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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK EARTH'S ENIGMAS: A VOLUME OF STORIES ***

EARTH'S ENIGMAS

A VOLUME OF STORIES BY

CHARLES G D ROBERTS

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C. G. D. R.

FREDERICTON, N. B.

January, 1896.

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Earth's Enigmas.

Do Seek their Meat from God.

One side of the ravine was in darkness. The darkness was soft and rich, suggesting thick foliage. Along the crest of the slope tree-tops came into view—great pines and hemlocks of the ancient unviolated forest—revealed against the orange disk of a full moon just rising. The low rays slanting through the moveless tops lit strangely the upper portion of the opposite steep,—the western wall of the ravine, barren, unlike its fellow, bossed with great rocky projections, and harsh with stunted junipers. Out of the sluggish dark that lay along the ravine as in a trough, rose the brawl of a swollen, obstructed stream.

Out of a shadowy hollow behind a long white rock, on the lower edge of that part of the steep which lay in the moonlight, came softly a great panther. In common daylight his coat would have shown a warm fulvous hue, but in the elvish decolorizing rays of that half hidden moon he seemed to wear a sort of spectral gray. He lifted his smooth round head to gaze on the increasing flame, which presently he greeted with a shrill cry. That terrible cry, at once plaintive and menacing, with an undertone like the fierce protestations of a saw beneath the file, was a summons to his mate, telling her that the hour had come when they should seek their prey. From the lair behind the rock, where the cubs were being suckled by their dam, came no immediate answer. Only a pair of crows, that had their nest in a giant fir-tree across the gulf, woke up and croaked harshly their indignation. These three summers past they had built in the same spot, and had been nightly awakened to vent the same rasping complaints.

The panther walked restlessly up and down, half a score of paces each way, along the edge of the shadow, keeping his wide-open green eyes upon the rising light. His short, muscular tail twitched impatiently, but he made no sound. Soon the breadth of confused brightness had spread itself further down the steep, disclosing the foot of the white rock, and the bones and antlers of a deer which had been dragged thither and devoured.

By this time the cubs had made their meal, and their dam was ready for such enterprise as must be accomplished ere her own hunger, now grown savage, could hope to be assuaged. She glided supplely forth into the glimmer, raised her head, and screamed at the moon in a voice as terrible as her mate's. Again the crows stirred, croaking harshly; and the two beasts, noiselessly mounting the steep, stole into the shadows of the forest that clothed the high plateau.

The panthers were fierce with hunger. These two days past their hunting had been well-nigh fruitless. What scant prey they had slain had for the most part been devoured by the female; for had she not those small blind cubs at home to nourish, who soon must suffer at any lack of hers? The settlements of late had been making great inroads on the world of ancient forest, driving before them the deer and smaller game. Hence the sharp hunger of the panther parents, and hence it came that on this night they hunted together. They purposed to steal upon the settlements in their sleep, and take tribute of the enemies' flocks.

Through the dark of the thick woods, here and there pierced by the moonlight, they moved swiftly and silently. Now and again a dry twig would snap beneath the discreet and padded footfalls. Now and again, as they rustled some low tree, a pewee or a nuthatch would give a startled chirp. For an hour the noiseless journeying continued, and ever and anon the two gray, sinuous shapes would come for a moment into the view of the now well-risen moon. Suddenly there fell upon their ears, far off and faint, but clearly defined against the vast stillness of the Northern forest, a sound which made those stealthy hunters pause and lift their heads. It was the voice of a child crying,—crying long and loud, hopelessly, as if there were no one by to comfort it. The panthers turned aside from their former course and glided toward the sound. They were not yet come to the outskirts of the settlement, but they knew of a solitary cabin lying in the thick of the woods a mile and more from the nearest neighbor. Thither they bent their way, fired with fierce hope. Soon would they break their bitter fast.

Up to noon of the previous day the lonely cabin had been occupied. Then its owner, a shiftless fellow, who spent his days for the most part at the corner tavern three miles distant, had suddenly grown disgusted with a land wherein one must work to live, and had betaken himself with his seven-year-old boy to seek some more indolent clime. During the long lonely days when his father was away at the tavern the little boy had been wont to visit the house of the next neighbor, to play with a child of some five summers, who had no other playmate. The next neighbor was a prosperous pioneer, being master of a substantial frame-house in the midst of a large and well-tilled clearing. At times, though rarely, because it was forbidden, the younger child would make his way by a rough wood road to visit his poor little disreputable playmate. At

length it had appeared that the five-year-old was learning unsavory language from the elder boy, who rarely had an opportunity of hearing speech more desirable. To the bitter grief of both children, the companionship had at length been stopped by unalterable decree of the master of the frame house.

Hence it had come to pass that the little boy was unaware of his comrade's departure. Yielding at last to an eager longing for that comrade, he had stolen away late in the afternoon, traversed with endless misgivings the lonely stretch of wood road and reached the cabin only to find it empty. The door, on its leathern hinges, swung idly open. The one room had been stripped of its few poor furnishings. After looking in the rickety shed, whence darted two wild and hawklike chickens, the child had seated himself on the hacked threshold, and sobbed passionately with a grief that he did not fully comprehend. Then seeing the shadows lengthen across the tiny clearing, he had grown afraid to start for home. As the dusk gathered, he had crept trembling into the cabin, whose door would not stay shut. When it grew quite dark, he crouched in the inmost corner of the room, desperate with fear and loneliness, and lifted up his voice piteously. From time to time his lamentations would be choked by sobs, or he would grow breathless, and in the terrifying silence would listen hard to hear if any one or anything were coming. Then again would the shrill childish wailings arise, startling the unexpectant night, and piercing the forest depths, even to the ears of those great beasts which had set forth to seek their meat from God.

The lonely cabin stood some distance, perhaps a quarter of a mile, back from the highway connecting the settlements. Along this main road a man was plodding wearily. All day he had been walking, and now as he neared home his steps began to quicken with anticipation of rest. Over his shoulder projected a double-barrelled fowling-piece, from which was slung a bundle of such necessities as he had purchased in town that morning. It was the prosperous settler, the master of the frame house. His mare being with foal, he had chosen to make the tedious journey on foot.

The settler passed the mouth of the wood road leading to the cabin. He had gone perhaps a furlong beyond, when his ears were startled by the sound of a child crying in the woods. He stopped, lowered his burden to the road, and stood straining ears and eyes in the direction of the sound. It was just at this time that the two panthers also stopped, and lifted their heads to listen. Their ears were keener than those of the man, and the sound had reached them at a greater distance.

Presently the settler realized whence the cries were coming. He called to mind the cabin; but he did not know the cabin's owner had departed. He cherished a hearty contempt for the drunken squatter; and on the drunken squatter's child he looked with small favor, especially as a playmate for his own boy. Nevertheless he hesitated before resuming his journey.

"Poor little devil!" he muttered, half in wrath. "I reckon his precious father's drunk down at 'the Corners,' and him crying for loneliness!" Then he reshoouldered his burden and strode on doggedly.

But louder, shriller, more hopeless and more appealing, arose the childish voice, and the settler paused again, irresolute, and with deepening indignation. In his fancy he saw the steaming supper his wife would have awaiting him. He loathed the thought of retracing his steps, and then stumbling a quarter of a mile through the stumps and bog of the wood road. He was foot-sore as well as hungry, and he cursed the vagabond squatter with serious emphasis; but in that wailing was a terror which would not let him go on. He thought of his own little one left in such a position, and straightway his heart melted. He turned, dropped his bundle behind some bushes, grasped his gun, and made speed back for the cabin.

"Who knows," he said to himself, "but that drunken idiot has left his youngster without a bite to eat in the whole miserable shanty? Or maybe he's locked out, and the poor little beggar's half scared to death. *Sounds* as if he was scared;" and at this thought the settler quickened his pace.

As the hungry panthers drew near the cabin, and the cries of the lonely child grew clearer, they hastened their steps, and their eyes opened to a wider circle, flaming with a greener fire. It would be thoughtless superstition to say the beasts were cruel. They were simply keen with hunger, and alive with the eager passion of the chase. They were not ferocious with any anticipation of battle, for they knew the voice was the voice of a child, and something in the voice told them the child was solitary. Theirs was no hideous or unnatural rage, as it is the custom to describe it. They were but seeking with the strength, the cunning, the deadly swiftness given them to that end, the food convenient for them. On their success in accomplishing that for which nature had so exquisitely designed them depended not only their own, but the lives of their blind and helpless young, now whimpering in the cave on the slope of the moon-lit ravine. They crept through a wet alder thicket, bounded lightly over the ragged brush fence, and paused to reconnoitre on the edge of the clearing, in the full glare of the moon. At the same moment the settler emerged from the darkness of the wood-road on the opposite side of the clearing. He saw the two great beasts, heads down and snouts thrust forward, gliding toward the open cabin door.

For a few moments the child had been silent. Now his voice rose again in pitiful appeal, a very ecstasy of loneliness and terror. There was a note in the cry that shook the settler's soul. He had a vision of his own boy, at home with his mother, safe-guarded from even the thought of peril. And here was this little one left to the wild beasts! "Thank God! Thank God I came!" murmured the settler, as he dropped on one knee to take a surer aim. There was a loud report (not like the sharp crack of a rifle), and the female panther, shot through the loins, fell in a heap, snarling

furiously and striking with her fore-paws.

The male walked around her in fierce and anxious amazement. Presently, as the smoke lifted, he discerned the settler kneeling for a second shot. With a high screech of fury, the lithe brute sprang upon his enemy, taking a bullet full in his chest without seeming to know he was hit. Ere the man could slip in another cartridge the beast was upon him, bearing him to the ground and fixing keen fangs in his shoulder. Without a word, the man set his strong fingers desperately into the brute's throat, wrenched himself partly free, and was struggling to rise, when the panther's body collapsed upon him all at once, a dead weight which he easily flung aside. The bullet had done its work just in time.

Quivering from the swift and dreadful contest, bleeding profusely from his mangled shoulder, the settler stepped up to the cabin door and peered in. He heard sobs in the darkness.

"Don't be scared, sonny," he said, in a reassuring voice. "I'm going to take you home along with me. Poor little lad, *I'll* look after you if folks that ought to don't."

Out of the dark corner came a shout of delight, in a voice which made the settler's heart stand still. "*Daddy*, daddy," it said, "I *knew* you'd come. I was so frightened when it got dark!" And a little figure launched itself into the settler's arms, and clung to him trembling. The man sat down on the threshold and strained the child to his breast. He remembered how near he had been to disregarding the far-off cries, and great beads of sweat broke out upon his forehead.

Not many weeks afterwards the settler was following the fresh trail of a bear which had killed his sheep. The trail led him at last along the slope of a deep ravine, from whose bottom came the brawl of a swollen and obstructed stream. In the ravine he found a shallow cave, behind a great white rock. The cave was plainly a wild beast's lair, and he entered circumspectly. There were bones scattered about, and on some dry herbage in the deepest corner of the den, he found the dead bodies, now rapidly decaying, of two small panther cubs.

The Perdu.

To the passing stranger there was nothing mysterious about it except the eternal mystery of beauty. To the scattered folk, however, who lived their even lives within its neighborhood, it was an object of dim significance and dread.

At first sight it seemed to be but a narrow, tideless, windless bit of backwater; and the first impulse of the passing stranger was to ask how it came to be called the "Perdu." On this point he would get little information from the folk of the neighborhood, who knew not French. But if he were to translate the term for their better information, they would show themselves impressed by a sense of its occult appropriateness.

The whole neighborhood was one wherein the strange and the not-to-be-understood might feel at home. It was a place where the unusual was not felt to be impossible. Its peace was the peace of one entranced. To its expectancy a god might come, or a monster, or nothing more than the realization of eventless weariness.

Only four or five miles away, across the silent, bright meadows and beyond a softly swelling range of pastured hills, swept the great river, a busy artery of trade.

On the river were all the modern noises, and with its current flowed the stream of modern ideas. Within sight of the river a mystery, or anything uninvestigated, or aught unamenable to the spirit of the age, would have seemed an anachronism. But back here, among the tall wild-parsnip tops and the never-stirring clumps of orange lilies, life was different, and dreams seemed likely to come true.

The Perdu lay perpetually asleep, along beside a steep bank clothed with white birches and balsam poplars. Amid the trunks of the trees grew elder shrubs, and snake-berries, and the elvish trifoliolate plants of the purple and the painted trillium. The steep bank, and the grove, and the Perdu with them, ran along together for perhaps a quarter of a mile, and then faded out of existence, absorbed into the bosom of the meadows.

The Perdu was but a stone's throw broad, throughout its entire length. The steep with its trunks and leafage formed the northern bound of it; while its southern shore was the green verge of the meadows. Along this low rim its whitish opalescent waters mixed smoothly with the roots and over-hanging blades of the long grasses, with the cloistral arched frondage of the ferns, and with here and there a strayed spray of purple wild-pea. Here and there, too, a clump of Indian willow streaked the green with the vivid crimson of its stems.

Everything watched and waited. The meadow was a sea of sun mysteriously imprisoned in the green meshes of the grass-tops. At wide intervals arose some lonely alder bushes, thick banked with clematis. Far off, on the slope of a low, bordering hill, the red doors of a barn glowed ruby-like in the transfiguring sun. At times, though seldom, a blue heron winged over the level. At times a huge black-and-yellow bee hummed past, leaving a trail of faint sound that seemed to linger like a perfume. At times the landscape, that was so changeless, would seem to waver a little, to shift confusedly like things seen through running water. And all the while the meadow

scents and the many-colored butterflies rose straight up on the moveless air, and brooded or dropped back into their dwellings.

Yet in all this stillness there was no invitation to sleep. It was a stillness rather that summoned the senses to keep watch, half apprehensively, at the doorways of perception. The wide eye noted everything, and considered it,—even to the hairy red fly alit on the fern frond, or the skirring progress of the black water-beetle across the pale surface of the Perdu. The ear was very attentive—even to the fluttering down of the blighted leaf, or the thin squeak of the bee in the straitened calyx, or the faint impish conferrings of the moisture exuding suddenly from somewhere under the bank. If a common sound, like the shriek of a steamboat's whistle, now and again soared over across the hills and fields, it was changed in that refracting atmosphere, and became a defiance at the gates of waking dream.

The lives, thoughts, manners, even the open, credulous eyes of the quiet folk dwelling about the Perdu, wore in greater or less degree the complexion of the neighborhood. How this came to be is one of those nice questions for which we need hardly expect definitive settlement. Whether the people, in the course of generations, had gradually keyed themselves to the dominant note of their surroundings, or whether the neighborhood had been little by little wrought up to its pitch of supersensibility by the continuous impact of superstitions, and expectations, and apprehensions, and wonders, and visions, rained upon it from the personalities of an imaginative and secluded people,—this might be discussed with more argument than conclusiveness.

Of the dwellers about the Perdu none was more saturated with the magic of the place than Reuben Waugh, a boy of thirteen. Reuben lived in a small, yellow-ochre-colored cottage, on the hill behind the barn with the red doors. Whenever Reuben descended to the level, and turned to look back at the yellow dot of a house set in the vast expanse of pale blue sky, he associated the picture with a vague but haunting conception of some infinite forget-me-not flower. The boy had all the chores to do about the little homestead; but even then there was always time to dream. Besides, it was not a pushing neighborhood; and whenever he would he took for himself a half-holiday. At such times he was more than likely to stray over to the banks of the Perdu.

It would have been hard for Reuben to say just why he found the Perdu so attractive. He might have said it was the fishing; for sometimes, though not often, he would cast a timorous hook into its depths and tremble lest he should lure from the pallid waters some portentous and dreadful prey. He never captured, however, anything more terrifying than catfish; but these were clad in no small measure of mystery, for the white waters of the Perdu had bleached their scales to a ghastly pallor, and the opalescence of their eyes was apt to haunt their captor's reveries. He might have said, also, that it was his playmate, little Celia Hansen,—whose hook he would bait whenever she wished to fish, and whose careless hands, stained with berries, he would fill persistently with bunches of the hot-hued orange lily.

But Reuben knew there was more to say than this. In a boyish way, and all unrealizing, he loved the child with a sort of love that would one day flower out as an absorbing passion. For the present, however, important as she was to him, she was nevertheless distinctly secondary to the Perdu itself with its nameless spell. If Celia was not there, and if he did not care to fish, the boy still longed for the Perdu, and was more than content to lie and watch for he knew not what, amid the rapt herbage, and the brooding insects, and the gnome-like conspiracies of the moisture exuding far under the bank.

Celia was two years younger than Reuben, and by nature somewhat less imaginative. For a long time she loved the Perdu primarily for its associations with the boy who was her playmate, her protector, and her hero. When she was about seven years old Reuben had rescued her from an angry turkey-cock, and had displayed a confident firmness which seemed to her wonderfully fine. Hence had arisen an unformulated but enduring faith that Reuben could be depended upon in any emergency. From that day forward she had refused to be content with other playmates. Against this uncompromising preference Mrs. Hansen was wont to protest rather plaintively; for there were social grades even here, and Mrs. Hansen, whose husband's acres were broad (including the Perdu itself), knew well that "that Waugh boy" was not her Celia's equal.

The profound distinction, however, was not one which the children could appreciate; and on Mrs. Hansen lay the spell of the neighborhood, impelling her to wait for whatever might see fit to come to pass.

For these two children the years that slipped so smoothly over the Perdu were full of interest. They met often. In the spring, when the Perdu was sullen and unresponsive, and when the soggy meadows showed but a tinge of green through the brown ruin of the winter's frosts, there was yet the grove to visit. Here Reuben would make deep incisions in the bark of the white birches, and gather tiny cupfuls of the faint-flavored sap, which, to the children's palates, had all the relish of nectar. A little later on there were the blossoms of the trillium to be plucked,—blossoms whose beauty was the more alluring in that they were supposed to be poisonous.

But it was with the deepening of the summer that the spell of the Perdu deepened to its most enthralling potency. And as the little girl grew in years and came more and more under her playmate's influence, her imagination deepened as the summer deepens, her perception quickened and grew subtle. Then in a quiet fashion, a strange thing came about. Under the influence of the children's sympathetic expectancy, the Perdu began to find fuller expression. Every mysterious element in the neighborhood—whether emanating from the Perdu itself or from the spirits of the people about it—appeared to find a focus in the personalities of the two

children. All the weird, formless stories,—rather suggestions or impressions than stories,—that in the course of time had gathered about the place, were revived with added vividness and awe. New ones, too, sprang into existence all over the country-side, and were certain to be connected, soon after their origin, with the name of Reuben Waugh. To be sure, when all was said and sifted, there remained little that one could grasp or set down in black and white for question. Every experience, every manifestation, when investigated, seemed to resolve itself into something of an epidemic sense of unseen but thrilling influences.

The only effect of all this, however, was to invest Reuben with an interest and importance that consorted curiously with his youth. With a certain consciousness of superiority, born of his taste for out-of-the-way reading, and dreaming, and introspection, the boy accepted the subtle tribute easily, and was little affected by it. He had the rare fortune not to differ in essentials from his neighbors, but only to intensify and give visible expression to the characteristics latent in them all.

Thus year followed year noiselessly, till Reuben was seventeen and Celia fifteen. For all the expectancy, the sense of eventfulness even, of these years, little had really happened save the common inexplicable happenings of life and growth. The little that might be counted an exception may be told in a few words.

The customs of angling for catfish and tapping the birch trees for sap, had been suffered to fall into disuse. Rather, it seemed interesting to wander vaguely together, or in the long grass to read together from the books which Reuben would borrow from the cobwebby library of the old schoolmaster.

As the girl reached up mentally, or perhaps, rather, emotionally, toward the imaginative stature of her companion, her hold upon him strengthened. Of old, his perceptions had been keenest when alone, but now they were in every way quickened by her presence. And now it happened that the great blue heron came more frequently to visit the Perdu. While the children were sitting amid the birches, they heard the *hush! hush!* of the bird's wings fanning the pallid water. The bird, did I say? But it seemed to them a spirit in the guise of a bird. It had gradually forgotten its seclusiveness, and now dropped its long legs at a point right over the middle of the Perdu, alighted apparently on the liquid surface, and stood suddenly transformed into a moveless statue of a bird, gazing upon the playmates with bright, significant eyes. The look made Celia tremble.

The Perdu, as might have been expected when so many mysteries were credited to it, was commonly held to be bottomless. It is a very poor neighborhood indeed, that cannot show a pool with this distinction. Reuben, of course, knew the interpretation of the myth. He knew the Perdu was very deep. Except at either end, or close to the banks, no bottom could be found with such fathom-lines as he could command. To him, and hence to Celia, this idea of vast depths was thrillingly suggestive, and yet entirely believable. The palpably impossible had small appeal for them. But when first they saw the great blue bird alight where they knew the water was fathoms deep, they came near being surprised. At least, they felt the pleasurable sensation of wonder. How was the heron supported on the water? From their green nest the children gazed and gazed; and the great blue bird held them with the gem-like radiance of its unwinking eye. At length to Reuben came a vision of the top of an ancient tree-trunk just beneath the bird's feet, just beneath the water's surface. Down, slanting far down through the opaline opaqueness, he saw the huge trunk extend itself, to an immemorial root-hold in the clayey, perpendicular walls of the Perdu. He unfolded the vision to Celia, who understood. "And it's just as wonderful," said the girl, "for how did the trunk get there?"

"That's so," answered Reuben, with his eyes fixed on the bird,— "but then it's quite possible!"

And at the low sound of their voices the bird winnowed softly away.

At another time, when the children were dreaming by the Perdu, a far-off dinner-horn sounded, hoarsely but sweetly, its summons to the workers in the fields. It was the voice of noon. As the children, rising to go, glanced together across the Perdu, they clasped each other with a start of mild surprise. "Did you see that?" whispered Celia.

"What did you see?" asked the boy.

"It looked like pale green hand, that waved for a moment over the water, and then sank," said Celia.

"Yes," said Reuben, "that's just what it looked like. But I don't believe it really was a hand! You see those thin lily-leaves all about the spot? Their stems are long, wonderfully long and slender. If one of those queer, whitish catfish, like we used to catch, were to take hold of a lily-stem and pull hard, the edges of the leaf might rise up and wave just the way *that* did! You can't tell what the catfish won't do down there!"

"Perhaps that's all it was," said Celia.

"Though we can't be sure," added Reuben.

And thereafter, whensoever that green hand seemed to wave to them across the pale water, they were content to leave the vision but half explained.

It also came to pass, as unexpectedly as anything could come to pass by the banks of the Perdu, that one dusky evening, as the boy and girl came slowly over the meadows, they saw a radiant

point of light that wavered fitfully above the water. They watched it in silence. As it came to a pause, the girl said in her quiet voice,—

"It has stopped right over the place where the heron stands!"

"Yes," replied Reuben, "it is evidently a will-o'-the-wisp. The queer gas, which makes it, comes perhaps from the end of that dead tree-trunk, just under the surface."

But the fact that the point of light was thus explicable, made it no less interesting and little less mysterious to the dwellers about the Perdu. As it came to be an almost nightly feature of the place, the people supplemented its local habitation with a name, calling it "Reuben Waugh's Lantern." Celia's father, treating the Perdu and all that pertained to it with a reverent familiarity befitting his right of proprietorship, was wont to say to Reuben,—

"Who gave you leave, Reuben, to hoist your lantern on my property? If you don't take it away pretty soon, I'll be having the thing put in pound."

It may be permitted me to cite yet one more incident to illustrate more completely the kind of events which seemed of grave importance in the neighborhood of the Perdu. It was an accepted belief that, even in the severest frosts, the Perdu could not be securely frozen over. Winter after winter, to be sure, it lay concealed beneath such a covering of snow as only firm ice could be expected to support. Yet this fact was not admitted in evidence. Folks said the ice and snow were but a film, waiting to yield upon the slightest pressure. Furthermore, it was held that neither bird nor beast was ever known to tread the deceptive expanse. No squirrel track, no slim, sharp foot-mark of partridge, traversed the immaculate level. One winter, after a light snowfall in the night, as Reuben strayed into the low-ceilinged kitchen of the Hansen farm-house, Mr. Hansen remarked in his quaint, dreamy drawl,—

"What for have you been walking on the Perdu, Reuben? This morning, on the new snow, I saw foot-marks of a human running right across it. It must have been you, Reuben. There's nobody else round here 'd do it!"

