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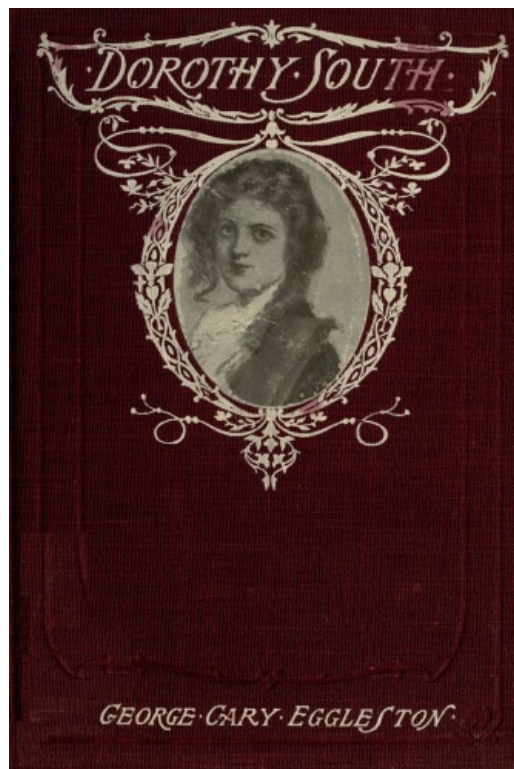
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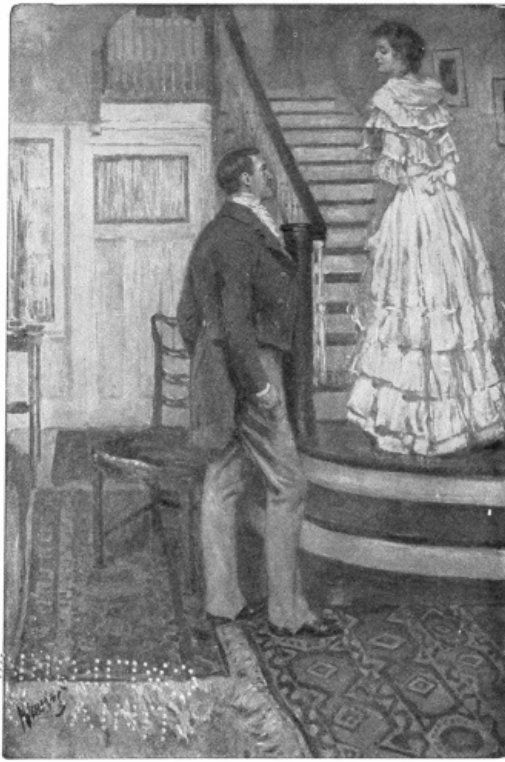
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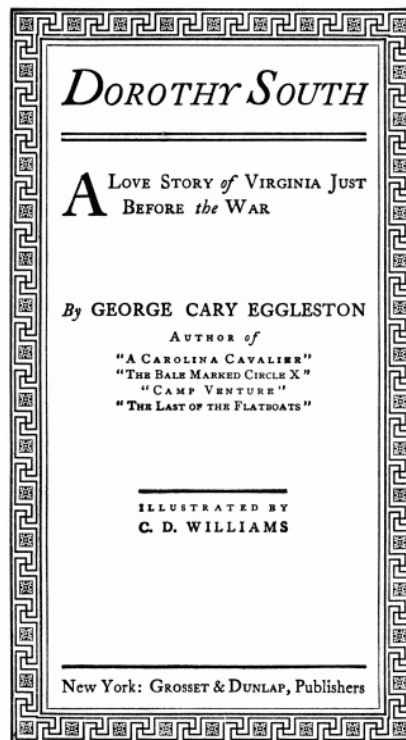
*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DOROTHY SOUTH: A LOVE STORY OF VIRGINIA JUST BEFORE THE WAR ***

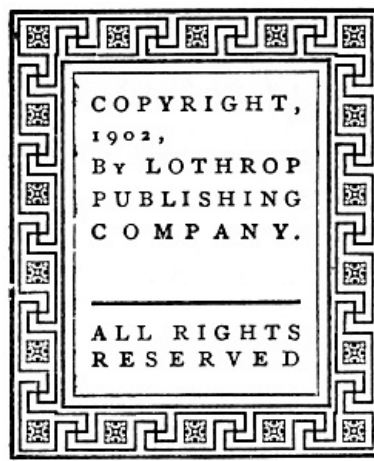




**"SHALL WE HAVE ONE OF OUR OLD-TIME HORSEBACK RIDES
'SOON' IN THE MORNING, DOROTHY?"**

[\(See page 440.\)](#)





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"Shall we have one of our old-time horseback rides 'soon' in the morning, Dorothy?"

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"Who is your Miss Dorothy?"

(*Page 17.*)

"I won't call you a fool because the Bible says I mustn't."

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Dorothy South.

(*Page 304.*)

"In that music my soul laid itself bare to yours and prayed for your love."

(*Page 417.*)

"Aunt Polly!" he said abruptly, "I want your permission to marry Dorothy."

(*Page 452.*)



DOROTHY SOUTH



I

TWO ENCOUNTERS

IT was a perfect day of the kind that Mr. Lowell has celebrated in song—"a day in June." It was, moreover, a day glorified even beyond Mr. Lowell's imagining, by the incomparable climate of south side Virginia.

A young man of perhaps seven and twenty, came walking with vigor down the narrow roadway, swinging a stick which he had paused by the wayside to cut. The road ran at this point through a luxuriantly growing woodland, with borders of tangled undergrowth and flowers on either side, and with an orchestra of bird performers all around. The road was a public highway, though it would never have been taken for such in any part of the world except in a south side county of Virginia in the late fifties. It was a narrow track, bearing few traces of any heavier traffic than that of the family carriages in which the gentle, high-born dames and maidens of the time and country were accustomed to make their social rounds.

