don't believe they do it, either. Debby, put a knife, fork, and napkin for Calthea Rose. If she is coming to dinner,

it is just as well to let her think that nobody forgot to bring the message she sent. She never comes to meals without sending word beforehand."

But Miss Calthea had not come to dinner. She sent word by Debby, who met her at the front door, that she had had her dinner, and that she would wait for the family on the piazza.

"Bonnet and parasol!" said Mrs. Petter. "She has come to make a call, and it's on you, Mrs. Cristie. Don't eat too fast, Mr. Tippengray; she's good for the rest of the afternoon."

CHAPTER X

ROSE VERSUS MAYBERRY

Miss Calthea Rose was a person of good height, originally slender, but gathering an appreciable plumpness as the years went on, and with good taste in dress when she chose to exert it, which on the present occasion she did. She possessed acute perceptions and a decided method of action : but whether or not the relation of her perceptions to her actions was always influenced by good judgment was a question with her neighbors ; it never was, however, a question with herself.

When everybody but Mr. Tippengray had finished dinner, and he had desired the others not to wait for him, as he would probably be occupied some time longer, the host and hostess went out to greet the visitor, followed by Mrs. Cristie and Lodloe. When Miss Calthea Rose turned to greet the latter lady her expression was cold, not to say hard ; but when her eyes fell upon the gentleman by the side of the young widow, a softening warmth spread over her face, and she came forward with outstretched hands.

"Did you see that?" said Mrs. Petter, aside to her husband. "Jealous as she can be of Mrs. Cristie till

she sees that she's got a young man of her own; then as sweet as sugar."

When Miss Calthea Rose set about to be as sweet as sugar, it was very good sugar that she took for her model. She liked to talk, but was not a mistress of words; and although her remarks were not always to the point, they were generally pointed. At last Mr. Tippengray came out on the piazza. He walked slowly, and he did not wear his usual ease of demeanor; but nothing could have been more cordial and reassuring than the greeting given him by Miss Calthea. If this were intended in any way to inspirit him, it failed of its effect. The Greek scholar stood apart, and did not look like a man who had made up his mind as to what he was going to do next; but Miss Calthea took no notice of his unusual demeanor. She talked with great graciousness to the company in general, and frequently directed remarks to Mr. Tippengray which indicated a high degree of good comradeship.

Under this general warmth Mr. Tippengray was forced to melt a little, and in a manner to accept the position thus publicly tendered him. But suddenly the maid Ida popped up the steps of the piazza. She had an open book in her hand, and she went directly and quickly to Mr. Tippengray. She held the book up toward him, and put her finger on a page.

"You were just here," she said, "when you had to go to your dinner. Now, if you will finish the explanation I can go on nicely. You don't know how you help me. Every word you say seems to take root." And she looked up into his face with sparkling eyes.

But not a sparkle sparkled from the eyes of the Greek scholar. He stood silently looking at the book, his face a little flushed, his eyes blinking as if the sunlight were too strong for him.

"Suppose you walk out on the lawn with me," said the nurse-maid, "and then we shall not disturb the others. I will not keep you more than five minutes."

She went down the steps of the piazza, and Mr. Tippengray, having apparently lost the power of making up his mind what he should do, did what she wanted him to do, and followed her. They did not walk very far, but stood barely out of hearing of the persons on the piazza, her eyes sparkling up into his face as his helpful words took root in her understanding.

At the instant of the appearance of the maid Ida Miss Calthea Rose stopped talking. Her subsequent glances toward this young woman and Mr. Tippengray might have made one think of steel chilled to zero. Mrs. Cristie looked at Lodloe, and he at her, and both slightly smiled. "She understands that sort of thing," he thought, and "He understands that sort of thing," she thought.

At this moment Mrs. Petter glanced at her two guests and saw the smile which passed between them. She understood that sort of thing.

"Who is that?" said Miss Calthea Rose, presently.

Mrs. Cristie, full of the humor of the situation, hastened to answer.

"It is my nurse-maid," she said, "Ida Mayberry."

"A child's nurse!" ejaculated Miss Calthea Rose.

"Yes," said Mrs. Cristie; "that is what she is."

"I expect," said Mrs. Petter, "that he is teaching

her Greek, and of course it's hard for her at the beginning. Mr. Tippengray's such a kind man that he would do anything for anybody, so far as he could; but I must admit that I can't see how Greek can help anybody to nurse children, unless there is some book on the subject in that language."

"Greek!" scornfully ejaculated Miss Calthea; and turning her steely glance from the couple on the lawn, she began to talk to Mr. Petter about one of his cows which had broken its leg.

Ida Mayberry was a young woman who meant what she said, and in less than five minutes, with a sparkling glance of thanks, she released Mr. Tippengray. That gentleman returned to the piazza; but his appearance elicited no more attention from the lady who had so recently brought into view their friendly relationship than if he had been the head of a nail in the floor beneath her. From Mr. Petter she turned to speak to some of the others; and if her words and manner did not make Mr. Tippengray understand, that, so far as she was concerned, he had ceased to exist, her success was not what she expected it to be.

Although he had been amused and interested, Walter Lodloe now thought that he had had enough of Miss Calthea Rose, and wandered away to the little garden at the foot of his staircase. He had not reached it before he was joined by Mr. Tippengray.

"Look here," said the latter, with something of his usual briskness, "if you are still in the humor, suppose we walk over to Lethbury."

Lodloe looked at him in surprise. "I thought you didn't want to go there," he said.

"I've changed my mind," replied the other. "I

think this is a very good day to go to Lethbury. It is a pretty village, and you ought to have some one with you to show you its best points."

As soon as she thought etiquette would permit, Mrs. Cristie withdrew, pleading the interests of her baby as an excuse.

"Do you mean to tell me," said Miss Calthea Rose, the moment the young mother was out of hearing, "that she leaves her baby in the care of that thing with a book?"

"Oh, yes," was the answer, "Mrs. Cristie tells me she is a very good nurse-maid."

"Well," said Miss Calthea, "babies are troublesome, and it's often convenient to get rid of them; but I must say that I never heard of this new style of infanticide. I suppose there isn't any law against it yet."

Mr. Petter looked uneasy. He did not like fault found with Mrs. Cristie, who was a great favorite with him.

"I am inclined to think, Miss Calthea," he said, "that you judge that young person too harshly. I have formed a very good opinion of her. Not only does she attend to her duties, but she has a good mind. It may not be a fine mind, but it is a good mind. Her desire to learn from Mr. Tippengray is a great point in her favor."

Here Mrs. Petter, who sat near her husband, pressed violently upon his foot; but she was too late: the words had been said. Mrs. Petter prepared herself for a blaze, but none came. There was a momentary flash in the Calthean eyes, and then the lids came down and shut out everything but a line of

steely light. Then she gazed out over the landscape, and presently again turned her face toward her companions, with nothing more upon it than her usual expression when in a bad humor.

"Do you know," she said abruptly, "that Lanigan Beam is coming back?"

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Petter. "I thought he was settled in Patagonia."

"It was not Patagonia," said Mr. Petter, "it was Nicaragua."

"Well, I knew it was the little end of some place," said she. "And now he's coming back! Well, that is unfortunate."

"Unfortunate!" said Miss Calthea. "It's criminal. There ought to be a law against such things."

Again the host of the Squirrel Inn moved uneasily on his chair and crossed and recrossed his legs. He liked Lanigan Beam.

"I cannot see," he said, "why it is wrong for a man to return to the place where he was born."

"Born!" scornfully exclaimed Miss Calthea. "It's the greatest pity that there is any place where he was born! But there's no use talking about him. He has written to them at the hotel at Lethbury that he will be there the day after to-morrow, and he wants them to have a room ready for him. If he'd asked them to have a grave ready for him it would have been much more considerate."

Mr. Petter now rose to his feet; his manner was very dignified.

"Excuse me, Miss Calthea," he said, "but I must go and look after my men in the corn-field."

Miss Calthea Rose sat up very straight in her chair.

"If there's anything you want to do, Mrs. Petter, I beg you won't let me keep you."

"Now, Calthea," said Mrs. Petter, "don't work yourself into such a terrible stew. You know Stephen doesn't like to have Lanigan pitched into. I'm sorry for even what I said. But that about his grave was enough to rouse a saint."

Miss Calthea was on the point of retorting that that was something which Stephen Petter was not, by any means; but she restrained herself. If she quarrelled with the Petters, and cut herself off from visiting the Squirrel Inn, a great part of the pleasure of her life would be gone.

"Well," she said, "we all know Lanigan Beam, and if there's anybody who wants the peace of the community to vanish entirely out of sight, the responsibility's on him, and not on me."

"Mrs. Petter," said Ida Mayberry, appearing so suddenly before that good woman that she seemed to have dropped through the roof of the piazza, "do you know where Mr. Tippengray is? I've been looking all over for him, and can't find him. He isn't in his little house, for I knocked at the door."

"Does Mrs. Cristie want him?" asked Mrs. Petter, making this wild grasp at a straw.

"Oh, no," said Ida. "It is I who want him. There's a Greek sentence in this book he lent me which I am sure I have not translated properly; and as the baby is asleep now, there couldn't be a better time for him to help me, if only I could find him."

Self-restraint was no longer possible with Miss Calthea Rose. A red blaze shot into her face, and without deigning to look in the direction of the

creature who had just spoken, she said in the sharpest tones of contemptuous anger :

"Greek to a child's nurse! I expect next he'll teach French to the pigs!"

The maid Ida lifted up her eyes from the book and fixed them on Miss Calthea.

"The best thing he could do," she quietly remarked, "would be to teach the old hens good manners;" and then she walked away with her book.

Miss Calthea sprang to her feet, and looked as if she was going to do something; but there was nothing to do, and she sat down again. Her brow was dark, her eyes flashed, and her lips were parted as if she was about to say something; but there was nothing to say, and she sat silent, breathing hard. It was bad enough to be as jealous as Miss Calthea was at that moment, but to be so flagrantly insulted by the object of her jealousy created in her a rage that could not be expressed in words. It was fortunate that she did not look at Mrs. Petter, for that good lady was doing her best to keep from laughing.

"Well!" she exclaimed, as soon as she could speak composedly, "this is too much. I think I must speak to Mrs. Cristie about this. Of course she can't prevent the young woman from answering back, but I think I can make her see that it isn't seemly and becoming for nurse-maids to be associating with boarders in this way."

"If you take my advice, Susan Petter," said Miss Calthea, in a voice thickened by her emotions, "you will keep your mouth shut on that subject. If your boarders choose to associate with servants, let them alone. It simply shows what sort of people they are."

Calthea Rose did not like to hear herself speak in a voice which might show how she was feeling, and as there was no use of staying there if she could not talk, she rose to leave, and, in spite of Mrs. Petter's hospitable entreaty to make a longer stay, she departed.

When her visitor was well out of sight, Mrs. Petter allowed herself to lean back in her chair and laugh quietly.

"Leave them alone, indeed!" she said to herself. "You may want me to do it, but I know well enough that you are not going to leave them alone, Miss Calthea Rose, and I can't say that I wonder at your state of mind, for it seems to me that this is your last chance. If you don't get Mr. Tippengray, I can't see where you are going to find another man who is properly older than you are."

CHAPTER XI

LANIGAN BEAM

THAT evening about eleven o'clock Walter Lodloe was sitting in his room in the tower, his feet upon the sill of the large window which looked out over the valley. He had come up to his room an hour or two before, determined not to allow the whole day to pass without his having done any work; and now, having written several pages of the story on which he was engaged, he was enjoying the approbation of his conscience, the flavor of a good cigar, and the beautiful moon-lighted scene which he beheld from his window.

More than this, he was thinking over the events of the day with a good deal of interest and amusement, particularly of his afternoon walk with Mr. Tippengray. He had taken a great fancy to that gentleman, who, without making any direct confidences, had given him a very fair idea of his relations with Calthea Rose. It was plain enough that he liked that very estimable person, and that he had passed many pleasant hours in her society, but that he did not at all agree with what he called her bigoted notions in regard to proprietorship in fellow-beings.

On the other hand, Lodloe was greatly delighted

with Miss Calthea's manner of showing her state of mind. Quite unexpectedly they had met her in Lethbury,—to which village Mr. Tippengray had not thought she would return so soon,—and Lodloe almost laughed as he called to mind the beaming and even genial recognition that she gave to him, and which, at the same time, included effacement and extinction of his companion to the extent of being an admirable piece of dramatic art. The effect upon Lodloe had been such that when the lady had passed he involuntarily turned to see if the Greek scholar had not slipped away just before the moment of meeting.

"When a woman tries so hard to show how little she thinks of a man," thought Lodloe, "it is a proof that she thinks a great deal of him, and I shall not be surprised—" Just then there came a tap at the window opposite the one at which he was sitting.

Now, when a man in the upper room of a fairly tall tower, access to which is gained by a covered staircase the door at the bottom of which he knows he has locked, hears a tap at the window, he is likely to be startled. Lodloe was so startled that his chair nearly tipped over backward. Turning quickly, he saw a man's head and shoulders at the opposite window, the sash of which was raised. With an exclamation, Lodloe sprang to his feet. His lamp had been turned down in order that he might better enjoy the moonlight, but he could plainly see the man at the window, who now spoke.

"Hold hard," said he, "don't get excited. There's nothing out of the way. My name is Beam—Lanigan Beam. I tapped because I thought if I spoke first

you might jump out of the window, being turned in that direction. May I come in?"

Lodloe made no answer; his mind did not comprehend the situation; he went to the window and looked out. The man was standing on the sharp ridge of a roof which stretched from the tower to the rear portion of the building. By reaching upward he was able to look into the window.

"Give me a hand," said the man, "and we'll consider matters inside. This is a mighty ticklish place to stand on."

Lodloe had heard a good deal that evening about Lanigan Beam, and although he was amazed at the appearance of that individual at this time and place, he was ready and willing to make his acquaintance. Bracing himself against the window-frame, he reached out his hand, and in a few moments Mr. Beam had scrambled into the room. Lodloe turned up the wick of his lamp, and by the bright light he looked at his visitor.

He saw a man rather long as to legs and thin as to face, and dressed in an easy-fitting suit of summer clothes.

"Take a seat," said Lodloe, "and tell me to what I owe this call."

"To your lamp," said the other, taking a chair, "it wasn't burning very brightly, but still it was a light, and the only one about. I was on my way to Lethbury, but I couldn't get any sort of conveyance at Romney, so I footed it, thinking I would like a moonlight walk. But by the time I got to the squirrel on the post I thought I would turn in here and stay with Stephen Petter for the night; but the house was all

shut up and dark, except this room, and as I knew that if I woke Stephen out of a sound sleep he'd bang me over the head with his everlasting Rockmores of Germantown, I determined to take a night's lodging without saying a word to him about it.

"There's a room back here that you can only get into by a ladder put up on the outside. I knew all about it, so I went to the ice-house and got a ladder, and climbed into the room. I put my valise under my head, and prepared to take a good sleep on the floor; but in three minutes I found the place was full of wasps. I couldn't stay there, you know; and I was just getting ready to go down the ladder again when I happened to look out of a window that opened on the roof, and saw you in here. I could see only the back of your head; but although it was pretty well lighted, I couldn't judge very well by that what sort of a person you were. But I saw you were smoking, and it struck me that a man who smokes is generally a pretty good fellow, and so I came over."

"Glad to see you," said Lodloe, "and what can I do for you?"

"Well, in the first place," said Beam, "have you any liquid ammonia? The first notice I had of the wasps in that room was this sting on my finger."

Lodloe was sorry that he did not possess anything of the kind.

"If I'm not mistaken," said the visitor, "there is a bottle of it on the top shelf of that closet. I have frequently occupied this room, and I remember putting some there myself. May I look for it?"

Permission being given, Mr. Beam speedily found the bottle, and assuaged the pains of his sting.

"Now, then," said he, resuming his seat, "the next favor I'll ask will be to allow me to fill my pipe, and put to you a few questions as to the way the land lies about here at present. I've been away for a year and a half, and don't know what's going on, or who's dead or alive. By the way, have you happened to hear anybody speak of me?"

"I should think so!" said Lodloe, laughing. "The greater part of this evening was occupied in a discussion on your life, adventures, moral character, disposition, and mental bias. There may have been some other points touched upon, but I don't recall them just now."

"Upon my word," said Lanigan Beam, putting his arms on the table and leaning forward, "this is interesting. Who discussed me?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Petter had the most to say," answered Lodloe.

"I'm glad to hear they're alive," interpolated the other.

"And Mrs. Cristie, who knew you when her husband was alive."

"Dead, is he?" said Beam. "Very sorry to hear that. A mighty pretty woman is Mrs. Cristie."

"Miss Calthea Rose was not present," continued Lodloe, "but her opinions were quoted very freely by the others, and sometimes combated."

"Calthea alive, is she?" ejaculated Beam. "Well, well, I ought to be glad to hear it, and I suppose I am. Anybody else?"

"Yes; there was Mr. Tippengray, one of the guests at the inn. There are only three of us in all. He had heard a great deal about you from Miss Rose.

She seems to have been very communicative to him."

"Chums, are they?" cried Lanigan Beam. "Well, bless his soul, I say, whatever sort of man he is. Now, what did they say about me?"

"It's my opinion," answered Lodloe, smiling, "that it is a very unsafe thing to tell a man what other people say about him."

Lanigan sprang to his feet, and stood, pipe in hand, before the other. "Now, sir," said he, "I have not heard your name yet—Lodloe; thank you. Now, Mr. Lodloe, I have before me the greatest chance of my life. It almost never happens that a man has an opportunity of hearing a straightforward account of what people say about him. Now, if you want to do the biggest kind of favor to a fellow-being, just tell me what you heard of me to-night. You are a perfect stranger to me, and you can speak out plainly about it without having the least feeling one way or the other."

Lodloe looked at him.

"Here's a chance," he said to himself, "that seldom comes to a man: an opportunity to tell a man exactly what his friends and neighbors think about him. It's a rare experience, and I like it. I'll do it."

"Very good," said he, aloud, "if you want to see yourself as others see you, I'll turn on the lights and act as showman; but remember, I have nothing to do with the painting. I have no prejudices one way or the other."

"All right," said Lanigan, reseating himself, "let the panorama move."

"About the first thing I was told," said Lodloe,

"was that you were a good-hearted fellow, but the fact that your father was an Irishman had deprived your character of ballast."

"Umph," said Lanigan, "there are some people who are all ballast. I don't mind that."

"And then I heard that although you were a wild and irresponsible youth, people generally expected that as you grew older you would gradually accumulate ballast; but instead of that you had steadily gone downhill from the moment of your birth."

"Now, then," said Lanigan, "I suppose I have no right to ask you, but I would like very much to know who said that."

"I don't object in the least to telling you," said Lodloe; "it is fitter that you should know it than that I should know it. That was a quoted opinion of Miss Calthea Rose."

"Good for you," said Lanigan, "you'd be death to the members of a scandal-monger society. You would break up the business utterly."

"To this Mr. Petter remarked," said Lodloe, "that he thought in many ways you had improved very much, but he was obliged to admit that he could not think of anything that you had done which was of the least benefit to yourself or anybody else."

"Upon my word!" cried Lanigan, "that's a pretty wide sweep for old Petter. I shall have to rub up his memory. He forgets that I helped him to make the plans for this house. And what did Mrs. Cristie say about me?"

"She said she thought it was a great pity that you did not apply yourself to something or other."

"She is right there," said Beam, "and, by George!

I'll apply myself to her. However, I don't know about that," he continued. "What else did Calthea say?"

"One remark was that having proved false to every friend you had here, you had no right to return."

"That means," said Mr. Beam, "that having promised at least five times to marry her, I never did it once."

"Were you really engaged to her?" asked Lodloe.

"Oh, yes," said the other, "it seems to me as if I had always been engaged to her. Born that way. Sort of an ailment you get used to, like squinting. When I was a youngster Calthea was a mighty pretty girl—a good deal my senior, of course, or I wouldn't have cared for her. As she grew older she grew prettier, and I was more and more in love with her. We used to have quarrels, but they didn't make much difference, for after each one of them we engaged ourselves again, and all went on as before. But the time came when Calthea kept on being older than I was, and didn't keep on being pretty and agreeable. Then I began to weaken about the marriage altar and all that sort of thing; but for all that I would have been perfectly willing to stay engaged to her for the rest of my life if she had wished it; but one day she got jealous, kicked up a tremendous row, and away I went."

"Well," said Lodloe, "she must have considered that was the best thing you could do for her, for Mrs. Petter said that she had heard her declare dozens of times that from her very youth you had hung like a millstone about her neck, and had blighted her every prospect, and that your return here would be like one of the plagues of Egypt."

"Mixed, but severe," said Mr. Beam. "Did anybody say any good of me?"

"Yes," answered Lodloe, "Mrs. Cristie said you were an obliging fellow, although very apt to forget what you had promised to do. Mr. Petter said that you had a very friendly disposition, although he was obliged to admit the truth of his wife's remark that said disposition would have been more agreeable to your friends if you had been as willing to do things for them as you were to have them do things for you. And Mrs. Petter, on her own motion, summed up your character by saying that if you had not been so regardless of the welfare and wishes of others; so totally given up to self-gratification; so ignorant of all kinds of business, and so unwilling to learn; so extravagant in your habits, and so utterly conscienceless in regard to your debts; so neglectful of your promises and your duty; so heretical in your opinions, political and religious, and such a dreadful backslider from everything that you had promised to be when a baby, you would be a very nice sort of fellow, whom she would like to see come into the house."

"Well," said Lanigan Beam, leaning back in his chair, "that's all of my bright side, is it?"

"Not quite," said Lodloe, "Mr. Tippengray declared that you are the first man he ever heard of who did not possess a single good point; that you must be very interesting, and that he would like to know you."

"Noble Tippengray!" said Mr. Beam. "And he's the man who is chumming it with Calthea?"

"Not at present," said Lodloe, "she is jealous, and doesn't speak to him."

Mr. Beam let his head drop on his breast; his arms hung down by his side, and he sank into his chair as if his spine had come unhinged.

"There goes the last prop from under me," he said. "If Calthea had a man in tow I wouldn't be afraid of her, but now—well, no matter. If you will let me take that bottle of ammonia with me,—I suppose by rights it now belongs to the house,—I'll go back to that room and fight it out with the wasps. As I haven't any good points, they'll be able to put some into me, I'll wager."

Lodloe laughed. "You shall not go there," he said. "I have more bed-covering than I want, and an extra pillow, and if you can make yourself comfortable on that lounge, you are welcome to stay here."

"Sir," said Lanigan Beam, rising, "I accept your offer, and if it were not that by so doing I would destroy the rare symmetry of my character, I would express my gratitude. And now I will go down your stairs and up my ladder, and get my valise."

CHAPTER XII

LANIGAN CHANGES HIS CRAVAT

EARLY the next morning, without disturbing the sleep of Walter Lodloe, Lanigan Beam descended from the tower, carrying his valise. His face wore that air of gravity which sometimes follows an early-morning hour of earnest reflection, and he had substituted a black cravat for the blue one with white spots that he had worn on his arrival.

Walking out toward the barn, he met Mr. Petter, who was one of the earliest risers on the place.

The greeting given him by the landlord of the Squirrel Inn was a mixture of surprise, cordiality, and annoyance.

"Lanigan Beam!" he exclaimed. "Why, I thought—"

"Of course you did; I understand," said the other, extending his hand with a dignified superiority to momentary excitement in others. "You thought I would arrive at Lethbury in a day or two, and had no idea of seeing me here. You have reason, but I have changed my plans. I left New York earlier than I intended, and I am not going to Lethbury at all—at least, not to the hotel there. I greatly prefer this house."

A shade of decided trouble came over Mr. Petter's face.

"Now, Lanigan," he said, "that will not do at all. Of course I don't want to be hard on you, and I never was; but my season has commenced, I have my guests, my rules are in full force, and I cannot permit you to come here and disarrange my arrangements. If for once, Lanigan, you will take the trouble to think, you will see that for yourself."

"Mr. Petter," said the younger man, setting his valise upon the ground, "I have no desire to disarrange them; on the contrary, I would stamp them with fixity. And before we go any further, I beg that you be kind enough not to call me by my Christian name, and to endeavor to produce in yourself the conviction that since you last saw me I have been entirely rearranged and reconstructed. In order to do this, you have only to think of me as you used to think, and then exactly reverse your opinion. In this way you will get a true view of my present character. It does not suit me to do things partially or by degrees, and I am now exactly the opposite of what I used to be. By keeping this in mind, any one who knew me before may consider himself or herself perfectly acquainted with me now."

Stephen Petter looked at him doubtfully.

"Of course," he said, "I shall be very glad—and so will Mrs. Petter—to find that you have reformed, but as to your coming here—"

"Now, then," said Mr. Beam, "I know you are not the man to allow trifles to stand in the way of important movements. I am here for a purpose, a great purpose, with which you will be in entire sympathy.

I will say at once, frankly and openly, that my object is the improvement of Lethbury. I have a project which—"

"Now, now, now!" exclaimed Mr. Petter, with much irritation, "I don't want to hear anything more of any of your projects; I know all about them. They all begin with a demand for money from your friends, and that is the end of the project and the money."

"Stephen Petter," said the other, "you are not looking at my character as I told you to look at it. Every cent of the capital required for my operations I will contribute myself. No one will be allowed to subscribe any money whatever. This, you see, is exactly the opposite of what used to be the case; and when I tell you that the success of my plan will improve the business of Lethbury, elevate its moral and intellectual standard, exercise an ennobling and purifying influence upon the tone of its society, and give an almost incredible impetus to faith, hope, and charity in its moral atmosphere,—and all that without anybody's being asked to give a copper,—I know you will agree with me that a mere matter of residence should not be allowed to block this great work."

Since he had been assured that he was not to be asked to contribute money, Mr. Petter's face had shown relief and interest; but now he shook his head.

"This is my season," he said, "and I have my rules."

Lanigan Beam laid his hand upon the shoulder of his companion.

"Petter," said he, "I don't ask you to infract your rules. That would be against my every principle. I

do not know the Rockmores of Germantown, but if it were necessary I would immediately go and find them, and make their acquaintance—I should have no difficulty in doing it, I assure you; but it is not necessary. I stayed last night with Mr. Lodloe, who occupies the top room of your tower. Don't jump out of your boots. I went to him because there was a light in his room and the rest of the house was dark, and he explained to me the Rockmorial reason why he occupies that room while the rest of your house is nearly empty. Now, you can do the same thing for me. Let me have that upper room with no stairway to it, give me the use of a ladder, and I shall be perfectly satisfied."

"But the room's not furnished," said Mr. Petter.

"Oh, we can easily get over that little difficulty," replied Mr. Beam, "whatever furniture may be needed can easily be put in through the window. If there are any wasps up there I can fumigate them out. Now, we call that settled, don't we? None of your rules broken, Lethbury regenerated, and nothing for you to do but look on and profit."

Mr. Petter gazed reflectively upon the ground.

"There can be no doubt," said he, "that Lethbury is in a stagnant condition, and if that condition could be improved it would be for the benefit of us all; and considering, furthermore, that if your project—which you have not yet explained to me—should be unsuccessful, no one but yourself will lose any money, I see no reason why I should interfere with your showing the people of this neighborhood that your character has been reconstructed. But if you should lodge in that room it would make a very odd condi-

tion of things. I should then have but three male guests, and not one of them literally living in my house."

"Ah, my good friend Petter," said Lanigan, taking up his valise, "you should know there is luck in odd conditions, as well as in odd numbers, and everything will turn out right, you may bet on that. Hello," he continued, stepping back a little, "who is that very pretty girl with a book in her hand? That cannot be Mrs. Cristie."

"Oh, no," said Mr. Petter, "that is her maid, who takes care of her child. I think the young woman has come out to study before beginning her daily duties."

"Upon my word!" said Lanigan Beam, attentively regarding Miss Ida Mayberry as she daintily made her way across the dewy lawn to a rustic seat under a tree. Then, suddenly turning to Mr. Petter, he said:

"Look you, my good Stephen, can't you let me go in somewhere and furbish myself up a little before breakfast?"

And having been shown into a room on the ground floor, Mr. Beam immediately proceeded to take off his black cravat and to replace it by the blue one with white spots.

CHAPTER XIII

DECREES OF EXILE

TOWARD the end of the afternoon of the day after Mr. Lanigan Beam had been installed as an outside guest of the Squirrel Inn, Miss Calthea Rose sat by the window at the back of her shop. This shop was a small one, but it differed from most other places of business in that it contained very few goods and was often locked up. When there is reason to suppose that if you go to a shop you will not be able to get in, and that, should it be open, you will not be able to find therein anything you want, it is not likely that such a shop will have a very good run of custom.

This was the case with Miss Calthea's establishment. It had become rare for any one even to propose custom, but she did not in the least waver in regard to her plan of closing up the business left to her by her father. As has been said, she did not wish to continue this business, so she laid in no new stock, and as she had gradually sold off a great deal, she expected to be able in time to sell off everything. She did not adopt the usual methods of clearing out a stock of goods, because these would involve sacrifices, and, as Miss Calthea very freely said to those who spoke to her on the subject, there was no need whatever for her to

make sacrifices. She was good at waiting, and she could wait. When she sold the few things which remained on the shelves—and she, as well as nearly every one in the village, knew exactly what these things were without the trouble of looking—she would retire from business, and have the shop altered into a front parlor. Until then the articles which remained on hand were for sale.

Miss Calthea was busily sewing, but she was much more busily engaged in thinking. So earnestly was her mind set upon the latter occupation that she never raised her head to look out at the special varieties of hollyhocks, dahlias, and marigolds which had lately begun to show their beauties in the beds beneath her window, nor did she glance toward the door to see if any one were coming in. She had much more important things to think about than flowers or customers.

Mrs. Petter had driven over to Lethbury that morning, and had told Calthea all the news of the Squirrel Inn. She had told her of the unexpected arrival of Lanigan Beam, of his unwillingness to go to Lethbury, as he had originally intended, and of the quarters that had been assigned to him in the ladder room. She also told how Lanigan, who now wished to be called Mr. Beam, had a wonderful plan in his mind for the improvement of Lethbury ; but whether it was electric lights, or gas, or water, or street railroads, or a public library, he would not tell anybody. He was going to work in his own way, and all he would say about the scheme was that he did not want anybody to give him money for it. And this, Mrs. Petter had remarked, had helped Mr. Petter and herself to be-

lieve what Lanigan had said about his amendment, for if anything could show a change in him, it would be his not wanting people to give him money.

Mrs. Petter had said a great deal about the newcomer, and had declared that whatever alterations had gone on in his mind, soul, and character, he certainly had improved in appearance, and was a very good-looking young man, with becoming clothes. In one way, however, he had not changed, for in a surprisingly short time he had made friends with everybody on the place. He talked to Mr. Lodloe as if he had been an old chum; he had renewed his acquaintance with Mrs. Cristie, and was very gallant to her; he was hand in glove with Mr. Tippengray, both of them laughing together and making jokes as if they had always known each other; and, more than that, it was not an hour after breakfast when he and Mrs. Cristie's nurse-maid were sitting on a bench under the trees, reading out of the same book, while Mr. Tippengray was pushing the baby-carriage up and down on the grass, and Mrs. Cristie and Mr. Lodloe were putting up the lawn-tennis net.

"I could see for myself," Mrs. Petter had remarked at this point, "that you were right in saying that there was no use in my talking about the boarders associating with servants; for when they made up the lawn-tennis game, it turned out that Mr. Tippengray didn't play, and so that girl Ida had to take a hand, while he kept on neglecting his Greek for the baby."

At last Miss Calthea let her sewing drop into her lap, and sat looking at an empty shelf opposite to her.

"Yes," she said to herself, her lips moving, although no sound was audible, "the first thing to do is to get

Lanigan away. As long as he is here I might as well not lift a finger; and it looks as if that impertinent minx of a child's nurse would be my best help. If he doesn't have one of his changeable fits, he will be ready in three days to follow her anywhere; but I must look sharp, for at this very minute he may be making love to the widow. Of course he hasn't any chance with her, but it would be just like Lanigan to go in strongest where he knew he hadn't any chance. However, I shall see for myself how matters stand, and one thing is certain—Lanigan has got to go."

About this time Mr. Lanigan Beam, finding himself with a solitary quarter of an hour on his hands, was reflecting on a bench upon the lawn of the Squirrel Inn. "Yes," he thought, "it is a great plan. It will elevate the social tone of Lethbury, it will purify the moral atmosphere of the surrounding country, and, above all, it will make it possible for me to live here. It will give me an opportunity to become a man among men in the place where I was born. Until this thing is done I can have no chance to better myself here, and, more than that, the community has no chance to better itself. Yes, it must be done; Calthea Rose must go."

At this moment Mr. Petter came along, on his way to supper.

"Well, Lanigan," said he, "are you thinking about your great enterprise?"

"Yes," said the other, rising and walking with him, "that is exactly what my mind was working on."

"And you are going to do it all yourself?" said Mr. Petter.

"Not exactly," said Beam. "I shall not require any pecuniary assistance, but I shall want some one to help me."

"Is there anybody about here who can do it?"

"Yes; I hope so," said Lanigan. "At present I am thinking of Mr. Tippengray."

"A very good choice," said Mr. Petter; "he is a man of fine mind, and it will certainly be to your advantage if you can get him to work with you."

"Indeed it will be," said Lanigan Beam, with much earnestness.

CHAPTER XIV

BACKING OUT

Ida Mayberry was walking on the narrow road which led through the woods from the Squirrel Inn to the public highway. She had been much interested in the road when she had been driven through it on the day of her arrival, and had availed herself of the opportunity given her this pleasant afternoon, by the prolonged slumbers of Master Douglas Cristie, to make a close acquaintance with its attractions.

It was indeed a pleasant road, where there were tall trees that often met overhead; and on each side there were bushes and vines and wild flowers, and little vistas opening into the woods, and rabbits running across the roadway; a shallow stream tumbling along its stony bed, sometimes to be seen and sometimes only heard; yellow butterflies in the air; and glimpses above, that afternoon, of blue sky and white clouds.

When she had walked about half the length of the road, Miss Mayberry came to a tree with a large branch running horizontally about three feet from the ground and then turning up again, so as to make a very good seat for young people who like that sort of thing. Ida was a young person who liked that sort

of thing, and she speedily clambered upon the broad horizontal branch and bestowed herself quite comfortably there. Taking off her hat and leaning her head against the upright portion of the branch, she continued the reflections she had been making while walking.

"Yes," she said to herself, "it will be wise in me not only to make up my mind that I will not grow to be an old maid, but to prevent people from thinking I am going to grow to be one. I believe that people are very apt to think that way about teachers. Perhaps it is because they are always contrasted with younger persons. There is no reason why girl teachers should be different from other girls. Marriage should be as practically advantageous to them as to any others, only they should be more than usually circumspect in regard to their partners; that is, if they care for careers, which I am sure I do.

"Now, the situation in this place seems to me to be one which I ought seriously to consider. It is generally agreed that propinquity is the cause of most marriages, but I think that a girl ought to be very careful not to let propinquity get the better of her. She should regulate and control propinquities.

"Here, now, is Mr. Lodloe. He seems to be a very suitable sort of a man, young and good-looking, and, I think, endowed with brains; but I have read two of his stories, and I see no promise in them, and I doubt if he would sympathize with good, hard study; besides, he is devoting himself to Mrs. Cristie, and he is out of the question. Mr. Tippengray is an exceedingly agreeable man, and a true student. To marry him would be in itself a higher education. But he is not a

bit young. I think he is at least fifty, perhaps more; and then, supposing that he should retain his mental vigor until he is seventy, that would give only twenty years of satisfactory intellectual companionship. That is a point that ought to be very carefully weighed.

"As to Mr. Beam, he is older than I am, but he is young enough. Upon the probable duration of his life one might predicate forty years of mental activity, and from what I have seen of him he appears to have a good intellect. They talk about an aqueduct and waterworks he is about to construct. That indicates the study of geology, and engineering capacity, and such a bias of mind would suit me very well. Mrs. Petter tells me that he is really and truly engaged to that old thing from Lethbury; but as she also said that he is heartily tired of the engagement, I don't see why it should be considered. He is as likely to correct his errors of matrimonial inclination as he is those of mathematical computation; and as for her, I should not let her stand in my way for one minute. Any woman who is as jealous about a man as she is about Mr. Tippengray has waived her right in all other men."

About this time a phaeton, drawn by a stout sorrel horse, and containing Miss Calthea Rose, was turning from the highroad into this lane. As a rule, Miss Calthea greatly preferred walking to driving, and although her father had left her a horse and several vehicles, she seldom made personal use of them; but to-day she was going to Romney, which was too far away for walking, and she had planned to stop at the Squirrel Inn and ask Mrs. Cristie to go with her.

It was necessary, for the furtherance of Miss Cal-

thea's plans, that she should be on good terms with Mrs. Cristie. She ought, in fact, to be intimate with her, so that when the time came she could talk to her freely and plainly. It was desirable, indeed, that she should maintain a friendly connection with everybody at the Squirrel Inn. She had not yet met Lanigan Beam, and it would be well if he should be made to feel that she looked upon him merely as an old companion, and cared for him neither more nor less than one cares for ordinary old companions. Thus he would feel perfectly free to carry out his own impulses and her desires.

Toward Mr. Tippengray she had decided to soften. She was still very angry with him, but it would not do to repel him from herself, for that might impel him toward another, and spoil two of her plans. Even to that impertinent child's nurse she would be civil. She need have but little to do with the creature, but she must not let any one suppose that she harbored ill feeling toward her, and, with the exception of Mrs. Petter, no one would suppose she had any reason for such feelings. In fact, as Miss Calthea's mind dwelt upon this subject, she came to think that it would be a very good thing if she could do some kindness or service to this girl. This would give effect to what she might afterward be obliged to say about her.

Having reached this point in her cogitations, she also reached the point in the road where Ida Mayberry still sat making her plans, and concealed from the view of those coming from the direction of the highroad by a mass of projecting elderberry bushes. Hearing an approaching vehicle, the young woman on

the horizontal limb, not wishing to be seen perched upon this elevated seat, sprang to the ground, which she touched about four feet from the nose of the sorrel horse.

This animal, which was trotting along in a quiet and reflective way, as if he also were making plans, was greatly startled by this sudden flash of a light-colored mass, this rustle, this waving, this thud upon the ground, and he bounded sidewise entirely across the road, stopping with his head in the bushes on the other side.

Miss Calthea, who was nearly thrown from her seat, could not repress a scream, and, turning, perceived Ida Mayberry.

"Did you do that?" she cried.

"I am sorry that I made your horse shy," said Ida, approaching the vehicle, "but he seems to be perfectly quiet now, and I hope nothing is broken. Horses ought to be taught not to shy; but I suppose that would be difficult, considering the small size of their brain cavities."

"If some people had as much brains as a horse," muttered Miss Calthea, "it would be better for them. Back, Sultan! Do you hear me? Back!" And she tugged with all her strength upon the reins.

But the sorrel horse did not move. He had two reasons for refusing to obey his mistress. In the first place, on general principles he disliked to back, and was fully conscious that Miss Calthea could not make him do it; and in the second place, he wanted a drink, and did not intend to move until he got it. Just here the brook was at its widest and deepest, and it came so near the road that in shying Sultan

had entered it so far that the front wheels of the phaeton nearly touched the water. Standing more than fetlock deep in this cool stream, it is no wonder that Sultan wanted some one to loosen his check-rein and let him drink.

"I am afraid you are not strong enough to back him out of that," said Ida, "and if there were not so much water all around him I would go and take him by the head."

"Let him alone," cried Miss Calthea. "Back, Sultan! Back, I say!" And she pulled and pulled, tiring herself greatly, but making no impression upon the horse.

Now appeared upon the scene Mrs. Cristie, pushing her baby-carriage. She had come to look for Ida. She was full of sympathy when she heard what had happened, and, pushing Douglas into a safe place behind a tree, came forward and proposed that some one go for a man. But Calthea Rose did not want a man. She was very proud of her abilities as a horsewoman, and she did not wish a man to behold her inferiority in emergencies of this sort. She therefore opposed the suggestion, and continued to pull and tug.

"That will never do," said Ida Mayberry, who had been earnestly regarding the situation. "You cannot make him move, and even if we did go into the water, he might jump about and tread on us. But I have thought of a way in which I think we can make him back. You are pretty heavy, Miss Rose, and Mrs. Cristie is lighter than I am, so she ought to get into the phaeton and take the reins, and you and I ought to help back the phaeton. I have seen it done, and I can tell you how to do it."

To this Miss Calthea paid no immediate attention; but as Mrs. Cristie urged that if Ida knew about such things it would be well to let her try what she could do, and as Miss Calthea found that tugging at Sultan's bit amounted to nothing, she stepped out of the low vehicle and demanded to know what the child's nurse proposed to do.

"Now, jump in, Mrs. Cristie," said Ida, "and when I give the word you pull the reins with all your might, and shout 'Back!' at him. Miss Rose, you go to that hind wheel, and I will go to this one. Now, put one foot on a spoke, so, and take hold of the wheel, and when I say 'Now!' we will both raise ourselves up and put our whole weight on the spoke, and Mrs. Cristie will pull on him at the same instant."

Somewhat doggedly, but anxious to get out of her predicament, Miss Calthea took her position at the wheel, and put one foot upon an almost horizontal spoke. Ida did the same, and then, giving the word, both women raised themselves from the ground; Mrs. Cristie gave a great pull, and shouted, "Back!" Then, as the hind wheels began slowly to revolve, the astonished horse, involuntarily obeying the double impulse thus given him, backed a step or two.

"Now, again!" cried Ida, and the process was repeated, this time the horse backing himself out of the water.

"Bravo!" cried Lanigan Beam, who, with Walter Lodloe, had arrived on the scene just as Calthea Rose and Ida Mayberry had made their second graceful descent from an elevated spoke to the ground.

CHAPTER XV

THE BABY IS PASSED AROUND

"Good for you, Calthy," cried Lanigan Beam, advancing with outstretched hands. "How do you do? Old Sultan is at his tricks again, is he, declining to back? But you got the better of him that time, and did it well, too."

In his admiration of the feat he had witnessed, the credit of which he gave entirely to his old and well-tried fiancée, Lanigan forgot for the moment his plan for the benefit of Lethbury.

Irritated and embarrassed as she was, Miss Calthea did not forget her intention of treating Lanigan Beam as a person between whom and herself there could be nothing of a connecting kind which could be set up as something of an obstructing kind between herself and any one else. She therefore took his hand, made a few commonplace remarks about his return, and then, excusing herself, approached Mrs. Cristie, who was just about to alight from the phaeton, and gave her the invitation to drive to Romney. That lady hesitated a few moments, and then, remembering some shopping she would like to do, accepted; and the attention of Miss Mayberry having been called to

the baby-carriage behind the tree, the two ladies drove off.

Ida Mayberry gazed for a moment at the departing vehicle, and then, turning to Mr. Beam, she said:

"She might at least have thanked me for getting her out of that scrape."

"Was that your idea?" said Lanigan.

"Of course it was," said the young woman. "If I hadn't shown her how to make the horse back, she would have pulled her arms out for nothing. It is easy to see that she does not know anything about managing horses."

Lanigan laughed outright.

"I would advise you not to say that to her," he said.

"I would as soon say it to her as not," said Ida, "somebody ought to do it. Why, if that horse had shied toward me instead of away from me when I jumped from that tree, I might have been very much hurt."

Lanigan laughed again, but this time inwardly.

"Do you like yellow flowers, Miss Mayberry?" said he. "The largest wild coreopsis I ever saw grow in this region. I noticed some in a field we just passed. Shall I gather a few for you?"

"I am very fond of that flower," said Ida; and Mr. Beam declaring that if she would step a little way with him he would show her a whole field of them, the two walked up the road.

Walter Lodloe had been gazing with some dissatisfaction at the departing phaeton. His mind was getting into a condition which made it unpleasant for him to see people take Mrs. Cristie away from him. He now turned and looked at the baby-carriage, in

which the infant Douglas was sitting up, endeavoring by various noises to attract attention to himself. Lodloe pulled the vehicle into the road, and finding that the motion quieted its occupant, he began slowly to push it toward the Squirrel Inn. When Walter Lodloe turned into the open space about the inn, he met Mr. Tippengray with a book in his hand.

"Really," said the latter, elevating his eyebrows, "I heard the creaking of those little wheels, and I—"

"Thought Miss Mayberry was making them creak," said Lodloe. "But she is not, and you may as well postpone the lesson I suppose you want to give her. She is at present taking lessons in botany from another professor;" and he hereupon stated in brief the facts of the desertion of the infant Douglas. "Now, what am I going to do with the little chap?" he continued. "I must search for Mrs. Petter."

"Don't do that," said the Greek scholar, quickly, "it would not look well for the young woman. Let me have the child; I will take care of it until she comes. I will wheel it down to my summer-house, where it is cool and shady."

"And an excellent spot to teach Greek," said Lodloe, laughing.

"A capital place," gayly replied Mr. Tippengray, putting his book into his pocket, and taking hold of the handle of the little carriage, elated by the feeling that in so doing he was also, for a time, getting a hold upon Miss Mayberry.