"No," said Reuben, "I haven't been nigh the Perdu these three days past. And then I didn't try walking on it, any way."

"Well," continued Celia's father, "I suppose folks would call it queer! Those foot-marks just began at one side of the Perdu, and ended right up sharp at the other. There wasn't another sign of a foot, on the meadow or in the grove!"

"Yes," assented Reuben, "it looks queer in a way. But then, it's easy for the snow to drift over the other tracks; while the Perdu lies low out of the wind."

The latter days of Reuben's stay beside the banks of the Perdu were filled up by a few events like these, by the dreams which these evoked, and above all by the growing realization of his love for Celia. At length the boy and girl slipped unawares into mutual self-revelations; and for a day or two life seemed so materially and tangibly joyous that vision and dream eluded them. Then came the girl's naïve account of how her confidences had been received at home. She told of her mother's objections, soon overruled by her father's obstinate plea that "Reuben Waugh, when he got to be a man grown, would be good enough for any girl alive."

Celia had dwelt with pride on her father's championship of their cause. Her mother's opposition she had been familiar with for as long as she could remember. But it was the mother's opposition that loomed large in Reuben's eyes.

First it startled him with a vague sense of disquiet. Then it filled his soul with humiliation as its full significance grew upon him. Then he formed a sudden resolve; and neither the mother's relenting cordiality, nor the father's practical persuasions, nor Celia's tears, could turn him from his purpose. He said that he would go away, after the time-honored fashion, and seek his fortune in the world. He vowed that in three or four years, when they would be of a fit age to marry, he would come back with a full purse and claim Celia on even terms. This did not suit the unworldly old farmer, who had inherited, not in vain, the spiritualities and finer influences of his possession, the Perdu. He desired, first of all, his girl's happiness. He rebuked Reuben's pride with a sternness unusual for him. But Reuben went.

He went down the great river. Not many miles from the quiet region of the Perdu there was a little riverside landing, where Reuben took the steamer and passed at once into another atmosphere, another world. The change was a spiritual shock to him, making him gasp as if he had fallen into a tumultuous sea. There was the same chill, there was a like difficulty in getting his balance. But this was not for long. His innate self-reliance steadied him rapidly. His long-established habit of superiority helped him to avoid betraying his first sense of ignorance and unfitness. His receptiveness led him to assimilate swiftly the innumerable and novel facts of life with which he came all at once in contact; and he soon realized that the stirring, capable crowd, whose ready handling of affairs had at first overawed him, was really inferior in true insight to the peculiar people whom he had left about the Perdu. He found that presently he himself could handle the facts of life with the light dexterity which had so amazed him; but through it all he preserved (as he could see that those about him did not) his sense of the relativity of things. He perceived, always, the dependence of the facts of life upon the ideas underlying them, and thrusting them forward as manifestations or utterances. With his undissipated energy, his curious frugality in the matter of self-revelation, and his instinctive knowledge of men, he made

his way from the first, and the roaring port at the mouth of the great river yielded him of its treasures for the asking. This was in a quiet enough way, indeed, but a way that more than fulfilled his expectations; and in the height of the blossoming time of his fifth summer in the world he found himself rich enough to go back to the Perdu and claim Celia. He resolved that he would buy property near the Perdu and settle there. He had no wish to live in the world; but to the world he would return often, for the sake of the beneficence of its friction,—as a needle, he thought, is the keener for being thrust often amid the grinding particles of the emery-bag. He resigned his situation and went aboard an up-river boat,—a small boat that would stop at every petty landing, if only to put ashore an old woman or a bag of meal, if only to take in a barrel of potatoes or an Indian with baskets and bead-work.

About mid-morning of the second day, at a landing not a score of miles below the one whereat Reuben would disembark, an Indian did come aboard with baskets and bead-work. At sight of him the old atmosphere of expectant mystery came over Reuben as subtly as comes the desire of sleep. He had seen this same Indian—he recognized the unchanging face—on the banks of the Perdu one morning years before, brooding motionless over the motionless water. Reuben began unconsciously to divest himself of his lately gathered worldliness; his mouth softened, his eyes grew wider and more passive, his figure fell into looser and freer lines, his dress seemed to forget its civil trimness. When at length he had disembarked at the old wharf under the willows, had struck across through the hilly sheep-pastures, and had reached a slope overlooking the amber-bright country of the Perdu, he was once more the silently eager boy, the quaintly reasoning visionary, his spirit waiting alert at his eyes and at his ears.

Reuben had little concern for the highways. Therefore he struck straight across the meadows, through the pale green vetch-tangle, between the intense orange lilies, amid the wavering blue butterflies and the warm, indolent perfumes of the wild-parsnip. As he drew near the Perdu there appeared the giant blue heron, dropping to his perch in mid-water. In almost breathless expectancy Reuben stepped past a clump of red willows, banked thick with clematis. His heart was beating quickly, and he could hear the whisper of the blood in his veins, as he came once more in view of the still, white water.

His gaze swept the expanse once and again, then paused, arrested by the unwavering, significant eye of the blue heron. The next moment he was vaguely conscious of a hand, that seemed to wave once above the water, far over among the lilies. He smiled as he said to himself that nothing had changed. But at this moment the blue heron, as if disturbed, rose and winnowed reluctantly away; and Reuben's eyes, thus liberated, turned at once to the spot where he had felt, rather than seen, the vision. As he looked the vision came again,—a hand, and part of an arm, thrown out sharply as if striving to grasp support, then dropping back and bearing down the lily leaves. For an instant Reuben's form seemed to shrink and cower with horror,—and the next he was cleaving with mighty strokes the startled surface of the Perdu. That hand—it was not pale green, like the waving hand of the old, childish vision. It was white and the arm was white, and white the drenched lawn sleeve clinging to it. He had recognized it, he knew not how, for Celia's.

Reaching the edge of the lily patch, Reuben dived again and again, groping desperately among the long, serpent-like stems. The Perdu at this point—and even in his horror he noted it with surprise—was comparatively shallow. He easily got the bottom and searched it minutely. The edge of the dark abyss, into which he strove in vain to penetrate, was many feet distant from the spot where the vision had appeared. Suddenly, as he rested, breathless and trembling, on the grassy brink of the Perdu, he realized that this, too, was but a vision. It was but one of the old mysteries of the Perdu; and it had taken for him that poignant form, because his heart and brain were so full of Celia. With a sigh of exquisite relief he thought how amused she would be at his plight, but how tender when she learned the cause of it. He laughed softly; and just then the blue heron came back to the Perdu.

Reuben shook himself, pressed some of the water from his dripping clothes, and climbed the steep upper bank of the Perdu. As he reached the top he paused among the birch trees to look back upon the water. How like a floor of opal it lay in the sun; then his heart leaped into his throat suffocatingly, for again rose the hand and arm, and waved, and dropped back among the lilies! He grasped the nearest tree, that he might not, in spite of himself, plunge back into the pale mystery of the Perdu. He rubbed his eyes sharply, drew a few long breaths to steady his heart, turned his back doggedly on the shining terror, and set forward swiftly for the farm-house, now in full view not three hundred yards away.

For all the windless down-streaming summer sunshine, there was that in Reuben's drenched clothes which chilled him to the heart. As he reached the wide-eaved cluster of the farmstead, a horn in the distance blew musically for noon. It was answered by another and another. But no such summons came from the kitchen door to which his feet now turned. The quiet of the Seventh Day seemed to possess the wide, bright farm-yard. A flock of white ducks lay drowsing on a grassy spot. A few hens dusted themselves with silent diligence in the ash-heap in front of the shed; and they stopped to watch with bright eyes the stranger's approach. From under the apple-trees the horses whinnied to him lonesomely. It was very peaceful; but the peacefulness of it bore down upon Reuben's soul like lead. It seemed as if the end of things had come. He feared to lift the latch of the well-known door.

As he hesitated, trembling, he observed that the white blinds were down at the sitting-room windows. The window nearest him was open, and the blind stirred almost imperceptibly. Behind it, now, his intent ear caught a sound of weary sobbing. At once he seemed to see all that was in

the shadowed room. The moveless, shrouded figure, the unresponding lips, the bowed heads of the mourners, all came before him as clearly as if he were standing in their midst. He leaned against the door-post, and at this moment the door opened. Celia's father stood before him.

The old man's face was drawn with his grief. Something of bitterness came into his eyes as he looked on Reuben.

"You've heard, then!" he said harshly.

"I know!" shaped itself inaudibly on Reuben's lips.

At the sight of his anguish the old man's bitterness broke. "You've come in time for the funeral," he exclaimed piteously. "Oh, Reube, if you'd stayed it might have been different!"

"The Young Ravens that Call upon Him."

It was just before dawn, and a grayness was beginning to trouble the dark about the top of the mountain.

Even at that cold height there was no wind. The veil of cloud that hid the stars hung but a hand-breadth above the naked summit. To eastward the peak broke away sheer, beetling in a perpetual menace to the valleys and the lower hills. Just under the brow, on a splintered and creviced ledge, was the nest of the eagles.

As the thick dark shrank down the steep like a receding tide, and the grayness reached the ragged heap of branches forming the nest, the young eagles stirred uneasily under the loose droop of the mother's wings. She raised her head and peered about her, slightly lifting her wings as she did so; and the nestlings, complaining at the chill air that came in upon their unfledged bodies, thrust themselves up amid the warm feathers of her thighs. The male bird, perched on a jutting fragment beside the nest, did not move. But he was awake. His white, narrow, flat-crowned head was turned to one side, and his yellow eye, under its straight, fierce lid, watched the pale streak that was growing along the distant eastern sea-line.

The great birds were racked with hunger. Even the nestlings, to meet the petitions of whose gaping beaks they stunted themselves without mercy, felt meagre and uncomforted. Day after day the parent birds had fished almost in vain; day after day their wide and tireless hunting had brought them scant reward. The schools of alewives, mackerel, and herring seemed to shun their shores that spring. The rabbits seemed to have fled from all the coverts about their mountain.

The mother eagle, larger and of mightier wing than her mate, looked as if she had met with misadventure. Her plumage was disordered. Her eyes, fiercely and restlessly anxious, at moments grew dull as if with exhaustion. On the day before, while circling at her viewless height above a lake far inland, she had marked a huge lake-trout, basking near the surface of the water. Dropping upon it with half-closed, hissing wings, she had fixed her talons in its back. But the fish had proved too powerful for her. Again and again it had dragged her under water, and she had been almost drowned before she could unloose the terrible grip of her claws. Hardly, and late, had she beaten her way back to the mountain-top.

And now the pale streak in the east grew ruddy. Rust-red stains and purple, crawling fissures began to show on the rocky face of the peak. A piece of scarlet cloth, woven among the fagots of the nest, glowed like new blood in the increasing light. And presently a wave of rose appeared to break and wash down over the summit, as the rim of the sun came above the horizon.

The male eagle stretched his head far out over the depth, lifted his wings and screamed harshly, as if in greeting of the day. He paused a moment in that position, rolling his eye upon the nest. Then his head went lower, his wings spread wider, and he launched himself smoothly and swiftly into the abyss of air as a swimmer glides into the sea. The female watched him, a faint wraith of a bird darting through the gloom, till presently, completing his mighty arc, he rose again into the full light of the morning. Then on level, all but moveless wing, he sailed away toward the horizon.

As the sun rose higher and higher, the darkness began to melt on the tops of the lower hills and to diminish on the slopes of the upland pastures, lingering in the valleys as the snow delays there in spring. As point by point the landscape uncovered itself to his view, the eagle shaped his flight into a vast circle, or rather into a series of stupendous loops. His neck was stretched toward the earth, in the intensity of his search for something to ease the bitter hunger of his nestlings and his mate.

Not far from the sea, and still in darkness, stood a low, round hill, or swelling upland. Bleak and shelterless, whipped by every wind that the heavens could let loose, it bore no bush but an occasional juniper scrub. It was covered with mossy hillocks, and with a short grass, meagre but sweet. There in the chilly gloom, straining her ears to catch the lightest footfall of approaching peril, but hearing only the hushed thunder of the surf, stood a lonely ewe over the lamb to which she had given birth in the night.

Having lost the flock when the pangs of travail came upon her, the unwonted solitude filled her with apprehension. But as soon as the first feeble bleating of the lamb fell upon her ear,

everything was changed. Her terrors all at once increased tenfold,—but they were for her young, not for herself; and with them came a strange boldness such as her heart had never known before. As the little weakling shivered against her side, she uttered low, short bleats and murmurs of tenderness. When an owl hooted in the woods across the valley, she raised her head angrily and faced the sound, suspecting a menace to her young. When a mouse scurried past her, with a small, rustling noise amid the withered mosses of the hillock, she stamped fiercely, and would have charged had the intruder been a lion.

When the first gray of dawn descended over the pasture, the ewe feasted her eyes with the sight of the trembling little creature, as it lay on the wet grass. With gentle nose she coaxed it and caressed it, till presently it struggled to its feet, and, with its pathetically awkward legs spread wide apart to preserve its balance, it began to nurse. Turning her head as far around as she could, the ewe watched its every motion with soft murmurings of delight.

And now that wave of rose, which had long ago washed the mountain and waked the eagles spread tenderly across the open pasture. The lamb stopped nursing; and the ewe, moving forward two or three steps, tried to persuade it to follow her. She was anxious that it should as soon as possible learn to walk freely, so they might together rejoin the flock. She felt that the open pasture was full of dangers.

The lamb seemed afraid to take so many steps. It shook its ears and bleated piteously. The mother returned to its side, caressed it anew, pushed it with her nose, and again moved away a few feet, urging it to go with her. Again the feeble little creature refused, bleating loudly. At this moment there came a terrible hissing rush out of the sky, and a great form fell upon the lamb. The ewe wheeled and charged madly; but at the same instant the eagle, with two mighty buffetings of his wings, rose beyond her reach and soared away toward the mountain. The lamb hung limp from his talons; and with piteous cries the ewe ran beneath, gazing upward, and stumbling over the hillocks and juniper bushes.

In the nest of the eagles there was content. The pain of their hunger appeased, the nestlings lay dozing in the sun, the neck of one resting across the back of the other. The triumphant male sat erect upon his perch, staring out over the splendid world that displayed itself beneath him. Now and again he half lifted his wings and screamed joyously at the sun. The mother bird, perched upon a limb on the edge of the nest, busily rearranged her plumage. At times she stooped her head into the nest to utter over her sleeping eaglets a soft chuckling noise, which seemed to come from the bottom of her throat.

But hither and thither over the round bleak hill wandered the ewe, calling for her lamb, unmindful of the flock, which had been moved to other pastures.

Within Sound of the Saws.

Lumber had gone up, and the big mill on the Aspohegan was working overtime.

Through the range of square openings under the eaves the sunlight streamed in steadily upon the strident tumult, the confusion of sun and shadow, within the mill. The air was sweet with the smell of fresh sawdust and clammy with the ooze from great logs just "yanked" up the dripping slides from the river. One had to pitch his voice with peculiar care to make it audible amid the chaotic din of the saws.

In the middle of the mill worked the "gang," a series of upright saws that rose and fell swiftly, cleaving their way with a pulsating, vicious clamor through an endless and sullen procession of logs. Here and there, each with a massive table to itself, hummed the circulars, large and small; and whensoever a deal, or a pile of slabs, was brought in contact with one of the spinning discs, upon the first arching spurt of sawdust spray began a shrieking note, which would run the whole vibrant and intolerable gamut as the saw bit through the fibres from end to end. In the occasional brief moments of comparative silence, when several of the saws would chance to be disengaged at the same instant, might be heard, far down in the lower story of the mill, the grumbling roar of the two great turbine wheels, which, sucking in the tortured water from the sluices, gave life to all the wilderness of cranks and shafts above.

That end of the mill which looked down river stood open, to a height of about seven feet, across the whole of the upper story. From this opening ran a couple of long slanting ways each two feet wide and about a hundred feet in length, raised on trestles. The track of these "slides," as they are technically termed, consisted of a series of wooden rollers, along which the deals raced in endless sequence from the saws, to drop with a plunge into a spacious basin, at the lower end of which they were gathered into rafts. Whenever there was a break in the procession of deals, the rollers would be left spinning briskly with a cheerful murmur. There was also a shorter and steeper "slide," diverging to the lumber yard, where clapboards and such light stuff were piled till they could be carted to the distant station.

In former days it had been the easy custom to dump the sawdust into the stream, but the fish-wardens had lately interfered and put a stop to the practice. Now, a tall young fellow, in top boots, gray homespun trousers and blue shirt, was busy carting the sawdust to a swampy hollow near the lower end of the main slides.

Sandy MacPherson was a new hand. Only that morning had he joined the force at the Aspohegan Mill; and every now and then he would pause, remove his battered soft felt from his whitish yellow curls, mop his red forehead, and gaze with a hearty appreciation at the fair landscape spread out beyond the mill. With himself and with the world in general he felt on fairly good terms—an easy frame of mind which would have been much jarred had he been conscious of the fact that from a corner in the upper story of the mill his every movement was watched with a vindictive and ominous interest.

In that corner, close by the head of one of the main slides, stood a table whose presiding genius was a little swinging circular. The circular was tended by a powerful, sombre-visaged old mill-hand called 'Lije Vandine, whose office it was to trim square the ragged ends of the "stuff" before it went down the slide. At the very back of the table hummed the saw, like a great hornet; and whenever Vandine got two or three deals in place before him he would grasp a lever above his head, and forward through its narrow slit in the table would dart the little saw, and scream its way in a second through the tough white spruce. Every time he let the saw swing back, Vandine would drop his eyes to the blue-shirted figure below, and his harsh features would work with concentrated fury. These seven years he had been waiting for the day when he should meet Sandy MacPherson face to face.

Seven years before, 'Lije Vandine had been working in one of the mills near St. John, New Brunswick, while his only daughter, Sarah, was living out at service in the city. At this time Sandy MacPherson was employed on the city wharves, and an acquaintance which he formed with the pretty housemaid resulted in a promise of marriage between the two. Vandine and his wife were satisfied with the girl's account of her lover, and the months slipped by swiftly without their making his acquaintance. Among the fishing and lumbering classes, however, it not seldom happens that betrothal brings with it rather more intimate privileges than propriety could sanction, whence it came to pass that one evening Sarah returned to her parents unexpectedly, having been dismissed from her situation in disgrace. Vandine, though ignorant, was a clear-seeing man, who understood his own class thoroughly; and after his first outburst of wounded indignation he had forgiven and comforted his daughter no less tenderly than her mother had done. He knew perfectly that the girl was no wanton. He went at once into the city, with the intention of fetching Sandy out and covering up the disgrace by an immediate marriage. He visited the wharves, but the young man was not there. With growing apprehension he hastened to his boarding-house, only to learn that MacPherson had left the place and was departing for the States by the next train, having been married the previous evening. The man's pain and fury at this revelation almost choked him, but he mastered himself sufficiently to ask a boy of the house to accompany him to the station and point out the betrayer. If the train had not gone, he would be in time to avenge his poor girl. The boy, however, took alarm at something in Vandine's face, and led him by a roundabout way, so that just as he drew near the station the Western Express rolled out with increasing speed. On the rear platform stood a laughing young woman bedecked in many colors, and beside her a tall youth with a curly yellow head, whom the boy pointed out as Sandy MacPherson. He was beyond the reach of vengeance for the time. But his features stamped themselves ineffaceably on the avenger's memory. As the latter turned away, to bide his time in grim silence, the young woman on the platform of the car said to her husband, "I wonder who that was, Sandy, that looked like he was going to run after the cars! Didn't you see? His arms kind o' jerked out, like that; but he didn't start after all. There he goes up the hill, with one pant-leg in his boot. He looked kind of wild. I'm just as glad he didn't get aboard!"

"He's one of your old fellers as you've give the go-by to, I kind of suspicion, Sis," replied the young man with a laugh. And the train roared into a cutting.

About a year after these events Vandine's wife died, and Vandine thereupon removed, with Sarah and her baby, to the interior of the province, settling down finally at Aspohegan Mills. Here he built himself a small cottage, on a steep slope overlooking the mill; and here Sarah, by her quiet and self-sacrificing devotion to her father and her child, wiped out the memory of her error and won the warm esteem of the settlement. As for the child, he grew into a handsome, blue-eyed, sturdy boy, whom his grandfather loved with a passionate tenderness intensified by a subtle strain of pity. As year by year his daughter and the boy twined themselves ever closer about his heart, Vandine's hate against the man who had wronged them both kept ever deepening to a keener anguish.

But now at last the day had come. When first he had caught sight of MacPherson in the yard below, the impulse to rush down and throttle him was so tremendous that as he curbed it the blood forsook his face, leaving it the color of ashes, and for a few seconds he could not tend his saw. Presently, when the yelping little demon was again at work biting across the timbers, the foreman drew near, and Vandine asked him, "Who's the new hand down yonder?"

"Oh!" said the foreman, leaning a little over the bench to follow Vandine's pointing, "yon's one Sandy MacPherson, from over on the Kennebec. He's been working in Maine these seven year past, but says he kind of got a hankering after his own country, an' so he's come back. Good hand!"

"*That* so!" was all Vandine replied.

All the long forenoon, amid the wild, or menacing, or warning, or complaining crescendos and diminuendos of the unresting saws, the man's brain seethed with plans of vengeance. After all these years of waiting he would be satisfied with no common retribution. To merely kill the betrayer would be insufficient. He would wring his soul and quench his manhood with some

strange unheard-of horror, ere dealing the final stroke that should rid earth of his presence. Scheme after scheme burned through his mind, and at times his gaunt face would crease itself in a dreadful smile as he pulled the lever that drove his blade through the deals. Finding no plan altogether to his taste, however, he resolved to postpone his revenge till night, at least, that he might have the more time to think it over, and to indulge the luxury of anticipation with realization so easily within his grasp.

At noon Vandine, muttering to himself, climbed the steep path to the little cottage on the hillside. He ate his dinner in silence, with apparently no perception of what was being set before him. His daughter dared not break in upon this preoccupation. Even his idolized Stevie could win from him no notice, save a smile of grim triumph that frightened the child. Just as he was leaving the cottage to return to the mill, he saw Sarah start back from the window and sit down suddenly, grasping at her bosom, and blanching to the lips as if she had seen a ghost. Glancing downward to the black road, deep with rotted sawdust, he saw MacPherson passing.

"Who is it?" he asked the girl.

"It's Sandy," she murmured, flushing scarlet and averting her face.

Her father turned away without a word and started down the hill. Presently the girl remembered that there was something terrifying in the expression of his face as he asked the curt question. With a sudden vague fear rising in her breast, she ran to the cottage door.

"Father!" she cried, "father!" But Vandine paid no heed to her calls, and after a pause she turned back into the room to answer Stevie's demand for a cup of milk.

Along about the middle of the afternoon, while Sandy MacPherson was still carting sawdust, and Vandine tending his circular amid the bewildering din, Stevie and some other children came down to play around the mill.

The favorite amusement with these embryo mill-hands, stream-drivers, and lumbermen, was to get on the planks as they emerged from the upper story of the mill, and go careering swiftly and smoothly down the slides, till, just before coming to the final plunge, they would jump off, and fall on the heap of sawdust. This was a game that to strangers looked perilous enough; but there had never been an accident, so at Aspohegan Mills it had outgrown the disapproval of the hands. To Sandy MacPherson, however, it was new, and from time to time he eyed the sport apprehensively. And all the while Vandine glared upon him from his corner in the upper story, and the children raced shouting down the slides, and tumbled with bright laughter into the sawdust.