There was a gate across the carriage track—a gate constructed in accordance with the requirement of the Virginia law that every gate set up across a public highway should be "easily opened by a man on horseback."

Near the gate the young man slackened his vigorous pace and sat down upon a recently fallen tree. He remembered enough of his boyhood's experience in Virginia to choose a green log instead of a dry one for his seat. He had had personal encounters with chigoes years ago, and wanted no more of them. He sat down not

because he was tired, for he was not in the least so, but simply because, finding himself in the midst of a refreshingly and inspiringly beautiful scene, he desired to enjoy it for a space. Besides, he was in no hurry. Nobody was expecting him, and he knew that dinner would not be served whither he was going until the hour of four—and it was now only a little past nine.

The young man was fair to look upon. A trifle above the medium height, his person was symmetrical and his finely formed head was carried with an ease and grace that suggested the reserve strength of a young bull. His features were about equally marked by vigor and refinement. His was the countenance of a man well bred, who, to his inheritance of good breeding had added education and such culture as books, and earnest thinking, and a favorable association with men of intellect are apt to bring to one worthy to receive the gift.

He seemed to know the spot wherein he lingered. Indeed he had asked no questions as to his way when less than an hour ago he had alighted from the pottering train at the village known as the Court House. He had said to the old station agent, "I will send for my baggage later." Then he had set off at a brisk walk down one of the many roads that converged at this centre of county life and affairs. The old station master, looking after him, had muttered: "He seems to think he knows his way. Mebbe he does, but anyhow he's a stranger in these parts."

And indeed that would have been the instant conclusion of any one who should have looked at him as he sat there by the roadside enjoying the sweet freshness of the morning, and the exquisite abandon with which exuberant nature seemed to mock at the little track made through the tangled woodlands by intrusive man. The youth's garb betrayed him instantly. In a country where black broadcloth was then the universal wear of gentlemen, our young gentleman was clad in loosely fitting but perfectly shaped white flannels, the trousers slightly turned up to avoid the soil of travel, the short sack coat thrown open, and the full bosomed shirt front of bishop's lawn or some other such sheer stuff, being completely without a covering of vest. Obviously the young pedestrian did not belong to that part of the world which he seemed to be so greatly enjoying.

That is what Dick thought, when Dick rode up to the gate. Dick was a negro boy of fourteen summers or about that. His face was a bright, intelligent one, and he looked a good deal of the coming athlete as he sat barebacked upon the large roan that served him for steed. Dick wore a shirt and trousers, and nothing else, except a dilapidated straw hat which imperfectly covered his closely cropped wool. His feet were bare, but the young man made mental note of the fact that they bore the appearance of feet accustomed to be washed at least once in every twenty four hours.

"Does your mammy make you wash your feet every night, or do you do it of your own accord?" The question was the young man's rather informal beginning of a conversation.

"Mammy makes me," answered the boy, with a look of resentment in his face. "Mammy's crazy about washin'. She makes me git inter a bar'l o' suds ev'ry night an' scrub myself like I was a floor. That's cause she's de head washerwoman at Wyanoke. She's got washin' on de brain."

"So you're one of the Wyanoke people, are you? Whom do you belong to now?"

"I don't jes' rightly know, Mahstah"—Dick sounded his a's like "aw" in "claw." "I don't jes' rightly know, Mahstah. Ole Mas'r he's done daid, an' de folks sez a young Yankee mahstah is a comin' to take position."

"To take possession, you mean, don't you?"

"I dunno. Somefin o' dat sort."

"Why do you call him a Yankee master?"

"O 'cause he libs at de Norf somewhar. I reckon mebbe he ain't quite so bad as dat. Dey say he was born in Ferginny, but I reckon he's done lib in de Norf among the Yankees so long dat he's done forgit his manners an' his raisin'."

"What's your name?" asked the young man, seemingly interested in Dick.

"My name's Dick, Sah."

"Dicksah—or Dick?"

"Jes' Dick, so," answered the boy.

"Oh! Well, that's a very good name. It's short and easy to say."

"Too easy!" said the boy.

"Too easy?" How do you mean?" queried the young man.

"Oh, nuffin', only it's allus 'Dick, do dis!' 'Dick do dat.' 'Dick go dar,' 'Dick come heah,' an' 'Dick, Dick, Dick' all de day long."

"Then they work you pretty hard do they? You don't look emaciated."

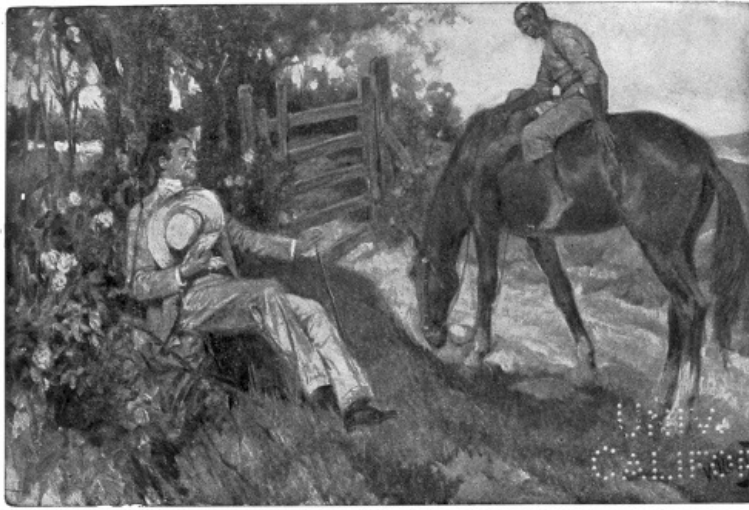
"Maishy what, Mahstah?"

"Oh, never mind that. It's a Chinese word that I was just saying to myself. Do they work you too hard? What do you do?"