"Yes," he continued, "it is just the place for me; it suits me in all sorts of ways, and I have a mind to tell you of a most capital joke connected with it. It is too good a thing to keep to myself any longer, and

now that I know you so well, I am perfectly willing to trust you. Would you believe it? I know the Rockmores of Germantown. I know them very well, and hate them for a lot of prigs. But I never told Stephen Petter. Not I! In some way or other he took it for granted that I did not possess the valuable acquaintanceship, and I let him think so. Ha! ha! That's the way I got the summer-house, don't you see? Ha! ha! ha!"

Lodloe laughed. "Your secret is safe with me," said he, and the two having reached the little garden, he left the Greek scholar and went to his room.

When Ida Mayberry had her arms full of the great yellow flowers she suddenly appreciated the fact that she must be a long way from the baby, and ought immediately to return to it. She thereupon hastened back across the uneven surface of the field. When she reached the spot where the baby had been left, no baby was there.

"My goodness!" she exclaimed, "Mr. Lodloe has taken the child away, and there is no knowing which way he has gone."

"Oh, the youngster's all right," said Lanigan. "Sit down and rest yourself, and we will walk to the inn."

"Not a bit of it!" exclaimed Ida. "You go that way, and I will go this, and if you see him, call out as loud as you can."

Very reluctantly Mr. Beam obeyed orders, and hurried in the direction of the highroad.

As he sat down by his open window, Walter Lodloe looked out and saw Ida Mayberry running. Instantly there was a shout from the summer-house and the wave of a handkerchief. Then the nurse-maid ceased

to run, but walked rapidly in the direction of the handkerchief-waver, who stood triumphantly pointing to the baby-carriage. After a glance at the baby to see that he was all right, Miss Mayberry seated herself on a bench in the shade, and took off her hat. In a few moments the Greek scholar was seated by her, the book was opened, and two heads were together in earnest study.

About ten minutes later Lodloe saw Lanigan Beam appear upon the lawn, walking rapidly. In a moment he caught sight of the group at the summer-house, and stopped short. He clinched his fists and slightly stamped one foot.

Lodloe now gave a low whistle, and Lanigan glancing upward at the sound, he beckoned to him to come to his tower room. The young man at first hesitated, and then walked slowly toward the little garden, and ascended the outside stairway.

Lodloe greeted him with a smile.

"As you seemed doubtful about joining the little company down there, I thought I would ask you up here," he said.

Lanigan walked to the window and gazed out at the summer-house.

"They are having a good, cosey time of it," said he, "but that won't do. That sort of thing has got to be stopped."

"Why won't it do?" asked Lodloe. "What is the matter with it, and who is going to stop it?"

"It's sheer nonsense," said Beam, turning away from the window and throwing himself into a chair. "Why should an old fellow like Tippengray take up all the spare time of that girl? She doesn't need to learn

anything. From what she has said to me I judge that she knows too much already."

"It strikes me," said Lodloe, "that if he likes to teach her, and she likes to learn, it is nobody's business but their own, unless Mrs. Cristie should think that her interests were being neglected." He spoke quietly, although he was a little provoked at the tone of his companion.

"Well," said Mr. Beam, stretching his legs upon a neighboring chair, "I object to that intimacy for two reasons. In the first place, it keeps me away from Miss Mayberry, and I am the sort of person she ought to associate with, especially in her vacation; and in the second place, it keeps old Tippengray away from Calthea Rose. That is bad, very bad. Mrs. Petter tells me that before Miss Mayberry arrived Calthea and the Greek were as chummy and as happy together as any two people could be. It is easy to see that Calthea is dead in love with him, and if she had been let alone I am confident she would have married him before the summer was over."

"And you think that desirable?" asked Lodloe.

"Of course I do," cried Lanigan, sitting up straight in his chair and speaking earnestly, "it would be the best thing in the world. Calthea has had a hard time with her various engagements,—all of them with me,—and now that she has found the man she likes she ought to have him. It would be a splendid match. He might travel where he pleased, and Calthea would be an honor to him. She could hold her own with the nobility and gentry, and the crowned heads, for that matter. By George! it would make him two inches taller to walk through a swell crowd with Cal-

thea on his arm, dressed as she would dress, and carrying her head as she would carry it."

"You seem to be a match-maker," said Lodloe, "but I don't meddle in that sort of thing. I greatly prefer to let people take care of their own affairs. But I feel bound to say to you that after Ida Mayberry neglected her duty to go off with you, I determined to advise Mrs. Cristie to dispense with the services of such a very untrustworthy nurse-maid."

Lanigan Beam sprang to his feet. "Don't you do that!" he cried. "I beg of you not to do that."

"Why not?" said Lodloe. "That would aid your philanthropic plan in regard to Miss Rose and Mr. Tippengray. The maid away, there is no reason why they should not come together again."

"Now, I am a straightforward, honest man," said Lanigan, "and I tell you plainly that that would be very hard on me. I've come here to my native place to settle down, and if I settle I've got to marry; and I have never seen a girl whom I would rather marry and settle with than Miss Mayberry. She may be a little slack about taking care of the baby, but I'll talk to her about that, and I know she will keep a closer eye on him. Now, if you want to see everybody happy, don't prejudice Mrs. Cristie against that girl. Give me a chance, and I'll win her into the right way; and I'll do it easily and naturally, without making hard blood or hurting anybody. Then old Tip and Calthea will come together again, and everything will be jolly. Now, don't you go and blast the happiness of all of us, and get that poor girl turned off like a drunken cook. And as for taking good care of the baby, just look at her now."

Lodloe looked out of the window. Ida Mayberry was leaning forward on the bench, twirling a great yellow flower before the child, who was laughing and making snatches at it. In a moment appeared Mr. Tippengray with a large white daisy; he leaned over the other side of the carriage and twirled his flower in front of the baby. The little fellow was in great glee, first clutching at one blossom and then at the other; and Mr. Tippengray laughed, and Miss Mayberry laughed, and the three laughed together.

"Confound it!" said Lanigan Beam, with a frown, "this thing must be stopped."

Lodloe smiled. "Work matters your own way," he said, "I shall not interfere."

An hour later, when Calthea Rose and Mrs. Cristie returned from Romney, Ida Mayberry was walking by the side of the baby-carriage, which Lanigan Beam was pushing toward the spot from which there was the best view of the western sky.

Mrs. Cristie looked at them, and said to herself:

"I don't altogether like that sort of thing, and I think it must be stopped."

Calthea Rose appeared to have recovered her good humor. She looked about her, apparently satisfied with the world and its ways, and readily accepted Mrs. Petter's invitation to stay to tea.

CHAPTER XVI

MESSRS. BEAM AND LODLOE DECLINE TO WAIT FOR THE SECOND TABLE

As has been before mentioned, Walter Lodloe had grown into a condition of mind which made it unpleasant for him when people took Mrs. Cristie away or occupied her time and attention to the exclusion of his occupancy of the same. As a literary man he had taken an interest in studying the character of Mrs. Cristie, and he had now come to like the character even better than he liked the study.

A pretty woman, of a lively and independent disposition and quick wit, and yet with certain matronly and practical points in her character, which always surprised as well as pleased him when they showed themselves, Mrs. Cristie could not fail to charm such a man as Lodloe, if the two remained long enough together. She had charmed him, and he knew it and liked it, and was naturally anxious to know whether, in the slightest degree, she thought of him as he thought of her. But he had never been able to perceive any indication of this. The young widow was kind, gracious, and at times delightfully intimate with him, but he knew enough of the world to understand that this sort of thing in this sort of place might

not in the least indicate that what was growing up in him was growing up in her.

On the afternoon of the day after Miss Calthea Rose had taken tea at the Squirrel Inn, Walter Lodloe came down from his room in the tower with no other object in life than to find Mrs. Cristie. It was about the hour that she usually appeared on the lawn, and if there should follow tennis, or talking, or walking, or anything else, one thing would be the same as another to Lodloe, provided he and she took part. But when he saw Mrs. Cristie her avocation was one in which he could not take part.

She was sitting on a bench by Mr. Tippengray, Ida Mayberry was sitting at his other side, and the everlasting baby-carriage was standing near by. The Greek scholar and the nurse-maid each had a book, but these were closed, and Mr. Tippengray was talking with great earnestness and animation, while the young women appeared to be listening with eager interest. It was plain that the two were taking a lesson in something or other.

As Lodloe walked slowly from the gate of the little garden, Mrs. Cristie looked up for a moment, saw him, but instantly resumed her attentive listening. This was enough; he perceived that for the present, at least, he was not wanted. He strolled on toward the field, and just below the edge of the bluff he saw Lanigan Beam sitting under a tree.

"Hello!" said the latter, looking up, "are they at that stupid business yet?"

Lodloe smiled. "Are you waiting for Miss Mayberry to get through with her lesson?" he asked.

"Yes, I am," said Lanigan. "I have been hanging

around here for half an hour. I never saw such a selfish old codger as that Tippengray. I suppose he will stick there with them the whole afternoon."

"And you want him!" said Lodloe.

"Want him!" exclaimed Lanigan. "Not much! But I want her. If there were only two together I would do as I did yesterday. I would join them, take a part, and before long carry her off. But I can't do that with Mrs. Cristie there. I haven't the cheek to break up her studies."

Lodloe laughed. "Don't let us wait for the second table," he said, "come and take a walk to Lethbury."

It was now Lanigan's turn to smile.

"You think you would better not wait for the second table," he said, "very well, then; come on."

The lesson on the bench had been deliberately planned by Mrs. Cristie. She had been considering the subject of her nurse-maid and Lanigan Beam, and had decided that it was her duty to interfere with the growth of that intimacy. She felt that it was her duty to exercise some personal supervision over the interests of the young person in her service, and had given her some guarded advice in regard to country-resort intimacies.

Having given this advice to Ida Mayberry, it struck Mrs. Cristie that it would apply very well to herself. She remembered that she was also a young person, and she resolved to take to herself all the advice she had given to her nurse-maid. And thus it was that she was sitting on the bench by Mr. Tippengray, listening to his very interesting discourse upon some of the domestic manners and customs of the ancients, and their surprising resemblance in many points to those

of the present day. Therefore it was, also, that she allowed Walter Lodloe to pass on his way without inviting him to join the party.

When Lodloe and Beam reached Lethbury, the latter proposed that they should go and worry Calthea Rose; and to his companion's surprised exclamation at being asked to join in this diversion Lanigan answered that having been used to that sort of thing all his life, it seemed the most natural sport in which to indulge now that he found himself in Lethbury again.

"Very good," said Lodloe, as they approached Miss Rose's place of business, "I shall not interfere with your native sports, but I do not care to join them. I shall continue my walk, and stop for you on my way back."

When Lanigan Beam entered Miss Rose's shop she was sitting, as was her custom, by the back window, sewing. A neighbor had dropped in to chat with her a half-hour before, but had gone away very soon. The people of Lethbury had learned to understand when Calthea Rose did not wish to chat.

Miss Calthea was not happy; she was disappointed. Things had not gone as she hoped they would go, and as she had believed they would go when she accepted Mrs. Petter's invitation to tea. That meal had been a very pleasant one; even the presence of Ida Mayberry, who came to table with the family when the baby happened to be asleep, did not disturb her. On the contrary, it gratified her, for Lanigan Beam sat by that young person and was very attentive to her. She carefully watched Mr. Tippengray, and perceived that this attention, and the interest of the

child's nurse in Lanigan's remarks, did not appear to give him the least uneasiness. Thereupon she began gradually, and she hoped imperceptibly, to resume her former method of intercourse with the Greek scholar, and to do so without any show of restoring him to favor. She did this so deftly that Mrs. Cristie was greatly interested in the performance, and an outside observer could have had no reason to suppose that there had been any break in the friendly intercourse between Miss Rose and Mr. Tippengray.

But this satisfactory state of things soon came to an end. When the daylight began to wane, and Miss Calthea's phaeton had been brought to the door, she went to it with her plans fully formed. As Mr. Tippengray assisted her into the vehicle, she intended to accept his proposition to drive her to Lethbury. She had slightly deferred her departure in order that the growing duskiness might give greater reason for the proposition. There would be a moon about nine o'clock, and his walk back would be pleasant.

But when she reached the phaeton Mr. Tippengray was not there. Ida Mayberry, eager to submit to his critical eye two lines of Browning which she had put into a sort of Greek resembling the partly cremated corpse of a dead language, and who for the past ten minutes had been nervously waiting for Master Douglas to close his eyes in sleep that she might rush down to Mr. Tippengray while he was yet strolling on the lawn by himself, had rushed down to him, and had made him forget everything else in the world in his instinctive effort to conceal from his pupil the shock given him by the sight of her lines. He had been waiting for Miss Calthea to come out, had been in-

tending to hand her to her vehicle, and had thought of proposing to accompany her to the village; but he had not heard the phaeton roll to the door, the leave-taking on the porch did not reach his ear, and his mind took no note whatever of the fact that Miss Rose was on the point of departure.

As that lady, stepping out upon the piazza, swept her eyes over the scene and beheld the couple on the lawn, she gave a jerk to the glove she was drawing on her hand that tore in it a slit three inches long. She then turned her eyes upon her phaeton, declined the offer of Mr. Petter to see her home, and, after a leave-taking which was a little more effusive than was usual with her, drove herself to Lethbury. If the sorrel horse had behaved badly in the early part of that afternoon, he was punished for it in the early part of that evening, for he completely broke all previous records of time made between the Squirrel Inn and Lethbury.

Thus the hopes of Miss Calthea had been doubly darkened; the pariah with the brimstone blossoms had not only treacherously deserted Lanigan, but had made Mr. Tippengray treacherously desert her. She had been furiously angry; now she was low-spirited and cross. But one thing in the world could have then cheered her spirits, and that would have been the sight of her bitterest enemy and Lanigan Beam driving or walking together past her shop door; but when Lanigan alone entered that shop door she was not cheered at all.

Mr. Beam's greeting was very free and unceremonious, and without being asked to do so he took a seat near the proprietress of the establishment.

"Well, well," he said, "this looks like old times. Why, Calthy, I don't believe you have sold a thing since I was here last."

"If you had any eyes in your head," said Miss Calthea, severely, "you would see that I have sold a great deal. Nearly everything, in fact."

"That proves my point," said Lanigan, "for nearly everything was gone when I left."

"And some of the things that are gone," said she, "you still owe me for."

"Well put, Calthy," said Lanigan, laughing, "and after that, let's drop the business. What's new and what's stale in Lethbury?"

"You are about the newest as well as the stalest thing here," said she.

Lanigan whistled. "Calthy," said he, "would you mind my smoking a cigar here? There will be no customers coming in."

"You know very well you cannot smoke here," she said. "What is the matter with you? Has that pincushioned-faced child's nurse driven you from the inn?"

A pang went through Lanigan. Was Calthea jealous of Miss Mayberry on his account? The thought frightened him. If he could have said anything which would have convinced Calthea that he was on the point of marrying Miss Mayberry, and that therefore she might as well consider everything at an end between herself and him, he would have said it. But he merely replied:

"She is a nice girl, and very much given to learning."

Now Miss Calthea could restrain herself no longer.

"Learning!" she exclaimed. "Stuff and deception! Impudent flirting is what she is fond of, as long as she can get a good-for-naught like you, or an old numskull like that Tippengray, to play her tricks on."

Now Lanigan Beam braced himself for action. This sort of thing would not do; whatever she might say or think about the rest of the world, Calthea must not look with disfavor on the Greek scholar.

"Numskull!" said he. "You're off the track there, Calthy. I never knew a man with a better skull than Mr. Tippengray; and as to his being old—there is a little gray in his hair, to be sure, but it's my opinion that that comes more from study than from years."

"Nonsense!" said Calthea. "I don't believe he cares a snap for study unless he can do it with some girl. I expect he has been at that all his life."

Now Lanigan's spirits rose; he saw that it was not on his account that Calthea was jealous of Ida Mayberry. His face put on an expression of serious interest, and he strove to speak impressively, but not so much so as to excite suspicion.

"Calthea," said he, "I think you are not treating Mr. Tippengray with your usual impartiality and fairness. From what I have seen of him, I am sure that the great object of his life is to teach, and when he gets a chance to do that he does it, and for the moment forgets everything else. You may be right in thinking that he prefers to teach young persons, and this is natural enough, for young people are much more likely than older ones to want to learn. Now, to prove that he doesn't care to teach young girls just because they are girls, I will tell you that I saw him,

this very afternoon, hard at work teaching Mrs. Cristie and Ida Mayberry at the same time, and he looked twice as happy as when he was instructing only one of them. If there were enough people here so that he could make up a class, and could have a sort of summer school, I expect he would be the happiest man on earth.

"I am afraid that is Mr. Tippengray's fault," continued Lanigan, folding his hands in his lap and gazing reflectively at his outstretched legs. "I am afraid that he gives too much of his mind to teaching, and neglects other things. He is carried away by his love of teaching, and when he finds one person or a dozen persons who want to learn, he neglects his best friends for that one person or those dozen persons. He oughtn't to do it; it isn't right: but then, after all, no man is perfect, and I suppose the easiest way for us to get along is to stop looking for perfection."

Miss Calthea made no answer. She gazed out of the window as if she was mildly impressed with a solicitude for the welfare of her garden. There flitted into her mind a wavering, indeterminate sort of notion that perhaps Lanigan was a better fellow than he used to be, and that if she should succeed in her great purpose it might not be necessary that he should go away. But still,—and here prudence stepped in front of kindliness,—if that child's nurse remained in the neighborhood, it would be safer if Lanigan kept up his interest in her; if she ultimately carried him off, that was his affair.

Leaning forward, Miss Calthea took a match from a box on a shelf, and handed it to Lanigan.

"You may as well smoke if you want to," she said;

"it's not likely any one will be coming in, and I don't object when the window is open."

Gratefully Lanigan lighted his cigar.

"Calthy, this is truly like old times," he said. "And, to finish up with Tippengray, I'll say that if Lodloe and I had not our mind so filled with our own businesses and projects, I'd get him to go in with me and help make up a class; but if I were to do that, perhaps people might say that all I wanted was to get in with the girls."

Here was a chance for Calthea to give her schemes a little push.

"There is only one girl," she said, "who would be likely to take part in that sort of thing, and that is the child's nurse at the Squirrel Inn; but if she really is given to study, I suppose she might help you to improve your mind, and if you are what you used to be, it will stand a good deal of improving."

"That's so, Calthy," said Lanigan, "that's so." He was in high good humor at the turn the conversation had taken, but did his best to repress his inclination to show it. "It might be well to go in for improvement. I'll do that, anyway." Lanigan blew out a long whiff of purple smoke. "Calthy is a deep one," he said to himself, "she wants me to draw off that girl from the old man. But all right, my lady; you tackle him and I will tackle her. That suits me beautifully."

At this moment Lodloe entered the shop, and Miss Calthea Rose greeted him with much graciousness.

"You must have taken a short walk," said Lanigan. "Don't you want to wait until I finish my cigar? It's

so much pleasanter to smoke here than in the open air. Perhaps Miss Calthea will let you join me."

Lodloe was perfectly willing to wait, but did not wish to smoke. He was interested in what he had heard of the stock of goods which was being sold off about as fast as a glacier moves, and was glad to have the opportunity to look about him.

"Do you know, Calthy," said Lanigan, "that you ought to sell Mr. Lodloe a bill of goods?" He said this partly because of his own love of teasing, but partly in earnest. To help Calthea sell off her stock was an important feature of his project.

"Mr. Lodloe shall not buy a thing," said Calthea Rose. "If he is ever in want of anything, and stops in here to see if I have it in stock, I shall be glad to sell it to him if it is here, for I am still in business; but I know very well that Mr. Lodloe came in now as an acquaintance and not as a customer."

"Beg your pardons, both of you," cried Lanigan, springing to his feet and throwing the end of his cigar out of the window. "But I say, Calthy, have you any of that fire-blaze calico with the rocket sparks that's been on hand ever since I can remember?"

"Your memory is pretty short sometimes," said Calthea, "but I think I know the goods you mean, and I have seven yards of it left. Why do you ask about it?"

"I want to see it," said Lanigan. "There it is on that shelf; it's the same-sized parcel that it used to be. Would you mind handing it down to me?"

Lanigan unrolled the calico upon the counter, and gazed upon it with delight. "Isn't that glorious!" he cried to Lodloe. "Isn't that like a town on fire!

By George! Calthea, I will take the whole seven yards."

"Now, Lanigan," said Miss Calthea, "you know you haven't the least use in the world for this calico."

"I know nothing of the sort," said Lanigan; "I have a use for it. I want to make Mrs. Petter a present, and I have been thinking of a fire-screen, and this is just the thing for it. I'll build the frame myself, and I'll nail on this calico, front and back the same. It'll want a piece of binding, or gimp, tacked around the edges. Have you any binding, or gimp, Calthy, that would suit?"

Miss Calthea laughed. "You'd better wait until you are ready for it," she said, "and then come and see."

"Anyway, I want the calico," said he. "Please put it aside for me, and I'll come in to-morrow and settle for it. And now, it seems to me that if we want any supper we had better be getting back to the inn."

"It's not a bad idea," said Miss Calthea Rose, when she was left to herself. "But it shall not be in a class. No, indeed! I will take good care that it shall not be in a class."

CHAPTER XVII

BANANAS AND OATS

When Walter Lodloe walked to Lethbury because he could not talk to Mrs. Cristie, it could not have been reasonably supposed that his walk would have had more practical influence on his feelings toward that lady than a conversation with her would have had; but such was the case.

It would have been very pleasant to talk, or walk, or chat, or stroll, or play tennis, with her; but when he reached the quiet little village, and wandered by himself along the shaded streets, and looked into the pretty yards and gardens, on the profusion of old-fashioned flowers and the cool green grass under the trees, and here and there a stone well-curb with a great sweep and an oaken bucket, and the air of quaint comfort which seemed to invade the interiors of those houses that were partly opened to his view, it struck him, as no idea of the sort had ever struck him before, what a charming and all-satisfying thing it would be to marry Mrs. Cristie and live in Lethbury in one of these cool, quaint houses with the quiet and shade and the flowers—at least, for a few years until his fortunes should improve.

He had a notion that Mrs. Cristie would like that

sort of thing. She seemed so fond of country life. He would write, and she would help him. He would work in the vegetable-garden, and she among the flowers. It would be Arcadia, and it would be cheap. Even with his present income every rural want could be satisfied.

An infusion of feasibility—or what he looked upon as such—into the sentimentality of such a man as Walter Lodloe generally acts as a stiffener to his purposes. He was no more in love with Mrs. Cristie than he had been when he left the Squirrel Inn, but he now determined, if he saw any reason to suppose that she would accept them, to offer himself and a Lethbury cottage to Mrs. Cristie.

He had a good opportunity to think over this matter and come to decisions, for his companion walked half the way home without saying a word.

Suddenly Lanigan spoke.

"Do you know," said he, "that I have about made up my mind to marry the governess?"

"She isn't a governess," said Lodloe, "she is a nurse-maid."

"I prefer to invest her with a higher grade," said Lanigan, "and it is pretty much the same thing, after all. Anyway, I want to marry her, and I believe I can do it if nobody steps in to interfere."

"Who do you suppose would do that?" asked Lodloe.

"Well," said Lanigan, "if the Lethbury people knew about it, and had a chance, every man jack of them, and every woman jack, too, would interfere, and under ordinary circumstances Calthea Rose would take the lead ; but just now I think she intends

to lend me a hand—not for my good, but for her own. If she does that, I am not afraid of all Lethbury and the Petters besides. The only person I am afraid of is Mrs. Cristie."

"Why do you fear her?" asked Lodloe.

"Well," said Lanigan, "when she was at the inn some years ago I was at my wildest, and her husband did not like me. He was in bad health, very touchy, and I suppose I gave him reason enough to consider me an extremely black sheep. Of course Mrs. Cristie naturally thought pretty much as he did, and from what you told me of the conference over my advent, I suppose her opinions haven't changed much. She has treated me very well since I have been here, but I have no doubt that she would consider it her duty to let Miss Mayberry know just the sort of fellow she thinks I am."

"Of course she would do that," said Lodloe, "and she ought to do it."

"No, sir," said Lanigan, "you are wrong, and I am going to prove it to you, and you shall see that I trust you as if I had known you years instead of days. I want you to understand that I am not the same sort of fellow that I used to be, not by any means. I told old Petter that, so that he might have a little practice in treating me with respect; but I didn't give him any reasons for it, because Calthea Rose would be sure to suspect that he knew something, and she'd worm it out of him; but I don't believe she could worm anything out of you. When I left this place, some eighteen months ago, I went down to Central America and bought a banana-farm, paying very little money down. In less than three months I sold my land to

a company, and made a very good thing out of it. Then, thinking the company after a while might want more land, I bought another large tract, and before the end of the year I sold that to them, doubling my money. Then I left the tropics, fearing I might go too deep into that sort of speculation and lose every cent I had. I travelled around, and at last landed in Chicago; and here the money-making fever seized me again. It is a new thing to me, and wonderfully intoxicating, I can tell you. I invested in oats, and before I knew it that blessed grain went up until, if its stalks had been as high as its price, it would have been over my head. I sold out, and then I said to myself: 'Now, Lanigan, my boy, if you don't want to be a beastly pauper for the rest of your life, you had better go home.' Honestly, I was frightened, and it seemed to me I should never be safe until I was back in Lethbury. Look here," he said, taking from a pocket a wallet filled with a mass of papers and a bank-book; "look at those certificates; and here is my New York bank-book, so you can see that I am not telling you lies.

"Now, you may say that the fact of my having money doesn't prove that I am any better than I used to be; but if you think that, you are wrong. There is no better way to reform a fellow than to give him something to take care of and take an interest in. That's my case now, and all I've got I've given myself, which makes it better, of course. I'm not rich, but I've got enough to buy out any business in Lethbury. And to go into business and to live here are what will suit me better than anything else, and that's not counting in Ida Mayberry at all. To

live here with her would be better luck than the biggest rise in oats the world ever saw. Now you see where I stand. If Mrs. Cristie goes against me, she does a cruel thing to me, and to Ida Mayberry besides."

"Why don't you tell her the facts?" said Lodloe. "That would be the straightforward and sensible thing to do."

"My dear boy," said Lanigan, "I cannot put the facts into the hands of a woman. No matter how noble or honorable she may be, without the least intention on her part they would leak out. And if Calthea Rose should get hold of them I should be lost. She'd drop old Tippengray like a hot potato, and stick to me like one of those adhesive plasters that have holes in them. No, sir! I don't want Calthea Rose to think well of me. I want her to keep on considering me as a good-for-nothing scapegrace. And, by George! it's easy enough to make her do that; it's all in her line of business. But I want other people to think well of me in a general way, and when Calthea and Tippengray have settled things between them, and are travelling on the Continent, which they certainly ought to do, I'll start in business, and take my place as one of the leading citizens of Lethbury; as things look now, all will be plain sailing if Mrs. Cristie thinks well enough of me not to interfere between me and Ida Mayberry. Now, all I ask of you is to say a good word for me if you can get a chance."

"After what you have told me," said Lodloe, "I think I shall say it."

"Good for you!" cried Lanigan. "And if I go to

Calthy and ask her to lend me the money to get a frame made for Mrs. Petter's fire-screen, don't you be surprised. What I'm doing is just as much for her good as for mine. In this whole world there couldn't be a better match for her than old Tippengray, and she knows it, and wants him."

"If there was a society for the prevention of cruelty to Greek scholars, I don't know but that it might interfere in this case," said Lodloe.

CHAPTER XVIII

SWEET PEAS

WALTER LODLOE was now as much flushed with the fever of love-making as Lanigan Beam had been flushed with the fever of money-making; but he did not have the other man's luck. Mrs. Cristie gave him few opportunities of making her know him as he wished her to know him. He had sense enough to see that this was intentional, and that if he made any efforts to improve his opportunities he might drive her away.

As he sat at his tower window, his fingers in his hair, and his mind trying to formulate the prudent but bold thing he ought to do, a voice came up from below. It was that of Ida Mayberry.

"Mr. Lodloe! Mr. Lodloe!" she cried; and when he had put his head out of the window she called to him:

"Don't you want to come down and help us teach Mr. Tippengray to play tennis? He has taught us so much that we are going to teach him something."

"Who are going to teach?" asked Lodloe.

"Mrs. Cristie and I," said Ida. "Will you come?"

Instantly consenting, Lodloe drew in his head, his love fever rising.

The Greek scholar was one of the worst tennis-players in the world. He knew nothing of the game, and did not appear capable of learning it. And yet, when Lanigan Beam appeared, having just arrived on horseback from Romney, Mrs. Cristie would not allow the Greek scholar to give up his place to the younger man. She insisted on his finishing the game, and when it was over she declared the morning too warm to play any more.

As she and Lodloe stood together for a moment, their rackets still in their hands, Mrs. Cristie smiled, but at the same time frowned.

"It is too provoking," she said, "I wish Douglas would wake up and scream his very loudest. I was just on the point of asking Ida to go with me into the garden to pick sweet peas, when Mr. Beam hands her that horrible bunch of wild flowers, crammed full of botany, I've no doubt. And now just look at them! Before one could say a word, there they are on that bench, heads together, and pulling the weeds to pieces. Think of it! Studying botany with *him*, and Mr. Tippengray on the same lawn with her!"

"Oh, he's too hot to teach anything," said Lodloe. "You don't seem to approve of Mr. Beam's attentions to that young woman."

"I do not," said she. "You know what he is as well as I do."

"Better," said Lodloe. For a moment he paused, and then continued: "Mrs. Cristie, I wish you would let me go into the garden with you to pick sweet peas and to talk about Mr. Beam."

"Mr. Beam?" she repeated.

"Yes," said Lodloe, "I wish very much to speak to

you in regard to him, and I cannot do it here, where we may be interrupted at any moment."

As a young and pretty woman who knew her attractions, and who had made resolutions in regard to the preponderance of social intercourse in a particular direction, Mrs. Cristie hesitated before answering. But as a matron who should know all about a young man who was paying very special attention to a younger woman in her charge, she accepted the invitation, and went into the garden with Lodloe.

The sweet-pea blossoms crowded the tall vines which lined one side of a path, and as she picked them he talked to her.

He began by saying that he had noticed, and he had no doubt that she had noticed, that in all the plain talk they had heard about Mr. Beam there had been nothing said against his moral character except that he did not pay his debts nor keep his promises. To this Mrs. Cristie assented, but said that she thought these were very bad things. Lodloe agreed to this, but said he thought that when a young man of whom even professional slanderers did not say that he was cruel, or that he gambled, or drank, or was addicted to low company and pursuits, had determined to reform his careless and thoughtless life, he ought to be encouraged and helped in every possible way. And then, when she asked him what reason he had to suppose that Mr. Beam had determined to reform, he straightway told her everything about Lanigan, Chicago oats and all, adding that the young man did not wish him to say anything about this matter, but he had taken it upon himself to do so because Mrs. Cristie ought to know it, and because he was sure that she

would not mention it to any one. When Mrs. Cristie exclaimed at this, and said that she thought that the sooner everybody knew it the better, Lodloe told her of the state of affairs between Calthea Rose and Lanigan Beam, and why the latter did not wish his reform to be known at present.

Mrs. Cristie dropped upon the ground every sweet-pea blossom she had gathered.

"I cannot imagine," she said, "how you can take the part of a man who would deliberately attempt to lower himself in the eyes of one woman in order that he might have a better chance to win another woman."

"Mrs. Cristie," said Lodloe, "I am a young man, and I have lived much among young men. I have seen many of them in dangerous and troubled waters, floating down to ruin and destruction, and now and then I have seen one who had turned and was trying to strike out for the shore. In every case of this kind I have tried to give the poor fellow a hand and help him get his feet on firm ground. Sometimes he jumped in again, and sometimes he didn't, but all that was not my affair; I was bound to help him when I saw him facing the right way; and that is just the way I feel about young Beam. I do not approve of all his methods, but if he wants moral support I say he ought to have it."

Mrs. Cristie looked at the pink, blue, and purple blossoms on the ground. "His sentiments are good and generous ones," she thought, "and I shall not say one word against them; but Ida Mayberry shall not marry that exceedingly slippery young man, and the good Mr. Tippengray shall not be caught by Calthea Rose." She came to this resolution with much

firmness of purpose; but as she was not prepared to say anything on the subject just then, she looked up very sweetly at Lodloe, and said:

"Suppose we drop Mr. Beam."

He looked for an instant into her eyes.

"Gladly," he exclaimed, with an impulse like a lightning-flash, "and speak of Walter Lodloe."

"Of you?" she said.

"Yes, of me," he replied; "of myself—of a man who has no scheme, no plan, no concealments, and who only wishes you to know that he loves you with all his heart."

She looked at him steadfastly for a moment. "Was it for this," she said, "that you asked me to come with you and pick sweet-pea blossoms?"

"Not at all," he exclaimed. "I meant no more than I said, and thought of no more. But the flowers we came to gather you have dropped upon the ground."

"They can easily be picked up again," she said.

"Not at all," he cried, and, stepping forward, put his foot upon the fragrant blossoms. Then, with a few rapid dashes, he gathered a bunch of sweet peas and extended them toward Mrs. Cristie.

"Will you not take these instead?" he said.

She put her hands behind her back.

"I do not mean," he said, speaking low but strongly, "that in accepting them you accept me. I only want to know that you will talk to me of what I said, or, at any rate, think of it."

But still she kept her hands behind her back. In her heart she knew that she wanted those flowers, but the knowledge had come so suddenly, so unexpectedly, and so unreasonably, that she did not

even look at them, and clasped her fingers together more tightly.

"Some one is coming," said Lodloe. "Tell me quickly, must these flowers be dropped?"

Steps could plainly be heard not far away. Mrs. Cristie looked up.

"I will take one," she said, "the very smallest."

He thrust the bunch of flowers toward her, and she hastily drew from it one which happened to be the largest of them all.

The person who now appeared in the garden walk was Calthea Rose. She experienced no emotions but those of mild amusement at seeing these two together. At present she did not care very much about either of them, although, when she had heard of the expected coming of the young widow, she had been afraid of her, and was prepared to dislike her. But finding her, as she supposed, already provided with a lover, Calthea was quite satisfied with Mrs. Cristie. She liked Lodloe on general principles, because he was a man. Her greeting was very pleasant. It often happened that the people whom Calthea Rose neither liked nor disliked were those who found her the most pleasant.

She was inclined to walk on and leave them among the sweet-pea blossoms, but Mrs. Cristie would not allow this. She joined Calthea, and the three went on together. When they stepped upon the open lawn, Calthea gave a quick glance around, and the result was very satisfactory. Ida Mayberry and Lanigan were still sitting together under a tree, and she saw Mr. Tippengray talking to Mrs. Petter not far from the summer-house. Nothing could be better arranged.

Lanigan was on the right road, and it would be quite as natural for her immediately to join Mrs. Petter as it would be easy to get rid of her.

The party separated, Lodloe going to his room and Calthea walking toward the summer-house. She had come that day to the Squirrel Inn with a purpose: she was going to be taught by Mr. Tippengray. In this world we must adapt ourselves to circumstances, and she was going to adapt herself to the Greek scholar's hobby. She was a sensible woman, and did not for a moment purpose to ask him to teach her the dead languages, philosophy, or science, things in which he knew she took no interest. Indeed, she would not ask him to teach her anything, but she was going to give him the opportunity to do so, and she was quite sure that that would be sufficient for her purpose.

She intended to make herself an audience of one, and to listen, in a way she knew would please him, to the recital of his travels and experiences. Of these he had often essayed to talk to her, but she had not encouraged him. She never liked to talk upon subjects of which other people knew more than she did, and she always endeavored to bring the conversation into a channel where she could take an equal part. If she could lead, so much the better. But now she was going to let Mr. Tippengray talk to her just as much as he pleased, and tell her all he wanted to tell her. She now knew him better than she had done before, and she had strong hopes that by this new string she would be able to lead him from the Squirrel Inn to Lethbury whenever she chose.

Mrs. Petter had long been accustomed to look upon Calthea Rose as a person whose anger would blaze up

very suddenly, but would go out quite as promptly, —which was true, when Miss Calthea chose to put it out,—but she was a little surprised that Calthea, after so recently going away in a huff, should treat Mr. Tippengray with such easy friendliness. If the Greek scholar himself felt surprised, he did not show it, for he was always ready to meet a cordial overture.

Miss Calthea had just accepted an invitation to be seated in the shade,—which she knew would very soon be followed by Mrs. Petter's going into the house, for that good woman was seldom content to sit long out of doors,—when up stepped Ida Mayberry.

"Mr. Tippengray," said she, in the clear, distinct way in which she always spoke, "here is something which I have been trying to explain to Mr. Beam, but I am afraid I haven't a quite correct idea about it myself. Will you please read it, and tell me how it strikes you?"

This was too much for the patience of Calthea Rose. Her resolutions of geniality and good nature could not stand for a moment against such an interruption at such a time. She turned sharply upon the nurse-maid, and, without attempting to disguise her feelings, said it seemed to her that a person so anxious to learn would be much better employed in attending to her business and in trying to learn something about babies than in interrupting conversation in this impertinent way.

"Learn something about babies!" exclaimed Miss Mayberry. "Nobody knows more about babies than I do—I have dissected one."

At this Mrs. Petter gave a cry of horror, and Miss Calthea stepped back, speechless with amazement.

As for the Greek scholar, he suddenly retired to a little distance and leaned over a bench, his back to the company. He was greatly agitated.

Without further remark, Miss Mayberry closed her book, and, with dignity, walked back to Lanigan Beam.

CHAPTER XIX

THE AROUSED ROSE

THE soul of Miss Calthea Rose was now filled with one burning purpose, and that was to banish from the Squirrel Inn that obtrusive and utterly obnoxious collegiate nurse-maid who had so shamelessly admitted a desire for surgical research in connection with the care of an infant. It was of no use for Miss Calthea to think at this moment of her plans in regard to Mr. Tippengray, nor, indeed, of anything but this one absorbing object. Until she had rid herself of Ida Mayberry she could expect to do nothing that she wished to do. Leaving Mr. Tippengray to the quiet enjoyment of his agitations, Miss Calthea and Mrs. Petter immediately set off to find Mrs. Cristie.

"She must instantly know," said the former, "what sort of a serpent she has in her service. If I were in her place I would never let that creature touch my baby again."

"Touch the baby!" exclaimed Mrs. Petter. "I wouldn't let her touch me. When a person with such a disposition begins on infants there is no knowing where she will stop. Of course I don't mean that she is dangerous to human life, but it seems to me horrible to have any one about us who would be look-

ing at our muscles, and thinking about our bones, and wondering if they worked together properly, and if they would come apart easily. Ugh! It's like having a bat in the room."

Mrs. Cristie was not in the mood to give proper attention to the alarming facts which were laid before her by the two women, who found her sitting by the window in her room. It had been so short a time since she had come from the garden, and the blossom of the sweet pea, which she still held in her hand, had been so recently picked from its vine, that it was not easy for her to fix her mind upon the disqualifications of nurse-maids. Even the tale that was told her, intensified by the bitter feeling of Miss Rose, and embellished by the imagination of Mrs. Petter, did not have the effect upon her that was expected by the narrators. She herself had been a student of anatomy, and was still fond of it, and if she had been able properly to consider the subject at that moment, she might not have considered it a bad thing for Ida Mayberry to have the experience of which she had boasted.

But the young widow did not wish at that moment to think of her nurse-maid or even of her baby, and certainly not to give her attention to the tales of her landlady and the spinster from Lethbury.

"I must admit," she said, "that I cannot see that what you tell me is so very, very dreadful, but I will speak to Ida about it. I think she is apt to talk very forcibly, and perhaps imprudently, and does not always make herself understood."

This was said with an air of abstraction and want of interest which greatly irritated Miss Calthea. She had not even been thanked for what she had done.

Mrs. Cristie had been very civil, and was evidently trying to be more so; but this was not enough for Miss Calthea.

"We considered it our duty," she said, with a decided rigidity of countenance, "to tell you what we know of that girl, and now we leave the matter with you;" which was a falsehood, if Miss Calthea was capable of telling one.

Then, with much dignity, she moved toward the door, and Mrs. Petter prepared to follow; but before going she turned with moist eyes toward Mrs. Cristie, and said:

"Indeed, indeed, you ought to be very careful; no matter how you look at it, she is not fit for a nurse, as everybody can see. Make up your mind to send her away, and I'll go myself and get you a good one."

Glancing out of the door to see that the Lethbury lady was out of hearing, Mrs. Cristie said:

"You are very good, Mrs. Petter, and I know you wish me well; but tell me one thing: wasn't it Miss Rose who proposed that you should come to me with this story about Ida?"

"Of course I should have told you myself," said Mrs. Petter, "though I might have taken my time about it; but Calthea did not want to lose a minute, and said we must go right off and look for you. She was as mad as hops anyway, for we were talking to Mr. Tippengray at the time, and Calthea does hate to be interrupted when she is talking to him. But don't you worry yourself any more than you can help, and remember my promise. I'll stick to it, you may count on that."

When Mrs. Cristie had been left to herself, she gave

enough time to the consideration of what had been told her to come to the following conclusion: "She shall not have him; I have made up my mind to that. Interrupted by Ida! Of course that is at the bottom of it." And having settled this matter, she relapsed into her former mood, and fell to thinking what she should do about the sweet-pea blossom.

She thought until the supper-bell rang, and then she rose, and with a pretty smile and flush upon her face, which showed that her thoughts had not in the least worried her, she put the sweet-pea blossom into a little jar which she had brought from Florence, and which was just big enough for one small flower.

At supper Walter Lodloe was very quiet and very polite, and Mrs. Cristie, who was opposite to him, though not at all quiet, was also very polite, but bestowed her attention almost entirely upon Mr. Tippengray, who sat beside her. The Greek scholar liked this, and his conversation sparkled.

Miss Calthea Rose, who had accepted Mrs. Petter's invitation to spend the night,—for if ever she was going to do anything at the Squirrel Inn, this was the time to do it,—did not like Mrs. Cristie's politeness, and her conversation did not sparkle. In fact, she was quieter than Mr. Lodloe, and paid little heed to the chatter of her neighbor, Lanigan Beam. This young man was dissatisfied. There was a place at the table that was sometimes filled and sometimes not filled. At present it was empty.

"I cannot see," said he, speaking to the company in general, "why babies are not brought to the table. I think they ought to be taught from the very beginning how to behave themselves at meals."

Mr. Petter fixed his eyes upon him, and, speaking through the young man, also addressed the company.

"I'm not altogether in favor of having small children at the table," said he. "Their food is different from ours, and their ways are often unpleasant; but I do think—"

"No, you don't," interrupted Mrs. Petter, from the other end of the table—"you don't think anything of the kind. That has all been fixed and settled, and there's no use in bringing it up again."

Mr. Petter looked at his wife with a little flash in his eye, but he spoke quietly.

"There are some things," he said, "that can be unfixed and unsettled."

Mrs. Cristie hastened to stop this discussion.

"As I own the only baby in the house," she said, with a smile, "I may as well say that it is not coming to the table, either by itself or in any other way."

A thought now tickled Mr. Tippengray. Without any adequate reason whatever, there came before him the vision of an opossum which he once had seen served at a Virginia dinner-table, plump and white, upon a china dish. And he felt almost irresistibly impelled to lean forward and ask Mr. Lodloe if he had ever read any of the works of Mr. Jonathan Carver, that noted American traveller of the last century; but he knew it wouldn't do, and he restrained himself. If he had thought Lodloe would understand him he would have made his observation in Greek, but even that would have been impolite to the rest of the company. So he kept his joke to himself, and, for fear that any one should perceive his amusement, he asked Mrs. Petter if she had ever

noticed how much finer was the fur of a cat which slept out of doors than that of one which had been in the house. She had noticed it, but thought that the cat would prefer a snug rug by the fire to fine fur.

Calthea Rose said little and thought much. It was necessary that she should take in every possible point in the situation, and she was doing it. She did not like Mrs. Cristie's attention to Mr. Tippengray, because it gave him pleasure, and she did not wish that other women should give him pleasure; but she was not jealous, for that would have been absurd in this case.

But the apparent state of feeling at the table had given her an idea. She was thinking very bitterly of Mrs. Cristie, and would gladly do anything which would cause that lady discomfort. There seemed to be something wrong between her and Mr. Lodloe; otherwise the two lovers would be talking to each other, as was their custom. Perhaps she might find an opportunity to do something here. If, for instance, she could get the piqued gentleman to flirt a little with her,—and she had no doubt of her abilities in this line,—it might cause Mrs. Cristie uneasiness. And here her scheme widened and opened before her. If in any way she could make life at the Squirrel Inn distasteful to Mrs. Cristie, that lady might go away. And in this case the whole problem that engrossed her would be solved, for of course the maid would go with the mistress.

Calthea's eyes brightened, and with a smile she half listened to something Lanigan Beam was saying to her.

"Yes," she thought, "that would settle the whole

business. The widow is the person I ought to drive away ; then they would all go, and leave him to me, as I had him before."

And now she listened a little, and talked a little, but still kept on thinking. It was really a very good thing that her feeling toward Mrs. Cristie had so suddenly changed, otherwise she might never have thought of this admirable scheme.

CHAPTER XX

AN INGENUOUS MAID

Mrs. Cristie was unusually prompt that evening in going to the relief of Ida Mayberry, but before she allowed that young woman to go down to her supper she put a question to her.

"What do you mean, Ida," she said, "by talking about dissecting babies? Whatever you may have done in that line, I do not think it is very nice to bring it forward when you have charge of a child."

