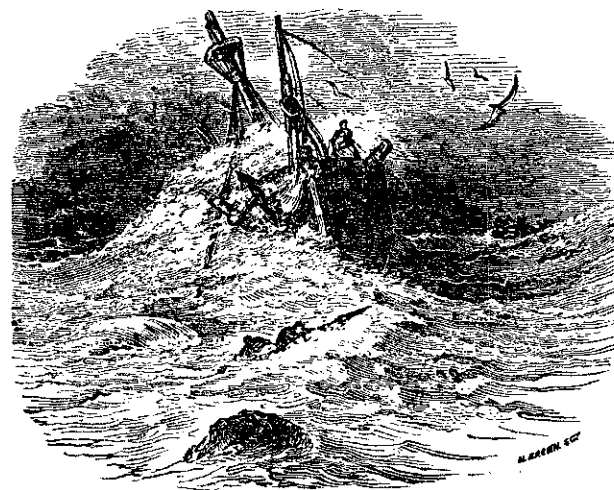


A
STRANDED SHIP:

A STORY OF SEA AND SHORE.

By L. CLARKE DAVIS.

"If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again."
RALPH WALDO EMERSON.



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TO
THE CREW
OF THE
"DICK AND CHARLIE,"

WHOSE LOVE MAKES ALL WINDS FAIR,

I INSCRIBE

THIS STORY.

Hampden

NOTE.

IN the third part of this story, Captain Brown, wrecking-master at Squan Beach, is made to deprecate the absence of proper appliances for the saving of human life upon that dangerous bit of coast. Even in fiction I cannot afford to be unjust to our Government, which has within a few years provided every necessary safeguard suggested by either the experience of the wreckers or the exigencies of the service.

But it has not been more than twelve years, I think, since a German emigrant ship, the Minerva, was stranded on that beach, involving a loss of nearly three hundred lives. All of them would probably have been saved if at that time the wreckers had been supplied with a mortar or other facilities for casting a line over the wreck.

From the incident of the Minerva I have taken the last scene of my story.

For the action of Abel Dunlethe at Lucknow, I am indebted to a precisely similar incident in the career in Mexico, of the late Confederate General Henry E. Reed, who fell severely wounded in planting the flag upon the heights of Chapultepec. For this act he was promoted to a captaincy, and voted a sword by the General Assembly of Kentucky.

L. C. D.



A STRANDED SHIP.

PART I.

ON DUNLETHE'S WHARF.

THE old historic town of Cambridge, which was yet old when the fight at Concord was only a story of yesterday—old in its gigantic elms, in its college-halls, in its legends of the Mayflower—was older yet as its streets and houses lay hushed and deserted under the June sun of its annual Commencement-day.

On none had that day's sun risen warmer or brighter than on the student Luke Connor, to whom had fallen the honors of his class. On none would it go down more darkly, or the stormy night following descend more mercilessly.

Life had been bounteous to this boy in many ways. It had given him wealth and energy and superb physical health. He was long ago an orphan; yet his youth had lacked no love.

To-day he stood surrounded by grave professors, trustees, and friends, like Saul among his brethren, taller and fairer than they. He rose to speak the farewell of his class, seeing before him a crowd of eager, expectant faces. They greeted him with long applause and encouraging smiles.

Yet he was to go out from that old college-hall, from among those who had loved and given him such honors, with the alien's curse upon him; and while men's praises were loudest, and his life seemed to them to open up before him in a long vista of triumphs, the shadow of the curse came close and covered him; and as men sometimes feel death suddenly touch them when they think death afar off, the gloom of a great wrong embraced and took from him for an instant power of speech and strength of limb. He had advanced to the rostrum, patiently awaiting subsidence of the tumult his name had aroused, when suddenly he threw his hand up to his face, as if to shut out the sight of something or to avoid a blow. When the hand was again withdrawn, he laid hold of a chair to keep himself from falling, and his face had lost its ruddy color.

"Take time, Mr. Connor," said one of the pro-

fessors, leaning forward. "It will pass away in a moment; take time."

The boy looked over his shoulder, smiling back at the speaker.

"It is gone now, thank you."

Then the boy's will, which was great as a man's will, came to his rescue, and the words of his farewell followed. There were in them the fulness, grace, and charm of that oratory which is of nature; and when he ceased speaking, there was a long, painful silence, and his audience breathed heavily; for the sombre spell of the hour was upon them all, and it was as if the shadow that had touched the student had touched them too. He had felt and spoken greatly; but no loud applause followed. It was noticed by a few in that fast-thinning multitude that, when the other professors came forward to give him such moderate commendation as befitted those grave gentlemen, there was one, the youngest of them all, who stood indifferently aloof, and purposely avoided him. It was curious, they thought, that this boy should have a single enemy.

Professors, trustees, seniors, and friends dropped off, one by one; but the student still lingered

uncertainly on the platform, turning often to look furtively behind him, as if he felt some presence there which might be real, or only incorporeal air.

But whatever was real in that scene then, was to him all dim and intangible, even to the departing audience; his own words had sounded strangely in his ears, and the language of others was unmeaning to him. It was all over at length, and, as he saw the last of the crowd leave the hall, he mechanically moved away; if he had any thought at all, it was to be quite alone. Directly he knew that he was in the long college-walk; to his left rose up the granite shaft of Bunker Hill, and before him the glittering dome of Boston State-House. Some of his classmates standing in his way accosted him; but he did not notice them, and passed on. It was not an idle fancy which made him feel that all the morning's sunshine had gone out of the air; he looked up at the sky, and saw that it was clouded over and threatened a storm. That was all he remarked, until he found that he was in the Cambridge-Road, entangled in a mass of horses and vehicles, and that people were crying out to him to move aside.

Extricating himself, he walked on along the boarded path under the huge elms, dimly aware of his name being called and of people speaking cheerily to him; but he did not stop to reply, pursuing his way, dogged, he fancied, by some devil of disaster.

At the door of one of the most ancient of Beacon Street houses he entered; but before closing it after him, he turned quickly, looking over his shoulder again, thinking the pursuing shadow must be there. It was an idle fancy; and, thinking still, as he ascended the great uncarpeted stairway, how idle it was, he entered a large square room, wainscoted to the ceiling in black carved walnut, having a spacious tiled fireplace, over which hung the high mantelpiece, sombre with the smoke and ashes of a century, its carved griffins' heads throwing curious shadows on the floor. About him, loosely strewn on tables, brackets, shelves, and pedestals, all the ages of art seemed to have left some token. There were rare pictures and marbles, curious bronzes and grotesque old carvings in ivory and wood, old weapons and quaint furniture of mahogany, velvet-cushioned and blackened with age. An

unwholesome room, at the sunniest of times ; unwholesomest of all when the clouds were black, as they were now, with an impending storm. A wood-fire blazed upon the hearth, for the north-east wind blew up chillingly from the bay. He had only seated himself before it, in the luxurious depths of his cushioned chair, for a moment, when he was startled by a knock at his door. He cried out impatiently, "Come in!" and a servant entered, handing him a letter. He took it from the man's hand, shut him out, closed and locked the door. Then he knew, by the subtle instinct that some men have, by which they feel disaster in the very air, that the pursuing shadow had entered there, and that he would suddenly grapple with the substance.

The student read the letter to the end, and did not cry out nor utter any word of hurt or pain ; but the agony on his face was piteous to see. Then the shadow that had entered there, fell at last, and held the boy, never to leave him—never again to depart from him in all the coming years, until the sea should roll over him, and hide him from the sight of living men. Till then his day of grace was dead.

The letter told him that his sister, for whom, he fancied, his love was beyond all brothers' love, was lying dead in the home her life had made beautiful to him ; had died confessing an awful wrong and shame. It was written by his guardian, a man who had supplied a father's place, not only in duty, but in love to the brother and sister. He was an old man now, and his story was haltingly, incoherently told, yet it conveyed to the student a sense of loss and dishonor, by its very indistinctness, deeper than the most studied expressions could have done. But that which was worse for guardian and worse for brother, was, that the man who had wrought this wrong was the student's friend, his classmate here, his old school and playfellow at home.

The poor girl was dead in her sin and dishonor, dying with this man's name upon her lips, crying out to him, in her agony and shame, to save her from the threatened ruin. Dead in all her sweet and tender womanhood ; dead in her charm and grace of youth ; and the man that killed her lived, and was the friend that he had set above all other men to love and honor. That was the bitter part of it all—his friend.

Stunned and made mad, the student lay back in his chair, the letter crumpled savagely in his hand, his physical strength gone, his mind alert only in its unwholesome fancies. Then to this boy, whose life had been singularly pure and gentle, came the devil, and tempted him. There were wrongs, he thought, which no word nor act could ever make right; there were wrongs which cried out, with the clearness and fulness of the old Jewish law, for the requital of vengeance. There should be a life for a life.

Filled with temptation, the day wore slowly on. The blurred sun crept down behind the gathering clouds, and up out of the sea and bay came the storm and darkness; the logs upon the hearth fell down and buried their flames under the graying ashes; uncanny and unwholesome shadows stole out from the recesses of the room; the frescoed arabesques grew dim in the waning light; the statues and the quaintly carved old furniture reflected themselves upon the floor and walls in distorted images, which, by times, mixed themselves curiously with the murderous fancies that filled the student's mind, strangely distorting and warping all the good there was in it,

turning the gentle, loving nature of the man into unclean channels of morbid bitterness and hatred. He felt the influences at work upon him, and made no effort to cast them off, but yielded to them. Man is not stronger than destiny, he thought; why should he struggle? He knew the worst that would surely come,—knew that life for him had changed, that the promise of all the years past, all the fruits of their toil and patient endeavor, were gone forever. In that hour he sank down, helpless under the weight of his wrong and shame, and putting away from him all chance or hope of honor, or men's love or happiness, bartering them all for his shallow thought of vengeance, he accepted the future and the work that he felt he had been called upon to do. With no weak regrets, no pity for the beautiful life to be trampled under foot, he took up the crime and curse of Cain, and did not murmur nor look back. His wrong, the unwholesome day, the weird shadows, and his own sombre fancies, had conspired together, and told him that he must kill the man who wrought this evil. That was his work, and he must about it speedily; and he would.

Yet, until the evening had come, the boy had

not moved toward the fulfilment of his purpose, though he knew that the man whom he had doomed to die he could find whenever he sought him. He still lay back in his chair, before the dying embers of the fire, the crumpled letter in his hand, quiet as a man dead or sleeping, an awful pallor on his face, his white throat bared, his black hair hanging in damp, close curls about his forehead,—a boy in years, with a stature like Saul, with a grand physical mould and strength of breast and limb.

When the dusk deepened, he took from the wall a curious old Spanish knife, its long, thin blade tapering to an almost imperceptible point. There was a latent, devilish cruelty in the careful manner shown by him as he ran his finger along the edge of the murderous toy; but he was evidently satisfied with his scrutiny, for he placed the knife carefully in his breast, and went out.

The rain began to patter on the stones as he turned into Tremont Street, but he rather welcomed that; it would cool the fever of his blood. He went on down the street, down past the houses of his friends,—of the men and women and little children who had given him true love. There

was not a single regret or tinge of bitterness in the thought that to-morrow they would all be closed against him—homes and hearts alike. He had weighed all his losses; and that was among them. From the open window of one mansion, a young girl, whom yesterday he had fancied he was fond of, spoke to him some pleasant, congratulatory words; but he passed on without returning her salutation. Now, the girl was not quite certain she had done right to speak to any one in that manner, and when Luke Connor passed by without a word to her in reply, there came to her a sense of shame for what she had done, and a fear that he thought her unwomanly; so that she stood there at the window, looking after him a long while, with some unhappy tears wetting her cheeks. But he went on his way, blind and dumb to everything that lay outside of his one ugly purpose.

Presently he rang the bell of a house facing the Common, in Boylston Place.

"Tell Mr. Lawrence I wish to see him," he said, when his summons was answered.

"Mr. Lawrence has gone out. Will you come in and wait?"

He hesitated for a moment, brushed past the servant as he had often done before, leaped the stairs two at a time, and was in Lawrence's chambers. No signs of hurried flight there; the rooms were undisturbed and orderly. A pipe, still warm, lay on the table, an open book beside it; his easy-chair standing near. He took it all in at a glance—was at the door again, where the servant still lingered, looking out at the rain.

"It's a rough night, Mr. Connor," he said. "Won't you wait a bit for Mr. George?"

"No; I will find him," he said, and retraced his steps along Boylston Street, dropping in here and there at club-houses and George Lawrence's other well-known haunts; but he was at none of them.

At each place, almost, the same question was asked, "Will you come in and wait?" and the same invariable answer given, "No; I will find him."

Foiled in his search, he remembered that Lawrence frequented the editorial sanctums on Court and Washington Streets, and that he should probably find him in one of them. He had begun his pursuit cool and unhurried, but his failures

excited and maddened him at last; the ugly fever in his blood had stolen upward to his head, and he was aware that his manner was strange and attracting attention. He tried to sober himself as he entered one newspaper-office after the other; but he noticed that his husky voice, or something in his face, startled for a moment the men he questioned. He had at length exhausted all the likely places of finding the man; then he thought of the unlikely ones. He began, too, to think that Lawrence had heard, in some way, of the girl's death, and was avoiding him; but that did not matter, he said, under his breath, he would find him all the same.

Aware now that he had lost all clew to his intended victim, he walked on, quite aimlessly, from one street to another, until, after an hour of such searching as had been, after all, only an eager scrutiny of the faces of the few pedestrians he met, he found himself standing under the black shadow of the Old South Church, thinking of its grim legend; from there he was in Hanover Street again, under Faneuil Hall, looking up with a new interest at its ugly historic front; then on again, his brain whirling curiously, his step un-

steady, and scarcely knowing how he had got there, he stood on Dunlethe's Wharf, gazing out at the black, silent bay gliding along to the sea, strangely fascinated by its rippling tide and the lights dangling from the yard-arms of ships. A California steamer, going to sail that night, waiting for the turn of tide, lay half a mile off-shore, with steam up and a hundred lights blazing aboard of her. Below him there was a shipping-office, the windows of which a boy was hurriedly closing for the night. As the last shutter was fastened, the door was thrown open, and, in the flood of light streaming out, George Lawrence stood revealed for a moment, but as if undecided whether he should return to the shelter of the office or fulfil his first intention of going out. The boy came out after him and closed the door, deciding the matter for him. Drawing the collar of his coat about his ears, he walked on down the wharf, shading his eyes with his hand, and looking out over the bay to the steamer. The student saw him there—had seen him before, when the office-lights were full upon him; but he failed to recognize his enemy in the oddly disguised figure now coming rapidly toward him.

A single lamp glimmered dimly at the end of the wharf, and the rain, coming down in torrents, had driven the officers of the watch to shelter, so that the two men were quickly closing in upon each other, in a spot seemingly set apart on this foul night for a foul deed.

A boat, lowered away from the steamer, was being rowed slowly against the tide, towards the end of the long wharf, a lamp swinging from the bow showing dimly a single rower. Luke Connor had forgotten the man he hunted altogether, but stood watching the crawling light on the bay, with a strange interest in a thing so trifling, when he was rudely jostled: the next instant he held George Lawrence by the throat, and, by an effort of his powerful strength, bore him to his knees.

The boat was coming nearer; the rower hailed his expected passenger, rested on his oars for a second, then hailed again; but there was no answer. The two men were on the verge of the pier, against which the black tide rippled hungrily.

Luke Connor had said to others and to himself a hundred times that night, that he would find

the man. He had found him,—found him, too, in a lonely, secluded spot, where no help could come if he but did his work quickly. He was not surprised, not moved in any way, that the man had been delivered, as he thought, into his hands. It was Fate or Providence, as his death would be—all Fate.

As quietly and undisturbed as he would have spoken to his friend in that earlier, happier time, he spoke to his enemy now.

"This coward's disguise," he said, "means flight; and that tells me you know your crime, and expected me. If you have a prayer to say, say it now, and quickly; for I mean to kill you."

George Lawrence heard the splash of the oars in the coming boat; a moment's time gained or a loud cry for help might save him yet, he thought. He struggled upward, and tried to cry out; but the hand clutching at his throat was as firm as a band of steel, pressing the life out of him.

Luke Connor's hand went quickly to his breast, and when it came out again all the devil that possessed the man clutched at the Spanish knife, and nerved him against any compunction

or faltering in his purpose. The dip of the oars in the approaching boat sounded fatally near, when the cowering wretch at his feet sprang up and struggled with him for his life. There was only a short, dull cry, as Connor plunged the knife home; then he swayed his victim to and fro for a moment, and, exerting his great power of limb, flung him headlong into the rising tide, that splashed and licked the spectral pier. An hour later, when it ebbed, it would have grown tired of beating *something* against the muddy piles, and would hurry another burden, beside the California steamer, out to sea.

Then the boy, whose work was done, but whose boyhood had slipped forever away from him within an hour or two, quietly looked at the bloody knife in his hand—flung it into the tide—stood irresolute for a moment, debating within himself whether he should go then and surrender himself to justice, or wait until morning. From where he stood he could hear the slow, labored "heave-ho" of the sailors on the steamer, as they weighed anchor; the approaching boat, he thought, could put him aboard, and escape would be certain and easy. Captains of outgoing

vessels were not disposed to be too suspicious of the character of their passengers, or to inquire too closely into their motives for leaving the States, no matter how or when they came on board; for California had not yet ceased to be a sort of free commonwealth where adventurers, thieves, and worse, went abroad in the open day, unquestioned and unmolested.

But he had no intention of flight. He had, from the first moment of his resolve, calmly weighed all the consequences of its fulfilment; and he was now quite ready to meet them. It mattered nothing to him that one of them was the chance of an ignominious death, or lingering imprisonment; neither had any terrors for him now. The sister was at rest, and she was the last of his kin; so there could be no one else to be hurt or tainted by his crime or its punishment. But he would wait until morning to give himself up to the law, he said; then, it might do with him what it would. He had a fancy that he would like to go back to his old rooms, and say good-by to them, before going to prison or death. It was a pleasant old street, he thought. Nowhere else in Boston was the air so sweet

and strong, blowing in to him from the bay, over the city gardens. From his window he could look across the Common, and fancy that nowhere else was the grass so green, nor the view down the serpentine-walk so fine; and the trees, waving in the morning winds, were as old friends, whose every leaf and bough he seemed to know. Even the plash of the fountains had something loving and friendly in it. It was all pleasant and friendly there; and the fancy of the moment before now became an eager desire to go back there and see it all in the sweet hush and light of another morning. He started back, making his way slowly among the rubbish of the long wharf, stepping deep in muddy pools, or slipping in the soft clay, hearing no longer the plash of oars nor roar of wind nor beat of rain nor swash of tide, nor remembering for a moment the *something* it was beating against the piles or bearing out to sea; but, as he went on through the deserted streets, he grew conscious that he walked unsteadily, and that, despite the chilling winds and rain, he was burning with fever, and that his head pained him. He put his hand up to his face, and, com-

ing then under a lamp, found his fingers dripping blood.