Among the children none enjoyed more than Stevie this racing down the slides. His mother, looking out of the window on the hillside, saw the merry little figure, bareheaded, the long yellow curls floating out behind him, as he half knelt, half sat on the sliding plank ready to jump off at the proper moment. She had no thought of danger as she resumed her housework. Neither had Stevie. At length it happened, however, that just as he was nearing the end of the descent, an eagle came sailing low overhead, caught the little fellow's eye, and diverted his attention for a moment. It was the fatal moment. Just as he looked down again, gathering himself to jump, his heart sprang into his throat, and the plank with a sickening lurch plunged into the churning basin. The child's shrill, frightened shriek was not half uttered ere the waters choked it.

Vandine had just let the buzzing little circular slip back into its recess, when he saw MacPherson spring from his cart and dash madly down to the shore.

At the same instant came that shrill cry, so abruptly silenced. Vandine's heart stood still with awful terror,—he had recognized the child's voice. In a second he had swung himself down over the scaffolding, alighting on a sawdust heap.

"Hold back the deals!" he yelled in a voice that pierced the din. It was not five seconds ere every one in the mill seemed to know what had happened. Two men sprang on the slides and checked the stream of deals. Then the great turbines ceased to grumble, and all the clamor of the saws was hushed. The unexpected silence was like a blow, and sickened the nerves.

And meanwhile—Stevie? The plank that bore his weight clinging desperately to it, plunged deeper than its fellows, and came up somewhat further from the slide, but not now with Stevie upon it. The child had lost his hold, and when he rose it was only to strike against the bottoms of three or four deals that lay clustered together.

This, though apparently fatal, was in reality the child's salvation, for during the half or three-quarters of a minute that intervened before the slides could be stopped, the great planks kept dropping and plunging and crashing about him; and had it not been for those very timbers that cut him off from the air he was choking to breathe, he would have been crushed and battered out of all human semblance in a second. As it was, ere he had time to suffocate, MacPherson was on the spot.

In an instant the young man's heavy boots were kicked off, and without pausing to count the odds, which were hideously against him, he sprang into the chaos of whirling timbers. All about him pounded the falling deals, then ceased, just as he made a clean dive beneath that little cluster that covered Stevie. As Vandine reached the shore, and was casting desperate glances over the basin in search of some clue to guide his plunge, MacPherson reappeared at the other side of the deals, and Stevie's yellow curls were floating over his shoulder. The young man clung

rather faintly to the supporting planks, as if he had overstrained himself; and two or three hands, who had already shoved off a "bateau," pushed out and picked him up with his burden.

Torn by a convulsion of fiercely antagonized passions, Vandine sat down on the edge of the bank and waited stupidly. About the same moment Sarah looked out of the cottage door in wonder to see why the mill had stopped so suddenly.

In all his dreams, Vandine had never dreamed of such chance as that his enemy should deserve his gratitude. In his nature there had grown up one thing stronger than his thirst for vengeance, and that one thing was his love for Stevie. In spite of himself, and indeed to his furious self-scorn, he found his heart warming strangely to the man who, at deadliest risk, had saved the life of his darling. At the same time he was conscious of a fresh sense of injury. A bitter resentment throbbed up in his bewildered bosom, to think that MacPherson should thus have robbed him of the sweets of that revenge he had so long anticipated. The first clear realization that came to him was that, though he must kill the man who had wronged his girl, he would nevertheless be tortured with remorse for ever after. A moment more, and—as he saw Sandy step out of the "bateau" with the boy, now sobbing feebly, in his arms—he knew that his vengeance had been made for ever impossible. He longed fiercely to grasp the fellow's hand, and make some poor attempt to thank him. But he mastered the impulse—Sarah must not be forgotten. He strode down the bank. One of the hands had taken Stevie, and MacPherson was leaning against a pile of boards, panting for breath. Vandine stepped up to him, his fingers twitching, and struck him a furious blow across the mouth with his open hand. Then he turned aside, snatched Stevie to his bosom, and started up the bank. Before going two paces, however, he paused, as if oppressed by the utter stillness that followed his astounding act. Bending a strange look on the young man, he said, in a voice as harsh as the saw's:—

"I was going to kill you to-night, Sandy MacPherson. But now after this day's work of yourn, I guess yer safe from me from this out." He shut his mouth with a snap, and strode up through the piles of sawdust toward the cottage on the hill.

As for MacPherson, he was dumbfounded. Though no boaster, he knew he had done a magnificently heroic thing, and to get his mouth slapped for it was an exigency which he did not know what to do with. He had staggered against the boards from the force of the stroke, but it had not occurred to him to resent it, though ordinarily he was hot-blooded and quick in a quarrel. He stared about him sheepishly, bewildered and abashed, and unspeakably aggrieved. In the faces of the mill-hands who were gathered about him, he found no solution of the mystery. They looked as astonished as himself, and almost equally hot and ashamed. Presently he ejaculated, "Well, I swan!" Then one of the men who had taken out the "bateau" and picked him up, found voice.

"I'll be gosh-darned ef that ain't the damndest," said he, slowly. "Why, so, I'd thought as how he was a-goin' right down on his prayer-handles to ye. That there kid is the apple of his eye."

"An' he was sot on *killin'* me to-night, was he?" murmured MacPherson in deepest wonderment. "What might his name be, anyhow?"

"Lije Vandine," spoke up another of the hands. "An' that's his grandchild, Stevie. I reckon he must have a powerful grudge agin you, Sandy, or he'd never 'a' acted that way."

MacPherson's face had grown suddenly serious and dignified. "Is the boy's father and mother livin'?" he inquired.

"Sarah Vandine's living with the old man," answered the foreman, "and as fine a girl as there'll be in Aspohegan. Don't know anything about the lad's father, nor don't want to. The man that'd treat a girl like Sarah Vandine that way—hangin 's too good for 'im."

MacPherson's face flushed crimson, and he dropped his eyes.

"Boys," said he, huskily, "ef 'Lije Vandine had 'a' served me as he intended, I guess as how I'd have only got my deserts. I reckon as how *I'm* the little lad's father!"

The hands stared at each other. Nothing could make them forget what MacPherson had just done. They were all daring and ready in emergency, but each man felt that he would have thought twice before jumping into the basin when the deals were running on the slides. The foreman could have bitten his tongue out for what he had just said. He tried to mend matters.

"I wouldn't have thought you was that sort of a man, to judge from what I've just seen o' you," he explained. "Anyhow, I reckon you've more'n made up this day for the wrong you done when you was younger. But Sarah Vandine's as good a girl as they make, an' I don't hardly see how you could 'a' served her that trick."

A certain asperity grew in the foreman's voice as he thought of it; for, as his wife used to say, he "set a great store by 'Lije's girl, not havin' no daughter of his own."

"It was lies as done it, boys," said MacPherson. "As for *whose* lies, why *that* ain't neither here nor there, now—an' she as did the mischief's dead and buried—and before she died she told me all about it. That was last winter—of the grippe—and I tell you I've felt bad about Sarah ever since. An' to think the little lad's mine! *Boys*, but ain't he a beauty?" And Sandy's face began to beam with satisfaction at the thought.

By this time all the hands looked gratified at the turn affairs were, to them, so plainly taking. Every one returned to work, the foreman remarking aside to a chum, "I reckon Sarah's all right." And in a minute or two the saws were once more shrieking their way through the logs and slabs and deals.

On the following morning, as 'Lije Vandine tended his vicious little circular, he found its teeth needed resetting. They had been tried by a lot of knotty timber. He unshipped the saw and took it to the foreman. While he was waiting for the latter to get him another saw, Sandy MacPherson came up. With a strong effort Vandine restrained himself from holding out his hand in grateful greeting. There was a lull in the uproar, the men forgetting to feed their saws as they watched the interview.

Sandy's voice was heard all over the mill:—

"'Lije Vandine, I saved the little lad's life, an' *that*, counts for *something*; but I know right well I ain't got no right to expect you or Sarah ever to say a kind word to me. But I swear, so help me God, I hadn't no sort of idee what I was doin'. My wife died las' winter, over on the Kennebec, an' afore she died she told me everything—as I'd take it kindly ef you'd let *me* tell *you*, more particular, another time. An' as I was wantin' to say now, I'd take it kind ef you'd let me go up along to your place this evenin', and maybe Sarah'd let me jest talk to the boy a little. Ef so be ez I could persuade her by-and-by to forget an' forgive—and you'd trust me after what I'd done—I'd lay out to marry her the minute she'd say the word, fur there ain't no other woman I've ever set such store by as I do now by her. An' then ther's Stevie—"

"Stevie and the lass hez both got a good home," interrupted Vandine, roughly.

"An' I wouldn't want a better for 'em," exclaimed MacPherson, eagerly, catching the train of the old man's thought. "What I'd want would be, ef maybe you'd let me come in along with them and you."

By this time Vandine had got his new saw, and he turned away without replying. Sandy followed him a few paces, and then turned back dejectedly to attend his own circular—he having been moved into the mill that morning. All the hands looked at him in sympathy, and many were the ingenious backwoods oaths which were muttered after Vandine for his ugliness. The old man paid little heed, however, to the tide of unpopularity that was rising about him. Probably, absorbed in his own thoughts, he was utterly unaware of it. All the morning long he swung and fed his circular, and when the horn blew for twelve his mind was made up. In the sudden stillness he strode over to the place where MacPherson worked, and said in a voice of affected carelessness—

"You better come along an' have a bite o' dinner with us, Sandy. You'll be kinder expected, I reckon, for Stevie's powerful anxious to see you."

Sandy grabbed his coat and went along.

The Butt of the Camp.

He was a mean-looking specimen, this Simon Gillsey, and the Gornish Camp was not proud of him. His neck was long, his mouth was long and protruding, like a bird's beak, his hair was thin and colorless, his shoulders sloped in such a manner that his arms, which were long and lean, seemed to start from somewhere near his waist.

His body started forward from the hips, and he used his hands in a deprecating fashion that seemed to beseech so much recognition as might be conveyed in a passing kick.

He was muscular to a degree that would never be guessed from his make-up, but the camp was possessed with a sense of shame at tolerating his presence, and protected its self-respect by reminding him continually that he was considered beneath contempt.

Simon seemed quite unconscious of the difference between the truth and a lie. It was not that he lied from malice—the hands said he hadn't "spunk" enough to know what malice was—but sheer mental obliquity led him to lie by preference, unless he saw reason to believe that the truth would conciliate his comrades.

He used to steal tobacco and other trifles whenever he found a good opportunity, and when he was caught his repentance was that of fear rather than of shame.

At the same time, the poor wretch was thoroughly courageous in the face of some physical and external dangers. The puniest man in camp could cow him with a look, yet none was prompter than he to face the grave perils of breaking a log-jam, and there was no cooler hand than his in the risky labors of stream-driving. Altogether he was a disagreeable problem to the lumbermen,—who resented any element of pluck in one so unmanly and meagre-spirited as he was.

In spite of their contempt, however, they could ill have done without this cringing axeman. He did small menial services for his fellows, was ordered about at all times uncomplainingly, and bore the blame for everything that went wrong in the Gornish Camp.

When one of the hands was in a particularly bad humor, he could always find some relief for his

feelings by kicking Gillsey in the shins, at which Gillsey would but smile an uneasy protest, showing the conspicuous absence of his upper front teeth.

Then again the Gornish Camp was waggishly inclined. The hands were much addicted to practical jokes. It was not always wholesome to play these on each other, but Gillsey afforded a safe object for the ingenuity of the backwoods wit.

For instance, whenever the men thought it was time to "chop a fellow down," in default of a greenhorn from the older settlements they would select Gillsey for the victim, and order that reluctant scarecrow up to the tree-top. This was much like the hunting of a tame fox, as far as exhilaration and manliness were concerned; but sport is sport, and the men would have their fun, with the heedless brutality of primitive natures.

This diversion, though rough and dangerous, is never practised on any but green hands or unwary visitors; but all signs fail in dry weather, and for Gillsey no traditions held.

When he had climbed as high as his tormentors thought advisable—which usually was just as high as the top of the tree—a couple of vigorous choppers would immediately attack the tree with their axes.

As the tall trunk began to topple with a sickening hesitation, Gillsey's eyes would stick out and his thin hair seem to stand on end, for to this torture he never grew accustomed. Then, as the men yelled with delight, the mass of dark branches would sweep down with a soft, windy crash into the snow, and Gillsey, pale and nervous, but adorned with that unfailing toothless smile, would pick himself out of the *débris* and slink off to camp.

The men usually consoled him after such an experience with a couple of plugs of "black-jack" tobacco,—which seemed to him ample compensation.

In camp at night, when the hands had all gone to bed, two or three wakeful ones would sometimes get up to have a smoke in the fire-light. Such a proceeding almost always resulted in skylarking, of which Simon would be the miserable object. Perhaps the arch-conspirator would go to the cook's flour-barrel, fill his mouth with dry flour, and then, climbing to the slumbering Simon's bunk, would blow the dusty stuff in a soft, thin stream all over the sleeper's face and hair and scraggy beard. This process was called "blowing him," and was counted a huge diversion.

On soft nights, when the camp was hot and damp, it made, of course, a sufficiently nasty mess in the victim's hair, but Gillsey, by contrast, deemed rather to enjoy it. It never woke him up.

If the joker's mood happened to be more boisterous, the approved procedure was to softly uncover Gillsey's feet, and tie a long bit of salmon twine to each big toe. After waking all the other hands, the conspirators would retire to their bunks.

Presently some one would give a smart tug on one of the strings, and pass it over hastily to his neighbor. Gillsey would wake up with a nervous yell, and grabbing his toe, seek to extricate it from the loop. Then would come another and sharper pull at the other toe, diverting Gillsey's attention to that member.

The game would be kept up till the bunks were screaming with laughter, and poor Gillsey bathed in perspiration and anxiety. Then the boss would interfere, and Gillsey would be set free.

These are only instances of what the butt was made to endure, though he was probably able to thrash almost any one of his tormentors, and had he mustered spirit to attempt this, all the camp would have seen that he got fair play.

At last, however, it began to be suspected that Gillsey was stealing from the pork barrels and other stores. This was serious, and the men would not play any more jokes upon the culprit. Pending proof, he was left severely to himself, and enjoyed comparative peace for nearly a week.

This peace, strange to say, did not seem to please him. The strange creature hated to be ignored, and even courted further indignities. No one would notice him, however, till one night when he came in late, and undertook to sleep on the "deacon-seat."

A word of explanation is needed here. The "deacon-seat"—why so called I cannot say—is a raised platform running alongside of the stove, between the chimney and the tier of bunks. It is, of course, a splendid place to sleep on a bitter night, but no one is allowed so to occupy it, because in that position he shuts off the warmth from the rest.

The hands were all apparently asleep when Gillsey, after a long solitary smoke, reached for his blanket, and rolled himself up on the coveted "deacon-seat," with his back to the glowing fire. After a deprecating grin directed toward the silent bunks, he sank to sleep.

Soon in the bunks arose a whispered consultation, as a result of which stalwart woodsmen climbed down, braced their backs against the lower tier, doubled up their knees, and laid their sock feet softly against the sleeper's form. At a given signal the legs all straightened out with tremendous force, and poor Gillsey shot right across the "deacon-seat" and brought up with a thud upon the stove.

With a yell, he bounced away from his scorching quarters and plunged into his bunk, not burnt, but very badly scared. After that he eschewed the "deacon-seat."

At last the unfortunate wretch was caught purloining the pork. It became known in the camp,

somehow, that he was a married man, and father of a family as miserable and shiftless as himself. Here was an explanation of his raids upon the provisions, for nobody in the camp would for a moment imagine that Gillsey could, unaided, support a family.

One Sunday night he was tracked to a hollow about a mile from camp, where he was met by a gaunt, wild, eccentric-looking girl, who was clearly his daughter. The two proceeded to an old stump concealed under some logs in a thicket, and out of the hollow, of the stump Gillsey fished a lump of salt pork, together with a big bundle of "hard-tack," and a parcel or two of some other kind of provender.

The girl threw herself upon the food like a famishing animal, devoured huge mouthfuls, and then, gathering all promiscuously into her scanty skirt, darted off alone through the gloom. As soon as she had disappeared with her stores, Gillsey was captured and dragged back to camp.

At first he was too helpless with terror to open his mouth; but when formally arraigned before the boss he found his tongue. He implored forgiveness in the most piteous tones, while at the same time he flatly denied every charge. He even declared he was not married, that he had no family, and that he knew no one at all in the Gornish district or that part of the province.

But the boss knew all about him, even to his parentage. He lived about ten miles from the camp, across the mountains, on the Gornish River itself. As for his guilt, there was no room for a shadow of uncertainty.

A misdemeanor of this sort is always severely handled in the lumber camps. But every man, from the boss down, was filled with profound compassion for Gillsey's family. A family so afflicted as to own Gillsey for husband and sire appeared to them deserving of the tenderest pity.

It was the pathetic savagery and haggardness of the young girl that had moved the woodmen to let her off with her booty; and now, the boss declared, if Gillsey were dismissed without his wages—as was customary, in addition to other punishment—the family would surely starve, cut off from the camp pork-barrel. It was decided to give the culprit his wages up to date. Then came the rough-and-ready sentence of the camp-followers. The prisoner was to be "dragged"—the most humiliating punishment on the woodmen's code.

Gillsey's tears of fright were of no avail. He was wrapped in a sort of winding-sheet of canvas, smeared from head to foot with grease to make him slip smoothly, and hitched by the fettered wrists to a pair of horses. The strange team was then driven, at a moderate pace, for about half a mile along the main wood-road, the whole camp following in procession, and jeering at the unhappy thief.

When the man was unhitched, unbound, and set upon his feet,—not physically the worse for his punishment save that, presumably, his wrists ached somewhat,—he was given a bundle containing his scanty belongings, and told to "streak" for home. As he seemed reluctant to obey, he was kicked into something like alacrity.

When he had got well out of sight the woodmen returned to their camp. As for the wretched Gillsey, after the lamentations wherewith he enlivened his tramp had sunk to silence, he began to think his bundle remarkably heavy. He sat down on a stump to examine it. To his blank amazement he found a large lump of pork and a small bag of flour wrapped up in his dilapidated overalls.

The snow was unusually deep in the woods that winter, and toward spring there came a sudden, prolonged, and heavy thaw. The ice broke rapidly and every loosened brook became a torrent. Past the door of the camp, which was set in a valley, the Gornish River went boiling and roaring like a mill-race, all-forgetful of its wonted serene placidity.

From the camp to Gillsey's wretched cabin was only about ten miles across the mountain, but by the stream, which made a great circuit to get around a spur of the hills, it was hardly less than three times as far.

To Gillsey, in his log hut on a lofty knoll by the stream, the winter had gone by rather happily. The degradation of his punishment hardly touched him or his barbarous brood; and his wages had brought him food enough to keep the wolf from the door. He had nothing to do but to sit in his cabin and watch the approach of spring, while his lean boys snared an occasional rabbit.

At last, on a soft moonlight night, when the woods were full of the sounds of melting and settling snow, a far-off, ominous roaring smote his ear and turned his gaze down to the valley. Down the stream, on the still night, came the deadly, rushing sound, momentarily increasing in volume. The tall girl, she who had carried off the pork, heard the noise, and came to her father's side.

"Hackett's dam's bust, shore!" she exclaimed in a moment.

Gillsey turned upon her one of his deprecating, toothless smiles. "'T aint a-goin' ter tech us here," said he; "but I'm powerful glad ter be outer the Gornish Camp ter night. Them chaps be a-goin' ter ketch it, blame the'r skins!"

The girl—she was a mere overgrown child of fourteen or fifteen—looked thoughtful a moment, and then darted toward the woods.

"Whar yer goin', sis?" called Gillsey, in a startled voice.

"Warn 'em!" said the girl, laconically, not stopping her pace.

"Stop! stop! Come back!" shouted her father, starting in pursuit. But the girl never paused.

"Blame the'r skins! Blame the'r skins!" murmured Gillsey to himself. Then, seeing that he was not gaining on the child, he seemed to gulp something down in his throat, and finally he shouted:—

"*I'll go, sis, honest I'll go. Yer kaint do it yerself. Come back home!*"

The girl stopped, turned round, and walked back, saying to her father, "They've kep' us the winter. Yer *must* git thar in time, dad!"

Gillsey went by the child, at a long trot, without answering, and disappeared in the woods; and at the same moment the flood went through the valley, filling it half-way up to the spot where the cabin stood.

That lanky youngster's word was law to the father, and she had set his thoughts in a new channel. He felt the camp must be saved, if he died for it. The girl said so. He only remembered now how easily the men had let him off, when they might have half-killed him; and their jests and jeers and tormentings he forgot. His loose-hung frame gave him a long stride, and his endurance was marvellous. Through the gray and silver glades, over stumps and windfalls, through thickets and black valleys and treacherous swamps, he went leaping at almost full speed.

Before long the tremendous effort began to tell. At first he would not yield; but presently he realized that he was in danger of giving out, so he slackened speed a little, in order to save his powers. But as he came out upon the valley and neared the camp, he caught once more a whisper of the flood, and sprang forward desperately. Could he get there in time? The child had said he *must*. He *would*.

His mouth was dry as a board, and he gasped painfully for breath, as he stumbled against the camp-door; and the roar of the flood was in his ears. Unable to speak at first, he battered furiously on the door with an axe, and then smashed in the window.

As the men came jumping wrathfully from their bunks, he found voice to yell:—

"The water! Dam broke! Run! Run!"

But the noise of the onrushing flood was now in their startled ears, and they needed no words to tell them their awful peril. Not staying an instant, every man ran for the hillside, barefooted in the snow. Ere they reached a safe height, Gillsey stumbled and fell, utterly exhausted, and for a moment no one noticed his absence.

Then the boss of the camp looked back and saw him lying motionless in his tracks. Already the camp had gone down under the torrent, and the flood was about to lick up the prostrate figure; but the boss turned back with tremendous bounds, swung Gillsey over his shoulder like a sack of oats, and staggered up the slope, as the water swelled, with a sobbing moan, from his ankles to his knees.

Seeing the situation of the boss, several more of the hands, who had climbed to a level of safety, rushed to the rescue. They seized him and his burden, while others formed a chain, laying hold of hands. With a shout the whole gang surged up the hill,—and the river saw its prey dragged out of its very teeth.

After a rest of a few moments, Gillsey quite recovered, and began most abject apologies for not getting to camp sooner, so as to give the boys time to save something.

The demonstrative hand-shakings and praises and gratitude of the men whom he had snatched from a frightful death seemed to confuse him. He took it at first for chaff, and said, humbly, that "Bein' as sis wanted him to git thar in time, he'd did his best." But at length it dawned upon him that his comrades regarded him as a man, as a hero, who had done a really splendid and noble thing. He began to feel their gratitude and their respect.

Then it seemed as if a transformation was worked upon the poor cringing fellow, and he began to believe in himself. A new, firmer, manlier light woke in his eye, and he held himself erect. He presently began to move about among the woodsmen as their equal, and their enduring gratitude gave his new self-confidence time to ripen. From that day Simon Gillsey stood on a higher plane. In that one act of heroism he had found his slumbering manhood.

In the Accident Ward.

The grass was gray, of a strange and dreadful pallor, but long and soft. Unbroken, and bending all one way, as if to look at something, it covered the wide, low, rounded hill that rose before me. Over the hill the sky hung close, gray and thick, with the color of a parched interminable twilight. Dew or a drop of rain could not be thought of as coming from such a sky.

Along the base of the low hill ran a red road of baked clay, blood red, and beaten with nameless and innumerable feet. I stood in the middle of this road and prepared to ascend the hill obliquely by a narrow footpath, red as blood, which divided the soft gray bending of the grasses. Behind

me the road made a sharp turn, descending out of thick clouds into a little blood-red hollow, where it was crossed by an open gate. In this gate, through which I had somehow come, stood two gray leopards and a small ape. The beasts stood on tip-toe and eyed me with a dreadful curiosity; and from somewhere in the little hollow I heard a word whispered which I could not understand. But the beasts heard it, and drew away through the open gate, and disappeared.