"Of course it wasn't nice," replied Ida, "and I should never have thought of speaking of it if it had not been for that thing from Lethbury. She makes me so angry that I don't know what I say. You ought to hear Lanigan Beam talk about her. He has confided to me, although I am not sure that he should have done it."

"Of course not," said Mrs. Cristie, very promptly; "he should not have confided anything to you."

"Well," continued Ida, "he told me, but said he would not breathe it to any one else, that the great object of his life at present was to rid this neighborhood of Calthea Rose. He says she has been a plague to this community ever since he has known her. She is always ready to make mischief, and nobody can tell

when or how she is going to do it. As for himself, he vows she has made it impossible for him to live here; and as he wishes to live here, he wants her to go."

"And how does he propose to make her go?" asked Mrs. Cristie.

"He wants her to marry Mr. Tippengray, which she is very willing to do, and then he is quite sure that they will go away and travel, and stay abroad for a long time. He knows that this will be the very thing that she would want to do."

"And I suppose," said Mrs. Cristie, "that Mr. Beam told you all this in order that you might be induced to help on the match between Mr. Tippengray and Miss Rose."

"That was exactly his object," said Ida; "he said that everybody ought to help in this good work."

"And then, I suppose, he would like to marry you," remarked Mrs. Cristie.

"He hasn't said so yet," replied Miss Mayberry, "but I think he would like to do it."

Mrs. Cristie brought down her little fist upon the table, regardless of her slumbering child.

"That man is utterly without a conscience!" she exclaimed. "If he hadn't kept on engaging himself over and over again to Calthea Rose, she might have married somebody else, and gone away long ago. He has no one but himself to blame that she is still here to worry him and other people. And as to his wishing to sacrifice Mr. Tippengray to his ease and comfort, I think it is the most shameful thing I ever heard of! I hope, Ida, that you did not encourage him in this iniquitous scheme."

Ida laughed, but quietly—remembering the baby.

"Not much," she said. "In fact, I have determined, if I can, to rescue Mr. Tippengray from that clutching old thing."

"How?" asked Mrs. Cristie, quickly.

"By marrying him myself," said the nurse-maid.

"Ida Mayberry!" exclaimed Mrs. Cristie.

"Yes," said the other; "I have been considering the matter a good deal, and I think it can be done. He is much older than I am, but that isn't of great importance when people suit in other ways. Of course I would not wish to marry a very old man, even if he were suitable, for I should have to look forward to a married life so short that it would not pay; but Mr. Tippengray was not born so dreadfully far back, and he is one of those men who keep young for a long time. I think he likes me, and I am sure I can easily make him like me more, if I choose. There is nobody here that I need be afraid of, excepting you, perhaps."

Mrs. Cristie looked at her in amazement.

"Me!" she exclaimed.

"Yes," said Ida, "and this is the way of it. For a time I rather liked Lanigan Beam, for he's young and good-looking, and particularly because he seems very much in love with me; but although he pretends to be anxious to study, I know he is not very deep, and will probably soon tire of that. So when my sympathy for Mr. Tippengray was fairly aroused,—and it has been growing for some time,—it was easy enough to drop Lanigan; but before I allowed myself to become too much interested in Mr. Tippengray I had to consider all sides of the case. You seem to like Mr. Tippengray very much, and of course if you really

make up your mind to prefer him to anybody else, one great object would be gained, just the same as if I married him, and he would be saved from the hole those two are digging for him."

"And in that case," said Mrs. Cristie, repressing a strong disposition to laugh, "what would you do? Perhaps you would be content to take anything that might be left."

"I suppose you mean Mr. Lodloe," said Ida. "Well, to speak plainly, I have never thought that I had a right to take him into consideration, but if the field were entirely open, I would not hesitate a moment in preferring him to either of the others."

Now Mrs. Cristie laughed outright.

"I could never have imagined," she said, "that a young girl such as you are could have such practical and business-like views about matrimony."

"Well," said the nurse-maid, "I don't see anything out of the way in my views. I want to bring an intelligent judgment to bear upon everything I do, and if the higher education is of any good at all, it ought to help us to regulate our affections."

"I have nothing to say on the subject," said Mrs. Cristie, "except that they did not pretend to teach us that at Vassar. I don't see how you can bring yourself to such calculations. But one part of your scheme I approve of highly: positively you ought to drop Lanigan Beam. As to marrying Mr. Tippengray, that is your affair, and his affair; and you may be sure I shall not interfere in any way."

Ida looked at her and smiled.

"I wasn't very much afraid of that," she said, "though of course I thought I ought to steer clear of

even a possible interference; but now I can go ahead with a clear conscience."

Mrs. Cristie felt drawn toward this ingenuous maid.

"Ida," she said, taking her by the hand, "as you have been so confiding toward me, I will say to you that since you have concluded to drop Mr. Beam your choice is decidedly restricted."

"I am glad to hear it," said the other, warmly, "he is a good man, and I think he has brains that you can count on. Is it all settled?"

"Oh, no, no!" said Mrs. Cristie. "And mind, Ida, don't you say a word of this to a living soul."

"Oh, you needn't be afraid of that," said Miss Mayberry, "I never betray confidences."

"I am afraid," said Mrs. Cristie to herself, as she stood alone by her baby's bedside, "that I went a little too far. It isn't settled yet, and it would have been better not to say anything about it. However"—and then her thoughts went wandering. She would go down-stairs and out of doors as soon as she had satisfied herself that Douglas could be prudently left to his slumbers.

CHAPTER XXI

TWISTED TRYSTS

Mrs. Cristie found the lower floor of the Squirrel Inn quite deserted. She stopped before a window in a Norman tower and looked out. Twilight was fading, but there was a young moon in the sky. By stepping a little to one side she could see the moon, with the evening star twinkling not far away from it. She did not go out, however, but slowly wandered into a long room under the roof of a Swiss chalet. Here she went out on a queer little balcony, and sat down; but her view was cut off by an outjutting upper story of the old English type, with rows of small-paned windows, and she soon came in from the balcony. There was a light burning in the tap-room, and as she passed its open door she stopped for a moment and gazed reflectively at the row of dilapidated stuffed squirrels, each of which had once stood guard upon the guide-post to the inn. But she took no note of the squirrels, nor of anything else in the quiet room, but as she stood, and instinctively put her finger to her forehead, a resolution came.

"I will be sensible, like Ida," she thought. "I will go out and let things happen as they may."

She went out into the young moonlight, and, glancing across the lawn, saw, near the edge of the bluff that commanded the western view, two persons sitting upon a bench. Their backs were toward her, but one of them she knew to be Calthea Rose.

"I hope that is not poor Mr. Tippengray," said Mrs. Cristie to herself. "If she has secured him already, and taken him out there, I am afraid that even Ida will not be able to get him away from her. Ida must still be at her supper. I should not have detained her so long."

But Ida was not at her supper. As she turned toward the end of the lawn, Mrs. Cristie saw her nurse-maid slowly strolling over the grass, a man on each side of her. They were plainly to be seen, and one man was Mr. Tippengray and the other Lanigan Beam. The three were engaged in earnest conversation. Mrs. Cristie smiled.

"I need not have feared for Ida," she thought, "she must have made a bold stroke to leave her rival in the lurch in that way, but I suppose in order to get one man she has to take both. It is a little hard on Miss Calthea;" and with an amused glance toward the couple on the bluff she moved toward the gardens. Her mind was in a half-timorous and undetermined state, in which she would have been glad to wander about by herself and to meet nobody, or, if it so should happen, glad to meet somebody; and wistfully, but yet timidly, she wondered which it would be. All at once she heard a step behind her. In spite of herself, she started and flushed, and, turning, saw Mr. Petter. The sight of this worthy gentleman was a shock to her. She had been sure he was sitting

with Calthea Rose on the bluff. If it was not he, who was it?

"I am glad to see you, Mrs. Cristie," said the landlord of the inn, "for I want to speak with you. My mind is disturbed, and it is on account of your assistant, Miss Mayberry. She has been talked about in a way that I do not at all like. I may even say that my wife has been urging me to use my influence with you to get her dismissed. I assured Mrs. Petter, however, that I should use that influence, if it exists, in exactly the opposite direction. Shall we walk on together, Mrs. Cristie, while I speak further on the subject? I have a high opinion of Miss Mayberry. I like her because she is what I term blooded. Nothing pleases me so much as blooded service, and, I may add, blooded associations and possessions. So far as I am able to have it so, my horses, my cattle, and all my live stock are blooded. I consider my house, this inn, to be a blooded house. It can trace its various lines of architectural ancestry to honorable origins. The company at my house, with the exception of Lanigan Beam,—who, however, is not a full guest, but rather a limited inmate, ascending by a ladder to his dormitory,—are, if you will excuse me for saying so, blooded. And that one of these guests should avail herself of blooded service is to me a great gratification, of which I hope I shall not be deprived. To see a vulgar domestic in Miss Mayberry's place would wound and pain me, and I may say, Mrs. Cristie, that I have been able to see no reason whatever for such substitution."

Mrs. Cristie had listened without a word, but as she listened she had been asking herself who that could

be with Calthea Rose. If it was not Walter Lodloe, who was it? And if it were he, why was he there? And if he were there, why did he stay there? Of course she was neither jealous, nor worried, nor troubled by such a thing, but the situation was certainly odd. She had come out expecting something, she did not know exactly what; it might not have been a walk among the sweet-pea blossoms, but she was very certain it was not a conversation with Mr. Petter, while Walter Lodloe sat over there in the moonlight with Calthea Rose.

"You need not have given yourself any anxiety," she said to her companion, "for I have not the slightest idea of discharging Ida. She suits me admirably, and what they say about her is all nonsense; of course I do not mean any disrespect to Mrs. Petter."

Mr. Petter deprecatingly waved his hand.

"I understand perfectly your reference to my wife," he said. "Her mind, I think, has been acted upon by others. Allow me to say, madam, that your words have encouraged and delighted me. I feel we are moving in the right direction. I breathe better."

"How is it possible," thought Mrs. Cristie, during the delivery of this speech, "that he can sit there, and sit, and sit, and sit, when he knows at this hour I am always somewhere about the house or grounds, and never in my room? Well, if he likes to sit there, let him sit;" and with this she looked up with some vivacity into the face of her landlord and asked him if even his pigeons and his chickens were blooded, and if the pigs were also of good descent. As she spoke she slightly accelerated her pace.

Mr. Petter was very willing to walk faster, and to

talk about all that appertained to his beloved Squirrel Inn, and so they walked and talked until they reached the garden and disappeared from view behind the tall shrubbery that bordered the central path.

Mrs. Petter sat on a little Dutch porch, looking out on the lawn, and her mind was troubled. She wished to talk to Mr. Petter, and here he was strolling about in the moonlight with that young widow. Of course there was nothing in it, and it was perfectly proper for him to be polite to his guests ; but there were lines in politeness as well as in other things, and they ought to be drawn before people went off walking by themselves in the garden at an hour when most farmers were thinking about going to bed. The good lady sat very uneasily on her little bench. The night air felt damp to her and disagreeable ; she was sure there were spiders and other things running about the porch floor, and there were no rounds to the bench on which she could put her feet. But she could not bear to go in, for she had not the least idea in the world where they had gone to. Perhaps they might walk all the way to Lethbury, for all she knew. At this moment a man came up to the porch. It was Lanigan Beam, and his soul was troubled. The skilful Miss Mayberry had so managed the conversation in which she and the two gentlemen were engaged that its subject-matter became deeper and deeper in its character, until poor Lanigan found that it was getting very much too deep for him. As long as he could manage to keep his head above water he stood bravely, but when he was obliged to raise himself on the tips of his toes, and even then found the discourse rising above his chin, obliging him to shut his mouth and to

blink his eyes, he thought it wise to strike out for shore before he made a pitiful show of his lack of mental stature.

And in a very bad humor Lanigan walked rapidly to the house, where he was much surprised to see Mrs. Petter on the little Dutch porch.

"Why, madam," he exclaimed, "I thought you never sat out after nightfall."

"As a rule, I don't," the good lady answered, "and I oughtn't to now; but the fact is—" She hesitated, but it was not necessary to finish the sentence. Mr. Petter and Mrs. Cristie emerged from the garden and stood together just outside its gate. He was explaining to her the origin of some of the peculiar features of the Squirrel Inn.

When the eyes of Mr. Beam fell upon these two, who stood plainly visible in the moonlight, while he and Mrs. Petter were in shadow, his trouble was dissipated by a mischievous hilarity.

"Well, well, well!" said he, "she *is* a woman."

"Of course she is," said Mrs. Petter, "and what of that, I'd like to know?"

"Now that I think of it," said Lanigan, with a finger on the side of his nose, "I remember that she and her young man didn't have much to say to each other at supper. Quarrelled, perhaps. And she is comforting herself with a little flirt with Mr. Petter."

"Lanigan Beam, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" cried the good lady. "You know Mr. Petter never flirts."

"Well, perhaps *he* doesn't," said Lanigan, "but if I were you, Mrs. Petter, I would take him out a shawl or something to put over his shoulders. He

oughtn't to be standing out there in the night wind."

"I shall do nothing of the kind," she answered shortly, "and I oughtn't to be out here in the night air, either."

Lanigan gazed at Mrs. Cristie and her companion. If that charming young widow wanted some one to walk about with her in the moonlight, she could surely do better than that. Perhaps a diversion might be effected and partners changed.

"Mrs. Petter," said he, "I wouldn't go in, if I were you. If you move about you will be all right. Suppose we stroll over that way."

"I am ready to stroll," said Mrs. Petter, in a tone that showed she had been a good deal stirred by her companion's remarks, "but I am not going to stroll over that way. The place is big enough for people to keep to themselves, if they choose, and I am one that chooses, and I choose to walk in the direction of my duty, or, more properly, the duty of somebody else, and see that the hen-houses are shut;" and taking Lanigan's arm, she marched him down to the barn, and then across a small orchard to the most distant poultry-house within the limits of the estate.

When Mr. Stephen Petter, allowing his eyes to drop from the pointed roof of his high tower, saw his wife and Lanigan Beam walking away among the trees in the orchard, he suddenly became aware that the night air was chilly, and suggested to his companion that it might be well to return to the house.

"Oh, not yet, Mr. Petter," said she; "I want you to tell me how you came to have that little turret over the thatched roof."

She had determined that she would not go indoors while Calthea Rose and Mr. Lodloe sat together on that bench.

Early in the evening Miss Calthea had seen Mr. Lodloe walking by himself upon the bluff, and she so arranged a little promenade of her own that in passing around some shrubbery she met him near the bench. Miss Calthea was an admirable manager in dialogue, and if she had an object in view it did not take her long to find out what her collocutor liked to talk about. She had unusual success in discovering something which very much interested Mr. Lodloe, and they were soon seated on a bench discussing the manners and ways of life in Lethbury.

To a man who recently had been seized with a desire to marry and to live in Lethbury, and who had already taken some steps in regard to the marriage, this subject was one of the most lively interest, and Lodloe was delighted to find what a sensible, practical, and well-informed woman was Miss Rose. She was able to give him all sorts of points about buying, building, or renting houses in Lethbury, and she entered with the greatest zeal into the details of living, service, the cost of keeping a horse, a cow, and poultry, and without making any inconvenient inquiries into the reasons for Mr. Lodloe's desire for information on these subjects. She told him everything he wanted to know about housekeeping in her native village, because she had made herself aware that his mind was set on that sort of thing. In truth, she did not care whether he settled in Lethbury or some other place, or whether he ever married and settled at all. All she wished was to talk to him in such a way that

she might keep him with her as long as possible. She wished this because she liked to keep a fine-looking young man all to herself, and also because she thought that the longer she did so the more uneasiness she would cause Mrs. Cristie.

She had convinced herself that it would not do for life to float too smoothly at the Squirrel Inn. She would stir up things here and there, but prudently, so that, no matter who became disgusted and went away, it would not be Mr. Tippengray. She was not concerned at present about this gentleman. It was ten to one that by this time Lanigan Beam had driven him away from the child's nurse.

Walter Lodloe was now beginning to feel that it was quite time that his conversation with Miss Rose, which had really lasted much longer than he supposed, should be brought to a close. His manner indicating this, Miss Calthea immediately entered into a most attractive description of a house picturesquely situated on the outskirts of Lethbury, which would probably soon be vacated on account of the owner's desire to go West.

At the other end of the extensive lawn two persons walked backward and forward near the edge of the trees, perfectly satisfied and untroubled. What the rest of the world was doing was of no concern whatever to either of them.

"I am afraid, Mr. Tippengray," said the nursemaid, "that when your Greek version of the literature of to-day, especially its humorous portion, is translated into the American language of the future, it will lose much of its point and character."

"You must remember, my dear Miss Mayberry," said the gentleman, "that we do not know what our

language will be in eight hundred or a thousand years from now. The English of to-day may be utterly unintelligible to the readers of that era. But that portion of our literature which I put into imperishable and unchangeable Greek will be the same then as now. The scholar may read it for his own pleasure and profit, or he may translate it for the pleasure and profit of others. At all events, it will be there, like a fly in amber, good for all time. All you have to do is to melt your amber, and there you have your fly."

"And a well shrivelled up fly it would be, I am afraid," said Ida.

Mr. Tippengray laughed.

"Be not too sure of that," he said. "I will translate some of my Greek version of 'Pickwick' back into English, and let you see for yourself how my amber preserves the fly."

"Let me do it," said Ida. "It is a long time since I read 'Pickwick,' and therefore my translation will be a better test."

"Capital!" cried Mr. Tippengray. "I will copy a few lines for you to-night."

From out an open Elizabethan window under a mansard roof, and overlooking a small Moorish veranda, there came a sound of woe. The infant Douglas had awakened from a troubled sleep, and with a wild and piercing cry he made known to his fellow-beings his desire for society. Instantly there was a kaleidoscopic change among the personages on the grounds of the Squirrel Inn. Miss Mayberry darted toward the house; the Greek scholar, without knowing what he was doing, ran after her for a short distance, and then

stopped; Mrs. Petter screamed from the edge of the orchard to know what was the matter; and Lanigan ran to see. Mr. Petter, the natural guardian of the place, pricked up his ears and strode toward the inn, his soul filled with a sudden fear of fire. Mrs. Cristie recognized the voice of her child, but saw Ida running, and so, relieved of present anxiety, remained where her companion had left her.

Walter Lodloe, hearing Mrs. Petter's voice and the running, sprang from his seat; and seeing that it would be impossible to detain him now, and preferring to leave rather than to be left, Miss Calthea hurried away to see what was the matter.

CHAPTER XXII

THE BLOSSOM AND THE LITTLE JAR

PERCEIVING Mrs. Cristie standing alone near the entrance to the garden, Walter Lodloe walked rapidly toward her. As he approached she moved in the direction of the house.

"Will you not stop a moment?" he said. "Do not go in yet."

"I must," she answered, "I have been out here a long while—too long."

"Out here a long time!" he exclaimed. "You surprise me. Please stop one moment. I want to tell you of a most interesting conversation I have had with Miss Rose. It has animated me wonderfully."

Considering what had occurred that afternoon, this remark could not fail to impress Mrs. Cristie, and she stopped and looked at him. He did not give her time to ask any questions, but went on:

"I have been asking her about life in Lethbury—houses, gardens, everything that relates to a home in that delightful village. And what she has told me opens a paradise before me. I did not dream that down in that moon-lighted valley I should be almost rich; that I could offer you—"

"And may I ask," she interrupted, "if you have been talking about me to Miss Rose?"

"Not a word of it," he answered warmly. "I never mentioned your name, nor referred to you in any way."

She could not help ejaculating a little sarcastically:

"How circumspect!"

"And now," he said, coming closer to her, "will you not give me an answer? I love you, and I cannot wait. And oh! speak quickly, for here comes Mrs. Petter straight toward us."

"I do not like Lethbury," said Mrs. Cristie.

Lodloe could have stamped his feet, in the fire of his impatience.

"But of me, of myself?" he said. "And oh! speak quickly; she is almost here."

"Please cease," said Mrs. Cristie, "she will hear you."

Mrs. Petter came up panting.

"I don't want to interrupt you, Mrs. Cristie," she said, "but really and truly you ought to go to your baby. He has stopped crying in the most startling and suspicious way. Of course I don't know what she has done to him, and whether it's anything surgical or laudanum. And it isn't for me to be there to smell the little creature's breath; but you ought to go this minute, and if you find there is anything needed in the way of mustard, or hot water, or sending for the doctor, just call to me from the top of the stairs."

"My dear Mrs. Petter," said Mrs. Cristie, "why didn't Calthea Rose come and tell me this herself, instead of sending you?"

"She said that she thought you would take it better

from me than from her; and after we had made up our minds about it, she said I ought not to wait a second."

"Well," said Mrs. Cristie, "it was very good in you to come to me, but I do not feel in the least alarmed. It was Ida's business to quiet the child, and I have no doubt she did it without knives or poison. But now that you are here, Mrs. Petter, I wish to ask your opinion about something that Mr. Lodloe has been talking of to me."

The young man looked at her in astonishment.

"He has been telling me," continued Mrs. Cristie, "of a gentleman he knows, a person of education, and accustomed to society, who has conceived the idea of living in Lethbury. Now, what do you think of that?"

"Well," said Mrs. Petter, "if he's married, and if his wife's got the asthma, or he's got it himself, I have heard that Lethbury is good for that sort of complaint. Or if he's failed in business and has to live cheap, or if he is thinking of setting up a store where a person can get honest wash-goods, or if he has sickly children, and isn't particular about schools, I suppose he might as well come to Lethbury as not."

"But he has none of those reasons for settling here," said Mrs. Cristie.

"Well, then," remarked Mrs. Petter, somewhat severely, "he must be weak in his mind. And if he's that, I don't think he's needed in Lethbury."

As she finished speaking the good woman turned and beheld her husband just coming out of the house. Being very desirous of having her talk with him, and not very well pleased at the manner in which her

mission had been received, she abruptly betook herself to the house.

"Now, then," said Mrs. Cristie, turning to Lodloe, "what do you think of that very explicit opinion?"

"Does it agree with yours?" he asked.

"Wonderfully," she replied. "I could not have imagined that Mrs. Petter and I were so much of a mind."

"Mrs. Cristie," said Lodloe, "I drop Lethbury, and here I stand with nothing but myself to offer you."

The moon had now set, the evening was growing dark, and the lady began to feel a little chilly about the shoulders.

"Mr. Lodloe," she asked, "what did you do with that bunch of sweet peas you picked this afternoon?"

"They are in my room," he said eagerly. "I have put them in water. They are as fresh as when I gathered them."

"Well," she said, speaking rather slowly, "if tomorrow, or next day, or any time when it may be convenient, you will bring them to me, I think I will take them."

In about half an hour Mrs. Cristie went into the house, feeling that she had stayed out entirely too late. In her room she found Ida reading by a shaded lamp, and the baby sleeping soundly. The nurse-maid looked up with a smile, and then turned her face again to her book. Mrs. Cristie stepped quietly to the mantelpiece, on which she had set the little jar from Florence, but to her surprise there was nothing in it. The sweet-pea blossom was gone. After looking here and there upon the floor, she went over to Ida, and in

a low voice asked her if she had seen anything of a little flower that had been in that jar.

"Oh, yes," said the girl, putting down her book; "I gave it to baby to amuse him, and the instant he took it he stopped crying, and very soon went to sleep. There it is; I declare, he is holding it yet."

Mrs. Cristie went softly to the bedside of the child, and, bending over him, gently drew the sweet-pea blossom from his chubby little fist.

CHAPTER XXIII

HAMMERSTEIN

Miss Calthea Rose was up and about very early the next morning. She had work to do in which there must be no delay or loss of opportunity. It was plain enough that her scheme for driving away Ida Mayberry had failed, and, having carefully noted the extraordinary length of time which Mrs. Cristie and Mr. Lodloe spent together under the stars the previous evening, she was convinced that it would not be easy to make that lady dissatisfied with the Squirrel Inn. She therefore determined to turn aside from her plans of exile, to let the child's nurse stay where she pleased, to give no further thought to Lanigan Beam, and to devote all her energies to capturing Mr. Tippengray. She believed that she had been upon the point of doing this before the arrival of intruders on the scene, and she did not doubt that she could reach that point again.

Miss Calthea was very restless that morning; she was much more anxious to begin work than was anybody else on the place. She walked about the ground, went into the garden, passed the summer-house on her way there and back again, and even wandered down to the barn-yard, where the milking had just begun.

If any one had been roaming about like herself, she could not have failed to observe such person. But there was no one about until a little before breakfast-time, when Mr. Petter showed himself.

This gentleman greeted Calthea coolly. He had had a very animated conversation with his wife on the evening before, and had been made acquainted with the unwarrantable enmity exhibited by this village shopkeeper toward Mrs. Cristie's blooded assistant. He was beginning to dislike Calthea, and he remembered that the Rockmores never liked her, and he wished very much that she would cease to spend so much of her time at his house. After breakfast Calthea was more fortunate. She saw the Greek scholar walking upon the lawn, with a piece of writing-paper in his hand. In less than five minutes, by the merest accident in the world, Mr. Tippengray was walking across the lawn with Miss Rose, and he had put his piece of paper into his pocket.

She wanted to ask him something. She would detain him only a few minutes. The questions she put to him had been suggested to her by something she had read that morning—a most meagre and unsatisfactory passage. She held in her hand the volume which, although she did not tell him so, had taken her a half-hour to select in Mr. Petter's book-room. Shortly they were seated together, and he was answering her questions which, as she knew, related to the most interesting experiences of his life. As he spoke his eyes glistened and her soul warmed. He did not wish that this should be so. He wanted to bring this interview to an end. He was nervously anxious to go back on the lawn, that he might see

Miss Mayberry when she came out of doors, that he might show her the lines of "Pickwick" which he had put into Greek, and which she was to turn back into English.

But he could not cut short the interview. Miss Calthea was not an Ancient Mariner; she had never even seen the sea, and she had no glittering eye; but she held him with a listening ear, and never was wedding-guest, or any other man, held more securely.

Minutes, quarter-hours, half-hours passed, and still he talked and she listened. She guided his speech as a watchful sailor guides his ship, and whichever way she turned it the wind always filled his sails. For the first ten minutes he had been ill at ease, but after that he had begun to feel that he had never so much enjoyed talking. In time he forgot everything but what he had to say, and it was rapture to be able to say it, and to feel that never before had he said it so well.

His back was toward the inn, but through some trees Miss Calthea could see that Mr. Petter's spring-wagon, drawn by the two grays, Stolzenfels and Falkenberg, was at the door, and soon she perceived that Mr. Lodloe was in the driver's place, and that Mrs. Cristie, with Ida Mayberry holding the baby, was on the back seat. The place next Lodloe was vacant, and they seemed to be waiting for some one. Then Lanigan Beam came up. There was a good deal of conversation, in which he seemed to be giving information, and presently he sprang up beside the driver and they were off. The party were going for a long drive, Miss Calthea thought, because Mrs. Petter had come out and had put a covered basket into the back of the wagon.

Mr. Tippengray was so absorbed in the interest of what he was saying that he did not hear the roll of the departing wheels, and Miss Calthea allowed him to talk on for nearly a quarter of an hour, until she thought he had exhausted the branch of the subject on which he was engaged, and was sure the spring-wagon was out of sight and hearing. Then she declared that she had not believed that any part of the world could be as interesting as that region which Mr. Tippengray had been describing to her, and that she was sorry she could not sit there all the morning and listen to him, but duty was duty, and it was necessary for her to return to Lethbury.

This announcement did not seem in the least to decrease the good spirits of the Greek scholar, but his chin and his spirits fell when, on reaching the house, he heard from Mrs. Petter that his fellow-guests had gone off for a long drive.

"They expected to take you, Mr. Tippengray," said his hostess, "but Lanigan Beam said he had seen you and Miss Rose walking across the fields to Lethbury, and so they asked him to go. I hope they'll be back to dinner, but there's no knowing, and so I put in a basket of sandwiches and things to keep them from starving before they get home."

Miss Calthea was quite surprised.

"We were sitting over yonder the whole time," she said,—"very much occupied with talking, it is true, but near enough to hear if we had been called. I fancy that Lanigan had reasons of his own for saying we had gone to Lethbury."

Poor Mr. Tippengray was downcast. How much time must elapse before he would have an opportunity

to deliver the piece of paper he had in his pocket! How long would he be obliged to lounge around by himself waiting for Ida Mayberry to return!

"Well," said Calthea, "I must go home; and as I ought to have been there long ago, I am going to ask Mr. Petter to lend me a horse and buggy. It's the greatest pity, Mr. Tippengray, that you have lost your drive with your friends; but as you can't have that, suppose you take one with me. I don't mind acknowledging to you that I am a little afraid of Mr. Petter's horses, but with you driving I should feel quite safe."

If Mr. Tippengray could have immediately thought of any good reason why he should stay at home that morning he would probably have given it, but none came into his mind. After all, he might as well be driving to Lethbury as staying there doing nothing; and there could be no doubt that Miss Calthea was very agreeable that morning. Consequently he accepted the invitation.

Calthea Rose went herself to the barn to speak to Mr. Petter about the horse, and especially requested that he would lend her old Zahringen, whom she knew to be the most steady of beasts; but Zahringen had gone to be shod, and there was no horse at her service except Hammerstein, and no vehicle but a village cart. Hammerstein was a better horse than Zahringen, and would take Calthea home more rapidly, which entirely suited Mr. Petter.

It may be here remarked that the barn and stables were not of Mr. Petter's building, but in order that they might not be entirely exempt from the influence of his architectural fancies, he had given his horses the names of certain castles on the Rhine.

Calthea was not altogether satisfied with the substitution of the big black horse for the fat brown one, but she could make no reasonable objection, and the vehicle was soon at the door.

Mr. Tippengray was very fond of driving, and his spirits had risen again. But he was a good deal surprised when Miss Calthea declined to take the seat beside him, preferring to occupy the rear seat, with her back to the horse. By turning a little to one side, she said, she could talk just as well, and it was more comfortable in such a small vehicle as a village cart to have a whole seat to one's self.

As soon as they were in the road that ran through the woods she proved that she could twist herself around so as to talk to her companion, and look him in the face, quite as easily as if she had been sitting beside him. They chatted together, and looked each other in the face, and the Greek scholar enjoyed driving very much until they had gone a mile or more on the main road, and had come upon an overturned wagon lying by the roadside. At this Hammerstein and the conversation suddenly stopped. The big black horse was very much opposed to overturned vehicles. He knew that in some way they were connected with disaster, and he would not willingly go near one. He stood, head up, ears forward, and slightly snorting. Mr. Tippengray was annoyed by this nonsense.

"Go on!" he cried. "Get up!" Then the driver took the whip from the socket and gave the horse a good crack.

"Get up!" he cried.

Hammerstein obeyed, but got up in a manner which

Mr. Tippengray did not intend. He arose upon his hind legs, and pawed the air, appearing to the two persons behind him like a tall, black, unsteady steeple.

When a horse harnessed to a village cart sees fit to rear, the hind part of the vehicle is brought very near to the ground, so that a person sitting on the back seat can step out without trouble. Miss Calthea perceived this, and stepped out. On general principles, she was quite sure it was safer to alight from the hind seat of a village cart than from the front seat.

"Don't pull at him that way," she cried, from the opposite side of the road. "He will go over backward on top of you. Let him alone and perhaps he will stop rearing."

Hammerstein now stood on all his feet again, and Miss Calthea earnestly advised Mr. Tippengray to turn him around and drive back.

"I am not far from home now," she said, "and can easily walk there. I really think I do not care to get in again. But I am sure he will go home to his stable without giving you any trouble."

But Mr. Tippengray's spirit was up, and he would not be conquered by a horse, especially in the presence of a lady.

"I shall make him pass it!" he cried, and he brought down his whip on Hammerstein's back with such force that the startled animal gave a great bound forward, and then, finding himself so near the dreaded wreck, he gave a wilder bound, and passed it. Then, being equipped with blinders, which did not allow him to see behind him, he did not know but that the frightful wagon, its wheels uppermost, was wildly pursuing

him, and fearing that this might be so, he galloped onward with all his speed.

The Greek scholar pulled at the reins and shouted in such a way that Hammerstein was convinced that he was being urged to use all efforts to get away from the oncoming monster. He did not turn into the Lethbury road when he came to it, but kept straight on. At such a moment the straighter the road the better. Going down a long hill, Mr. Tippengray, still pulling and shouting, and now hatless, perceived, some distance ahead of him, a boy standing by the roadside. It was easy enough for the practised eye of a country boy to take in the state of affairs, and his instincts prompted him to skip across the road and open a gate which led into a field recently ploughed.

Mr. Tippengray caught at the boy's idea, and, exercising all his strength, he turned Hammerstein into the open gateway. When he had made a dozen plunges into the deep furrows and through the soft, yielding loam, the horse concluded that he had had enough of that sort of exercise, and stopped. Mr. Tippengray, whose senses had been nearly bounced out of him, sprang from the cart, and, slipping on the uneven surface of the ground, tumbled into a deep furrow, from which, however, he instantly arose, without injury, except to his clothes. Hurrying to the head of the horse, he found the boy already there, holding the now quiet animal. The Greek scholar looked at him admiringly.

"My young friend," said he, "that was a noble thought, worthy of a philosopher."

The boy grinned.

"They generally stop when they get into a ploughed field," he said. "What skeered him?"

Mr. Tippengray briefly related the facts of the case, and the horse was led into the road. It was soon ascertained that no material harm had been done to harness or vehicle.

"Young man," said Mr. Tippengray, "what will you take for your hat?"

The boy removed his head-covering and looked at it. It was of coarse straw, very wide, very much out of shape, without a band, and with a hole in the crown surrounded by a tuft of broken straw.

"Well," said he, "it ain't worth much now, but it'll take a quarter to buy a new one."

"Here is a quarter for your hat," said the Greek scholar, "and another for your perspicacity. I suppose I shall find my hat on the road, but I cannot wait for that; the sun is too hot."

The Greek scholar now started homeward, leading Hammerstein. He liked walking, and had no intention whatever of again getting into that cart. If, when they reached the overturned wagon, the animal should again upheave himself, or in any way misbehave, Mr. Tippengray intended to drop his hold of him, and allow him to pursue his homeward way in such manner and at such speed as might best please him.

The two walked a long distance without reaching the object of Hammerstein's fright, and Mr. Tippengray began to think that the road was a good deal narrower and more shaded than he had supposed it to be. The fact was that a road diverged from the right, near the top of the hill, which he had not noticed when passing it in mad career, and naturally turning

to the right, without thinking very much about it, he had taken this road instead of the one by which he had come. Our scholar, however, did not yet comprehend that he was on the wrong road, and kept on.

Soon his way led through the woods, with great outstretching trees, with wide-open spaces, interspersed here and there with masses of undergrowth. Mr. Tippengray greatly enjoyed the shaded road, the smell of the pines, and the flowers scattered along the edges of the wood. But in a few minutes he would doubtless have discovered that he had gone astray, and, notwithstanding the pleasantness of his surroundings, he would have turned back, had he not suddenly heard voices not far away. He stopped and listened.

The voices came from behind a clump of evergreens close by the roadside, and, to his utter amazement, Mr. Tippengray heard the voice of Lanigan Beam saying to some one that true love must speak out, and could not be silenced; that for days he had been looking for an opportunity, and now that it had come, she must hear him, and know that his heart was hers only, and could never belong to anybody else. Then the voice of Ida Mayberry, very clear and distinct, replied that he must not talk to her in that way; that her line of life and his were entirely different. She was doubtless going to say more, when her companion interrupted, and vowed with all possible earnestness that whatever line of life she chose should be his line; that he would gladly give up every plan and purpose, follow her in whatever direction she chose to lead, and do whatever she wished he should do.

Mr. Tippengray was very uneasy. The subject-

matter of the conversation he was overhearing disturbed him in a manner which he did not understand, and he felt, moreover, that it was not proper for him to listen to another word. He did not know what to do: if he moved forward they would hear the wheels, and know that he had been near; and if he attempted to back out of the vicinity there was no knowing what hubbub he and Hammerstein might create. While standing undecided, he heard Lanigan speak thus:

"And as for Greek and that sort of thing, you shall have all you want. I'll hire old Tippengray by the year; he shall be the family pedagogue, and we'll tap him for any kind of learning we may happen to want."

Instantly all thought of retreat fled from the mind of the scholar; his eyes glittered, and he was on the point of doing something, when there came from a little distance the voice of Mrs. Cristie, loudly calling for Ida. There was shuffling of feet, and in a few moments Mr. Tippengray perceived the nurse-maid rapidly walking away between the trees, while Lanigan leisurely followed.

With head erect and nostrils dilated, as if he had been excited by the perception of something upside down, Mr. Tippengray again laid hold of the bridle of Hammerstein, and went on. In a few minutes he emerged upon an open space, through which flowed a little brook, and where sat Mrs. Cristie, Lodloe, Ida Mayberry with the baby in her lap, and Lanigan Beam. All of these persons, excepting the infant, were eating sandwiches.

At the sight of the little man and the tall horse, the former spattered with mud, smeared with the earth of

the ploughed field, and crowned with a misshapen hat with the expansive hole in the top, the sandwich-eaters stopped eating, gazed open-eyed, and then burst out laughing. Mr. Tippengray did not laugh; his eyes still glittered.

It was half an hour before the tale was told, order restored, and Mr. Tippengray had washed his face and hands in the brook and taken refreshment. Then he found himself alone with Mrs. Cristie.

"Truly you have had a hard time," said she, kindly.

"Madam," answered the Greek scholar, "you are entirely correct. This has been an unfortunate day for me. I have been cunningly entrapped and heartlessly deserted; I have been nearly frightened out of my wits, have had my soul nearly burned out of my body, and have been foully besmirched with dirt and mud. But, worse than all, I have heard myself made the subject of contempt and contumely."

"How is that?" exclaimed Mrs. Cristie. "I do not understand."

"I will quickly make it plain to you," said the indignant scholar, and he related the conversation he had overheard.

"What a shameful way to speak of you, Mr. Tippengray!" cried Mrs. Cristie. "I did not suppose that Mr. Beam would dare to say such things to one whom he knew to be your friend. I have no doubt that if I had not called Ida at that moment, you would have heard her resent that disrespectful speech."

"I hope so; with all my heart, I hope so," replied the Greek scholar.

He said this with so much feeling that his com-

panion looked at him a few moments without speaking.

"Mr. Tippengray," she said presently, "it is time for us to go home. How would you like to take Ida Mayberry back in your cart?"

The brightness in the eyes of the Greek scholar changed from the glitter of indignation to gleams of joy.

"Madam," said he, "I should like it of all things. It would remove from the anticipated pleasures of this day the enormous alpha privative which has so far overshadowed them."

The young widow did not exactly comprehend this answer, but it was enough to know that he was glad to accept the opportunity she offered him. No sooner had he spoken than Mr. Tippengray remembered the hazards to which he was exposing himself by again taking the reins of Hammerstein, but not for an instant did he think of drawing back. His desire to take Ida Mayberry away from that fellow, and have her by himself, overpowered fear and all other feelings.

Mrs. Cristie's arrangement for the return pleased everybody except Lanigan Beam. The nurse-maid was perfectly willing to go in the village cart, and was not at all afraid of horses; and Walter Lodloe had no objection to sitting on the back seat of the wagon with his lady-love, and helping take care of the baby. Lanigan made few remarks about the situation; he saw that he had made a mistake, and was being punished for it, and without remonstrance he took the front seat and the reins of the grays.

CHAPTER XXIV

TRANSLATIONS

Lanigan Beam had no more fear of Mr. Tippengray as a rival than he would have had of Mr. Petter; but the apportionment of companions for the return trip nettled him a good deal, and, as a consequence of this, the pair of grays travelled homeward at a smarter pace than before, and Hammerstein and the village cart were soon left far behind.

The road was not the one by which Mr. Tippengray had arrived on the scene, but led through the woods to the main road, which it joined at a point not far from the sign of the Squirrel Inn. Hammerstein travelled very quietly and steadily of his own accord, slackening his gait at the rough places, thus giving Mr. Tippengray every opportunity for an uninterrupted converse with his fellow-scholar; and he lost no time in submitting to her his Greek version of the lines from "Pickwick."

"I am very glad you have it with you," said Ida, "for I put my Greek dictionary in my pocket this morning, when I first came down, hoping to have a chance to do some translating; and what better chance could I have than this?"

Drawing out her dictionary and a little blank-book,

she immediately began her labors. Mr. Tippengray did not altogether like this. He felt an intense and somewhat novel desire to converse with the young woman on no matter what subject, and he would have preferred that she should postpone the translation. But he would not interrupt the engrossing occupation into which she now plunged with ardor. Rapidly turning backward and forward the leaves of the little dictionary, and tapping her front teeth with her pencil as she puzzled over the correlation of Greek and English words and expressions, she silently pursued her work.

Although he did not talk to her, it was very pleasant for Mr. Tippengray to sit and look upon this fair young scholar. At her request, he made the tall steed walk, in order that her pencil might not be too much joggled, slyly thinking, the while, that thus the interview would be prolonged. The air was warm and balmy. Everything was still about them. They met no one, and every minute Mr. Tippengray became more and more convinced that, next to talking to her, there could be no greater joy in life than basking in the immediate atmosphere of this girl.

At last she shut up her dictionary.

"Now, then!" she exclaimed, "I have translated it, and I assure you that it is a fair and square version, for I do not in the least remember the original paragraph."

"I have the original here," said Mr. Tippengray, pulling the second volume of "Pickwick" from his pocket, "and we will compare it with your translation, if you will be so good as to read it. You do not know with what anxious enthusiasm I await the result."

"And I, too," said Ida, earnestly. "I do not think there could be a better test of the power of the Greek language to embalm and preserve for future generations the spirit of Dickens. Now I will read, and you can compare my work with the original as I go on."

The translation ran thus:

"'For the reason that he who drives a vehicle of the post-road holds high office above the masses,' to him answered the Sire Weller with eyes affiliated; 'for the reason that he who drives a vehicle of the post-road acteth at will, undoubted, humanity otherwise prohibited. For the reason that he who drives a vehicle of the post-road is able to look with affection on a woman of eighty far distant, though it is not publicly believed that in the midst of any it is his desire to wed. Among males which one discourseth similarly, Sammy?'"

"I wrote Sammy," she explained, "because I remembered that is the way the name is used in English."

Mr. Tippengray raised his eyebrows very high, and his chin slowly began to approach the sailor knot of his cravat.

"Oh, dear!" he said, "I am afraid that this would not express to future ages the spirit and style of Dickens. The original passage runs thus;" and he read:

"'"'Cos a coachman's a privileged individual,' replied Mr. Weller, looking fixedly at his son. ''Cos a coachman may do without suspicion wot other men may not; 'cos a coachman may be on the very amicablest terms with eighty mile o' females and yet nobody thinks that he ever means to marry any vun among 'em. And wot other man can say the same, Sammy?'"

"They are not much alike, are they?" said Miss Mayberry. "I think if Dickens could read my translation he would not in the least recognize it. The fact is, Mr. Tippengray, I do not believe that your method of Greek pickling will answer to preserve our fiction for the future. It may do for histories and scientific works, but when you come to dialect and vernacular, if you once get it into Greek you can never get it back again as it used to be."

"That will be a great pity," said Mr. Tippengray, "for fiction makes up such a large part of our literature. And it does seem that good English might be properly translated into good Greek."

"Oh, it isn't the translation," said Ida; "that is all easy enough: it's the resurrection back into the original condition. Look at the prophet Enoch. He was translated, but if it were possible now to bring him back again, he would not be the same Enoch, you know."

"One might infer from that simile," said the Greek scholar, smiling, "that when a bit of English gets into Greek it goes to heaven, and would better stay there. Perhaps you are right in what you say about fiction. Anyway, it is very pleasant to talk with one who can appreciate this subject, and reason sensibly about it."

Mr. Tippengray shut up his book and put it back into his pocket, while his companion tore her translation from her note-book and scattered it in little bits along the road.

"I would not like it," she said, "if any one but you were to read that and know I did it."

Mr. Tippengray's eyes and Mr. Tippengray's heart turned toward her. Those words, "any one but

you," touched him deeply. He had a feeling as if he were being translated into something better than his original self, and that this young woman was doing it. He wished to express this in some way, and to say a good many other things which came crowding upon his mind, but he expressed nothing and said none of these things. An exclamation from Ida caused him to look in front of him, and there was the spring-wagon with the horses standing still.

Mrs. Cristie turned round and called to them :

"Mr. Beam says that there are some by-roads just ahead of us, and as he was afraid you might turn into one and get lost, he thought it better to wait for you."

"Nonsense !" cried Miss Mayberry. "There was no danger that we would turn into any by-ways. The road is plain enough."

"I'm not so sure of that," said Mr. Tippengray to himself. "I think that just now I was on the point of turning into a by-way."

The wagon now moved slowly on, and the village cart followed. Mr. Tippengray would gladly have dropped a good deal behind, but he found this not practicable, because whenever he made Hammerstein walk Stolzenfels and Falkenberg also walked. It was plain enough that Lanigan Beam did not wish any longer to cut himself off from the society of the lady to whom he had made a proposal of marriage, and whenever he could find a pretext, which was not difficult for Lanigan, he called back to her to direct her attention to something, or to ask her opinion about something. Miss Mayberry did not respond with any readiness, but the persistence of the young man suc-

ceeded in making the conversation a general one, and the Greek scholar made no attempt to explain to the nurse-maid that he was in course of translation.