"I am glad the devil struck back," he said, quietly, and went on.

But he lost his way presently in the tortuous streets of the locality, and, seeing a light ahead, followed it, and saw that it came from the travellers' room of the old Stackpole Inn, which was an inn of the better sort, as it now is, one hundred years ago. As he entered the cleanly room, the clerk, with his chair tipped back against the wall, was sleeping soundly; and he passed on to the travellers' room beyond, the door of which, standing open, revealed an inviting fire, and lights. As he crossed the threshold, a dog started up and disputed his passage; when a man, seated at the table reading, looked up, and, recognizing the student and seeing blood upon his face and hands, started to his feet.

"My God! Connor, you are hurt," he said, coming forward.

The speaker was the professor, who had been noticed by a few people, that morning, to stand aloof from the boy at the close of his address. They had never liked each other, and Connor

thought that it would have pleased him better to have met any other man than Professor Dauntton that night. Yet it did not greatly matter; it might be better that an enemy and not a friend should give him up to justice.

The boy staggered forward, laying his hand on the other's arm impatiently, and motioning back to the man asleep in the outer room.

"It is nothing," he said. "Are we alone here?"

"Yes, quite alone. I was caught in the storm, and have sent for a carriage. It will be here presently," the professor replied.

"Will you give me a chair? I am dizzy, and this sudden light has blinded me."

The professor drew a chair to the fire, and, seating him in it, stood waiting for a moment. Luke Connor's head fell forward on the table, and there was a miserable silence in the room, only disturbed by the dog coming forward and snarling savagely at the odor of something on the student's hand.

When Connor looked up again, his eyes wandered about the walls and furniture, dazed and stupid.

"Will you tell me what it was I asked you a

moment ago? I have lost myself altogether, and have forgotten something that I wished to say to you."

The student had risen, and the professor kindly put out his hand to save him from falling; when he had seated him again, he said,

"You asked me if we were alone here, and I answered, 'Yes, quite alone.' Can you recall what it was you wished to say to me?"

"Yes! I killed the man to-night who did this"—pointing to a cut reaching across the temple to the ear. "You must give me up; but will you let me rest until morning, and send an officer to my rooms then?"

"Yes, I will do what you wish,"—an expression of incredulity in his eyes, and secretly doubting Connor's sanity. "Is there any thing that I can do for you?" he asked.

"Will you get me some brandy, and—close that door after you? I would rather that man did not see me."

When the liquor was brought, Luke Connor drank it eagerly. As the professor turned his back to put down the glass, he asked,

"Do you care to tell me about this matter?"

"No; I will not tell *you*. I never liked you, nor you me; and that is why I am not sorry you will give me up. Not that I think it will be a pleasant thing for you to do, professor; but I would rather you did it than a man I cared for."

"You are right; it will not be pleasant for me to send the first honor of the class to a jail or beyond. But a man's duty may lie even there."

"You are right; it is your *duty*. To-night I rely on your generosity to leave me undisturbed. Will your carriage be here soon?"

"It is here now," the professor said, hearing the sound of the wheels outside. If you are ready, I will throw this cloak about you as you pass through the next room."

"You are considerate, professor;" and the man put out his hand frankly, but the other did not take it.

When they entered the outer room, the drowsy clerk had again tilted his chair back against the wall, and growled good-night without looking up.

When they arrived at the Beacon Street house, the professor carefully led the student to the door of his rooms, then courteously said good-night. But Connor stopped him with a question.

"You bear me no ill-will, professor?"

"No. Why should I?"

"Will you shake hands, then? I have a fancy we will not meet again."

"No; I prefer not. Good-night."

"Good-night, Professor Dauntton," the student answered back; and he grimly smiled as he thought of the professor's prejudice, closing the door after him.

Then he went into the inner room, and stood with his hands resting on the dressing-table, looking into the mirror, coolly surveying the face he had seen under all phases but that of crime. He had fancied that it would be altered; that when he saw it next the demon of murder would have set his seal upon it, changing and defiling it.

When he had satisfied himself, he said,

"It is not different from my face of yesterday, only that it is gashed and bloody. I am glad he struck me."

He washed the blood carefully from his face and hands, throwing the water into the street when he had done, not wishing to see the stain in it again in the morning. A wound, running across the temple to the ear, showed itself when

the matted hair was brushed aside, which began to bleed again as he washed away the clots about it. He bound it up with his handkerchief, changed his clothing, selecting piece after piece with curious care, packed a small trunk with such things as he thought he would need in prison, and then threw himself into his chair by the replenished fire, to wait for the morning. After a while he slept, quietly and calmly as he had ever done, disturbed by no dreams of the dead man drifting out on the tide.

The sweet June morning came in with the songs of the birds in the Public Gardens; and the sunshine, falling warmly across the bright colors of the carpet and hangings, touched into wondrous radiance, here and there, a pictured face or landscape. A bust of Psyche, at the base of which some white flowers grew, attracted him with the sunlight lingering on it. A face full of beauty, purity, and pain, he fancied; then stooped to kiss the forehead. When he raised his head, there was a blood-stain on the marble.

Then he somehow knew, as nothing else had told him, the full and perfect meaning of the thing he had done. He had smiled last night at

the professor's refusal to take his hand, as unmeaning prejudice ; but the spot upon the forehead of the pure Soul, Psyche, told him that he was never again to touch the hand of man or lip of woman, without leaving a stain behind. Believing that, the prison or death would be altogether best, he thought.

The officer came awhile later, and found the man impatiently awaiting him.

"Now," said the officer, "it's uncommon plucky in you to give yourself up in this way ; and while I don't want you to say anything that can be used against you, I would like to know who the man was, and how you came to do it."

"I think your duty lies another way, my man. Suppose you follow it. I am quite ready," Connor said, shortly.

"Oh, as for that, I know my duty ; but, naturally, I am not without curiosity."

When the day was gone, Luke Connor had been committed to prison, there to await, as best he might, his day of trial. It seemed a long way off at first ; but, like all far-off events, it came, if slowly, none the less surely.

He felt, when he was called upon to enter his plea, that he was among friendly people, and that in no man's face among them all was there a single craving look for his life.

Then he placed his hands firmly on the wooden railing before him, and, in clear, unfaltering accents said :

"A man deserved death at my hands, and I killed him ; but in the manner and form in which I stand indicted, I am not guilty."

The prosecution, in their opening address to the court and jury, in support of the indictment, alleged :

That a murder had been committed by the prisoner at the bar.

That in proof thereof they would offer two separate and distinct admissions of the prisoner, made on the night of the 22d day of June, 1855 ; and that while neither of these admissions included the name or a description of the murdered man, yet, they believed and expected to prove that he was a former friend of the prisoner, viz., one George Lawrence.

That, in addition to said admissions of the prisoner, they would offer, in support of the in-

dictment, the evidence of a learned and eminent citizen, who had accidentally encountered the prisoner while his hands were yet wet with his victim's blood, and also the prisoner's bloody garments worn at the time of the perpetration of the murder.

That, moreover, they relied upon the following facts, which they would establish, to support the theory of the prosecution that the said George Lawrence was slain in cold blood by the prisoner at the bar.

1. The said George Lawrence had suddenly disappeared from his domicile and all his other usual places of resort, without any previous preparation, notice, or warning.

2. That he disappeared on the night of that fatal 22d of June, and had never since been seen nor heard of.

3. That an examination of his domicile had established that he had not intended flight nor concealment.

4. That the widest and most untiring inquiry of friends, relatives, and officers of the law, failed to supply any clew to his whereabouts, or to assign him a place among living men.

5. That he had left his rooms but a few minutes previous to the prisoner's having inquired for him there, leaving a message with the servant that he would return soon.

6. That, on that 22d of June night, the prisoner had sought the said George Lawrence in all likely and in some unlikely places, until a late hour, under the peculiar circumstances of a violent storm raging, and repeated failures.

7. That the prisoner's manner during the time of this search was eager, violent, and excited.

8. That the said George Lawrence had, in some manner unknown to the prosecution, wronged the prisoner, and that the prisoner believed the said Lawrence had deserved death at his hands, and that the prisoner, being instigated by the devil, did murder the said Lawrence.

The prosecution in support of the indictment, called their witnesses, who testified to George Lawrence's disappearance on the night of the 22d of June; the subsequent search for and failure to find any trace of him; to the excited, angry manner of the prisoner on that night; the

finding of his bloody clothing; his admissions before the magistrate. Beyond that they could not go; and when the name of Albert Dauntton was called, there was a sensation in the court—men and women rising up and pressing forward, looking over each other's heads, to see the learned professor, whose evidence, it had been said, would destroy the prisoner's chance of life.

The professor was requested to narrate the circumstances of the interview in the travellers' room of the old Stackpole Inn; which he did, very slowly and carefully, evidently considering that a man's life might hang on the proper placing of each word he uttered. Occasionally he glanced uneasily toward the prisoner, as if to convince him of his sympathy, or to let him understand that, though it was his duty to say that which might consign him to death, it was, nevertheless, an unpleasant thing to do. He told the story simply and truly, and not without some feeling, too.

"We have closed. Cross-examine," said the prosecuting attorney. And then this dialogue occurred between the counsel for the prisoner and the witness:

Counsel. Did the prisoner mention the name of the man he said he had killed?

Witness. He did not. He said, "I killed the man to-night who did this," pointing to a wound on his temple.

Counsel. Did you ask him the man's name, or why he had killed him?

Witness. I did not. I asked him if he cared to tell me about the matter, and he declined.

Counsel. Will you describe the prisoner's manner, nearly as you can, at that time, and say whether you thought him to be in full and perfect control of his faculties?

Witness. His manner was excited and feverish; he was physically very weak, and would have fallen once or twice if I had not seated him. I think his mind wandered a little at times. He asked me a simple question one moment, and forgot it the next. I thought, at the time, that he was not in full possession of his mental faculties during all portions of the interview, at others that his mind was never clearer.

Counsel. Did you notice, in the morning of that day, at any time during the Commencement

exercises, any thing peculiar in the prisoner's manner?

Witness. I did. At the moment he stepped forward to deliver his address to the class, he seemed to grow dizzy, threw his hand up to his face, and would have fallen, I fancied, but that he laid hold of something. I afterwards walked after him, along the Cambridge-Road, into the city, and I remarked that he frequently looked furtively over his shoulder, as if under the impression he was being pursued; his face was very pale, and his dazed, uncertain manner was especially peculiar, as his success as a student and speaker had been very assured on that day.

Counsel. That will do, professor.

Albert Daunton sat down then to wait for the end, with a larger stake in the trial than he knew.

The Commonwealth having closed, the counsel for the defence alleged, in support of the prisoner's plea of not guilty,

That no murder had been committed by the prisoner at the bar.

That the one essential element in the case of

the prosecution which could enable them to maintain the indictment was absent, inasmuch as the body of the alleged murdered man had not been found nor recognized.

That, as regarded the disappearance of the said George Lawrence, the defence would show to the court and jury that the said Lawrence had ample and sufficient cause for flight and subsequent concealment.

That there was no reason whatever to suppose that the said Lawrence had been murdered or made away with at all.

That the prisoner's admissions amounted to nothing, as the prisoner was *non compos mentis* at the time of making such admissions and for some hours previous thereto; all which they believed, and much of it had been already proved by the Commonwealth's own witness, the learned and eminent citizen already produced by the prosecution.

Counsel. With the permission of the Court we will now call witnesses to prove that George Lawrence had sufficient reasons for flight and concealment.

At this moment the prisoner beckoned to his

counsel, whispered something briefly in his ear, and insisted on it against the other's continued protest.

"May it please the Court," said the counsel, "we are reluctantly compelled, by the express wishes of the prisoner, to rest our case here. He will not permit us to call the witnesses, who, we are assured, would satisfy this Court and jury that George Lawrence had meditated flight, and that he had good reasons for keeping a long and enforced concealment. Our hands are tied, and we can do no more. We must therefore submit the case to the jury on its present merits."

The Judge delivered his charge, the jury retired, deliberated, and came into court with their verdict.

"NOT GUILTY," the foreman said.

When the verdict was rendered, the people there pressed forward, straining to see how it would affect the prisoner; but they saw no change nor emotion in the man's face. He had then, as before, the same subdued, quiet manner; and later he received the congratulations of his counsel, calmly and almost listlessly. Instead of being, as was natural, the most interested per-

son there, in the result of the trial, he appeared to be the least so. The impassive face and manner revealed nothing; but if the man just escaped from peril of death had told them what he felt, he would only have said, "I am tired, and glad it is all over."

As he stepped out of the crowded room into the radiance and warmth of the fair summer day, a free man again—free to go and to come as he willed—there was only his counsel by his side. Some of his old college-chums stood at the door, waiting for him to come out; but they did not speak to him as he passed. It hurt him more than he cared to say; but he was silent.

He parted from his counsel at the next street, and went back to his old rooms, there to think it all out and to resolve what to do next. He found a dozen notes lying on his table, of old dates. Some enclosed tradesmen's bills, and several others notified him of his expulsion from his college societies and his club. The harvest he had sowed, he began early to reap. He knew that when institutions closed their doors against him, no pure homes would open theirs, at his summons.

He sat reading the last of these notes, when a boy ran past outside, crying, "Evening paper." He raised the window, and called to him. When the paper was brought in, the first paragraph that caught his eye had reference to his trial. The sharp fellow who prepared the court reports said, in regard to the verdict, "If the laws of Scotland prevailed here, the verdict would have been *not proven*, instead of not guilty."

"So! *that* would have been the verdict, would it?" he thought, then flung the paper from him.

All this made his way clearer, easier. He determined to go away somewhere; it did not greatly matter where, but as far from civilization as possible. Then a curious fancy seized hold of Luke Connor, and held him: he resolved to go out into the world and to make his hands earn the bread he ate; to use the mighty strength of frame he bore, and turn it to account. He meant to go where his crime was unknown, and where, under a new name, maybe, he could remain unquestioned, and trusted by honest men; for men's good word and regard were something essential to his being. But in taking

up his resolve, he never once thought of the old scriptural curse, "A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

He yet lacked a year of his majority; until then, or longer, he would live among strangers. When he came into his own, he fancied he could buy friends and love and forgetfulness; and until then he would labor like a menial: that would help him to forget.

Then he closed up the beautiful old rooms; and from among the men who had known him, and who knew the ugly history of his crime, he suddenly disappeared; and as time went by, he was lost so completely from their sight, that at last his name became only a fireside legend which sent children shivering to their beds, and in which they were told the history of a man cruelly murdered and drifted far out to sea on the stormy tide of a June night.



PART II.

BY THE SWEAT OF HIS BROW.

THE beautiful night, closing down on the golden City by the Sea, hid under its shadows a thousand wrongs and crimes; but as the sultry day faded, and the lamps were lighted, other wrongs and crimes grew fairer and bolder, and the gamesters hung out their gaudy lures to entrap the devotees of Chance.

One San Francisco gaming-house differed in no essential particular from a hundred others of the same class which night and day kept open doors for their votaries during the summer of 1855. The same rough sort of men were to be found in them all; the same gaudy furniture and hangings, the same low-voiced croupiers or dealers, the same soft-footed servants, were characteristic of each.

In one, the night was far spent, the raw, chilly morning beginning to dawn, and the players

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dropping off one by one from around the green tables. The croupiers yawned wearily, tired of raking into their strong boxes treasures which they were only paid to gather, and which they could not share. The long, high-ceiled room shone gaudily in the gas glare, reflecting back from its mirrored walls the gorgeous hangings and crimson-covered furniture. A gilded buffet against the wall sparkled with its store of beautiful glass, through which glared redly the fiery liquors, placed there by the wily spider of this parlor with a cunning forethought to steal away the brains of the unwary flies whom he had entrapped.

Play went on at a single table, about which the men were mostly miners, who had come down from the mountains with their large or small stores of gold, the result of weeks or months of such labor and exposure as few men long endure and survive, only to lay it all down on the green cloth before the quiet-voiced croupier, never to see it again. Rough-voiced, rude-mannered, hard-fisted fellows mostly, who staked and lost and bore their failure or success with oath or laughter equally unpleasant to hear. One by

one as the day came on the players went away up into the mountain gullies again, only to dig and sweat and find gold, to bring back, after more weeks or months, to this room to lose. But one man there did not stir, though the sunlight of the morning had already fallen on and made beautiful the Golden Gate, its ships and cliffs and piers. Seated at the table, a few men still standing about, he sat watching the game with feverish anxiety, being flushed or depressed beyond all others as he lost or won; he differed from the rest not only in his nervous, feverish impatience, but in that there was about him an air of gentler breeding than they had known, a gentleman at odds with luck, fast parting with that something which raised him above his coarse associates; so much of his face as could be seen—for his hat was drawn low over his forehead and his hand wandered about his mouth and chin in almost perpetual unrest—was pale and thin, his hands white and attenuated, his eyes sunken and fierce, as if from an inward fever. He had evidently suffered great bodily or mental distress, and had scarcely recovered from its effects. Later, he was left quite alone at the green table with the

croupier, the drowsy servants hanging about silent and sole spectators of the game.

The croupier raked in the result of the previous play, and, looking out into the sunshine, asked, "Do you play again?"

The man's voice was thin and weak as he answered, "Yes, I play my last dollar on the red."

The rod spun quickly round, resting on the black.

"You have lost," said the other, coolly, raking in the pile of coin. "Were you right in saying you had staked your last dollar?"

"Yes, the last of a good many hundreds that have gone down into this hell since yesterday."

The croupier tossed back to him a half-handful of coin. "Take that; it will pay your way to the diggings; and if you don't like this hell, keep out of it. You came here of your own choice, you miserable beggar."

Then the man held the money in his hand, irresolute for a moment whether to keep it or fling it back into the croupier's face.

The banker smiled. "Keep it, my man," he said; "you'll need it soon." There was more

pity than insolence in his tone now, which made it all the more offensive to the ruined gamester.

He put the money into his pocket and crept away into the chill, moist air of the morning; a gentleman very much at odds with fortune, and slipping fast down the hill.

"He's been sick, that man has," said a sleepy servant.

"And not long out of jail," added another.

The keeper of the place that the man had just left was no better or no worse than his fellows. They were all willing enough to give back to the men that they plundered a small percentage of their losings to enable them to reach the mines, knowing by long experience that they would find their way back to the green tables again with replenished stores.