"Oh, I don't do nuffin' much. Only when I lays down in de sun an' jes' begins to git quiet like, Miss Polly she calls me to pick some peas in de gyahten, er Miss Dorothy she says, 'Dick, come heah an' help me range dese flowers,' or Mammy, she says, 'Dick, you lazy bones, come heah an' put some wood under my wash biler.' "

"But what is your regular work?"

"Reg'lar wuk?" asked the boy, his eyes growing saucer-like in astonishment, "I ain't



“WHO IS YOUR MISS DOROTHY?”

got no reg'lar wuk. I feeds de chickens, sometimes, and fin's hens' nests an' min's chillun, an' dribes de tukkeys into de tobacco lots to eat de grasshoppers an' I goes aftah de mail. Dat's what I'se a doin' now. Leastways I'se a comin' back wid de mail wot I done been an' gone after.”

“Is that all?”

“Dat's nuff, ain't it, Mahstah?”

“I don't know. I wonder what your new master will think when he comes.”

“Golly, so do I. Anyhow, he's a Yankee, an' he won't know how much wuk a nigga ought to do. I'll be his pussonal servant, I reckon. Leastways dat's what Miss Dorothy say she tink.”

“Who is your Miss Dorothy?” the young man asked with badly simulated indifference, for this was a member of the Wyanoke family of whom Dr. Arthur Brent had never before heard.

“Miss Dorothy? Why, she's jes' Miss Dorothy, so.”

“But what's her other name?”

“I dunno. I reckon she ain't got no other name. Leastways I dunno.”

“Is Wyanoke a fine plantation?”

“Fine, Mahstah? It's de very finest dey is. It's all out o-doors and I reckon dey's a thousand cullud people on it.”

“Oh, hardly that,” answered the young man—“say eight or nine hundred—or perhaps one hundred would be nearer the mark.”

“No, *Sir!* De Brents is quality folks, Mahstah. Dey's got more'n a thousan' niggas, an' two or three thousan' horses, an' as fer cows an' hawgs you jes' cawn't count 'em! Dey eats dinner offen chaney plates every day an' de forks at Wyanoke is all gold.”

“How many carriages do they keep, Dick?”

“Sebenteen, besides de barouche an' de carryall.”

“Well, now you'd better be moving on. Your Miss Polly and your Miss Dorothy may be waiting for their letters.”

As the boy rode away, Dr. Arthur Brent resumed his brisk walk. He no longer concerned himself with the landscape, or the woods, or the wild flowers, or the beauty of the June morning, or anything else. He was thinking, and not to much purpose.

“Who the deuce,” he muttered, “can this Miss Dorothy be? Of course I remember dear old Aunt Polly. She has always lived at Wyanoke. But who is Dorothy? As my uncle wasn't married of course he had no daughter. And besides, if he had, she would be his heir, and I should never have inherited the property at all. I wonder if I have inherited a family, with the land? Psha! Dick invented Miss Dorothy, of course. Why didn't I think of that? I remember my last stay of a year at Wyanoke, and everything about the place. There was no Dorothy there then, and pretty certainly there is none now. Dick invented her, just as he invented the gold forks, and the thousand negroes, and all those multitudinous horses, carriages, cows and hogs. That black rascal has a creative genius—a trifle ill regulated perhaps, but richly productive. It failed him for the moment when I demanded a second name for Dorothy. But if I had persisted in that line of inquiry he would pretty certainly have endowed the girl with a string of surnames as completely fictitious as the woman herself is. I'll have some fun out of that boy. He has distinct psychological possibilities.”

Continuing his walk in leisurely fashion like one whose mind is busy with reflection, Dr. Arthur Brent came at last to a great gate at the side of the road—a gate supported by two large pillars of hewn stone, and flanked by a smaller gate intended for the use of foot farers like himself.

“That's the entrance gate to the plantation,” he reflected. “I had thought it half a mile farther on. Memory has been playing me its usual trick of exaggerating everything remembered from boyhood. I was only fifteen or sixteen when I was last at Wyanoke, and the road seems shorter now than it did then. But this is surely the gate.”

Passing through the wicket, he presently found himself in a forest of young hickory trees. He remembered these as having been scarcely higher than the head of a man on horseback at the time of his last visit. They had been planted by his uncle to beautify the front entrance to the plantation, and, with careful foresting they had abundantly fulfilled that purpose. Growing rather thickly, they had risen to a height of

nearly fifty feet, and their boles had swelled to a thickness of eight or ten inches, while all undergrowth of every kind had been carefully suppressed. The tract of land thus timbered by cultivation to replace the original pine forest, embraced perhaps seventy-five or a hundred acres, and the effect of it in a country where forest growths were usually permitted to lead riotous lives of their own, was impressive.

As the young man turned one of the curves of the winding carriage road, four great hounds caught sight of him and instantly set upon him. At that moment a young girl, perched upon a tall chestnut mare galloped into view. Thrusting two fingers of her right hand into her mouth, she whistled shrilly between them, thrice repeating the searching sound. Instantly the huge hounds cowered and slunk away to the side of the girl's horse. Their evident purpose was to go to heel at once, but their mistress had no mind for that.

"Here!" she cried. "Sit up on your haunches and take your punishment."

The dogs obediently took the position of humble suppliants, and the girl dealt to each, a sharp cut with the flexible whip she carried slung to her pommel. "Now go to heel, you naughty fellows!" she commanded, and with a stately inclination of her body she swept past the young man, not deigning even to glance in his direction.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Dr. Brent, "that was done as a young queen might have managed it. She saved my life, punished her hounds to secure their future obedience, and barely recognizing my existence—doing even that for her own sake, not mine—galloped away as if this superb day belonged to her! And she isn't a day over fifteen either." In that Dr. Brent was mistaken. The girl had passed her sixteenth birthday, three months ago. "I doubt if she is half as long as that graceful riding habit she is wearing." Then after a moment he said, still talking to himself, "I'll wager something handsome that that girl is as shy as a fawn. They always are shy when they behave in that queenly, commanding way. The shyer they are the more they affect a stately demeanor."