Dinner was very late at the Squirrel Inn that day, and Mrs. Petter gave her guests a scolding. But this did not in the least disturb the mind of Mr. Tippengray, who was well used to being scolded for coming late to his meals. But something else disturbed him, and for nearly an hour after dinner he wandered about the lawn and around the house. He wanted very much to see Miss Mayberry again, and to tell her the things he did not have a chance to tell her on the road, and he also very much wished to prevent that rascally Lanigan Beam from getting ahead of him, and continuing his broken-off interview with the lady.

CHAPTER XXV

MR. TIPPENGRAY MOUNTS HIGH

It seemed as if every one must be taking an afternoon nap, for the Greek scholar had the grounds to himself. When he began to be tired of walking, he seated himself where he had a good view of the house, and presently saw Ida Mayberry at her window, with the young Douglas in her arms. Almost at the same moment he saw Lanigan Beam approaching from the direction of the barns.

"If he turns his steps toward that window," thought the scholar, "I shall see to it that I am there before him."

But the young man did not walk toward the front of the house, but went in the direction of his room, where the ladder stood leaning against the open window. Mounting this, he disappeared within.

The eyes of Mr. Tippengray flashed, and his face was lighted by a bright thought. In an instant he was on his feet and running lightly toward Lanigan's room. Cautiously and silently he approached the ladder; deftly, and without making the least noise, he moved the upper end of it from the side of the building, and then, putting it on his shoulder, gently walked away with it.

Around to the front of the house Mr. Tippengray carried the ladder, and boldly placed it nearly upright under Miss Mayberry's window. In astonishment that young lady looked out and asked him what in the world he was doing.

"I want to speak to you," said Mr. Tippengray, "on a subject of great importance, and I cannot afford to lose this opportunity. May I come up?"

"Certainly," said Ida.

In a moment the Greek scholar was standing on one of the upper rounds of the ladder, with his head and shoulders well above the window-sill. Little Douglas was delighted to see him, and, taking hold of his outstretched forefinger, gave it a good wag.

"It was a capital notion," said Mr. Tippengray, "for me to take this ladder. In the first place, it enables me to get up to you, and secondly, it prevents Lanigan Beam from getting down from his room."

Miss Mayberry laughed, and the baby crowed in sympathy.

"Why shouldn't he get down, Mr. Tippengray?" said she.

"If he did," was the answer, "he would be sure to interfere with me. He would come here, and I don't want him. I have something to say to you, Miss Mayberry, and I must be brief in saying it, for bystanders, no matter who they might be, would prevent my speaking plainly. I have become convinced, Miss Mayberry, that my life will be imperfect, and indeed worthless, if I cannot pass it in prosecuting my studies in your company and with your assistance. You may think this strong language, but it is true."

"That would be very pleasant," said the nurse-

maid, "but I do not see how you are going to manage it. My stay here will soon come to an end, for if Mrs. Cristie does not return to the city in a week or two, I must leave her. I am a teacher, you know, and before the end of the summer vacation I must go and make my arrangements for the next term; and then, you can easily see for yourself that when I am engaged in a school I cannot do very much studying with you."

"Oh, my dear young lady," cried Mr. Tippengray, "you do not catch my idea. I am not thinking of schools or positions, and I do not wish you to think of them. I wish you to know that you have translated me from a quiet scholar into an ardent lover, and that it would be of no use at all to try to get me back into my original condition. If I cannot be the man I want to be, I cannot be the man I was. I ask you for your hand, your heart, and your intellect. I invite you to join me in pursuing the higher education until the end of our lives. Take me for your scholar and be mine. I pray you give me—"

"Upon—my word!" was the ejaculation, loud and distinct, which came up from the foot of the ladder and stopped Mr. Tippengray's avowal. Miss Mayberry instantly thrust her head out of the window, and Mr. Tippengray looked down. It was Calthea Rose who had spoken, and she stood under the window in company with Mr. and Mrs. Petter. A short distance away, and rapidly approaching, were Mrs. Cristie and Walter Lodloe.

"Here is gratitude!" cried Calthea, in stinging tones. "I came all the way back from Lethbury to see if anything had happened to you and that horse,

and this is what I find. The top of a ladder and a child's nurse! Such a disgrace never fell on this county."

"Never, indeed," cried Mrs. Petter. "I wouldn't have believed it if angels had got down on their knees and sworn it to me. Come down from that ladder, Mr. Tippengray! Come down from it before I make my husband break it to bits beneath you. Come down, I say!"

"Mr. Tippengray," said Mr. Petter, in solemn voice, "in the name of the laws of domesticity and the hearthstone, and in the honorable name of the Squirrel Inn, I command you to come down."

There was but one thing for Mr. Tippengray to do, and that was to come down, and so down he came.

"Disgraceful!" cried Miss Rose, "you ought to be ashamed to look anybody in the face."

"Never would I have believed it," exclaimed Mrs. Petter. "Never, never, if I had not seen it with my own eyes, and in broad daylight, too!"

What Mr. Tippengray would have said or done is not known, for at that instant Ida Mayberry leaned far out of the window and claimed the attention of the company.

"Look here!" she cried, "we have had enough of this. Mr. Tippengray has nothing to be ashamed of, and he had a perfect right to climb up this ladder. I want you all to understand that we are engaged to be married."

This announcement fell like a sudden downpour upon the people beneath the window, and they stood silenced; but in an instant the Greek scholar bounded up the ladder, and, seizing Miss Mayberry by the hand, kissed it rapturously.

"I may have been a little abrupt," she said, in a low voice, "but I wasn't going to stand here and let our affair be broken off like that."

At Mr. Tippengray's spontaneous exhibition of tender affection, Mr. Petter involuntarily and reverently took off his hat, while Mrs. Cristie and Lodloe clapped their hands. The lover, with radiant face, now descended the ladder and received congratulations from everybody except Miss Calthea, who, with her nose pointed about forty-five degrees above the horizon, walked rapidly to the post where she had tied her horse.

Miss Mayberry now appeared, with the baby in her arms, and an expression of great satisfaction upon her face. Mrs. Cristie relieved her of the first, but the latter increased as the little company heartily shook hands with her.

"I had supposed it would be different with you, Mr. Tippengray," said Mrs. Petter, "but people ought to know their own minds, and I have no doubt that Calthea would have often made it very hot for you, especially if you did not turn over an entirely new leaf in regard to coming to your meals. But there must be no more laddering; whether it is right or not, it does not look so. When Ida isn't tending to the child, and it's too wet to be out of doors, you can have the little parlor to yourselves. I'll have it dusted and aired."

"Excuse me," said Lodloe, coming forward, "but if you have no further use for that ladder, Mr. Tippengray, I will take it to Lanigan Beam, who is leaning out of his window and shouting like mad. I presume he wants to come down, and as I have locked the door of my room, he cannot descend in that way."

"Poor Lanigan!" ejaculated Mrs. Petter. "He doesn't know what he's coming down to. But no matter what he undertakes, he is always a day after the fair."

Mr. Petter drew the Greek scholar aside.

"My dear sir," he said expressively, "I have a special reason for congratulating you on your decision to unite your blood and culture with those of another. Had you been entrapped by the wiles of our Lethbury neighbor, a person for whom I have but slight regard, and who is looked upon with decided disapprobation by those as competent to judge as the Rockmores of Germantown, I am afraid, my dear sir, I should have been compelled to sever those pleasant relations which for so many months have held us together, and which I hope may continue for years."

"My good Petter," said Mr. Tippengray, "I have a pleasant house in town, which I hope to occupy with my wife this winter, and I should like it very much if you and Mrs. Petter would make us a visit there, and, if you wish, I'll have some of the Germantown Rockmores there to meet you."

The landlord of the Squirrel Inn stepped back in amazement.

"Do you mean to say," he exclaimed, "that you know the Rockmores?"

"The way of it is this," replied the Greek scholar: "you see, my mother was a Purley, and on the maternal side she belonged to the Kempton-Tucker family, and you know that the head of that family married for his second wife a Mrs. Callaway, who was own sister to John Brent Norris, whose daughter married a Rockmore. So you see we are connected."

"And you never told me!" solemnly exclaimed Mr. Petter.

"No," said his companion, "there are pleasures of revelation which are enhanced by a delay in realization; and, besides, I did not wish to place myself in a position which might, perchance, subordinate some of your other guests."

"I must admit that I am sorry," said Mr. Petter, "but your action in the matter proves your blood."

And now, Mrs. Cristie having finished her very earnest conversation with Ida, the newly betrothed pair walked together toward the bluff from which there was such a beautiful view of the valley below.

CHAPTER XXVI

ANOTHER SQUIRREL IN THE TAP-ROOM

"If I had known," said Lanigan Beam, as late that night he sat smoking with Walter Lodloe in the top room of the tower, "that that old rascal was capable of stealing my ladder in order to make love to my girl, I should have had a higher respect for him. Well, I'm done for, and now I shall lose no time in saying good-by to the Squirrel Inn and Lethbury."

"Why so?" asked his companion, in surprise. "Was the hope of winning Miss Mayberry the only thing that kept you here?"

"Oh, no," said Lanigan, "it was the hope that Calthea might get old Tippengray. You will remember I told you that. But as she cannot now go off with him, there is nobody for her to go off with, and so I must be the one to travel."

Lodloe laughed. "Under the circumstances, then," he said, "you think you couldn't stay in this neighborhood?"

"Not with Calthea unattached," replied Lanigan. "Oh, no! Quite impossible."

When Miss Rose had been convinced that all her plans had come to naught, earnestly and with much severity and singleness of purpose she considered the

situation. It did not take her long to arrive at the conclusion that the proper thing for her to do was to marry Lanigan Beam, and to do it without loss of time. Having come to this decision, she immediately began to make arrangements to carry it into effect.

It was utterly vain and useless for Lanigan to attempt to get away from her. She came upon him with a sweet assurance which he supposed had vanished with her earlier years; she led him with ribbons which he thought had faded and fallen into shreds long, long ago; she clapped over his head a bag which he supposed had been worn out on old Tippengray; and she secured him with fetters which he imagined had long since been dropped, forgotten, and crumbled into dust. He did not go away, and it was not long before it was generally understood in the neighborhood that, at last, he and Calthea Rose were to be married.

Shortly after this fact had been made public, Lanigan and Walter Lodloe, who had not seen each other for some days, were walking together on the Lethbury road.

"Yes," said the former, "it is a little odd, but then, odd things are all the time happening. I don't know whether Calthea has taken me in by virtue of my first engagement to her, or on some of the others. Or it may be that it is merely a repeal of our last breaking off. Anyway, I found she had never dreamed of anything but marrying me; and though I thought I had a loose foot, I found I hadn't, and there's an end of it. Besides, I will say for Calthea that her feelings are different from what I supposed they were. She has mellowed up a good deal in the last year or two,

and I shall try to make things as easy for her as I can.

"But one thing is certain: I shall stick to my resolution not to tell her that I have made money, and have reformed my old, loose ways of living and doing business. All that I am going to keep as a sort of saving fund that I can draw on when I feel like it, and let it alone when I don't feel like it. We are going to travel,—she is wild on that point,—and she expects to pay the piper. She can't do it, but I shall let her think she's doing it. She takes me for a rattling scapegrace, and I needn't put on the sober and respectable unless I choose to; and when I do choose it will be a big card in my hand. By George! I know Calthea so well that I can twist her around my finger; and I am not sure, if I had got the other one, that I could have done that. It's much more likely that I should have been the twisted one."

"What is Miss Rose going to do about her business?" asked Lodloe.

"Oh, that's to be wound up with a jerk," answered his companion. "I've settled all that. She wanted to hire somebody to take charge of the store while we're gone, and to sell out the things on her old plan; but that's all tomfoolery. I have engaged a shopkeeper at Romney to come out and buy the whole stock at retail price, and I gave him the money to do it with. That's good business, you know, because it's the same as money coming back to me; and as for the old oddments and remnants and endments of faded braids and rotten calicoes, it's a clear profit to be rid of them. If the Romney man sends them to be ground up at the paper-mill, he may pay himself for the cart-

age and his time. So the shop will be shut day after to-morrow, and you can see for yourself that my style of business is going to be of the stern, practical sort; and, after all, I don't see any better outlook for a fellow than to live a married life in which very little is expected of him, while he knows that he has on tap a good bank-account and a first-class moral character."

The autumn was a very pleasant one, and as there was no reason for doing anything else, the guests at the Squirrel Inn remained until late in the season. Therefore it was that Miss Calthea was enabled to marry and start off on her wedding-tour before the engaged couples at the inn had returned to the city, or had even fixed the dates for their weddings. Calthea was not a woman who would allow herself to be left behind in matters of this nature. From her general loftiness and serenity of manner, and the perfect ease and satisfaction with which she talked of her plans and prospects with her friends and acquaintances, no one could have imagined that she had ever departed from her original intention of becoming Mrs. Lanigan Beam.

In the midst of her happiness, she could not help feeling a little sorry for Ida Mayberry, and this she did not hesitate to say to some persons with whom she was intimate, including Mrs. Petter. To be sure, she had been informed as to the year of Mr. Tippengray's birth, which, if correct, would make him forty-six; but it was her private opinion that sixty would be a good deal nearer the mark. However, if the young child's nurse should become an early widow, and be thrown upon her own resources, she, for one, would

not withhold a helping hand. But she earnestly insisted that not a word she said on this subject should ever be breathed into another ear.

When Ida Mayberry heard what Calthea had said about her and Mr. Tippengray's age, she was very angry, and declared she would not go to the old thing's wedding, which was to take place the next day in the Lethbury church. But, after thinking over the matter, she changed her mind, and concluded that at times like this we should all be pleasant and good-natured toward one another; so she sat down and wrote a letter to Miss Calthea, which she sent to the expectant bride that very afternoon. The missive ran thus:

"My dear Miss Rose: I have seen so little of Mr. Beam in the last few days that I have had no opportunity to express to him some thanks which are due him from Mr. Tippengray and myself. I am therefore obliged to ask you, my dear Miss Rose, to give to him a message from me, which, as it is one of gratitude, you will be pleased to deliver.

"Not long ago, when Mr. Beam took occasion to tell me that he loved me and asked me to marry him,—I remember now that it was on the very day that Mr. Petter's horse behaved so badly and, unfortunately for you, tipped you out of the tail end of the little cart, and made it necessary for you to give up both it and Mr. Tippengray to me,—he (Mr. Beam) was so good as to say that if I would agree to be his wife and still wished the instructive companionship of Mr. Tippengray, he would take that gentleman into his family as a tutor. Now this, as you will readily acknowledge, my dear Miss Rose, was very good in Mr. Beam, and in return I wish you to say to him, both from Mr. Tippengray and from me, that if

there should ever be any position in our gift which he is capable of filling, all he has to do is to ask for it.

"Most sincerely yours,

"Ida Mayberry."

And the next day in church no face expressed a more delighted interest in the nuptial ceremonies than that of the pretty Miss Mayberry.

It was late in November, and the weather was getting decidedly cool. There was a fire in the tap-room of the Squirrel Inn, and also one in the little parlor; and by this, after supper, sat Mr. and Mrs. Petter.

The guests were all gone. Mr. and Mrs. Tippengray, who had had a quiet wedding in New York, were on their way to Cambridge, England, where the bride would spend a portion of the honeymoon in the higher studies there open to women, while Mrs. Cristie and Mr. Lodloe were passing happy days in the metropolis preparing for their marriage early in the new year. The Beams were in Florida, where, so Lanigan wrote, they had an idea of buying an orange grove, and where, so Calthea wrote, she would not live if they gave her a whole county.

The familiar faces all being absent, and very few people dropping in from Lethbury or the surrounding neighborhood, the Squirrel Inn was lonely, and the hostess thereof did not hesitate to say so. As for the host, he had his books, his plans, and his hopes. He also had his regrets, which were useful in helping him to pass his time.

"What in the world," asked Mrs. Petter, regarding an object in her husband's hands, "made you take

down that miserable, dilapidated little squirrel from the sign-post? You might as well have let him stay there all winter, and put up a new one in the spring."

"This has been a most memorable year," replied her husband, "and I wish to place this squirrel in his proper position on the calendar shelf of the tap-room before the storms and winds of winter have blown the fur from his body and every hair from his upturned tail. I have killed and prepared a fresh squirrel, and I will place him on the sign-post in a few days."

"If you would let that one stay until he was a skin skeleton, he would have given people a better idea of the way this year has turned out than he does now," said Mrs. Petter.

"How so?" he asked, looking at her in surprise.

"Don't we sit here stripped of every friendly voice?" she said. "Of course, it's always more lonesome in the winter, but it's never been so bad as this, for we haven't even Calthea to fall back on. Things didn't turn out as I expected them to, and I suppose they never will; but it always was my opinion, and is yet, that nothing can go straight in such a crooked house. This very afternoon, as I was coming from the poultry-yard, and saw Lanigan's ladder still standing up against the window of his room, I couldn't help thinking that if a burglar got into that room he might suppose he was in the house; but he'd soon find himself greatly mistaken, and even if he went over the roof to Mr. Lodloe's room, all he could do would be to come down the tower stairs, and then he would find himself outside, just where he started from."

"That would suit me very well," remarked Mr. Petter.

"If this house had been built in a plain, straightforward way," his wife continued, "with a hall through the middle of it, and the rooms alike on both sides, then things might have happened in a straightforward way, and not all mixed up, as they were here this summer. Nobody could tell who was going to marry who, and why they should do it, if they ever did."

Mr. Petter arose and, still holding the stuffed squirrel in his hand, stood with his back to the fire.

"It strikes me, Susan," said he, looking reflectively in front of him, "that our lives are very seldom built with a hall through the middle and the rooms alike on both sides. I don't think we'd like it if they were. They would be stupid and humdrum. The right sort of a life should have its ups and downs, its ins and outs, its different levels, its outside stairs and its inside stairs, its balconies, windows, and roofs of different periods and different styles. This is education. These things are the advantages that our lives get from the lives of others.

"Now, for myself, I like the place I live in to resemble my life and that of the people about me. And I am sure that nothing could be better suited to all that than the Squirrel Inn.

"All sorts of things come into our lives, and when a thing like Lanigan Beam comes into it, what could be better than to lodge it in a place where it can go no farther? and if something of a high order, something backed up by Matthew Vassar, but which is a little foreign and not altogether of our kind, how well to be able to put that in a noble and elevated position, where it can have every advantage and can go and

come, without being naturalized or made a part of us. Think, too, how high excellence can be worthily lodged, with the comforts of the North and the beauties of the South, as in the case of Mrs. Cristie's rooms; and how blooded service is not forced into a garret, but is quartered in a manner which shows that the blood is recognized and the service ignored."

"If I had known what she was when she came," remarked Mrs. Petter, "I should have put her on the top floor."

"Think, too," continued the landlord, "of noble sentiments, high aspirations, and deep learning, lodged of their own free will—for it appears that there was no necessity for it—so near as to answer every need of social domesticity, and yet in a manner so free and apart as to allow undisturbed and undisturbing reveries beneath the stars, and such other irregular manifestations of genius as are common to the gifted."

"Such as coming late to meals," interpolated the lady.

"Think, too," Mr. Petter went on to say, speaking in a more earnest voice—"think, too, of a life or a house in which there is no place for a Calthea Rose, in which she cannot exist, and which, I am happy to say, she has always opposed and condemned."

Mrs. Petter slightly yawned.

"All that sounds very well," she said, "and there may be truth in it; but, after all, here we are alone by ourselves, and, so far as I can see, no chance of being less lonely next season; for your rules keep out all common folks, and we can't count on the people who were here this year coming again."

Mr. Petter smiled. "There is no reason to suppose," he said, "that next season we shall not be favored with the company of the Rockmores of Germantown."

And with that he walked away to place in its proper position on the shelf in the tap-room the squirrel of the past season.

THE MERRY CHANTER

THE MERRY CHANTER

CHAPTER I

MY CAREER IS ENDED

FOR two years Doris and I had been engaged to be married. The first of these years appeared to us about as long as any ordinary year, but the second seemed to stretch itself out to the length of fifteen or even eighteen months. There had been many delays and disappointments in that year.

We were both young enough to wait and both old enough to know we ought to wait; and so we waited. But, as we frequently admitted to ourselves, there was nothing particularly jolly in this condition of things. Every young man should have sufficient respect for himself to make him hesitate before entering into a matrimonial alliance in which he would have to be supported by his wife. This would have been the case had Doris and I married within those two years.

I am by profession an analyzer of lava. Having been from my boyhood an enthusiastic student of mineralogy and geology, I gradually became convinced that there was no reason why precious metals and precious stones should not be found at spots on

the earth where nature herself attended to the working of her own mines; that is to say, that I can see no reason why a volcano should not exist at a spot where there were valuable mineral deposits; and this being the case, there is no reason why those deposits should not be thrown out during eruptions in a melted form, or unmelted and mixed with the ordinary lava.

Hoping to find proof of the correctness of my theory, I have analyzed lava from a great many volcanoes. I have not been able to afford to travel much, but specimens have been sent to me from various parts of the world. My attention was particularly turned to extinct volcanoes; for should I find traces of precious deposits in the lava of one of these, not only could its old lava beds be worked, but by artificial means eruptions of a minor order might be produced, and fresher and possibly richer material might be thrown out.

But I had not yet received any specimen of lava which encouraged me to begin workings in the vicinity in which it was found.

My theories met with little favor from other scientists, but this did not discourage me. Should success come it would be very great.

Doris had expectations which she sometimes thought might reasonably be considered great ones, but her actual income was small. She had now no immediate family, and for some years lived with what she called "law kin." She was of a most independent turn of mind, and being of age could do what she pleased with her own whenever it should come to her.

My own income was extremely limited, and what my actual necessities allowed me to spare from it was

devoted to the collection of the specimens on the study of which I based the hopes of my fortunes.

In regard to our future alliance, Doris depended mainly upon her expectations, and she did not hesitate, upon occasion, frankly and plainly to tell me so. Naturally I objected to such dependence, and anxiously looked forward to the day when a little lump of lava might open before me a golden future which I might honorably ask any woman to share. But I do not believe that anything I said upon this subject influenced the ideas of Doris.

The lady of my love was a handsome girl, quick and active of mind and body, nearly always of a lively mood, and sometimes decidedly gay. She had seen a good deal of the world and the people in it, and was "up," as she put it, in a great many things. Moreover, she declared that she had "a heart for any fate." It has sometimes occurred to me that this remark would better be deferred until the heart and the fate have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with each other.

We lived not far apart in a New England town, and calling upon her, one evening, I was surprised to find the lively Doris in tears. Her tears were not violent, however, and she quickly dried them; and, without waiting for any inquiries on my part, she informed me of the cause of her trouble.

"The *Merry Chanter* has come in," she said.

"Come in!" I ejaculated.

"Yes," she answered, "and that is not the worst of it; it has been in a long time."

I knew all about the *Merry Chanter*. This was a ship. It was her ship which was to come in. Years

ago this ship had been freighted with the ventures of her family, and had sailed for far-off seas. The results of those ventures, together with the ship itself, now belonged to Doris. They were her expectations.

"But why does this grieve you?" I asked. "Why do you say that the coming of the ship, to which you have been looking forward with so much ardor, is not the worst of it?"

"Because it isn't," she answered. "The rest is a great deal worse. The whole affair is a doleful failure. I had a letter to-day from Mooseley, a little town on the sea-coast. The *Merry Chanter* came back there three years ago with nothing in it. What has become of what it carried out, or what it ought to have brought back, nobody seems to know. The captain and the crew left it the day after its arrival at Mooseley. Why they went away, or what they took with them, I have not heard; but a man named Asa Cantling writes me that the *Merry Chanter* has been lying at his wharf for three years; that he wants to be paid the wharfage that is due him; and that for a long time he has been trying to find out to whom the ship belongs. At last he has discovered that I am the sole owner, and he sends to me his bill for wharfage, stating that he believes it now amounts to more than the vessel is worth."

"Absurd!" I cried. "Any vessel must be worth more than its wharfage rates for three years. This man must be imposing upon you."

Doris did not answer. She was looking drearily out of the window at the moon-lighted landscape. Her heart and her fate had come together, and they did not appear to suit each other.

I sat silent also, reflecting. I looked at the bill which she had handed to me, and then I reflected again, gazing out of the window at the moon-lighted landscape.

It so happened that I then had on hand a sum of money equal to the amount of this bill, which amount was made up not only of wharfage rates, but of other expenses connected with the long stay of the vessel at Asa Cantling's wharf.

My little store of money was the result of months of saving and a good deal of personal self-denial. Every cent of it had its mission in one part of the world or another. It was intended solely to carry on the work of my life, my battle for fortune. It was to show me, in a wider and more thorough manner than had ever been possible before, what chance there was for my finding the key which should unlock for me the treasures in the storehouse of the earth.

I thought for a few minutes longer, and then I said, "Doris, if you should pay this bill and redeem the vessel, what good would you gain?"

She turned quickly toward me. "I should gain a great deal of good," she said. "In the first place, I should be relieved of a soul-chilling debt. Isn't that a good? And of a debt, too, which grows heavier every day. Mr. Cantling writes that it will be difficult to sell the ship, for it is not the sort that the people thereabout want. And if he breaks it up he will not get half the amount of his bill. And so there it must stay, piling wharfage on wharfage, and all sorts of other expenses, on those that have gone before, until I become the leading woman bankrupt of the world."

"But if you paid the money and took the ship," I asked, "what would you do with it?"

"I know exactly what I would do with it," said Doris. "It is my inheritance, and I would take that ship and make our fortunes. I would begin in a humble way, just as people begin in other businesses. I would carry hay, codfish, ice, anything, from one port to another. And when I had made a little money in this way, I would sail away to the Orient, and come back loaded with rich stuffs and spices."

"Did the people who sailed the ship before do that?" I asked.

"I have not the slightest doubt of it," she answered; "and they ran away with the proceeds. I do not know that you can feel as I do," she continued. "The *Merry Chanter* is mine. It is my all. For years I have looked forward to what it might bring me. It has brought me nothing but a debt, but I feel that it can be made to do better than that, and my soul is on fire to make it do better."

It is not difficult to agree with a girl who looks as this one looked and who speaks as this one spoke.

"Doris," I exclaimed, "if you go into that sort of thing I go with you! I will set the *Merry Chanter* free."

"How can you do it?" she cried.

"Doris," I said, "hear me. Let us be cool and practical."

"I think neither of us is very cool," she said, "and perhaps not very practical. But go on."

"I can pay this bill," I said, "but in doing it I shall abandon all hope of continuing what I have chosen as my life-work; the career which I have marked out

for myself will be ended. Would you advise me to do this? And if I did it would you marry me now, with nothing to rely upon but our little incomes and what we could make from your ship? Now, do not be hasty. Think seriously, and tell me what you would advise me to do."

She answered instantly, "Take me, and the *Merry Chanter*."

I gave up my career.

CHAPTER II

SHE IS HE, AND IT IS OURS

A MAN and wife stood upon Asa Cantling's wharf at Mooseley, gazing with wide-open eyes at the *Merry Chanter*. All claims had been paid. The receipt was in my pocket.

"I will not look upon the ship," Doris had said, "until it is truly ours—until every taint of debt shall have been wiped away."

How long, how high, how big it was! It had two towering masts. As I gazed upon it my heart swelled. It was a career!

Doris suddenly seized me by the hand. "Come," she said, "there he is!"

"Who?" I exclaimed.

"The Merry Chanter himself!" she cried, running with me toward the bow of the vessel, which on our first approach had been concealed from us by a pile of barrels.

We went upon the narrow space between the barrels and the wharf, and stood close to the Merry Chanter, the wooden figurehead which gave the name to the ship.

He was a stalwart fellow eight feet high, and so

firmly fastened to the bow of the vessel that the waves of the sea and the winds of the air had never been able to move him. But long voyages in storms, in glowing heat, or in icy spray had had an effect on his physical organization. When young he had probably been of pleasing colors, but now every trace of paint had vanished; even the mahogany brownness of his nose and cheeks was probably due to the natural hue of the wood of which his head was formed. The rest of him was of a uniform weather-beaten grayness.

The rest of him must be understood to mean what remained of him; the whole of his original self was not there. His head was thrown back; his long hair hung upon his shoulders; and his mouth was open, as if in the act of trolling some jolly sea song. His right arm had been stretched out after the manner of one who is moved by the spirit of the words he sings, but the greater part of that arm was now gone. Some wild, rollicking wave had rushed to meet him, taken him by the hand, and gone off with his arm.

His other arm held a short cloak about him and still remained entire, but he had no feet, and one of his knees had been knocked away; but still he stood up, bold and stout, chanting his brave roundelays, which one could hear only when waves were tossing or winds roaring. What if his nose were split, his chin dented, and his beard broken! The spirit of the Merry Chanter was still there.

How many a wave-crest must have swashed into that open mouth as the chanter boldly chanted and the ship plunged! But how merrily he had risen, all dripping, and had sung on!

The eyes of Doris were glowing as she looked upon

him. "He shall lead us to fortune," she said, taking my hand. "Shall he not?"

The spirit of the chanter and of Doris was upon me. "Indeed he shall!" I answered warmly.

Asa Cantling, or, as he was called in the village, Captain Asa, now came upon the wharf and asked us if we would like to go on board. Like to! Of course we would! To go on board was the dominant purpose of our souls.

Captain Asa was an oldish man, but reaching up to some iron bars which projected from the vessel, he clambered up her side with the monkey-like agility which belongs to a sailor. In a few minutes he lowered a ladder with a hand-rail, by which Doris and I went on board.

"She's a good schooner yet," said Captain Asa, as with swelling hearts we stood upon our deck. "She's too big for us, but she's got good timbers in her; an' if you'll have her towed to New Bedford, or Gloucester, or some such port, I don't doubt you'd get more for her than you've paid."

I looked at Doris. Her eyes flashed and her nostrils dilated, but she made no answer to these cold-blooded words. We walked the length of our deck. How long it was! Captain Asa pointed out the various objects of interest as we passed them—windlass, galley, capstan, wheel; all nautical, real, and ours!

"I've kept the hatches down," said Captain Asa, "skylights shut, an' everything stowed away ship-shape. I'd ask you to go below, but we must come again for that."

Almost with one voice we besought the captain not to let us keep him a moment from his dinner. We

would remain on board a little longer. We were not ready for our dinner. We watched him as he went down the ladder and into the village, and then we sat down on a double-pointed log that was bolted to the deck. The bulwarks were so high that we could not be seen.

We did not sit long. Up sprang Doris. "Let us go below!" she cried. I followed her, and after entering the cook's galley by mistake, we found the door at the head of the stairs which led below, and hurried down.

The air below was close, and the ship's smells were of an old and seasoned sort; but everything was excitingly interesting. We ran from one end to the other of this lower deck. We looked into what must have been the captain's cabin. It was cosey to an extreme that made Doris clap her hands. We looked into the sailors' bunks. We looked at the great masts which came from below and went up above—our masts!

We examined everything forward, amidships, and aft, and then I lifted a hatch, and we looked down into the dark depths of the hold. We could not see much, and did not dare to descend without a light; but the cool air which came up to us smelled as if all the odors of Araby and the spicy East had been tarred and salted and stowed away down there.

When at last we ascended to the deck, Doris stood still and looked about her. Her face and eyes shone with a happy glow. Stretching out her right arm, she exclaimed: "All hail to our *Merry Chanter!* We shall sail in him to the sunny seas of the south, and, if we feel like it, steer him into the frozen mysteries of the north. He shall give us fortune, and, what is

better still, we shall go with him wherever he goes, getting all manner of fun and delight out of him while he is lifting us to opulence. And now, I think it must be a good deal past our dinner-time, and we'd better go and see about it."

As we walked through the village to the little hotel where we had taken lodgings, two ideas revolved themselves in my mind. The first of these I mentioned to my wife.

"Doris," said I, "as we own a ship, and intend to sail on it, we should be more nautical, at least in our speech. You should not speak of a ship as 'he'; 'she' is the proper expression."

"I don't agree with you," said Doris. "I think it is all nonsense calling ships 'she' without regard to their real gender. It is all very well to call the *Sarah Penrose* 'she,' or the *Alice*, or the *Mary H.*,"—pointing to fishing-vessels in the little harbor,—"but when you speak of the *Royal George* or the *Emperor William* as 'she' it is silly and absurd. The Merry Chanter is a man. He gave his manly name to our ship. Our ship is not a female."

"But," said I, "every sailor calls his ship 'she.' It is tradition, it is custom; in fact, it has become law."

"It is all stuff and nonsense," she said. "I don't care a snap for such tradition and such law! Sailors ought to have learned better by this time."

"But you don't want to be laughed at, do you?" I asked.

"No, I don't," she answered promptly. "We cannot have proper authority in our ship if we are laughed at, and I will do this: I will consent to call the ship 'it,' but I will never consent to call it 'she.'"

And with these words we entered the hotel.

The other idea which entered my mind was a more important one. I had noticed, especially when we were on board the ship, that Doris was taking the lead in everything. It was she who had declared what we should do, where we should go, that one thing should be done or another left undone. Now, this was all wrong. It was a blow at the just constitution of matrimony. Of course, in these early days of our married life I was glad to let my bride talk and plan as she pleased; but she was going too far. If this thing were allowed to continue it would become a habit.

What step I should take to nip in the bud this little weed which might grow until it overshadowed our happiness I could not immediately determine. It must be a quick, vigorous, and decided step. It must settle the matter once and for all time. Of course I would be tender, but I must be firm. As soon as possible I would decide what the step should be.

That afternoon we went to see Captain Asa, to ask him what sort of marine traffic he thought we would better begin with.

"You see," said Doris, "we want to engage in some coastwise trading, in order that our profits may enable us to set out upon longer and more important voyages."

"That is the state of the case," said I. "My wife agrees with me entirely."

"Now, what shall we load with first," said Doris, "hay, fish, or ice?"

Captain Asa smiled. "As for fish," he said, "our own boats bring in all the fish that can be turned into

money in this town, an' if we send away any, they've got to get to market while they are fresh, an' it may be the railroad'll get 'em there quicker. An' as for hay, we don't get much hay from along the coast—that is, if we want the cattle to eat it. That generally comes from the West, by rail. Ice? Well, this isn't the season to ship ice."

"But there must be other things," said Doris, anxiously.

"Yes," said the captain, "there is. Now, I'll tell you what wouldn't be a bad thing. Sail your vessel up to Boston an' get a load of flour. You can afford to bring it down cheaper than the railroad can. There'd be some took in this town. I'd take a barrel. An' a good deal might be sold along the coast if you put it cheap enough. Then, again, when you get to Boston you may have the good luck to sell your vessel."

"The *Merry Chanter* is not to be sold," said Doris, emphatically.

"All right," said the captain. "That point sha'n't be touched upon ag'in. Well, if you're goin' to set out on trading v'yages, you'll want a crew."

"Yes," said I, "of course we shall want a crew."

"A crew costs a good deal, doesn't it?" asked Doris.

"That depends," said Captain Asa, "on the kind of crew you get. Now, an out-and-out crew for that schooner—"

"But we don't want an out-and-out crew," interrupted Doris, "and if you tell us what such a crew will cost it will simply drive us stark mad, and the whole thing will come to an end."

"You must understand, captain," I said, "that we

wish to make a very quiet and inexpensive beginning. We can spend but little money at first, and cannot afford to employ large bodies of men."

"It is the management of sails that occupies a good deal of the time of a crew, isn't it?" asked Doris.

"Yes," answered the captain, "that's a good part of it."

"Well, then," continued Doris, "my idea is this: we'll sail the *Merry Chanter* at first with as few sails as possible, and then we need only have enough men to work those sails."

"All right!" said the captain. "Things can often be done one way as well as another, if you have a mind to. There's many a good ship been sailed short-handed. You can't make quick voyages that way; but, as you are the owners, that's your business."

We both agreed that we had no intention at present of making the *Merry Chanter* a greyhound of the sea; and, after some further consideration of the subject, Captain Asa said he would talk to some people in the town and see what he could do toward getting us a crew of the sort we wanted.

CHAPTER III

WE SHIP A CREW

EARLY the next morning an elderly personage introduced himself as Captain Timon Mucher. He was a man of medium height, gray hairs, and a little bowed by years; but he had sharp, bright eyes, and a general air of being able to jump about a yard from the floor. His storm-beaten features were infused with a modest kindliness which instantly attracted Doris and me.

"Cap'n Cantlin'," said he, "told me that you're lookin' for a crew for that schooner o' yourn. Now, sir, if you're agreeable, I'd like to go in her as skipper. Everybody in this town knows what sort o' a skipper I am, and they'll tell you. I did think I'd about give up navigatin', but when I heerd yesterday that that schooner that's been lying so long at Cantlin's wharf was goin' to sea, there come over me the same kind of hanker for outside rollin' and pitchin' that I used to have when I happened to be ashore without a ship. I've got a good cat-rigged fishin'-boat, and I go out in her every day that's fit; and there is times when I get a good deal of outside pitchin' and rollin'. But pitchin' and rollin' in a cat-boat isn't what a man that's been brought up to the sea lays awake more'n half an hour and hankers for. If there hadn't been

no schooner goin' to sail from this port and wantin' hands, I guess I'd stuck pretty quiet to the cat-boat; but now there is a schooner sailin' from here and wantin' hands, I'd like to go in her as skipper."

Doris and I looked at each other, and then at the old man. Instinctively we both stretched out our hands to him. He was captain of the *Merry Chanter*.

It was plain enough that Captain Timon Mucher was delighted with our decision.

"Well, now," said he, "it just tickles me to sail with owners like you, who knows your own minds and settles a bargain as quick as a squall tips over a sailboat full of young fellers from town."

I did not like to break in on the old man's satisfaction, but I felt bound to state that the bargain was not yet completed.

"Bother bargains!" said Doris. "We're going to have the captain anyway! Didn't we say so?"

"But it is possible," said I, "that he may expect a —a salary larger than we can afford to pay."

"As to that," said Captain Timon, "there needn't be no words about that; I'll go sheers with you, if you like."

This was reasonable, and pleased the owners. We were very willing to give him part of the profits.

"What share would you require?" I asked.

"Well," said he, "we can divide what we make each v'yage into six parts, and I'll take one of 'em. Does that strike you as fair?"

It struck us as quite fair.

We now had a long talk with our captain, and got all sorts of information. At length he left us; but in about an hour he, with Captain Asa, came just as we

were about to start out for the wharf, and brought with them three elderly men, evidently of the seafaring class. These were presented to us as Captain Retire Garnish, Captain Jabez Teel, and Captain Cyrus Bodship.

The three stranger captains gravely came forward and shook hands with us. As I have said, they were all elderly men; the youngest-looking of them, Captain Cyrus Bodship, must have been sixty. Strange to say, my wife and I were both struck by a certain similarity in these men, a sort of family likeness. This must have been due to the fact, Doris afterward remarked, that they were all sons of Mother Ocean, for, in fact, they were not at all alike. Captain Garnish was large and tall, Captain Teel was of a sparish figure, while Captain Cyrus Bodship was short, and inclined to be stout.

In one respect they were alike: each wore a very large and stiffly starched shirt-bosom with a black silk neckerchief, and each one looked uncomfortable in his suit of Sunday clothes. In this respect Captain Cyrus Bodship had a slight advantage over his companions, for he had on a pair of black velvet slippers embroidered with red.

"These gentlemen," said Captain Asa, "would like to ship as your crew."

Doris and I could not help smiling. "Crew?" said I. "I thought they were all captains."

"So they are, so they are," said Captain Asa. "But they can speak for themselves."

We now all seated ourselves in the little parlor, and Captain Garnish, without any hesitation, began to speak for himself:

"As for me, I'm a captain if ever anybody was one. Since my thirty-second year I've been skipper on one craft or another till four years ago last April I settled down here and took to fishin'. That's my history. When I heard that Cap'n Timon, here, was goin' to be skipper of your schooner I says to myself: 'I'd like to sail with him. There ain't nothin' about a ship I don't know; there ain't nothin' about a ship I can't do. I'd rather go to sea than fish, and I'm ready to sign the papers.'"

"All that's about the same with me," said Captain Jabez Teel; "only I didn't get to be captain till I was thirty-eight, and I came here nigh on to five years ago. Otherwise Cap'n Garnish and me is in the same boat, and I'm ready to sign papers."

Captain Cyrus sat silent a moment with a jolly sort of grin on his face. "I've been tryin' to think what year it was I was fust made captain, but it's too fur back; I can't put my finger on it. As for other partic'lars, I'm pretty much in the wake of Cap'n Garnish and Cap'n Teel, here. Perhaps I'm a good ways astern, but I'm younger than they is, and may overhaul 'em yit. I'm ready to sign papers."

The situation was interesting and amusing. "Do you mean to say," I asked, "that you three will make a sufficient crew for our vessel?"

Captain Timon immediately spoke up: "Yes, sir. They are all the crew I want. With them three I'll sail your schooner, and there won't be no complaint. Yes, sir; that's what I say."

Engaging three old men as our crew seemed to us a serious matter, and I asked Captain Asa to step with me into a back room. Doris followed.

"Do you really think," I asked the captain, "that these three men can work our ship?"

"Of course they can do it," said he. "Each one of 'em is worth three ordinary seamen; they've got heads on 'em, they has! An' they're as lively as old cats, besides. Now, there's Cap'n Garnish. He's sailed vessels on every sea on this globe. He's the man that run his vessel—a three-masted schooner she was—from the Straits of Malacca to Madras, nigh on to fifteen hundred miles, on one tack with a stiff nor'easter, an' a hole in her starboard quarter as big as that table. There wa'n't no time to have his ship docked if he wanted to save his cargo, an' a hole like that couldn't be patched up by him an' his crew. An' so twenty minutes after he was run into he set every inch of canvas there was a spar for, an' drove her right slam across the Bay of Bengal, with her lee scuppers mostly takin' in water, but her weather quarter with the hole in it high an' dry. When he came into port at Madras they wouldn't believe that he'd raced across the bay with his ship stove in like that."

Doris had listened with admiration. "But could he do that now?" she asked.

"Do it?" said Captain Asa. "Of course he could! He could do it with a hole twice as big! An' there's Cap'n Teel," he continued. "He was friz up two years in Melville Straits when he was commandin' of a whaler; an', more'n that, he has had his ships wrecked under him eleven times, which is four more than anybody in this State can say; an' he an' his crew came out all right every time, either trampin' off on shore or bein' picked up. What he hasn't been through isn't worth goin' through!

"An' there's Cap'n Cyrus. Now, Cap'n Cyrus is the luckiest seaman that ever sat on a thwart. He never had nothin' happen to him. He'd always run into his home port with the same old grin that he set sail with. Once, bound to Australia,—I think it was in '59,—he had his three topgallant masts blowed away by a typhoon. Now, Cap'n Cyrus said to himself that he guessed he'd got it this time, an' that he'd be long overdue at port, for he didn't carry no spare spars along, havin' got out o' the way of carryin' 'em on account of his bein' so lucky an' never havin' no need of 'em; but this didn't make him feel grumpy, for, as he said to himself, a little change would do him good. But—would you believe it?—when he anchored at an island to take in fresh water, he went on shore himself, an' climbin' a little hill, he saw, on the other side of the island, another ship takin' in water, an' the skipper was his wife's cousin, Andrew Tinkey, with plenty of spare spars aboard; an' Cap'n Cyrus's vessel bein' rigged up in double-quick time by both crews, she got into port a week before she was looked out for. I tell you what it is, a owner has got to hunt a long while before he finds three such cap'ns as them!"

In spite of my admiration of these noble fellows, I could not help being practical. I could not believe that they would be able to do everything. But when I asked if some younger persons would not be needed on the ship, Captain Asa answered very decidedly: "No, sir; no young fellows nor boys won't be needed. If you shipped a bigger crew the profits would have to be cut up into smaller sheers, and the cap'ns wouldn't stand that."

"But suppose we don't make any profits?" said Doris. "That would be a great loss to these brave old sailors."

"Oh, they won't lose nothin'," said Captain Asa. "They've all got good houses, an' they rent 'em out for the summer to city people. I've got the lettin' of them. They're all widowers, from two to three times over, except Cap'n Cyrus, an' his wife has been livin' for nigh on to five year at West Imbury, so he's as free as a sandpiper, an' no funeral in the family, nuther."

Again my practical mind asserted itself. "Look you, captain," said I. "Is it expected that we are to furnish provisions for the crew as well as ourselves, and to supply money for the purchase of the cargo when we get to Boston? If that is the case, I think that two sixths of the profits is but a poor return."

"Oh, bother the profits," cried Doris. "I want to hoist anchor and put to sea!"

Captain Asa looked at her admiringly. "You're just like them cap'ns," said he. "They're all hankerin' to feel the ship heave an' to smell bilge-water. But what you say is worth considerin', sir. I'll go an' speak to 'em about it."

In a few minutes he returned and stated that the captains allowed that what I said had sense in it, and that they all agreed to chip in and each pay one sixth of expenses for stores and cargo.

"Good!" cried Doris. "Now everything is settled, and let us be on board and away."

But there was a good deal to be done before we could be "on board and away." The captains, however, were as anxious as Doris to be away, and lost no time in the necessary preparations. They knew just

what to do and what to get, and naturally we left everything to them.