When the man reached the street, his first thought was to find a hotel; but he carefully avoided the best houses, and walked on until he found an obscure tavern in an obscure street, and there he entered.

The clerk, a low, narrow-browed ruffian, eyed him closely as he advanced slowly to the desk and stated his object.

"You have made a mistake; this is a hotel, not a graveyard," the fellow said insolently, smiling at some loungers in the room.

"I have made no mistake, and I don't mean to die yet awhile; if I should, I have sufficient money to pay my funeral expenses." He threw some coin on the desk. "Take what you want out of that for a day's accommodation; give me a decent room, and breakfast."

"I don't want your money now. A good many people come in who have none, and I thought you looked like one of that sort," said the clerk, abating nothing in the insolence of his manner. "Sign the register, will you?"

"What is it you ask?" said the man, perfectly understanding the request, but pretending he did not, trying to gain time.

"I ask you to register your name."

"My name?"

"Yes, your name—or another man's; it don't matter to us, only we require people who come here to write the names by which they wish to be known on our register."

The man drew his hand slowly across his nervous mouth, looked at the clerk for a moment

with an ugly glitter in his eyes; then he took up the pen, and in a miserably cramped hand wrote his name,

ABEL DUNLETHE.

The clerk turned the book about, and read it. "I think," he said, "your people made a mistake in your christening."

"How? I don't understand."

"They called you for the wrong brother. It should have been Cain—the other one."

Loud, coarse laughter greeted this sally of the clerk's; but Abel Dunlethe only scowled upon the ruffians in the room, and went out to find his breakfast elsewhere.

Still choosing the obscure streets, he went on until he came to a decent, cleanly-looking tavern on Suter Street, where he entered, and received civil treatment. He breakfasted, and afterwards slept until noon. He went out then, and occupied the remainder of the day in buying an outfit for the mines. In the morning he started, making the journey by steamer to Sacramento, thence for days together, across the dead level of the plains, among the great oaks for awhile, and

then over a dreary desert of sand, or through a tangled wilderness of bushes to the Mokelumne river, on the southern hills of which the miners worked like ants, digging and washing the yellow sands. He arrived at nightfall, as they began to light their fires and prepare for supper. He passed among them closely scrutinized, hoping, with a curious longing for fellowship, that some one would ask him to share the evening meal with them; but he went on past their quarters and cabins, uninvited to pitch his tent near or to enter theirs. When he had reached the outer edge of the rancho, he pitched his tent, and built his fire unassisted or unvisited by any one. Later in the night, he sat at his door, watching the hills grow denser with each expiring flame, his own thoughts growing blacker as the bitterness of his situation gathered about him. Some men near him were seated on stones, at their fire, playing cards. He wanted some one to say a single friendly word to him before he went in for the night. He hesitated for a moment, then went over to them. The men looked up at him as he stood among them.

"These seats are all reserved, mate; no room

here," said the biggest ruffian of the lot, shuffling the cards. The rest laughed, and went on with the game. He went back to his tent.

When he had made all fast for the night, he sat on his tent-floor, silent for a long time. "It *was* a mistake," he said presently, getting up; "I should have been called Cain, for it seems as if I carried his mark in my face. I haven't had a friendly word to-day."

Nor had he. He had come among a rough, desperate crew, mostly vagabonds and adventurers from the States, noisy and frolicsome, but, for all that, with a good deal of human feeling for the unfortunates of their class who fell exhausted by the way. But they did not like this man's appearance; it might have been that the air of the gentleman was too strong upon him to suit their tastes, or it might have been that, when they looked into his face, they indeed saw there the mark of Cain.

Dunlethe resolved that first night never to try again to get a friendly word from any man. In the morning he located his claim, and with increasing strength went to work with pick-axe and spade and sieve. But he was not a strong

man yet; illness had pulled him down, and he was unused to such exertion, so that, the given quantity of labor being small, the result was not great. The rough fellows, who had avoided him at first, seeing how poorly he began to look and how unsuccessful his awkward efforts were, came about him now to proffer assistance or advice; but he was morose or silent with them all, as they had been with him. Then he fell sick, and the men, seeing his pick and shovel lying idle in the pit, went over to his tent, but he was soured and bitter, and he turned them savagely away. After a time, when he was better, and the miners noticing that he still kept himself aloof from them, refusing to join in their games at cards, or story-telling, or drinking-bouts, they left him quite alone, and went no more to his tent or diggings.

He believed for awhile that he was glad of their neglect, and stoutly maintained his resolve; but the time soon came when he grew intolerably lonely and miserable; his money, too, was giving out, and he found no nuggets, and but little dust to replace it. Other men, he thought, had friends or companions in the gullies of

these black hills, and he had none; other men got letters from home, but none ever came to him; occasionally, though, he borrowed a newspaper from the States, and then he read eagerly every line of it, down to the last advertisement; it made him feel less lonely, somehow. Returning one night from his claim, he came upon a man reading a paper to a group of miners seated around the fire, and, going in among them, he found the reader had finished. Then he heard some one ask,

"Didn't you say that you knew the murdered man, Joe?"

"No, I didn't know the *man*, but I knew the boy, George Lawrence; I lost sight of him when he was a man, for I left home young, you see." The speaker looked up into Dunlethe's face, which was shaded with his hand, as if to shut off the glare of the flames. "We were talking, mate," he said, "of a man as was murdered in the States—a gentleman I once knew. Sit down, and I'll tell you about it."

Dunlethe sat down among them, still shading his face from the fire, keeping his hand between the narrator and himself.

The miner went on, keenly relishing his story, and glad to have another listener, to whom it was all new.

"I knew that boy, George Lawrence; I worked for his father. He was English—from Surrey, and I think George was English too, but he must have come over when young. He was a baddish sort of boy, was George. But no matter about that now; he's dead."

"Murdered, I think you said?" Dunlethe asked.

"Yes, he was murdered, at night, in Boston—flung into the river off of old Dunlethe's wharf. Hello! there, mate, aren't that what you're called—Dunlethe?"

"That is my name, but I do not know the wharf, nor the owner. I am from the West—Ohio." The men turned lazily to look at him as he spoke, but the next moment their eyes were bent on the fire. "Well, stranger!" he asked, "was the murderer discovered?"

"Yes, he was; he was found, and tried for George Lawrence's murder, and though he said he did it, they let him go. 'Not guilty,' was the verdict."

"What was that man's name?"

"The murderer's, do you mean?"

"Yes—the man who killed George Lawrence."

"Well, Mr. Dunlethe, his name was Luke Connor," the miner said, turning full upon him, as being the one auditor most interested in his story.

"You did not know this man Connor, then, did you?" asked Dunlethe.

"I'm not so sure of that, mate; there was some Connors in that town where I came from, may be I did know him, for he was a friend of the man he killed. If he was one of them Connors I knew, though I might forget his first name, I would know his face if I ever saw it again. I never forget faces."

The face he looked at now was shaded from him and from the fire by a hand that was visibly trembling. Dunlethe got up. "The man was acquitted, you said?"

"Yes—'not guilty,' was the verdict. You're not going, eh? Well, then, good-night, mate," said the miner; sorry to lose so good a listener.

"Good-night, friends all." He had been gone but a few minutes, when he returned, and asked permission to take the paper to his tent.

Dunlethe sat up half the night reading it, and as often as he concluded the account of the murder and the trial, went back to it again. When he started out to the pit in the morning, he carried the paper to the owner. He was glad the miner had gone to his work before he got there; he flung the paper into his tent, and went on, thinking a good deal, by the way, of the man who knew the Connors, and never forgot faces.

During the next few days he kept himself very close to his work and quarters, but the solitude oppressed him beyond endurance, and he tried to make friends with some of the better sort, but the effort was futile; he met with no response, and was made to understand that he was disliked, and that, even by the hardened wretches of the mines, he was regarded with suspicion.

He worked on then alone for several weeks, digging and washing, but scarcely getting out sufficient gold to support existence from day to day; and then the rainy season set in, which was unfortunately at a time when he was certain he had reached a lode filled with gold. For several days before he had been encouraged to more vigorous exertions, to go deeper, both by

the indications and the increased results, and within a few hours he had found a number of rich nuggets, scales, and dust in abundance, and felt that his labors were about to be rewarded.

The night that followed was rough and stormy, beyond all nights he had ever seen. The rain fell in unbroken torrents, swelling the mountain streams, which rushed impetuously down the cañons, sweeping before them whatever encumbered their way. In the morning, while the rain still fell, he ventured out, going down to see how, in the general rack and ruin, his lode had fared. When he arrived at the place where he thought that it ought to be, he could discover not a trace of its whereabouts. The gulley in which it was located was filled up with mud and stones and trees; he looked down upon a miserable, hopeless wreck, never to be worked nor made profitable again; even his tools were gone—nothing left of all yesterday's hope and promise of success. His long months of labor and exposure had gone for nothing, and he must begin all anew. Buried in the corner of his tent were some nuggets, scales, and dust, which he dug up and sewed into his tattered clothing.

He sat by his fire all day, while the rain pelted down upon his tent-roof, counting over his losses, living over again the better years he had known, between which and to-day a dead face came and went forever. A dead face which came and looked in at his tent-door by day and by night, in foul or pleasant weather—always there.

Then he grew sick of the place, of his hard luck, and of the men there who avoided him; afraid, too, of the man who knew the Connors and never forgot a face. The next day the rain had ceased falling, and the sun shone. Then, not knowing but that the storm would come again to-morrow, he shouldered his traps, started out to find a new location—one not likely to be buried in the next tempestuous night. He went farther away into the newer fields and the profounder loneliness of the mountains, to locate his claim and dig and wash, and wash and dig. He found the place he sought after several days' toilsome tramp, pitched his tent, and began prospecting; finally locating a claim a short distance from the mountain road. Half a mile off was the nearest cabin, where provisions, liquors, and

implements were sold. There he went and bought flour, bacon, and coffee, stored them away, and then went to his work, a little more ragged and dirty, a little more desperate, a little further off from the God he once knew than he had ever been.

He was not lonely here, as he had been before; there were no other men about him to be roughly rude to him, or happy, or to get letters from home, or to have friendships and loves. Here he was sufficient unto himself, alone, but not lonely. Then he dug on and on, day after day throwing out the washed sands which left no gold behind, digging deeper through sand and clay and rock in vain. Disappointment and defeat made him mad. He valued gold for its own sake as little as any man; but to get it meant success, or, as he grew to call it, luck. In the place of human love and fellowship, which should have been in Dunlethe's heart, there suddenly was engendered in it, by defeat, a single feeling—an awful hunger and thirst to find gold. That one passion filled his life up, took all his thought, and occupied his sleep. Having found it, he might have flung it away again, or recklessly

tossed it open-handed to the first beggar that passed that way, but he was mad to find it, for that would be luck, and luck meant to this poor wretch, that his God had not deserted him, that he was not altogether forgotten and cast out.

Then day by day and month after month, he dug deeper into the pit he had sunk, but the indications grew no more promising, the luck his very soul grew hungry for, did not come to him, and the few ounces of gold that he had before gathered were going fast. Desperate at last under continued failure, he swore a savage oath that if he should be unlucky for only another day, he would dig no more.

The day came, and the man, as if regretful of his oath and repenting it, dug with the persistence and energy of one who delved for life, or to save his soul alive. It wore on slowly and surely to its close, leaving him digging there, every muscle strained to its utmost tension, great beads of sweat standing on his face and hands, rolling down his limbs, sapping his strength; but that was all of his reward. The dying day gave him no signs of the golden luck he toiled for—it was almost gone now, and as Dunlethe paused in his

work, leaning on his shovel, watching the sun sinking behind the line of melancholy cedars skirting the horizon, he heard the music of a loud, jubilant song, echoing along the hills, and turning around he saw some men approaching, a rough and careless crew of Frenchmen.

They came nearer and stood upon the brink of the pit he had made.

One touched his cap gayly, and asked, "What luck, Monsieur?"

Abel Dunlethe clambered up from the depths of the hole.

"No luck, Messieurs," he said; "and be damned to it. I have dug there for many months, and in all kinds of weather. The dry mine of yesterday I have seen filled to day with water, and have bailed it out with such poor contrivances as you see here about me. I have begun with the pick at dawn and have laid the shovel down only at dusk. I have washed the accursed sands till my fingers were worn to the bone, and yet I have found nothing. I will dig no more. If you care to try your luck, there is the claim and there are the tools. Take them, Messieurs, you are welcome, and may your luck be better than mine.

There are my tent and traps on the hill yonder, you are welcome to them all."

"A million thanks, generous Monsieur," they said, and the merry fellows, ready for any fortune, good as well as bad, jumped down into the pit, went to work, and resumed the measure of their interrupted song.

He shook the dust of the hole from his torn shoes, and with no object, no place nor time in view, started off along the mountain defile by which the other men had come.

"What luck, Monsieur Dunlethe?" he asked himself savagely, and he answered back to the mocking devil within, "No luck, Monsieur Dunlethe, no luck at play, no luck at work, no luck at any thing, no luck for the man on whom the curse has fallen, no luck for the alien adventurer, bearing a dead man's name."

On he went down the mountain path in the rapidly closing twilight; down to the valley below, where lights already gleamed from tent and cabin door. He was half-way down when a horse's feet struck the path beside him. He stepped aside into the bushes to let the horse and rider pass.

"What luck, stranger?" asked the rider, drawing rein.

"No luck, stranger, pass on," the man replied, cursing the other for using that word at that time.

The rider looked down at Abel Dunlethe with an ugly, mocking smile on his face. "I meant to tell you," he said, "you surly devil, of the luck of some friends of yours, back in the hills yonder. They have struck the lode to which you had dug down, and within an hour have taken out a hundred ounces. You had better return and ask them to give you back your claim, or share it with you."

Dunlethe strode on to where the lights shone in the valley, cursing the good fortune that shunned him and went to other men. The rider shot past, leaving the luckless, surly stranger to himself.

He reached the valley at last, and, footsore and weary, entered a tavern, about the door of which a score of miners were seated, all eagerly discussing the ill luck of the man Dunlethe, and making their plans for migrating soon to the new and richer diggings, which he had found, but

not enjoyed. He sat alone by the stove, his ragged hat drawn down over his face, damning the men outside who continued to sneer at his folly for giving his claim to others after so many months of labor.

In the morning, having paid for his lodging and breakfast, he found that his last grain of gold was gone, and remembered bitterly that in half an hour after he had thrown away his lode, it had yielded to others a hundred ounces. He went down to the river then, and stood watching a gang of laborers digging away a bank for a mill-site. He recollected that he too must work, if he would live; in a few hours he would be hungry again; about lodgings, that did not matter; he could creep into any shed and find shelter. He found the foreman of the works after a little search, and asked to be employed.

The man, a hearty, frank fellow, looked at him for a moment, and the result of his survey not being satisfactory, said "No. I have no work here that you could do. You are scarcely strong enough for this job."

"You mistake. I have worked for months in a hole, digging sand and rock. I am a strong

man," replied Dunlethe, his voice quivering a little ; he wanted the chance to get near to this bluff, pleasant-faced gentleman, to make a friend of him, if he could.

The other, remarking his anxiety to get work, said, cheerfully, "Very well, turn in and try your luck with the rest, though you don't look fit."

Having arrived late, he was placed on the outer edge of the laborers' gang, where the earth tossed to him from above could be thrown into the river. The sand was wet and heavy, his shovel large and unwieldy. After an hour his back began to ache as it never did before, and at the end of another hour his hands were gashed and sore ; he could barely stand erect, every muscle seemed strained and ready to crack. Momentarily he looked up, watching the sun lazily crawling to the meridian, thinking that noon would never come ; for he meant to knock off then and go away, his pride would not permit him to do it before. Noon came to the poor wretch at last, and found him without strength, with aching back and muscles, his hands dripping blood where the rough-handled shovel gliding through, had torn and bruised them. When

the dinner-bell rang for the workmen, he did not follow them, but hunted up the foreman.

When he found him, he said, frankly, "You were right this morning, and I was wrong ; the work is too hard for me. Pay me for half a day, and let me go ; my luck is against me."

"I can't pay you till Saturday night," the man said. "It is against the rules. Stay here till then, and I will look up some light work for you, may be." He was sorry for the poor wretch, who had no friends, and who would be hungry and houseless when night came ; he looked around to find some excuse for employing him until pay day. "Go in and get your dinner now," he said, "and afterwards, go up the hill yonder, and chop away those bushes ; they are in our road there. I will pay you the same wages as I pay the others."

"No, I will not do that. I will do a man's work, or I will not take a man's wages. As to what you owe me, give that to some other poor devil on Saturday night for me. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," the foreman said. "I'm sorry I can't help you." Then he stood looking after

the poor fellow whose luck was against him, until he was lost in the turn of the road.

The road to Sacramento lay straight before him, another led away to his deserted mine. He took the former, penniless and already hungry, with a hundred miles, over a rough road, to go. He could not go into the tavern with the other laborers for dinner; he had earned it, but he had not got his pay. Afterwards he was hungrier, less fastidious about satisfying his hunger.

He went on till nightfall, meeting here and there a worn-out straggler like himself; then he entered a rough roadside tavern. The landlord was leaning on his counter as Dunlethe entered, but he glanced once at the stranger, and left him standing in the middle of the room without further notice.

Dunlethe, quick to see the hostile manner of the man, turned to go out; but hunger and fatigue held him fast. "I have no money, and I want supper and lodging. I have not eaten any thing since morning, and the night will be cold."

"Stranger," said the landlord, "a hundred men like you pass this road every day, and each one stops to tell me what you have told me. If it

was only one man, I could help him, but I can't help a hundred."

"You are right. I beg your pardon for intruding. Good-night."

"Stop, though," said the landlord, who recollected that he could help one man, and had not done it for a long while. "Stop, you are not fit to go on to-night. You shall be the one man; you shall have your supper, and if you can sleep on that bench, you are welcome."

The supper was set before him, and Dunlethe ate ravenously, and then slept until morning on the bench before the fire. Before dawn he was up and gone; before noon he had accomplished twenty miles, with fifty yet to go, and his long fast from the previous night began to tell on him.

He stopped again at a tavern. "Can you give me dinner?" he asked of a woman standing in the door-way. "I have no money."

"No," she said. "I can give you nothing. I can't feed every beggar that comes this road."