Dr. Arthur Brent was a man of a scientific habit of mind. To him everything and everybody was apt to assume somewhat the character of a "specimen." He observed minutely and generalized boldly, even when his "subject" happened to be a young woman or, as in this case, a slip of a girl. All facts were interesting to him, whether facts of nature or facts of human nature. He was just now as earnest in his speculations concerning the girl he had so oddly encountered, as if she had been a new chemical reaction.

Seating himself by the roadside he tried to recall all the facts concerning her that his hasty glance had enabled him to observe.

"If I were an untrained observer," he reflected, "I should argue from her stately dignity and the reserve with which she treated me—she being only an unsophisticated young girl who has not lived long enough to 'adopt' a manner with malice aforethought—I should argue from her manner that she is a girl highly bred, the daughter of some blue blooded Virginia family, trained from infancy by grand dames, her aunts and that sort of thing, in the fine art of 'deportment.' But as I am not an untrained observer, I recall the fact that stage queens do that sort of thing superbly, even when their mothers are washerwomen, and they themselves prefer corned beef and cabbage to truffled game. Still as there are no specimens of that kind down here in Virginia, I am forced to the conclusion that this young Diana is simply the highly bred and carefully dame-nurtured daughter of one of the great plantation owners hereabouts, whose manner has acquired an extra stateliness from her embarrassment and shyness. Girls of fifteen or sixteen don't know exactly where they stand. They are neither little girls nor young women. They have outgrown the license of the one state without having as yet acquired the liberty of action that belongs to the other." Thus the youth's thoughts wandered on. "That girl is a rigid disciplinarian," he reflected. "How sternly she required those hounds to sit on their haunches and take the punishment due to their sins! I'll be bound she has herself been set in a corner for many a childish naughtiness. Yet she is not cruel. She struck each dog only a single blow—just punishment enough to secure better manners in future. An ill tempered woman would have lashed them more severely. And a woman less self-controlled would have struck out with her whip without making the dogs sit up and realize the enormity of their offence. A less well-bred girl would have said something to me in apology for her hounds' misbehavior. This one was sufficiently sensible to see that unless I were a fool—in which case I should have been unworthy of attention—her disciplining of the dogs was apology enough without supplementary speech. I must find out who she is and make her acquaintance."

Then a sudden thought struck him; "By Jove!" he exclaimed aloud, "I wonder if her name is Dorothy!"

Then the young man walked on.

II

WYANOKE

HALF an hour later Arthur Brent entered the house grounds of Wyanoke—the home of his ancestors for generations past and his own birthplace. The grounds about the mansion were not very large—two acres in extent perhaps—set with giant locust trees that had grown for a century or more in their comfortable surrounding of closely clipped and luxuriant green sward. Only three trees other than the stately locusts, adorned the house grounds. One of these was a huge elm, four feet thick in its stem, with great limbs, branching out in every direction and covering, altogether, a space of nearly a quarter acre of ground, but so high from the earth that the carpet of green sward grew in full luxuriance to the very roots of the stupendous tree. How long that aboriginal monarch had been luxuriating there, the memory of man could make no report. The Wyanoke plantation book, with its curiously minute record of everything that pertained to the family domain, set forth the fact that the "new mansion house"—the one still in use,—was built in the year 1711, and that its southeasterly corner stood "two hundred and thirty nine feet due northwest of the Great Elm which adorns the lawn." A little later than the time of Arthur Brent's return, that young man of a scientific mental habit made a survey to determine whether or not the Great Elm of 1859 was certainly the same that had been named "the Great Elm" in 1711. Finding it so he reckoned that the tree must be many hundreds—perhaps even a thousand years of age. For the elm is one of the very slowest growing of trees, and Arthur Brent's measurements showed that the diameter of this one had increased not more than six inches

during the century and a half since it had been accepted as a conspicuous landmark for descriptive use in the plantation book.

The other trees that asked of the huge locusts a license to live upon that lawn, were two quick-growing Asiatic mulberries, planted in comparatively recent times to afford shade to the front porch.

The house was built of wood, heavily framed, large roomed and gambrel roofed. Near it stood the detached kitchen in the edge of the apple orchard, and farther away the quarters of the house servants.

As Arthur Brent strolled up the walk that led to the broad front doors of the mansion his mind was filled with a sense of peace. That was the dominant note of the house and all of its surroundings. The great, self-confident locust trees that had stood still in their places while generations of Brents had come and gone, seemed to counsel rest as the true philosophy of life. The house itself seemed to invite repose. Even the stately peacock that strolled in leisurely laziness beneath the great elm seemed, in his very being, a protest against all haste, all worry, all ambition of action and change.

"I do not know," thought the young man, as he contemplated the immeasurably restful scene, "what the name Wyanoke signifies in the Indian tongue from which it was borrowed. But surely it ought to mean rest, contentment, calm."

That thought, and the inspiration of it, were destined to play their part as determinative influences in the life of the young man whose mind was thus impressed. There lay before him, though he was unconscious of the fact, a life struggle between stern conviction and sweet inclination, between duty and impulse, between intensity of mind and lassitude of soul. There were other factors to complicate the problem, but these were its chief terms, and it is the purpose of this chronicle to show in what fashion the matter was wrought out.

Advancing to the porch, Arthur rapped thrice with the stick that he carried. That was because he had passed the major part of his life elsewhere than in Virginia. If such had not been the case he would have interpreted the meaning of the broad open doors aright, and would have walked in without any knocking at all.

As it was, Johnny, the "head dining room servant," as he was called in Virginia—the butler, as he would have been called elsewhere—heard the unaccustomed sound of knocking, and went to the door to discover what it might mean. To him Arthur handed a visiting card, and said simply: "Your Miss Polly."