But the whole of the little town took an interest in the fitting out of the *Merry Chanter*, the stout old ship that had lain so long at Cantling's wharf. Doris received much advice and some small presents from the women, while the men gave a good deal of voluntary service which we well knew was all for the sake of their old mates, the four captains.

Some things I could not help thinking of, and standing by Captain Timon on the wharf, I asked him if a wooden ship lying so long in the water did not accumulate a great many barnacles on her side, which would impede her sailing.

A shade of uneasiness passed over the face of the old man. "Of course," said he, "when a vessel's been tied up for two or three years in salt water it's no more'n nat'ral that she'd have barnacles on. Natur' is natur', an' there's no gettin' round it, and of course if the barnacles was cleaned off her she'd make more knots an hour than she would with 'em on her. But I tell you what it is, sir, if you begin with barnacles there's no tellin' how fur you'll have to go on, nor where you'll stop. Why, sir, if she was my ship, an' things was as they is, I wouldn't do as much as to paint the door of that galley. If you begin anywhere, barnacles or paint, you're bound to go on, an' there'd be no v'yage made in that ship this year. It would be like old Tom Duffin of Scap's Neck. Tom was about as well off as anybody in these parts. He had a good house an' a big sloop-rigged fishin'-boat. She wa'n't as fast as some, but she was so big and safe-lookin' that the city people who came down here

always wanted to go sailin' with Tom, an' he charged 'em high, he did, for in some ways he wa'n't no fool. But bein' with these fine people so much kinder twisted Tom's head, an' one day he went off an' bought himself a new shiny black silk hat. That was Tom's turnin'-p'int. With that hat on his head, his Sunday clothes, which ought to have lasted him all his life, wa'n't good enough, an' he got new ones. Then his wife's clothes wa'n't good enough to go along with them, an' she got new ones. Then the children's clothes wa'n't good enough to go along with them, an' they got new ones. An' then his furnitur' wa'n't good enough to go along with all them fine clothes, and new had to be got. And that made the house look mean, an' Tom set to work to build a new one. There ain't no use carryin' the story all along, but Tom went straight from that new silk hat to the Bremport poorhouse, where he is now; and his wife's a nurse in the chronic ward, an' his children is out in service in Boston. Now, sir, I look upon them barnacles as just the same as that black hat. If you begin on them you may not bring up at the poorhouse, but there's no knowin' where you will bring up. The only thing anybody can know is that there will be no v'yage this year."

I could readily understand Captain Timon's meaning and his anxiety to start on our voyage. If we undertook to put the *Merry Chanter* into good repair the chances of those four old captains feeling the heave of the seas and smelling bilge-water would be small indeed.

"From what you say I suppose you can sail the ship, barnacles or no barnacles," I said.

"Sail her!" exclaimed he. "Just you wait and see! An' the best thing we can do is to hurry up her stores and get sail on her. The longer she lies here the more barnacles she'll get."

When I repeated this conversation to Doris she declared that Captain Timon was exactly right. "We have no money to bedeck and adorn the *Merry Chanter*," she said, "and if we had I wouldn't do it. If we got her all into sleek and shiny shipshape, I suppose we'd have to have a regular shipshape crew, and I wouldn't have that for the world. Let us get on board with our four lively old captains and sail away before anything turns up which will positively have to be done."

CHAPTER IV

THE "MERRY CHANTER" SETS SAIL

As soon as possible Doris and I took possession of our quarters on the *Merry Chanter*. We occupied the captain's cabin, and our good skipper bunked forward with the crew.

"If they was common seamen," said he, "I wouldn't do it; but as they're all captains as well as me, I don't mind."

While busily engaged in arranging our cabin, one morning, we were informed that some one wanted to speak with us, and we went on deck. There we found a person whom for some days we had noticed walking up and down on the wharf, and showing an evident interest in our ship and our preparations. He was a fresh-looking, smooth-faced young man, over thirty perhaps, who stood up very erect, and whose general air indicated that he was one who, having found out what was good and what was bad in this world, had been content to act upon his knowledge, but at the same time to give himself no airs of superiority to other people who had not found out what he knew. This was a good deal for anybody's air to indicate, but Doris told me afterward that it was what she thought this man's air indicated. His manner of

speaking to us was at the same time independent and respectful.

"Would it suit you," he said, "to take me on board your ship as a passenger?"

We were somewhat surprised. "Where do you wish to go?" I asked.

"I have been told that you sail for Boston," said he.

I replied that Boston was our destination.

"Very good," said he. "Then I wish to go to Boston."

"But, sir," said Doris, "you can go a great deal quicker by train, you know."

"I do not wish to travel by land," he said. "I wish to sail by sea. I do not care very much to be in Boston, but I wish to go there on a ship."

"Are you a sailor?" I asked.

"No, sir," he said; "I am a butcher. For four years and a half I have carried on butchering in this neighborhood. You can inquire of anybody as to my character. I do not wish to butcher any more, at least for the present. I have saved some money, and I intend to travel, and it struck me that I'd rather begin my travels on your ship than in any other way. I do not wish to work, but to pay my passage. Of course, if there's a wreck, or a man overboard, or the ship takes fire, I'm willin' to do my part as man to man. But otherways what I want is to pay my way, and to be beholden to no man, nor to have him beholden to me, exceptin' in such things as are understood to be owed by man to man."

We asked for a little time for consideration, and retired to the cabin, whither we summoned Captain Timon.

"He speaks us fair," said Doris. "I think he would make a good passenger."

Captain Timon thought so too. "He's a very respectable young man," said he; "straightforward an' honest, an' means what he says. If he wants to get the worth of his money travellin', I guess he knows as well as we do that he can get it on board this schooner; an' the money he pays will be somethin' sure to count on."

"What shall we charge him?" asked Doris.

"Well," said Captain Timon, "if you make it somethin' that can be divided even into six parts I'll be satisfied, an' I know the others will."

I then made a suggestion based upon the ordinary fare to Boston, which, after some modification, was agreed to; and I went on deck to inform the young man that for so much money we would take him as passenger to Boston.

The butcher instantly agreed to my terms, consented to bunk forward with the crew, and went ashore to fetch his baggage. In two or three hours he returned, bringing his effects in a cart. They consisted of a large trunk, a small trunk, a square, leather-covered box, two long oblong boxes, a package wrapped in an oilskin cloth, and a market-basket, the cover of which being slightly raised, I saw to be full of boots and shoes. Besides these, he carried in his hand a cage containing a sandpiper, with one wing carefully bandaged to its body.

"It looks like a good deal of baggage," he said to me, "just for a trip to Boston. But it isn't only to Boston that I want to go. I've set out to travel just as long as I can keep it up. I've sold my horse and

wagon, and what's here is all the property I have, and wherever I go I take it with me. As for this bird," he said, "I saw him on the beach with a broken wing, and I caught him, and now I'm tryin' to cure him up. When animals is too small to butcher, I'm fond of 'em."

And thereupon, assisted by his carter, he carried his property below.

Doris and I were getting very impatient to start on our voyage, but there seemed to be no end of delays, the principal of which was connected with the shipment of stones—cobblestones of varied sizes. As the *Merry Chanter* could ship no cargo at Mooseley, for the reason that there was nothing there to ship, it was necessary that she should go to Boston in ballast, and these stones were her ballast.

"They are filling it up from one end to the other!" cried Doris. "I never saw anything like it! This waiting for bread and getting stones is more than I counted on, Captain Timon," she cried. "If there are so many barnacles on the ship I should think they would serve for ballast."

The skipper shook his head. "It won't do to trust to barnacles," he said, "though I don't doubt there's a good many of 'em. But don't be afraid, ma'am. We'll get her off before you know it."

It was on the morning of a Wednesday, the 3d of June, that Captain Timon came to us rubbing his hands, and declared that the *Merry Chanter* was ready to sail. He called the ship the *Chanter*, but that was an abbreviation my wife and I never allowed ourselves to adopt.

"Hurrah!" cried Doris, before I could find words

to express my satisfaction. "And now, dear captain, let every sail be set, and hoist our ensign to the topmost peak."

A smile came over the face of the good skipper. "I guess we won't set every sail," said he. "They won't be needed with this wind; an' as to ensign, I don't know as we've got one aboard."

"That is too bad!" said Doris. "As soon as we are fairly off I'll go to work and make one myself."

Everything being now all ready, and Captain Timon having done everything that should be done for a schooner clearing for Boston, we hoisted anchor; that is to say, we cast off the cables which for so long had held the *Merry Chanter* to Cantling's wharf.

It seemed to me as if the whole town had turned out to see us off and to help us get off. More willing hands than were really necessary helped the captains to hoist the foresail, the mainsail, and two jibs; and when this had been done the owners of the willing hands scuttled down into their boats, made fast to a line from the *Merry Chanter*, and vigorously pulled her bows around so that she might take the wind.

It was a long time before her bow got around or she took the wind; but Doris and I and the butcher scarcely noticed this, so busy were we waving our handkerchiefs and shouting good-bys to the women, the children, and the old men on the wharf, who, in return, waved their handkerchiefs, their hands, or their hats to us, wishing us a lucky voyage, fair winds, and smooth water.

At last the *Merry Chanter* was got around, the wind filled her sails, the boats cast off, and, pulling to a little distance, their occupants waved their hats and

cheered; there was a slight inclination of the deck to leeward, and our ship was under way.

It is seldom, I think, that a ship goes to sea with a crew composed entirely of captains, but the consideration of the fact gave us great comfort. Here were men with long lives of experience. Whatever might happen, they would know exactly what to do. These noble seamen had been from pole to pole; they had known the desolation of the icy north; they had sailed through the furious typhoons of the tropics; and with sound ships, or ships with battered sides, they had dashed in safety through maddened waves from port to port. And not only the best of good seamanship, but the best of good luck, we carried with us. In all his life Captain Cyrus had never had anything serious happen to his ships; and why should he begin now? It was especially consoling to me, as I looked at my lovely wife, to think of these things at the outset of our wedding-trip.

Not only seamen of vast experience, but able and lively seamen, were our captains. No one could imagine that years hung heavy upon them. Captain Timon stood at the helm with the bold, bright eye of an old sea-king. Captain Garnish, acting as mate, strode tall and strong along the deck, looking up at the sails and rigging with the air of a man who knew exactly what each inch of canvas, each stick of timber, and each piece of cordage should at that moment be doing, and ready, if he saw the least thing amiss, to roar out condemnation.

Captain Teel had assumed the duties of cook, and was now shut up in the galley; but Captain Cyrus, as lively as a squirrel, and still wearing his embroidered

velvet slippers, was here, there, and everywhere, stowing away this, coiling up that, and making things, in general, shipshape, and always with a pleasant grin upon his face, as if it were all an old story to him and he liked it.

Doris ran forward to see how the Merry Chanter himself was getting on, and I followed. We leaned over the bulwarks of the bow and looked at him. There he stood, part of his right arm still extended, his head thrown back, and his long hair appearing ready to float in the breeze, while his open mouth seemed drinking in the fresh salt air.

"Look at him!" cried Doris. "He is all ready for the tossing waves, the roaring gale, and the brave sea song. How grand it must be to stand there with nothing but the sea before him, catching everything first, and afraid of nothing!"

Seizing my hands, Doris danced away with me over an almost level deck. "Isn't this grand?" she said. "And treading our own deck! Let's pipe all hands to grog!"

I entered into the enthusiasm, but demurred to the grog-piping.

On the opposite side of the deck walked up and down the butcher, clad in an immaculately clean white gown of the kind peculiar to his trade, and worn probably with the idea of keeping the dust off his clothes.

"How do you like the sea?" asked Doris, as we passed.

"I think I shall like it when we get there," said the butcher.

"Get there?" she exclaimed. "Don't you call this the sea?"

"No," said he; "this is Mooseley harbor. When we get around that point, two miles from here, then we are really out to sea."

Captain Teel now appeared and informed us that dinner was ready. It had been decided that the butcher, as a passenger, should mess with us. Captain Timon was also to be one of our company, but he declined to leave the wheel for the present.

The butcher appeared at the table in a neat suit of new clothes, having removed his gown. He was, indeed, a very tidy and proper-looking fellow. As he was used to that sort of thing, I invited him to carve.

"No, sir," said he, quietly but with decision; "I have shut the shop door behind me."

We had fine sea appetites for our meal, but Doris ate hurriedly. "I'm so afraid we'll pass around the point while I am down here," she said. "I wouldn't for the world miss our actual passage out upon the bosom of Mother Ocean!"

When we ran on deck we looked about and beheld the point still ahead of us.

"Why, Captain Timon," said Doris, "have we sailed at all?"

"Oh, yes," he said cheerily, "we're gettin' on, we're gettin' on. We haven't lost no headway so fur. This wind'll freshen before long, and then you'll see." And leaving the helm in care of Captain Garnish, he went below.

Whether the wind fell off instead of freshening, or whether, as Doris surmised, we had become accidentally anchored, we certainly made but little progress, and there were times when it seemed as if the distant point were actually becoming more distant.

As there was no probability of an immediate rush out upon Mother Ocean, we went below to look over our little stock of literature; and while so engaged we heard a great sound of flapping and banging upon deck. Hurrying up, we found that the sails were loosely swinging and hanging, and that the crew, assisted by Captain Timon, were engaged in pulling them down.

"What is the matter?" we cried.

"Nothin' is the matter," replied Captain Cyrus, cheerily. "We're goin' to fish."

Doris sat down on something. "Fish!" she gasped.

Captain Timon now came toward us. "You see," said he, "it ain't no use tryin' to make headway against this flood-tide; an' so we thought we'd a great sight better anchor and fish. The fish'll be comin' in lively with the flood. The tide will turn about six o'clock, an' then we can go out on the ebb an' pass the p'int in just the prettiest time of the evenin'. An' if you want to fish, there's lines enough on board for everybody."

For some minutes we were disgusted to the point of not being able to say how disgusted we were. Then Doris, seeing the captains gathered at the stern all busy in preparing their lines, sprung to her feet and declared that she might as well make the best of it, and that she was going to fish.

Captain Cyrus took charge of her, baiting her hook, and cheerily giving her all needful help and advice. As for me, I did not care to fish; and as for the butcher, he did not care to fish; and together we walked forward.

"It's my opinion," said he, confidentially, "that this

is a stone ship. I'll lay two to one there's barnacles on her like the foundation-walls of a church, and inside they've loaded her up with stone enough for a monument. If she ever sticks fast on a bar she'll be solid enough to build a lighthouse on."

"You don't seem to have faith in the sailing qualities of our ship," said I. "You must be sorry you took passage with us."

"Oh, no," said he. "I've come on board with all my belongin's, and I intend to stick to her as long as anybody else does. Stone ship or wooden ship, I don't go back on my bargain."

The *Merry Chanter* was lying two or three miles from Mooseley and about a mile and a half from the point. The wind and tide together had swung her around so that she lay almost broadside to the distant town. Looking in that direction, we saw, far away, a little boat.

The butcher gazed a few moments in silence, and then he said: "There's a skiff comin' after us from town. Perhaps they think somethin's happened. I'll go down and get one of the spy-glasses and see who it is."

When he returned with the glass, he levelled it at the boat. For a few moments he gazed, and then he said forcibly, but in an undertone, "I'll be knocked in the head if that isn't Captain Cyrus's wife!"

"What do you suppose she wants?" I asked. "Why does she come?"

"No man can tell you that," he answered. "She hates sea air, and won't live with him. But since I've been in these parts she's come down four times to see him, and every time he has been away on a fishin'

cruise or somethin'. You know Captain Cyrus goes for the luckiest man in the world. But my conscience! she made it hot for the neighbors when she saw the way his house was kept. And now she's found him off again; but bein' anchored, she's come after us. I'll go and report to the skipper."

So saying, he walked aft, and taking Captain Timon aside, he stated what he had seen. I followed, and I perceived that this intelligence had a wonderful effect upon our skipper.

"Don't say a word to Captain Cyrus," he whispered to us. "We must get out of this in no time." And, without a moment's delay, he piped all hands to haul up fishing-lines, weigh anchor, hoist sail, and get under way.

In these hurried preparations I did what I could to help; and the butcher looked as if he would like to follow my example, but was restrained by the proprieties of his position as a passenger.

"If there's any danger of that boat catchin' up," said he, "I'll lay hold and work like a good fellow; for her comin' aboard will be worse than a ship afire."

The skipper was at the wheel. "We're goin' to run her before the wind," he said, "an' we won't try to double the p'int. That land off there makin' the sou'west line of our harbor is an island, an' there's an inlet between it and the mainland that we can run through. Wind and tide will favor us, an' I reckon we can get away; an' Captain Cyrus won't never know nothin' about it. That boat can't pull across the bay after us; she's huggin' the shore now on account of the tide. Them's two colored men that's been waiters at a hotel that's pullin' her. There ain't

a man belongin' to our town that would get out his boat to take Captain Cyrus's wife after him."

"But will not Captain Cyrus suspect something from your sudden change of plans?" I asked.

"He knows the fish wouldn't bite," said the skipper, "an' that ought to be reason enough."

The situation had been explained to Doris, and she was wildly anxious to have every stitch of canvas crowded upon the *Merry Chanter* that she might speed across the bay and away from that little boat.

"What she wants is to come aboard," said Doris, "and we can't have a woman like that on the *Merry Chanter*. If she wants to scold her husband let her wait until he gets home. It isn't far to Boston and back."

Captain Timon smiled at this remark. "We're not on a straight line for Boston just now, but if we try to double that p'int she'll catch us sure."

"Then let us forget there is a point," said Doris, who in this matter was exactly of my opinion.

It did not seem the *Merry Chanter's* habit to dash through the water, but with a good wind behind her and a tide more in her favor than against her, she sailed across the bay at a rate considerably better than that of a boat rowed by two inexperienced oarsmen. When the little boat saw what we were about, it left the shore and steered as if to cut us off. But it was easy to see that the tide was carrying it back toward the town.

The tide also carried us in a somewhat retrograde direction, but by the aid of the wind we laid a straight course for the inlet of which Captain Timon had spoken.

Captain Cyrus was kept busy forward, and suspected nothing of his pursuit by the little boat.

"She has about gi'n up the chase," said Captain Timon, looking back at the boat. "Them fellows can't catch a schooner sailing afore the wind, an' I don't believe they want to try much, nuther. We was at anchor when they put out from town."

I had known oarsmen who, I thought, would be able to catch that schooner even were she sailing before the wind.

In about two hours we reached the inlet, and Doris and I were surprised to find how narrow it was. It was like a small river.

"Do large ships often go through here?" I asked of the skipper.

"'Tain't common," said he; "but me an' the other cap'ns knows every inch of this inlet an' every stage of the tide, an' you can rest sure there'll always be a foot of water between her keel an' the bottom."

The inlet, we were told, was three miles long and opened into Shankashank Bay. For a great part of this distance the incoming tide carried us through, and when we met the flood from the bay the inlet had widened, so that we were enabled to take advantage of the wind for the rest of the way.

It was nearly dark when we emerged into Shankashank Bay, but we could see well enough to judge that it was a large expanse of water.

"We may as well anchor here," said the captain, "an' make ourselves comfortable for the night. Even if she can get anybody to row her, it's not likely she can come through that inlet after us. The tide runs in at both ends of it, an' meets in the middle, an'

unless she strikes it just at high tide or low tide she'll find a reg'lar mill-race ag'in' her fur half the way, no matter whether it is flood or ebb."

The captains were all busy anchoring the schooner and getting down the sails when the butcher came up the companionway and beckoned me apart.

"Look here!" said he,—and I noticed that he appeared somewhat agitated,—"do you know that there is a stowaway aboard?"

"A what?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, there is," he continued, "a regular one. I was down below where it was pretty dark, bein' only one lantern, when I heard a voice comin' from I didn't know where, and sayin', 'Butcher, ahoy!' I give a jump and looked about lively, I can tell you. And directly I saw a straw hat a-stickin' up from the edge of a hatchway. 'Look you, butcher,' says some one under the hat, 'can't you get me somethin' to eat?' 'Who are you?' says I. 'I am a stowaway,' he said; 'and as you are neither a captain nor an owner, I hope I may persuade you to get me somethin' to eat, for I am very hungry. When the ship is fairly out to sea I will come forth, but until then I beg you will keep my secret.' Now, what sort of a stowaway do you call that, sir?" asked the butcher, earnestly.

"A very odd one," I answered. "What did you say to him?"

"I didn't say no more, but came right up-stairs to speak to you; and he don't know whether I've gone to get him grub or to report him to the skipper."

"Of course we ought to tell Captain Timon," said I.

"I don't know about that," said the butcher, shaking his head. "Sea-captains are mighty severe on ship-

board. It's ten to one they'd drag him out and pitch him overboard, and it's too dark for him to see to swim ashore. I think it will be better to give him somethin' to eat and let him stay aboard till mornin', and then we can put him ashore decently."

"But don't you think it will be dangerous to have such a man on board during the night?"

"You needn't be afraid of him," he said. "I've brought my butcher tools along. And, what's more, that fellow ain't got no call to come out. What he wants is to keep shady."

We talked a little more on the subject, and I then agreed that the butcher should give the stowaway something to eat, and that nothing should be said to the captains or to my wife until the morning.

I was ill at ease, however, and did not sleep well that night. After tossing about a good deal, I quietly arose and peeped out of the cabin door. By the dim light of the lantern I saw, not far away, the butcher, sitting on a chest. His arms were folded; his eyes were open, gazing thoughtfully into the surrounding darkness; and by his side lay a bright and heavy butcher's cleaver.

He did not see me; and I softly closed the door, got into my berth, and fell into a sound sleep.

CHAPTER V

THE STOWAWAY

WHEN, early in the morning, after our first night on board the *Merry Chanter*, I met the butcher, I did not mention to him that I had discovered him standing, or rather sitting, guard before our cabin. I believed that the sentiments which prompted him to this delicate attention should be respected.

"Well," said I, "did everything go on all right in the night?"

"All right," he answered. "I have just peeped down the hatchway, and I caught sight of his straw hat. I guess the rest of him is there. And, if you say so, we'll let him stay till after breakfast."

An hour later, when the captain and Doris were informed that there was a stowaway in the hold, there was great excitement on board the schooner. All thoughts of weighing anchor and setting sail were abandoned for the time. Every soul on the vessel repaired to the hatchway. Even Doris pressed as near the edge as I would allow. The stowaway was bidden to come forth, and almost immediately he scrambled up among us. The light was not very good between-decks, and we could only see that he was a man of medium height and of spare build.

With Captain Timon on the one side of him, and Captain Garnish on the other, the stowaway was marched to the upper deck. This unauthorized passenger was seen to possess an intelligent face and a very rusty suit of clothes. Glancing rapidly around him, he exclaimed, "We are not at sea!"

"At sea!" roared Captain Garnish. "A double-headed Dutchman of a land-lubber you must be not to know the difference between pitchin' on the sea and lyin' all night at anchor in smooth water! How dared you stow yourself away on board this vessel? Is it rope's end first, or simple chuck over the side?" he said, turning to the skipper.

"We won't be too hard on him," said Captain Timon. "Perhaps the man can't swim."

"He ain't done no harm," said Captain Cyrus. "Let's let him off easy and set him ashore in a boat."

Captain Teel shook his head. "It won't do," he said, "to offer prizes for that sort of thing."

"Prizes!" cried Captain Garnish, who was evidently a man of high temper, with a strong way of doing and putting things. "I'd prize him! I'd—"

Doris now spoke up. "None of those things shall be done to him," she said, "until he tells his story. Please, sir, will you tell us your story?"

The man had a pair of plaintive eyes, and he fixed them upon Doris. "I am a schoolmaster," he said. "For nearly a year I have been teaching at West Imbury."

Each of the captains now put his head a little forward, and listened with great attention.

"I stood it as long as I could," said the schoolmaster, "and then I ran away. I am not a sailor, but I

thought I should like to go to sea. Anything would be better than teaching school at West Imbury."

"Did the scholars treat you badly?" asked Doris.

"Oh, no," said the schoolmaster. "I don't mind boys—I can manage them; but it was the woman I boarded with who drove me to desperation."

"Couldn't you board somewhere else?" asked Doris.

"No, not at all," he answered. "She had a contract from the town to board me for two years. She was the lowest bidder. She would lose money if I went away, and she threatened me with the law. But my privations and misery were insupportable, and I fled."

"Who was the woman who had your contract?" asked Captain Cyrus.

"Mrs. Bodship," said the schoolmaster.

At these words each of the four captains heaved a sigh, and, involuntarily, Captain Cyrus laid his hand on the man's shoulder.

"Now that you've put yourself square afore us," said Captain Timon, "I don't know as we've got much to say ag'in' you; but you ought to have come aboard square an' honest, instead of stowin' away."

"I was told," said the schoolmaster, "that you did not want any hands, and I could not stay on shore a moment longer."

"Do you wish to go to Boston?" asked Doris.

"I will go anywhere," said the schoolmaster. "I will do anything, if only you will let me stay with you."

The captains now retired and talked together, while Doris and I had some further conversation with the schoolmaster. In a few minutes the captains returned.

"We have agreed," said the skipper, "that if the

owners are willin' we are willin' to let him stay on board, on condition that he is not to have any part of the profits. We are all agreed that the profits ought not to be divided into any more than six parts. So that if he stays aboard he mustn't do no more work than will just pay for what he eats ; a bunk, not costin' anything, can be thrown in for nothin'."

This compact was quickly made, and the schoolmaster, much relieved, was taken below to breakfast.

"There ain't no need," said Captain Timon, confidentially, "fur Captain Cyrus or that schoolmaster to know that Mrs. Bodship was tryin' to overhaul the schooner. It will just worry the captain, an' won't do the schoolmaster no good."

"Do you think Mrs. Bodship will continue her pursuit?" I asked.

"Yes, sir," said the skipper. "She's the kind of woman that don't give up easy. But I think we've given her the slip. She'll be sure to think that we've rounded this island and sailed north, for of course we couldn't have no call to stay in Shankashank Bay. It's my opinion she's gone to Boston to be ready to meet us when we get there. She's got a horse an' buggy, an' I calculate she'll drive herself there."

"You don't mean," exclaimed Doris, "that she can get to Boston in a buggy sooner than we can get there in the *Merry Chanter?*"

"Yes, I do," answered Captain Timon. "She's an awful woman with the whip. An' the reason I think she will go in her buggy is that she'll want to call at the different ports to see if we have put into any of them for water or repairs."

"Horrible!" cried Doris. "What shall we do when we get to Boston and find her there?"

"I don't believe she'll wait," said the skipper. "She's a nervous woman, an' hates to wait. I guess she'll be gone when we get there."

When the schoolmaster came on deck he had tidied himself up a little and now looked like another man. "I cannot thank you enough," he said to Doris and me, "for allowing me to remain on board of your ship. It is like beginning a new life. But I must admit that I shall feel safer when I am out upon the open sea."

"Can you swim?" asked the butcher, who was standing near.

The schoolmaster answered that he was sorry to be obliged to say that he could not; whereupon the butcher gently whistled a few notes and gazed out over the water.

I had begun to believe that the butcher was a pessimist.

"And now, captain," cried Doris, "let us up anchor and hoist sail. There is no reason for our stopping here any longer."

"I don't know about that," said Captain Timon, dubiously. "The tide is comin' in again, an' we'll get out of this bay just as quick by lyin' here as by tryin' to sail ag'in' that flood-tide. But if you'd like to be movin', we can take a sail along the coast of Shankashank Bay an' have a sight of the country; an' then, when the tide turns, we can go out on the ebb."

"Oh, by all means, let us sail!" cried Doris. "Anything is better than being anchored here."

"Am I to understand, captain," said I, "that during our voyage we are to stop every time the tide is against us?"

"Oh, no," said the skipper, with a laugh. "That's only when we're in these bays. We sha'n't take no account of tide when we are out to sea."

During the rest of that morning we sailed along the coast of Shankashank Bay, sometimes half a mile from the land and sometimes even less. It was a pretty shore, and we enjoyed it, although we were moving south and almost directly away from Boston. There was a good wind from the west, but we sailed slowly. We would not wish, however, to sail very fast in the wrong direction.

We passed a little scattered town, with a few fishing-boats anchored along the shore. Then we came to a bluff crowned with pine woods which extended some distance back into the interior. The country, as far as we could see along the shore, appeared marshy and thinly settled.

The captains now went forward and talked together, leaving the wheel in my hands. I had determined to learn to steer, and to get as much nautical education as possible.

In a very few minutes Captain Timon returned. "We've agreed," said he, "that we'd be runnin' ag'in' sense an' reason if we didn't lay to here and take in water."

"Water!" I cried. "Why, we have taken in water."

"Yes," said the skipper, "common water. But just the other side of that bluff there's the Kilkink Spring. A tribe of Injuns used to live there just on account of

that spring. There is no better water in the world, an' it's great on keepin'. Fur a long v'yage there's nothin' like it."

At first Doris and I were inclined to rebel; but suddenly she changed her mind. "It is true," she said, "that the water we have had to drink so far is flat and horrid, and now that we have a chance of taking in some fine spring water we ought by all means to do so. It can't keep us long."

This seemed to me a proper moment to assert myself, and to make Doris understand that I was the one who should decide questions of this sort. But upon reflection I found that I was not prepared to take such action. When I took my true position I must be fully prepared to maintain it.

In twenty minutes we were anchored about a quarter of a mile from the bluff, and after dinner a boat with two casks and two captains went ashore for water.

The schoolmaster was ill at ease. "I do not believe," said he to me, "that I can truly feel safe from Mrs. Bodship until we are actually out at sea."

The butcher walked aft to where Captain Timon was quietly smoking his pipe. "Look here," said the butcher, "you ought to give that schoolmaster somethin' to do. He has got a mind, he has, and if you don't set his arms and legs a-goin', that mind of his will run away with him."

"I have given him somethin' to do," said the skipper, sternly. "He's lent a hand at the capstan, an' he's lent a hand at the sheets. That'll pay fur his breakfast an' dinner, an' I can't give him no more work till he's had his supper."

The butcher made no further remark to the skipper, but turning to me as I sat by with my afternoon pipe, he said: "He's so scared that he won't stay on deck for fear that she might be driving along in her buggy and get sight of him. And if she does, he says, she'll be bound to come aboard."

"What in the world is he afraid of?" I asked. "He must be very silly."

"He is afraid of Mrs. Bodship," said the butcher; "and if you knew Mrs. Bodship you'd be afraid of her too, especially if she had a contract to board you. I believe that wherever that schoolmaster goes she'd follow him and board him, so that she could send in her bill to the town." For a moment he stood in thought. "I know what I'll do!" he exclaimed. "I'll lend him one of my gowns to wear over his clothes. Then he can be on deck as much as he pleases, and if she does see him she won't know him, unless her spectacles are a lot better than most."

Not long afterward there appeared on deck what seemed to be a pair of butchers. Doris and I were much amused by the spectacle. But, notwithstanding his garb, the schoolmaster did not look the butcher. His gait, his bearing, were not those of a genuine slicer of meat and cleaver of bones. Still, he was disguised sufficiently to deceive any Mrs. Bodship who might be travelling on shore.

The butcher's efforts on behalf of the schoolmaster's peace of mind did not end here. After a few turns up and down the deck in deep reflection, he came aft, bringing with him the cage which contained the wounded sandpiper.

"Look here," said he to the schoolmaster, "I wish

you'd run this bird while you're aboard. I'm not such an hour-and-minute man as you are, and sometimes I forget him."

The schoolmaster took the cage and looked inquiringly at the other.

"Now," said the butcher, "there's a good deal to occupy the mind in running a sandpiper in a cage, especially if he's got a broken wing. I laid out to cure that wing, but I guess you can do it a great deal better than I could, if you give your mind to it. What he wants is plenty of mutton tallow, and a cage kept as clean as a hospital ward."

When the two casks and Captain Teel and Captain Garnish returned in the boat, the schoolmaster, with a piece of sail-cloth tied in front of him to protect his butcher's gown, was busily engaged in cleaning the sandpiper's cage. Captain Garnish stepped up to him with an angry glare upon his face.

"Look here," he said, "that's ag'in' contract. We didn't take you aboard this schooner to work, except meal stints, an' no more."

The schoolmaster looked up at the angry captain, but before he could reply the butcher broke in. "Now, then, cap'n," said he, "this sandpiper business is a private job between me and the schoolmaster. What he gets and what he don't get is his business and mine. The sandpiper hasn't got anything to do with the ship, and he could be run ashore just as well as he is run here."

The severity on Captain Garnish's countenance began to fade. "Very well," said he, "if it's private, I've nothin' to say. But there's no claims fur work to be brought ag'in' the profits."

CHAPTER VI

THE MAN ON THE HILL

DORIS and I were amazed at the slow progress made by the captains in supplying the *Merry Chanter* with pure water from the celebrated Kilkink Spring. The boat went out again, this time with the skipper and Captain Teel, and their trip was a longer one than that of the two other captains. At the end of the third trip evening began to fall, and Captain Timon said it would be of no use to try to get any more water that day.

"Any more?" cried Doris. "Surely we have enough by this time!"

The skipper smiled and shook his head. "Not fur a sea v'yage," he said. "When you once get out to sea there's no gettin' in fresh water. You see, we've throwed out all we took in at Mooseley, because you said that it didn't agree with you. We don't want to make our owners sick, you know."

"I wish I had never mentioned the water," said Doris, marching away.

The next morning the process of taking in the water began again; but there was no use fretting about this, Captain Timon remarked, for the tide was

coming in again, and we ought to be glad that we had something useful to do while we were obliged to wait.

Restless and impatient, and tired of walking up and down the deck of our anchored vessel, Doris and I went ashore on the second trip of the boat, thinking a country walk might quiet our minds. The butcher had already been landed; but we could not induce the schoolmaster to leave the ship. We left him anointing and bandaging the wounded wing of the sandpiper.

Doris would not leave until the skipper had assured her that our going on shore would not interfere with the sailing of the *Merry Chanter* when the proper time came. Captain Timon said he would fire a gun—he had a musket on board—two hours before he weighed anchor, and as this would certainly give us plenty of time to return to the ship, we went ashore with easy hearts.

The country which lay between the bluff and the little town was slightly rolling, wiry grass growing thinly in the sandy soil, with a few bushes here and there. At some distance, on the top of a little rounded hill, we saw the butcher, apparently admiring the landscape. As we walked in his direction, desiring to know if anything could be seen from the top of that hill, he came down to meet us.

"Do you know," he said, as soon as he was near enough, "if that schoolmaster was attendin' to my sandpiper?"

We assured him that we had left the pedagogue giving careful attention to the unfortunate bird.

"I am glad of that," he said, his countenance assuming an expression of relief. "He ought to keep

himself occupied, and the captains won't let him do no more for the ship than just exactly so much. I was afraid he might get tired stayin' there doin' nothin' and might come ashore. And it would be pretty rough on him if she were to nab him before he'd got to fairly feelin' at home on the ship."

"What were you looking at from that hill?" asked Doris, who was anxious to go on.

"I was looking for Mrs. Bodship," said he. "If I'd seen her driving this way in her buggy I'd been on board in no time, and had that schoolmaster stowed away among the ballast; and if he'd heaved some of it at her when she come down to look for him I wouldn't have blamed him, though, of course, Captain Cyrus's feelings must be taken into account when it comes to that."

"I think you are entirely too much afraid of Mrs. Bodship," said I.

"Well, she hasn't come along yet," said the butcher. "But on the top of that hill there is a man that I've had my eye on for pretty nigh an hour. In the whole of that time I don't believe he's taken his eyes off the ship. I have an idea that he has got a contract to spy for Mrs. Bodship."

"Let us go straight over there and speak to him," said Doris. "No man has a right to spy on the *Merry Chanter*."

Doris spoke so quickly that I had no time to propose this myself, but we instantly started for the distant man.

"Let me go first," said the butcher. "He may have a club or a knife about him."

Whether or not the butcher had his cleaver in one

of his pockets I could not tell, but he walked bravely on.

The man on the hill did not seem at all disturbed by our approach. On the contrary, he came to meet us, as the butcher had done. He was a middle-sized man, somewhat inclined to stoutness, but very quick and springy in his gait. His face was plump and ruddy, smooth shaven except a pair of sandy side-whiskers, and he had pleasant blue eyes. Without doubt he was an Englishman.

"Good morning to you," he said, raising his hat. "Now, I dare say you belong to that ship."

I informed him that my wife and I owned the vessel.

"Really!" he exclaimed. "Now, tell me, where are you bound to?"

"To Boston," I replied.

"The very thing!" he exclaimed. "Boston is in the North somewhere, now, isn't it? I'm an English traveller, but I don't like your long railway carriages. In England we'd use them for bridges. I came to this place in a wagon, but it is broken to smash down there in that village. Now, I should like, of all things, to take a sail along the coast; I don't care whether it is to Boston or Salt Lake City. Now, tell me, will you book me as a passenger? It is a trading-vessel, isn't it?"

Doris and I consulted apart. "I have an idea," said she, "that it is not impossible we might make more money carrying passengers than freight. He seems like an honest, straightforward man. Why shouldn't we take him to Boston?"

We returned and told the man that we were mak-

ing a regular commercial cruise to Boston, and that if he were in no hurry to get there we would take him as a passenger.

"Good!" he cried, "I'll go. I am in no hurry, you know. But you are positively sure, now, that you are not going to cross the Atlantic?"

So far the butcher had not spoken, nor did he speak now; but the spasm of resigned pessimism which seemed to run through his frame, heaving his chest and gently upturning his eyes, indicated quite plainly his opinion of the *Merry Chanter's* crossing the Atlantic.

Having assured the Englishman that our trade was entirely coastwise, he declared he would go instantly to the town, fetch his luggage, and be on board in no time. In fact, when we had finished our ramble and were about to enter the boat which Captain Teel had rowed over to take us back to dinner, we saw our passenger rapidly striding over the hills, bearing an immense portmanteau in one hand, and in the other a hat-box, a bundle of umbrellas and canes, besides various other packages. He shouted to us to wait for him, and we took him on board with us.

The captains did not object in the least to our new passenger. "Summer tenants an' boarders," said Captain Timon, "an' sailin'-parties long and short, has got ten times more money in 'em than fish an' crops, or the flour trade either, for that matter. I go in fur pickin' up passengers all along the coast if we can get 'em."

"Always being careful," said Doris, in an undertone, "not to pick up a Bodship." At which Captain Timon gave a sympathetic grin.

After dinner Doris said to me, "We ought to have a book in which to put down the names of our passengers." Accordingly I made one of several sheets of paper. We entered first the name of the butcher, and then I was about to write that of the schoolmaster, but Doris objected.

"We ought to have another page for a free list," she said, "and put him on that."

When this had been arranged we went on deck to inquire the name of our new passenger. We found him sitting on a coil of rope, smoking a black wooden pipe and talking gayly to the butcher, the schoolmaster, and three of the captains.

"What is your name, sir?" said I, approaching with my book in my hand.

He took his pipe from his mouth in deference to the presence of my wife. "I am Lord Crabstairs," he said.

I happened to be looking at the butcher at this moment, and saw him suddenly turn upon his heel and disappear below. In an instant he returned. His arms were folded upon his chest, but I could see beneath his white gown the distinct outlines of a cleaver. He stepped close to me.

"Maniacy is a thing," he whispered, "which cannot be allowed on shipboard."

"You may think it a little odd," said the new passenger, looking about on the various degrees of surprise and amazement expressed upon the countenances of the company, "that a member of the Upper House should be neglecting his parliamentary duties and taking passage with you for Boston, where he hasn't the least business in the world, you know. But when

I have told you my story you won't think it so beastly odd, after all."

"Story?" cried Doris. "Let everybody sit down and listen."

And everybody did; Captain Teel being brought post-haste from the cook's galley.

CHAPTER VII

LORD CRABSTAIRS

"In the first place," said Doris, "do you really mean to say that you are truly an English lord—a peer of the realm?"

"I do really and truly mean to say that," answered the passenger, his blue eyes gleaming with as much of an honest glow as was ever seen in eyes. "I am Henry, Lord Crabstairs of Haviltree, Warwickshire. The family estates once covered, I am told, ten thousand acres."

The butcher listened with interest. "Cattle?" he asked.

"Oh, no," said the other, "I don't care for cattle. What I like is poultry. Just before I left England I had the finest lot of poultry you ever saw—all blooded, with pedigrees. And bees, twenty-seven hives of bees, and each one with its name painted on it in a different color from the rest—'Daisy,' 'Clover,' 'Daffodil,' and so on. The bees couldn't read the names, you know, but each one knew his hive by the color of the letters."

"This is the first time I ever heard," said Captain Garnish, "that there was twenty-seven colors."

"Oh, bless you!" cried the Englishman, "it is easy enough to manage that. On one hive the letters were

all red, and on another they were all blue, and on another half were red and half blue, and so on. In that way I made the colors go round, you know."

"You ought to have painted your bees," remarked Captain Timon, "and then there couldn't have been no mistake. If you saw a red bee goin' into a blue hive you could have picked him up and put him into the right hole."

"No need of that, no need of that!" cried the Englishman. "The bees attend to that. They kill them if they make a mistake, you know. And there are lots of other things I like, such as flower-beds and a kitchen garden. Nothing sets me up, you know, like working in the kitchen garden. And a cow. Every morning I curried and brushed my cow until she shone like a sealskin. That cow knew me like a brother. If she happened to be out of sight in the copse, all I had to do was to drum on the bottom of a tin pail, and she would come running to be milked and to get her bit of cabbage-leaf."

The company looked wonderingly at one another. Was this the usual way of life with British peers?

"When all that happened," continued the speaker, "I was the happiest man in the United Kingdom. Forty years old, sound of wind and limb, no wife nor child nor any one depending on me, a nice little house in the prettiest part of Bucks County, with a great copper beech in front of my door that the earl himself would have given a thousand pounds for if it could have been taken up and planted in his park, with a little green as smooth as velvet where I used to feed my fowls, and the brightest flower-beds and the earliest peas within twelve miles of Aylesbury. I have a

little income from my mother's family, and that kept things going, and from break of day till ten o'clock at night there couldn't be a jollier fellow than I was.

"Well, madam, and all of you, it was on a beautiful morning this spring, with the grass greener and more flowers in blossom and the peas more forward than I had ever known them before at that time of year, not to speak of a little calf as like to her mother as two pins of different sizes, when I was sitting in front of my cottage in the shade of the beech, with my morning pipe and mug of ale, that there came to me two men,—attorneys, they were, from London, who had driven over from the railway-station in a dog-cart,—and they lost no time in saying that their errand was to inform me that by the death of the late lamented Godfrey, Lord Crabstairs, I was now Henry, Lord Crabstairs of Haviltree.

"As you may well imagine, I jumped up in a rage at hearing this. 'None of your lies!' I cried. 'Lord Godfrey may be dead or he may not be dead, but, whichever he is, he has a son and a grandson, legal issue. You need not suppose that I have not kept my eye on all that.' 'That may be,' said the speaking attorney; 'but your eye didn't keep the son from falling overboard from a collier in the Mersey, and his infant son from dying two weeks ago of cholera infantum, without issue. Whereupon, by the death of old Lord Godfrey yesterday morning, you are Lord Crabstairs, and no mistake.'

"Now, then," said the Englishman, looking briskly around at his auditors, "I was so angry that I was ready to knock down those two men right and left. But in England it does not do to lay hands on law

folk. I was well up in this Crabstairs succession, you know. I had studied it all my life, and with two good lives between me and the title I felt safe. But how could any man imagine that such beastly luck was coming to him! You see, the Crabstairs have been loaded with an inherited debt for a long, long time back, and for a hundred and fifty years there has not been a lord of the estate who has lived at Haviltree. Every man jack of them, as soon as he came into the title, was clapped into jail for debt. There was no getting out of it except by running away; which some of them did.

"The inherited debt, you know, was bigger than any Crabstairs could pay. The second son of old Lord Godfrey took time by the forelock and ran away to the Philippine Islands, where he married a native wife and brought up a large family. But he never had anything but a heathen marriage, for fear that his elder brother might die without issue, and misery might come upon his wife's children."

"That was true Christianity," said Captain Teel, solemnly.

"'Now,' said the speaking attorney to me, 'my lord,' said he—'Don't my lord me!' I shouted. 'I renounce the title! I have nothing to do with these Crabstairs! I am eleven removes from the main line.' 'You can't renounce the title, my lord,' said he. 'You are the heir-at-law, and there is no getting out of it.' Now the second attorney, who hadn't said anything so far, spoke up. He took a paper out of his pocket. 'Henry, Lord Crabstairs of Haviltree, Warwickshire,' said he, 'I arrest you for debt in the amount of two hundred and eighty thousand pounds, seven shillings,

and sixpence ha'penny. And we brought over a constable in the dog-cart, so the easier you make things the better.'

"On hearing this I hurled my pint pot at one attorney and my pipe at the other, and making a dash at the beehives which stood near by, I kicked over a dozen of them. A black cloud of savage stingers came howling out, and as I sprang away—not one of them after me, for they knew their master—I heard behind me such a cursing and swearing and screaming as nearly split my ears. I darted into the garden, through the pea-patch, and over the back fence, and made across country, at a pace those law people couldn't think of keeping up, to the railway-station. I caught a train, went to town, drew all my little income that was due, and took passage for America.