Then he went on again until sun-down, and only ten more miles gained. He could go no farther, he thought, and began to look about

among the trees for a place in which to pass the night, when he saw, a short distance ahead, the light of a camp-fire. As he approached the camp, a young girl ran out into the road, closely followed by a savage-looking dog, that darted past her and flew at his throat. The girl caught the dog's collar, held him back, and called to some one in the tent to help her, for the rough beast was more than she could hold. Dunlethe, too worn and weak to have struggled with the animal, stood passively waiting for his spring, when the tent-flaps were thrown back, and a tall, powerfully formed man came out, struck the dog down, apologized to the stranger for the rough reception he had got, and asked him what he could do for him.

"I am tired, sick, and hungry. Can you give me a bit of bread, and a place by your fire?"

"Certainly, I can do that, and more. Come in and see." Then, getting ready a comfortable meal, he set it before Dunlethe, and watched him as he devoured it. "Where did you have your dinner, comrade?" he asked presently.

"I had no dinner—nor breakfast either. Do I eat too much, that you ask? My luck is down

on me, and I am going to Sacramento to get work."

"Eat till you are filled, my surly friend, you are welcome," said the other; "but how would you like to go further than Sacramento and fare better?"

"Where to?"

"To Australia. I'm going there to try grazing, and shall want a man like you to help me. Will you go?"

"Yes," said Dunlethe, "I will go there,—the farther, the better. When do you start?"

"In the first outward-bound vessel that leaves San Francisco," his host answered.

Three days later, the grazier, having left his little girl in charge of some friends, stood with Abel Dunlethe on the deck of an Australian trader, setting out to sea.

On the sixth day out, the steward went into the grazier's cabin, and when he came on deck again, he ran to the captain, trembling and white-faced, and told him that he had one passenger less than he had shipped, for the grazier was lying in his berth, with his eyes wide open, staring blankly up at the ceiling, dead.

When the voyage was ended, Abel Dunlethe found himself at Melbourne, with one decent suit of clothing, which was on his back, with a few dollars in his pocket, which had been given him by the grazier. He was thousands of miles away from any man he knew, under the dominion of the English flag, out of work, desperate, reckless, and, as he said, at odds with luck. He wandered about for a day or two, seeking employment, but finding none. He had again got down to his last dollar, after two years of labor in the mines. Then the devil, who tempted him so never before, tempted the lonely, deserted vagabond with liquor, and made him drunk.

Just then the air of Melbourne, of Europe, of the States, was thick with such tales of bloody horror, of such foul deeds being done in India, that the hearts of men sickened within them. The sepoy had risen on their masters, and England called for troops to go out and save her children from massacre, and her possessions from being retaken. Recruiting stations were opened in Melbourne, as elsewhere among the English possessions, and Abel Dunlethe, drunk and desperate, enlisted to fight the sepoy in

India, awakened one morning to find himself possessor of the Queen's shilling, and a new suit of clothes, the collar of the jacket being uncomfortably tight and stiff about his neck.

When the morning came, he looked out at the newly risen sun through the barred windows of the guard-house, a place vilely dirty, damp, and foul. He was quite sober then, and his mind quicker and clearer than it had been for many a day past. Then, in the bright, reproachful sweetness and purity of the morning, Dunlethe sat down on the rough bench of his den, and reviewed the later portions of his life. All the black, dirty years which he had thought were lying dead behind him, rose up before him with their ugly records bare, and reading them slowly in the light of that fair day, he saw the man he had come to be. A miserable, desperate wretch, who had sowed the wind, and was reaping plentifully the whirlwind. It is not much to say for him, that he never meant to be the criminal he was; that temptation came to him unawares, and that he weakly, willingly yielded to it, as other and better men have done. But the review was scarcely satisfactory to her English

Majesty's new recruit ; so unsatisfactory, indeed, that the man, hidden somewhere in the heart or brain of Abel Dunlethe, revealed himself, and the India soldier came to a sublime determination—not to rise out of the awful slough into which he had surely dragged himself, not to atone for the old, ugly life, by living a new and beautiful one. All that was above and beyond him. He rose to the best heights he knew, and for him, they were sublime ones. He would debase his Maker's image no longer ; creep into no more sweet souls, polluting as he went ; but he would go out there to India to die—to die like a soldier, while the eyes of a hundred comrades should look upon him as he fell. He already fancied the battle over, the next day's review, *his* place vacant in the ranks, *his* name called when his General rode by, and his comrades' answer to it—“*Dead upon the field of honor.*”

Later in the day his door was thrown open, and a corporal's guard had come to fetch him to the barracks. Passing the officers' quarters, the men were noticed by their Captain, a wiry, quick-eyed little fellow, who stood at his door, a good

deal bored, apparently, with Melbourne inactivity, idly tapping his boot.

He coolly surveyed the recruit for a moment as he passed, then called to him. He went into his quarters and sat down, Abel Dunlethe closely following him, standing at last a few feet from the officer's chair, twirling his regulation cap in his grimy hands. A miserable-looking devil, surely, on the surface, but for all that, something of the ruined gentleman shining through all his coating of shame and debasement.

The Captain left him standing there, not speaking for a moment, but surveying him with more interest than he had shown in any thing but those India reports, for a long time. “You enlisted for the India service?” he asked. “Why?”

“I was drunk.”

“Yet you don't look like a drinking man. Why drunk?” the officer asked.

“Not being a drinking man, it took but little to make me drunk. I have no head for liquor ; am easily upset. I could get but little, my money was all gone.”

“You had no better reason, then? Your

English blood did not fire up as you heard those tales from India, and make you hungry to get at those tawny devils over there?" asked the Captain, who, wishing to believe there was yet left in Dunlethe at least a spark of patriotism or humanity, tried hard to strike it out of him, and make it burn again.

"No," Dunlethe said. "I enlisted yesterday, because I was drunk. I would enlist to-day, when I am sober, because I want to be shot. I should like to die doing some good."

The little man looked up at this, and the air of something which was not altogether indolent curiosity, dropped away from his manner, and he looked at his recruit with a new interest in his eyes.

"You want to be shot? Well! that is not the highest ambition, and a man like you might do better; but you know best. Being shot is better, I suppose, than dying in the gutter. Are you quite sure, my man, that you are English?"

"Yes, English. From Surrey."

"No. English you may be, but not from Surrey. I happen to be from Surrey, and to

know every respectable family name thereabouts, and yours is not among them."

"Yet all the same, I am from Surrey. I would like to go if you are done questioning me," Dunlethe said, doggedly.

Captain Duncan leisurely took his feet off the table before him, and picked up a paper-knife with which he cut the leaves of an English novel lying there. He did not answer Dunlethe's question until he had cut the last fold of the book; then he looked again at the man, and, with no change in his bored, indifferent manner, said to him,

"You are at the bottom of the hill, now, and it is none of my business how you got there; but did it never occur to you that it might be worth your while to climb up again?"

"No, it is no use. My luck is down on me; it is not worth while. I thank you heartily, though, for the interest your question shows, but it is not worth while. Can I go now?"

"Yes, you can go." When he was gone, the Captain went to the door, looking after the miserable, trembling figure. "He wants to be shot," he said. "Well, he stands a chance to

have his wish soon gratified ; we sail to-morrow. I wonder why I feel interested in that fellow ? I have seen so many going down into the depths. A gentleman, turned blackguard, and at the bottom of the hill, maybe he will turn now and go up again ; but he is not English I think ; not from Surrey certainly, and if he is, his name is not Abel Dunlethe. He *is*, though, a miserable devil, and to get shot is probably the best thing he could do."

The Captain lounged at his door a long while afterwards, looking along the path Dunlethe had gone, not quite able to get that gentleman, turned blackguard, out of his thoughts.

The long voyage across the Southern seas to the Indian shores was drearily slow to Abel Dunlethe, who found no companionship among the rough sailors and soldiers on board. He sat alone, mostly on the forecastle or rigging, looking out seaward, with no healthier nor more cheerful company than his own sombre thoughts. Sometimes Captain Duncan came forward among his men, and then Dunlethe, without looking up, knew that the little Captain's eyes were upon him, and was glad to think that he had not for-

gotten him. He thought a good deal of the Captain's question ; if it might not be worth while to try to climb the awful steep down which he had fallen ? But to get shot, he thought, would be the easiest way, soonest ending and mending all trouble.

They were not permitted to go into quarters at Calcutta, where they landed, but were immediately marched forward to join the old 64th at Allahabad. Already the force at Cawnpore had been betrayed and butchered with horrible atrocity. Lucknow was still held by Lawrence, but the murderous sepoys had trapped him into the Residency, and there threatened his command and the women and children with him, with the same horrors meted out to the garrison of Cawnpore. In the camp and march and drill, Dunlethe, a quiet, intelligent man, was ambitious to learn his duties rapidly and well, but his wish did not yet reach beyond the desire to be shot, and to have his comrades say he was a good as well as a brave soldier, and after those days in Melbourne he never touched liquor again ; besides, the soldier's active round of duties was medicine against thought, and when it was whis-

pered through the camp that in another day Havelock would march to relieve Lucknow and recapture Cawnpore, Dunlethe was the most eager of them all for the day to come. But two or three more days passed in preparation before the march began, and then Abel Dunlethe went forward under the eyes of the little Captain, to find an honorable field to die on. He hoped it might be at Lucknow, doing some great, heroic deed for the starving women and children there, but no matter where, he thought, so that it came soon.

Through the streets of Allahabad, as they passed, they met the fierce scowls of the Hindoos, and the Mahommedans turned away their faces, that their hatred might not be seen in their eyes. Beyond, the rains fell incessantly, and the fields bordering the roads they marched over were turned into morasses; but the men pressed on to the relief of the threatened, beleaguered garrison of Lucknow.

On the tenth day of that fierce July, with a torrid sun blazing down upon them, they marched fifteen miles to Khaga, five miles from Futtehpoore, where the insurgents had en-

trenched themselves in great force. On the twelfth, the attack began, and Abel Dunlethe, with a whispered prayer breaking upon his white lips, went down into the battle, with the old determination strong upon him, to fill a place no more among living men. He fought like a man drunk with wounds, drunk unto madness with the carnage and tumult; he saw his Captain far in advance, surrounded by a horde of yellow devils, trying to strike him down; he hewed a path through the dusky Mahrattas to his officer's side; together they cut their way to the mouth of the enemies' guns; later he was again alone among their cannoniers, blackened with smoke and powder, seeking death at a hundred hands and finding it nowhere; but pressing on in the farthest advance, where brave men fell thick about him, struggling hand to hand for the possession of the guns; then he knew that he was at the Captain's side again, that the Captain had spoken to him brave, encouraging words, and that his manner was that of a man speaking to an equal and a friend; that he was bleeding and dizzy; that they had been closed upon by hordes of yelling sepoys; that

their comrades had dashed in to their support, and that he lay under the captured guns, stiff and sore and bleeding, and that the little Captain was kneeling over him.

Being not badly hurt, he opened his eyes and smiled up into the Captain's face, and the smile was so frank and boyish, that the officer knew that under the man's shell of crime and debauch, there were elements of good yet alive, and struggling to assert themselves.

"You are not dead, then?" he said. "You have come back to join us again. You saved my life to-day, comrade. After all, may it not be worth while to live—to be a man again?"

Dunlethe closed his eyes then, to shut in some unmanly tears. He had come there to lose his own life; the battle was over, and he had given life, not lost it. Already to-day, a brave gentleman had spoken to him as to a friend, and now he had sought him out from among the dead and wounded, to tell him he had saved his life, and to call him comrade. After all, there might be a chance—it might be worth while to try to be a man again.

Havelock buried his dead in the night, and

beyond Futtehpoore, in a grove of mango trees, sheltered from the fatal sunbeams that carried off more men than the enemy's bullets, he pitched his tents. There they rested during the next day, and on the fourteenth, when the march was resumed, Abel Dunlethe was in the ranks, and the day following he was in the thickest of the fight at Aong; but while death touched his comrades before and behind him, upon the right and the left, it passed him by, and when the battle closed, he was still among living men, a hero among his comrades, a brave soldier whom his regiment admired and honored.

Led on by Major Renaud, he was at the battle of the Bridge of Pandoo Muddee, at Ahirma, at Cawnpore, always where death came oftenest, but never finding it; still a living man, whose name came at last to the ears of Havelock; came at Cawnpore to be found in his letters. In an unofficial note to General Neil, speaking of the battle, he said, "I never saw a braver man than a private of the 64th, named Dunlethe. He placed himself, in the last charge, opposite the muzzle of a gun that was scattering death into our ranks, and led on a dozen of his comrades

amid a shower of grape to its capture. His Captain, Duncan, of the detached service, has applied for the man's promotion."

The little Captain and Sergeant-major Dunlethe met often after the capture of Cawnpore, for some idle time followed, and cholera had got among the troops, filling the hospitals more rapidly than the enemy had been able to do, and these two men were a good deal among the sick and dying; the Sergeant-major being as active among his prostrated comrades now, as he had ever been in the fight. But they never said any thing now about that old determination of Dunlethe's to get shot. When promotion came to the man who had saved his life, Captain Duncan only pressed his hand in silence, and somehow Dunlethe knew better than any words could have told him of the Captain's satisfaction at his advancement; but he never knew that the Captain had applied for it, and had told to Havelock the whole history of his brilliant deeds, and the story of their first meeting. "Recognition would make a man of him again," the Captain had urged. The two men were tacit, undemonstrative friends, and the Captain knew

as surely as the Sergeant-major did, that the manhood in him, asleep and covered up so long, was asserting itself, and that a better, nobler resolve had taken the place of the old one.

The lonely watches in the hospital, the marches and the battles under the blazing India suns, went on, day by day and week by week, and the army of Havelock settled down before Lucknow, to wrest it from the grasp of the murderous sepoys, and to rescue the starving garrison, the women and children there. But wherever the army of the grand old Christian soldier went, there was carried with it, among all that sudden making of splendid names, the name of Sergeant-major Dunlethe, and always coupled with a record of a hundred brave or humane deeds. Men dying of the cholera, blessed him as he carried water to their lips; men battling in the deadly breach, struggled forward to fight or fall by his side; wherever the sublime deeds of that army were known, men heard and respected the name of Abel Dunlethe. The fame of it had gone through that India army, had been heard in England; and wherever there were heroic men

living to honor a brave soldier, they honored Abel Dunlethe.

On that last day's fight at Lucknow, the day of the deliverance of the Residency, the flag of the 64th had passed through many hands: early in the day the Ensign had been killed; another and another had pressed forward to raise again the fallen standard; later it was caught up from the stiffened hands of its dead bearer by Abel Dunlethe; it was at that moment that they were sweeping on through seas of fire, and pour of shot and shell, to the capture of the last redoubt. He raised it high above his head, that those in the rear might see it was still safe, shook out its tattered folds, and then leaped into the ditch already heaped high with his dead and wounded comrades. Followed by the scanty remnant of his regiment, he clambered up the slippery sides of the redoubt, and amid a yell of triumph, taken up by regiment after regiment, and echoed again by an army, Abel Dunlethe planted the flag he bore upon the enemy's ramparts; but falling, sorely wounded, he yielded his charge to another, and as the victorious ranks pressed on to the Residency, he felt that at last he had done a

man's work, and that thereafter the shame and crime of his life would be less heavy to bear.

"Your friend Dunlethe has got an ugly scalp wound, and a shattered arm, Captain Duncan," the surgeon said, as the two men stood over his bed in the hospital; "but he will come out of this all right."

He was among the wounded carried out in the hushed flight of that night, through the long line of piquets to the Alum Bagh; he was later among those who were called from the ranks to go up higher; the flag he had carried into the redoubt he was accounted fit to bear always, and he was known thereafter throughout the India army, as Ensign Dunlethe; later again he stood before the dying Havelock, ready to sail for England, relieved on account of wounds, and bearer of despatches home; later still, he stood among the heroes of the India war, in the presence of a mighty concourse of people, waiting proudly to be decorated with the Victoria Cross.

After the ceremony, Captain Duncan touched the decoration shining on the Ensign's breast, and looking over the brilliant assemblage that

had witnessed its bestowal, said, "That is better, after all, than being shot!"

"Yes, it is better; it has made me a man again, and I have before me a man's work to do. We part here for awhile. I left something undone over there in America. I am going now to do it."

The two friends said farewell, after the manner of men whose love is deep, with no great show of feeling, yet the pain of parting was no less bitter.



PART III.

THE WRECK OF THE OSPREY.

IT may have been that the boys of the Sophomore class in the old College began it, or it may have been something in the grave, quiet dignity and power of the man—a something more befitting maturity than youth—or it may have been one of society's little revenges; but however it came about, or however it began, Professor Albert Daunton was, wherever he was known, spoken of as "old."

It is quite true that he was a silent, reticent man—but almost all scholars are that; it is true that there were deep lines of care in the broad, white forehead—but so are there in all thoughtful men's brows; it is true that he had little of the charm and careless grace which come and go with early manhood; that his clothes of sober brown were somewhat baggy, and mostly sat awry upon his lean, nervous body—but then, what has a grave professor to do with youth's vanities or graces?

Life was solemn and earnest to the staid professor, and man's chief aim, he said and believed, was self-development.

But he was not an old man; he was rather a quiet, bookish one, reticent, fastidious; a little stiff and awkward, undoubtedly, but those who knew him best said, that if the right fingers touched the keys, his discourse was like excellent music, and they hinted at great depths of feeling lying serenely beneath the undemonstrative surface. He had been a thoughtful, retiring boy, and the ripened fruit was only of the kind the blossom promised.

He was not very fond of society, and possibly Society called him "Old Daunton," to revenge itself for the slight. The college was his first thought, and held a good deal of his life and love; to his books at home he gave another generous slice of his affections, and to home itself another; so, naturally, he had little left for the idle crowd outside.

He was only a Freshman himself so few years ago, that it seemed very absurd to call this man "Old Daunton." It was while he was still a Freshman that his mother brought home her little

baby niece one night after the funeral of its father, and became at once so tender and motherly to the girl that she grew up, unconscious of any loss out of her life. That was only fifteen years ago, and though Daunton had been made professor a long time, the little girl was only twenty now. So, of course, Daunton could not be so very old. But he was odd and queer and priggish; there was no denying that, for everybody said it was true, and he certainly did cling with a most stupid tenacity to the old-fogy college, and the old home and its inmates. "To his old home and his *mother*," he would have maintained; but Society said, with its wickedest smile, "to the little girl, turned twenty."

Some stupid person one day repeated Society's remark, so that it came to his ears; maybe it was intended that it should.

"No," he said to himself, "I am not more fond of my adopted sister than a brother should be. I have, though, that much fondness for her, I hope."