Between the footpath (which all the time gleamed redly through the over-gathering grasses) and the rounded brink of the gulf there seemed to be a fence of some sort, so fine that I could not quite distinguish it, but which I knew to be there.

I turned my eyes to the low summit of the hill. There I saw a figure, all gray, cleaving the grasses in flight as swift as an arrow. Behind, in pursuit, came another figure, of the color of the grasses, tall and terrible beyond thought. This being, as it seemed to me, was the Second Death, and my knees trembled with horror and a sort of loathing. Then I saw that he who fled made directly for me; and as they sped I could hear a strange hissing and rustling of their garments cleaving the grasses. When the fleeing ghost reached me, and fell at my feet, and clasped my knees in awful fear, I felt myself grow strong, and all dread left my soul. I reached forth my right hand and grasped the pursuing horror by the throat.

I heard the being laugh, and the iron grip of my own strong and implacable fingers seemed to close with a keen agony upon my own throat, and a curtain seemed to fall over my eyes. Then I gasped for breath, and a warm pungent smell clung in my nostrils, and a white light swam into my eyes, and I heard a voice murmuring far off, but in an accent strangely familiar and commonplace, "He's coming round all right now."

I opened my eyes with a dim wonder, and found myself surrounded by the interested faces of the doctors and the clean white walls of the hospital ward. I heard a sound of some one breathing hoarsely near by, and a white-capped nurse with kind eyes stepped up to my pillow, and I perceived that the heavy breather was myself. I was lying with my head and neck swathed in bandages, and a sharp pain at my throat. Then flashed across my memory the crash and sickening upheaval of the collision. I wondered feebly how it had fared with my fellow-passengers, and again I saw that instant's vision of wild and startled faces as the crowded car rose and pitched downward, I knew not whither. With a sense of inexpressible weariness, my brain at once allowed the terrible scene to slip from its grasp, and I heard a doctor, who was standing at the bedside watch in hand, say, quietly, "He'll sleep now for a couple of hours."

The Romance of an Ox-Team.

The oxen, lean and rough-haired, one of them caroty red, the other brindle and white, were slouching inertly along the narrow backwoods road. From habit they sagged heavily on the yoke, and groaned huge windy sighs, although the vehicle they were hauling held no load. This structure, the mere skeleton of a cart, consisted of two pairs of clumsy, broad-tired wheels, united by a long tongue of ash, whose tip was tied with rope to the middle of the forward axle. The road looked innocent of even the least of the country-road-master's well-meaning attempts at repair,—a circumstance, indeed, which should perhaps be set to its credit. It was made up of four deep, parallel ruts, the two outermost eroded by years of journeying cart-wheels, the inner ones worn by the companioning hoofs of many a yoke of oxen. Down the centre ran a high and grassy ridge, intolerable to the country parson and the country doctor, compelled to traverse this highway in their one-horse wagons. From ruts and ridges alike protruded the imperishable granite boulder, which wheels and feet might polish but never efface. On either side of the roadway was traced an erratic furrow, professing to do duty for a drain, and at intervals emptying a playful current across the track to wander down the ruts.

Along beside the slouching team slouched a tall, lank, stoop-shouldered youth, the white down just beginning to stiffen into bristles on his long upper lip. His pale eyes and pale hair looked yet paler by contrast with his thin, red, wind-roughened face. In his hand he carried a long-handled ox-whip, with a short goad in the butt of it.

"Gee, Buck!" he drawled, prodding the near ox lightly in the ribs. And the team lurched to the right to avoid a markedly obtrusive boulder. "Haw, Bright!" he ejaculated a minute later, flicking with his whip the off shoulder of the farther ox. And with sprawling legs and swaying of hind-quarters the team swerved obediently to the left, shunning a mire-hole that would have taken in the wheel to the hub. Presently, coming to a swampy spot that stretched all the way across the road, the youth seated himself sidewise on the narrow tongue connecting the fore and hind axles, and drove his team dry-shod.

It was a slow and creaking progress; but there seemed to be no hurry, and the youth dreamed gloomily on his jolting perch. His eyes took no note of the dark-mossed, scrubby hillocks, the rough clearings blackened with fire, the confused and ragged woods, as they crept past in sombre procession. But suddenly, as the cart rounded a turn in the road, there came into view the figure of a girl travelling in the same direction. The young man slipped from his perch and prodded up the oxen to a brisk walk.

As the noise of the team approached her, the girl looked around. She was good to see, with her

straight, vigorous young figure in its blue-gray homespun gown. Her hair, in color not far from that of the red ox, was rich and abundant, and lay in a coil so gracious that not even the tawdry millinery of her cheap "store" hat could make her head look quite commonplace. Her face was freckled, but wholesome and comely. A shade of displeasure passed over it as she saw who was behind her, and she hastened her steps perceptibly. But presently she remembered that she had a good five miles to go ere she would reach her destination; and she realized that she could not hope to escape by flight. With a pout of vexation she resigned herself to the inevitable, and dropped back into her former pace. Immediately the ox-team overtook her.

As the oxen slowed up she stepped to the right to let them pass, and then walked on, thus placing the cart between herself and her undesired companion. The youth looked disconcerted by these tactics, and for a few moments could find nothing to say. Then, dropping his long white lashes sheepishly, he murmured, "Good-day, Liz."

"Well, Jim-Ed!" replied the girl, coolly.

"Won't ye set on an' let me give ye a lift home?" he asked, with entreaty in his voice.

"No," she said, with finality: "I'd ruther walk."

Not knowing how to answer this rebuff, he tried to cover his embarrassment by exclaiming authoritatively, "Haw, Bright!" whereupon the team slewed to the left and crowded him into the ditch.

Soon he began again.

"Ye *might* set on, Liz," he pleaded.

"Yes, I *might*," said she, with what she considered rather withering smartness; "but I ain't a-goin' to."

"Ye'll be tired afore ye git home," he persisted, encouraged by finding that she would talk back at him.

"James-Ed A'ki'son," she declared, with emphasis, "if ye think I'm a-goin' to be beholden to *you* fer a lift home, ye're mistaken, that's all."

After this there was silence for some time, broken only by the rattling and bumping of the cart, and once by the whir of a woodcock that volleyed across the road. Young Atkinson chewed the cud of gloomy bewilderment. At length he roused himself to another effort.

"Liz," said he, plaintively, "y' ain't been like ye used to, sence ye come back from the States."

"Ain't I?" she remarked, indifferently.

"No, Liz, ye ain't," he repeated, with a sort of pathetic emphasis, as if eager to persuade himself that she had condescended to rebut his accusation. "Y' ain't been like ye used to at all. Appears like as if ye thought us folks in the Settlement wasn't good enough fer ye now."

At this the girl tossed her head crossly.

"It appears like as if ye wanted to be back in the States ag'in," he continued, in a voice of anxious interrogation.

"My lands," exclaimed the girl, "but ye're green!"

To the young man this seemed such an irrelevant remark that he was silent for some time, striving to fathom its significance. As his head sank lower and lower, and he seemed to lose himself completely in joyless reverie, the girl shot occasional glances at him out of the corners of her eyes. She had spent the preceding winter in a factory in a crude but stirring little New England town, and had come back to Nova Scotia ill content with the monotony of life in the backwoods seclusion of Wyer's Settlement. Before she went away she had been, to use the vernacular of the Settlement, "keepin' company with Jim-Ed A'ki'son;" and now, to her, the young man seemed to unite and concentrate in his person all that she had been wont to persuade herself she had outgrown. To be sure, she not seldom caught herself dropping back comfortably into the old conditions. But these symptoms stirred in her heart an uneasy resentment, akin to that which she felt whenever—as would happen at times—she could not help recognizing that Jim-Ed and his affairs were not without a passing interest in her eyes.

Now she began to grow particularly angry at him because, as she thought, "he hadn't nothing to say fer himself." Sadly to his disadvantage, she compared his simplicity and honest diffidence with the bold self-assertion and easy familiarity of the young fellows with whom she had come in contact during the winter. Their impertinences had offended her grievously at the time, but, woman-like, she permitted herself to forget that now, in order to accentuate the deficiencies of the man whom she was unwilling to think well of.

"My lands!" she reiterated to herself, with accumulated scorn, "but *ain't* he green? He—why, he wouldn't know a 'lectric car from a waterin'-cart. An' *soft*, too, takin' all my sass 'thout givin' me no lip back, no more 'n if I was his mother!"

But the young man presently broke in upon these unflattering reflections. With a sigh he said slowly, as if half to himself,—

"Lands, but I used to set a powerful store by ye, Liz!"

He paused; and at that "used to" the girl opened her eyes with angry apprehension. But he went on,—

"An' I set still more store by ye now, Liz, someways. Seems like I jest couldn't live without ye. I always did feel as how ye was too good, a sight too good, fer me, an' you so smart; an' now I feel it more 'n ever, bein' 's ye've seen so much of the world like. But, Liz, I *don't* allow as it's right an' proper fer even you to look down the way ye do on the place ye was born in an' the folks ye was brung up with."

"My!" thought the girl to herself, "he's got some spunk, after all, to git off such a speech as that, an' to rake me over the coals, too!"

But aloud she retorted, "Who's a-lookin' down on anybody, Jim-Ed A'ki'son? An', anyways, *you* ain't the whole of Wyer's Settlement, be ye?"

The justice of this retort seemed to strike the young man with great force.

"That's so," he acknowledged, gloomily. "'Course I ain't. An' I s'pose I hadn't oughter said what I did."

Then he relapsed into silence. For half a mile he slouched on without a syllable, save an occasional word of command addressed to the team. Coming to another boggy bit of road, he seated himself dejectedly on the cart, and apparently would not presume to again press unwelcome assistance upon his fellow-way-farer. Quite uncertain whether to interpret this action as excess of humility or as a severe rebuke, the girl picked her way as best she could, flushed with a sense of injury.

When the mud was passed, the young man absent-mindedly, kept his seat. Beginning to boil with indignation, the girl speedily lost her confident superiority, and felt humiliated. She did not know exactly what to do. She could not continue to walk humbly beside the cart. The situation was profoundly altered by the mere fact that the young man was riding. She tried to drop behind; but the team had an infinite capacity for loitering. At last, with head high in the air, she darted ahead of the team, and walked as fast as she could. Although she heard no orders given by their driver, she knew at once that the oxen had quickened their pace, and that she was not leaving them behind.

Presently she found herself overtaken; whereupon, with swelling heart and face averted, she dropped again to the rear. She was drawing perilously near the verge of that feminine cataclysm, tears, when Fate stepped in to save her from such a mortification.

Fate goes about in many merry disguises. At this juncture she presented herself under the aspect of two half-tipsy commercial travellers driving a single horse in a light open trap. They were driving in from the Settlement, in haste to reach the hotel at Bolton Corners before nightfall. The youth hawed his team vigorously till the nigh wheels were on the other side of the ditch, leaving a liberal share of the road for them to pass in.

But the drummers were not satisfied with this. After a glance at the bashful face and dejected attitude of the young man on the ox-cart, they decided that they wanted the whole road. When their horse's head almost touched the horns of the off ox, they stopped.

"Get out of the way there!" cried the man who held the reins, insolently.

At any other time Jim-Ed would have resented the town man's tone and words; just now he was thinking about the way Liz had changed.

"I've gi'n ye the best half o' the road, mister," he said, deprecatingly, "'n' I can't do no better fer ye than that."

"Yes, you can, too," shouted the driver of the trap; "you can give us the whole road. It won't hurt your old cart to go out in the stumps, but *we* ain't going to drive in the ditch, not by a jugful. Get over, I tell you, and be quick about it."

To this the youth made no immediate reply; but he began to forget about the girl, and to feel himself growing hot. As for the girl, she had stepped to the front, resolved to "show off" and to make very manifest to the city men her scorn for her companion. Her cheeks and eyes were flaming, and the drummers were not slow to respond to the challenge which she flashed at them from under her drooped lids.

"Ah, there, my beauty!" said the driver, his attention for a moment diverted from the question of right of way. His companion, a smallish man in striped trousers and fawn-colored overcoat, sprang lightly out of the trap, with the double purpose of clearing the road and amusing himself with Liz. The saucy smile with which she met him turned into a frown, however, as he began brutally kicking the knees of the oxen to make them stand over.

The patient brutes crowded into the ditch.

"Whoa, there! Gee, Buck! gee, Bright!" ordered the youth, and the team lurched back into the road. At the same time he stepped over the cart-beam and came forward on the off side of the team.

"Ye'd better quit that, mister!" he exclaimed, with a threatening note in his voice.

"Give the lout a slap in the mouth, and make him get out of the way," cried the man in the trap.

But the man in the fawn-colored overcoat was busy. Liz was much to his taste.

"Jump in and take a ride with us, my pretty," said he.

But Liz shrank away, regretting her provocative glances now that she saw the kind of men she had to do with.

"Come, come," coaxed the man, "don't be shy, my blooming daisy. We'll drive you right in to the Corners and set up a good time for you." And, grasping her hand, he slipped an arm about her waist and tried to kiss her lips. As she tore herself fiercely away, she heard the man in the trap laugh loud approval. She struck at her insulter with clenched hand; but she did not touch him, for just then something happened to him. The long arm of the youth went out like a cannon-ball, and the drummer sprawled in the ditch. He nimbly picked himself up and darted upon his assailant, while the man in the trap shouted to him encouragingly,—

"Give it to him pretty, Mike."

But the young countryman caught him by the neck with long, vise-like fingers, inexorable, and, holding him thus helpless at arm's length, struck him again heavily in the ribs, and hurled him over the ditch into a blueberry thicket, where he remained in dazed discretion.

Though of a lamb-like gentleness on ordinary occasions, the young countryman was renowned throughout the Settlement for the astonishing strength that lurked in his lean frame. At this moment he was well aroused, and Liz found herself watching him with a consuming admiration. He no longer slouched, and his pale eyes, like polished steel, shot a menacing gleam. He stepped forward and took the horse by the bridle.

"Now," said he to the driver, "I've gi'n ye half the road, an' if ye can't drive by in that I'm a-going to lead ye by, 'thout no more nonsense."

"Let go that bridle!" yelled the driver, standing up and lashing at him with the whip.

One stroke caught the young man down the side of the face, and stung. It was a rash stroke.

"Hold the horse's head, Liz," he cried; and, leaping forward, he reached into the trap for his adversary. Heeding not at all the butt end of the whip which was brought down furiously upon his head, he wrenched the driver ignominiously from his seat, spun him around, shook him as if his had been a rag baby, and hurled him violently against a rotten stump on the other side of the ditch. The stump gave way, and the drummer splashed into a bog hole.

Nothing crows a man more quickly than a shaking combined with a ducking. Without a word the drummer hauled himself out of the slop and walked sullenly forward. His companion joined him; and Liz, leading the horse and trap carefully past the cart, delivered them up to their owners with a sarcastic smile on her lips. Then she resumed her place beside the cart, the young man flicked the oxen gently, and the team once more got slowly under way.

As the discomfited drummers climbed into their trap, the girl, in the ardor of her suddenly adopted hero-worship, could not refrain from turning around again to triumph over them. When the men were fairly seated, and the reins gathered up for prompt departure, the smaller man turned suddenly and threw a large stone, with vindictive energy and deadly aim.

"Look out!" shrieked the girl; and the young countryman turned aside just in time to escape the full force of the missile. It grazed the side of his head, however, with such violence as to bring him to his knees, and the blood spread throbbing out of the long cut like a scarlet veil. The drummers whipped their horse to a gallop, and disappeared.

The girl first stopped the team, with a true country-side instinct; and she was at the young man's side, sobbing with anxious fear, just as he staggered blindly to his feet. Seating him on the cart, she proceeded to stanch the bleeding with the edge of her gown. Observing this, he protested, and declared that the cut was nothing. But she would not be gainsaid, and he yielded, apparently well content under her hands. Then, tearing a strip from her colored cotton petticoat, she gently bound up the wound, not artistically, perhaps, but in every way to his satisfaction.

"If ye hadn't gi'n me warnin', Liz, that there stun'd about fixed me," he remarked.

The girl smiled happily, but said nothing.

After a long pause he spoke again.

"Seems to me ye're like what ye used to, Liz," said he, "only nicer, a sight nicer; an' y' used to be powerful nice. I allow there couldn't *be* another girl so nice as you, Liz. An' what ever's made ye quit lookin' down on me, so sudden like?"

"Jim-Ed," she replied, in a caressing tone, "ef y' *ain't* got no paper collar on, ner no glas' di'mon' pin, I allow ye're a *man*. An' maybe—maybe ye're the *kind* of man I *like*, Jim-Ed."

To even such genuine modesty as Jim-Ed's this was comprehensible. Shyly and happily he reached out his hand for hers. They were both seated very comfortably on the cart-beam, so he did not consider it necessary to move. Side by side, and hand in hand, they journeyed homeward

in a glorified silence. The oxen appeared to guide themselves very fairly. The sunset flushed strangely the roadside hillocks. The nighthawks swooped in the pale zenith with the twang of smitten chords. And from a thick maple on the edge of a clearing a hermit-thrush fluted slowly over and over his cloistral ecstasy.

A Tragedy of the Tides.

This is the story of the fate that befell Lieutenant Henry Crewe and Margaret Neville, his betrothed, who disappeared from the infant city of Halifax on the afternoon of September 18th, 1749. The facts were gathered by one Nicholas Pinson from the mouths of Indians more or less concerned, from members of the Neville family, and from much sagacious conjecture; and woven, with an infinite deal of irrelevant detail, into a narrative which has been rigorously condensed in the present rendering. The industrious Pinson's manuscript, with all its attenuated old French characters, its obscure abbreviations, and its well-bred contempt for orthographical accuracy, might perhaps be found even yet in the Provincial archives at Halifax. At least, if any one be curious to examine this story in the original, just as M. Pinson wrote it, he may search the archives of Halifax with a reasonable surety that the manuscript is as likely to be found there as anywhere else.

There was a faint, opaline haze in the afternoon air, and in the still waters of the harbor the low hills, with their foliage lightly touched in bronze and amethyst and amber, were faithfully reproduced. Into a hollow between two knolls wooded with beech trees, ran a shallow cove, its clear waters edged with sand of a tender, greenish gray. Close to the water's edge stood the lovers, and across the silence they could hear, pulsating dimly, the hammers of them that were building the city.

"Listen," said the man, as he drew the girl closely to him and kissed her on the forehead; "those are the strokes that are making a home for *us*."

The girl lifted her lips for a kiss that never reached them. The man was seized from behind, a dark hand covered his mouth; and Lieutenant Henry Crewe, his sword unstirred in its scabbard, found himself pinioned hand and foot, ere he had time to realize that other arms were about him than those of the woman he loved. With her it fared in like fashion, save that before they covered her mouth she found time for one long piercing cry. It was heard by those who were working on the city palisades; but no man could tell the direction whence it came. Presently a search party set out for the thick woods lying a little north of west from the city; but in the mean time the Indians had carried their captives northeastward to the lakes, and were making all speed on the Fundy coast by way of the Shubenacadie trail.

Henry Crewe was a tall man, and well sinewed, and for a brief space he strove so fiercely with his bonds that his fair skin flushed well-nigh purple, and his lips, under the yellow mustache, curled apart terribly, like those of a beast at bay. Unable to endure the anguish of his effort, Margaret averted her eyes, for she knew the hopelessness of it. Like all the Nevilles of Nova Scotia to this day, the girl was somewhat spare of form and feature, with dark hair, a clear, dark skin, and eyes of deep color that might be either gray or green. Her terrible cry had been far less the utterance of a blind terror than a deliberate signal to the garrison at the fort, and so complete was her self-control that when Crewe presently met her gaze his brain grew clearer, he forgot the derision in the Indians' painted faces, ceased his vain struggles, and bent all his thought to the task of finding means of deliverance.

The captives were thrown into canoes and paddled swiftly to the head of the long basin which runs inland for miles from the head of the harbor. At the beginning of the portage their feet were unbound, and their mouths set free from the suffocating gags.

"Oh, Margaret! Margaret! To think I should have brought you to this!" exclaimed Crewe in a harsh voice, the moment his lips were free.

The girl had confidence in her lover's power to find some way of protecting her, in case no help should come from the city. Her sole thought now was to show herself brave, and in no way to embarrass his judgment. Before she could answer, however, the leader of the band struck Crewe across the mouth with the flat of his hatchet, as a hint that he should keep silence. Had Crewe been alone, bound as he was, he would have felled his assailant with a blow of the foot; but for Margaret's sake he forced himself to endure the indignity tamely, though his blue eyes flamed with so dangerous a light that the Indian raised his hatchet again in menace. The girl's heart bled under the stroke and at sight of the wounded mouth, but she prudently abstained from speech. Only she spoke one word in a low voice that said all things to her lover's ear, the one word "Beloved!"

To the chief now spoke one of the band in the Micmac tongue:—

"Why not let the paleface talk to his young squaw? It will be the more bitter for them at the last!"

"No," said the chief, grinning; "it is as death to the palefaces to keep silence. But they shall have time to talk at the last."

Throughout the long journey, which was continued till midnight under the strong light of a moon

just at the full, the lovers held no converse save in the mute language of eye and gesture, and that only during the rough marches from one lake to another. The greater part of the journey was by canoe. At night they were lashed to trees some way apart, and separated by the camp-fire. Crewe dared not address a word to Margaret lest he should anger his captors into doing him some injury that might lessen his powers of thought or action, and the girl, seeing that no immediate gain could be had from speech, dreaded to be smitten on the mouth in a way that might disfigure her in her lover's eyes. Only at times, when a wind would blow the smoke and flame aside, she looked across the camp-fire into the young man's face, and in the look and in the smile of the steady lips he read not only an unswerving courage, but also a confidence in his own resourceful protection, which pierced his heart with anguish. All night he pondered schemes of rescue or escape, until his brain reeled and his soul grew sick before the unsolvable problem. He could move neither hand nor foot, and just before dawn he sank to sleep in his bonds. Then for the waking girl the loneliness became unspeakable, and her lips grew ashen in the first light of the dawn.

Late on the following day the band drew up their canoes on the banks of the Shubenacadie, where its waters began to redden with the tide, and struck through the woods by a dark trail. The next day the captives were tortured by the sight of a white steeple in the distance, belonging to an Acadian settlement. Crewe judged this to be the village of Beaubassin. The surmise was confirmed when, a few hours later, after a wide detour to avoid the settlement, the flag of France was seen waving over the foliage that clothed a long line of heights. By this time the band was traversing a vast expanse of salt marshes, and after crossing a little tidal stream near its head, they turned sharply southwestward toward the sea. Presently the raw red earthworks of Beauséjour rose into view some seven or eight miles distant across the marshes. There, among his bitter enemies, Crewe knew he might find sure succor, if only the gallant Frenchmen could be made aware of what was passing so near them. He saw Margaret's eyes fixed with terrible appeal upon the hostile works, wherein for her and for her lover lay safety; and agonized to feel his utter helplessness, he raised a long and ringing shout which, as it seemed to him, must reach the very souls of those behind the ramparts. Margaret's heart leaped with hope, which flickered out as she saw the Indians laugh grimly at the foolish effort. To be within sight of help, and yet so infinitely helpless! For the first time the girl yielded to complete despair, and her head sank upon her breast. In the Journal of the Sieur Carré, at this time a lieutenant at Beauséjour, occurs this entry, under date of September 20, 1749:—

"Noted this morning a small party of natives moving down the shores of the river Tintamarre. Too far off to distinguish whether it was a war party or not, but this their order of march seemed to suggest."

After skirting for perhaps an hour a red and all but empty channel, which Crewe recognized by hearsay as the bed of the Tantramar (or *Tintamarre*, "water of hubbub"), the savages suddenly led their captives down the steep, gleaming abyss of mud to the edge of the shallow current, which now, at low tide, clattered shrilly seaward over clods of blue clay and small stones rolled down from the uplands.

Margaret awoke from her despair enough to shudder disdainfully, as her feet sank more than ankle deep in the clinging ooze, and to wonder why the Indians should halt in such a place. She met her lover's glance, and saw that he was singularly disturbed.