"And here I am, knowing nothing in the world of what has become of my dear home, my cow and my calf, of my flower-beds and my kitchen garden, of my beautiful flock of poultry, or of the bees and the attorneys. I have left everything behind me; but there is one thought that makes up for a lot of what has happened, and that is that for the first time in many a long year there is no Lord Crabstairs in jail for debt. And what is more," he said, rising to his feet, and his blue eyes sparkling with honest indignation, "there never will be, so long as I am alive!"

At this Captain Garnish came forward and shook the Englishman by the hand, and his example was immediately followed by the other captains and by the schoolmaster.

"I can feel for you," said the latter, "as one who flees from tyranny. May you never be overtaken!"

The butcher did not shake hands. That was not his way. He stood up very straight and said: "May I be chopped and sawed, bone-drawed and skewered, if I'd live in a country where a man can be made a lord without his having a word to say about it! If I found myself in that fix, sir, debt or no debt, jail or no jail, I'd cut and run! I say you did the square thing, sir!"

"Do you intend," asked Doris, who had listened with eager earnestness to the Englishman's story, "to continue to call yourself Lord Crabstairs?"

"Of course I do," said the other. "That is my name, and I shall not disown it. I don't wish to sail under false colors; and more than that, so long as it is known that I am alive and holding the title they can't nab any other poor fellow, perhaps with a family."

"Very good," said Doris; "we understand your case perfectly. And now," she continued, turning to Captain Timon, "let us set sail."

CHAPTER VIII

DOLOR TRIPP

But Captain Timon was not yet ready to set sail. The business of water-carrying had not gone on in the afternoon, for the reason that the spring had become muddy by much dipping, and required some time in which to settle and purify itself. Two casks had been left there, so it was absolutely necessary that a boat should go after them, and it was now too late in the day to make an advantageous trip.

I think Doris's impatience would have proved beyond her control had not she become interested in a plan proposed by Lord Crabstairs. That nobleman was of an exceedingly lively and practical disposition, and took a great interest in his contemplated sea-voyage to Boston. He had come into this part of the country without other aim than to escape cities, which he hated; and he would not now be going to Boston but for the opportunity of going by sea. He was very fond of the sea, and when he had seen our anchored ship he had been fascinated by the idea of sailing somewhere in her.

His desire now was to plunge boldly into sailor life, to pull on ropes, to climb the masthead, and all that sort of thing, and he had been very much taken aback

when the schoolmaster informed him that nothing of the kind would be allowed.

"If you pay your passage," said the schoolmaster, "they will not let you do any work at all; and if you sail gratis, so to speak, you can only do enough to pay for your meals."

The prospect of sailing without occupation appeared dull to Lord Crabstairs, nor did the offer of the schoolmaster sometimes to allow him to attend to the sandpiper promise much relief. But his mind was as quick and active as his body.

"By George!" he cried, "I don't care for birds like that; but I will keep poultry. Fresh eggs every morning, and roast fowl for dinner. I will go on shore at daybreak to-morrow and buy some."

The butcher here remarked that if fowls were to be killed he would furnish the tools, but that was all he would do, as he had gone out of that business.

Our detentions in port had had the effect of making Doris feel the need of occupation, and she gladly welcomed the poultry scheme. Of course there would not be time on the voyage to hatch out little chickens; but she determined, if it were possible, to purchase for herself a hen with a young brood.

The discussion regarding this new scheme proved interesting, and the captains gave their full consent. The enthusiastic nobleman went so far as to suggest the purchase of a few hives of bees, but this proposal met with no favor. A cow was spoken of, but here the butcher vehemently objected. The time might come, he said, when she would have to be slaughtered, and he vowed he would not sail in company with a cow that might have to be slaughtered.

The first thing I saw when I cast my eyes landward the next morning was Lord Crabstairs hurrying over the hillocks toward the shore, and carrying a pair of full-grown fowls with each hand. He had rowed himself ashore, and now returned with his prizes.

"There they are!" he cried, as soon as he reached the deck. "Three hens and a cock! That was all the woman would sell, but she said we might get young chicks at a house about a mile farther inland. I will go there directly I've eaten breakfast. And now, what are we to do with them? Of course it won't do to put up a high fence all around the deck. But I dare say they know as well as we do that they can't swim, and so will not jump overboard. Anyway, here goes to see what will happen." And he cut the cords which bound their legs.

Instantly the four fowls began to rush madly here and there, screaming and fluttering their wings. The cock flew half-way up one of the shrouds of the mainmast, and sat there crowing and evidently highly excited, while the three hens went screaming down the open hatchway on the forward deck, and then, after some wild careering, flew down another hatchway into the hold among the ballast.

"That will do very well," said Lord Crabstairs. "I will throw them down some bread, and there they can stay until we have mustered the rest of the flock. As for the cock, if he likes rope-ladders, he is welcome to stop there for the present."

"It is a good thing he is not an egg-layer," said the schoolmaster.

After breakfast Lord Crabstairs, accompanied by Doris, who wished to select her own brood, and by

myself and the butcher, went on shore on an expedition after poultry.

The house to which we directed our steps was about a mile and a half from our landing-place, and when we had approached near enough to get a good view of it we found it to be a dark, sombre building without a tree near it, except a great pine, which grew so close to one corner that it seemed like a part of the house. As we drew nearer, Doris remarked that it looked more like a prison than a farm-house.

At this Lord Crabstairs laughed loud, and said he hoped we should not find it full of jail-birds, as those were not the ornithological specimens we were after.

As we drew nearer, the resemblance to a prison increased. A high pale-fence surrounded the house-yard, and we could see that there were iron bars to the windows. The narrow gate which opened upon the road was locked, but a man was at work inside, and he came and opened it. When we told him our errand, he at first hesitated, and then said we must go and ask at the house.

In a body, we went up a grass-grown brick path to the front door, where we knocked. A more dreary-looking house I never stood before. The building itself had a certain air of importance, but the surrounding grounds did not accord with any such air. They were flat, bare, and covered with scrubby grass; not a flower-bed nor border, nor even a rose-bush. The thin grass which covered the house-yard had recently been cut, and the man was now raking it into meagre little piles of hay. A few outbuildings at a short distance were separated from this yard by a high fence and a gate. The building itself was

destitute of any attempt at ornament, not having even a piazza.

After we had waited some minutes, the door was opened as far as a stout chain would allow, and the form of a tall woman appeared at the aperture. She wore a black-and-white striped sunbonnet. We saw more of this sunbonnet than of her face.

Doris stepped forward and stated our errand. The woman listened, and then, remarking that she would see, shut the door with a bang.

"Polite, that!" said Lord Crabstairs. "I dare say she is a female convict."

The door was not opened again, but presently there came around the corner another woman, also wearing a black-and-white sunbonnet; but she was shorter and had a pleasanter voice than the other.

"If it's chickens you want," she said, "you can come this way. We have some to sell." She led the way through a gate to a poultry-yard, were she showed us a variety of fowls, not one of which, Lord Crabstairs declared, possessed a single drop of pure blood. He selected, however, a half-dozen of the best specimens, and Doris bought a hen with nine little chicks, together with the coop, which, with its occupants, the butcher and I undertook to carry to the boat.

While we were engaged in making our purchases another woman came out to the chicken-yard. She also wore a black-and-white sunbonnet, but she was younger than the two others, and her face was quite pretty. Her countenance had a pensive expression, but her large gray eyes were quick and alert, and moved with interest and curiosity from one member of our party to another. She did not speak during

the selection and bargaining, but observed everything that was done and listened to everything that was said.

When we were leaving the poultry-yard she stepped up to Doris and said : "I am glad you wanted chickens. I have not seen a stranger since March."

Delighted to have this opportunity given her to ask questions, Doris asked questions without stint.

"Yes," answered the young woman, "my two sisters and I live here all alone by ourselves. This high fence and the iron bars to the lower windows are to keep out burglars. Alwilda—she is the one who came to the front door—and Lizeth—that one over there with the chickens—are very much afraid of burglars. There is no man in the house. Our hired man sleeps in the barn. Alwilda locks the two yard gates herself every night, so he is shut out just the same as everybody else. My name is Dolor—Dolor Tripp. Tripp is our family name. Yes, it is dreadfully lonely. We don't do anything but just live here, except Alwilda ; she paints."

"Paints!" exclaimed Doris in surprise, recalling the figure of the tall woman in the black-and-white sunbonnet.

"Yes," replied Dolor Tripp. "She paints pictures on the dining-room walls. She has gone only half round the room, and she has been years and years at it. Sometimes she paints things she sees, and sometimes things she remembers. The things she remembers are done better than the things she sees. She never goes outside this yard."

"And you?" asked Doris. "Have you nothing to occupy your time?"

"Not a thing," replied the young woman, "except housework, and that doesn't count. I should like the chickens, but Lizeth attends to them. I hardly ever see neighbors or strangers. The minute I heard that there were people here to buy chickens I came straight out. I am glad to see anybody."

I had joined the group, and noticed that at these words a smile appeared on the hitherto somewhat pensive countenance of the speaker. She looked around and perceived that her sister and Lord Crabstairs had gone to a little distance to look at some ducks.

"Do you know," she said, "that over and over again I have felt glad that that pine-tree is growing so close to the corner of the house. It never enters the minds of Alwilda and Lizeth that there is any danger in it, but you can see for yourselves that if a burglar once got into the yard he could go up that tree just the same as a ladder, and get into that second-story window. I have sat up half the night wondering if a burglar ever would come up that tree."

"Do you mean to say," I asked, "that your feeling of loneliness is so great that you would even be glad to see a burglar?"

"I don't exactly say that I would be glad to see one," answered Dolor, "but it would be a change."

"You must indeed be lonely," said Doris, looking upon the girl with earnest sympathy, "if you consider a burglar better than nobody."

Doris looked at Dolor Tripp for a few moments, and then suddenly turned to me with a light upon her face. She drew me aside, and whispered: "A glittering idea has just struck me. Suppose we pro-

pose to her to go with us! A voyage to Boston would do her no end of good; and when we came back we could leave her here just as well as not. Shall I ask her?"

There was a deference in these concluding words which greatly pleased me. As a rule I did not desire any more women on the *Merry Chanter*, but this case was exceptional. The passage-money of the young woman would be of service, it would be an excellent thing for Doris to have a suitable person of her own sex on board, and it would be true charity to give this poor girl a chance to see something of the world. As to her being a stranger to us, that did not matter. Most of us were comparative strangers to one another, and it is not customary to inquire into the character and family antecedents of passengers to Boston.

When Doris made her suggestion to Dolor Tripp the eyes of the latter opened wide and sparkled. "Go to Boston?" she cried. "In a ship? With you? Go? Why, I would go if I had to sell my hair! But Alwilda will never agree. Lizeth may—I don't know; but you can't move Alwilda one inch. But don't suppose I am not going," she added quickly. "Nothing would ever happen if you waited for Alwilda to agree. When do you start?"

"We ought to set sail," said Doris, "very soon after we get to the ship. I suppose all the water must be on board by this time."

"Oh, dear!" said Dolor Tripp. "That would be dreadfully soon. I don't see how I could manage it."

During our conversation with the young woman the butcher had been standing by, silent but observant. He now stepped forward. "I don't believe, ma'am,"

he said, addressing Doris, "that we can sail as soon as we get back. The skipper wants to go out on the ebb, and it must have been high tide two hours ago, so that by the time we are aboard and everythin' is ready there won't be much ebb-tide to go out on; and it won't be high water again until after dark to-night. So you see Cap'n Timon is more than likely to want to wait till to-morrow mornin', anyway."

"Well," said Doris, "there isn't really any reason why we should be in a hurry. Boston will keep, I've no doubt. And if Captain Timon thinks it is better to wait until to-morrow morning, of course we can wait until then. Will that suit you?" she said to Dolor Tripp, whose countenance was now glowing with excitement.

"That will be time enough," was the answer. "I shall know all about it this afternoon."

"Can you send us word," asked Doris, "so we may know whether or not to expect you?"

Dolor Tripp looked a little embarrassed, but before she could speak the butcher said to her, "Have you a clock in your house?"

"Of course we have," she answered promptly.

"Well, then," said he, "if you will have a note ready at six o'clock precisely I'll come here and get it."

"Very well," said Dolor Tripp; "I'll have it ready. It will be better for you to go to the lower end of the yard, and I'll hand the note to you through the palings. The gate is directly in front of the dining-room windows."

Lord Crabstairs and Lizeth now returned to us, his lordship having given up the idea of buying ducks,

because there would be no way of allowing them to swim except by lowering them from the ship by means of a long cord, and this would be feasible only when we were at anchor. The butcher and I now took up the coop containing the hen and chickens, our disengaged hands each bearing a pair of fowls, while his lordship carried the rest of the purchased poultry, gallantly declining to allow Doris to bear the weight of even the smallest pullet.

We left behind us two happy sisters, one placidly smiling over the results of an unusually profitable sale, and the other glowing with the anticipation of unknown joys.

CHAPTER IX

THE "MERRY CHANTER" AND THE TIDE

A LITTLE before dark that afternoon the butcher appeared before Doris and me on the after portion of the deck and made his report.

"I got to that house," he said, "at a quarter before six; and as I was a little ahead of time I waited outside the pale-fence, keeping some bushes between me and the house. Pretty soon that Dolor sister came out and began walking straight down to the corner of the fence; but before she got there the Lizeth sister she came out, and then the Dolor sister she turned straight toward the chicken-yard, and going inside the feed-house, she came out with her apron full of corn, and began feeding the chickens right and left like mad; and the Lizeth sister she called out to her to stop wasting corn that way, and she went and took the corn from her and began to attend to the chickens herself. Then the Dolor sister she went walking about picking the weed blossoms, throwing 'em down again, and picking more, and all the time moving down toward the fence; and the minute the Lizeth sister locked the poultry-yard and went into the house, the Dolor one came straight to the corner where she said she'd meet me, and there I was. She

put this note between the palings, and says she, 'Is there any way of getting a trunk from this house to your ship to-night?' 'Unbeknown?' says I. 'Yes,' said she; 'at least, nobody here must know it.' 'Then you are going with us to Boston?' says I. 'Yes, indeed, I am,' says she; 'but there will be no trouble about me. It's only the trunk.' 'Then your sisters are not willing?' says I. 'They wouldn't be if I told 'em,' says she, 'and so I don't intend to tell 'em. They haven't the least right in the world over me, for I am of age; but they'd make a lot of trouble if they knew I wanted to go to Boston, and I don't want to have any more trouble than I can help having.' 'When will your trunk be ready?' says I, 'and where will it be?' 'There's an empty one in a lower room,' says she; 'and after it gets pitch-dark I can put it outside by the back door, and then I can bring my things down and put them in it; but I can't move it after that.' 'At what time will it be all packed and locked and at the back door?' says I. 'Certainly by twelve o'clock,' says she. 'Then at one o'clock,' says I, 'it will be on board the ship.' 'That is beautiful,' says she; 'and as soon as the lower gate is unlocked for the hired man in the morning, I'll walk through the chicken-yard and around the sand-hills till I am out of sight of the house, and then go straight to the shore.' 'Where there'll be a boat to meet you,' says I. Then she said she supposed I was the cap'n, and on being told not thanked me all the same and left sharp. And here's the note."

With the exception of the statement that the writer would bring money to pay her passage, the note contained nothing that the butcher had not told us.

"I like her spirit," said Doris. "If she is of age there is no reason why she shouldn't go to Boston, or anywhere else she wants to. But how in the world is her trunk to be got here? The gates will be locked."

"The schoolmaster and I," said the butcher, "will attend to the trunk. He won't be afraid to go on shore when it is pitch-dark, and I'll take a bull's-eye lantern to use when needed."

This being settled, Doris and I went below to arrange for the accommodation of the new-comer. There was a little cabin back of our own, which we appropriated to Dolor Tripp. Its space was extremely limited, but we could do no better for her.

Lord Crabstairs had been so exceedingly busy in arranging accommodations for the poultry on the deck, and in endeavoring to entice from the rigging the cock which had first arrived on board, that he did not know of the arrangements that had been made for the transfer of the baggage of Dolor Tripp. Otherwise, as he informed us next morning, he would have been on hand, for a lark like that was much to his liking.

The butcher and the schoolmaster must have had a hard time with the trunk, but they succeeded in getting it over the high fence, and by one o'clock, as had been promised, it was on board the *Merry Chanter*.

Doris and I arose very early the next morning, and it could not have been more than half-past six when we beheld Dolor Tripp coming down to the shore with a parasol in one hand and a little leather bag in the other. Lord Crabstairs was standing near us, and the moment his eyes fell upon her he gave a jump.

"I'll take a boat and fetch her," said he. "I can do that much, anyway."

"Stop!" cried Doris. "I do not think that would be fair. After all the butcher's trouble about her he should have the pleasure of bringing her over in the boat."

"I don't quite see the point of that," said Lord Crabstairs. "'Turn about is fair play.'"

"That would be no turn about at all," said Doris; "but we have no time to argue this matter, for Dolor Tripp will get down to the water's edge and find nobody to bring her over. So, as I command the *Merry Chanter*, and everybody in it, I am obliged to say to you, Lord Crabstairs, that you cannot go after that young woman unless the butcher is willing."

It struck me that this was a moment when a word from me seemed to be called for, but I could not make up my mind what sort of word to speak.

Lord Crabstairs made a very low bow. "Madam," said he, "I submit; and I will go find the butcher and see if he will give me his chance."

In about a minute the butcher appeared from below, and made instant preparations to descend into the boat which was tied to the schooner's stern. "It will be much better," he said, "for some one who knows her to go after her. She may not like to be brought over by a stranger."

"Know her! Stranger! Bedad, I like that!" ejaculated Lord Crabstairs, as the butcher rowed away. "He rows very well for a butcher, now, doesn't he? I don't believe a man who rows as well as that can be a very good butcher. Now, do you, madam?"

"I do declare," exclaimed Doris, without paying any

attention to this inquiry, "she really does seem delighted to see him! And I am so glad she has on that pretty straw hat. I was afraid she would come in her black-and-white sunbonnet."

The shore was but a short distance away, and very soon Dolor Tripp was on board the *Merry Chanter*. She was cordially received by the owners, the four captains, and the passengers, and shook hands all round.

"And now," cried Doris, "we must up anchor, hoist sail, and be away without loss of time. I long to be out on the rolling deep."

But Captain Timon shook his head. "The tide doesn't serve this mornin', madam," said he.

"Oh, bother the tide!" cried Doris. "I never saw anything like it. But I beg you will make a start the instant it does serve." And with this she took Dolor Tripp down below to show her the arrangements that had been made for her accommodation.

Lord Crabstairs, who was an active fellow, now mounted aloft to compel the truant cock to get down from its elevated position in the rigging, while the schoolmaster, carrying the sandpiper in its cage, appeared on deck and proceeded to give the usual morning attentions to the wounded bird.

The butcher, his hands in his pockets and an expression of earnest thought on his face, came after me. Meeting me at the extreme stern of the vessel, he said in a low voice: "Do you know that I have got some ideas about this schooner? We have been lying here more than three days, and in all that time I don't believe she's moved around with the tide any more than that stump there on shore has moved around

with it. Tide in and tide out, twice a day each way, and she's been lying here with her bowsprit pointing out to sea and her rudder pointing in to shore, with never a shift one way or the other. Now, it stands to reason, I take it, that if a schooner like this could move with the tide she would move with it; and as she doesn't move with it, it stands to reason she can't move with it."

"I never thought of that!" I exclaimed in surprise. "But, since you speak of it, I believe it is so. What do you suppose it means?"

"Means?" replied the butcher, looking around him and speaking in lower tones. "I'll tell you what I believe it means. I think that we are stuck fast to the bottom of this bay. When they first came in they put out their anchor, and then the schooner, most likely, swung around on to a sand-bar, and stuck tight and fast. If she hasn't done that, what's to hinder her moving with the tide?"

"But the captains?" I said. "If the ship were aground they would mention it. They would do something."

"They are not much on the mention," said the butcher, "and as to do, they've been hoping every high tide would float her off. I would have been on deck this morning when the Dolor sister showed on shore if I hadn't been listening to the cap'ns' talk about some particular high tide that comes with a particular quarter of the moon. I was called off, and didn't make out what quarter it was, but I believe they're waiting for it."

"If that is the case," said I, "I hope most earnestly that it is not far off."

"There's no knowing," said the butcher, rather lugubriously. "I don't care to ask 'em about it, for it's their business to sail the ship, not mine. But there's one thing I do know, and that is, when an old schooner like this, with some seventy cart-loads of paving-stones inside of her, and barnacles outside that will weigh about as much, settles on a sand-bank, she'll want a special high tide to come along at its earliest convenience if she ever expects to float at all."

I gazed gloomily over the stern. The little boat was gently pulling at her painter as the tide impelled her seaward, but the *Merry Chanter* kept its position like a Horse Guard on sentry duty. "At any rate," I said, "it will be of no use to worry the ladies with our conjectures."

"I am with you there," said the butcher. "It wouldn't be my way to trouble them or anybody else. But it strikes me that we'll find things pretty crooked when we eat up all our provisions before we've sailed an inch to Boston, and the news gets around that we're aground in Shankashank Bay, and Mrs. Bodship comes after the schoolmaster, and either carries him off, and perhaps Cap'n Cyrus too, or else stays on board herself, which would be an everlasting sight worse, and the Alwilda sister and the Lizeth sister come after Dolor Tripp, and Lord Crabstairs gets kidnapped for the family debts while wandering on shore."

CHAPTER X

LORD CRABSTAIRS AND THE BUTCHER MAKE AN AGREEMENT

When Dolor Tripp came on deck after breakfast on the morning of her arrival on board the *Merry Chanter* she was in a state of intense delight with her surroundings. She was going to sea in a ship! She had been on the bay in a boat, but never on the sea in a ship! And what was this for—and that? And how different the air was, even such a little way from shore!

When Doris told her how we came to own the *Merry Chanter*, and had talked to her about the four captains, and about the butcher, and about Lord Crabstairs, and about the schoolmaster, Dolor Tripp declared that that ship was the most interesting place she had ever been in in her whole life.

She was in no hurry to start, and was perfectly willing to wait for the tide. Being on board the ship was joy enough for the present. She asked questions about every part of the vessel; and although the four captains would have been the proper persons to answer these questions, these experienced mariners were not allowed the opportunity of so doing. Lord Crabstairs

and the butcher always happened to be near at hand when Dolor Tripp wanted to know anything; and sometimes both answered her question in the same instant, while sometimes one got a little ahead of the other.

Toward noon, however, I noticed that Dolor Tripp was walking about the after portion of the ship accompanied only by Lord Crabstairs, and soon afterward I found that he and the butcher had come to an agreement on the subject. A chalk line had been drawn across the deck midway between the bow and the stern, and it had been settled that Lord Crabstairs should explain to Dolor Tripp everything aft of that line, while the butcher should have the privilege of being her guide over that portion of the schooner which lay forward of the line. By this amicable arrangement annoying interferences would be avoided.

Lord Crabstairs, with his glowing, ruddy face, and his sparkling blue eyes, was in a very good humor as he told his companion everything he knew about the after portion of the ship, and a great deal, I am sure, that he did not know. But want of knowledge did not interfere in the least with the fluency of his merry talk, nor with her enjoyment.

For some time the butcher had been below, but now he came up and informed Doris and me that he had been consulting with Captain Cyrus, and getting as much information as possible in regard to foremasts and bowsprits, with their attachments and surroundings, so that when his turn to guide the young woman should come he would be able to give her points that might be depended upon. When he and Lord Crabstairs had tossed up for the two portions into which

the ship had been divided by the chalk line he had been very glad that the bow end had fallen to him.

"Passengers," said he, "are mostly at sterns, and bows are newer to them. And, besides, the Merry Chanter is on my end, and I intend to come out strong on that dilapidated old party. I think she's the kind of young woman to take to things that are on the romantic."

But he did not intend to begin with her as soon as Lord Crabstairs had finished. No, indeed! He was too deep for that! He would take her when she was fresh, and not so bored with ropes and spars that she did not wish to hear such things even so much as mentioned.

It was yet early in the afternoon, and we were enjoying ourselves idly on deck, some reading, some smoking and talking, and nearly all of us in the shade of the mainsail, which had been partly hoisted to serve the purpose of an awning. Even the butcher was content to gaze quietly out at sea, for, in his opinion, Dolor Tripp had not yet sufficiently recovered from her ordeal of the morning properly to enjoy his interesting accounts of the nautical objects forward of the chalk line. Suddenly there came from landward a shrill voice; and the voice cried, "Do—lo——r!"

Instantly we all sprang to our feet, bobbed under the boom, and ran for the stern of the schooner. On shore, close to the water's edge, stood a woman in a black-and-white sunbonnet, who was easily recognized by those who had seen her before as Lizeth of the poultry-yard.

Again came the voice across the water: "Dol—or! Are you on that ship?"

Dolor Tripp stood on tiptoe and showed herself well above the bulwarks. "Don't you see me, Lizeth?" she cried.

The distance between the ship and the shore was not great, and as there was but little wind, the clear, high voices of the sisters were distinctly heard across the intervening space.

"Where-are-you-going?" cried Lizeth.

"I-am-going-to-Boston," replied her sister.

"How-long-do-you-expect-to-stay?" cried Lizeth.

Dolor Tripp turned to Doris. "How long do you think," she said, "that the ship will stay in Boston? You know I want to come back in it."

"I really do not know," was the answer, "but we shall certainly stay long enough to take on board some barrels of flour."

Then Dolor Tripp turned her face shoreward, and hailed her sister. "I-do-not-know," she cried. "It-depends-on-flour."

"What-flour?" screamed Lizeth.

Dolor Tripp turned inquiringly. "Minnesota Family Joy," said I, for want of better information to give.

"Min-ne-so-ta-Fam-i-ly-Joy," screamed Dolor Tripp.

Lizeth did not immediately resume her questions, but after a few moments' thought she cried, "Why-don't-you-start?"

"There-is-some-thing-the-matter-with-the-tide," replied Dolor Tripp.

Here there was another pause in this high-strung conversation, and several persons on board the *Merry Chanter* looked at one another and smiled.

Lizeth now called out again, "Will-you-get-me-in-

Boston-four-yards-of-the-inch-wide-black-and-white-ribbon?"

"I-will!" cried Dolor Tripp. "Does-Alwilda-know-I've-gone?"

"Yes," called back Lizeth. "She's-begun-painting-you-on-the-dining-room-wall. You-are-stretched-out-drowned-on-the-sea-shore. Your-face-is-all-soaked-and-there's-little-slimy-green-weeds-flappin'-against-it. She-was-just-beginnin'-to-paint-a-puddle-under-you-when-I-came-away. Good-by!"

"Now, isn't that mean?" said Dolor Tripp, turning a troubled countenance toward us; and then, suddenly recollecting herself, she called after her departing sister a shrill "Good-by!"

"I notice," remarked the butcher, as he cast a severe look shoreward, "that she didn't say anything about the weeds and the puddle till she'd got in her black-and-white ribbon."

In order to dissipate from her mind all thoughts of the dismal picture of herself which was in course of creation upon the dining-room wall of her home, the butcher now invited Dolor Tripp to allow him to show her that portion of the *Merry Chanter* which lay forward of the chalk line. The invitation was accepted, and from the general appearance of things forward I think that Dolor Tripp's enjoyment was troubled by no visions of soaked countenances.

The captains were on the forecastle, and as they all knew something about Dolor Tripp or her family, they had frequent snatches of talk about her. Lord Crabstairs and the schoolmaster took to wandering about the bow, but the former never uttered a word. He had agreed that the butcher should take charge

of the lady on this part of the ship, and he religiously forbore to speak.

When the butcher and his fair companion leaned over the extreme bow, and he began to describe and descant upon the wooden figure of the Merry Chanter, Doris, who had gone forward, requested permission to listen, which being cheerfully granted, we all gathered about the speaker.

It is astonishing how well that butcher talked about our old figurehead. He let himself out splendidly about roaring winds and mountain waves, and driving rain and freezing sleet, and banks of blinding fog, and yet ever that right arm, or what there was left of it, was stuck straight out, and that head was thrown back boldly, and that mouth was open ready for song or shout, or to take in sea-water, as the case might be.

"He has been through it all, time and again," said the butcher, in conclusion, "and he is ready for it all over again, fair weather or foul, as long as those iron bolts through his body hold him fast to the ship."

"I love him already," cried Dolor Tripp; "and as soon as we begin to plough the waves I am going to stand in front here and see him do those things."

"Of course," remarked Captain Timon, "that will depend on the principal owner"—waving his hand toward Doris. "I have heard her say that she wanted to stand abaft the figurehead when there happened to be a good sea on."

"Oh, there will be room for us both," said Doris, who had already begun to take very kindly to Dolor Tripp.

CHAPTER XI

THE PROMENADE BATH

THE next morning, after breakfast, Captain Timon made a little speech to the assembled ship's company. "I feel bound," he said, "to tell you all that I've been disapp'inted in the wind an' the tide. They are two things which won't wait fur no man, but they're willin' enough to make any man wait fur them, an' that's not what I call the square thing."

"You are right there, captain," said Lord Crabstairs; "but the rascals have been at it all their lives, and it is too late to try to reform them."

"This schooner," continued the captain, "draws a leetle more water than we thought she did. You see, none of us ever sailed in her before, an' she draws a leetle more water than we thought she did. An' then ag'in, there's a leetle less water in this bay than there generally is at this season. You see, when we anchored here to get water out of that spring we didn't know that the ship drawed so much an' the bay was so low."

"Then," interrupted Lord Crabstairs, "you should get more water out of your spring and pour it into your bay."

Captain Timon joined in the laugh that followed this remark, and then went on:

"What we want is a high wind, pretty nigh to a gale, comin' in from sea along with the flood-tide. That will give us enough water to get out of this bay, an' then we're all right. That half-gale from the sou'east is what we're a-waitin' fur."

"That sort of gale," said the butcher, "most generally comes in the fall of the year."

"That is autumn, isn't it?" cried Lord Crabstairs. "Now, really, that is three months off!"

"If you'd sailed the sea as much as we have," said Captain Timon, addressing the butcher, "you'd have knowed that them gales blows whenever they've a mind to. That's their rule; whenever they've a mind to. Now, there's just two things we can do; an' one of them is to get a vessel that don't draw so much water. Cap'n Teel has got one to hire. She's a sloop, and a good one. He can bring her round here, an' we can put our stores into her, an' sail to Boston without no trouble at all."

At this point there was a general outcry. "Sail in another ship!" cried Doris. "Never! It is not the voyage to Boston I care about; it is the voyage there in our *Merry Chanter*."

I joined in the remonstrance. Lord Crabstairs vowed that he was in no hurry, and could wait for a wind as long as anybody else. And Dolor Tripp asserted with considerable warmth that if she could not sail behind that bold wooden singer of the sea she did not wish to sail at all.

The butcher had been gazing intently upon first one and then another of us; and when Dolor Tripp

had said her say he spoke out fully and definitely. "I stick to the ship," said he.

The schoolmaster made no remark. He was not now so uneasy as he had been at first, but it was plain enough that he wished to sail away, no matter in what vessel.

"Well, then," continued Captain Timon, "as none of you seems to want to leave the schooner, there's another thing you can do: you can just make yourselves comfortable an' wait fur the gale with a flood-tide. Some of you can take the boat an' go fishin'; some of you can walk about on shore; an' if any of you wants to hire a horse, you can do it over there in the village. If there's a special high tide when you are not aboard, I'll just run the schooner out into deeper water an' fire a gun and wait fur you."

This plan was instantaneously agreed upon, and to prove that we were perfectly contented with the *Merry Chanter*, we all set about to amuse ourselves.

Lord Crabstairs went to look after his poultry. These were mostly scattered about the deck, none of them having courage to fly overboard; but some had gone out on the bowsprit, and the truant cock was still in the rigging. His master had vainly endeavored to coax him down, and was obliged to put his corn on the crosstrees, where it was contentedly pecked up. Doris applied herself to the care of her little chicks and their mother; three of the captains went ashore in the boat; the butcher was making some remarks to me in regard to the improbability of the schooner's moving from her present position without leaving behind her her hold, her paving-stones, and her bar-

nacles; and what Dolor Tripp was looking at in the water I do not know, but suddenly her little boots, in which she was standing tiptoe, slipped backward, and in an instant she disappeared over the side of the vessel.

I gave a shout and rushed for the spot where she had been leaning over the bulwark. Doris, startled by the great splash, was by my side in a moment. Looking down with pallid faces, we saw below us what appeared like the surface of a boiling pot some five feet wide. Out of the tossing turmoil of the water now arose the dripping head, shoulders, and arms of Dolor Tripp, who had succeeded in struggling to her feet, and who stood upright, puffing and blowing the water from her mouth, wildly waving her hands, and endeavoring to scream.

In the next instant there were two great splashes, and the butcher and Lord Crabstairs went overboard. Each of them was under water for an instant, and then, emerging upright, they swashed toward the dripping maiden, and each took her by an arm.

"You are as safe now," exclaimed Lord Crabstairs, sputtering as he spoke, "as if you were high and dry on shore."

"Unless we sink in the sand," said the butcher.

But Dolor Tripp paid no attention to similes and suppositions. "Oh, get me out!" she cried. "Get me out!"

Those of us who were on deck soon discovered that it would not be easy to get her out. There was one broad ladder with hand-rails by which we descended into or ascended from the one boat which belonged to the *Merry Chanter*, and this ladder had been taken

ashore in the boat by the three captains who had gone for fuel, and who proposed to use it when sawing off such lower branches of trees as might be small enough to suit their purpose. The idea that anybody might want the ladder while they were gone never entered the minds of these wood-cutting mariners.

Captain Teel, who was left on board, was not very fertile in expedients. He proposed hauling up the young woman by means of a rope; and when the butcher declared that if this were done she would be cut to pieces by the barnacles, the captain suggested that if a spar were put out at an angle, with one end held down to the bottom and the other resting on the side of the vessel, she might climb on board without touching the barnacles.

This proposition meeting with no approval, the captain stated that the proper thing to do was to put a block and tackle out at the end of a boom and haul her up that way, but that as he was the only seaman on board, he did not like to undertake this job by himself. He might put a barrel of fish on board that way, but it would take a good deal of careful hauling and steering to prevent a dangling young woman from getting bumped. He rather guessed that the boat would be back pretty soon, and that the best thing to do would be to wait for it.

This seemed like hard lines for Dolor Tripp, and I suggested that the three should wade to shore.

"They can't do that," said Captain Teel. "The water is deeper nearer shore than it is just here. If they go a dozen yards from the schooner it will be over their heads. We've made soundin's."

"I suppose," said Doris to the group in the water,

"that you will have to wait till the boat comes; but you ought to walk about to keep from taking cold."

"Very good," said Lord Crabstairs; and releasing his hold upon Dolor Tripp, he offered his arm in the usual fashion. The butcher, on her other side, did the same, and the three began their walk through the water.

"You can go all around the ship," said Captain Teel, "if you don't get too far away from her, and I guess you'll find the bottom pretty hard and smooth."

The tide was very low, the water being not more than waist-deep for the men and below the shoulders of Dolor Tripp; but it was quite deep enough to make walking a very slow performance. But as the young woman put perfect faith in the ability of her protectors, and as the two men were greatly pleased to have this opportunity of aiding and protecting her, the spirits of the little party recovered their usual level as they pushed their way through the water. On deck, Doris and I, with Captain Teel and the schoolmaster, kept pace with them, the latter carrying a plank which he intended to hurl to or upon Dolor Tripp in case of danger, such as a tidal wave or an attack by sharks.

"I like it ever so much!" cried Dolor Tripp to Doris. "It is a promenade bath. The water is warm and lovely."

Reaching the bow of the ship, Dolor Tripp looked up at the Merry Chanter.

"I never expected," she said, "to be under him and look at him from the sea. I wonder if I could climb up to him by this anchor-chain?"

"Don't try it, miss," said Lord Crabstairs. "If you

ever climb up to anybody, don't let it be to a wooden-headed old party like that."

"When it comes to that sort of thing," said the butcher, "the climbing will be the other way."

Perhaps Dolor Tripp did not understand this remark, for she made no answer to it. As they moved on she said:

"How gently these little waves lap up against us! Do you gentlemen believe in mind-waves?"

"I don't know what they are," said the butcher.

"If you mean a wavering of the mind," answered Lord Crabstairs, "I have had it often; particularly when I bought my last cow. I wavered between Alderney and Ayrshire for nearly a month, and, after all, I bought a Devon."

"Oh, it isn't anything like that," said the young woman. "It is a sort of understanding between minds that are far away from each other. It comes along in a sort of airy waves, something like these ripples, I suppose, and the thoughts and feelings of one friend go to another ever so far off."

"Oh, I know what it is!" cried Lord Crabstairs. "You can do it with snails. You go to China and take a she-snail with you, and I stay here with a he-snail, or vice versa. I can go to China with either, and you can keep the other—"

"Do they have to be a married couple, to begin with?" interrupted the butcher.

"What! The people?" cried Lord Crabstairs.

"No, the snails," said the butcher.

"Yes," replied the other. "I forgot to say they must be a pair, so that there shall be a sympathy between them." Then, again addressing the lady:

"You have one snail and I the other one, and we've got the whole world between us. Whichever of us wishes to communicate with the other takes a pin and jabs his or her snail, as the case may be, and in that very same instant the other snail wiggles."

"Horrible!" cried Dolor Tripp. "If I had to do that I would never communicate."

"I don't believe it hurts them," said Lord Crabstairs. "The least little bit of a prick will do. And we could get up a jab alphabet: one short jab, a long jab, two short jabs, with a rest between them—three long jabs, a rest and a short jab, and so on."

"I never would do it," said Dolor Tripp, firmly. "I wouldn't even watch wiggles that were made by pins in China."

The butcher did not wish to be left out of this conversation. "That must be pretty much the same thing," he said, "as is the case with the legs of frogs. You catch a dozen frogs, and put their hind legs on a plate, all skinned and ready to be cooked, arranged in a circle with their toes pointing out like the spokes in a wheel, and then you sprinkle some salt on them, and every one of those legs begins to kick. If you never saw it before you'll drop the plate."

"That is not like my snails at all!" cried Lord Crabstairs. "A person in China couldn't sprinkle salt on frog-legs here. If he were near enough to do that he might as well talk. I don't see any sense in that sort of thing, even allowing that your frog-legs do kick."

"I don't see any sense in the other sort of thing," said the butcher, "even if your snails do wiggle."

At this Dolor Tripp declared that her correspondence should always be either by letter or by tele-

graph ; and she began to wonder when the boat would return. We all strained our eyes shoreward, but nothing could be seen of the nautical wood-cutters, and the three in the water were obliged to continue their stroll around the vessel.

Captain Teel now made a joke which for some time had been resolving itself into form in his mind. "She calls it a promenade bath," he said, with a subdued giggle, "but to me it looks a good deal more like a promenade baptize. That butcher in his shirt looks just like a minister with a pair of uncommon sinners."

I had noticed that every time the party passed under the bow the butcher looked very attentively at his disengaged arm, which hung down by his side. Having caught my eye, he now turned back a little, and held up his hand with his forefinger and thumb separated about two inches. He then pointed toward the surface of the water, and after that let his arm drop again.

The meaning of this pantomime was very plain to me. He had been measuring the depth of the water by some mark on his sleeve, and the tide had risen two inches. He wanted me to know that he was getting uneasy. I began to grow uneasy also. I would have been better pleased had not the butcher always chosen me as the recipient of his forebodings.

But there was no reason for anxiety, for, as the hour for dinner drew nigh, the three captains emerged from the woods, two of them carrying the ladder and the other a bundle of sticks. Dolor Tripp and her companions were then near the bow of the vessel, and concealed from view of persons on shore. By the time the boat had nearly reached the schooner the

three water-walkers came around the bow, and there never were more astonished mariners than our captains when they beheld the three heads and shoulders which apparently floated toward them. Captain Cyrus, who held the tiller, was so startled that he nearly fell overboard, and in their sudden consternation the two others allowed a few words of the swearing variety to escape from their lips—the first we had heard from them since they had entered our service.

"Now, you see," said Lord Crabstairs to Dolor Tripp, "if those sailors had taken a snail with them and we had had a snail, we could have let them know what was the matter, and they would have turned back immediately and taken us out of the water. Every ship should carry a lot of snails, in case the people on board get separated."

The butcher shrugged his shoulders, but evidently saw no way of bringing his frogs' legs to the fore.

Our friends were soon on board and in dry clothes, and when the butcher appeared on deck he took me to one side and remarked: "As I was walking round this ship I made up my mind it wouldn't be long before her barnacles grew down into the sand-bank—that is, if they grow that way; and when that happens, and taking into consideration the seventy cart-loads of paving-stones in her hold, she'll have a pretty strong foundation. But of course there's no use saying anything of that kind to the ladies, especially if they're beginning to feel as if they'd like to be getting on to Boston."

CHAPTER XII

DOLOR TRIPP TAKES US UNDER HER WING

THE gloomy remarks of the butcher in regard to the permanency of the *Merry Chanter's* position had a certain effect upon me. I did not agree with him, for I had full faith in the knowledge and experience of our skipper, and believed that when the exceptional gale and the exceptional tide came along together our ship would float off the sand-bank and sail out of Shankashank Bay. But the continual allusions of the butcher to our barnacles and our seventy cart-loads of paving-stones could but depress me. It would require such a very high tide and such a very strong gale to move us. As we had started for Boston, I wanted to go there.

Doris, to my surprise, appeared to have become reconciled to the delay. Of course, as she had started for Boston, she wanted to go there; but, as she several times remarked, she did not wish to be unreasonable. She knew there were many delays connected with voyages on sailing-vessels, such as calms, head-winds, and the like, and she supposed the cause of our present detention was equivalent to a calm. With this view Captain Timon coincided.

She had begun to feel at home in Shankashank Bay, and so long as she had to stay she determined to make

the best of it. And in this resolve she was joined by the rest of the ship's company.

Lord Crabstairs could sing a good song, and he sang a great many. The butcher had a deep and earnest voice, and with this he joined in choruses. The rest of us also did our duty in this line, according to our abilities. The schoolmaster conducted spelling-bees; Doris told stories, which she did excellently well; and I delivered one lecture on "The Analysis of Lava." The only person, however, who appeared to be much interested in the subject was Lord Crabstairs, who inquired if there were any volcanoes near Boston. I think this question was inspired by a glimmer of hope in regard to the lifting of the hereditary debts of his family; for when I told him that there were no volcanoes near the port to which we were bound, he fixed his eyes upon the back of Dolor Tripp, and, I am sure, gave no further thought to lava.

On the second day after the water promenade a picnic on shore was proposed; and immediately after dinner the two ladies, with myself, the butcher, Lord Crabstairs, and the schoolmaster, went on shore. The latter declined at first to be of our party, for fear that Mrs. Bodship might catch sight of him; but as the butcher lent him a gown and a high silk hat, he was convinced that he might go with us without danger of being recognized—at least, at a distance. He took with him the sandpiper in its cage; for, although the bird was well on its way to recovery, he considered it not yet able to take care of itself.

Our plan was to go some distance inland, eat our supper at an appropriate rural spot, and, returning to the shore at the close of the day, take a moonlight row

on Shankashank Bay. This was to be long or short, according to our pleasure, and when it was over we would return to the *Merry Chanter*. We invited any of the captains who chose to accompany us, but they all declined. The exceptional gale might come in with the tide, and in that case they should all be on board to take the schooner out into deeper water.

We rambled about two miles inland, and our little excursion was enjoyed by all of us until we were preparing to return to the shore after having eaten our supper. Then a sudden rain-storm burst upon us, and we ceased to enjoy the excursion. Hastily gathering up our baskets and wraps, we ran for the nearest house; but as this was about a quarter of a mile away, we were well wet before we got there.

Even when we reached it we found it a poor place of refuge. It was a very small house, and there was nobody at home but a boy and girl, who, I am sure, would not have admitted us if we had knocked at the main door. But as we rushed pell-mell into the kitchen from the back of the house, they had no option in regard to our entrance. The girl, however, locked the door of the front or best room, so that we should not go in there with our wet feet and clothes, and we were obliged to bestow ourselves as well as we could in the little kitchen, in which there was one chair. There was no fire, and the girl declared there was no need of making one until her mother came with the supper, and that she would not come until the rain was over. Had we been able to discover any fuel we would have made the fire ourselves; but as we saw none, we merely stood about and grumbled.

The heavy clouds which had come up so fast from

behind the woods in which we had supped brought darkness upon us at least an hour before we expected it, and the rain continued to fall steadily. When we had spent half an hour or more in the dismal little kitchen, Dolor Tripp spoke up.

"It will never do to stay here," she said. "We shall take our deaths of cold. Our house is not a mile away, and the best thing we can do is to go there. We are so wet now that we might as well be wetter, and when we get to the house we can warm and dry ourselves and stay until the rain is over."

The suggestion was accepted instantly, and heaping coals of fire upon the heads of the youngsters by giving them some small change, we tramped out into the storm. Dolor Tripp declared that, dark as it was, she knew she could find the way, for the road to her home was a moderately direct one, having but few turns; and, supported by Lord Crabstairs and the butcher, she led the way.

The road might have been direct enough and smooth enough if we could have kept in the middle of it; but the sides on which, without intending it, we did most of our walking were very rough, and as we frequently ran against the fences on either side, Dolor Tripp declared that she believed that the roads were a good deal narrower by night than by day. But during our slow and stumbling progress we cheered ourselves with two reflections—we were getting nearer and nearer to a sheltering roof, and the exercise was keeping us from taking cold.