Just then the girl chanced to pass, and the man looked down into her sweet, fair face, about which the golden-red hair of Berenice hung in

wavy clouds. And then as he looked down into the depths of the tender eyes, and saw how fair she was and good and pure; and remembering her sunny temper and grave simplicity, he felt that it was pleasant to have this beautiful woman near him; that her grace and youth and wisdom made all stories of knight-errantry possible and true; that her purity and simple truth helped his faith in mankind, and threw about all women he knew a certain glamour of saintliness and a profounder loveliness. But he did not love her as lovers do their mistresses; and, as for marrying any one, he had not thought of that yet. That would come in its own good time, as Providence or Fate appointed. His loves, he thought, were only to be found among the old Hellenic heroines.

And with this conclusion reached so easily, he shook the gossip off, and was glad that he had so readily settled every thing between himself and the girl whom he called his sister.

As for Margaret Daunton, she looked up to the quiet professor with feelings of awful reverence and admiration, which the least lover-like attentions on his part would have quickly devel-

oped into love. But while the awkward old fellow of thirty was courtly as a Spaniard, he was equally as cold. He was the only hero that she had ever met face to face—not exactly a Bayard or a Sir Philip Sidney, but a Bacon. He was the highest type of man she had ever known, and maybe the highest she would ever know; but he was not gallant and *debonair*, as other heroes shortly coming into her life would be. It was a pity. If he had only been a little less like my lord of Verulam, a little more like Sir Philip.

The long vacation had come to the old College at Cambridge, as it comes everywhere, with the tropical heats of the summer; and coming to the professor as to other men, he took his mother and Margaret Daunton down to the Jersey coast, selecting for their holiday retreat an old farmhouse in Ocean County, lying back half a mile from the sea, on the south bank of the Squan River, shut out from all the world by surrounding oaks, and long, melancholy ranges of cedars. For more than thirty years, people from far and near have been going to that same old farmhouse by the sea, in parties of twos and threes,

until sometimes the guests have numbered thirty or forty, and then the bluff, honest old wrecking-master, Captain Brown, to whom the property has descended, has counted it a prosperous season indeed.

The Squan River, lying directly back of the house, is, for nearly twelve miles above the inlet, simply an arm of the ocean, having its tidal flow and ebb, and formerly, in stormy weather, the less venturesome craft that sailed the sea, ran into it for shelter. But they must be very wise pilots, indeed, who do this now, for the inlet has nearly closed up and is but a few feet wide; though once inside the howling waters of the bar, there is a harbor for a hundred ships.

The season was backward; the rains, heavy and cold, continued on this bit of coast until late in the summer, keeping visitors away from it for a time. The Dauntons, having arrived early, were for weeks the only occupants of the farm, and the only passengers in the beach wagon, going down for their bath in the sea. The professor, who donned the old wrecking-master's pea-jacket and his own heavy boots, rather enjoyed the continually recurring rains and storms, and

the loneliness of the place. It was a rule of life with him to hate strangers, and he dreaded the sunshine and clear skies that would crowd the old farm-house with them. He and Margaret, in the roughest weather,—he muffled up in Captain Brown's pea-jacket and she in her waterproof,—took long walks through the woods, across fields, and along the river and ocean shores. It was not so pleasant to Mrs. Dauntton, whom feeble health and rough weather obliged to keep indoors; but it was all delightful enough to these two people, whose hardier strength gave to their life on the sandy cliffs, or under the sombre cedars, a new zest and meaning.

It was curious, but here the Professor did not greatly miss his old books, or his college associations, and, indeed, they became at length only dim and far-off memories of toil. There is a weight of languor and laziness in the air of Squan Beach, that makes mental or physical labor altogether impossible in sunny weather. The dweller on that sleep-enchanted shore is content, on golden summer days, to lie in the sun, to watch the flying clouds, to taste the saltiness of the air, to note the flight of the sea-gull and

osprey, to bathe in the swelling surf, to rest soul and body in the shade of the oaks and cedars, to be content to live drowsy, uneventful days, to forget the busy, fretting world beyond, and to give time to living and loving.

Early in July the rainy season closed; and at stage-time every day, Captain Brown stood on the corner of the porch, welcoming new guests. Directly the house was full, and the over-crowded beach wagon was now obliged to make a second trip to accommodate the numerous bathers. They were all gathered about the low wooden houses one day, after the bath, watching the mists driving in over the still, unruffled waters; they seemed to be swept in before a great wind, the rapid flight of which they heralded and fled from. To the northeast a speck of black cloud was set in the sky, and as the people stood there it suddenly grew wider, denser, until in a little while it seemed to cover the ocean from shore to shore. Out of that cloud the northeast wind came, driving the mists before it, causing consternation among a hundred ships, which, at the first gathering of the mists, clewed down their sails, tacked about while yet there was time, and made for the

broad open sea, where they hoped to outride the gale in safety.

The guests of the old farm stood there quiet and awed; they heard the howling of the coming wind, saw the sea boil up under it as it whistled inland, saw the fear-stricken fleet furling every inch of unnecessary canvas, running affrighted from the grim and dangerous beach, which, change as it may with every tempest, lies forever dotted here and there with wrecks of noble ships; and which, farther back, in the little cemetery on the cliffs, shows the sunken graves of unknown mariners who died among its hungry foam, and sent home no tidings.

If the hundred ships and more could find safety in the open sea, they had already found it, for they had outsailed the dangers of the coast—all but one. Not a mile from shore a schooner-rigged yacht, rolling heavily and lying deep in the water, washed momentarily by gigantic seas, floundered and struggled in the waves of the coming storm. The rush of the wind had reached the land; and, as if in an insane defiance of it, the men on the yacht threw out their sails on either side, wing-and-wing, ran

up their flying-jib and set the top-sail, when the vessel bowed deeply forward, rose again as free and graceful as a gull, seeming only to touch the crest of the waves for an instant, then to plunge beneath them, but staggering, plunging onward with awful speed, she drove ahead into the seething whirl of the breakers.

The yacht was making for the inlet, and was close enough to the shore now to enable those who breathlessly watched her course to distinguish the man at the helm, a young fellow of gigantic figure, whom they had seen make fast the main-sheet to the deck with his own hands; and although his vessel plunged deep into every sea, threatening to go down head-foremost each moment, the young sailor held her on her course, and fixing his eyes upon one point in the rapidly nearing shore, he let his vessel drive on to its apparent destruction as if it was pursued by the fabled Furies of the wind.

Now staggering beneath and mounting triumphantly again to the surface of the waves, rearing and plunging like a horse unused to goading and feeling whip and spur for the first time, the yacht sailed on; when, from the wrecking-sta-

tion below, about which wreckers and fishermen had gathered in haste to watch the adventurous craft, a signal was run up. "Make half a point south," it said. Instantly the yacht was squared away as indicated, when, coming full before the wind, her jib-sheets were torn away one by one, the top-sail shivered for a moment in the gale and then was ripped out, and fluttered away like a cloud; yet, all unmindful of the wreck above and below, the man at the helm kept her bow that half a point south, for there lay the narrow inlet, dangerous and uncertain in fairest weather, as its breakers roared and broke, but now a desperate, almost a hopeless chance.

Margaret Dauntton held the Professor's arm with a fierce grip. "Will the man make the inlet?" she asked. "Is he sure to do it?"

"I do not know; it is a poor chance," the Professor said. "But why more anxiety for that handsome, daring devil at the helm than for the two or three other men there, Margaret?"

"Can you look at the different men, and ask that? *He* stands erect, head and shoulders above them all. From here you can see the oward-look in their shrinking figures, but there

is none in his. He is not careless of his life; he is bending every nerve and muscle to save himself and them, and yet, when he will be within a single moment of his death, he will not more certainly look it in the face than he is doing now. Why should I not give my sympathy to the brave man instead of to the cowards there?"

"Because, Margaret, the cowards there may have wives and children at home; and that fellow has none, or he would give this lee-shore a wide berth."

Then a cloud of suspicion or doubt fell between these two that had never been there before, and they walked on down the beach to the inlet in silence which neither cared to disturb. The Professor was annoyed and vexed by the girl's interest in this stranger, who guided his boat among the breakers with such free and skilful daring; and she, too, was annoyed that the Professor, always before just and generous, should withhold any credit from the brave fellow out there, struggling so grandly for life.

Yet what could it matter to the old Professor for whom she interested herself? Were not his

loves and romances away back there among the dead Hellenic fables? He had said so, and yet the man's heart beat uneasily when he saw this girl, whom he had grown to consider his very own by every tie of gratitude and affection, bestowing her sympathy and showing deep feeling for another, and that other a stranger; dimly seen as yet far out at sea.

He had forgotten, in his annoyance at Margaret, to watch the course of the yacht, when a sharp cry from her suddenly drew his attention to the struggling boat. An ugly squall had struck her at an imminent moment, tearing out the deck fastenings, which held the main-sail square away, and in an instant it was flung aloft, caught by the gale, and wound about and around the pliant mast, which bent like steel. Top-sail and jibs and mainsail were gone, and nothing left but the foresail now, which, in the flawy gale, threatened momentarily to jibe, in which case all previous efforts would be rendered futile. But the blue-coated sailor at the helm held the little vessel on her course as undaunted as if he knew every drop of water under him. The roar and thunder of the surf

were too deep for those on shore to hear his voice, but from his gestures they knew that he was giving orders which were not obeyed by the demoralized crew.

The yacht was of twelve feet beam, while the entrance to the inlet was barely twenty feet in all. So that even in case the sailor's quick eye detected the very centre of the channel, he would have scarcely four feet of water on either gunwale.

Captain Brown stood among his men, who, resting on the sides of the life-boats, keenly watched the daring sailor.

"She never ken make it, Cap'en Brown; ef he luffs, she'll jibe, an' ef he don't luff, that bit of canvas 'ill go by the wind," said a smoky-skinned, wheezy-voiced old fellow at the Captain's side.

"Well now, I don't know about that, William. It's oncertain. You see, that young fellow's peart, he is, and he's got true grit, an' he's plucky, an' he's got a clear eye an' a steady, cool hand, an' he wouldn't surprise me if he won, after all," the Captain drawled out, sententiously.

The yacht had approached the mouth of the seething hell of the breakers that already sprang at her bows and leaped upon her deck, when she lurched to leeward, and her fore-sail, which hitherto had stood the fury of the gale unscathed, parted from boom to gaff, and directly was only a flaunting mass of ribbons in the wind.

The life-boats were hurriedly run down to the shore, as quickly manned, and a dozen brawny fisherman stood by, ready to launch them when the little craft struck the bar. But she did not strike at all. She was suddenly put hard to windward, the gale caught the few yards of the main-sail still unfurled about the peak, she obeyed the hand at the helm, and while the eager crowd looked on and held their breath while a hundred seconds might be told off, the yacht lifted up her bow again, struck the crest of the last defeated breaker, plunged and rose and plunged and rose, and the next instant sailed quietly into the unruffled surface of the river.

Without any seeming haste or excitement she was battened down; after some trunks and baggage were brought up from below, her shattered

sails were furled, her rigging cut away, her decks cleared, her yawl was launched, the luggage stowed into it, and then the crew and the blue-coated sailor landed.

He was met by the wrecking-master, who extended his brawny hand in token of welcome and fellowship, for the old fellow had been a sailor before the other was born.

"Thanks for your timely signal, Captain. The little Argo would scarcely have brought us safely to shore without it; and in that case the golden fleece would have been altogether lost to me, I am afraid."

"I dunno about that fleece, Cap'en, but I do know you've just saved your bacon, and although I say it to your face, which I shouldn't, you're a brave fellow, and I'd like to shake hands agen if you don't mind it; also, while you're here, I'd like it mightily if you'd make my house your own, just to stay at or come and go to, as you like; a bed's better nor a hammock any time, and similarly, dry land better nor water; but," said the Captain, "why in thunder did you, a peart enough sailor, as I've seen to-day, run onto a lee-shore in a nor'-easter?"

"The last thing first, then, Captain. The yacht has settled six inches since she crossed that last breaker; that strained and hammered her to death; but she was sinking before the gale came on, and I ran on a lee-shore, thinking only of beaching her as a desperate chance for life; just then I saw your inlet here, made for it, got my course by your signal, and here I am, and there's my hand, and I will take your bed, and again a thousand thanks to you for my safety."

"You ought to thank God for it, young man; for when the sea rose up to swallow you alive, it was His hand, not mine, that parted the waters and delivered you."

"I do thank God," the sailor said, "with all my heart, my friend, and——"

Something just then blanched the brave young fellow's face whiter than the threatened death out there had done. What was it? What had stopped the ready current of his talk, cutting short his speech? What was it that made his hand tremble up to his mouth in that weak, uncertain way? Not anything in the old Captain's manner; not the soft, brown eyes of the

girl, timidly bent upon him ; not the quiet, controlled eyes of the man on whose arm she leaned. Yet, for a hurried moment, he was cowed, as no mere physical danger could have done ; he seemed to the girl to have suddenly lost his height of stature and bravery of bearing ; to shrink and tremble before the man at her side. She looked alternately into their faces for an answer to his curious behavior ; but when she turned to the Professor, the usual grave, reticent smile was on his lips, and if the two men had ever met before, there was no sign of it in the Professor's eyes, which looked dully into the eyes of the sailor, absent of meaning or recognition.

When, still perplexed at the unsolved riddle, she turned again to the other man, he was shaking hands gayly enough with the old wrecking-master ; then he gave some directions quietly and coolly to his crew about his luggage and the sinking yacht. His face was turned fully toward her, and she noticed that the pallor and fright were gone from it ; that his manner was easy and possessed ; that, as he looked toward her, there was a bright, boyish smile in his eyes ; and

when Captain Brown presented Mr. Luke Connor to her and the Professor, the two men gravely saluted each other after the fashion of gentlemen, and she noticed the bits of talk succeeding had nothing different in them from other bits of talk likely to chance between two intelligent persons when introduced to each other.

"We must congratulate you on your escape," the Professor said. "Your vessel is sinking, I think you told the Captain."

"Yes, she leaked badly before, but that last thumping she got in the inlet was too much for her. She will be gone in an hour, if she is not already aground."

"Then," said Margaret, her rare, sweet smile mocking the gravely spoken words, "I am afraid the modern Jason will have all the dangers of the voyage and pursuit, without finding the treasure he seeks."

Luke Connor looked far out to sea as the girl stopped speaking, as if he weighed the dangers he had passed, before he answered her.

"I am not so sure of that," he said presently. "The gods of to-day, I fancy, are as vigilant and strong as those older ones ; indeed, I am not

sure they are not the same, and who knows that they did not send the new *Argo* there, to this shore, knowing that here the modern Jason might find what he sought? Adventurers are sailing to-day over every sea in search of it; one is hunting it in the mines of California or Australia, another in India or Japan, but everybody is hunting it somewhere. I think the golden fleece of to-day is only another name for happiness, and I am as likely to find it here as elsewhere."

The man's voice had grown low and solemn and prophetic, and the girl, noticing his changed manner, looked at him curiously. If then he had given one bold glance into the pure brown eyes before him, or had dared to cast a single admiring look at her, or at the bright masses of the golden hair, waving so luxuriantly about her neck and face, she would have caught the hidden sense of his meaning, and if she had, she would have avoided him forever after. But his eyes did not once meet hers, they being still bent far out at sea; and the girl, too simple and true to be suspicious or to take alarm, only simply wondered where, among the melancholy

groves of that grim shore, the golden prize might hang.

But the Professor, quicker of thought than she, and more suspicious too, knew that Margaret had curiously attracted Luke Connor, and that the tawny hair floating about her form typified to the reckless sailor Jason's fabled fleece.

The *Argo* had settled at flood tide, but her deck still showed above the surface of the shallow river. "She lies safe enough there," Luke said. "If you think her traps worth the trouble, she is yours to dismantle, Captain Brown, but her hull is sprained and thumped to pieces."

He looked back regretfully at the sunken wreck. They had been good friends together, the man and his boat. If, as he said, the golden fleece was only another name for happiness, he had sought that in many places in his yacht. They had shared a good many dangers, lived true, brave lives together, struggling and wrestling with tempest and sea, and now the old *Argo* lay there in that hole of a river, sunk and worthless. It had been a better life than any he knew on shore. That was a

fever of dissipation, a round of pleasure that was unwholesome and vile. The only love he knew there was the love that he had bought. The lips that kissed the pure brow of Psyche, had kissed no pure lips since; the hand made bloody on that long-ago commencement night had never been clean again, he morbidly fancied. Yet in every hour of this man's plunges into vice and wretchedness, his true, nobler self cried out for something better—for the sweet, manly life he had once known—for friendship and love. But he knew that men looked coldly on him; that fathers of pure girls never asked him to their houses; that, mixed with the sincerest interest men ever showed him, there was more than one half morbid curiosity. He knew, when he met his former friends face to face, that if they noticed him at all, which few did, they were quietly wondering, as they passed on their opposite way, how a murderer must feel; what must be the daily life of a man who has escaped hanging, or what distempered fancies of the murdered victim tortured him by night.

If he could have answered them at all, he would have said that no thought of being

hanged, that no ghost of the dead man who had wronged his sister, ever came to him by day or night. But while no ghost ever haunted him, sleeping or waking, the awful crime of which his soul stood guilty was like a second self, clinging close as his skin, urging him forever into the Lethe of riot and dissipation. He only lived to forget, to get rid for awhile of himself; and the pity of it all was, that under the crust of vice that was on it, there was a true, manly, noble self, full of generous impulses, capable of heroic achievements, worthy of good men's honor and affectionate regard; but indeed it was true, he had buried it all very deep, so that men went on remembering his crime, after they should have forgiven and forgotten the actors in it.

While the men whom he had known in that old, happier time placed a gulf, impossible to bridge over, between him and them, it was curious that women and little children, with their pure, unerring instincts, came close to and loved the man. It might have been partly his genuine, hearty manner, or his superb beauty, alive and magnetic with health and strength, or his free thought and free speech that beguiled

them and won their hearts ; but whatever it was, women and children had been very tender of his faults and loving of Luke Connor.

As he walked beside Margaret Daunton from the beach to the farm-house, his instincts telling him how pure and gentle a woman she was, his senses showing him how beautiful and intelligent she was, he felt as he had never done before ; his crime weighed heavily upon him, and he knew with deadly certainty that the once sweet waters of life that he had muddied, he must drink to the end ; that a pure woman, saintly in thought and deed, was not for him to gather to his breast. Other men, with clean hands and unsullied name, might strive to win, and some one marry her ; but he alone was shut out and under the ban.