The place was like a hideous gaping pit. A double winding of the channel closed it in above and below. Some forty or fifty feet over their heads, against a pure sky of loveliest blue, waved a shaggy fringe of salt grasses, yellowing in the autumn air. This harsh and meagre herbage encircled the rim of the chasm, and seemed to make the outer world of men infinitely remote. The sun, an hour or two past noon, glared down whitely into the gulf, and glistened, in a myriad of steely reflections, from the polished but irregular steepes of slime. There was something so strange and monstrous in the scene that Margaret's dull misery was quickened to a nameless horror. Suddenly a voice, which she hardly recognized as that of her lover, said slowly and steadily:—

"Margaret, this is the end of our journey; we have come to the end."

Looking up she met Crewe's eyes fastened upon her with a gaze which seemed to sustain her and fill her nerves with strength. With the end of his uncertainty his will became clear, and his resolution perfect as tempered steel. An Indian had brought two stakes and thrown them on the mud at the leader's feet. Margaret looked at the rough-trimmed saplings, at the tide-mark far up the dreadful slope, then again into her lover's face. She understood; but she gave no sign, save that her skin blanched to a more deathly pallor, and she exclaimed in a voice of poignant regret: "Have we kept silence all these long hours only for this? And I had so much to say to you!"

"There will be time," he said gently, and his voice was a caress. "The flood tide has not yet begun, and it will take some hours. And it was well, dear, that we could not speak; for so you had hope till the last to support you, while I had none, having heard the Indians say we were to die, though they said not in my hearing when or how. Had you known you might not have had this high courage of yours, that now gives *me* strength to endure the utmost. Dear, your heroic fortitude has been everything to me."

A faint flush of pride rose into the girl's face, and she stretched out her pinioned arms to him, and cried: "You shall not be deceived in me. I will be worthy of you, and will not shame our race before these beasts."

By this time the stakes were driven into the strong clay. They were placed some way up the slope, and one a little space above the other. To the lower stake they fastened Crewe. As the girl was being bound to the other, her arms were freed for a moment that the savages might the more readily remove her upper garments, and by a swift movement she loosened her hair so that it fell about her to her knees,—the splendid Neville hair, still famous in the Province. There was no bounty then on English scalps, and the horror of the scalping knife was not threatened them. When the savages had made their task complete, they laughed in their victims' faces and retreated up the steep and over the grassy rim.

"Are they gone?" asked the girl.

"No, they are lying in wait to watch us," answered Crewe; and as he ceased speaking a muffled sound was heard, and with a sudden hubbub that filled the chasm with clamor, the first of the flood-tide came foaming round the curve, and the descending current halted as if in fear of the meeting. The next moment the bed of the stream was hidden by a boiling reddish torrent, racing up the channel; and the tide was creeping by inches toward the captives' feet. For an hour or more the bright gulf of death was so loud with this turmoil and with the echoes from the red walls of mud, and the yellow eddies of foam whirled and swept so dizzily past their eyes, that the captives' senses were dulled in a measure, as if by some crude anodyne or vast mesmeric influence. When, however, the channel was about one-third full and the water now beginning to cover Crewe's feet, the flood became more quiet and equable, spreading smoothly over freer spaces. Presently there was a frightful silence, intensified by the steady sunlight, and broken only by the stealthy, soft rush and snake-like hiss of the tide. Then, as Margaret's brain grew clear in the stillness, a low cry, which tortured Crewe's features, forced itself from her lips. She realized for the first time why the stake to which she was bound had been set higher than her lover's. She would watch the cruel colored water creep over Crewe's mouth, then cover his eyes, and hide at last the brave head she had longed to kiss, ere it climbed to ease her own lips of life. She said: "Love, I will lay my face down in the water as soon as it is near enough, and I shall *not* be far behind you."

A wide-winged gray gull, following the tide up the channel, gave a startled cry as he came upon the silent figures, and rose higher, with sudden flapping, as he turned his flight away across the marshes.

In the Journal of the Sieur Carré, in Beauséjour, there is a second entry under the date of September 20, 1749. It was added on a succeeding day. Translated fully it runs thus:—

"In the afternoon took a guard and marched across the Tintamarre to see what mischief the redskins had been at, having observed them to leave two of their number in the channel, and to linger long on the brink, as if watching something in the stream. It was within an hour of high tide when we reached the spot, the savages disappearing on our approach. Saw on the further shore a piteous sight, whereat our hearts burned to follow the redskins and chastise their devilish malice. A woman was bound to a stake, her face fallen forward in the water, and a wonderful luxuriance of dark hair spread about her and floating on the current. Swam across the river, with those of my men following who could, and, plunging beneath the tide, cut her bonds. But found the life had fled, at which we wondered; for had she held her head erect the water would not yet have been within a little of her chin. But presently we found, beneath the water, the body of a young man, bound likewise to a stake; and it seemed to us we thereupon understood why the poor lady had been in such haste to die. The lovers, for so we deemed them, were plainly English, and we took them with us back to the Beauséjour, purposing to give them Christian burial,—and more than ever cursing the hard necessity which forces us to make alliance with the natives."

At the Rough-and-Tumble Landing.

The soft smell of thawing snow was in the air, proclaiming April to the senses of the lumbermen as unmistakably as could any calendar.

The ice had gone out of the Big Aspohegan with a rush. There was an air of expectation about the camp. Everything was ready for a start down-stream. The hands who had all winter been chopping and hauling in the deep woods were about to begin the more toilsome and perilous task of "driving" the logs down the swollen river to the great booms and unresting mills about its mouth. One thing only remained to be done ere the drive could get under way. The huge "brow" of logs over-hanging the stream had yet to be released. To whom would fall the task of accomplishing its release, was a question still undecided.

The perils of "stream-driving" on a bad river have been dwelt upon, I suppose, by every writer who has occupied his pen at all with the life of the lumber-camps. But to the daring backwoodsman there seldom falls a task more hazardous than that of cutting loose a brow of logs when the logs have been piled in the form of what is called a "rough-and-tumble landing." Such a landing is constructed by driving long timbers into the mud at the water's edge, below a steep piece of bank. Along the inner side of these are laid horizontally a certain number of logs, to form

a water front; and into the space behind are tumbled helter-skelter from the tops of the bank the logs of the winter's chopping. It is a very simple and expeditious way of storing the logs. But when the ice has run out, and it is time to start the lumber down-stream, then comes trouble. The piles sustaining the whole vast weight of the brow have to be cut away, and the problem that confronts the chopper is how to escape the terrific rush of the falling logs.

Hughey McElvey, the boss of the Aspohegan camp, swinging an axe (rather as a badge of office than because he thought he might want to chop anything), sauntered down to the water's edge and took a final official glance at the brow of logs. Its foundations had been laid while McElvey was down with a touch of fever, and he was ill satisfied with them. For perhaps the fiftieth time, he shook his head and grumbled, "It's goin' to be a resky job gittin' them logs clear." Then he rejoined the little cluster of men on top of the bank.

As he did so, a tall girl with splendid red hair came out of the camp and stepped up to his side. This was Laurette, the boss's only daughter, who had that morning driven over from the settlements in the back country, to bring him some comforts of mended woollens and to bid "the drive" God-speed. From McElvey the girl inherited her vivid hair and her superb proportions; and from her mother, who had been one Laurette Beaulieu, of Grande Anse, she got her mirthful black eyes and her smooth, dusky complexion, which formed so striking a contrast to her radiant tresses. A little conscious of all the eyes that centred upon her with varying degrees of admiration, love, desire, or self-abasing devotion, she felt the soft color deepen in her cheeks as she playfully took possession of McElvey's axe.

"*You're* not goin' to do it, father, I reckon!" she exclaimed.

"No, sis," answered the boss, smiling down at her, "leastways, not unless the hands is all scared."

"Well, who *is* goin' to?" she inquired, letting her glance sweep rapidly over the stalwart forms that surrounded her. A shrewd observer might have noted that her eyes shyly avoided one figure, that stood a little apart from the rest,—the figure of a strongly-built man of medium size, who looked small among his large-moulded fellows. As for Jim Reddin, who was watching the girl's every movement, his heart tightened with a bitter pang as her eyes thus seemed to pass him over. Having, for all his forty years, a plentiful lack of knowledge of the feminine heart and its methods, he imagined himself ignored. And yet had he not Laurette's promise that none other than he should have the privilege of driving her home to the settlements that afternoon?

"That's what we're just a-goin' to decide," said McElvey, in answer to Laurette's question. "But first," he continued, with a sly chuckle, "hadn't you better pick out the feller that's goin' to drive you home, sis? We're goin' to be powerful well occupied, all hands, when we git a start on them logs, I tell you!"

At this suggestion a huge young woodsman who was standing behind some of the others, out of Laurette's range of vision, started eagerly forward. Bill Goodine was acknowledged to be the best-looking man on the Big Aspohegan,—an opinion in which he himself most heartily concurred. He was also noted as a wrestler and fighter. He was an ardent admirer of Laurette; but his passion had not taught him any humility, and he felt confident that in order to gain the coveted honor of driving the girl home he had nothing to do but apply for it. He felt that it would hardly be the "square thing" to put Laurette to the embarrassment of inviting him right there before all the hands. Before he could catch her eye, however, Laurette had spoken what surely the devil of coquetry must have whispered in her ear. Undoubtedly, she had promised Jim Reddin that he should drive her home. But "let him show that he appreciates the favor," she thought to herself; and aloud, with a toss of her head, she exclaimed, "I'll take the one that cuts out the logs,—if he wants to come!"

The effect of this speech was instantaneous. Fully half the hands stepped forward, exclaiming, "I'll do it!—I'll do it, boss!—I'm your man, Mr. McElvey!" But Bill Goodine sprang to the front with a vigor that brushed aside all in his path. Thrusting himself in front of the laughing McElvey, he shouted, "I spoke first! I claim the job!" And, snatching up an axe, he started down the bank.

"Hold on!" shouted McElvey; but Goodine paid no attention. "Come back, I tell you!" roared the boss. "The job's yours, so hold on!" Upon this Bill came swaggering back, and gazed about him triumphantly.

"I guess *I'm* your teamster, eh, Laurette?" he murmured. But, to his astonishment, Laurette did not seem to hear him. She was casting quick glances of anger and disappointment in the direction of Jim Reddin, who leaned on a sled-stake and appeared to take no interest in the proceedings. Goodine flushed with jealous wrath, and was about to fling some gibe at Reddin, when McElvey remarked,—

"That's all very well, sis; and has kinder simplified matters a lot. But I'm thinkin' you'd better have another one of the boys to fall back on. This 'ere's an onusual ticklish job; and the feller as does it'll be lucky if he comes off with a whole skin."

At these words so plain an expression of relief went over Laurette's face that Bill Goodine could not contain himself.

"Jim Reddin *dasn't* do it," he muttered to her, fiercely.

The girl drew herself up. "I never said he dast," she replied. "An' what's Jim Reddin to me, I'd like to know?" And then, being furious at Jim, at herself, and at Goodine, she was on the point of

telling the latter that *he* shouldn't drive her home, anyway, when she reflected that this would excite comment, and restrained herself. But Reddin, who imagined that the whole thing was a scheme on Laurette's part for getting out of her promise to him, and who felt, consequently, as if the heavens were falling about his ears, had caught Goodine's mention of his name. He stepped up and asked sharply, "What's that about Jim Reddin?"

Laurette was gazing at him in a way that pierced his jealous pain and thrilled his heart strangely; and as he looked at her he began to forget Bill Goodine altogether. But Goodine was not to be forgotten.

"I said," he cried, in a loud voice, "that you, Jim Reddin, jest *dasn't* cut out them logs. You think yourself some punkins, you do; but ye're a coward!" And, swinging his great form round insolently, Goodine picked up his axe and sauntered down the bank.

Now, Laurette, as well as most of the hands, looked to see this insult promptly resented in the only way consistent with honor. Reddin, though tender-hearted and slow to anger, was regarded as being, with the possible exception of Goodine, the strongest man in that section of the country. He had proved his daring by many a bold feat in the rapids and the jams; and his prowess as a fighter had been displayed more than once when a backwoods bully required a thrashing. But now he gave the Aspohegan camp a genuine surprise. First, the blood left his face, his eyes grew small and piercing, and his hands clenched spasmodically as he took a couple of steps after Goodine's retreating figure. Then his face flushed scarlet, and he turned to Laurette with a look of absolutely piteous appeal.

"I *can't* fight him," he tried to explain, huskily. "You don't understand. I ain't *afeard* of him, nor of any man. But I vowed to his mother I'd be good to the lad, and—"

"Oh, I reckon I quite understand, Mr. Reddin," interrupted the girl, in a hard, clear voice; and, seeing the furious scorn in her face, Reddin silently turned away.

Laurette's scorn was sharpened by a sense of the bitterest disappointment. She had allowed herself to give her heart to a coward, whom she had fancied a hero. As she turned to her father, big tears forced themselves into her eyes. But the episode had passed quickly; and her distress was not observed, as all attention now turned to Goodine and his perilous undertaking. Only McElvey, who had suspected the girl's sentiments for some time, said in an undertone, "Jim Reddin ain't no coward, and don't you forget it, sis. But it *is* queer the way he'll just take anything at all from Bill Goodine. It's somethin' we don't none of us understand."

"I reckon he does well to be scared of him," said Laurette, with her head very high in the air.

By this time Goodine had formed his plans, and had got to work. At first he called in the assistance of two other axemen, to cut certain of the piles which had no great strain upon them. This done, the assistants returned to safe quarters; and then Bill warily reviewed the situation. "He knows what he's about," murmured McElvey, with approbation, as Bill attacked another pile, cut it two-thirds through, and left it so. Then he severed completely a huge timber far on the left front of the landing. There remained but two piles to withstand the main push of the logs. One of these was in the centre, the other a little to the right,—on which side the chopper had to make his escape when the logs began to go. This latter pile Goodine now cut half-way through. Feeling himself the hero of the hour, he handled his axe brilliantly, and soon forgot his indignation against Laurette. At length he attacked the centre pile, the key to the whole structure.

Everybody, at this point, held his breath. Loud sounded the measured axe-strokes over the rush of the swollen river. No one moved but Reddin, and no one but Laurette noticed his movement. His skilled eye had detected a danger which none of the rest perceived. He drew close to the brow, and moved a little way down the bank.

"What can he be up to?" wondered Laurette; and then she sniffed angrily because she had thought about him at all.

Goodine dealt a few cautious strokes upon the central pile, paused a moment or two to reconnoitre, and then renewed his attack. Reddin became very fidgety. He watched the logs, and shouted earnestly,—

"Better come out o' that right now and finish on this 'ere nigh pile."

Goodine looked up, eyed first his adviser, then very narrowly the logs, and answered, tersely, "Go to h—ll!"

"That's just like the both of 'em," muttered McElvey, as Goodine turned and resumed his chopping.

At this moment there came a sullen, tearing sound; and the top of the near pile, which had been half cut through, began to lean slowly, slowly. A yell of desperate warning arose. Goodine dropped his axe, turned like lightning, and made a tremendous leap for safety. He gained the edge of the landing-front, slipped on an oozy stone, and fell back with a cry of horror right beneath the toppling mass of logs.

As his cry re-echoed from every throat, Jim Reddin dropped beside him as swiftly and almost miraculously as a sparrow-hawk flashes upon its prey. With a terrific surge he swung Goodine backward and outward into the raging current, but away from the face of the impending

avalanche. Then, as the logs all went with a gathering roar, he himself sprang outward in a superb leap, splashed mightily into the stream, disappeared, and came up some yards below. Side by side the two men struck out sturdily for shore, and in a couple of minutes their comrades' eager hands were dragging them up the bank.

"Didn't I *tell* you Jim Reddin wasn't no coward?" said McElvey, with glistening eyes, to Laurette; and Laurette, having no other way to relieve her excitement and give vent to her revulsion of feelings, sat down on a sled and cried most illogically.

As the two dripping men approached the camp, she looked up to see a reconciliation. Presently Goodine emerged from a little knot of his companions, approached Reddin, and held out his hand.

"I ask yer pardon," said he. "You're a man, an' no mistake. It is my life I owe to you; an' I'm proud to owe it to sech as you!"

But Reddin took no notice of the outstretched hand. The direct and primitive movements of the backwoodsman's mind may seem to the sophisticated intelligence peculiar; but they are easy to comprehend. Jim Reddin quite overlooked the opportunity now offered for a display of exalted sentiment. In a harsh, deliberate voice he said,—

"An' now, Bill Goodine, you've got to stand up to me, an' we'll see which is the better man, you or me. Ever sence you growed up to be a man you've used me just as mean as you knowed how; an' now we'll fight it out right here."

At this went up a chorus of disapproval: and Goodine said, "I'll be d—d if I'm a-goin to strike the man what's jest saved my life!"

"You needn't let *that* worry you, Bill," replied Reddin. "We're quits there. I reckon you forget as how your mother, God bless her, saved my life, some twenty year back, when you was jest a-toddlin'. An' I vowed to her I'd be good to you the very best I knowed how. An' I've kep' my vow. But now I reckon I'm quit of it; an' if you ain't a-goin' to give me satisfaction now my hands is free, then you ain't no man at all, an' I'll try an' find some way to *make* you fight!"

"Jim's right!—You've got to fight, Bill!—That's fair!" and many more exclamations of like character, showed the drift of popular sentiment so plainly that Goodine exclaimed, "Well, if you sez so, it's got to be! But I don't want to hurt you, Jim Reddin; an' lick you I kin, every day in the week, an' you know it!"

"You're a liar!" remarked Jim Reddin, in a business-like voice, as the hands formed a ring.

At this some of the hands laughed, and Goodine, glancing around, caught the ghost of a smile on Laurette's face. This was all that was needed. The blood boiled up to his temples, and with an oath under his breath he sprang upon his adversary.

Smoothly and instantaneously as a shadow Reddin eluded the attack. And now his face lost its set look of injury and assumed a smile of cheerful interest. Bill Goodine, in spite of his huge bulk, had the elasticity and dash of a panther; but his quickness was nothing to that of Reddin. Once or twice the latter parried, with seeming ease, his most destructive lunges, but more often he contented himself with moving aside like a flash of light. Presently Goodine cried out,—

"Why don't yer *fight*, like a man, stidder skippin' out o' the road like a flea?"

"'Cause I don't want to hurt you," laughed Reddin.

But that little boastful laugh delayed his movements, and Goodine was upon him. Two or three terrible short-arm blows were exchanged, and then the two men grappled.

"Let 'em be," ordered McElvey. "They'd better wrestle than fight."

For a second or two, nay, for perhaps a whole minute, it looked to the spectators as if Reddin must be crushed helpless in Bill's tremendous embrace. Then it began to dawn on them that Reddin had captured the more deadly hold. Then the dim rumors of Reddin's marvellous strength began to gather credence, as it was seen how his grip seemed to dominate that of his great opponent.

For several minutes the straining antagonists swayed about the ring. Then suddenly Reddin straightened himself, and Bill's hold slipped for an instant. Before he could recover it Reddin had stooped, secured a lower grip, and in a moment hurled his adversary clear over his shoulder. A roar of applause went up from the spectators; and Goodine, after trying to rise, lay still and groaned, "I'm licked, Jim. I've had enough."

The boss soon pronounced that Bill's shoulder was dislocated, and that he'd have to go back to the settlements to be doctored. This being the case, Laurette said to him benevolently, after her horse was harnessed to the pung, "I'm sorry I can't ask you to drive me home, though you *did* cut out the logs, Bill. But I reckon it'll be the next best thing fur you if *I* drive *you* home. An' Jim Reddin'll come along, maybe, to kind of look after the both of us."

To which proposition poor Bill grinned a rather ghastly assent.

An Experience of Jabez Batterpole.

One February afternoon a tremendous snow-storm was raging about the camp on the Upper Keswick. The air was so thick with driving flakes that one could scarcely see five feet ahead of him. It fell dark in the woods by the middle of the afternoon, and the chopping and the hauling came to an end. Lamps were soon lighted in camp, and the lumbermen, in their steaming homespuns, gathered about the roaring stove to sing, smoke, swap yarns and munch gingerbread. The wind screamed round the gables of the camp, rattled at the door and windows, and roared among the tree-tops like the breaking of great waves on an angry coast. From the stables close by came ever and anon the neighing of a nervous horse.

Andy Mitchell had been detailing with tireless minuteness the virtues of his magnificent team of stallions, Tom and Jerry, and had described (as was his wont on all possible occasions) the manner in which they had once saved his life when he was attacked by a tremendous Indian Devil. This Indian Devil (as the Northern Panther is called in Canada) had been literally pounded to pieces under the hoofs of the angry stallions. As Mitchell concluded, there came a voice from the other side of the stove, and a tall Woodstocker spoke up. This was a chopper very popular in the camp, and known by the name of Jabe. His real name, seldom used except on Sundays, was Jabez Ephraim Batterpole.

"*I'll* tell yez a leetle yarn, boys," said Jabe, "about a chap ez warn't *egzackly* an Injun Devil, but he was half Injun, an' I'm a-thinkin' t' other half must 'a' been a devil. I run agin him las' June, three year gone, an' he come blame near a-doin' fur me. I haint sot eyes on him sence, fur which the same I ain't a-goin' to complain.

"I'd been up to the Falls, an' was a-takin' a raft down the river fur Gibson. Sandy Beale was along o' me, an' I dunno ez ever I enjoyed raftin' more 'n on the first o' thet trip. Doubtless yez all knows what purty raftin' it is in them parts. By gum, it kinder makes a chap lick his lips when he rickolecks it, a-slidin' along there in the sun, not too hot an' not too cold, a-smokin' very comfortable, with one's back braced agin a saft spruce log, an' smellin' the leetle catspaws what comes blowin' off the shores jest ez sweet an' saft ez a gal's currls a-brushin' of a feller's face."

"*What* gal's currls be you referrin' to Jabe?" interrupted Andy Mitchell.

"Suthin' finer 'n horse-hair, anyways!" was the prompt retort; and a laugh went round the camp at Andy's expense. Then Batterpole continued:—

"When we come to Hardscrabble it was sundown, so we tied up the raft an' teetered up the hill to Old Man Peters's fur the night. Yez all knows Old Man Peters's gal Nellie, ez there ain't no tidier an' honestier slip on the hull river. Nellie was purty glad to see Sandy an' me, ef I does say it that shouldn't; an' she chinned with us so ez she didn't hev no time to talk to some other chaps ez was puttin' up there that night. An' this, ez I mighty soon ketched onter, didn't seem nohow to suit one of the fellers. He was a likely-lookin' chap enough, but very dark-complected an' sallow-like, with a bad eye, showin' a lot o' the white. An eye like that's a bad thing in a horse, an' I reckon 't ain't a heap better in a man.

"Sez I to Nellie, sez I: 'Nellie, who's yer yaller friend over there by the windy, which looks like he'd like to make sassage-meat o' my head?'

"Nellie's eyes flashed, an' she answered up right sharp: 'T ain't no friend of mine. 'T ain't no sort of a *man* at all. It's only somethin' the freshet left on the shore, an' the pigs wouldn't eat nohow.'

"You bet I laffed, an' so did Sandy. Ez I heern later on, the chap had ben a-botherin' roun' Nellie all winter, fur all she'd gin him the mitten straight an' sent him about his bizness heaps o' times. I reckon the feller suspicioned we was a-laffin' at him, fur he squinted at me blacker 'n ever.