After walking for what seemed to me a very long time, Dolor Tripp remarked that she believed that she had passed a fork in the road where we should

have turned to the right, and that we must go back a little. We went back ; but after stumbling and splashing and peering about for nearly a quarter of an hour, our guide said that she now believed we had not passed the fork, and we might as well keep on.

We kept on and on and on, and at last we came to a fork,—which the butcher discovered,—and then we turned to the right. The rain now began to slacken, the clouds grew a little thinner, and a diluted and shadowed moonlight enabled us better to find our way. I asserted that I believed it would be well to change our course, and, instead of going to the Tripp house, turn shoreward and get back to the schooner as soon as possible.

This proposition, however, met with no favor. The others declared that as the road to the shore would from this point lead us over fields and sand-hills, we should be lost, and should miserably perish ; whereas, from the Tripp house to the boat-landing we all knew the way, which, moreover, we need not take until we had dried ourselves and rested.

We therefore pressed on ; and as we could now see the roadway, which, although sloppy, was comparatively smooth, we made fair progress, and after a time the house of our destination loomed up dark before us. As we made our way to the front gate Dolor Tripp remarked : "Of course they are abed and asleep, for they always go to bed early, and the gate must be locked."

"But I hope they will get up and open it," said I.

"Not Alwilda and Lizeth," she said. "You wouldn't think that if you knew them. They wouldn't unlock the gate after dark, even if they were up ; and as to

getting out of bed to do it, they'd let Queen Victoria stand here and wait till morning."

For some time I had been in a bad humor, and I now felt very much provoked. "It might have been well," I said, "if you had thought of all this before you brought us here."

"I did, partly," said Dolor Tripp. "That is, I thought it would be just as well that they should be in bed and asleep when we got here, for I know Alwilda will talk dreadfully to me about going to Boston, and perhaps talk me out of it; but I didn't happen to think that if they were not up we might not get in."

"There is no need bothering about the gate," quickly spoke up the butcher. "I can make an opening in this fence, and not hurt it, either. And when we get inside the yard I expect we can find some window or door unfastened. There always is in country houses."

Dolor Tripp replied that if he did not hurt the fence she thought that would be a good plan, and in a few minutes the butcher had felt along the fence and found a place where the pales were somewhat loose by reason of age. He and Lord Crabstairs then pulled five or six of them from their bottom fastenings and pushed them to one side, so that the party easily entered.

The butcher enjoined us to make as little noise as possible. It was natural that he should not wish to wake up a woman who might talk Dolor Tripp into not going to Boston. Then he said he would go by himself round the house and try the shutters and doors.

"You needn't do that," said Dolor Tripp. "There isn't a door or a window on the lower floor that isn't bolted, or locked, or barred, or screwed up."

There was a little murmur among us. The rain had almost ceased, but we were tired, wet, and miserable, and what we wanted above all things was to rest ourselves before a fire. The situation was disheartening, and as for Doris and me, we did not care whether the sisters were wakened or not, so that we got in and were warmed.

"I'll knock at the door," said I, "and make some one come down and open it."

Dolor Tripp held up a warning hand. "Don't do that," she said. "Alwilda has a gun. I've thought of a way to get in. Do you see that pine-tree at the corner of the house? That is the tree that I expected the burglars to climb up when I used to sit and watch for them. And if a burglar could do it, I should think some one else could; and then he could easily push up the sash of that window and get in, and go through the room into the hall and down the stairs, and take down the bar from this door and unlock it, and let us in."

"I'll do it!" said the butcher, the moment she had finished speaking; and, without delay, he advanced toward the tree.

"I would climb up and go in myself," said Lord Crabstairs, "but I am not sure that I understand these American houses."

The butcher took off his gown, which clung to him like a wet shroud, and casting it upon the grass, he began to ascend the tree. This he did easily and rapidly, the horizontal branches affording him convenient hold for foot and hand. Very soon he was inside the house, and we listened anxiously, fearing that we might hear a noisy stumbling and the report

of Alwilda's gun. But we heard no noise at all; and after what seemed an unnecessarily protracted period of waiting, the front door quietly opened.

"I didn't strike the stairs at first," whispered the butcher, "and I went too far along that upper hall; but when I came against a door that was partly open I knew I was wrong, and turned back."

"Mercy!" gasped Dolor Tripp. "That was their room!"

We all now entered, and the butcher gently closed the door behind us. There was an unshuttered window at the other end of the hall, through which came enough dim light to enable us faintly to discern one another and surrounding objects.

"I'll go first," whispered Dolor Tripp, "and take you to the old part of the house."

So saying, she led us, all stepping as softly as we could, to the transverse hall, and along this to a large open door, through which we passed and went down three steps into another hall. This was very short; and opening a door at the end of it, Dolor Tripp ushered us into a large room, into which the moonbeams, now grown brighter, came through a small unshuttered window high up in the wall.

Dolor Tripp, who seemed to be used to doing things in semi-darkness, took down an iron candlestick from the mantelpiece, and asked if anybody had a match. One was immediately produced by Lord Crabstairs, and the candle was lighted.

"Now," said she, holding the light above her head, "this is the kitchen of the old house. Part of the old house was torn down to make room for the new one, which is pretty old itself, but this kitchen was left. If

some one will close that door we shall be entirely shut off from the rest of the house, and then we need not be so particular about keeping quiet."

I did not care a snap whether this part of the house was old or new, but I saw before me a great, old-fashioned fireplace with some charred logs lying upon the iron andirons, and at one end of the hearth a pile of fire-wood. This was what we had come for. We fell to work, and in ten minutes a great fire was blazing and crackling, the wet wraps of the ladies were removed, and we all gathered around the hearth, which fortunately was large enough to accommodate the six of us. It is astonishing how the genial heat dried our shoes and clothes and raised our spirits.

The schoolmaster and the butcher sat at the corners of the fireplace, and they were very well placed indeed. The former took off his gown and hung it on a crane that extended from one side of the great fireplace. He wished to have it dry enough to put on when he went out. It was not probable that Mrs. Bodship would be rambling about the country at night, but he wanted to feel quite safe.

"Now, then," said Doris, "if we only had some good hot tea we ought to be perfectly happy."

"And something to eat," added Lord Crabstairs. "I, for one, am half famished."

"You can have both tea and something to eat," said Dolor Tripp. "We have used this kitchen as a storeroom for the things we buy in quantities. In that cupboard is a box of tea, and there is sugar and salt and spices, and a barrel of flour."

"We can't do anything with flour and salt without waiting ever so long," said Doris.

"I feel as if I could eat them without baking," said Lord Crabstairs.

"You needn't do that," said Dolor Tripp. "I can go quietly to the other end of the house, where the pantry is. There is always something to eat there. But first let us boil the kettle. If you, sir, will move your gown a little farther to the back of the crane, there is a kettle here which we can hang over the fire."

Under her direction, the butcher, with as little noise as possible, pumped some water from a cistern under the kitchen, and when the kettle was filled and over the fire, the two ladies got down some cups, saucers, and a tea-pot from the shelves of a dresser which seemed to be filled with old-time pottery.

Then Dolor Tripp started to go to the pantry. "I will blow out the candle," she said, "and take it with me. Then I will light it when I get there. They are very hard to wake, but a light passing through the house might do it. You folks won't mind sitting here in the firelight?"

Of course we did not mind, and Doris offered to go with her. The two opened the kitchen door and went out into the little hall. In a moment they returned.

"What do you think?" said Doris, in an excited undertone. "The door at the top of the steps that lead into the main building is fastened, and we cannot open it!"

In great surprise we all rose to our feet and looked toward Dolor Tripp, that she might tell us what to think. "Is there a spring-lock on the door?" I asked.

"No," said she, "there is no spring-lock, and we did not close the door after us. We shut only this kitchen door. But I know who did it," she added quietly. "It was the ghost. It is one of its ways to lock and bolt doors."

CHAPTER XIII

THE PIE GHOST

"THE ghost!" exclaimed Doris, with a quick grasp upon the arm of Dolor Tripp.

"I was sure of it!" said the butcher, looking straight in front of him and speaking very decidedly. "I saw something white moving in the front hall as I came down the stairs. I knew it for a ghost, but I didn't say anything, for I didn't suppose it would meddle with six people."

"Fiddle-faddle!" said Lord Crabstairs. "There are no such things as ghosts." And with this opinion I coincided. The schoolmaster said nothing. He resumed his seat at the side of the fireplace, and rearranged his gown upon the crane so as to expose all parts of it to the heat. It might be necessary to put it on suddenly.

"There is no mistake about this ghost," said Dolor Tripp. "If you will all sit down till the kettle boils I will tell you about it."

We resumed our seats in front of the fire, and the butcher put on some fresh sticks.

"It has been in this house," said Dolor, still holding the unlighted candle, "ever since I first came here, a

little girl only ten years old. I soon began to see it, though I don't believe it often saw me."

"Didn't it frighten you nearly to death?" asked Doris.

"No," replied the other. "At first I thought it belonged to the house just as much as any of the other queer things which I found here, and there seemed to be no reason why I should be frightened at one thing more than at another."

"What did your sisters say about it?" asked Doris.

"They didn't say anything," replied the other. "I soon began to believe that they didn't know anything about it, and I was afraid that if I told them they would have something done to drive it out of the house."

We all looked at her in amazement. "And you did not want that?" asked Lord Crabstairs.

"No, indeed," replied Dolor Tripp. "I used to try to watch for it. I would go into different parts of the house at night and watch for it, hoping it would come by. Sometimes weeks and weeks would pass without my seeing it, and then I would get a glimpse of it on two or three nights in succession."

"What did it look like?" asked Doris.

"Its head was light or whitish, and below it gradually melted down into darkness."

"That was it," said the butcher. "That is exactly like the thing I saw."

"And you never, never told your sisters," said Doris, "that they were living in the house with a ghost?"

"No, indeed!" replied Dolor Tripp. "You see, before we came here we lived in a horrid little house in the town, and when it was decided by the court

that this place belonged to us nobody was so glad as I was. So, as I told you, I did not want Alwilda and Lizeth to do anything to drive the ghost away; but what I was most afraid of was that they might find that they couldn't get rid of it, and would go away themselves. I wouldn't have had that happen for anything in the world."

"And so," said Doris, "as the burglars would not come, you didn't want to lose the visits of a ghost."

"Perhaps so," replied Dolor Tripp. "And now the kettle is boiling, and we can have some tea, if we can't get anything else."

"As for ghosts," interjected Lord Crabstairs, "I never have believed in them, and never shall. But I do know that I am as hungry as a wolf; and if you'll allow me, miss, I'll push open that door, no matter who fastened it on the other side, and I'll go with you to the pantry, or anywhere else where there's bread and meat, and defend you against all comers, ghosts or otherwise."

"Oh, you must not do that!" exclaimed Dolor Tripp. "The door would be broken, and Alwilda and Lizeth would surely wake up."

"As for believing in ghosts," said the butcher, "a good deal depends upon who does the believing. If you've never had a chance of seeing ghosts, sir, you are out of the race."

The candle was now lighted, and cups of hot tea were served by the ladies. I hurriedly drank a cup, and then began to consider the situation. I went to the door at the top of the steps and tried it, thinking perhaps there might be a mistake in regard to its being fastened. But there had been no mistake. It was

locked, and the key was on the other side. I did not like to be fastened up against my will in any place or by any agency.

I now insisted that we should leave this place without delay, by window if there was no other outlet, and make our way to our boat.

"Oh, you can't get out," said Dolor Tripp, "until he unfastens the door. The window-sashes are all nailed and screwed fast, and the outside shutters and that back door are padlocked. Alwilda and Lizeth are very particular about having this kitchen secure from burglars. But you needn't worry. That door will be opened before long. The ghost always does that after making you wait a little while."

"I think it is rather jolly," said Doris, "to have a ghost for a jailer, though I can't really say I should like to have him come in and bring us a jug of water and a loaf of bread."

"If he will do that," said Lord Crabstairs, "I'll believe in him; although I don't care for the water, and should like him to fetch some meat or cheese with the bread."

Doris suddenly turned toward the schoolmaster. "What have you done with the sandpiper?" she said.

The butcher started. "You are not thinking of eating him?" he asked.

"Oh, no," said Doris, with a laugh. "We have not got so low as that yet, although I must admit that I also am awfully hungry. But talking of things to eat made me think of the bird, and I wondered what had become of it."

"I left the cage," said the schoolmaster, "just out-

side by the front door. I put my hat over it to keep the rain off the sandpiper."

Lord Crabstairs smote his knees with his hands and laughed. "Why, man," he cried, "that tall silk hat has blown forty miles across country by this time!"

The butcher looked at him severely. "That's all right," he said. "I should like to know how it could get out of this yard with such a high fence and no gate open. I don't believe it's raining, anyway; so you may feel sure, ma'am, that the sandpiper is comfortable."

At this moment there was a little noise at one of the windows, and turning my eyes in that direction, I saw the lower sash raised a couple of inches. I was about to spring toward the window when Doris, who had followed my glance, caught me by the coat.

Instantly we all rose to our feet, and as we looked at the window, beyond which we could see nothing, something like a young moon began to protrude itself through the opening under the sash. In a moment the lunar apparition had greatly increased in size and was a half-moon.

Dolor Tripp now made a quick step forward.

"Keep back, all of you," she said. "I know what it is." And going to the window, she took hold of the moon, and drawing it into the room, she held it up to us in all the glory of its fulness.

"A pumpkin-pie!" exclaimed Doris.

We gathered about it. It was of the largest size, and as yellow as gold. "Oh, delicious!" cried Doris. "Somebody get a knife."

"But where did it come from?" I asked.

"From the ghost, of course," replied Dolor Tripp.

"That is one of its ways. It leaves pies about. Several times when it has locked me into a room I've just waited quietly until I found the door unfastened, and there outside, just where I wouldn't step into it, there would be a little pie."

"A lovely ghost!" cried Lord Crabstairs. "I am converted. I believe in him. But this isn't a pie; it's a tart. Pies are made of meat."

"No, they are not," said the butcher; "at least, not punkin-pies. I should think I ought to know what things are made of meat."

"And I ought to know what things are made of fruits and vegetables," retorted Lord Crabstairs. "That is a tart!"

"I'll toss up to see who is right," said the butcher.

"Done!" said Lord Crabstairs, producing a penny.

"Heads!" cried the butcher.

It was tails.

"All right," said the butcher. "I'll take some of it, but all the same I never imagined that I should live long enough to eat punkin-tart!"

Dolor Tripp quickly cut the pie into six parts, but I would have none of it. I do not believe in ghosts, and will not eat food brought by them. I went to the window and endeavored to raise the sash higher, but could not do so. With all my strength I could not increase the width of the narrow aperture. One of the shutters was open, but the shadow of the main building and a growth of evergreen bushes made everything dark immediately outside.

I left the window, and walking quietly out of the kitchen into the little hall, I again tried the door at the top of the steps. To my delight, it was unfastened.

I stepped gently back, and looking in at the kitchen door, I caught the eye of the butcher, who was finishing his piece of pie. Without attracting the attention of the others, who were making some fresh tea, he came to me.

I whispered to him to follow. We went up the steps and through the door. We groped our way along the passage, turned into the main hall, opened the front door, and went out.

"It is no ghost," I said. "Let us go around the house and catch him!"

"I began to have my doubts," said the butcher. "The pie was too real."

As quietly as possible we walked along the front of the house and around the end of it, returning by the back toward the old kitchen. The moon gave us light enough to see our way until we reached the shaded corner by the window; but when we had slowly and gently pushed through the evergreens we found ourselves in almost total darkness, the little light that came from the candle within amounting to almost nothing. But although we could not expect to see an approaching figure, we might hear one, and we stood silently and waited.

But we did not wait long. Down from some region above came a light, misty spot like a will-o'-the-wisp. When it was about five feet from the ground it moved toward the kitchen window. I do not know what the butcher thought, but at this moment it occurred to me that perhaps, after all, it might be well not to interfere with this apparition. We really had no right to interfere, and we were ourselves intruders upon the premises. And whether it were a ghost, or a man, or

a woman, there was something in my nature, naturally sensitive, which prompted hesitation before actively interfering with the pursuits of another.

But I had no time properly to revolve this subject in my mind. The butcher reached out one hand and took me by the coat-sleeve. Following the impulse thus given, I moved with him toward the window, our feet making no noise upon the soft grass.

Against the faint light in the room, on the side of the window where the shutter was opened, we could see the top of a strangely formed head raised just high enough above the window-sill to enable its owner to look inside. The ghost was watching our friends!

There was a quick movement of the apparition; the butcher had seized it. In the next instant I also laid hold of it. Within my grasp I felt an arm, a human arm, quite firm and solid. Not a word was spoken; there was no struggle, no noise. Silently the butcher and I pulled our captive away from the window, through the overhanging evergreen boughs, and out into the moonlight.

There we discovered that we held a man, quite a small man, with a white cap on his head.

"Well, now," said he, looking from one to the other of us, "you have caught me, haven't you? And I must say you did it pretty neat. I knew it was risky, foolin' with sech a big party, but for the life of me I couldn't help it. Never sech a chance turned up before in this house!"

"But who are you?" said I.

"You are a stranger to me," replied the little man, "and you wouldn't know who I was if I told you. Now, this gentleman knows me, and I know him."

"You don't mean to say," exclaimed the butcher, "that you are—"

"Yes, I am," interrupted the other.

"And you are the ghost?"

"Now, tell me," asked the little man, "did she take me for a ghost? I always hoped she would, but I couldn't help feelin' sort of oncertain about it."

"She certainly did," answered the butcher.

"That's what I call real jolly!" said our prisoner, rubbing his hands. "Let's go in and have it all out. I guess I've served my time as a spook, and might as well come down to the level of common people."

As the butcher had released his hold of our prisoner, I did so likewise. The little man now started off, and went around the house to the front door. We followed, and he led us into the hall and along the passage to the kitchen. Entering abruptly, he stopped near the door, and exclaimed in a cheery voice, and without removing his cap: "Now, ladies and gentlemen, here's your ghost! What do you think of him?"

The party had been anxiously discussing our absence, and Lord Crabstairs and the schoolmaster were about to start out to look for us. They now all stood amazed, gazing wide-eyed at the new-comer.

Suddenly Dolor Tripp stepped forward. "Griscom Brothers!" she exclaimed.

"Yes," said the little man, "I am Griscom Brothers."

"In the name of common sense," said Doris, "please tell me what you two are talking about? Is this the pie ghost?"

"Yes, madam," said Griscom Brothers. "And not only pie, but bread, both wheat and Boston brown,

with rye to order; cakes of all kinds, especially home-made ginger; and family bakings and roasts on reasonable terms. In a word—Griscom Brothers."

"Of the village over there," added Dolor Tripp, in further explanation.

"Griscom Brothers," said the butcher, in a tone of confident affirmation.

All this was as surprising to me as it was to the others. As for Lord Crabstairs, he stood up very straight with his feet wide apart, and stared at Griscom Brothers.

"Now, really!" he exclaimed. "It is Brothers, is it? And the ghost of a baker, besides!"

"No, sir," spoke up quickly the little man. "I may be a baker ghost, but I am not the ghost of a baker; not yet."

"Are you two in one?" asked Lord Crabstairs. "If not, where is the other one of you?"

"My brother," said the little man, "who, with me, gave our business its firm-name, has been deceased for a long time."

"Then," said Lord Crabstairs, "Griscom Brothers is half dead, and has a right to be a half-ghost."

"Aha!" said the little man. "That's about right. Half the time I'm a baker, and half the time a ghost. And now, then, if you folks care to hear all about it, I'm ready to talk."

"Care to hear!" said Dolor Tripp. "I'm on pins and needles to hear!"

The fire was now built up afresh, and again we placed ourselves on our chairs, stools, and boxes about the hearth, Griscom Brothers having a place in the middle, between Dolor Tripp and Doris. I happened

to notice that in this arrangement the schoolmaster was left out, and was standing back of our half-circle. But as the schoolmaster was evidently a humble-minded person and did not appear to object to his position, I thought it wise not to disturb the company by interrupting the story which the baker had just begun.

CHAPTER XIV

WHAT GRISCOM BROTHERS GOT OUT OF A PUMPKIN-PIE

By the bright light of the fire I took a good look at Griscom Brothers. He appeared to be about fifty years old, with a merry countenance, small eyes, grizzly side-whiskers, and below his white paper cap a little curly, grizzly hair. It was plain that he liked to talk, and that he was well satisfied with his present position. "Now," said he, looking from side to side, "I know who you all are. You are the people from the schooner out here in the bay ; and as I've told you who I am, we may call ourselves acquainted, and I'll go on and tell about the ghost business without asking any questions of you ; at least, not now.

"I've often noticed," said he, giving himself a little twist in his chair, "that when a man sits down, fair and square, to tell a story, it happens time and again that the story don't step up to the mark as lively as it ought to, and when it does show itself, it isn't as much of a story as it was expected to be. I shouldn't wonder if my story should be that way ; but I'll take it by the nape of the neck and bring it right in, and let you folks see all there is of it.

"It was about twelve years ago, when my brother

died and my family got to be only me, that I found I didn't get sleep enough. You see that, being a baker, I am obliged to go to my work very early in the morning, mostly about three o'clock, and that if I don't get a good sleep in the first part of the night it will tell on me. You know, that sort of thing will tell on people. Now, the room I slept in after my family became so small was Mrs. Springer's second floor back, and every Tuesday night the Dorcas Society used to meet there, and them women kept up such a chattering from before dark to nobody knows how late at night, that I might as well try to make good bread of brick-clay as to sleep ; meaning no offence, of course," —turning from one to the other of the ladies,—"if either of you belongs to a Dorcas Society."

"Which I do not," said Doris, "and if I did I wouldn't mind."

"Now, you see," continued Griscom Brothers, "when a man loses his night's sleep on one night in the week, he is very like to get into the habit of losing it ; that's what I did, and couldn't stand it. At that time this house was empty, the law having not decided who it belonged to, and it came into my head that it would be a good thing to come over here and sleep. There would be no Dorcas Society here, or anything else to disturb me. So here I came, finding it easy to get in at one of these kitchen windows ; and I fixed up a bed in an upper room, and there I could sleep like a toad in a hole. Of course I didn't want to hurt Mrs. Springer's feelings, and I never said nothing to her about my not sleeping in the house. I went up-stairs every night at my reg'lar bedtime, and I rumpled up the bed and went away, Mrs. Springer not knowing

whether I left the house at three o'clock in the morning or nine o'clock at night. You see, I'm very spry at getting about without people seeing me; and to this day Mrs. Springer doesn't know that for the last twelve years I haven't slept in her house except on some very stormy nights."

"Paid for your room straight along, I guess," remarked the butcher.

"Yes, sir. As I didn't pay nothing here it was all right I should pay there. Well, after I had kept up this thing for two years, you and your sisters," turning to Dolor Tripp, "came here to live, and then you may be sure I had a hard nut to crack. I had become so accustomed to this big, quiet house that I didn't believe I could sleep under any other roof, and so I said to myself, 'I'll stay here, and these people sha'n't know it any more than Mrs. Springer does.' There's a loft over this kitchen which you can't get into except by that trap-door and a ladder, and so before you came here I put the ladder up into the loft, and put a bolt on the other side of the trap-door, which kept me private. I knew you wouldn't want to use the loft, and I thought I might as well have it as not."

"And you've been sleeping there for ten years!" exclaimed Dolor.

"That's about the time," said Griscom Brothers. "I put everything into that room to make myself comfortable,—not your things, but my things,—and I got in and out through a little window in the roof. There are some strips nailed on for a grape-vine, and these I use for a ladder. I can go up and down in the darkest night just like stairs. I can get into the house just the same as I used to, because the lock on the back

door of the main house is one I put there myself, years ago, and of course I've got a key to it. Not long after you came I got to going over the house again, principally to see if the doors and windows were all shut and fastened. You was a little girl then, and you had a way of going out of doors after your sisters had gone to bed. You never thought of shutting up when you came back. When you got to be a big girl, and even a young woman, you did the same thing. So I kept on taking care of things."

"It strikes me," said Lord Crabstairs, who had been listening very attentively to the baker's story, "that you had rather an odd way of getting a night's sleep. Rambling through a house and playing ghost isn't the way to refresh a man, I take it."

"Now, you see," said Griscom Brothers, "the p'int of it is this: when I was at Mrs. Springer's I couldn't sleep if I wanted to, but in this house I could go to my little room and sleep whenever I felt like it; that makes all the difference in the world."

"Yes," said the butcher, "being able to do a thing is often just as much good to a person as doing it."

"Now, tell me another thing," said Lord Crabstairs. "What did you mean by that pumpkin-tart?"

"Tart!" exclaimed the baker.

"That's all right," said the butcher. "We tossed up, and tart it is."

Griscom Brothers did not seem to understand, but he went on to explain:

"That was an ordered punkin-pie. It isn't the season for that sort of thing, and nobody but me has got any punkins kept over. Old Mrs. Gormish ordered the pie for her grandchild's christening, but when they

sent for Mr. Black he couldn't come, and they had to have Mr. Startling, and he's a dyspeptic, and so the old lady sent word to me she didn't want no pie, and it was left on my hands. I always like to have something to eat before I start out in the early morning, so I brought this with me, for there isn't no call for such. When you people came into the kitchen I was fast asleep, but I jumped up quick enough and hurried down to see what was the matter. I was at the window seeing and listening to pretty nearly all you did and said; and when I heard you talking about being so hungry I thought of giving you that pie, and I locked the door to keep you in the kitchen until I thought I had done my duty by you."

"You did it well," said Doris. "It was a good pie."

"I dare say," said Lord Crabstairs, "that in this country bakers don't sell meat."

"No," said Griscom Brothers, "as a rule they don't."

"Well, then," said his lordship, "as we are pretty well dried and warmed, and as there is nothing more to eat, we might as well be getting back to the ship."

We all agreed that this was the proper thing to do, and we rose from our seats.

"Before you go," said Griscom Brothers, addressing Dolor Tripp, "I want to settle one thing: Do you object to my staying on in that little loft, or must I go back to Mrs. Springer?"

"I think," said Dolor Tripp, "that it would be much better for you to stay where you are for the present. I am going to Boston, and when I come back I will speak to my sisters about it."

"Then I'll pack up my goods," said Griscom Bro-

thers, "the day you come back, for I know what your sisters will say."

As the baker finished speaking he turned suddenly, and his eyes fell upon the schoolmaster, who until this moment had been keeping well in the background. For an instant the two gazed steadily at each other, then Griscom Brothers exclaimed—almost screamed:

"Johnny!"

The schoolmaster, with his long arms extended, rushed upon the other, and in a moment they were folded in a close embrace.

The pie ghost was the schoolmaster's father.

For a few moments nothing was said, and we gazed in amazement upon the embracing couple. Then the butcher beckoned us a little apart and said in a low voice:

"That young man ran away from home more than twelve years ago. I didn't know him, for all that happened before I came to these parts, but I have often heard the story. I shouldn't wonder if he has been as much afraid of meeting his dad as of running afoul of Mrs. Bodship."

Griscom Brothers now stepped forward, holding his son by the hand.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "who could have thought it, that old Mrs. Gormish's punkin-pie should have given me back my son! If it hadn't been that she threw the pie on my hands I shouldn't have brought it here, and if it hadn't been here I shouldn't have tried to give it to you, and if I hadn't done that you never would have ketched me, and if you hadn't ketched me I shouldn't have known that my Johnny was with you."

"It strikes me," said Lord Crabstairs, "that you ought to thank the clergyman who ate his meals so fast that he gave himself dyspepsia. If he had been able to eat pumpkin-tart you wouldn't have found your son."

"Tart!" ejaculated the baker.

"Tart it is," said the butcher; "tossed up all square. And now I think it is time for us to be moving."

"Johnny," said Griscom Brothers, "won't you stay with me to-night? My bed is wide enough for two."

But the schoolmaster hesitated, and finally said he thought it would be better for him to go back to the ship, for he had certain work to do in the morning.

We should have exclaimed against any ship-work taking this new-found son from his father, but it was quite plain that the schoolmaster did not wish to stay. Perhaps he thought that if he walked across the country in broad daylight and without the protection of our company Mrs. Bodship might pounce upon him in spite of his disguise.

"Very well," said his father. "Perhaps it's better for you to go; for if you stayed here we should talk all night, and neither of us get any sleep."

The schoolmaster now took his butcher's gown from the crane, where in the course of its frequent shiftings it had received a number of broad black stripes, and put it on.

"I suppose there are reasons for your wearing that," said his father, "but I won't ask them now. If you don't sail too early in the morning, I'm coming to see you on board the ship."

"We shall be delighted to have you visit us," cried Doris; "and the ship shall not sail until you arrive."

Preceded by Griscom Brothers, who carried the candle, we now left the kitchen. When we reached the long hallway our leader stopped, and, addressing Dolor Tripp, said that before she went away he would like to show her the picture that her sister was painting of her.

We all declared that we should like to see that picture, and the baker led us into the dining-room.

"You needn't be afraid," he said, as we walked after him, "of waking up Alwilda and Lizeth ; I never knew two women sleep like they do. I believe their eyelids shut with a snap at nine o'clock, and open with a click at six in the morning."

The dining-room was large and high, with plain, smooth walls entirely unadorned except by a row of pictures painted on the smooth plaster at about the eye-line, and intended to extend all around the room. The line on three of the walls was completed. These pictures had all been painted by Alwilda, and the style of them proved that she had been to a great extent her own teacher. The subjects were various, and some of them quite astonishing. We did not examine the whole gallery, but proceeded to the latest picture, which was yet unfinished.

This painting, about a yard square, represented Dolor Tripp lying drowned by the sea-shore—this being the fate which her sister expected would befall her while voyaging to Boston. The wretched plight of the recumbent corpse made us shudder, and the subject of the sketch covered her face with her hands.

"It is outrageous ! it is shameful !" cried Doris. "Such a thing ought not to be allowed to exist !"

"Which it shouldn't," said Lord Crabstairs, "if I had a pail of whitewash."

"And a brush," added the butcher.

"I have that," said Doris, who had been looking about her, and had perceived the artist's materials near by.

Doris was an amateur artist, and, moreover, was quick to think and act. With a palette, a few colors, and some brushes, she stood before the picture, Griscom Brothers holding the candle. The pallid features of the drowned maiden soon began to glow with rosy health; her eyes were closed, but it was plain she slept; the sands and shallow water about her changed into soft, green grass, and the tall, slimy weeds which had thrown themselves about her form were now green, wavy stems with somewhat too brilliant blossoms. Even the rocks were covered with soft moss, and the whole scene changed so rapidly under Doris's brush that we were filled with an admiration we did not hesitate to express.

"I am glad you like it," said Doris. "I'm sure there's nothing soaked or dead about Dolor Tripp now."

"When Alwilda Tripp sees that," said Griscom Brothers, "she'll think there's been a miracle."

"Which there has been," remarked the butcher; "an out-and-out square miracle."

"I don't know what she'll think," said Dolor Tripp, "but I know what I think;" and she kissed Doris.

I think we all would have been delighted to be in that room when Alwilda came down in the morning, but we spoke no more upon the subject, and quickly left the house.

"I'll lock the door and make everything all right," said Griscom Brothers, "and soon after breakfast I shall be down at the shore ready to be took on board."

The schoolmaster picked up his tall silk hat, which still rested on the top of the sandpiper's cage, and put it on ; then he took up the cage, looked in at the bird, and was ready to go.

"Bless my soul !" exclaimed Griscom Brothers, "you look like a holiday butcher that's been half broiled. If you are going to slaughter that bird, don't do it until I come in the morning."

We now took leave of the baker and left the yard by the opening in the fence, after which the loose palings were restored to their proper position by the butcher. Though the moon was bright, we had some difficulty in finding our way on account of the fog which was coming in from the sea ; but the butcher was now our guide, and without serious mishap or much detention we reached the shore, where we had left our boat. But when we had embarked we found the fog on the bay so thick that we could not see a boat's-length in any direction. The schooner, however, was not far from shore, and we thought we could easily reach her ; but in this opinion we were mistaken. We rowed and rowed, and still did not reach the ship. How we could have taken a wrong direction none of us could imagine, but we turned the boat and rowed and rowed again.

"Can it be possible," cried Doris, "that our ship has sailed away?"

"Absolutely impossible !" said the butcher, with much fervency.

We now rowed about, this way and that, for at least

half an hour, and I think we all began to be afraid that perhaps we had drifted out to sea. Suddenly the butcher laid down his oars and requested us all to be quiet; then, standing up in the boat, he flapped his elbows two or three times and gave forth a loud cock-a-doodle-do! There was an instant's silence, and then, not far away from the stern of the boat, there came an answering cock-a-doodle-do!

We all knew that this came from the cock in the rigging of the *Merry Chanter*.

In five minutes we were on board.

"Past midnight," said Captain Cyrus, whose watch it was.

CHAPTER XV

WE ARE LOYAL TO THE "MERRY CHANTER"

EARLY the next morning the fog cleared away, and soon after breakfast we heard a hail from the shore.

"It's father," cried the schoolmaster, who was engaged in giving the usual morning attentions to the sandpiper.

And, sure enough, looking shoreward, we saw Griscom Brothers waving something white in his hand as if it were a flag of truce.

Captain Cyrus went after him in the boat, and very soon the good baker was on board.

Bidding us all a cheery good morning, he handed the white article to the butcher.

"Here is your gown," he said, "which you left on the grass last night; and it's a very good thing you did so. If you want to know why, I'll tell you."

We all wanted to know why, and he told us.

"You see," said he, "we always serve the Tripp family with bread on Saturday morning, and this morning I thought I would deliver it myself. I found Lizeth Tripp at the chicken-yard, and she was looking as if she had had a bad night.

"'Did you sleep well?' I asked, feeling a little ner-

vous, I must say, fearing she had heard something in the night.

"'Oh, I slept well enough,' said she, 'but I've seen sights this morning.' 'What sights?' says I. 'Just listen,' says she. 'When I opened the window early this morning, the first thing that I saw was something white lying flat on the grass, with its long arms stretched out, as if it was dead. It made me jump, I tell you, for at first I thought it was a spirit; but it was so flat and thin that I next thought it was only the skin of a spirit.' 'Which I didn't know they shed them,' says I. 'Nor I neither,' says she. 'But I tell you it frightened me, and I jumped back from that window and went down-stairs; and something seemed to move me to go into the dining-room and look at the picture Alwilda was painting, and when I saw it I was struck worse than ever. I tumbled back into a chair, and for ever so long I couldn't move for staring. By good luck Alwilda didn't come into the room, being busy with breakfast. And now I have just come out to ask the hired man to take a pitchfork and carry off that skin, or whatever it is; but he has gone away, and I'm mighty glad to see you. I wish you'd come into the dining-room and look at the picture.' So, as innocent as a lamb, I followed her into the dining-room, and looked at the picture which you, madam, touched up last night. I must say that, seeing it in the daylight, the young woman in the grass looked as if she had died of a raging fever in the middle of a lot of red-hot flowers. 'What's the matter with it?' says I, as innocent as if I hadn't seen the thing done. 'It's been changed,' says she. 'It was a picture of a soaked corpse, and now it's a sleeping

beauty ; and if the spirit of Dolor Tripp didn't change it, I'd like to know what spirit did. If she was really lost at sea that's just the way she'd come back to comfort us.' 'Now, look here,' says I, 'I don't believe in spirits anyway, and if there was any, they couldn't paint.'

"Having been a ghost myself," he said, looking round the company with a smile, "I ought to know what they can do.

" 'Now, then,' says I to Lizeth Tripp, 'it's my opinion that your sister Alwilda began to feel bad about this picture, and so she altered it herself. Now, if I was you, I'd rub out the whole thing—that is, if it can be rubbed out.' 'I can clean it all off the wall,' says she ; 'for I've often seen Alwilda do that thing when she didn't like a picture and wanted to paint it over again.' And with that she went and got a steel thing like a hoe, and scraped every scrap of that picture off the smooth wall. 'There shouldn't be no such picture in the house,' says she, 'whether it's of a drowned sister, or of one asleep on the broad of her back in the middle of a field ; and as fast as Alwilda paints them I'll scrape 'em out.'

"Now, it seems to me," said Griscom Brothers, "that I got us all out of that scrape pretty well."

"That's your way of looking at it," said Lord Crabstairs ; "but it strikes me that Lizeth Tripp is going to get herself into a lot of scrapes if she keeps on scraping out her sister's pictures."

"Well," continued the baker, "there wasn't nothing left to clear up but that white thing on the grass, and when I looked at it I told Lizeth it was nothing but a butcher's gown, that most likely had blown over there

in the storm. I didn't know it was yours until I picked it up and saw your name on it. So I said I'd take it away with me; and I left as quick as I could, for I didn't want to have to clear up anything more."

We all agreed that Griscom Brothers had done his part well, and he now retired to the bow of the ship to hold converse with his son.

Dolor Tripp was very anxious that this conversation should be speedily terminated, so that we might sail away. She feared that if there should be a quarrel between Alwilda and Lizeth on account of the one scraping out the pictures of the other, it might become necessary for her to go home and act as peacemaker; but if she were actually on her way to Boston this would not be possible.

Captain Timon, however, assured her there was no hurry, and that Griscom Brothers would have time to talk with his son as long as he liked.

In half an hour the baker left us.

"I don't suppose you'll sail on Sunday," he said, "and if you don't get off to-day, I'll come on board again to-morrow."

"We shall never sail on Sunday," said the butcher, speaking very positive indeed.

I looked at the butcher, and he looked at me, and we both looked at Captain Timon, who looked out over the sea.

We did not sail on Sunday, and on Monday evening Doris took me aside for what she called a serious conversation.

"It seems to me," she said, "that as owners of this ship we are not doing our duty by our passengers. The butcher came on board and paid his passage to

Boston; we are not taking him to Boston. Lord Crabstairs came on board to go to Boston; he paid his passage, and we are not taking him there. The schoolmaster came on board to go somewhere, and we are not taking him anywhere. It is true he paid for no passage; but we promised to take him to Boston, and we are not taking him. Dolor Tripp is worse off than the others, because she is really afraid that if we do not soon start, something will make it necessary for her to go home. As for ourselves, we have taken our chances, and must be content; and as to the four captains, they also have taken their chances. They undertook to sail the *Merry Chanter* to Boston, and if they are delayed on the voyage it is no more our affair than it is theirs. But when people pay money for their passage it is a different matter."

I had been fishing that day with Lord Crabstairs, and had had very good luck; I expected to go out again the next day, and I said to Doris that for the present I thought we were all very well off as we were.

"I am very well satisfied to wait," said Doris, "for it is very pleasant here, and our living is certainly cheap; but that has nothing to do with our duty toward our passengers."

"What can we do for them?" I asked.

"We can do one of two things," answered Doris: "we can pay them back their passage-money, or send them to Boston by rail."

"Either one of those things would be pretty hard on us," I said, "especially after having boarded and lodged them all this time."

"That has nothing to do with it," said Doris. "Jus-

tice is justice, and we should not take their money and keep them waiting and waiting here for an exceptional high tide."

I reflected a few moments. "It would be well," I said, "to find out what they think about it. Let us call a meeting of the ship's company."

"Good!" cried Doris; "and you must preside. You are the proper person to take the chair."

After supper the meeting was called, and the whole population of the ship, including Griscom Brothers,—who had come on board for an evening visit,—attended.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said I,—and the moment I had uttered these words I knew that I had made a mistake; I should have said "shipmates," or something of that sort; but I went on,—"my wife and I have concluded that we are not doing our duty by you. We do not know exactly when we shall be able to sail, and we have thought that it might be better to send you to Boston by the railroad."

At this a little murmur seemed to run through the company, and Doris interrupted me.

"My husband does not mean," she said, "that we have decided to send you to Boston by rail. What we desire is to give you an opportunity of expressing your feelings in regard to the situation. You have paid your money, and you are entitled to a passage on this ship to Boston; but if you think you would rather not wait any longer, we will consult together and see what it will be best to do. It may be that you would like to go to Boston by rail."

At this another murmur, louder than the first, was heard from the company, and the butcher rose to his feet.

"Is a motion in order?" he asked.

"Yes," said Doris.

I felt that I was presiding over this meeting in rather an odd way, but the oddity did not seem to strike any one else, and the butcher put his motion.

"I move that we stick to the ship," said he.

Lord Crabstairs leaned toward Dolor Tripp. "What do you think about it?" he asked.

"If I do not go to Boston in this ship," she answered, "I shall not go at all."

"Second the motion," called out Lord Crabstairs.

"Before the motion is put," said Doris, "we ought to hear what the captains have to say about it."

The four captains stood in a row on the starboard side of the deck. Being older and more accustomed to speak, Captain Timon spoke for his fellow-mariners.

"Well," said he, "each of us put some money into this venture, and of course we don't want to lose it. If we don't get to Boston our money is lost. If that money is lost, we want to be able to say that it wasn't lost because we gave up the v'yage too soon, but we want to be able to say it was lost because a gale of wind an' a high tide didn't come into Shankashank Bay together. Of course that gale an' that tide may never come in together, but we're in favor of givin' them a leetle longer chance. A good many things in this world would do a sight better than they do if they had a leetle longer chance. So we four are in favor of stickin' to the ship."

He looked at his companions, and each one gave an affirmative nod.

The question was put, and it was unanimously resolved to stick to the ship.

"Three cheers!" cried Doris. And the ship's company gave three hearty cheers.

During the meeting Griscom Brothers had neither voted nor spoken, but he cheered with the others.

"Not being an owner, a passenger, or a captain," said he, "of course this isn't my business, but I'm mighty glad to see you're going to stand by the ship. It isn't everybody that's got a ship to stand by. That's what I said to my Johnny. 'Stand by the ship. If you're going to Boston, go. When you come back, I'll take you into the baking business, or you can keep on with your schoolmastering; but whatever you do, you must stick to it.' That's what I said to my Johnny. And now I say to the rest of you, if you don't sail to-morrow morning I'll drop in and see you in the afternoon."

"It's my opinion," said the butcher to us, when Griscom Brothers had gone on shore, "that the schoolmaster would rather go to baking than go to sea, but he's afraid to show himself on land till his father has settled matters with Mrs. Bodship. If any man can do it Griscom Brothers can do it, and he's promised to try."

CHAPTER XVI

DOLOR TRIPP SETS SAIL

THE very next day a gale came into the bay with a flood tide; but although the wind was strong enough to stir up a very fine storm, it did not blow enough water into the bay to float the *Merry Chanter*.

Our four captains were all ready to take advantage of the first indication that our ship was free to ride the waves; but no such indication came.

"I'm afraid she's voted to stick to the sand-bar," said the butcher, when the tide began to ebb.

With this exception, none of us showed any signs of giving up hope. There would be another high tide in twelve hours, and the gale might increase in violence.

But although the storm did not move our ship, it greatly delighted some of our company. The bow of the vessel pointed out toward the sea, and for nearly the whole day one or the other of the ladies stood there enjoying the storm. When Doris occupied this post I was with her, and when Dolor Tripp was there the butcher stood on one side of her and Lord Crabstairs on the other.

They could have had no better opportunity of thoroughly enjoying the storm. The waves rolled in, sometimes dashing up to the very feet of the figure of

the Merry Chanter, and sometimes throwing the spray over his head and into our faces. The wind whistled through the cordage and blew the cock from the rigging. Fortunately he alighted upon the deck, where he had not set foot since he had been brought to the ship, and he ran screaming and flapping to the coops where the other fowls were sheltered.

It seemed to me that Doris and Dolor Tripp could not get enough of this turmoil of the elements.

"To see it all and be in it," said Doris, when we had gone down to the cabin for a brief rest; "to feel the storm and not to be afraid of it; to look upon the rolling, tossing waves and yet feel the deck as immovable as a floor beneath our feet; to fancy we hear the Merry Chanter shouting his sea songs into the very teeth of the storm—it is grand! it is glorious! and it is perfectly safe!"

For my part, I very soon got enough of the turmoil of the elements, and I fancy that the butcher and Lord Crabstairs were satisfied as easily as I was; but although I frequently entreated Doris to shorten the time of her observations at the bow, I do not believe that the supporters of Dolor Tripp gave the least sign that they did not like the sea wind almost to take away their breath, or the sea water to dash into their faces and drench their clothes. The young woman was enveloped in a waterproof cloak and hood; and although the butcher possessed a garment of this kind, he would not put it on, because by so doing he would have confessed himself less able to endure bad weather than Lord Crabstairs, who had forgotten to provide a mackintosh for the voyage.

Once I proposed to Doris to allow the schoolmaster

to have the pleasure of gazing at the storm with her, but she indignantly repudiated the proposition.

"Look at those two men," she said; "do they flinch from the side of the woman they love?"

And of course after that I had nothing more to say about a substitute.

The storm did not increase in violence, but gradually subsided, and the next day was pleasant and clear. Doris occupied herself with her little chicks. The schoolmaster opened the cage of the sandpiper, which had become quite tame, and allowed the bird to take a constitutional upon the deck. The cock flew back to his old position in the rigging and crowed aloud his satisfaction at again feeling himself above us all. Everything seemed to be going on in the same quiet and pleasant methods to which we had become accustomed before the gale had tantalized us with a half-hope of Boston.