In that same hour, if the old *Argo*, lying a sunken, worthless wreck in the river there, could have been made seaworthy again, he would have plunged once more into the breakers with her, no matter how the bar threatened, nor what storms prevailed or winds blew. Better the sudden death out yonder, than to live to bear this girl's reproach. It was not that she had already become essential to him, but it was natural that

a man cut off from white bread for many long years, should loathe the black loaf forever held to his lips, and hunger for the other ; or that a barefooted beggar, passing the boundaries of a fair domain, should pause for awhile to behold how fair it was, and then to wish that the title to it should be made clear to him and his heirs forever ; especially natural would it seem if the beggar's tastes fitted him to enjoy such an estate. He, Luke Connor, was the man who had eaten only of the black bread of bought, vicious pleasures, whose nature cried out hungrily for better food ; he was the barefooted beggar, gazing over the wall of a beautiful domain, whose fruitful acres stretched away to the sea and skyline—a wall which he might never cross, lest the cry of the keeper be raised against him, and he be hunted down.

He felt that he was not a man while he could not say to this girl's mother, "Give me your child, for I love her." Other men might go to her, telling the reverential love they felt, but he never might.

He could never do that ; his hands were bloody ; and if it were right for the State, or

Justice, to take life at all, he had no right to his life even. It had been saved, and the State, or Justice, cheated out of it by a quibble, a lawyer's shrewd eloquence, or the whim of a soft-hearted jury; so he felt that he bore his life even under a false pretence, and that it had been forfeit long ago. Yet no man loved life better than he loved his. It was sweet and good to him from the rising to the setting of the sun; and no man would have fought more desperately to preserve it, if a struggle came.

But it could never be a man's full life, he thought, unless he might love and marry as other men could. He knew the danger before him when it was only an hour old, but he did not flee from it. Let the surly keeper come, he said; but he would first see the beautiful fields, the long, dim paths, the friendly shadows of the trees, smell the fragrance of the flowers and hear the songs of birds and splash of fountains. Let the keeper come; the beggar would have climbed the wall and seen with his own eyes how broad and fair the landscape was, and as he was turned out again to wander over

the rough highways, eating his black bread, what he had seen and heard would be a pleasant and happy memory to him forever. So, Luke Connor resolved to linger for a day or two, with the beautiful woman, under the old wrecking-master's roof, and then he would go back to the love that could be bought and pleasures that bury self and bring forgetfulness. But he never would forget, that he had seen Margaret Daunton, and that, for a day or two, he had stood up before her, accounted worthy of her regard and honor.

But he did not go after a day or two, nor yet after many days. He too, after long, rough years, sat down by the sweet waters and ate of the blissful lotus, which brought dreamful ease and forgetfulness of crime and trouble.

He sent to town to have his horses brought down, he discarded his sailor's suit, and robed himself bravely, as a man does who wishes to appear at his best in the eyes of the woman he loves.

The story of that old farm-house was repeating itself at every watering-place, large and small, along the whole Atlantic coast, and at

every summer retreat in mountain or valley. The old, old story, forever beautiful and new, of two people of opposite sex, coming directly to believe that "all for love, and the world well lost" is the only true religion. Margaret Dauntton and Luke Connor had learned that faith on the sands, that day by the sea, I think; but then they only saw, as in a glass, darkly; and now, after these many days of rides and walks and sunset wanderings they would have died at the stake for it, bravely as any bigot of the olden time for his higher creed.

This was all very bad for the grave old Professor indeed. He had made a terrible mistake of it. If he had only, in those old days at home, been less blind, less devoted to his stupid books, less interested in his Greek poetry and College duties; if he had only loved his Hellenic heroines less, and cared more for the beautiful, loving girl whom his stupid affection called sister!

But he had been so secure in his possession of the yellow-haired little girl that he had been in no hurry to fall in love with and marry her. There, at home, his dear old mother played house-dog, keeping watch and ward at the gate,

driving all poachers away; but here, in this summer holiday, came this barefooted beggar, Luke Connor, claiming the fair domain, and making out a good title to it, too.

He knew that he had only to utter one word into the girl's ear to make her send the beggar all to sea again; to make her great, brown eyes dilate with horror; to make her shrink appalled from his touch. But would he say it, that was the question! What was his duty? Was it the devil of selfishness that tempted him to go to the girl with Luke Connor's story, or was it solely a real desire for her completest happiness that prompted him to tell her the man was a murderer, a debauchee? He knew the coarse delights, the vices and sloughs of vileness Connor had grovelled in for a good many years past. Was he fit to marry with such a woman as Margaret, a woman sweet and saintly as few women were? He might let the old crime go, and be silent about it. God knew, there was sufficient provocation for that, the Professor thought. He could scarcely blame the man for that; besides, the man was mad when he did it. But, outside of that, was Luke Con-

nor fit to be Margaret's husband?—and even if he could forget and forgive it, would others do so? If they ever married, would not the scorn and gibe follow Margaret as surely as it had followed him? And how could he save her at all, if he kept that old, foul tale of murder back?

He thought it over for a long time, weighing the matter coolly in his mind. If he told her—well? Then the beggar, Luke Connor, with his altogether wrecked, miserable life, would hurry back to his old existence of bought sin, and Margaret would be glad that he had saved her from the ignominy of being a murderer's wife, of being the mother of a murderer's children. And for himself? Had he a right to think of himself at all, just then? He had, for he, too, loved Margaret; and if she married with Luke Connor, where would he carry his wreck of life? Would his books, his College, his Hellenic heroines supply her place in his vacant home in all the coming years?

Yet look at it as he would, the high-toned gentleman and scholar shrank from the task of telling her. He could not help thinking that this

young fellow's lines had fallen in rough places; that if he had dropped out of good men's graces, he had been sorely tempted to his fall; and now, just as Connor's feet had touched solid ground, and his soul tasted happiness, he was about to knock it all from under his feet and send him back into the slough again. The more the Professor looked at it, the more he did not like it. It was a mean bit of business for any man to do, he said. He began to doubt if happiness would be worth the purchase at that price—but, then, *her* happiness, he asked himself. Might that not be worth paying much for, to secure? He was not certain of that; women were curious in their likes and dislikes. After all, what had Connor done to commend himself to Margaret's favor? He had simply stood up like a man in an ugly swash of sea, and successfully run his yacht into smooth water. Success counts so much with women, thought the Professor.

But what was it Margaret had said under her breath that day, while the tears wet her cheeks, as she saw Luke Connor guiding his sinking, battered boat through the breakers? Only

this: "It would be so easy, if the time had come, to die by the side of a brave man like that." Ah! Professor, we old fellows, who have wives and daughters, and who have lost the fight, as our shabby coats and hair turned prematurely gray bear witness, know that success counts but little in a woman's love—that her sublimest hero is the husband, lover, or son who has dared the battle, and when it was over, has left the field, not victorious, but scarred and defeated.

The Professor's mother was not a quick old lady, and never hurried to conclusions by too rapid a course; yet even she, who from the hours he took Margaret Daunton home, after her father's funeral, promising to be a mother to the girl, and sealing her promise to her, as she crossed the threshold of the vacant house, with a solemn, silent prayer to God, saying, "As I deal with her, Almighty Father, so deal Thou with me, now and forever"—even she, blind and old and simple as she was, saw that Margaret and the sailor of the *Argo* were a good deal together, and that Margaret showed she liked to be with him more than she had ever liked to be with the Professor. But she was not alarmed by it at all.

She knew that her son would marry Margaret all in his own good time—he was the sultan to command, and Margaret the handmaiden to pick up the glove, whenever he chose to cast it to her; and strangers might come and go, but Margaret would be still her son's. Of that there could be no doubt—she had settled that in her own mind, to her own intense satisfaction, long ago. Yet she was rather vexed that they had come to this public place at all; undoubtedly it was pleasant enough; she liked the green fields, the woods, the cliffs, the roar of the sea, the dash of the waves, and to watch the sun fade away into the crimson tide; and certainly the people were agreeable people; but it was the girl's first look at the world, and young girls grew romantic by the sea, and, altogether, it might distract her fancy for awhile. Indeed, the old lady thought so long about it, as she dozed in her chair on the porch that sunny afternoon, that she resolved she would talk to Albert about the matter.

The Professor had been out all the afternoon for a long, quiet walk on the beach. He had wanted to be alone, where he could think over

this matter of his duty to Margaret undisturbed, and settle it. When he came back to the house, it was all settled—the Professor had decided. But his decision was a different one from that which he had adopted on the beach. In the long, dim path of the woods, near the farm-house, he had come upon Margaret and Luke Connor walking slowly toward him, rapt in themselves, and unmindful of anything outside of their own belongings; the sod beneath his feet was soft and yielding, his step was noiseless; and they, unconscious of his presence, had come so near, that, without hearing their words at all, he had heard the low, sweet murmur of Margaret's voice, and in her face he saw a light and glow of quiet happiness that he had never seen there before. Then the grave old Professor, sorely wounded, betook himself and the wreck of his life into the deeper shadows of the sombre pines, and, stealing silently away, he began again to think it over, growing suddenly conscious of something having been lost out of his life, which could never come again. He sat there a long while, until the sun had gone down behind the cliffs, leaving sea and sky filled with its crimson

splendor; then he settled it all differently again, and, finally, went slowly along to his mother's chamber, where he sat down beside her, with an awful shadow on his honest old face, which she, dull and slow as she was, quickly noted. But she began a long way off, after the fashion of mothers, whose tender fingers are forever prying down into the hurt, locked hearts of children.

"You are tired, Albert," she said. "Did you walk all the way to the wreck of the Osprey?"

"All the way, mother—and back," he replied, slowly and wearily; for he knew what was coming, and wanted time. "The old ship lies high and dry, half embedded in the sands, too strained, I think, ever to sail the seas again."

"And can an old ship, Albert, stranded and broken, make your face like *that*? The shore lies thick with the whitening skeletons of noble ships, which you have seen a hundred times, and jested at."

"I know, mother. The stories of those wrecks are such old stories now that they seem unreal as fables; but the Osprey came on only yesterday, and at the station the wreckers showed me, lying under an old sail, the figures of the Cap-

tain and his young wife—a girl with fair hair and brown eyes, not unlike our Margaret. When they were last seen alive together upon the ship, the wreckers said they stood looking shoreward, watching the launching of the life-boat, thinking, no doubt, that their deliverance was near at hand; but before it left the shore, a wave swept over the ship and hurled them into the sea. A moment before, she had taken her little baby from her breast, and held it up in her arms, as if, by that means, to plead with the wreckers on the shore to hasten to their rescue. When the two bodies came ashore this morning, they were found lying but a few feet apart, with their faces turned toward each other. I said she was like our Margaret. She was; she had the same pure face, the same sunny hair, the same dainty look of gentle womanhood. It was a sad sight, mother."

It *had* been a sad sight, sadder to the man than he told; for, seeing this dead semblance of the woman he loved lying under the coarse sail and thinking of the easy possibility of Margaret becoming Luke Connor's wife, he could not be certain that this dead woman's fate would not be

a better, kindlier fate for her; not quite sure that it would not be better for Margaret to be washed upon the shore dead at his feet, than to marry that man.

Then he had gone up from the sea, and, from the sight of the dead it had early given up, resolved to tell Margaret the worst he knew of Connor; but when he saw them together in the woods, hearing the low, tender murmur of her voice, and seeing the bright, buoyant look in her eyes, that was there never before, he had known that already he was too late, that she already loved him, and that, to have told her then, would only have made her cling the closer to the ruined man on whom the old, old curse had fallen.

There was a long silence between the mother and son. She thought tenderly of the dead woman, who had taken her baby from her breast to inspire the wreckers, in her peril of death, lying now under the coarse sail, watched over by the grim coastmen at the station. He thought of the living girl whose life, he fancied, was more completely wrecked than if she were lying dead among the sands. Mrs. Dauntton's next question startled him.

"Do you know this young sailor, Luke Connor?" she asked.

"Do I know Luke Connor?" Daunton was thrown off guard, and parried for time. "You mean the man who came into the inlet with his yacht?"

"Yes. Do you know him?"

There was a moment's pause, then the Professor looked fairly into his old mother's eyes, and did what he had never done before in all his life—he lied to her.

"No, mother," he said, slowly and deliberately, as if weighing the meaning of every word; "no, mother, I do not know him."

"I wish you did, Albert; I wish you did. I am growing old fast now. I am losing memory and sight. I like the young man, and I would rather not. Sometimes I feel as if I had seen him before, and again his name sounds familiar to me as my own, and always connected with something bad. But I never can recall where I have seen his face, nor remember how that name is associated with the record of some ugly crime in my mind. But it is, and I wish you knew him. He is a great deal with your Margaret."

Without looking up at all, the Professor knew that the keen gray eyes of the old lady were watching the effect of those last words upon him. He reached out his hands to hers, and, laying one within the other, smiled as he said, "*My* Margaret, mother! Why mine? She is your daughter and my sister; so, let us speak of her as our Margaret—not mine!"

There was a quick shade of alarm passed over the old lady's face, despite his frank, assuring smile. "My son, have you never thought of Margaret Daunton in any way than as your cousin—as something nearer and dearer than cousin or sister—as your wife?"

She was trying the honest old fellow very hard just then, but he swallowed a big lump that had got into his throat, and, taking the trembling old hand into his own, he again, for the second time in life, looked into his mother's face, and deliberately lied to her. He fancied it was becoming easier now, when her happiness was likewise involved in the concealment of the truth.

"No, mother, I have never thought of Margaret in any other relationship than that of a sister, of whom I was very fond."

She went to him, and laid her old white head on his breast, with a great sense of loss and terror in her face, and in the trembling figure and voice. "Oh, my son, my son!" she cried; "it has been the one thought and plan of my life. I have daily and nightly prayed God to spare my life long enough to let me see her your wife. I have prayed that he would let you two together lay me away at the last. Is there no hope for it—no chance that you will yet change your mind? She is better, nobler, more beautiful than other women are, and I have only lived in the hope to make her worthy to be my son's wife. Was all my loving labor lost? Is there no chance, Albert?"

"No, mother," he said, "there is no chance. She has found a husband, younger and better and more suited to her, elsewhere. She already loves this sailor, Luke Connor. I saw it in her face to-day——"

She stood up and confronted him, her lips quivering, her fingers nervously winding themselves about his own. "You do not mean," she said, her voice grown suddenly husky and broken, "you do not mean that Margaret loves that

man? No, no, you fancied it. You know you are quick to fancy harm coming to her or me; but nothing so horrible as that could be true. My memory—everything—seems going from me; but oh, Albert, help me to remember the crime that belongs to a name like his. Margaret must be told. We must save her. We must go away from here at once; help me to do what is right. Margaret is yours, I tell you; I gave her to you, years and years ago, when she was only a child in my arms. Help me, Albert!"

It was piteous to see so gentle and calm a life as hers had been so troubled as it grew toward the end, piteous to see its one hope beaten down and trampled under foot, piteous to see her anguish and pain at her great loss; but her son seated her in her chair, resting his hands tenderly on her breast, as he said, "Mother, you must hear me now. I cannot help you to what you want. It is too late; the evil has already fallen upon us. Margaret loves Luke Connor to-day well enough to take his crime, if he has a crime, upon herself—to share with him forever his dishonored name—if it is dishonored.

We must give her up to him, not for his sake, but for her own."

"But you, Albert?—what of yourself, for you—you loved her?"

"It does not matter, mother. I would not love her at all, if I loved myself better," the poor old fellow said, wearily. "I have you and my home and my work. These have always been enough for me—they will be enough now. Our care must be for Margaret; there must be no hint to her against the honor of the man she loves—no reproach nor suspicion against him from us. If calumny or unpalatable truth touches him, neither must come from us. I doubt if he has spoken to her yet. Let us wait and be very tender with her, for she has been the steady light and warmth of home to both of us."

"If this is true, my son, that you have told me," she said, "then God help us all. These are dark, stormy days coming to me at the end. But I will not speak of my trouble to her; send her in to me. I am very tired, and need her."

When the Professor went out into the orchard where Margaret was, he looked like a very old

man, indeed—like a man on whom affliction had fallen heavily, suddenly robbing him of youth and purpose. At the gate the old wrecking-master accosted him.

"You're ailing, Professor," he said. "These nor'easters affect people onused to 'em, sometimes. Now, they have affected you, and you aren't well. Not a bit of it."

"You mistake, Captain Brown. I am well enough, but tired. I walked along the coast to the wreck of the Osprey, and the sands were heavy." The Professor wanted to be alone and would have passed on, but the old Captain was inclined, just then, to hear himself talk, and fancied the Professor wanted to hear him too. The latter stopped courteously to listen to what the wrecker had to say.

"And so you walked all the way up there to the wreck, eh? Well, now, it's curious how strangers to these parts will hanker after wrecks, and stories of 'em, but they do. Now, Professor, it wasn't a pleasant sight to see that young woman a-lying there, and him beside her? No, I know it wasn't. But we see a heap of such sights, an' you might think, now, it would

harden us like, but it don't. Now, maybe you don't think it, but no woman would care for that poor body there, tender as them wreckers. They're men, they are. But that isn't what hurts 'em most, though. What hurts them men is to see a crew, with a woman or a baby among 'em, clinging to a ship's sides, and the winds howling like devils about 'em, and the big waves rolling up to 'em, hungry like to drag 'em all into the sea, and for them men to stand there on the shore, helpless, and knowing that no life-boat as was ever built could live out there, and that they can't save 'em, but must stand there on shore and see 'em, after awhile, drop one by one into the sea. Now, Professor, if this Government of ours could afford it, which it can't, you know, it would have a mortar down here, and we could fire a line to them ships easy enough; but Government is too poor, you see. Seeing people calling on us to save 'em when we can't, is what hurts us wreckers, and makes wreckin' an onpleasant business to foller; but then we do save lots that never would be saved, only for us, and that makes it pleasant again, you see."

While the old wrecker, leaning on the gate,

talked on monotonously, the Professor was looking out seaward, watching the first signs of a coming storm. "This wind is getting fresher, I think, Captain?" he asked.

"Surely. It'll be a hurricane before morning; but they'll all give this bit of devil's coast a wide berth to-night. It's when it comes up in a minute like, and takes 'em unawares that they come smashing onto it; but you see, Professor, they've got warning to-night."

The Captain, casting a last glance at the threatening sky, went indoors; and the Professor, finding Margaret, sent her in to Mrs. Dauntton, and then started off for a long walk along the river-shore.



PART IV.

A LIFE FOR A LIFE.

THE wind that had been gradually rising since noon had grown into a storm before evening, and the hurtled mists came driving in from the sea dense and spectral, hiding the fields and woods and river ; but no rain fell, and above there was a clear, starlit sky, under which floated the compact mists and torn, scudding clouds, each in its way heralding the coming tempest. All night long the wind thundered through the trees, the ospreys in their rudely shaken nests kept up their wild, unearthly cry, the surf beat and hammered on the shore ; but through and above it all still shone the clear, steady light of the stars, while below them floated in upon the winds the mists and clouds.