"Purty soon Nellie got fussin' roun' the room, over nigh to where the yaller chap was a-settin', an' he spoke to her, saft-like, so ez we couldn't hear what he was a-gittin' at. Nellie she jest sniffed kinder scornful; an' then, *what* would yez suppose that chap done? He reached out suddent, grabbed her leetle wrist so hard 'at she cried out, an' *slapped* her—yes, slapped her right across the mouth. Nellie jest stood there white, like a image, an' never said one word; an' I seed the red marks o' the blackguard's fingers come out acrost her cheek. Next minit yaller face jumped fur the door,—an' me arter him, you kin bet yer life! He was a-makin' tracks purty lively, but I kin run a leetle myself, an' I was onter him 'gin Sandy an' the rest was outer the door. An' didn't I whale him, now? I twisted his knife outer his hand, an' I laced him till I was clean tuckered out. But the feller was grit, an' never hollered oncet. When I quit he laid still a bit. Then he riz up slowly, started to walk away, turned half round, an' hissed at me jest like a big snake er 'n old sassy gander:—

"'I'll—pay—*you!*'

"'Git!' sez I, an' he purceeded to git, joggin' along towards Woodstock.

"Well, now, how thet Nellie did look at me, proud an' grateful like, when I come back to the house; an' sez I to myself, 'Jabez Ephraim, you've ben an' gone an' put in the big licks there, old feller!' But I never sed nuthin' about it at all to Nellie, nor Nellie didn't to me. Now yer a-smilin', boys, so I may remark jest here, to save yez from interruptin' hereafter, thet I've ben to Old Man Peters's sence, on several occasions; an' nex' summer I hope to see yez all acceptin' the hospitality of Mrs. Jabez E. Batterpole! But *thet* ain't no part o' this here story!

"Nex' day Sandy an' me hed a fine run downby Woodstock. The old raft rid kinder loose, however, an' we blamed up *an'* down the fellers ez had pinned her together to the Falls. Howsomever, we tightened her up a bit, an' calc'lated she'd hold through.

"Ez we come in hearin' of the Meductic, Sandy sez to me, sez he: 'Jabe, old 'Ductic is a-hoopin' her up to-day. There's a big head o' water on, an' I'm thinkin' we'll hev to keep our eyes peeled. It'll take some skittish steerin', fur ef the old raft jest teches the rocks she'll go all to slivers.'

"Right you be!" sez I. An' we braced up.

"Now, ez we soon seen, old 'Ductic *was* jest a-rearin'. The big raft shivered like a skeered filly ez she ketched the first nip of them cross-currents, an' she commenced ter bulge an' sag like a nonsense. Sandy was on the forrard sweep, but obsarvin' thet, ez the currents was a-settin', he warn't no use forrard, I called him aft to help me. Ez I turned my head a leetle mite to holler to him I ketched a squint o' that yaller chap a-steppin' in behind a tree on the bluff.

"There warn't no time to be a-considerin' of yaller chaps, fur the raft was settin' dead onter the big rocks in the middle o' the rapid, an' Sandy an' me was a-heavin' an' a gruntin' on them sweeps to swing her cl'ar. 'She'll make it,' sez Sandy, 't last—an' that very minit there comes a ringin' shot from the bluff, an' I feels like it was a dash o' scaldin' water 'long the tip o' my shoulder-blade. Yez'll notice, I was leanin' forrard at the time.

"I'm shot!" sez I; an' then I sees Sandy's sweep swing round, an' Sandy drops on the logs.

"I jumped cl'ar over to where he laid, but straightways he hops up an' yells, 'It's only me arm! Look out for the raft, Jabe!'

"I looked out, boys, you bet! But she was jest sheerin roun' onter them rocks, an' no man's arm could 'a' stopped her. I looked up at the bluff, an' ketched a sight o' the yaller blackguard standin' there ez cool ez ye please, mind yez, a-loadin' up fur a fresh shot.

"I hadn't no time fur another squint at him, fur next minit the old raft struck the rocks. She jest tumbled to pieces like a box o' matches. I hustled Sandy out to the tail o' the raft jest in time, an' told him to jump an' strike out fur all was in him, an' I'd see him through er else we'd kinder shuffle off together.

"Correct!" sez Sandy, chipper ez ye please; an' then we both jumped, me with a grip like grim death onter Sandy's belt.

"*Boys*, but it was a caution to see them waves, an' cross-currents, an' chutes, an' big ripples, an' eddies, an' whirlpools, how they jest sucked us down an' slapped us up an' smothered us an' chucked us roun' like chips. I jes kep' my mouth shet an' said my pray'rs fur all was in me. An' ez for swallerin' water—I must 'a' tuk in half a bar'l. How we was kep' cl'ar of the rocks was a miracle, *out* an' out. A queer light got ter dancin' an' shiftin' front o' my eyes, an' the singin' in my ears was gittin' kind o' pleasant like, an' I calc'late that yaller chap must a gone away purty well satisfied; when, on the suddent, a sorter shock brung me to, an' I felt my feet tech bottom. There was a sight o' life left in Jabez Ephraim yet, ye can bet yer pile.

"I straightened up an' found 'at we was in a quiet eddy, at the foot o' the rapids, on the funder side o' the stream. The water warn't up to me arm-pits, neether. Ez for Sandy, the starch was clean knocked out o' *him*, so I jest hauled him ashore an' spread him out on the rocks to dry while I hev a leetle o' thet water off my stummick. In half a minit I felt better, an' then I went an' tumbled Sandy roun' till he was considerable lighter in the hold. Presently he come to an' opened his eyes.

"I swan, boys, we didn't hurry noane. We jest laid there in the sun a matter of an hour er so, kinder recooperatin'. Then we pinte up river. When the folks heerd what had tuk place, yez'll allow there was lots o' the boys out lookin' for the yaller chap. But he'd got scarce, an' what's more, he's stayed scarce. Any of yez fellers ever seen him?"

"Ef ever *I* runs agin him," exclaimed Andy Mitchell, in a burst of generous enthusiasm, "I'll feed him to my team fur Injun Devil."

The Stone Dog.

It was drawing towards sunset, and I had reached the outskirts of the city, which here came to an abrupt end upon the very edge of the marshes. The marshes stretched before me bare and gray, with here and there a flush of evening color, serving but to emphasize their utterness of desolation. Here and there, also, lay broad pools, their shore and water gradually intermerging through a sullen fringe of reeds. The river, which had been my day-long companion—a noisy stream flowing through breezy hills, and villages, and vineyards—having loitered to draw its circle about the city walls, had fallen under a spell. It met me here a featureless, brimming ditch, and wound away in torpid coils to the monotonous horizon. And now this shrunken city, its edges dead and fallen to decay, these naked levels, where not even a bittern's voice had courage to startle the stillness, filled me, in spite of myself, with a vague apprehensiveness. Just as one who is groping in profound darkness feels his eyes dilate in the effort to catch the least glimmer of

light, I found my senses all on the strain, attentive to their very utmost. Though the atmosphere was heavy and deadening, my eyes were so watchful that not even the uprising of some weeds, trodden down, perhaps, hours before by a passing foot, escaped their notice. My nostrils were keenly conscious of the sick metallic odor from the marshes, of the pleasanter perfume of dry reed panicles, of the chill, damp smell of mouldering stone-work, and of a strangely disagreeable haunting essence from a certain dull-colored weed, whose leaves, which shot up within tempting reach of my hand, I had idly bruised in passing. My ears, for all their painful expectancy, heard at first no sound save the rustle of a frightened mouse in the dead grass near; but at length they detected the gurgle of running water, made audible by a faint stray wind which breathed in my direction.

Instinctively I turned and followed the sound. On my right a huge fragment of the wall jutted into the marsh, and passing this I saw before me, brightened by the sunset, a narrow stretch of dry, baked soil, raised somewhat above the level of the pools, and strewn with shattered bricks and scraps of tiling and potsherds. The musical lapsing of the water now fell upon my ears distinctly, and I saw a little way off a quaint old fountain, standing half a stonecast clear of the wall. With the sunlight bathing it, the limpid water sparkling away from its base, it was the only cheerful object in the landscape; yet I felt an unaccountable reluctance to approach it. The evil enchantment which seemed to brood over the place, the weird fantasies chasing each other through my unconsenting brain, annoyed me greatly, for I profess to hold my imagination pretty well under control, and to have but small concern for ghostly horrors. Shaking aside my nervousness, I began to whistle softly as I strolled up to examine the old fountain. But on noticing how lugubrious, how appropriate to the neighborhood and my feelings was the air that came to my lips, I laughed aloud. At the sudden sound of my voice I felt both startled and somewhat abashed. Laughter here was clearly out of place; and besides, the echo that followed was obtrusively and unpleasantly distinct, appearing to come both from a deep-arched doorway in the wall near by, and from the vaulted hollow of the basin of the fount, which lay just beneath the dog's jaws. As I should have said before, the fountain was a great cube of darkish stone, along the top of which a stone dog crouched; and the water gushed from between its carved fore-paws into a deep basin, the side of which was cleft two thirds of the way to its base. Through this break, which I saw to be an old one from the layers of green film lining it, the stream bubbled out and ran off among barren heaps of débris, to sink itself in the weeds of some stagnant pool. The head of the dog was thrust forward and rested upon the fore-paws as if the brute were sleeping; but its half-open eyes seemed to watch the approaches to the doorway in the wall. As a piece of sculpture, the animal was simply marvellous. In its gathered limbs, though relaxed and perfectly at rest, a capacity for swift and terrible action seemed to hold itself in reserve, and a breath almost appeared to come from the half-opened jaws, momentarily dimming the crystal that smoothly gushed beneath. No scrap of vegetation could the rill persuade out of the inexorable sterility around, saving for some curdled greenish mosses that waved slowly from the sides of the basin, or pointed from root-hold on brick and shard, where the small current loitered a little. I am not a taker of notes, nor, for all my vagrant and exploring tendencies, am I a very close observer. Nevertheless, though it is now a year and a half since what I am telling of took place, the minutest details of that strange fountain, and of the scene about it, are as definitely before me as if I had been there but yesterday. I am not going to inflict them all upon my reader, yet would do so without a spark of compunction, if by such means I could dim the all too vivid remembrance. The experiences that befell me by this fountain have shaken painfully the confidence I once enjoyed as to the fulness of my knowledge of the powers of things material. I cannot say that I have become credulous; but I have ceased to regard as necessarily absurd whatever I find it difficult to explain.

From the fountain it was not a score of paces to the doorway in the wall, which was sunk below the surface of the ground, so that the crumbling arch surmounting it was scarcely on a level with my feet. Steep narrow stairs of brick work, consisting, I think, of seven steps, led down to it. The doorway had once been elaborately ornamented with mouldings in yellow stucco, most of which had fallen, and all but choked the stairs. The crude pale color of these fragments jarred harshly against the olive of the damp stone foundations and the stained brown of the mouldy brick. After my usual fashion, I set myself to explore this doorway, in my interest half forgetting my apprehensions. As I descended the steps the sound of the running water faded out, with a suddenness which caught my ear, though failing to fix my attention. But as I made to grasp the great rusty iron doorhandle, which was curiously wrought of two dragons intertwined neck and tail, again my every sense sprang on the alert, and a chill of terror crept tingling through my frame. My straining ears could detect not the slightest sound from the fountain, which was within plain view behind me. I felt as if some eye were fixed upon me. I faced sharply about and set foot on the steps to ascend. And I saw the water at that very moment burst forth afresh between the feet of the dog, from whose eye a dull white glow seemed just vanishing. It must be borne in mind that the beast's flank was toward the doorway, and, in consequence, only one of its half-closed eyes visible from where I stood. I ascended and went straight to the fountain. I grasped the great stone head and gave it a wrench, but found it just as immovable as it looked. Vexed at my idiotic fears, I vowed to take my fill of investigating that doorway, and to find out if there lay anything of interest beyond it. I knew this part of the city was quite deserted, and that no outraged householder in the flesh was likely to confront my trespassings. But the last of the daylight was now upon me, and I thought best to postpone my enterprise till the morrow. As I betook myself back toward humanity and lodgings, I felt that eye piercing me till I rounded the buttress of the wall; but I denied my folly permission to look back.

The following morning was spent among the curious old cafés, the unexpected squares, and the

gorgeous but dilapidated churches of the inhabited city. All these things, however, failed to interest me. With more time on my hands than I quite knew what to do with, I yet felt as if my time were being wasted. The spell of the dead outskirts, of the shadowless dead marshes, of that mysterious and inscrutable dog, clung to me with unrelenting persistence. And the early afternoon found me standing again by the fountain.

Familiarly I scooped up the cool water and drank it from my palm. I scattered it over the parched bricks and clay, which instantly soaked it in. I dashed a few drops also, playfully, upon the image of the dog, which had taken, the evening before, such fantastic liberties with my overwrought fancy. But these drops gathered themselves up nimbly into little shining balls, and fled off to the ground like so much quicksilver. I looked out upon the wan pools and marshes, whence a greenish mist steamed up, and seemed to poison the sunlight streaming through it. It is possible that this semblance of an unwholesome mist was not so much the fault of the marshes as a condition of the atmosphere, premonitory of the fierce electric storms and the earthquake which visited the city that same night. The greenish light beat full on the sunken doorway, so that only the lowermost steps remained in shadow. However unattractive the temporary complexion of the sun, I was glad of his company as I descended the steps. The twisting dragons of the doorhandle attracted me as I drew near. As for the dog, I had exorcised it from my imagination with those nimble drops of water; and for the old door, it looked as if a little persuasion would make it yield whatever secret it might chance to have in keeping. But certainly, if I might credit my ears, which had once more grown abnormally attentive, the sound of the water had ceased. My flesh began to creep a little, though I told myself the fading of the sound was entirely due to my position,—that the walls of the stairway intercepted it. At the same time I felt that eye watching me, and a chilly sweat broke out upon my limbs; but I execrated my folly, and refused to turn my head. Meanwhile, so alert had become my hearing that the escape of some gases, bubbling up from the bottom of a pool far out in the marsh, resounded as if close beside me. I tried to force the bolt back, but in vain; and I had just come to the conclusion that a sharp wrench would break away bolt, socket, and all, when an uncontrollable instinct of fear turned me about to see what peril threatened. The head of the dog was facing directly toward me, and its eyes, now wide open, flamed upon me with strange and awful whiteness. I sprang up the steps and was at the beast's side in an instant; but I found the head, as before, resting upon the paws, the eyes half closed and dull, the water gushing down into the basin.

As I bathed my shaking hands and clammy forehead, I laughed with deep irritation. I said then to myself that the ignorant could hardly be blamed for even the wildest superstitions, when a cool-headed and enlightened modern like myself was so wrought upon by the fictions of his brain. I philosophized for some time, however, before I got the better of my repugnance to that doorway. I humorously assured myself that, at the worst, this incomprehensible beast was securely anchored to his fountain; and that if anything terrible were at the other side of the door which I was going to open, it surely could not be capable of much, good or ill, after its century or so of imprisonment. Then I walked firmly straight to the doorway and down the seven steps; and I knew that first one eye was turned upon me, then both; the water was silent before I had gone ten paces.

It was useless trying to conquer the creeping of my skin, the fear that pricked along my nerves; so, bidding my reason ignore these minor discomforts, I busied myself with the problem of loosening the bolt-socket. It occurred to me at the time that there might be an easier entrance at the other side of the wall, as nothing in this neighborhood was in good enough repair to boast of more than three walls standing; but no, that would have been a concession to my illusions. I chipped away at the soft stone with my knife. I jerked hard upon the bolt, which gave a little, with clatter of falling stucco; and on the instant I faced around like lightning, in an indescribable horror. There, at the very top of the steps, crouched the dog, its head thrust down close to my face. The stone jaws were grinning apart. A most appalling menace was in the wide, white eyes. I know I tugged once more upon the bolt, for a great piece of the door and arch crumbled and came away; and I thought, as the head closed down, that I made a wild spring to get past the crouching form. Then reason and consciousness forsook me.

When sense returned, I found myself lying on a pile of rags, in a darkish, garlicky hut, with the morning sunlight streaming in through the open door. I sat up, with the memory of my horror vivid upon me, and wondered, with a sigh of relief at the change, what sort of a place I had got to. I was in a very different quarter of the city from the neighborhood of the fountain. Here were still the ruined outskirts, still the desolate marshes, but the highlands backing the city on the north began to rise just beyond the hut's door. I got up, but found my right shoulder almost disabled. I could not lift my arm without great pain. Yet my clothing was not torn, and bore no marks save of dust and travel. I was about to uncover and examine the damaged shoulder, when in came the owner of the hut, an honest-looking, heavy-set muleteer, who showed all his teeth in his gratification at observing my recovery.

As I gathered from my host, he had had occasion to pass what he called the "Fonte del Cano" near sunset of the afternoon preceding. He had found me lying in a stupor, face down, across the basin of the fount, and directly beneath the jaws of the dog, which he piously crossed himself on mentioning. Not stopping to look for explanations, though he saw the old door was partly broken away, he had put me on his mule and made haste homeward, in fear of the coming of twilight in that grim place. There had come up a great storm in the night, and then an earthquake, shaking down many old walls that had long been toppling to their fall. After sunrise, being a bold fellow, he had gone again to the place, in hope of finding some treasure revealed by the disturbance.

Report said there was treasure of some kind hidden within the wall; but none had dared to look for it since the day, years before his birth, when two men undertaking the search had gone mad, with the great white eyes of the dog turned terribly upon them. There were other strange things said about the spot, he acknowledged reluctantly, which, however, he would not talk of even in daylight; and for himself, in truth, he knew but little of them. Now, he continued, in place of anything having been laid bare, the whole top of the wall had fallen down and buried steps and doorway in masses of ruin. But the fountain and the dog were untouched, and he had not cared to go nearer than was necessary.

Having reached my lodgings, I rewarded the honest fellow and sent him away in high feather, all-forgetful of the treasure which the earthquake had failed to unearth for him. Once alone in my room, I made haste to examine my shoulder. I found it green and livid. I found also, with a sick feeling which I shall not soon forget, that it was bruised on either side with deep prints of massive teeth.

The Barn on the Marsh.

It had not always stood on the marsh. When I was a little boy of seven, it occupied the rear of our neighbor's yard, not a stone's throw from the rectory gate, on one of the windy, sunshiny spurs of South Mountain. A perpetual eyesore to the rector; but I cannot help thinking, as I view it now in the concentrated light of memory, that it did artistic service in the way of a foil to the loveliness of the rectory garden. This garden was the rector's delight, but to my restless seven years it was a sort of gay-colored and ever-threatening bugbear.

Weeding, and especially such thorough, radical weeding as alone would satisfy the rector's conscience, was my detestation; and, moreover, just at the time of being called upon to weed, there was sure to be something else of engrossing importance which my nimble little wits had set themselves upon doing.

But I never found courage to betray my lack of sympathy in all its iciness. The sight of the rector's enthusiasm filled me ever with a sense of guilt, and I used to weed quite diligently, at times.

One morning the rector had lured me out early, before breakfast, while the sun yet hung low above the shining marshes. We were working cheerfully together at the carrot-beds. The smell of the moist earth and of the dewy young carrot-plants, bruised by my hasty fingers, comes vividly upon my senses even now.

Suddenly I heard the rector cry, "Bother!" in a tone which spoke volumes. I saw he had broken his hoe short off at the handle. I stopped work with alacrity, and gazed with commiserating interest, while I began wiping my muddy little fingers on my knickerbockers in bright anticipation of some new departure which should put a pause to the weeding.

In a moment or two the vexed wrinkles smoothed themselves out of the rector's brow, and he turned to me with the proposal that we should go over to our neighbor's and repair the damage.

One end of the barn, as we knew, was used for a workshop. We crossed the road, let down the bars, put to flight a flock of pigeons that were feeding among the scattered straw, and threw open the big barn doors.

There, just inside, hung the dead body of our neighbor, his face distorted and purple. And, while I stood sobbing with horror, the rector cut him down with the draw-knife which he had come to borrow.

Soon after this tragedy, the barn was moved down to the marsh, to be used for storing hay and farm implements. And by the time the scene had faded from my mind, the rector gave up the dear delights of his garden, and took us off to a distant city parish. Not until I had reached eighteen, and the dignity of college cap and gown, did I revisit the salty breezes of South Mountain.

Then I came to see friends who were living in the old rectory. About two miles away, by the main road, dwelt certain other friends, with whom I was given to spending most of my evenings, and who possessed some strange charm which would never permit me to say good-night at anything like a seasonable hour.

The distance, as I said, to these friends was about two miles, if you followed the main road; but there was a short cut, a road across the marsh, used chiefly by the hay-makers and the fishermen, not pleasant to travel in wet weather, but good enough for me at all times in the frame of mind in which I found myself.

This road, on either hand, was bordered by a high rail fence, along which rose, here and there, the bleak spire of a ghostly and perishing Lombardy poplar. This is the tree of all least suited to those wind-beaten regions, but none other will the country people plant. Close up to the road, at one point, curved a massive sweep of red dike, and further to the right stretched the miles on miles of naked marsh, till they lost themselves in the lonely, shifting waters of the Basin.

About twenty paces back from the fence, with its big doors opening toward the road, a

conspicuous landmark in all my nightly walks, stood the barn.

I remembered vividly enough, but in a remote, impersonal sort of way, the scene on that far-off sunny summer morning. As, night after night, I swung past the ancient doors, my brain in a pleasant confusion, I never gave the remembrance any heed. Finally, I ceased to recall it, and the rattling of the wind in the time-warped shingles fell on utterly careless ears.

One night, as I started homeward upon the verge of twelve, the marsh seemed all alive with flying gleams. The moon was past the full, white and high; the sky was thick with small black clouds, streaming dizzily across the moon's face, and a moist wind piped steadily, in from the sea.

I was walking swiftly, not much alive to outward impressions, scarce noticing even the strange play of the moon-shadows over the marshes, and had got perhaps a stone's throw past the barn, when a creeping sensation about my skin, and a thrill of nervous apprehension made me stop suddenly and take a look behind.

The impulse seized me unawares, or I should have laughed at myself and gone on without yielding to such a weakness. But it was too late. My gaze darted unerringly to the barn, whose great doors stood wide open. There, swaying almost imperceptibly in the wind, hung the body of our neighbor, as I had seen it that dreadful morning long ago.

For a moment I could hear again my childish sobs, and the remembrance of that horror filled me with self-pity. Then, as the roots of my hair began to stir, my feet set themselves instinctively for flight. This instinct, however, I promptly and sternly repressed. I knew all about these optical illusions, and tried to congratulate myself on this opportunity for investigating one so interesting and vivid. At the same time I gave a hasty side-thought to what would have happened had I been one of the superstitious farmhands or fishermen of the district. I should have taken to my heels in desperate terror, and been ever after faithfully persuaded of having looked upon a veritable ghost.

I said to myself that the apparition, if I looked upon it steadfastly, would vanish as I approached, or, more probably, resolve itself into some chance combination of moonlight and shadows. In fact, my reason was perfectly satisfied that the ghostly vision was due solely to the association of ideas,—I was fresh from my classes in philosophy,—aided and abetted by my own pretty vivid imagination. Yet the natural man, this physical being of mine, revolted in every fibre of the flesh from any closer acquaintance with the thing.

I began, with reluctant feet, to retrace my steps; but as I did so, the vision only grew so much the clearer; and a cold perspiration broke out upon me. Step by step I approached, till I stood just outside the fence, face to face with the apparition.

I leaned against the fence, looking through between the rails; and now, at this distance, every feature came out with awful distinctness—all so horrible in its distortion that I cannot bear to describe it.

As each fresh gust of wind hissed through the chinks, I could see the body swing before it, heavily and slowly. I had to bring all my philosophy to bear, else my feet would have carried me off in a frenzy of flight.

At last I reached the conclusion that since my sight was so helplessly deceived, I should have to depend upon the touch. In no other way could I detect the true basis of the illusion; and this way was a hard one. By much argument and self-persuasion I prevailed upon myself to climb the fence, and with a sort of despairing doggedness to let myself down on the inside.

Just then the clouds thickened over the face of the moon, and the light faded rapidly. To get down inside the fence with that thing was, for a moment, simply sickening, and my eyes dilated with the intensity of my stare. Then common-sense came to the rescue, with a revulsion of feeling, and I laughed—though not very mirthfully—at the thoroughness of my scare.

With an assumption of coolness and defiance I walked right up to the open doors; and when so close that I could have touched it with my walking-stick, the thing swayed gently and faced me in the light of the re-appearing moon.