The comely and intelligent serving man was puzzled by the card. He had not the slightest notion of its use or purpose. In his bewilderment he decided that the only thing to be done with it was to take it to his "Miss Polly," which, of course, was precisely what Arthur Brent desired him to do. There was probably not another visiting card in all that country side—for the Virginians of that time used few formalities, and very simple ones in their social intercourse. They went to visit their friends, not to "call" upon them. Pasteboard politeness was a factor wholly unknown in their lives.

Miss Polly happened to be at that moment in the garden directing old Michael,—the most obstinately obstructive and wilful of gardeners,—to do something to the peas that he was resolutely determined not to do, and to leave something undone to the tomatoes which he was bent upon doing. On receipt of the card, she left Michael to his own devices, and almost hurried to the house. "Almost hurried," I say, for Miss Polly was much too stately and dignified a person to quicken a footstep upon any occasion.

She was "Miss Polly" to the negro servants. To everybody else she was "Cousin Polly," or "Aunt Polly," and she had been that from the period described by the old law writers as "the time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." How old she was, nobody knew. She looked elderly in a comfortable, vigorous way. Gray hair was at that time mistakenly regarded as a reproach to women—a sign of advancing age which must be concealed at all costs. Therefore Aunt Polly's white locks were kept closely shaven, and covered with a richly brown wig. For the rest, she was a plump person of large proportions, though not in the least corpulent. Her dignity was such as became her age and her lineage—which latter was of the very best. She knew her own value, and respected, without aggressively asserting it. She had never been married—unquestionably for reasons of her own—but her single state had brought with it no trace or tinge of bitterness, no suggestion of discontent. She was, and had always been, a woman in perfect health of mind and body, and the fact was apparent to all who came into her comfortable presence.

She had a small but sufficient income of her own, but, being an "unattached female"—as the phrase went at a time when people were too polite to name a woman an "old maid,"—she had lived since early womanhood at Wyanoke; and since the late bachelor owner of the estate, Arthur Brent's uncle, had come into the inheritance, she had been mistress of the mansion, ruling there with an iron rod of perfect cleanliness and scrupulous neatness, according to housekeeping standards from which she would abate no jot or tittle upon any conceivable account. Fortunately for her servitors, there were about seven of them to every one that was reasonably necessary.

She was a woman of high intelligence and of a pronounced wit,—a wit that sometimes took humorous liberties with the proprieties, to the embarrassment of sensitive young people. She was well read and well informed, but she never did believe that the world was round, her argument being that if such were the case she would be standing on her head half the time. She also refused to believe in railroads. She was confident that "the Yankees" had built railroads through Virginia, with a far seeing purpose of overrunning and conquering that state and possessing themselves of its plantations. Finally, she regarded Virginia as the only state or country in the world in which a person of taste and discretion could consent to be born. Her attitude toward all dwellers beyond the borders of Virginia, closely resembled that of the Greeks toward those whom they self assertively classed as "the barbarians." How far she really cherished these views, or how far it was merely her humor to assert them, nobody ever found out. To all this she added the sweetest temper and the most unselfish devotion to those about her, that it is possible to imagine. She was very distantly akin to Arthur, if indeed she was akin to him at all. But in his childhood he had learned to call her "Aunt Polly," and during that year of his boyhood which he had spent at Wyanoke, he had known her by no other title. So when she came through the rear doors to meet him in the great hall which ran through the house from front to rear, he advanced eagerly and lovingly to greet her as "Aunt Polly."

The first welcome over, Aunt Polly became deeply concerned over the fact that Arthur Brent had walked

the five or six miles that lay between the Court House and Wyanoke.

"Why didn't you get a horse, Arthur, or better still why didn't you send me word that you were coming? I would have sent the carriage for you."

"Which one, Aunt Polly?"

"Why, there's only one, of course."

"Why, I was credibly informed this morning that there were seventeen carriages here besides the barouche and the carryall."

"Who could have told you such a thing as that? And then to think of anybody accusing Wyanoke of a 'carryall!'"

"How do you mean, Aunt Polly?"

"Why, no *gentleman* keeps a carryall. I believe Moses the storekeeper at the Court House has one, but then he has nine children and needs it. Besides he doesn't count."

"Why not, Aunt Polly? Isn't he a man like the rest of us?"

"A man? Yes, but like the rest of us—no. He isn't a gentleman."

"Does he misbehave very grossly?"

"Oh, no. He is an excellent man I believe, and his children are as pretty as angels; but, Arthur, he *keeps a store*."

Aunt Polly laid a stress upon the final phrase as if that settled the matter beyond even the possibility of further discussion.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" asked the young man with a smile. "In Virginia no man keeps a carryall unless he is sufficiently depraved to keep a store also. But I wonder why Dick told me we had a carryall at Wyanoke besides the seventeen carriages."

"Oh, you saw Dick, then? Why didn't you take his horse and make him get you a saddle somewhere? By the way, Dick had an adventure this morning. Out by the Garland gate he was waylaid by a man dressed all in white 'jes' like a ghos', Dick says, with a sword and two pistols. The fellow tried to take the mail bag away from him, but Dick, who is quick-witted, struck him suddenly, made his horse jump the gate, and galloped away."

"Aunt Polly," said the young man with a quizzical look on his face, "would you mind sending for Dick to come to me? I very much want to hear his story at first hands, for now that I am to be master of Wyanoke, I don't intend to tolerate footpads and mail robbers in the neighborhood. Please send for Dick. I want to talk with him."

Aunt Polly sent, but Dick was nowhere to be found for a time. When at last he was discovered in a fodder loft, and dragged unwillingly into his new master's presence, the look of consternation on his face was so pitiable that Arthur Brent decided not to torture him quite so severely as he had intended.

"Dick," he said, "I want you to get me some cherries, will you?"

"'Cou'se I will, Mahstah," answered the boy, eagerly and turning to escape.

"Wait a minute, Dick. I want you to bring me the cherries on a china plate, and give me one of the gold forks to eat them with. Then go to the carriage-house and have all seventeen of my carriages brought up here for me to look at. Tell the hostlers to send me one or two hundred of the horses, too. There! Go and do as I tell you."