It was at the breaking of the day that the guests at the old farm-house were awakened from sleep by the discharge of a solitary gun ; it sounded so near and distinct that it startled the

sleepers from their beds. It was presently followed by a second report, and at intervals by others. Then there was hurried dressing, and a quick tramp to the sea by all who lived either in farm-house or cabin, for the slow booming guns told of another wreck ; of life to be saved, to some ; of plunder and salvage, to others.

Professor Dauntou had already left the house, when he heard Margaret's voice calling to him.

"Will you let me go with you ?" she asked, as if fearing a refusal.

"Yes, my girl, and thank you for the good company. See the people there, hurrying across the marshes ; there cannot be a man, woman, or child left in the village. These people can scent a wreck in the air, I think."

They hurried on with the rest, the girl holding the Professor's arm, and occasionally casting quick, timid glances behind her, evidently looking for some one whom she had not seen among the other guests going down to the sea.

They got down in time to see the men and horses thundering along the hard beach, with the life-boats on their rough carriages, surrounded by the yelling wreckers, mad with the

excitement of perilous adventure. They trotted alongside, their hands upon the gunwales of the boats, grim and alert, like artillerymen hurrying to the front, full of the fire and bravery of the battle. The horses flew along, untouched by whip or goad, as if they knew the value of the freight they bore and the necessity for speed. But when the wreckers arrived opposite to the stranded ship, against which the waves thumped mercilessly, there fell a dead silence among them all, wreckers, fishermen, and villagers alike, and they looked toward the monster wreck and then into each other's faces, hopeless, dismayed. It was no use, they said, one to the other; no boat could live in such a sea.

It was an emigrant ship, from Liverpool; and about her decks and lower rigging, which the sea almost constantly washed, clung her helpless, doomed passengers and crew, as thick as bees about the hive. She had come on broadside to the bar, at that treacherous, dark hour before the dawn, and was strained badly; yet she still held together above decks, but at low-water line showed an ugly break in her hull amidship.

The people of the village had built a fire of

the ocean wrack gathered from alongshore, for the wind, blowing a hurricane directly on land, chilled them to their bones. They stood or sat huddled about it in picturesque groups, generally silent, looking off to where the ship lay hard and fast on the bar; wondering in their stolid fashion how long she could hold together, with the sea thumping her sides in that way, and often making clear breaches over her from stem to stern. The women who had husbands in the wrecking service stood about the boats on which the men sat, entreating and forbidding them to venture out. They needed little entreaty, yet, somehow, they felt that out there, with those despairing wretches, and not idly here on shore, lay their duty; and in more than one breast among those rough fellows the sense of duty was stronger than sense of fear, or love of wife and child. It only needed the magnetic example of one man, more daring than the rest, to hurry them all into the boats, and once there, to risk everything for humanity and duty.

Captain Brown, the master, stood apart from his men, talking to the Professor and Margaret.

"Is there no hope for those poor people, Cap-

tain Brown?" she asked. "Surely, with these brave men, who know the sea and shore, you can do something. Help them, Captain; they are so many; there are women and children among them, such as your wife and children are. Try to help them. Do not let them go down into the sea before our eyes without making a single effort, Captain."

The girl's hand had caught his own, and her wet, passionate eyes looked right into his, pleading with him for the women and children, who had their counterparts in his own home and heart.

"It's no use, Marg'ret. She's doomed, that ship is, an' she'll go down afore our eyes, an' we *can't* help it. I'm main sorry, but we can't help 'em."

"I am not a strong man, Captain Brown," said the Professor slowly, "but I was accounted a good stroke once in the Cambridge crew, and I would like to make one of a party to attempt the rescue of those people there."

"You would—*you*? Then by the good Lord, Professor, I'll make another. Hello, men! I daren't force one of you into that boat while the sea pitches like that, though it's your duty, you know, men; but who'll volunteer to go out there

with a line to that ship. It's a desp'rit service, but Professor Daunton is going an' I'm going; and now, who else'll go? Good for you, Bill Shadrack; good for you, Tom Hemphill; you're men, you are. Now some more of you as hasn't got anybody at home. Who's the next man to go into the boat?

Two others instantly volunteered, and despite the cries of children and wives the men leaped into the boat, and each one with a last look shoreward, quietly poised his oar in the air, stiffened himself in his place, and sat solemnly watching the mountainous wave over which he was to be hurled. Half a hundred brawny hands seized the boat and tried to launch her, unsuccessfully at first; but on the fourth trial she plunged into the breakers, and in the next moment she was thrown high and dry upon the beach, smashed like an eggshell; her crew of six all safe, but all a good deal bruised and hurt.

The old Captain gathered himself up with the rest. "I told you it was no use, Professor," he said. "I know a sea when I see it, and I knowed no boat could live a minute out there."

"I see it is no use, Captain. God help them

all, for only He can now," and the Professor turned away sick at heart, not noticing the blood dripping freely from his fingers.

But Margaret was in an instant at his side, tying her handkerchief about his bleeding hand. When it was done she went up to the fire where poor Tom Hemphill had been carried, his face gashed and bloody. Margaret stooped down by him, took the rough unkempt head on her knees, while she staunched the blood and bound up the wounds. Tom was only a fisherman, with no wife nor child to care for his coming or going; but as the beautiful lady put her arm about his neck to raise his battered head to her lap, he closed his eyes suddenly as if he had no right to look at her then.

"You have done a brave thing, Mr. Hemphill," she said, as she arranged some blankets under him.

"I'd do it agen, Miss, only to have your little finger touch me, I would," rejoined honest Tom.

"It was better," she said, not displeased, "to have done it for those poor people there."

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"What chance, Captain?"

It was a pleasant voice that had asked the question, the old wrecker thought, before he looked up at the gigantic figure of the speaker on horseback; a little too cheery and careless, though, he thought again, as he looked into the cool, gray eye, and saw a bright, easy smile on Luke Connor's face; then he said:

"Capt'n. Connor, I shouldn't be obleeged to tell a man like you, as knows the sea, that there is *no* chance for them poor souls on that wrack. Only God and a miracle will ever let them see home agen."

"Only God and a miracle?" the man asked, a doubtful smile on his face.

"Yes—jest that, Capt'n Connor."

The Professor stood by jealously watching and noting every expression of the man who had robbed him of his wife and home and love; and remarking his light, incredulous tone, his careless bearing in the face of such calamity as there was before him in the stranded ship, he turned suddenly away, afraid of himself; afraid lest his anger and contempt should make him drag the cool, indifferent devil from his saddle, and beat the life out of him. He thought of Margaret as

this wretch's wife, and his heart grew sick within him.

"Have you tried the boat, Captain Brown?" Luke Connor asked.

"Does that look as if we had tried the boat, young man?" and the old wrecker pointed sternly to where the shattered fragment lay strewn about the beach.

"Very much like it, Captain Brown; but are there no more volunteers?"

Luke Connor did not wait for the savage answer of the wrecking-master, but rode down to the wreckers and their wives; a gallant, noble figure, straight as a maple, and as shapely, holding his impatient horse in hand easily as a child holds a kitten; a powerful figure, robust, hardy, wearing easily and gracefully the strength and nerve of a dozen common men.

The wreckers' faces lighted up pleasantly as they touched their hats to the gallant sailor, who had defied the dangers of their inlet, as he swept into the river one day. They had been witnesses to his bravery, his skill they could understand, and his strength they envied.

"My men," he said, as he drew rein among

them, "you know me. You know that I can make my offer good. I will give a thousand dollars to every man who lends a hand to carry a line to that ship!"

A dead silence among the men, flashing eyes and dark scowls among the women, followed the offer of the speaker.

"What, no answer?" he said. "You want more. Well, you shall have it. Any six of you stand out there, and name your price. Don't be afraid, I'll pay it down on the nail."

He paused, but no man stirred; the women crept closer to their husbands, holding their arms and glaring savagely at Connor.

"You won't go? Then let one man among you swim to that ship, and he shall be the owner of Captain Brown's sea-farm. You all know it—you all know that it will be a fortune to any one who owns it when your railroad comes down here. I will give it out and out, to the man who swims to that ship. Still no answer? Why, you cowards, are you afraid of a bit of dirty water or of some salt spray washing over you? Will nothing tempt you, you miserable devils?"

"We are not cowards, Captain Connor, but no

boat can live out there ; it has been tried, and no man among us can swim there," a wrecker said, doggedly.

"Try it again, you cowards. O my God," he exclaimed, "for one hour's life of the old Argo, and I would show you what a single man could do. I would sail her out there, if the waves of hell washed her sides ; you have been upon the seas all your miserable lives, and yet not a man of you will stir."

The bitter words were scarcely uttered, when a gaunt old fish-wife, a woman tall and muscular, apparently, as himself, her arms bared to the shoulders, her face as brown as the dead kelp, her sharp features watched over by gray, hawkish eyes, her voice shriller, more piercing than the wind, seized his bridle, and with a quick jerk threw Luke Connor's horse back on his haunches.

"Cowards, are we?" she cried. "Then what are you? What are you, coming here to tempt to their certain death these men with children and wives? Why don't you go yourself? What makes you tempt other men with fortunes greater than they ever dreamed of, to do a thing your

own cowardly heart will not let you do? What is your dirty money to *you*? You never worked for it ; no, not a penny of it. You don't know the value of money ; these men do. You never worked with the nets, wet to the armpits, from sunset till morning for a poor mess of fish to keep starvation from your door! You never worked in storm, in sleet and hail and snow, for a dollar a day, at wrecking, and saving human lives. These men have done it hundreds of times, and will do nothing else as long as they live ; and the like of you comes here tempting them with more money than they could count over. Go carry a line to the ship yourself ; save your filthy bribes, you murderer, and earn the right to call our sons and husbands cowards. Go yourself."

During the delivery of this fierce tirade, Luke Connor sat back on his horse, more amused than vexed at the earnestness of the old fish-wife, until the single word *murderer* escaped her lips, and then his cheeks blanched, and he grew dizzy for a moment ; but recovering himself, he leaned forward in his saddle and gravely addressed the wreckers one and all.

"My friends," he said, "I am sorry. I was wrong, and this good wife is right. I will carry a line to the ship."

The old woman let go the bridle, stared hard into the man's face, full of unbelief, and for a moment her haggard countenance expressed it, but something she saw in the calm, solemn eyes of Luke Connor told her that he meant to do it, and it chilled the blood in her heart. Her voice was not shrill now, but husky and full of pain. "*You*," she said, "you, carry a line to yon poor wretches! It can't be done, Capt'n Luke—it can't be done, I tell you. I'm only a miserable old woman, but I know. I lived on this coast before you was born, Master Luke, and I have seen the sea since I was a baby, and I know it, I do. I'm hurt that I vexed you. I didn't mean to call you a murderer, I didn't mean to be rough and to make you do a mad thing like that, but you drove my man bitter hard with your piles of money and your hard words. You can't save 'em, Captain Luke; only God can do that." The woman clung to his arm at last, as if by her simple strength she would hold him back.

"Then, under God," he said solemnly, "I will do it."

She turned fiercely upon the gaping wreckers, who stood in little groups, shaking their heads in earnest protest and excitedly discussing this new danger. They readily forgave Luke Connor his hard words. They had seen him do a braver thing than they had ever done, when before them all he had lashed his mainsheet to the deck in a fierce storm, at the moment when his crew would no longer aid him; they had seen him sail his toy-ship through the hungry mouth of hell, as it were, into their river. They liked this young fellow, who threw his money around among them so lavishly, who had helped them at their nets, sat on their hearths, shared their luck in deep-sea fishing, and who was a hail-fellow well met with the humblest of them all. They knew him to be so reckless of personal danger that he would certainly risk a passage to the wreck, and they did not like it.

"Will you let him do it, men?" she asked, looking into their faces for help. "Will you let him go out there into that boiling hell-broth? He's been like a brother to you men, he has."

You've eaten of his salt ever since he came among us. Do you mean to let him throw his life away before your eyes? If you do, you're greater cowards and meaner men than he called you just now. You speak to him, Captain Brown, he'll mind you."

"What is the young one going to do now, friend Wagner?" the Captain inquired.

The young fellow leaped from his horse, drew his arm through the bridle, and, taking the old wrecking-master by both shoulders, looked down in his face, with a grave, tender smile in his eyes. "Captain Brown," he said, "I propose to carry a line to yonder ship. You said, awhile ago, that only God and a miracle could save those poor people there——"

"Yes, I did say that," the Captain answered, looking blankly amazed at the other's earnestness.

"Well, Captain, is not your God as alive to-day as he was eighteen hundred years ago? Is He not as strong and able to help His people now as then? Can He not do a miracle to-day as easily as then? You, Captain Brown, are a prayerful, God-fearing man—a good man, I call you—will you help me?"

The old wrecker's eyes measured and weighed the sturdy giant looking down upon him, before he spoke. He had seen in his active life so many things done which men had not called miracles, but which had been pronounced impossible, that he was not prepared to say what might or might not be done by a man strong, resolute, and daring as this young fellow.

"This aren't the time of miracles, Capt'n Luke, but you're a strong man and you know the sea; now look for yourself, can you carry a line out yonder—can any man do it?"

Luke Connor deliberately surveyed the prospect before him, before he answered; he saw all the danger, all the necessity too, and felt how desperate the chances really were. No other man than he would have tried it, after so fully weighing its impossibilities; but no other man would have had his motive, nor been guided to it by the same curious fancy. But to the morbid soul of Luke Connor, it was no fancy; rather a solemn message to him from his God, which he would blindly and implicitly obey.

"I can try, Captain Brown," he said. "I am not a boaster, I think you know, but I have lived

upon the water a long while ; there are few men who can swim as I can ; there are but few men with half my strength or endurance. The most of the danger lies there in that first breaker ; there is some in the second, and less in the third. I don't mind that swashing sea beyond, for if I could pass the three lines of breakers, the tide would favor me, and I could feel almost certain of success. Will you help me ?”

The Captain turned to his men for counsel. The young fellow was so calm and earnest about this matter, though his eyes shone with an unnatural brilliancy, and his face was pale as if death had already marked him out from among living men. The wreckers looked at the master, and shook their heads.

“It's no use, Capt'n Luke. The men are all agen your doing it. We like you, Capt'n Connor, and we know you've got the pluck, but it aren't in mortal power to do it, an' we aren't going to stand by an' see you dashed to pieces on this shore.”

“I am only one man, Captain Brown,” he urged, “and there are at least a hundred men, women, and children on that ship. She cannot

last many hours longer with that sea hammering the life out of her at every stroke. She will go to pieces before night. Will you help me—or am I to try it without your help ?”

While he paused, waiting for the Captain's answer, an awful, piercing cry went up from the wreck, drowning for a moment the beat of the waves and the roar of the wind. The men turned to the vessel and saw that she had parted amidships, and that men and women were struggling in the sea, clinging desperately to fragments of the wreck.

The old wrecking-master gave but a single glance at this new and imminent danger, and then said :

“Yes, Capt'n Luke, I'll help you ; there's not a man here as won't help you. But have you squared accounts up there ? Is it all right with you, Capt'n ?”

“It will be all right, if I don't come back. I will have squared all accounts then, Captain Brown,” the man said, grasping the other's hand ; “for then I shall have given a life for a life.”

“I don't exactly know what you mean by a

life for a life, though I've been taught that works aren't nothing without faith and repentance; but if you don't come back—an' God help you will—I'd like to stand near you up there; I'd be satisfied with your chances." There was some salt water in the old fellow's eyes, and his voice trembled a bit as he released Luke Connor's hand. "And now when will you be ready?" he asked.

"In a few minutes, Captain Brown; when I have said good-by to my friends there. Get out the lines at once, and let the first one be light and strong as possible; have ropes fastened above and run down on either side of the lines, a few feet apart. The men can hold on by them close to the breakers, and maybe save me from being dashed ashore in case I make a mistake. Let the strongest and coolest men go to the end; there are none of them, I think, who will mind a knock down or two from the sea on my account?" He looked down among them, shaking hands with one and all, smiling his grand, brave smile, his eyes wondrously bright and tender.

"All right, Captain Luke. There's none here as will shirk any danger to help you."

Luke walked up the beach to the fire, where the Professor and Margaret were still busy in nursing poor Hemphill. When yet several yards distant he called to the Professor, who looked annoyed for a moment, but got up and went to him. The two men had not spoken together a dozen times during the summer, and then only when it was unavoidable.

The younger man was the first to speak, as they now stood face to face. His usual habit of restraint in presence of the Professor was gone; and as he spoke, the simple, earnest manner of the old, boyish time was upon him, which was curiously puzzling to the other.

"I think that you know me, Professor Daunton, despite your affected ignorance?"

"Yes, Mr. Connor, I do know you. At college I knew you for a brilliant, passionate boy, and I know you now as a brilliant, reckless, and dangerous man."

"Hard words, Professor Daunton, and you are a brave man to say them in my teeth in this way, but I won't quarrel with you now. One question, if you please. Have you told Miss Daunton all you know of me? Understand

me, I don't dispute your right to have done it——"

The Professor interrupted him, speaking with his usual grave, controlled manner. "No, I have told her nothing. If I had such a right, I never used it."

"Professor Daunton," Luke Connor said, "you are a braver man than I thought—a braver and a better man than I could ever be, sir."

"I have been an honorable man, I trust, if that is what you mean. Having answered your question, may I consider our interview at an end?" the Professor asked, touching his hat and moving away.

"One moment more, if you please, Professor Daunton. I would have liked, even at college, to have made such a man as you my friend; but that was not possible; you never liked me,—and then my trouble came." Luke Connor spoke hurriedly as if the moments of his life were numbered. "But that is nothing now to either of us. I am going to carry a line to yonder ship; and before I go I am glad to have learnt that your sister does not know my story. It will be easier to die thinking that she will

never know it; that she can always think of me as she knows me now—at my best."

When Luke Connor announced so quietly his resolution to the Professor, the grave scholar, whose sympathies with brave deeds lay very near the surface, but had deep roots in his nature, came closer to the speaker, his face lighting up with instinctive recognition of the greatness of the man before him.

"You must never attempt that, Mr. Connor," he said, earnestly. "All that men can do has been tried here to-day already. But I know you better now than I ever knew you before; and I promise you that Margaret shall never know your old, sad secret, if I can keep it from her. But you must not make this hopeless attempt. You will? Are you sure that there is nothing that I can say or do that will cause you to abandon it? Trust me, there is nothing that I will not do."