Could my eyes deceive me? It certainly was our neighbor.

Scarcely knowing what I did, I thrust out my stick and touched it, shrinking back as I did so. What I touched, plain instantly to my sight, was a piece of wood and iron,—some portion of a mowing-machine or reaper, which had been, apparently, repainted and hung up across the door-pole to dry.

It swayed in the wind. The straying fingers of the moonbeams through the chinks pencilled it strangely, and the shadows were huddled black behind it. But now it hung revealed, with no more likeness to a human body than any average well-meaning farm-implement might be expected to have.

With a huge sigh of relief I turned away. As I climbed the fence once more I gave a parting glance toward the yawning doorway of the barn on the marsh. There, as plain as before I had pierced the bubble, swung the body of my neighbor. And all the way home, though I would not turn my head, I felt it at my heels.

Captain Joe and Jamie.

How the wind roared in from the sea over the Tantramar dike!

It was about sunset, and a fierce orange-red gleam, thrusting itself through a rift in the clouds that blackened the sky, cast a strange glow over the wide, desolate marshes. A mile back rose the dark line of the uplands, with small, white farmhouses already hidden in shadow.

Captain Joe Boulton had just left his wagon standing in the dike road, with his four-year-old boy on the seat. He was on the point of crossing the dike, to visit the little landing-place where he kept his boat, when above the rush and whistle of the gale he heard Jamie's voice. He hurried back a few paces before he could make out what the little fellow was saying.

"Pap," cried the child, "I want to get out of the wagon. 'Fraid Bill goin' to run away!"

"Oh, nonsense!" answered Captain Joe. "Bill won't run away. He doesn't know how. You stay there, and don't be frightened, and I'll be right back."

"But, pap, the wind blows me too hard," piped the small voice, pleadingly.

"Oh, all right," said the father, and returning to the wagon he lifted the child gently down and set him on his feet. "Now," he continued, "it's too windy for you out on the other side of the dike. You run over and sit on that big stick, where the wind can't get at you; and wait for me. And be sure you don't let Bill run away."

As he spoke the Captain noticed that the horse, ordinarily one of the most stolid of creatures, seemed to-night peculiarly uneasy; with his head up in the air he was sniffing nervously, and glancing from side to side. As Jamie was trudging through the long grass to the seat which his father had shown him, the Captain said, "Why, Bill *does* seem scary, after all; who'd have thought this wind would scare *him*?"

"Bill don't like it," replied Jamie; "it blows him too hard." And, glad to be out of the gale, which took his breath away, the little fellow seated himself contentedly in the shelter of the dike. Just then there was a clatter of wheels and a crash. Bill had whirled sharply about in the narrow road, upsetting and smashing the light wagon.

Now, utterly heedless of his master's angry shouts, he was galloping in mad haste back toward the uplands, with the fragments of the wagon at his heels. The Captain and Jamie watched him flying before the wind, a red spectre in the lurid light. Then, turning away once more to see to his boat, the Captain remarked, "Well, laddie, I guess we'll have to foot it back when we get through here. But Bill's going to have a licking for this!"

Left to himself, Jamie crouched down behind the dike, a strange, solitary little figure in the wide waste of the marshes. Though the full force of the gale could not reach him, his long fair curls were blown across his face, and he clung determinedly to his small, round hat. For a while he watched the beam of red light, till the jagged fringe of clouds closed over it, and it was gone. Then, in the dusk, he began to feel a little frightened; but he knew his father would soon be back, and he didn't like to call him again. He listened to the waves washing, surging, beating, roaring, on the shoals beyond the dike. Presently he heard them, every now and then, thunder in against the very dike itself. Upon this he grew more frightened, and called to his father several times. But of course the small voice was drowned in the tumult of wind and wave, and the father, working eagerly on the other side of the dike, heard no sound of it.

Close by the shelter in which Jamie was crouching there were several great tubs, made by sawing molasses-hogsheads into halves. These tubs, in fishing season, were carried by the fishermen in their boats, to hold the shad as they were taken from the net. Now they stood empty and dry, but highly flavored with memories of their office. Into the nearest tub Jamie crawled, after having shouted in vain to his father.

To the child's loneliness and fear the tub looked "cosey," as he called it. He curled up in the bottom, and felt a little comforted.

Jamie was the only child of Captain Joe Boulton. When Jamie was about two years old, the Captain had taken the child and his mother on a voyage to Brazil. While calling at Barbadoes the young mother had caught the yellow fever. There she had died, and was buried. After that voyage Captain Joe had given up his ship, and retired to his father's farm at Tantramar. There he devoted himself to Jamie and the farm, but to Jamie especially; and in the summer, partly for amusement, partly for profit, he was accustomed to spend a few weeks in drifting for shad on the wild tides of Chignecto Bay. Wherever he went, Jamie went. If the weather was too rough for Jamie, Captain Joe stayed at home. As for the child, petted without being spoiled, he was growing a tough and manly little soul, and daily more and more the delight of his father's heart.

Why should he leave him curled up in his tub on the edge of the marshes, on a night so wild? In truth, though the wind was tremendous, and now growing to a veritable hurricane, there was no apparent danger or great hardship on the marshes. It was not cold, and there was no rain.

Captain Joe, foreseeing a heavy gale, together with a tide higher than usual, had driven over to the dike to make his little craft more secure.

He found the boat already in confusion; and the wind, when once he had crossed out of the dike's

shelter, was so much more violent than he had expected, that it took him some time to get things "snugged up." He felt that Jamie was all right, as long as he was out of the wind. He was only a stone's throw distant, though hidden by the great rampart of the dike. But the Captain began to wish that he had left the little fellow at home, as he knew the long walk over the rough road, in the dark and the furious gale, would sorely tire the sturdy little legs. Every now and then, as vigorously and cheerfully he worked in the pitching smack, the Captain sent a shout of greeting over the dike to keep the little lad from getting lonely. But the storm blew his voice far up into the clouds, and Jamie, in his tub, never heard it.

By the time Captain Joe had put everything shipshape, he noticed that his plunging boat had drifted close to the dike. He had never before seen the tide reach such a height. The waves that were rocking the little craft so violently, were a mere back-wash from the great seas which, as he now observed with a pang, were thundering in a little further up the coast. Just at this spot the dike was protected from the full force of the storm by Snowdons' Point. "What if the dike should break up yonder, and this fearful tide get in on the marshes?" thought the Captain, in a sudden anguish of apprehension. Leaving the boat to dash itself to pieces if it liked, he clambered in breathless haste out on to the top of the dike, shouting to Jamie as he did so. There was no answer. Where he had left the little one but a half-hour back, the tide was seething three or four feet deep over the grasses.

Dark as the night had grown, it grew blacker before the father's eyes. For an instant his heart stood still with horror, then he sprang down into the flood. The water boiled up nearly to his arm-pits. With his feet he felt the great timber, fastened in the dike, on which his boy had been sitting. He peered through the dark, with straining eyes grown preternaturally keen. He could see nothing on the wide, swirling surface save two or three dark objects, far out in the marsh. These he recognized at once as his fish-tubs gone afloat. Then he ran up the dike toward the Point. "Surely," he groaned in his heart, "Jamie has climbed up the dike when he saw the water coming, and I'll find him along the top here, somewhere, looking and crying for me!"

Then, running like a madman along the narrow summit, with a band of iron tightening about his heart, the Captain reached the Point, where the dike took its beginning.

No sign of the little one; but he saw the marshes everywhere laid waste. Then he turned round and sped back, thinking perhaps Jamie had wandered in the other direction. Passing the now buried landing-place, he saw with a curious distinctness, as if in a picture, that the boat was turned bottom up, and glued to the side of the dike.

Suddenly he checked his speed with a violent effort, and threw himself upon his face, clutching the short grasses of the dike. He had just saved himself from falling into the sea. Had he had time to think, he might not have tried to save himself, believing as he did that the child who was his very life had perished. But the instinct of self-preservation had asserted itself blindly, and just in time. Before his feet the dike was washed away, and through the chasm the waves were breaking furiously.

Meanwhile, what had become of Jamie?

The wind had made him drowsy, and before he had been many minutes curled up in the tub, he was sound asleep.

When the dike gave way, some distance from Jamie's queer retreat, there came suddenly a great rush of water among the tubs, and some were straightway floated off. Then others a little heavier followed, one by one; and, last of all, the heaviest, that containing Jamie and his fortunes. The water rose rapidly, but back here there came no waves, and the child slept as peacefully as if at home in his crib. Little the Captain thought, when his eyes wandered over the floating tubs, that the one nearest to him was freighted with his heart's treasure! And well it was that Jamie did not hear his shouts and wake! Had he done so, he would have at once sprung to his feet and been tipped out into the flood.

By this time the great tide had reached its height. Soon it began to recede, but slowly, for the storm kept the waters gathered, as it were, into a heap at the head of the bay. All night the wind raged on, wrecking the smacks and schooners along the coast, breaking down the dikes in a hundred places, flooding all the marshes, and drowning many cattle in the salt pastures. All night the Captain, hopeless and mute in his agony of grief, lay clutching the grasses on the dike-top, not noticing when at length the waves ceased to drench him with their spray. All night, too, slept Jamie in his tub.

Right across the marsh the strange craft drifted before the wind, never getting into the region where the waves were violent. Such motion as there was—and at times it was somewhat lively—seemed only to lull the child to a sounder slumber. Toward daybreak the tub grounded at the foot of the uplands, not far from the edge of the road. The waters gradually slunk away, as if ashamed of their wild vagaries. And still the child slept on.

As the light broke over the bay, coldly pink and desolately gleaming, Captain Joe got up and looked about him. His eyes were tearless, but his face was gray and hard, and deep lines had stamped themselves across it during the night.

Seeing that the marshes were again uncovered, save for great shallow pools left here and there, he set out to find the body of his boy. After wandering aimlessly for perhaps an hour, the Captain began to study the direction in which the wind had been blowing. This was almost exactly with

the road which led to his home on the uplands. As he noticed this, a wave of pity crossed his heart, at thought of the terrible anxiety his father and mother had all that night been enduring. Then in an instant there seemed to unroll before him the long, slow years of the desolation of that home without Jamie.

All this time he was moving along the soaked road, scanning the marsh in every direction. When he had covered about half the distance, he was aware of his father, hastening with feeble eagerness to meet him.

The night of watching had made the old man haggard, but his face lit up at sight of his son. As he drew near, however, and saw no sign of Jamie, and marked the look upon the Captain's face, the gladness died out as quickly as it had come. When the two men met, the elder put out his hand in silence, and the younger clasped it. There was no room for words. Side by side the two walked slowly homeward. With restless eyes, ever dreading lest they should find that which they sought, the father and son looked everywhere,—except in a certain old fish-tub which they passed. The tub stood a little to one side of the road. Just at this time a sparrow lit on the tub's edge, and uttered a loud and startled chirp at sight of the sleeping child. As the bird flew off precipitately, Jamie opened his eyes, and gazed up in astonishment at the blue sky over his head. He stretched out his hand and felt the rough sides of the tub. Then, in complete bewilderment, he clambered to his feet. Why, there was his father, walking away somewhere without him! And grandpapa, too! Jamie felt aggrieved.

"Pap!" he cried, in a loud but tearful voice, "where you goin' to?"

A great wave of light seemed to break across the landscape, as the two men turned and saw the little golden head shining, dishevelled, over the edge of the tub. The Captain caught his breath with a sort of sob, and rushed to snatch the little one in his arms; while the grandfather fell on his knees in the road, and his trembling lips moved silently.

Strayed.

In the Cabineau Camp, of unlucky reputation, there was a young ox of splendid build, but of a wild and restless nature.

He was one of a yoke, of part Devon blood, large, dark-red, all muscle and nerve, and with wide magnificent horns. His yoke-fellow was a docile steady worker, the pride of his owner's heart; but he himself seemed never to have been more than half broken in. The woods appeared to draw him by some spell. He wanted to get back to the pastures where he had roamed untrammelled of old with his fellow-steers. The remembrance was in his heart of the dewy mornings when the herd used to feed together on the sweet grassy hillocks, and of the clover-smelling heats of June when they would gather hock-deep in the pools under the green willow-shadows. He hated the yoke, he hated the winter; and he imagined that in the wild pastures he remembered it would be for ever summer. If only he could get back to those pastures!

One day there came the longed-for opportunity; and he seized it. He was standing unyoked beside his mate, and none of the teamsters were near. His head went up in the air, and with a snort of triumph he dashed away through the forest.

For a little while there was a vain pursuit. At last the lumbermen gave it up. "Let him be!" said his owner, "an' I rayther guess he'll turn up agin when he gits peckish. He kaint browse on spruce buds an' lung-wort."

Plunging on with long gallop through the snow he was soon miles from camp. Growing weary he slackened his pace. He came down to a walk. As the lonely red of the winter sunset began to stream through the openings of the forest, flushing the snows of the tiny glades and swales, he grew hungry, and began to swallow unsatisfying mouthfuls of the long moss which roughened the tree-trunks. Ere the moon got up he had filled himself with this fodder, and then he lay down in a little thicket for the night.

But some miles back from his retreat a bear had chanced upon his foot-prints. A strayed steer! That would be an easy prey. The bear started straightway in pursuit. The moon was high in heaven when the crouched ox heard his pursuer's approach. He had no idea what was coming, but he rose to his feet and waited.

The bear plunged boldly into the thicket, never dreaming of resistance. With a muffled roar the ox charged upon him and bore him to the ground. Then he wheeled, and charged again, and the astonished bear was beaten at once. Gored by those keen horns he had no stomach for further encounter, and would fain have made his escape; but as he retreated the ox charged him again, dashing him against a huge trunk. The bear dragged himself up with difficulty, beyond his opponent's reach; and the ox turned scornfully back to his lair.

At the first yellow of dawn the restless creature was again upon the march. He pulled more mosses by the way, but he disliked them the more intensely now because he thought he must be nearing his ancient pastures with their tender grass and their streams. The snow was deeper about him, and his hatred of the winter grew apace. He came out upon a hillside, partly open, whence the pine had years before been stripped, and where now grew young birches thick

together. Here he browsed on the aromatic twigs, but for him it was harsh fare.

As his hunger increased he thought a little longingly of the camp he had deserted, but he dreamed not of turning back. He would keep on till he reached his pastures, and the glad herd of his comrades licking salt out of the trough beside the accustomed pool. He had some blind instinct as to his direction, and kept his course to the south very strictly, the desire in his heart continually leading him aright.

That afternoon he was attacked by a panther, which dropped out of a tree and tore his throat. He dashed under a low branch and scraped his assailant off, then, wheeling about savagely, put the brute to flight with his first mad charge. The panther sprang back into his tree, and the ox continued his quest.

Soon his steps grew weaker, for the panther's cruel claws had gone deep into his neck, and his path was marked with blood. Yet the dream in his great wild eyes was not dimmed as his strength ebbed away. His weakness he never noticed or heeded. The desire that was urging him absorbed all other thoughts,—even, almost, his sense of hunger. This, however, it was easy for him to assuage, after a fashion, for the long, gray, unnourishing mosses were abundant.

By and by his path led him into the bed of a stream, whose waters could be heard faintly tinkling on thin pebbles beneath their coverlet of ice and snow. His slow steps conducted him far along this open course. Soon after he had disappeared, around a curve in the distance there came the panther, following stealthily upon his crimsoned trail. The crafty beast was waiting till the bleeding and the hunger should do its work, and the object of its inexorable pursuit should have no more heart left for resistance.

This was late in the afternoon. The ox was now possessed with his desire, and would not lie down for any rest. All night long, through the gleaming silver of the open spaces, through the weird and checkered gloom of the deep forest, heedless even of his hunger, or perhaps driven the more by it as he thought of the wild clover bunches and tender timothy awaiting him, the solitary ox strove on. And all night, lagging far behind in his unabating caution, the panther followed him.

At sunrise the worn and stumbling animal came out upon the borders of the great lake, stretching its leagues of unshadowed snow away to the south before him. There was his path, and without hesitation he followed it. The wide and frost-bound water here and there had been swept clear of its snows by the wind, but for the most part its covering lay unruffled; and the pale dove-colors, and saffrons, and rose-lilacs of the dawn were sweetly reflected on its surface.

The doomed ox was now journeying very slowly, and with the greatest labor. He staggered at every step, and his beautiful head drooped almost to the snow. When he had got a great way out upon the lake, at the forest's edge appeared the pursuing panther, emerging cautiously from the coverts. The round tawny face and malignant green eyes were raised to peer out across the expanse. The laboring progress of the ox was promptly marked. Dropping its nose again to the ensanguined snow, the beast resumed his pursuit, first at a slow trot, and then at a long, elastic gallop. By this time the ox's quest was nearly done. He plunged forward upon his knees, rose again with difficulty, stood still, and looked around him. His eyes were clouding over, but he saw, dimly, the tawny brute that was now hard upon his steps. Back came a flash of the old courage, and he turned, horns lowered, to face the attack. With the last of his strength he charged, and the panther paused irresolutely; but the wanderer's knees gave way beneath his own impetus, and his horns ploughed the snow. With a deep bellowing groan he rolled over on his side, and the longing, and the dream of the pleasant pastures, faded from his eyes. With a great spring the panther was upon him, and the eager teeth were at his throat,—but he knew nought of it. No wild beast, but his own desire, had conquered him.

When the panther had slaked his thirst for blood, he raised his head, and stood with his fore-paws resting on the dead ox's side, and gazed all about him.

To one watching from the lake shore, had there been any one to watch in that solitude, the wild beast and his prey would have seemed but a speck of black on the gleaming waste. At the same hour, league upon league back in the depth of the ancient forest, a lonely ox was lowing in his stanchions, restless, refusing to eat, grieving for the absence of his yoke-fellow.

The Eye of Gluskâp.

I.

It was close upon high tide, and the creek that wound in through the diked marshes was rapidly filling to the brim with the swirling, cold, yellow-gray waters of Minas. The sun, but half risen, yet lingered on the wooded crest of the Gaspereau hills; while above hung a dappled sky of pink and pale amber and dove-color. A yellow light streamed sharply down across the frost-whitened meadows, the smouldering ruins of Grand Pré village, and out upon the glittering expanse of Minas Basin. The beams tinged brightly the cordage and half-furled sails of two ships that rode at anchor in the Basin, near the shore. With a pitilessly revealing whiteness the rays descended on the mournful encampment at the creek's mouth, where a throng of Acadian peasants were getting ready to embark for exile.

"Late grew the year, and stormy was the sea."

Already had five ships sailed away with their sorrowful freight, disappearing around the towering front of Blomidon, from the straining eyes of friends and kinsfolk left behind. Another ship would sail out with the next ebb, and all was sad confusion and unwilling haste till the embarkation should be accomplished. The ship's boats were loaded down with rude household stuff, and boxes full of homespun linens and woollens.

Children were crying with the cold, and a few women were weeping silently; but the partings which had succeeded each other at intervals throughout the last few weeks had dulled the edge of anguish, and most of the Acadians wore an air of heavy resignation. The New England soldiers on guard gave what help they could, but sullenly; for they were weary of the misery that they had so long been forced to watch.

The people were huddled on a little patch of marsh within a curve of the dike. Beyond the dike there spread a stretch of reddish brown salt-flats, covered with water only at the highest spring-tides, and now meagrely sprinkled with sharp-edged blades and tufts of the gray salt-grasses. The flats were soft between the bunches of the grass, and a broad track was trampled into mire by the passing down of many feet from the dike's edge to the boats.

In a work like this there are always a thousand unlooked-for delays, and before half the embarkation was effected the tide had reached the full, and paused and turned to ebb. As the strip of shining red mud began to widen between the grasses and the water's edge, the bustle and confusion increased. Sometimes a woman who had already stepped into the boat, thinking that her people had preceded her, would spring over the side into the shallow water, and rush, sobbing with anxious fear, back to the encampment. Sometimes a child would lose sight of its father or mother in the press, and lift its shrill voice in a wail of desolation which found piteous echo in every Acadian heart.

Lower and lower fell the tide. The current was now thick and red with the mud which it was dragging from the flats to re-deposit on some crescent shoal at the mouth of the Canard or Piziquid. Over the dike and down toward the waiting boats came an old man, bent with years, supported by his son and his son's wife a middle-aged couple. The decrepit figure in its quaint Acadian garb was one to be remembered. Old Remi Corveau was a man of means among the Acadian peasants. His feet were incased in high-top moccasins of vividly embroidered moose-hide, and his legs in gaiters, or *mitasses*, of dark blue woollen homespun, laced with strips of red cloth. His coat was a long and heavy garment of homespun blanket, dyed to a yellowish brown with many decoctions of a plant which the country-folk now know as "yaller-weed." A cap of coarse sealskin covered his head, and was tied beneath his chin with a woollen scarf of dull red. The old man clutched his stick in his mittened right hand, muttering to himself, and seemed but half aware of what was going on. When he came to the edge of the wet, red clay, however, he straightened himself and looked about him. He gazed at the boats and at the anchored ships beyond. A light of sudden intelligence flashed into his feeble eyes. He turned half round and looked back upon the ruined village, while his son and daughter paused respectfully.

"Hurry along there now," exclaimed one of the guards, impatiently; and the Acadian couple, understanding the tone and gesture, pulled at their father's arms to lead him into the boat. The old man's eyes flamed wildly, and crying, "*J'ne veux pas! j'ne veux pas!*" he broke from them and struggled back toward the dike. Instantly his son overtook him, picked him up in his arms, and carried him, now sobbing feebly, down to the boat, where he laid him on a pile of blankets. As the laden craft moved slowly toward the ship the old man's complainings ceased. When they went to hoist him over the ship's side they discovered that he was dead.

And now the very last boatload was well-nigh ready to start. The parish priest, who was staying behind to sail with the next and final ship, was bidding his sad farewells. A young woman drew near the boat, but hardly seemed to see the priest's kind face of greeting, so anxiously was she fumbling in the depths of a small bag which she carried on her arm.

The bag was of yellow caribou-skin, worked by Indian fingers in many-colored designs of dyed porcupine quills.

"What's the matter, Marie, my child?" inquired the priest, gently. "Hast thou lost something more, besides thy country and thy father's house?"

As he spoke the girl, whose name was Marie Beaugrand, looked up with a sigh of relief, and turned to him affectionately.

"I have found it, Father! *V'la!*" she exclaimed, holding up a gigantic amethyst of marvellous brilliancy. "Pierrot gave it to me to keep for him, you know," she added timidly, "because of the bad luck that goes with it when a *man* has it!"

This was no time to chide the girl for her belief in the superstition which he knew was connected with the wondrous jewel. The priest merely smiled and said: "Well, well, guard it carefully, my little one; and may the Holy Saints enable it to mend the fortunes of thee and thy Pierrot! Farewell; and God have thee ever in his keeping, my dear child!"

Hardly were the words well past his lips when the girl gave a scream of dismay, and sprang forward down the slippery red incline. She had dropped the amethyst, by some incomprehensible mischance. The priest beheld the purple gleam as it flashed from between the girl's fingers. Her

high cap of coarse undyed French linen fell away from her black locks as she stooped to grope passionately in the ooze which had swallowed up her treasure. In a moment the comely picture of her dark blue sleeves, gray petticoat, and trim red stockings was sadly disfigured by the mud. The girl's despair was piercing; but the impatient guards, who knew not what she had lost, were on the point of taking her forcibly to the boat, when Colonel Winslow, who stood near by, checked them peremptorily.

Seeing the priest gird up his cassock and step forward to help the sobbing girl in her search; Colonel Winslow questioned of the interpreter as to what the damsel had lost to cause such lament.

"A toy, a mere gaud, your Excellency," said the shrewd interpreter, giving Winslow a title which he would not have employed had there been any one present of higher rank than the New England Colonel. "A mere gaud of a purple stone; but they do say it would be worth a thousand pounds if one had it in London. These poor folk call it the 'Witch Stone,' because, they say, it brings bad luck to the man that has it. The more learned sort smile at such a superstition, and call the stone 'The Star' by reason of its surpassing beauty,—Pierrot Desbarat's star, they call it now, since that youth picked it up last spring on Blomidon, where it had once before been found and strangely lost again. They say the youth gave the jewel to his betrothed yonder to keep for him, if so she might ward off the evil fortune."