"What on earth do you mean, Arthur?" asked Aunt Polly, who never had quite understood the whimsical ways of the young man. "I tell you there is only one carriage—"

"Never mind, Aunt Polly. Dick understands me. He and I had an interview out there by the Garland gate this morning. Mail robbers will not trouble him again, I fancy, now that his 'Yankee Master' is 'in position,' as he puts it. But please, Aunt Polly, send some one with a wagon to the Court House after my trunks."

III

DR. ARTHUR BRENT

ARTHUR BRENT had been born at Wyanoke, twenty seven years or so before the time of our story. His father, one of a pair of brothers, was a man imbued with the convictions of the Revolutionary period—the convictions that prompted the Virginians of that time to regard slavery as an inherited curse to be got rid of in the speediest possible way compatible with the public welfare. There were still many such Virginians at that time. They were men who knew the history of their state and respected the teachings of the fathers. They remembered how earnestly Thomas Jefferson had insisted upon writing into Virginia's deed of cession of the North West Territory, a clause forever prohibiting slavery in all the fair "Ohio Country"—now constituting Indiana, Illinois and the other great states of the Middle West. They held in honor, as their fathers before them had done, the memory of Chancellor George Wythe, who had well-nigh impoverished himself in freeing the negroes he had inherited and giving them a little start in the world. They were the men to whom Henry Clay made confident appeal in that effort to secure the gradual extirpation of the system which was the first and was repeated as very nearly the last of his labors of statesmanship.

These men had no sympathy or tolerance for "abolitionist" movements. They desired and intended that slavery should cease, and many of them impoverished themselves in their efforts to be personally rid of it. But they resented as an impertinence every suggestion of interference with it on the part of the national government, or on the part of the dwellers in other states.

For these men accepted, as fully as the men of Massachusetts once did, the doctrine that every state was sovereign except in so far as it had delegated certain functions of sovereignty to the general government. They held it to be the absolute right of each state to regulate its domestic affairs in its own way, and they were ready to resent and resist all attempts at outside interference with their state's institutions, precisely as

they would have resisted and resented the interference of anybody with the ordering of their personal households.

Arthur Brent's father, Brandon Brent, was a man of this type. Upon coming of age and soon afterwards marrying, he determined, as he formulated his thought, to "set himself free." When Arthur was born he became more resolute than ever in this purpose, under the added stimulus of affection for his child. "The system" he said to his wife, "is hurtful to young white men, I do not intend that Arthur shall grow up in the midst of it."

So he sold to his brother his half interest in the four or five thousand acres which constituted Wyanoke plantation, and with the proceeds removed those of the negroes who had fallen to his share to little farms which he had bought for them in Indiana.

This left him with a wife, a son, and a few hundred dollars with which to begin life anew. He went West and engaged in the practice of the law. He literally "grew up with the country." He won sufficient distinction to represent his district in Congress for several successive terms, and to leave behind him when he died a sweetly savored name for all the higher virtues of honorable manhood.

He left to his son also, a fair patrimony, the fruit of his personal labors in his profession, and of the growth of the western country in which he lived.

At the age of fifteen, the boy had been sent to pass a delightful year at Wyanoke, while fitting himself for college under the care of the same tutor who had personally trained the father, and whose influence had been so good that the father invoked it for his son in his turn. The old schoolmaster had long since given up his school, but when Brandon Brent had written to him a letter, attributing to his influence and teaching all that was best in his own life's success, and begging him to crown his useful life's labors with a like service to this his boy, he had given up his ease and undertaken the task.

Arthur had finished his college course, and was just beginning, with extraordinary enthusiasm, his study of medicine when his father died, leaving him alone in the world; for the good mother had passed away while the boy was yet a mere child.

After his father's death, Arthur found many business affairs to arrange. Attention to these seriously distracted him, greatly to his annoyance, for he had become an enthusiast for scientific acquirement, and grudged every moment of time that affairs occupied to the neglect of his studies. In this mood of irritation with business details, the young man decided to convert the whole of his inheritance into cash and to invest the proceeds in annuities. "I shall never marry," he told himself. "I shall devote my whole life to science. I shall need only a moderate income to provide for my wants, but that income must come to me without the distraction of mind incident to the earning of it. I must be completely a free man—free to live my own life and pursue my own purposes."

So he invested all that he had in American and English annuity companies, and when that business was completed, he found himself secure in an income, not by any means large but quite sufficient for all his needs, and assured to him for all the years that he might live. "I shall leave nothing behind me when I die," he reflected, "but I shall have nobody to provide for, and so this is altogether best."

Then he set himself to work in almost terrible earnest. He lived in the laboratories, the hospitals, the clinics and the libraries. When his degree as a physician was granted his knowledge of science, quite outside the ordinary range of medical study was deemed extraordinary by his professors. A place of honor in one of the great medical colleges was offered to him, but he declined it, and went to Germany and France instead. He had fairly well mastered the languages of those two countries, and he was minded now to go thither for instruction, under the great masters in biology and chemistry and physics.

Two years later—and four years before the beginning of this story, there came to Arthur Brent an opportunity of heroic service which he promptly embraced. There broke out, in Norfolk, in his native state, in the year 1855, such an epidemic of yellow fever as had rarely been known anywhere before, and it found a population peculiarly susceptible to the subtle poison of the scourge.

Facing the fact that he was in no way immune, the young physician abandoned the work he had returned from Paris to New York to do, and went at once to the post of danger as a volunteer for medical service. Those whose memories stretch back to that terrible year of 1855, remember the terms in which Virginia and all the country echoed the praises of Dr. Arthur Brent, the plaudits that everywhere greeted his heroic devotion. The newspapers day by day were filled with despatches telling with what tireless devotion this mere boy—he was scarcely more than twenty three years of age—was toiling night and day at his self appointed task, and how beneficent his work was proving to be. The same newspapers told with scorching scorn of physicians and clergymen—a very few of either profession, but still a few—who had quitted their posts in panic fear and run away from the danger. Day by day the readers of the newspapers eagerly scanned the despatches, anxious chiefly to learn that the young hero had not fallen a victim to his own compassionate enthusiasm for the relief of the stricken.