"You can do or say nothing, Professor Daunton. It is my one chance. I have not lived a good, true life since we last parted. I have lived to myself and for myself, abusing and degrading what was best in me. I have read some-

where, that God grants it to but few men to carry a line to a stranded ship. I have a fancy that He will grant it to me. If he does, I shall take it as a token that my sin is forgiven me. But if it be His will that I shall perish in the trial, it will be best so, for the weight of my crime has been heavy on me these many years, and I am tired. You once refused to take my hand, Professor; will you take it now? I somehow feel already as if the miserable, unclean past was dead forever, as if I was again the equal of honorable men."

The Professor took the proffered hand and held it, while he said, "Forgive me, Mr. Connor, that I did not understand you sooner. It has been my loss. I can understand, I think, that you feel as if God had called you to do this thing; but think again, and let me and Margaret dissuade you from it."

"You could not dissuade me; I even think *she* would not try to do it. Let us say good-by here. The men will be ready before me."

They held each other's hand for a long while, as it seemed to those who saw them, and then said, good-by; but Luke Connor did not go; he

stood irresolute for an instant, an unuttered question on his lips.

The Professor, seeing something in the man's glowing eyes as yet unexpressed, asked him what it was.

"If I should come back, Professor Daunton?" Connor asked.

"If you should come back to us, Mr. Connor, there is no man living to whom I would rather give my sister than yourself," the Professor answered, heartily.

"Thank you, and good-by again."

"Good-by," said the Professor. Then he stood looking after the man, going so bravely to his death, with already the glow of immortality in his eyes, yet with the springy, buoyant step of youth; and the loyal gentleman had only sorrow for the brilliant fellow, harboring not a thought of how Luke Connor's death would affect his own future. He was a brave, true man.

It had already spread around among the people on the beach, that Captain Connor intended carrying a line to the wreck; and when they heard the story, and seeing by the wreckers' hurried preparations that it was true, they gathered

about him, tearful and quiet, silently taking the proffered hand, the women sobbing over, or showering kisses upon it, saying under their breath, "God bless you."

Directly he stood before Margaret. Her face had grown pallid and haggard since she had heard the story.

"I am going now, Margaret," he said. "Let us say good-by, quickly. The curious kindness of these people is taking the strength and nerve out of me. I must go at once."

She put out her hand uncertainly, like one gone suddenly blind, and groping in the dark. She only said, "Is it right for you to go?"

"Yes, it is right," he answered.

"Then go, Luke—and God bless you, and bring you back to me."

"In the olden time, Margaret," he said, "the Roman mothers—not braver nor nobler than you—when they sent their sons to the battle, they sanctified them for death by a kiss; I have thought in this last minute that death waits for me out there; will you kiss me now?"

She bent forward and kissed his forehead, bared reverentially for her lips to touch and

anoint for death. Then all the fierce, hungry passion surging in her woman's heart mastered her, and she threw her arms about him and held him close to her breast. "O God!" she cried; "I daren't do what is right. I cannot let you go, Luke—I cannot let you go." But her hold about him relaxed, and she sank down motionless upon the sands.

"Will you take her up and be kind to her?" Luke said to the old wife, whose arms were already about her.

"Yes, I will—for her own sake, as well as yours," she answered.

He entered the bathing-house then, and when he came out again a fisherman's great coat, reaching to his feet, covered him. He walked out among the crowd of villagers, who formed a line on either side of him, through which he might pass, as they would have done for a great conqueror, and then stood sorrowfully watching him as he passed on to his certain grave.

The wreckers had the lines quite ready, and waited for him. The ship lay a quarter of a mile off shore, the sea thundering against her broadside, every tenth wave making a clean

breach over her ; her passengers and crew huddled together on the forward deck, clinging to the rigging, the gunwales, or any possible object of protection.

"Are you quite ready, Capt'n Connor?" the wrecking-master asked, wiping great beads of sweat from his face.

"All ready, Captain." The voice in which the answer was given was blithe and cheery ; the man's step was free and assured. "One moment, Captain Brown. My horse there. He has never felt any other legs than mine across him ; promise me that no other than yourself shall ever use him ?"

"I promise, Captain Luke."

The men gathered around and hid him from the villagers above. The old wrecking-master securely fastened the thin, strong cord about his shoulders, and under his arms. That in turn was made fast to a thicker, stronger cord, and that in its turn to a cable of sufficient strength to sustain the weight of the life-car. Then the wreckers manned the ropes stretching down to the surf.

The time had come. The naked figure of the man gleamed white and solid as ivory ; the

knotted muscles stood up about the arms and thighs and breasts in hard, steely bunches. The Hercules scarcely stood stronger, fairer to the sight. He looked death in the face squarely, and did not falter. He looked out to the far sea-line, to the wreck crowded with its living freight, then he looked back over his old, foul life ; back to the time when it was pure and true. Forgive the man his one moment of weakness, for it was his last ; but he thought for a single instant of the beautiful world he was giving up forever, of the women who had laid in his bosom, of the children who had loved him, of Margaret ; and as the mountainous wave rolled in foaming and hungry, he closed his eyes, saying farewell and farewell to them all, adding only, "God have mercy on me, a sinner !"

"Wait for the next, Capt'n—not that one—the next," shouted the old wrecker.

"I will wait till you tell me to go," he said. "Keep the line slack, but under ready control ; and in no case are you to draw it in until an hour has gone by. If you have to draw it in then, first send the women and children away. Shall I try this breaker, Captain?"

"Yes. God bless you, Capt'n—God bless you—God forever——"

The man was gone. He had waited until the instant that the thundering wave reared its awful crest and poised itself for the break upon the shore; then he sprang forward, plunging headlong under it. Then the men about the ropes stood ready to receive back again his body with life or without it. But it did not return to them on that wave, and with a piteous sense of terror on their faces they turned to watch the line that slowly began to uncoil itself, and to glide through the master's fingers.

For a moment, while they all stood gravely watching coil after coil glide away, no man spoke; then the master looked up, his lips white, his hands trembling. "Thank God, mates, he has passed the first breaker."

He had, and was thus far safe. Diving under, instead of into the wave, it had swept harmlessly over him, and he knew he would have a second's breathing space to prepare himself for the next one. He saw it, as he emerged into the trough of the sea, sweeping down upon him with a mighty surge and roar, but before it could reach

him he was down again, beneath it and in the undertow of the first breaker, going rapidly out and out to sea.

The villagers and guests of the farm came down to the shore, and stood where the spray dashed over them, looking out among the waves with anxious, hopeless eyes, but nowhere could they distinguish the head of the swimmer; and they thought sorrowfully of him, as one over whom the deep waters had closed, leaving his place vacant among living men forever.

The line stood still, or swayed from side to side, and then ran out rapidly and tightened in the Captain's fingers; again it slackened, and yard after yard of it was flung back to shore on the crest of a wave; but as often as hope seemed certainly to die in the hearts of the watchers there, the line would gather up and tighten, giving assurance that Luke Connor was still alive.

He was alive, and having treated the third breaker as he did the former ones, it passed as harmlessly over him, and by no power of theirs would he ever touch the shore again. Between him and the ship there was yet nearly a quarter of a mile of mad, turbulent sea, rolling and heav-

ing before the wind, on which he was tossed like a cork—forward sometimes, sometimes backward. But all that was nothing to the really skilful swimmer, who had learned his art in the ocean. If his strength endured, the man was certain to win. So on each wave he rose and fell, now going ahead, now losing in one moment more than he had gained in three, yet on the whole surely lessening the distance between him and the ship, for the tide carried him forward.

By the side of the old Captain stood Margaret Daunton, very quiet, pale and tearless. She touched the wrecker's arm, and he looked up.

"I would like to hold that cord, if you will let me," she said. "My hand is even steadier than your own. I know what is to be done. I have stood here, watching you from the first. Will you let me take the cord now? Do not fear; no harm shall come to him through my hands. Will you trust me with it?"

"Yes, I will, Miss Marg'ret—I'll trust you; but remember, he's past the breakers now, and it's only a question of main strength with him. There are a thousand chances that the sea will wear him out before he can reach that ship; and

if, when every breath was precious as life to him, that cord tightened in your hands, it might drag him down never to come up again. I've told you now, Miss Marg'ret, will you take it?"

"Yes, Captain Brown, and it shall not be tightened nor loosened in my hands wrongly. I know what is to be done. There is no one here that has my right to hold that cord."

He handed it to her, and she stood over it in his place and felt, as it glided through her fingers, that Luke Connor was yet safe, and directly came to know by its decreasing coils that either he had drifted far away from it, or that he was near the ship.

She held it until the minutes seemed to have crept into hours, hours into days, and it yet glided away, or stood still, or was washed shoreward, while other hours and days seem to evolve themselves out of its coils, until all sense of time and scene was lost to her. But as certainly as hope seemed to die out in their hearts, causing them to look blankly into each other's faces, so surely would the line tighten again and fling back assurance that Luke Connor was still among living men.

But in the moment that the smile was brightest in their faces, and hope greatest in their hearts, yards and yards of the slender cord glided swift as lightning, or a fish's flight, through the girl's hands, and the Captain sprang toward her, dragged it from her grasp, and hauled it fiercely in.

"What is it, Captain Brown?" she cried piteously. "What is it that I have done wrong?"

"Nothin' wrong with you, Miss Marg'ret," he answered, gruffly. "Nothin' wrong with you, but more nor an hour is gone, Miss Marg'ret, and we should a-drawn in afore now."

A frightened whisper, which she eagerly caught at, went through the crowd, and killed every particle of hope within them. What she heard was this:

"There be a dead man and a shark at t'other end of that line."

She started up from among them, her hand tossing back from her eyes the golden splendor of her hair, her right arm stretched straight out before her, her voice ringing, resonant. "No, no, no, you mistake. See there! see there! Look at the ship, and thank God. Oh, thank God, all of you!"

They turned their eyes to where the white arm pointed, and they saw a man naked, dragged up from among the jib chains of the wrecked ship, they saw him mount to the deck, and heard the passengers and crew shout out their joyful cry of deliverance.

"Now, then, some of you women take care of that girl, can't you?" the old Captain yelled. "And men, can't you raise a single cheer for the brave fellow as saved a hundred lives? Can't you yell, you devils, you?"

No, they could not. The old Captain could not do it himself. "I can't help blubbering a bit, Tom Hemphill, for I am mortal fond of that young fellow, I am," the Captain said. For awhile they were all dumb; their sudden gladness, after the sharp pain, was cracking their heartstrings, choking them. But the moment gone, they shouted till they were hoarse, and then all of them went to work like men who had just waked up and were beginning a new day, fresh and hearty, every one of them working like six.

Then away spun the line, through nobody's hands now, away and away until the last strong

cable of all was made fast to the ship, drawn taut, and then along spun the life-car, with a couple of brave fellows in it, to the wreck.

In five minutes it was back again on shore, full of women, with their babes on their breasts, and a hundred women more, fish wives and farmers' wives, with their babies snug at home, all crowding about the poor, delivered people, trying to show them, by all the kind ways they knew, how they rejoiced over the rescue. But there was one little baby in the car with no mother's breast to lie on now, for she had gone down into the cruel foam of the sea when the ship parted; and Margaret Daunton took it reverently in her arms, saying that God had sent it to her, and calling it Theodora, and she calls it that to this day.

The sturdy wreckers worked with a will; but somehow, they were silent and awed over this deliverance, for the curious fancy of Luke Connor had got abroad among them; and rough and coarse as many of them were, they believed in his fancy; and as they dragged the life-car to and from the ship, until every man and woman and child, except the ship's officers, were landed, they were strangely impressed with the belief

that God had wrought as great a miracle that day among them, as He had done long ago, when he bade other fishermen, humble as themselves, "launch out into the deep and let down their nets."

Dressed in a suit of the commander's clothes, Luke Connor stood with the officers of the wreck around the life-car ready to embark, when the steward called to them from the after-deck. "Hold on there," he said. "A passenger has been left in his berth, too ill to leave it without help. He was left in the cabin when the ship parted, and I have not seen him since. It is the young India Ensign, Abel Dunlethe."

"Let me go for him, Captain Stevens," Connor said. "I am the strongest and freshest man among you all. I would like to give this sick man his first sight of land and safety."

"Very well, Mr. Connor, you shall have your wish. There is nothing that I could deny you to-day. I will show you his quarters."

Connor darted past the Captain, caught up a plank, bridging over the chasm in the ship's deck, crossed to the other side, and the next moment stood in the after-cabin; the only other

occupant of which was George Lawrence, the man Luke Connor flung off of Dunlethe's wharf, that commencement-night long ago.

The two men for a moment faced each other, unutterable amazement stamped on their features.

"Thank God, thank God for this," Luke Connor said under his breath, awed, and feeling as if God himself stood somewhere near.

The gaunt, emaciated face of the sick man grew whiter and thinner as he stared blankly into Connor's eyes. He tried to raise himself upon his elbow, but was too weak. "Have you come again to kill me?" he asked, his voice husky and weak. "I am less able to cope with you now than when you thought you had murdered me, but I will not ask my life at your hands. I deserved that you should kill me, yet now that I have seen you again I would like to live. I laid here waiting for death with the breaking up of the wreck, when I heard your step upon the deck, and then I thought of rescue and a chance for a longer life over there in England. I was coming home here only to clear your name. To show myself among those who

thought that you had murdered me. Have you come to save or to kill me, Connor?"

"I came to save you. Tell me how it is that I see you alive?" asked Connor, still speaking in an awed whisper.

"I was picked up from the side of the wharf where you threw me, by a boat that had already started for the landing to take me on board the steamer for California. I was carried aboard of her, my wound dressed, and I arrived safely in San Francisco. Then I went to India."

The light of the recognition of a brave man shone in Luke Connor's eyes. "Are you the soldier," he asked, "that they call Abel Dunlethe?—the man who won the Victoria Cross, for planting the standard on the ramparts at Lucknow?"

"Yes, I am," George Lawrence said, a momentary glow of pride in his tone, his fingers touching the ribbon of the cross laid under his pillow. "I first tried to get shot, and then I tried to live a better, truer life than I had ever known. I started home to tell you that the man you thought dead by your hand yet lived, and to ask you in your mercy to forgive him."

What were the words of Kingsley's legend? Luke Connor asked himself. Presently, recollecting them, he said, "Lawrence, I have read that God grants it to but few men to carry a line to a stranded ship, or to plant the standard on the enemy's ramparts. To me He has granted the first, and to you the other. I accept it as a token that He has forgiven us both; and as He hears me now, so do I forgive you."

"God bless you, Connor. Will you carry me out now? I am not a heavy weight," the Ensign said.

Luke Connor wrapped the sick man in a blanket, placed him in the life-car carefully, as mothers that day had placed their children there, and then the car was hauled away, bearing the last living soul from the wreck.

A curious motley crowd of human beings, wreckers and wrecked, fishermen and their wives, and guests from the old farmhouse by the river, stood massed upon the shore, as near to the sea as they could get, waiting to welcome their hero among them again. When he landed, the shout they sent up was meant not only for him, but as a defiance to the defeated winds

and waves. He, the man who had brightened their homes, had conquered sea and storm, delivering from the jaws of death a hundred lives. The rescued alone could not join in the shout, but they drew near to him, craving only to touch the man who, at the moment when they had looked into each other's eyes, mutely asking how soon their watery graves would open, had turned the hand of death aside and made home and happiness possible realities to all of them.

Higher up the shore Margaret Daunton stood alone, waiting for him. Seeing her there, they released him, and he went to her.

He put out both his hands to meet hers. "Margaret," he said, "I have come back to you."

"Yes," she answered. "God has given you back to me."

They walked up the beach to where the Professor stood apart, looking out at the old hulk. He went down to meet them, and I think that, in the brief moment in which they stood with hand clasped in hand, there came to each of these men thorough recognition of the other.

"It was curious," the Professor said, "that

the Captain's last act aboard should be to set his flag at the peak. Now, we would naturally suppose that his mind would be bent on graver things?"

"I don't know about that, Professor," Luke answered. "The flag will still wave and keep guard over the old hulk after her decks have gone under; and passing sailors seeing it, will know that her captain was the last man to leave his ship. But, Professor Daunton, there is a sick man yonder whom you once knew. Wherever the story of Lucknow is repeated, he will be known as Abel Dunlethe, but we, Professor, know him as George Lawrence. I would be glad if you could be kind to the man. He means to show himself among the people who once knew him and me, and then to return to England, where he has friends, and where he hopes to find health again. Yes! it is true, the dead has returned to life, and I would like Margaret to hear the story now; but I would like you to tell her, Professor."

"Captain Connor, you'll excuse me breaking in here, where I'm most likely not wanted," said

the old wrecking-master; "but Miss Marg'ret here, who's by sights the most onreasonable young woman I know, obleeged me to give her that line to hold, because you was strung onto the other end of it." As the old fellow fired this tremendous shot, his face, which had been grave as an owl's, suddenly relaxed into a broad smile, and there was a jolly gurgle of laughter in his throat.

"So you held the line, Margaret?"

"Yes, Luke."

"See, Margaret," he said, taking her hand in his, "see how the old fables repeat themselves! An Argonaut sails into your inlet one day, and as he steps ashore the sun is shining on the tawny masses of your hair, and he knows that he has found the golden fleece he sought, and that it waves alone for him, a symbol of eternal happiness."

Starlight has fallen on field and sea and river, and Margaret Daunton's shining hair is lying on her mother's breast; she has told her secret to the only woman who has a right to know it.

"Bring Luke Connor here, Margaret," her mother said. "But listen to me first; when I took you across the threshold of your deserted home (and you were only a little child then, with your head upon my breast, as it now is), I made a solemn vow to God for you, which I am trying hard to keep. I hope God hears and sees me now, when I give you to this man, and so keep the oath I made; for it should count in His eyes against a multitude of sins. That is all, Margaret: bring him here."

Starlight on field and sea and river, and the stars looking down saw some wreckers grouped about a fire on the shore, like jackals waiting for their prey, patiently watching an old hulk stranded on the bar, battered and hammered at by the sea, with the red cross of St. George flaunting bravely at her peak. They saw her, as she was slowly beaten to death on the shoals, lurch suddenly to leeward and go down forever into the unknown depths.

The stars looking in at the farm-house windows, saw in one room the old Professor sitting at the bedside of a man, on whose breast

gleamed the colors of the Victoria Cross, thinking grimly that a bit of ribbon, or a woman's golden hair, might count in men's lives as the greatest triumph—or the greatest loss. "Of all the wrecks upon the shore," he thought, "the worst are those with which the sea has nothing to do."

The stars looking down saw Margaret Dauntton and Luke Connor standing together by the gate, looking seaward, quiet and happy in their triumph of love. They saw before them no more rough seas nor stranded ships.

"God is good, and all is well," said Margaret.

THE END.

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