But in fact everything was not going on quietly and pleasantly. Lord Crabstairs and the butcher were unquiet and unpleasant; that is, to each other. By the advice of Captain Timon, they had established a system in regard to Dolor Tripp. After breakfast one of them would take the first watch, and at the end of an hour would relinquish his position by her side to the other. When the second watch of an hour had ended, each of the men would give the lady an hour to herself, thus allowing her to be undisturbed until noon; after dinner each man went on watch for an hour, and then Dolor Tripp had two hours to herself. After supper there were no watches, because Captain Timon declared that as long as he commanded the ship he would see no woman overworked.

But this apparently amicable arrangement did not serve its purpose. It gave each man a fair chance, but each man wanted more. They had become of little social advantage to us, for the one who happened to be off duty was inclined to be silent and was continually looking at his watch.

As for Dolor Tripp herself, Doris and I could see no reason to suppose that she liked one man better than the other. With Crabstairs she was lively and beaming, and apparently delighted that it was his watch. With the butcher she was lively and beaming, and delighted that he was on duty.

"What's wanted on this ship," said Captain Timon to us, "is one man less, or one woman more. If each of them fellers had a gal it'd be all right, but one gal isn't enough for two of 'em."

"What would you do about it?" asked Doris, who was beginning to be disturbed at the turn things had taken.

"I'd chuck one of 'em overboard," said the captain, "an' let him swim ashore."

"Which one would you chuck?" I asked.

"The Englishman," said the captain. "If I've got to haul down any flag, I'd haul down the Union Jack before the Stars and Stripes."

"That wouldn't be fair," said Doris. "One has just as much right as the other."

"I suppose that's so," said Captain Timon, with a grin; "an' as we can't chuck the young woman overboard, I guess we'll have to let the matter settle itself."

"It seems to me," said I, when the captain had left us, "that a marriage with a British peer would be of much more advantage than a marriage with a butcher."

"I don't agree with you," said Doris. "Lord Crabstairs has repudiated his peerage, and the butcher has repudiated his butcherage; they now stand on equal ground. Before Lord Crabstairs was overtaken and crushed by his title he was quite as free and independent a man as the butcher is, and now that he has escaped from his peerage he is again just as good as the butcher. He has told us he has a small income not derived from his father's family, and the butcher has saved money, so in every way they are even, and Dolor Tripp ought to be allowed to take her choice between them."

"The trouble will be," said I, "to induce her to make a choice. I think she likes to have two men courting her, and the affair will probably end in a fight on the *Merry Chanter*."

"I don't believe it," exclaimed Doris. "Neither of those men would so far forget himself as to fight on my ship."

"Your ship!" I said.

"Oh, I meant to say ours," she answered.

The next day the butcher took the first watch with Dolor Tripp. At eight o'clock precisely he offered her his arm and invited her to walk the deck with him. I noticed that his face wore a serious expression, and that he was extremely deferential and polite to his companion, guiding her carefully around the wet places on deck, which were still damp from the morning's swabbing, and apparently paying the strictest attention to what she might be saying, as if he were anxious not to lose a word of her sweet speech.

In the meantime Lord Crabstairs appeared to be in a very unquiet mood. He was restless and excited,

and finally filled his pockets with corn and ran up into the rigging, where he fed the cock, who for some time had been crowing for his breakfast. The moment that the butcher's watch had come to an end Lord Crabstairs scuttled down the rope-ladder so fast that we were afraid he would slip and break his neck. In an instant he was at the side of Dolor Tripp, and, giving her his arm, rapidly conducted her to the bow of the ship, this portion of the deck being now untenanted. The butcher walked slowly toward us as we sat in our customary seats at the stern.

"You are going to lose a passenger," he said.

"Which one?" we cried.

"That depends on circumstances," said the butcher. "You see, I made up my mind last night that things couldn't go on as they were going on, and so right after breakfast I proposed to him that we should toss up and decide which should put the question to her. We'd agreed that neither of us should do that without giving the other notice. He was ready, quick as lightning, and we tossed. He called 'heads,' and heads it was twice. And he's got her."

"But she may not accept him," cried Doris.

"Oh, she'll take him; there's no doubt about that," said the butcher, looking solemnly down at the deck. "If he proposes first she'll take him, and if I had proposed first she would have taken me. Neither of us had any doubt on that point."

Fifteen minutes later no one on board could have had any doubt on that point, for Lord Crabstairs and Dolor Tripp walked toward us, the one with a downcast, blushing face, and the other with the most beaming, joy-lighted countenance I ever saw.

"You see," said Lord Crabstairs, "we have just stepped aft to announce our engagement. We didn't think it exactly the square thing in a small party like this to keep dark about it even for a short time."

"As if you could do it!" cried Doris. And then we congratulated the happy couple, the butcher shaking hands with each of them with a degree of earnest solemnity not common on such occasions.

Lord Crabstairs and his lady-love now went below to acquaint the schoolmaster and the four captains with what had occurred.

"And now," said Doris to the butcher, "what were you going to say about our losing a passenger?"

"Well," said he, "if they stay on board I go, but if they go ashore I'll stay here. I don't want to go back on my word about sticking to the ship, but circumstances often give a new twist to things."

"Indeed they do," said Doris, speaking in a very sympathetic tone and offering her hand to the butcher.

"I'm mighty glad of it," said Captain Cyrus to us, a little while afterward. "I don't know when I've heard anythin' that's pleased me better. For the life of me I couldn't see how they were goin' to get out of that fix without its endin' in a row. It was only yesterday, madam, that I thought that if you was only disengaged it would be all right, for then there would be two young women, one for each of them; but you was settled for, and there was only one young woman for the two men. But now it's all straightened out and we can have peace on board."

I wish here to record the fact that from that moment I never made a voluntary observation to Captain Cyrus Bodship.

CHAPTER XVII

HOW LIZETH AND ALWILDA TOOK IT

WHEN Griscom Brothers came on board that afternoon and heard the news he was delighted.

"I thought it would come to that," he said. "Title is bound to get ahead of meat. And what do the happy lovers intend to do? Will they remain on board and go to Boston?"

"No," said Doris, "they leave us this afternoon. Dolor Tripp is in her cabin packing her trunk. She will go home to her sisters, and Lord Crabstairs will lodge in the village, where he can go and see her every day. They are to be married as soon as possible."

"I am mighty glad," said Griscom Brothers, "that Dolor Tripp is going home ; she's needed there. Ever since Lizeth scraped out Alwilda's picture them two sisters haven't spoke. That sort of thing has happened before. As much as six weeks or two months has passed without either of them speaking a word to each other, and at such times Dolor has to be a sort of go-between to tell one what the other wants. They've had a pretty tough pull of it this time without her."

"What do they do?" I asked. "Make signs to each other?"

"No," said the baker. "When one of them has to ask something of the other, she goes out to the hired man and tells him to go into the house and speak to her sister. But his boots are so dirty that they never do this unless they are positively obliged to. Lizeth told me that yesterday she was nearly starving for butter because she couldn't make up her mind to tell that man to ask Alwilda where she had put the milk-house key."

Dolor Tripp now came on deck ready to go ashore, and in a few moments Lord Crabstairs appeared, glowing with ruddy joy, and loaded with a huge valise, a bundle of rugs, a hat-box, and a collection of umbrellas and canes.

Their intention was to go together and acquaint the sisters of Dolor Tripp with what had happened, and ask their blessing. Doris thought it was the proper thing for her to go with Dolor; and as it promised to be an interesting occasion, I thought it the proper thing to go with Doris. Griscom Brothers said that on his way to the village he could stop at the Tripp house just as well as not, and that he would do it; whereupon the schoolmaster remarked that as the party would be so large he would not be afraid to go with them himself. At first the butcher seemed inclined to stay on board, but after taking me aside and remarking that if he did not go with us it might look as if he were showing bad feeling in the matter, he joined the party.

Only the four captains remained on the *Merry Chanter*. These faithful mariners must be at their posts in case the exceptional wind and the exceptional tide came into the bay together.

Our boat had to make two trips before we were all landed, and then we walked to the house. Griscom Brothers and the schoolmaster carried the huge valise, in order that Lord Crabstairs could give one arm to his lady-love; and the butcher, to his honor be it said, relieved his late rival of the hat-box and the package of umbrellas and canes. Dolor Tripp said she could send the hired man for her baggage.

We found Lizeth in the poultry-yard.

"Lizeth," said Dolor Tripp, blushing a little, "this is Lord Crabstairs."

"Lord which?" exclaimed Lizeth.

"Crabstairs," replied her sister. "We are going to be married."

Lizeth looked at them in astonishment. "You two!" she exclaimed.

"Only the two of us," said Dolor. "And I want you to like him, Lizeth; you ought to like your brother-in-law."

"Do you mean to say," said Lizeth, speaking slowly, "that this man is a sure-enough foreign lord?"

"Yes," said her sister, "he's an out-and-out peer of the British realm."

Lizeth looked as if she were going to whistle, but she did not.

"It is a fair and square thing for me to say," remarked Lord Crabstairs, "that I am a lord against my will, and my title brings me no property except two centuries of debts."

"But you really are an English nobleman?" asked Lizeth.

"Yes," said Lord Crabstairs, "I am."

Lizeth now looked steadfastly at her sister and at

the sturdy Englishman by her side. Then she looked at the rest of us, and then spoke.

"I don't believe in monarchies," she said, "nor in kings, nor in crowns and sceptres, nor in aristocracies, nor in peers and realms. I am a plain, free-born, independent republican, and look down upon empires and thrones. My ancestors did not come over in the *Mayflower*, but I am quite sure that they came in a plain wooden ship, and didn't put on any airs. As I said before, I've nothing to do with peers and peeresses, nor kings and queens. I am a free-born American, and a free-born American I shall die. But if he really is a lord I suppose he can have you." At this Dolor Tripp hung upon her sister's neck and kissed her, and then we all went to make the announcement to Alwilda.

We found the elder sister in the dining-room painting a picture upon the wall. She was at work upon a small blue house, surrounded by flowers and shrubberies of the brightest and gayest colors. Birds with brilliant plumage were flying through the air; there was a sunset glow in the sky; and a young woman, with a red shawl and a yellow petticoat, was playing a harp in the foreground.

Dolor Tripp was so struck by this work of art that she was obliged to satisfy her curiosity about it before stating the object of her visit.

"What in the world is that, Alwilda?" she exclaimed.

"That," said the artist, stepping back from the wall, but taking no notice of the presence of our party, "is a home in the midst of all sorts of things that are joyful to look at, or to listen to, or to smell; but, in spite of

all that, the person that lives in the house is blue, and everything in it is blue, and the very house itself is blue."

"Do you live in that house?" asked her sister.

"At present I do," was the answer.

"Well, I am come to make your house a livelier color," said Dolor Tripp. "Alwilda, this is Lord Crabstairs."

The tall woman turned the front of her black-and-white sunbonnet upon his lordship. "What does he want?" she said. "Some more chickens?"

"No," said Dolor Tripp. "He wants me."

Alwilda looked steadfastly at the couple, now holding each other by the hand.

"A lord?" she said.

"Yes," said her sister, "really and truly an English lord."

"You are quite sure," asked Alwilda, "that he isn't a German count?"

"Of course not," replied her sister, hotly.

"Or a Spanish duke?" asked Alwilda.

"Ridiculous!" said Dolor. "How could he be?"

"Or a Highland chief, or an African king?" asked the other.

And at this we all laughed.

"Well," said Alwilda, "they are just as likely to say they are one of these things as another, and I don't suppose it makes much difference which it is. But if you two are really going to be married there is one thing I want to ask you. When you set up housekeeping, do you intend to have one single bedstead, and no more, in your spare room?"

"What in the world do you mean by that?" cried her sister.

"I mean," said the other, "that I want to know, when I come to see you, if I'm to have the spare room all to myself, or if there's to be somebody else there at the same time with me. If she's to be there," motioning out of doors, "at the same time that I am, then I don't want to go, and I don't want to have anything to do with your marrying or your housekeeping. But if I'm to have the room to myself, then I suppose there's nothing more to be said."

"You shall have it," cried Lord Crabstairs. "I shall have a bedstead built in which there shall not be room for two fishing-rods."

"Then, Alwilda," cried Dolor Tripp, "you approve of our marriage?"

"It's better than drowning," said her sister. "And taking it all in all," she continued, after a little reflection, "I'm rather glad you wanted to marry a foreigner. Americans are too uppish; but when you get hold of a man that is accustomed to being down-trodden, it's easy to keep him so."

At this Lord Crabstairs roared with laughter till the ceiling echoed, and we all joined in.

Alwilda did not smile, but looked from one to the other, and when the laughter had ceased she asked Griscom Brothers how much she owed him for bread.

The merry baker declared he did not carry his account with him, and then Lord Crabstairs stepped forward and spoke.

"I wish you to understand, madam," he said to Alwilda, "that your sister is not marrying a rich lord. My income is a very small one, and I shall be obliged to go into some work or other to support myself and my wife."

"Oh, money doesn't matter," said Alwilda, turning toward her picture. "Dolor has money."

"I'd like to know where," exclaimed her youngest sister.

"In the bank," said Alwilda, "gathering interest."

"And you never told me!" cried Dolor Tripp, excitedly.

"Why should I?" answered Alwilda. "What call had you for money? When you should come of age you were to have it, or when you should marry you were to have it. Now you and your African king will have it."

The statement that Dolor Tripp was possessed of a fortune, though probably a small one, created a profound sensation among us, and our congratulations were warm and sincere. We were about to depart, when Doris addressed Alwilda.

"I would like very much to know," she said, "whether or not you now intend to alter the color of the house in your picture?"

"Well," said Alwilda, meditatively, "I think I shall paint the roof red, but I shall wait to see how things turn out before I change the color of the rest of the house."

"I tell you what it is," said Griscom Brothers, when we were outside, and he and Lord Crabstairs were starting for the village, "there will soon be an end to them two sisters keeping mum to each other. There's nothing on earth could keep them from talking about Dolor's getting married."

It was late in the evening when we reached the *Merry Chanter*, and our supper was much less lively than when Dolor Tripp and Lord Crabstairs were with us.

"I had begun to feel satisfied to wait here," said Doris, when we had gone on deck, "but now I am sure I shall feel lonely, and I think we must ask the captains to do their very best to leave the bay and start for Boston, even if the tide and wind do not exactly suit."

"Yes," said I, "we'll talk to them in the morning."

"What do you think about it?" she said to the butcher.

"Well," he answered, "I don't know that it's my place to give advice."

"You're too modest," said Doris.

Shortly after this the butcher took the opportunity to speak to me privately.

"If I were to marry that young woman who's left us," said he, "and she was on board this ship, and worrying and hankering to start for Boston, it strikes me I would tell her all about the sand-bank and the barnacles and the seventy cart-loads of paving-stones in the hold."

I looked at him severely. "But you are not married to her," I said; "and not being married, you do not know what a married person should say to the person to whom he is married."

To this the butcher made no reply.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CAPTAINS SPEAK

THE next morning Doris spoke her mind to the captains.

"We must do something," she said. "If we can't do one thing, let us do another. We must set sail for Boston without delay."

"Madam," said Captain Garnish, "Dolor Tripp's trunk is still on board, and no matter what happens, we cannot sail until she sends for that."

Doris stamped her foot impatiently.

"What a thing to wait for!" she said.

Half an hour afterward a man with a cart appeared on the shore, and hailing the ship, he shouted lustily that he had come for a trunk. Two of the captains took the trunk to him in the boat, and when they returned we noticed that each of them heaved a little sigh.

"Now the last link is broken," remarked Doris.

"There are some links," said the butcher, "that are mighty hard to break."

Doris looked at him compassionately. She thought he referred to the link between himself and Dolor Tripp, but I knew that he meant the link between the bottom of the *Merry Chanter* and the sand-bank.

It was now plain to me that the captains felt that matters had come to a crisis, and that they must either do something or say something. For an hour they held a conference in the forecastle, and then they came aft in a body.

Captain Timon, being the oldest, spoke first.

"We cap'ns," said he, "have been considerin' a lot about this ship, an' as the owners, an' perhaps the passengers that are left, may be gettin' a little worried at the longishness of our v'yage to Boston, we feel—an' it's no more than right to let 'em know it—that sailin' to Boston in this vessel isn't what we call plain sailin'. This is an old vessel, an' she's been lyin' in the dock so long that her hull is a good deal more barnacle than it is timber. Now, it's pretty nigh impossible to sail a ship when her hull is more than half barnacles. Of course most of the barnacles could be scraped off at low tide, but if we did that we'd open the seams of the old schooner, an' she'd leak like a flour-sieve."

"Why didn't you tell us this before?" cried Doris, indignantly.

"Well," said Captain Timon, slowly, "you was the owners, an' you wanted to go to Boston, an' we would have sailed you there if we could have done it."

"And there's another thing," said Captain Garnish. "Them pavin'-stones in the hold is too heavy for this vessel; they sink her too deep. Of course we could go to work and throw 'em out; but I've followed the sea pretty nigh all my life, and I know that it wouldn't be safe to take this schooner outside the bay with a pound less ballast in her than she's got in her now."

"This should certainly have been told to us," said Doris, very sternly.

"There's another p'int," said Captain Teel, "that might be overlooked by people that ain't sailors. This ship is short-handed. Of course there's enough of us aboard to sail her in fair weather, and when we cleared for Boston we thought that the spell of fine weather we was then havin' would more than likely last to the end of the v'yage. But there's no knowin' what sort of weather we are likely to have now, and if we was to be beatin' up the coast in a heavy gale, and if one of us was to be at the wheel, and another on the look-out, and another castin' the lead, and another battenin' down the for'ard hatches, it stands to reason that there wouldn't be nobody to take in the tops'ls."

Doris was flushed with anger, and I was on the point of bursting out into uncontrollable vituperation, when Captain Cyrus, with a smiling face and pleasant voice, spoke up.

"What we cap'ns want to do," said he, "is to be fair all round. We want to be fair to you, and fair to ourselves. Now, here's Cap'n Timon, Cap'n Garnish, and Cap'n Teel, that's all got houses of their own, which they've let furnished by the month to summer visitors. Now, if we had sailed straight from Mooseley to Boston we'd have been there and back before the month was out, and these three cap'ns could have been on hand to collect the advance rent for another month, either from them tenants or some others. But as things is, and is likely to be, it don't stand to reason that we can get to Boston and back before the end of the month. Now, I am not speakin' for myself, but for my mates. I've got a house, and it's furnished, but

I can't let it, for there is no knowin' what time Mrs. Bodship might want to come there, and it wouldn't do for her to find a tenant in it. So you see it's not my interests I'm speakin' for."

Doris could not say a word, but my anger broke forth.

"You miserable old salt-pickled fishermen!" said I, "why don't you speak the truth and be done with it? You know that you have run our vessel aground and you can't get her off. I could have sailed her better myself."

Captain Garnish advanced with flashing eye and clinched fist.

"Young man," he roared, "if you hadn't your wife with you, I'd show you the difference between a pickled fisherman and a live clam!"

The butcher now stepped boldly between the captains and the owners.

"No more of this," he said. "I am only a passenger, but so long as I am on this ship there'll be no fighting on board of her."

The butcher owned a cleaver, and his words were respected.

Doris rushed down to her cabin, where she burst out crying, and I followed her. We had rather a doleful time together; but after a while we heard the cheery voice of Griscom Brothers, who had come on board for his daily visit, and we went on deck. After his usual hearty salutations to us all, the baker addressed the butcher:

"Lord Crabstairs sent a message to you. He said he hasn't no use for chickens now. He told me to tell you that, expecting to spend most of his spare time

till he gets married in going backward and forward between the village and the Tripps' house, he makes a present of all his poultry to you, knowing that you will take good care of it."

"If Lord Crabstairs thinks," said the butcher, "that what has happened is going to be covered up by nine full-grown hens and a year-old cockerel, he has mistaken his man; but if he just wants to give them to me as plain fowls from one man to another, I'll take them and send him thanks."

"That's what he meant," cried Griscom Brothers. "He as much as said so to me; and so you can just pitch in and feed them, for they are yours."

Looking about him as he was speaking, Griscom Brothers perceived that something had happened, and that all was not right with us. He was about to speak, when I led him aside and explained the situation.

"That's a pity; that's a great pity," said he, shaking his head. "It's a bad thing to have ill-feeling break out among people who are voyaging together on a ship, but we must see what can be done to straighten out matters."

Before, however, he could offer any suggestions to this end, the butcher came aft with a message from the four captains. I was not on very good terms with the butcher, but he spoke pleasantly to me as well as to Doris. He informed us that the captains had decided that, on the morrow, they would return to their homes by land in order to attend to their private affairs. If, after the end of the month, it should be considered advisable not to endeavor to take the *Merry Chanter* to Boston, they would be content with their share of the money paid by the passengers, and would relinquish all further claims upon the schooner.

"In that case," said Doris, "we must go on shore, also."

"It is base conduct on the part of the captains," said I. "I do not object to go on shore, but I object to being forced to do so by their desertion of our ship."

"The ship shall not be deserted," said the butcher. "I shall remain on board. I have all my belongings here, and I am very comfortable. I have my poultry to take care of and plenty of things to do; and as I can go on shore in the boat whenever I feel like it, I am not afraid to be here without sailors, for I don't believe any storm that could come into this bay could move the *Merry Chanter*. However, I shall keep the anchor out, for the sake of appearances. It doesn't mean any more than 'esquire' to a man's name, but it looks well. Now, how does that plan strike the owners?"

Doris declared that if the butcher really desired to stay on the ship, we should be very glad to have him do so.

"In that case," said Griscom Brothers, "if you want Johnny to stay with you, he can do it; but if you don't want him, I'll take him home and set him to baking. It is time he was in some solid business. And as for you, madam, and your husband, if you want to stay around in this neighborhood, there is the Tripp house. There's plenty of room in it, and I believe Alwilda and Lizeth would like you to board with them for a while."

"That would suit me exactly," said Doris. "I wish to be somewhere where I can see the *Merry Chanter* whenever I choose to go and look at it."

"Which is quite natural," said Griscom Brothers; "and we had better call this business settled. And now I'll go ashore, and engineer the matter with Alwilda and Lizeth. I know I can do it."

The next day the four captains, being ready to go before we were, came in a body to take leave of us.

"We don't want to go away," said Captain Timon, speaking for the others, "without sayin' to you both that we part, on our side, quite friendly. Bygones is bygones. If we could have got you to Boston, we would have got you there, an' been glad of it. But we couldn't and we didn't, so there's an end of it. If you ever get your ship floated, an' towed into fresh water where her barnacles would drop off, an' have her fitted up so that she won't need so many pavin'-stones, we might be willin' to ship on her again, an' see what we could do to get her to Boston for you. But till that time comes, we bid you good-by. An' here's our hands, wishin' you good luck an' lots of it."

Doris shed some tears as she shook hands with the four old mariners; and although my sense of personal dignity demanded that I should not take their hands, I did so for fear of further annoying my wife.

In the afternoon Doris and I also left our ship,—temporarily, as my wife earnestly declared,—and repaired to the house of the Tripp sisters, who were perfectly willing to accommodate us until we determined what it should be best for us to do.

The schoolmaster went home with his father, who vowed to protect him against Mrs. Bodship at all hazards; and the butcher was left alone on board the *Merry Chanter*.

CHAPTER XIX

HORRIBLE SEAWEEDS FLAP OVER HER

Our days with the Tripp family passed pleasantly enough. I went fishing, and sometimes Doris went with me. Doris went sketching, and sometimes I went with her. Dolor Tripp was in high spirits, and her sister Lizeth developed quite a pleasant humor. Lord Crabstairs spent every day, and the greater part of every evening, in the company of his beloved one; and, consequently, he was a good deal in our company, and seldom failed to make things lively in one way or another.

Griscom Brothers was a regular visitor. He had not yet arranged to leave his quarters over the old kitchen, and generally spent the nights there, giving up his room in the village to his son. He did not altogether relinquish his line of business as a ghost, especially when he had reason to believe that on account of moonlight walks or late departure of a visitor some outer door had been left unfastened. In his wanderings about the house he frequently deposited some delicacy in his line at the door of the room occupied by Doris and myself, and I am sure that in this regard Dolor Tripp was not forgotten. The butcher could be depended upon for a visit at least

every second day. Occasionally the schoolmaster came, but he was a quiet man who did not care to do much walking about the country.

In about ten days after our arrival, Dolor Tripp and Lord Crabstairs were married. A clergyman came over from the village, and we had a very pleasant little wedding, which was made more cheerful by Alwilda, who, as soon as the ceremony was completed, proceeded at once to the dining-room, and changed the color of the blue house in her latest picture to bright yellow with scarlet window-frames. After a banquet, in which the talent of Griscom Brothers shone to marvellous effect, the happy couple proceeded on their wedding-trip.

About a week after the wedding, Doris and I were down at the edge of Shankashank Bay. Across the stretch of water that separated the *Merry Chanter* from the shore Doris and the butcher were holding a high-pitched conversation, when this voice-destroying dialogue was cut short by the arrival of a boy in a funny little cart resembling a wooden wash-basin on wheels, who brought us a telegram from the nearest station. The message was from Montreal, at which place we knew the newly married couple intended making a considerable stay. It was from the young bride, and it read thus:

"I am shipwrecked, and lying drowned upon the shore, cold and dead. Horrible seaweeds flap over me. He will write.—DOLOR."

With pallid cheeks Doris and I read this again and again, but what it meant we could not divine. We knew it meant misery of some sort, but what sort of misery neither of us could imagine. At last, not

knowing what to do, we determined to take the butcher into our confidence, and hailed him to come ashore. In a few minutes his boat grated upon the sand.

He read the telegram, and looked as black as night. Doris whispered in my ear: "He must not go back after his cleaver. We must not let him do that!" In a few moments, however, the storm-clouds on the face of the butcher began to disappear.

"At first I thought," he said, "that that man had deceived her; that he's not a lord. But, considering that he didn't want to be a lord, and put on no airs about it, I don't believe the trouble is there."

"But where is it?" said I.

The butcher shook his head.

"It's no use going to them," he said, "until we know what has happened. We must wait for the letter."

"Do you think of going to them?" asked Doris, in surprise.

"Certainly," said the butcher, "if I am needed."

That was a doleful day for us. We felt obliged to tell the Tripp sisters of the telegram, and the effect of the mysterious message was to throw Lizeth into a fit of grumbling that Dolor should be so foolish as to stir them up with a telegram like that when a letter was on its way, and to send Alwilda into the dining-room, where she began work upon an enormous tombstone, large enough to contain the names of all her family.

The butcher went to the village, where he said he would stay until a letter came, and then bring it to us forthwith. Griscom Brothers was taken into council, and he declared it was his opinion that it was clams. Dolor would be sure to call for them, and as the Cana-

dians were not a clam-eating people they probably did not know how to cook them. Nothing would be more likely to give rise to a telegram like that than a quantity of badly cooked clams. He felt keenly on this point, for he knew how clams should be cooked so that they would hurt no one, and had he been in Montreal the case might have been quite different.

The next day at noon, the butcher, who had stayed in the village all night, leaving his poultry, the sandpiper, and the *Merry Chanter* to take care of themselves, brought a letter from Lord Crabstairs.

It was addressed to me, and read as follows:

"My dear Sir: I am sorry to be obliged to write to you that I have been knocked out of time worse than any man ever was since the beginning of the world. My wife sent you a telegram this morning, but she tells me she did not go into details, so I shall write you how matters stand, although it is not of the least use, except to make our friends unhappy. We stopped at Boston, because Dolor said that as she had originally started to go there she would like to do it, and she did me the honor to declare that she travelled with as merry a chanter as if she had sailed in your ship. Then she wanted to go to Montreal, and we went there; for I was not in the least afraid to travel in Canada, where I knew no one, and where I should register no name but that of George Garley, which I bore before I came into the title. Well, we saw the sights of Montreal, and they did us no harm. But one of the Cabinet Ministers happened to be in town, and they gave him a public reception, and of course Dolor wanted to go to that, and we went. A lot of heavy swells went in ahead of us, each with some sort of a title or other, and I noticed as Dolor heard these names called out she got more and more uneasy,

and just as we were coming up to the scratch she took out of my hand a card on which I had written ' Mr. and Mrs. Garley,' and herself gave to the usher one of the cards which we had had printed for use in the States only. When we were announced as Lord and Lady Crabstairs, we created a fine sensation, I assure you; for nobody of that rank had gone in yet, and I dare say there is no duchess in England who can carry herself in better style and form than my little wife did. She was as proud as a gilded peacock, and I must say that I was a good deal that way myself. I had never had any good of the title, and I was glad something had come of it. Dolor was so particularly tickled by the deferential manner in which she was treated that I was ashamed I had ever thought of presenting the card of Mr. and Mrs. Garley. The next morning, when I went into the reading-room of the hotel, the first man I saw was that infernal attorney who had brought me the news, in front of my own house, of my accession to the title and the debts. It is of no use to write much about this; it is too beastly miserable even to think about. The wretched cad had found out I had gone to America, and the inheritors of the claims had sent him over to look me up. But he had not heard a bit about me until he saw in the morning paper that Lord and Lady Crabstairs had attended the reception the evening before. He had the papers, and he nabbed me on the spot, and now I go back to England to spend the rest of my life in a debtor's dungeon, and to think that my poor dear did it simply because she thought I ought to be as big a swell as any of them. I vow I wish I had done it myself. Well, it is all up. Life is all up. Everything is all up, so far as we are concerned. The whole world has gone to the bad. What is to be done, I cannot say. In a week I am to sail for England, but it is impossible for Dolor to go with me. She would not be allowed to

share my dungeon, and I would not have her do it. Moreover, I could not endure to look through a narrow slit in the wall and see her wandering about the neighborhood where she did not know one street from another, and wasting to a skeleton day by day. But how I am to go away and leave her, I know not. So here we are in blackest misery. By the eleven devils who continually howl around Judas Iscariot, I wish that the first Lord Crabstairs had been born dead!

"Yours wretchedly, "CRABSTAIRS.

"For the sake of Dolor, I stick to the title."

This letter was read aloud in the presence of the two Tripp sisters, Doris, and the butcher. When it was finished Alwilda and Lizeth arose without a word, put on their black-and-white striped sunbonnets, and went out—one to the dining-room, and the other to the poultry-yard. Doris and I gazed at each other in silence, but the butcher stood up with flashing eyes and heaving breast.

"Who is to go to Montreal?" he said.

"To Montreal?" I repeated. "There's no use in any one going there in a case like this; there is nothing to be done."

"If no one else goes," said the butcher, "I shall go."

"That you shall not do," said Doris. "It would not be suitable or proper. I am going."

She went, and of course I went with her.

We found the bridal couple in doleful plight. Lord Crabstairs was a prisoner in his hotel, awaiting the departure of the steamer on which his passage had been taken. Poor Dolor was plunged in blackest grief.

"Of course you did not understand the telegram I sent," she sobbed. "It wasn't half strong enough."

Her husband was a brave fellow, and tried to put the best face on the matter, especially when his wife was present.

"I dare say I shall have a bit of a jolly time now and then," he said, "and that things will not be quite as bad as we have been thinking they would be. I never speak to that wretched cad of an attorney about anything, but I have heard that they turn debtors into a court now and then to take the fresh air, and perhaps they'll let me keep chickens. That would be no end jolly! And, more than that," he exclaimed, his whole face lighting up, "who knows but that they'll let me have a cow? I know I could keep a cow in a stone courtyard, and if they will let me serve milk and eggs to the fellows in the other dungeons I would have lots to do, especially when it came to the collecting of the monthly bills."

This kind of talk may have cheered the poor man a little, but it did not cheer us. Our principal concern was for Dolor. We had read stories of the Fleet and the Marshalsea, and supposed it likely that Lord Crabstairs might in time learn to endure life in a debtors' prison; but Dolor would be an absolute stranger in England, and she could not be allowed to go there. So there was nothing for her to do but to return to her home.

We spoke privately to Lord Crabstairs on this subject, and he agreed with us.

"Of course that's the place for her," he said, "and I would rather think of her there than anywhere else, but there is one thing about it that worries me. I

don't want her to go there if that butcher intends to live in the neighborhood. Not that I have anything to say against the butcher. He is an honest man, and tossed up fair every time, and if at the last tossing two tails had come up instead of two heads, perhaps he might have had her. But that's neither here nor there. Heads turned up, and there was an end to him."

Neither of us answered this remark. Doris looked as if she had something to say, but she did not say it.

"I will write to him," exclaimed Lord Crabstairs, "and put the matter fair and square before him. Then he will surely see it as I do."

"Anything like that," said Doris, somewhat severely, "you must certainly attend to yourself."

Lord Crabstairs wrote to the butcher and put the matter fair and square before him. On the next day but one this answer came by telegraph :

"If her coming home depends on my going, I go."

"There is a man for you !" exclaimed Doris, with a slight flush on her face as she read this telegram.

I made no reply. The butcher was well enough in his way, but he was not a man for me.

Dolor knew nothing of the letter or the telegram. That evening she said to us :

"I have been thinking about going home. It will be perfectly dreadful with my husband snatched away to a living death, and every hope in life shattered and shivered, but in some ways it may be better than it used to be. I shall have more company. I dare say the *Merry Chanter* will not sail for ever so long, and I shall often see you two, and perhaps the captains, to

say nothing of Griscom Brothers and the schoolmaster. The butcher, too, is a very pleasant man, and probably he will always live in the neighborhood."

At this Lord Crabstairs leaned his head upon his hands and gave a groan. Dolor stepped quickly to his side and put her arm about his neck.

"Poor fellow!" she said. "I wish I better knew how to help you to bear your misery! And to think," she suddenly exclaimed, standing erect, with her eyes sparkling with indignation, "the people who really owe these horrible debts, as well as the people to whom the debts were owed, have been dead so long that they have even ceased to be corpses!"

CHAPTER XX

THE COLLECTOR OF ANTIQUES

DORIS and I agreed to stay in Montreal until the very last minute, and when the steamer should be entirely out of sight we would return home, taking Dolor with us. To Lord Crabstairs we privately promised that before starting we would telegraph to the butcher.

Saturday was the steamer's sailing-day, and on Friday morning the attorney came to Lord Crabstairs's room, where Doris and I were paying an early visit to the unfortunate couple. Lord Crabstairs had declared he would never again speak a word to this attorney, who had dogged him across the Atlantic. But this time he broke through his rule.

"What do you mean," he cried, "by this impertinence? Is it not enough to have one cur keeping guard outside the door without another pushing himself into the room?"

This harsh speech made not the least impression upon the attorney, who quietly remarked: "Half an hour ago I received a message by cable concerning you which I did not in the least understand. But in picking up the morning paper I find this despatch from London, which is a curious bit of news, and may

interest you." And handing a newspaper to Lord Crabstairs, he stepped to one side.

Lord Crabstairs took the paper and read aloud the following news item:

"Considerable interest has lately been excited with regard to the case of Lord Crabstairs, who recently succeeded, not to the estate,—for there is none,—but to the title of this ancient family. It is well known that his only inheritance was a vast mass of debts, some of which began to accumulate in the seventeenth century, and which were increased and multiplied by a long line of ancestors, so that many years ago it became impossible for any descendant of the house to pay them. In consequence of this unfortunate state of affairs the new Lord Crabstairs became liable to arrest at the moment of his coming into the title, and to be sent to the debtors' jail, where so many of his forefathers had passed their lives. The public has already been made aware that this new nobleman evaded the officers of the law and fled to America, where, in Montreal, he was recently arrested as an absconding debtor. The publication of the facts in the London papers attracted the attention of an American gentleman, Mr. Copley Westbridge, who has been for some time in Europe expending a large portion of his great fortune in collecting material with which to found an antiquarian museum in New York. Mr. Westbridge pays much attention to antiquities of every kind, and the case of Lord Crabstairs interested him greatly. He obtained permission to examine the vast mass of claims, bonds, defeasances, judgments, executions, warrants, mortgages, bills, writs of *elegit* and of *capias ad satisfaciendum*, and legal papers of every variety originating in the reigns, protectorates, and regencies of two centuries; and all so worded and drawn as to bear upon the unfortunate man who hap-

pened to be Lord Crabstairs, no matter in what period of time or part of the world. This mass of ancient and curious documents appeared so valuable to Mr. Westbridge that he bought the whole of it for his museum. The descendants of the original creditors consented to accept a fixed price for the collective debts, and Mr. Westbridge signed a quitclaim, which entirely absolved Lord Crabstairs and his descendants from any connection with the debts of his forefathers. By this transaction this unique and highly valuable collection of legal curiosities goes to the States, and a British peer is made a freeman on his native soil."

As Lord Crabstairs read this piece of news his voice became louder and louder, and I am sure the eyes of all of us opened wider and wider, and that our hearts beat faster and faster. Dropping the paper, Lord Crabstairs stepped toward the attorney.

"What is the message you received?" he shouted.

"It was very short," replied the attorney; "merely these words: 'No further claims against your prisoner; release him.' Therefore, my lord, you are no longer under arrest. Good morning."

With two shouts of wild ecstasy Lord and Lady Crabstairs rushed into each other's arms, and Doris and I quietly withdrew.

The gayest, happiest, and most madly hilarious three people in the Dominion of Canada that day were Doris and Lord and Lady Crabstairs. I, too, was wonderfully well pleased, but my pleasure did not exhibit itself in extravagant manifestations such as those of my companions.

"What are you going to do?" asked Doris of Lord Crabstairs as we all sat at luncheon together. "Are

you going back to England? Have you any sort of an ancestral pile left to you?"

"I really do not know," replied his lordship. "I have never gone very deeply into the beastly business. Whether there was an entail or no entail, there is nothing left, anyway. But if anything were left, I should have nothing to do with a stick or a stone that belonged to my ancestors, for fear that the American antiquarian had overlooked a paper or two, and that some sort of antiquated debt in geometrical progression still stuck to the property. I own a neat little place in Bucks, and if everything hasn't been scattered to the four winds, there is a cow there, and a lot of high-bred poultry, two dogs, and a cat, and some of the prettiest flower-beds you ever saw in your life. Lord and Lady Crabstairs will live there, and if the other lords of the realm think that my house is too humble an abode for a British peer they can smother their mortification until I make money enough to build a better one. I intend that the next house of the Crabstairs shall date from me."

It was decided that the best thing for us all to do was to return together to the Tripp house. We wrote at once to announce the good news of our coming, and we were met at the railroad-station by a little crowd of friends. Lizeth Tripp was there, but not Alwilda, who would not leave the house unprotected even on an occasion like this. The four captains were there, and Griscom Brothers, and the schoolmaster, and very prominent among the others the butcher, wearing a freshly washed and starched gown, and a shining high silk hat. Having heard that Dolor's husband was coming back with her, he did not think it necessary

to leave the neighborhood. Behind this little group of friends stood the entire population of the village.

We walked to the Tripp house in a long procession, the baggage of the bridal pair being gladly carried by the four captains, the schoolmaster, Griscom Brothers, and the butcher. The villagers followed us for a short distance only. They all knew what sort of a woman Alwilda Tripp was. The hired man had come down to the station, but he had hurried back ahead of us, and now stood at the open gate bearing a huge sunflower, which he presented to Lady Crabstairs.

"I don't believe there's another person in this world," said Lizeth, when we had reached the house, "on whom that man would have wasted nearly a gill of chicken-seed."

We found Alwilda in the dining-room, standing before the huge tombstone she had painted on the wall. She quietly submitted to the embrace of her sister, and very civilly returned the salutations of the rest of the party.

"I am very much puzzled," she then remarked, "to know what to do with that tombstone. I don't want to scrape it out, because I took a great deal of pains with it, and yet, as things have turned out, it doesn't seem to be suitable."

"Who is that sprawling nigger at the foot of the stone with his head in a brass pan?" asked Lord Crabstairs.

"By that," replied Alwilda, "I intended to represent the downfall of an African king."

At this we all laughed heartily, and Lord Crabstairs cried:

"Well, whatever you do, madam, paint out the

nigger. He doesn't suit at all. And if you want an inscription for your tombstone I'll give you one: 'Here lies two centuries of debt, and the devil take it!'"

"I might put that," said Alwilda, "except the part about the devil. I can have instead of it 'now departed.'"

"I think I can propose something better than that," cried Doris. "You can cut off the top of the gravestone so as to make it look like the base of a monument, and on this you can paint a handsome column or obelisk. You can make a flower-bed of the fallen African king, and pretty vines can twine themselves about the base of the stone. These, with blossoming shrubs and flowers on each side and in the background, will make a very cheerful picture. Then on the monument I propose you paint these words: 'To the memory of the good ship *Merry Chanter*, which—'" She hesitated a few moments, and then said: "I cannot think of a good sentiment. Will not one of you help me?"

Griscom Brothers smiled, and in a moment said:

"Perhaps this might do: 'To the memory of the good ship *Merry Chanter*, which made slow time but fast friends.'"

"Capital!" said Doris. And we all agreed that this would be an exceedingly appropriate inscription.

"I'll paint it in that way," said Alwilda. And immediately she went to work upon it.

CHAPTER XXI

THE "MERRY CHANTER" LEAVES SHANKASHANK BAY

Lord and Lady Crabstairs remained with us at Dolor's old home for a week or more, and then started on a short western tour. When this continuation of their bridal trip was completed they would sail for England to take possession of their small estate in Buckinghamshire, where, as the humblest and happiest of all lords and ladies, they expected to build up a little paradise.

Every one of us was sorry to have them go, and each of us gave them some little memento. The butcher's present was a beautiful new cleaver of the best steel.

"This sort of thing," he said, "comes very handy in the kitchen."

And then speaking to me in an undertone he remarked:

"They say that sharp-edged tools cut love, but there are cases when this doesn't matter."

The four captains brought queer things which they had picked up in distant lands, and Griscom Brothers put a little oyster-pie in a tin can and told them they must think of him when they ate it in their own house.

"I do not need anything," said Dolor, "to make me remember the ghost who used to leave pies at my door."

"I haven't anything that will do for a memento," said Alwilda; "but I will paint your portraits from memory and send them to you."

"May the ship sink that carries them!" muttered the butcher.

The day after the departure of Lord and Lady Crabstairs, Doris and I walked down to the shore to look at our ship.

"Do you know," said Doris to me, "that I am very much afraid the *Merry Chanter* will never sail again. I don't believe the highest kind of tide will lift her now. She must have become a permanent portion of the earth's surface."

I had long been waiting for an opportunity to assert myself, and to make plain to Doris the value of my opinions and my decisions. I considered such action as due to my personal dignity, and had only postponed it because no proper occasion had appeared to offer itself. Now an occasion offered.

"There is no need of surmises on the subject," I said. "I have positively determined that that ship is not fit for navigating purposes, and that we must give up all idea of sailing in her to any place whatever."

"I am glad you think so," said Doris, "because I was afraid I might have some trouble in convincing you that now we ought not to think of such a thing as taking voyages in our ship. But what shall we do with her?" she continued. "But here comes the butcher. Let us ask him."

The butcher, who had been rowing from the ship, now ran his boat upon the beach. When Doris had

asked his advice upon the important subject under consideration, he stood for some moments holding his chin in his hand.

"I'll make you an offer," he said. "I like living on board the schooner. It suits me first-rate. She's got a splendid foundation, and will stand storms like a lighthouse. If you say so, I'll buy her of you."

My wife and I retired a little for consideration.

"There cannot be the slightest doubt about it," said Doris. "We should sell him the ship, for it is of no earthly use to us."

"Very well," said I, "let us sell it to him."

The butcher bought the *Merry Chanter*, and with the purchase-money in our pockets Doris and I prepared to leave Shankashank Bay for a little inland town, where we would set up a home entirely unconnected with maritime pursuits.

On the morning of the day we were to leave we went on board the *Merry Chanter* for a final visit. The schoolmaster received us at the beach, and rowed us to the ship. As we stepped on deck the butcher, in whitest gown and blackest hat, received us with a sorrowful courtesy. Griscom Brothers was on board with the four old captains, who had come over purposely to bid us farewell. We were all there except the lively Lord Crabstairs and the pretty Dolor. The butcher thought it proper to allude to this fact.

"There is a gap among us, my friends," he said, "which we cannot fail to see. There are, however, other gaps which are not visible," and he turned his face toward the sea.

Doris walked over the ship and bade good-by to

everything. Her own old hen, followed by a brood of now well-grown chickens, came clucking toward her, doubtless remembering former dainty repasts. The other poultry crowded about her, hoping to be fed, and the sandpiper ran along the rail by her side, his little eyes sparkling with the expectation of a crumb.

She walked to the bow, and looked over at the wooden figure-head.

"Good-by, dear Merry Chanter," she said. "Whenever the winds are high, and I know there is a storm on the coast, I shall think of you bravely breasting the waves that rush in from the sea, and shouting your bold sea songs out into the storm."

The butcher insisted upon rowing us to the shore. As we bade him farewell he cordially invited us to pay him a visit whenever we felt like breathing a little sea air.

"When you are fixed and settled," he said, "I want to send you—a—not exactly a present, but something to remind you of this part of the world."

Three months after this there came to our new home an enormous box, which gave rise to more curiosity in Doris and myself than we had ever felt in regard to any package of any shape or size. When, after an infinite deal of pains, the cover had been forced off and some wrappings removed, there we saw the Merry Chanter, unbolted from the bow of our ship, and sent by the butcher to us.

When Doris saw it she burst into tears.

"He shall be our household god," she said. "As long as we live he shall stand in our home."

He stands there now.