Dr. Arthur Brent knew nothing of all this at the time. His days and nights were too fully occupied with his perilous work for him even to glance at a newspaper. He was himself stricken at last, but not until the last, not until that grand old Virginian, Henry A. Wise had converted his Accomac plantation into a relief camp and, arming his negroes for its defence against a panic stricken public, had robbed the scourge of its terrors by drawing from the city all those whose presence there could afford opportunity for its spread.

Dr. Arthur Brent was among the very last of those attacked by the scourge, and it was to give that young hero a meagre chance for life that Henry A. Wise went in person to Norfolk and brought the physician away to his own plantation home, in armed and resolute defiance alike of quarantine restrictions and of the protests of an angry and frightened mob.

Such in brief had been the life story of Arthur Brent. On his recovery from a terribly severe attack of the fever, he had gone again to Europe, not this time for scientific study, but for the purpose of restoring his shattered constitution through rest upon a Swiss mountain side. After a year of upbuilding idleness, he had returned to New York with his health completely restored.

There he had taken an inexpensive apartment, and resumed his work of scientific investigation upon

lines which he had thought out during his long sojourn in Switzerland.

Three years later there came to him news that his uncle at Wyanoke was dead, and that the family estate had become his own as the only next of kin. It pleased Arthur's sense of humor to think of a failure of "kin" in Virginia, where, as he well remembered, pretty nearly everybody he had met in boyhood had been his cousin.

But the news that he was sole heir to the family estate was not altogether agreeable to the young man. "It will involve me in affairs again," he said to himself, "and that is what I meant should never happen to me. There is a debt on the estate, of course. I never heard of a Virginia estate without that adornment. Then there are the negroes, whose welfare is in my charge. Heaven knows I do not want them or their value. But obviously they and the debt saddle me with a duty which I cannot escape. I suppose I must go to Wyanoke. It is very provoking, just as I have made all my arrangements to study the problem of sewer gas poisoning with a reasonable hope of solving it this summer!"

He thought long and earnestly before deciding what course to pursue. On the one hand he felt that his highest duty in life was to science as a servant of humanity. He realized, as few men do, how great a beneficence the discovery of a scientific fact may be to all mankind. "And there are so few men," he said to himself, "who are free as I am to pursue investigations untrammelled by other things—the care of a family, the ordering of a household, the education of children, the earning of a living! If I could have this summer free, I believe I could find out how to deal with sewer gas, and that would save thousands of lives and immeasurable suffering! And there are my other investigations that are not less pressing in their importance. Why should I have to give up my work, for which I have the equipment of a thorough training, a sufficient income, youth, high health, and last but not least, enthusiasm?"

He did not add, as a less modest man might, that he had earned a reputation which commanded not only the attention but the willing assistance of his scientific brethren in his work, that all laboratories were open to him, that all men of science were ready to respond to his requests for the assistance of their personal observation and experience, that the columns of all scientific journals were freely his to use in setting forth his conclusions and the facts upon which they rested.

"I wish I could put the whole thing into the hands of an agent, and bid him sell out the estate, pay off the debts and send me the remainder of the proceeds, with which to endow a chair of research in some scientific school! But that would mean selling the negroes, and I'll never do that. I wish I could set them all free and rid myself of responsibility for them. But I cannot do that unless I can get enough money out of the estate to buy little farms for them as my father did with his negroes. I mustn't condemn them to starvation and call it freedom. I wish I knew what the debt is, and how much the land will bring. Then I could plan what to do. But as I do not know anything of the kind, I simply must go to Wyanoke and study the problem as it is. It will take all summer and perhaps longer. But there is nothing else for it."

That is how it came about that Dr. Arthur Brent sat in the great hallway at Wyanoke, talking with Aunt Polly, when Dorothy South returned, accompanied by her hounds.

IV

DR. BRENT IS PUZZLED

DOROTHY came up to the front gate at a light gallop. Disdaining the assistance of the horse block, she nimbly sprang from the saddle to the ground and called to her mare "Stand, Chestnut!"

Then she gathered up the excessively long riding skirt which the Amazons of that time always wore on horseback, and walked up the pathway to the door, leaving the horse to await the coming of a stable boy. Arthur could not help observing and admiring the fact that she walked with marked dignity and grace even in a riding skirt—a thing so exceedingly difficult to do that not one woman in a score could accomplish it even with conscious effort. Yet this mere girl did it, manifestly without either effort or consciousness. As an accomplished anatomist Dr. Brent knew why. "That girl has grown up," he said to himself, "in as perfect a freedom as those locust trees out there, enjoy. She is as straight as the straightest of them, and she has perfect use of all her muscles. I wonder who she is, and why she gives orders here at Wyanoke quite as if she belonged to the place, or the place belonged to her."

This last thought was suggested by the fact that just before mounting the two steps that led to the porch, Dorothy had whistled through her fingers and said to the negro man who answered her call:—"Take the hounds to the kennels, and fasten them in. Turn the setters out."

But the young man had little time for wondering. The girl came into the hall, and, as Aunt Polly had gone to order a little "snack," she introduced herself.

"You are Dr. Brent, I think? Yes? well, I'm Dorothy South. Let me bid you welcome as the new master of Wyanoke."

With that she shook hands in a fashion that was quite child-like, and tripped away up the stairs.