The New England colonel's high-arched eyebrows went up into his forehead at this tale. His round and ruddy face softened with sympathy for the poor girl's despair. Winslow was convinced of the wisdom and justice of the orders which he was carrying out so firmly; but he wished the task of removing the Acadians had been confided to any other hands than his. "This affair is more grievous to me," he wrote to a friend about this time, "than any service I was ever employed in."

Presently, remarking that the girl's efforts were fruitless, and the tide ebbing rapidly, Winslow ordered several of his soldiers down into the mud to assist her search. Veiling their reluctance the men obeyed, and the ooze was explored to the very water's edge. At length, realizing that the departure could not safely be longer delayed, Winslow ordered the quest to cease.

As the girl turned back to the boat the colonel caught sight of the despair upon her face; and reddening in the folds of his double chin he slipped some gold pieces into the muddy hand of the priest.

"Be good enough, sir, to give the damsel these," he said, stiffly. "Tell her I will have the search continued. If the stone is found she shall have it. If any one steals it I will hang him."

As the priest, leaning over the boat-side, slipped the pieces into the buckskin bag, Colonel Winslow turned away, and rather roughly ordered the bespattered soldiers back to camp to clean themselves.

After the priest had bid farewell to the still weeping Marie and the little company about her, he stood waiting to receive the other boat which was now returning from the ship. He saw that something unexpected had taken place. His old parishioner was lying back in the stern, covered with a blanket, while his son and daughter lamented over him with the unrestraint of children. On the following day, under the stern guard of the Puritan soldiers, there was a funeral in the little cemetery on the hillside, and the frozen sods were heaped upon the last Acadian grave of Grand Pré village. Remi Corveau had chosen death rather than exile.

And what was the jewel whose loss had caused such grief to Marie Beaugrand? For generations the great amethyst had sparkled in the front of Blomidon, visible at intervals in certain lights and from certain standpoints, and again unseen for months or years together. The Indians called it "The Eye of Gluskâp," and believed that to meddle with it at all would bring down swiftly the vengeance of the demigod. Fixed high on the steepest face of the cliff, the gem had long defied the search of the most daring climbers. It lurked, probably, under some over-hanging brow of ancient rock, as in a fit and inviolable setting. At length, some years before the date of the events I have been describing, a French sailor, fired by the far-off gleaming of the gem, had succeeded in locating the spot of splendor. Alone, with a coil of rope, he made his way to the top of the ancient cape. A few days later his bruised and lifeless body was found among the rocks below the height, and taken for burial to the little hillside cemetery by the Gaspereau. The fellow had evidently succeeded in finding the amethyst and dislodging it from its matrix, for when next the elfin light gleamed forth it was seen to come from a point far down the cliff, not more than a hundred feet above the tide.

Here it had been found by Pierrot Desbarats, who, laughing to scorn the superstitious fears of his fellow-villagers, had brought it home in triumph. It was his purpose to go, at some convenient season, to Halifax, and there sell the matchless crystal, of whose value the priest had been able to give him some idea. But that very spring ill luck had crossed the threshold of Pierrot's cabin, a threshold over which he was even then preparing to lead Marie Beaugrand as his bride. Two of his oxen died mysteriously, his best cow slipped her calf, his horse got a strain in the loins, and his apple blossoms were nipped by a frost which passed by his neighbors' trees. Thereupon, heeding the words of an old Micmac squaw, who had said that the spell of the stone had no power upon a woman, Pierrot had placed his treasure in Marie's keeping till such time as it could be transformed into English gold—and from that day the shadow of ill-fate had seemed to pass from him, until the edict of banishment came upon Grand Pré like a bolt out of a cloudless heaven.

From the ship, on whose deck he awaited her coming, Pierrot saw the apparently causeless accident which had befallen the gem, and watched with dry lips and burning eyes the vain endeavors of the search. His hands trembled and his heart was bitter against the girl for a few moments; but as the boat drew near, and he caught the misery and fathomless self-reproach on her averted face, his anger melted away in pity. He took Marie's hand as she came over the bulwarks, and whispered to her: "Don't cry about it, '*Tite Chérie*, it would have brought us bad luck anywhere we went. Let's thank the Holy Saints it's gone."

As the ship forged slowly across the Basin and came beneath the shadow of the frown of Blomidon, Pierrot pointed out first the perilous ledge to which he had climbed for the vanished "star," and then the tide-washed hollow under the cliff, where they had picked up the body of the luckless sailor from St. Malo. "Who knows, Marie," continued Pierrot, "if thou hadst not lost that evil stone thou might'st one day have seen *me* in such a case as that sailor came unto!" And then, not because she was at all convinced by such reasoning, but because her lover's voice was kind, the girl looked up into Pierrot's face and made shift to dry her tears.

II.

Late in December the last ship sailed away. Then the last roof-tree of Grand Pré village went down in ashes; and Winslow's lieutenant, Osgood, with a sense of heavy duty done, departed with his New England troops. Winslow himself had gone some weeks before.

For five years after the great exile the Acadian lands lay deserted, and the fogs that gathered morning by morning on the dark top of Blomidon looked down on a waste where came and went no human footstep. All the while the fated amethyst lay hidden, as far as tradition tells, beneath the red ooze and changing tides of the creek.

Then settlers began to come in, and the empty fields were taken up by men of English speech. Once more a village arose on Grand Pré, and cider-presses creaked on the hills of Gaspereau. Of the Acadians, to keep their memory green on the meadows they had captured from the sea, there remained the interminable lines of mighty dike, the old apple orchards and the wind-breaks of tall poplars, and some gaping cellars full of ruins wherein the newcomers dug persistently for treasure.

By and by certain of the settlers, who occupied the higher grounds back of the village, began to talk of a star which they had seen, gleaming with a strange violet radiance from a patch of unreclaimed salt marsh by the mouth of the creek. In early evening only could the elfin light be discerned, and then it was visible to none but those who stood upon the heights. Soon, from no one knew where, came tales of "The Eye of Gluskâp," and "The Witch's Stone," and "*L'Etoile de Pierrot Desbarat*," and the death of the sailor of St. Malo, and the losing of the gem on the day the ship sailed forth. Of the value of the amethyst the most fabulous stories went abroad, and for a season the good wives of the settlers had but a sorry time of it, cleansing their husbands' garments from a daily defilement of mud.

While the vain search was going on, an old Scotchman, shrewder than his fellows, was taking out his title-deeds to the whole expanse of salt-flats, which covered perhaps a score of acres. Having quietly made his position secure at Halifax, Dugald McIntyre came down on his fellow-villagers with a firm celerity, and the digging and the defiling of garments came suddenly to an end by Grand Pré Creek. Soon a line of new dike encompassed the flats, the spring tides swept no more across those sharp grasses which had bent beneath the unreturning feet of the Acadians, and the prudent Scot found himself the richer by twenty acres of exhaustlessly fertile meadow, worth a hundred dollars an acre any day. Moreover, he felt that *he had the amethyst*. Could he not see it almost any evening toward sundown by merely climbing the hillside back of his snug homestead? How divinely it gleamed, with long, pale, steady rays, just inside the lines of circumvallation which he had so cunningly drawn about it! In its low lurking-place beside the hubbub of the recurring ebb and flow, it seemed to watch, like an unwinking eye, for the coming of curious and baleful fates.

But it never fell to the Scotchman's fortune to behold his treasure close at hand. To the hill-top he had to go whenever he would gloat upon its beauty. To the most diligent and tireless searching of every inch of the marsh's surface it refused to yield up its implacably virginal lustre. Sometimes, though rarely, it was visible as the moon drew near her setting, and then it would glitter whitely and malignantly, like a frosty spear-point.

At last the settlers began to whisper that the Star was not in the marsh at all, but that Dugald McIntyre, after the fashion of these canny folk, had o'er-reached himself, and run the lines of the dike right over it. That it could continue to shine under such discouraging circumstances, the settlement by this time scorned to doubt. To "The Eye of Gluskâp" the people were ready to attribute any powers, divine or devilish.

Whether the degree of possession to which Dugald McIntyre had attained could be considered to constitute a legal ownership of the jewel or not is a question for lawyers, not for the mere teller of a plain tale, the mere digger among the facts of a perishing history. Suffice it to say that the finger of ill-fortune soon designated Dugald McIntyre as the man whose claim to the "Eye" was acknowledged by the Fates.

From the time of the completion of the new dike dated the Scotchman's troubles. His cattle one year, his crops another, seemed to find the seasons set against them. Dugald's prudence,

watchfulness, and untiring industry minimized every stroke; nevertheless, things went steadily to the worse.

It was Destiny *versus* Dugald McIntyre, and with true Scottish determination Dugald braced himself to the contest. He made a brave fight; but wherever there was a doubtful point at issue, the Court Invisible ruled inexorably and without a scruple against the possessor of the "Eye of Gluskâp." When he was harvesting his first crop of hay off the new dike—and a fine crop it seemed likely to be—the rains set in with a persistence that at length reduced the windrows to a condition of flavorless gray straw. Dugald McIntyre set his jaws grimly together, took good hay from another meadow to mix with the ruined crop, and by a discreet construction of his bundles succeeded in selling the whole lot at a good price to his most gracious Majesty's government at Halifax. This bold stroke seemed to daunt the Fates for a time, and while they were recovering from their confusion affairs went bravely with Dugald. When haying season came round again the weather kept favorable, and the hay was all harvested in perfect shape. Dugald was much too prudent to boast; but in his innermost heart he indulged a smile of triumph. That night his barns and outbuildings were burned to the ground, and two fine horses with them; and his house was saved hardly. This was too much even for him. Refusing to play longer a losing game, he sold the "New Marsh" at some sacrifice to a settler who laughed at superstition. This sceptical philosopher, however, proved open to conviction. A twelvemonth later he was ready almost to give the land away, and the "Eye of Gluskâp" with it. For a mere song the rich and smiling tract, carrying a heavy crop just ready for the scythe, was purchased by a young New Englander with an admirable instinct for business. This young man went to Halifax and mortgaged the land and crop to their full value; and with the cash he left to seek his fortune. Thus the "Eye of Gluskâp," and the Marsh with it, came into the possession of a widow of great wealth, on whom the spell, it seemed, was of none effect. Her heirs were in England, and it came to pass, in the course of a generation, that Grand Pré knew not the owners of the fated Marsh, and could not tell what troubles, if any, were falling upon the possessors of "The Star." Nevertheless the star kept up its gleaming, a steady eye of violet under the sunsets, a ray of icy pallor when the large moon neared her setting; and at length it was discovered that the enchanted jewel had yet other periods of manifestation. Belated wayfarers, on stormy December nights, had caught the unearthly eye-beam when no other light could be seen in earth or sky. When this took place the tide was always near about the full, and beating hoarsely all along the outer dykes. Then would be heard, between the pauses of the wind, the rattle of oars at the mouth of the creek, and the creaking of ships' cordage, and anon the sound of children crying with the cold. If voices came from the spot where the "New Marsh" lay unseen and the "Star" shone coldly watchful, they were for the most part in a tongue which the wayfarers could not understand. But now and again, some said, there were orders spoken in English, and then the clank of arms and the tramp of marching feet. Of course these things were held in question by many of the settlers, but there were none so hardy as to suffer themselves to be caught upon the "New Marsh" after nightfall. "The Eye of Gluskâp" discerned a supernatural terror in many a heart that claimed renown for courage.

III.

A hundred years had rolled down the hillsides of the Gaspereau and out across the Minas tides into the fogs and hollows of the past; and still the patch of dyked land at the creek's mouth was lit by the unsearchable lustre of the "Eye of Gluskâp."

As for the various distinguished scientists who undertook to unravel the mystery, either much study had made them blind, or the lights were unpropitious; for not one of them ever attained to a vision of the violet gleam. They went away with laughter on their lips.

One spring there came to Grand Pré a young Englishman named Desbra, a long-limbed, ample-chested youth, with whitish hair and ruddy skin, and clear, straightforward blue eyes. Desbra was resolved to learn farming in a new country, so he bought an old farm on the uplands, with an exhausted orchard, and was for a time surprised at the infertility of the soil.

Gradually he made himself master of the situation, and of some more desirable acres, and also, incidentally it seemed, of the affections of a maiden who lived not far from Grand Pré.

Dugald McIntyre had prospered again when the "Eye of Gluskâp" no longer looked malignantly on his fortunes; and to his descendants he had left one of the finest properties within view of Blomidon. It was Jessie McIntyre, his great-grandchild, who had captured the heart of young Desbra.

One rosy September afternoon, as Jessie stood in the porch where the wild grapes clustered half ripe, the young Englishman came swinging his long legs up the slope, sprang over the fence between the apple trees, and caught the maiden gleefully in his arms.

"Congratulate me, Mistress McIntyre," he cried, as the girl pushed him away in mock disapproval. "I have just made a bargain,—a famous bargain,—a thing I never did before in my life."

"Good boy," replied Jessie, standing a-tip-toe to pat the pale brush of her lover's well-cropped hair. "Good boy, we'll make a Blue Nose of you yet! And what is this famous bargain, may I ask?"

"Why, I've just bought what so many of your fellow-countrymen call the 'Noo Ma'sh,'" answered Desbra. "I have got it for twenty dollars an acre, and it's worth a hundred any day! I've got the deed, and the thing's an accomplished fact."

Jessie looked grave, and removed herself from her lover's embrace in order to lend impressiveness to her words. "Oh, Jack, Jack!" she said, "you don't know what you have done! You have become a man of Destiny, which I don't believe you want to be at all. You have bought the 'Star.' You have made yourself the master of the 'Witch's Stone.' You have summoned the 'Eye of Gluskâp' to keep watch upon you critically. In fact, it would take a long time to tell you all you have done. But one thing more you must do,—you must get rid of that famous bargain of yours without delay. I'm not superstitious, Jack, but truly in this case I am disturbed. Bad luck, horrid bad luck, has always befallen any man owning that piece of Marsh, for the Marsh contains the Witch's Stone, and a spell is on the man that possesses that fatal jewel."

Jack Desbra laughed and recaptured the maiden. "All right," said he, "if a man mustn't possess it, I shall give it away to a woman! How will that suit you, my lady?"

Jessie looked dubious, but said anything would be better than for him to keep it himself. Whereupon the young man continued: "Put on your hat, then, and come down into the village with me, and I will forthwith transfer the property, with all appurtenances thereof, to Jessie McIntyre, spinster, of the parish of Grand Pré, County of Kings, Province of Nova Scotia, in her Majesty's Dominion of Canada; and the 'Eye of Gluskâp' will find something better to keep watch upon than me!"

To this proposal Miss Jessie, being in the main a very level-headed young lady, in spite of her little superstitions, assented without demur, and the two proceeded to the village.

On the way thither and back, Desbra learned all the history of the "Star on the Marsh," as I have endeavored to unfold it in the preceding pages. As it happened, however, there was no mention of Pierrot Desbarat's surname in Jessie's account. Marie Beaugrand she spoke of, but Marie's *fiancé*, the last finder of the amethyst, she simply called Pierrot.

"But have you yourself ever seen the sinister glory you describe?" asked Desbra, as they neared the McIntyre home. Jessie's story had interested him keenly. He was charmed with the tale as constituting at least a notable bit of folk-lore.

"Of course I've seen it," replied Jessie, almost petulantly. "I dare say I can show it to you now. Let us go to the top of the hill yonder, where that old poplar stands up all by itself. That tree is a relic of the Acadians, and the 'Eye' watches it, I fancy, when it has nothing better to look at!"

When the lovers reached the hill-top and paused beside the ancient and decaying poplar, the sun had just gone down behind North Mountain, and a sombre splendor flooded the giant brow of Blomidon. The girl pointed toward the mouth of the creek. Desbra could not restrain a cry of astonishment. From just inside the dike, in a deep belt of olive shadow, came a pale, fine violet ray, unwavering and inexplicable. Presently he remarked:—

"That is a fine gem of yours, my dear; and if I owned such a treasure I shouldn't leave it lying around in that careless fashion. Who knows what might happen to it, away down there on the New Marsh? What if a gull, now, should come along and swallow it, to help him grind his fish bones."

"Don't be silly, Jack!" said the girl, her eyes dilating as she watched the mystic beam. "You know you don't half like the look of it yourself. It makes you feel uncanny, and you're just talking nonsense to make believe you don't think there is anything queer about it!"

"Quite the contrary, I assure you, O Mistress of the Witch Stone, O Cynosure of the 'Eye of Gluskâp!'" answered Desbra. "I am, indeed, so much impressed that I was taking pains to remind the Powers of the transfer I have just effected! I desire to hide me from the 'Eye of Gluskâp' by taking refuge behind a certain little spinster's petticoats!"

There was a long silence, while Desbra kept gazing on the mystic gleam as if fascinated. At last Jessie made a move as if she thought it time to return to the house, whereupon the young man, waking out of his fit of abstraction, said slowly:—

"Do you know, it seems to me now as if you had been telling me an old story. I feel as if you had merely recalled to my memory incidents which I had long forgotten. I remember it all now, with much that I think you did not tell me. Looking at that strange point of light I have seen,—*did* you tell me anything of an old man dying in a boat and being brought to shore just as Marie was leaving for the ship? That is a scene that stands out upon my memory sharply now. And did you say anything about an old priest? I saw him leaning over the side of the boat and slipping something into Mane's sack."

"No," said Jessie, "I didn't tell you any of that, though it all happened as you say. Let us go home, Jack, it frightens me terribly. Oh, I wish you hadn't bought that Marsh!" and she clung trembling to the young man's arm.

"But what can it mean?" persisted Desbra, as they descended the hill. "Why should I think that I was there when it all happened,—that it all happened to me, in fact? My grandmother was of French blood,—perhaps Acadian blood, for my grandfather married her, in the West Indies. After the exile the Acadians, you say, were scattered all over the face of the New World! Can there be in my veins any of the blood of that unhappy people?"

Jessie stopped short and looked up at her lover's face. "Why, your name," she cried, "sounds as if it might have been French once!"

"My grandfather's name was Manners Sutton," responded Desbra, musing. "My father had to take my grandfather's name to inherit some property in Martinique. I, of course, pronounce my name in English fashion, but it is spelled just as my father's was—D-e-s-b-r-a!"

As the young Englishman gave his name its French accent and pronunciation, Jessie uttered a little cry of intelligence and wonder. She looked at her lover a moment in silence, and then said very slowly, very deliberately, pausing for every word to tell.

"The name of Marie's lover, the young man who found the 'Witch's Stone,' was—Pierrot Desbarats! D-e-s-b-a-r-a-t-s. You are none other, Jack, than the great-grandson of Marie and Pierrot."

"Truly," said Desbra, "when I come to think of it, the name was spelled that way once upon a time!"

"Well, you shall *not* be a man of Destiny, Jack!" exclaimed the girl. "I won't have it! But as for me, that is another matter. We shall see if the 'Eye of Gluskâp' has any malign influence over *me*!"

IV.

Early in December, having just returned to Grand Pré from their wedding journey, Jack Desbra and his wife were standing one evening in a window that looked out across the marshes and the Basin. It was a wild night. A terrific wind had come up with the tide, and the waves raged in thunderously all along the Minas Dykes. There was nothing visible without, so thick was the loud darkness of the storm; but the young Englishman had suggested that they should look to see if the "Star" would shine a welcome to their home-coming.

"It is *my* Star, remember, Jack," said his wife, "and it will be guilty of no such irregularity as showing itself on a night like this."

"You forget, my lady," was the reply, "that the Star is now mine. The Marsh has the Star, and my lady has the Marsh; but I have my lady, and so possess all!"

"Oh, Jack," cried the girl, with a shudder, "there it is! I am sure something will happen. Let us sell the Marsh to-morrow, dear; for now that I belong to you I can no longer protect you from the spell. I had forgotten that!"

"Very well," said Desbra, lightly, "if you say so, we'll sell to-morrow."

As the two stood locked in each other's arms, and straining their eyes into the blackness, the violet ray gathered intensity, and almost seemed to reveal, by fits, the raving turmoil of the rapidly mounting tide.

In a few moments Desbra became absorbed, as it were, in a sort of waking dream. His frank, merry, almost boyish countenance took on a new expression, and his eyes assumed the strange, far-focused steadfastness of the seer's. His wife watched, with a growing awe which she could not shake off, the change in her husband's demeanor; and the fire-light in the cheerful room died away unnoticed.

At last the girl could bear no longer the ghostly silence, and that strange look in her husband's face. "What do you see, Jack?" she cried. "What do you see? Oh, how terribly it shines!"

When Desbra replied, she hardly recognized his voice.

"I see many ships," said he, slowly, and as if he heard not the sound of his own words. "They sail in past Blomidon. They steer for the mouths of the Canard and Gaspereau. Some are already close at hand. The strange light of the 'Eye of Gluskâp,' is on the sails of all. From somewhere I hear voices singing, '*Nos bonnes gens reviendront.*' The sound of it comes beating on the wind. Hark! how it swells over the marshes!"

"I do not hear anything, Jack, dear, except these terrible gusts that cry past the corners of the house," said Jessie, tremulously.

"How light it grows upon the New Marsh, now!" continued her husband, in the same still voice. "The 'Eye' shines everywhere. I hear no more the children crying with the cold; but on the Marsh I see an old man standing. He is waiting for the ships. He waves his stick exultantly to welcome them. I know him,—it is old Remi Corveau. They told me he died and was buried when the ships sailed away from Grand Pré.

"There comes a great ship heading for Long Island shoal. Cannot the captain see how the waves break furiously before him? No ship will live a moment that strikes the shoal to-night. She strikes! God have—No! she sails straight through the breakers!—and not three feet of water on the shoal!

"Two ships have reached the creek," continued Desbra, speaking more rapidly. "How the violet light shines through their sails! How crowded the decks are! All the faces are turned toward shore, with laughter and with streaming eyes, and hands outstretched to the fields of Grand Pré. I know the faces. There is Evangeline, and there is Jaques Le May,—but why don't they drop anchor? They will ground if they come any nearer shore! And in this sea—Merciful Heaven, they are on the dikes! They strike—and the dike goes down before them! The great white waves throng in behind them—the Marsh is buried—and the light goes out!"

The young man started back and put his hand to his eyes, as if awaking from a dream. He caught the sound of his wife's sobbing, and, throwing both arms about her, he stooped to kiss her hair, which gleamed in the dark.

"What's the matter, darling?" he whispered, anxiously. "And what has become of our fire?"

"Oh, Jack, you have frightened me so!" replied the girl. "You have been dreaming or in a trance, and seeing dreadful things that I could not see at all! I could see nothing but that hateful 'Eye,' which has been shining as if all the fires of hell were in it. Come away! we will sell the Marsh to-morrow at *any* price!"

"But, dear," said Desbra, "the Star has gone out! There is not a sign of it to be seen. All outside is black as Egypt. Look!"

Reluctantly the girl turned toward the window. She gave a little cry. "That's just what you said a minute ago!" she exclaimed. "You said 'the light goes out,' and then you came to yourself. I believe the dike is washed away!"

"Well," said Desbra, "we'll see to-morrow." And they drew the curtains and lit the lamps and stirred the fire to a blaze; and between the shriekings of the wind they heard the roar of the breakers, trampling the low and naked coast.

When morning broke over the Gaspereau hills, and men looked out of their windows, every vestige of the dike that had inclosed the New Marsh was gone. The site of the Marsh was much eaten away, and a bank of sand was piled at the other side of the creek, near the mouth, in such a way as to divert the channel many feet from its old course.

Thereafter the tides foamed in and out with daily and nightly clamor across the spot where the "Star on the Marsh" had gleamed; and men made no new effort to reclaim the ruined acres.

THE END.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK EARTH'S ENIGMAS: A VOLUME OF STORIES

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