Arthur Brent found himself greatly interested in the girl. She was hardly a woman, and yet she was scarcely to be classed as a child. In her manner as well as in her appearance she seemed a sort of compromise between the two. She was certainly not pretty, yet Arthur's quick scrutiny informed him that in a year or two she was going to be beautiful. It only needed a little further ripening of her womanhood to work that change. But as one cannot very well fall in love with a woman who is yet to be, Arthur Brent felt no suggestion of other sentiment than one of pleased admiration for the girl, mingled with respect for her queenly premature dignity. He observed, however, that her hair was nut brown and of luxuriant growth, her complexion, fair and clear in spite of a pronounced tan, and her eyes large, deep blue and finely overarched by their dark brows.

Before he had time to think further concerning her, Aunt Polly returned and asked him to "snack."

"Dorothy will be down presently," she said. "She's quick at changing her costume."

Arthur was about to ask, "Who is Dorothy? And how does she come to be here?" but at that moment the girl herself came in, white gowned and as fresh of face as a newly blown rose is at sunrise.

"It's too bad, Aunt Polly," she said, "that you had to order the snack. I ought to have got home in time to do my duty, and I would, only that Trump behaved badly—Trump is one of my dogs, Doctor—and led the others into mischief. He ran after a hare, and, of course, I had to stop and discipline him. That made me late."

"You keep your dogs under good control Miss—by the way how am I to call you?"

"I don't know just yet," answered the girl with the frankness of a little child.

"How so?" asked Arthur, as he laid a dainty slice of cold ham on her plate.

"Why, don't you see, I don't know you yet. After we get acquainted I'll tell you how to call me. I think I am going to like you, and if I do, you are to call me Dorothy. But of course I can't tell yet. Maybe I shall not like you at all, and then—well, we'll wait and see."

"Very well," answered the young master of the plantation, amused by the girl's extraordinary candor and simplicity. "I'll call you Miss South till you make up your mind about liking or detesting me."

"Oh, no, not that," the girl quickly answered. "That would be *too* grown up. But you might say 'Miss Dorothy,' please, till I make up my mind about you."

"Very well, Miss Dorothy. Allow me to express a sincere hope that after you have come to know what sort of person I am, you'll like me well enough to bid me drop the handle to your name."

"But why should you care whether a girl like me likes you or not?"

"Why, because I am very strongly disposed to like a girl like you."

"How can you feel that way, when you don't know me the least little bit?"

"But I do know you a good deal more than 'the least little bit,' " answered the young man smiling.

"How can that be? I don't understand."

"Perhaps not, and yet it is simple enough. You see I have been training my mind and my eyes and my ears and all the rest of me all my life, into habits of quick and accurate observation, and so I see more at a glance than I should otherwise see in an hour. For example, you'll admit that I have had no good chance to become acquainted with your hounds, yet I know that one of them has lost a single joint from his tail, and another had a bur inside one of his ears this morning, which you have since removed."

The girl laid down her fork in something like consternation.

"But I shan't like you at all if you see things in that way. I'll never dare come into your presence."

"Oh, yes, you will. I do not observe for the purpose of criticising; especially I never criticise a woman or a girl to her detriment."

"That is very gallant, at any rate," answered the girl, accenting the word "gallant" strongly on the second syllable, as all Virginians of that time properly did, and as few other people ever do. "But tell me what you started to say, please?"

"What was it?"

"Why, you said you knew me a good deal. I thought you were going to tell me what you knew about me."

"Well, I'll tell you part of what I know. I know that you have a low pitched voice—a contralto it would be called in musical nomenclature. It has no jar in it—it is rich and full and sweet, and while you always speak softly, your voice is easily heard. I should say that you sing."

"No. I must not sing."

"Must not? How is that?"

The girl seemed embarrassed—almost pained. The young man, seeing this, apologized:

"Pardon me! I did not mean to ask a personal question."

"Never mind!" said the girl. "You were not unkind. But I must not sing, and I must never learn a note of music, and worst of all I must not go to places where they play fine music. If I ever get to liking you very well indeed, perhaps I'll tell you why—at least all the why of it that I know myself—for I know only a little about it. Now tell me what else you know about me. You see you were wrong this time."

"Yes, in a way. Never mind that. I know that you are a rigid disciplinarian. You keep your hounds under a sharp control."

"Oh, I *must* do that. They would eat somebody up if I didn't. Besides it is good for them. You see dogs and women need strict control. A mistress will do for dogs, but every woman needs a master."

The girl said this as simply and earnestly as she might have said that all growing plants need water and sunshine. Arthur was astonished at the utterance, delivered, as it was, in the manner of one who speaks the veriest truism.

"Now," he responded, "I have encountered something in you that I not only do not understand but cannot even guess at. Where did you learn that cynical philosophy?"

"Do you mean what I said about dogs?"

"No. Though 'cynic' means a dog. I mean what you said about women. Where did you get the notion that every woman needs a master?"

"Why, anybody can see that," answered the girl. "Every girl's father or brother is her master till she grows up and marries. Then her husband is her master. Women are always very bad if they haven't masters, and even when they mean to be good, they make a sad mess of their lives if they have nobody to control them."

If this slip of a girl had talked Greek or Sanscrit or the differential calculus at him, Arthur could not have been more astounded than he was. Surely a girl so young, so fresh, and so obviously wholesome of mind could never have formulated such a philosophy of life for herself, even had she been thrown all her days into the most complex of conditions and surroundings, instead of leading the simplest of lives as this girl had manifestly done, and seeing only other living like her own. But he forbore to question her, lest he trespass again upon delicate ground, as he had done with respect to music. He was quick to remember that he had already asked her where she had learned her philosophy, and that she had nimbly evaded the question—defending her philosophy as a thing obvious to the mind, instead of answering the inquiry as to whence she

had drawn the teaching.

Altogether, Arthur Brent's mind was in a whirl as he left the luncheon table. Simple as she seemed and transparent as her personality appeared to him to be, the girl's attitude of mind seemed inexplicable even to his practised understanding. Her very presence in the house was a puzzle, for Aunt Polly had offered no explanation of the fact that she seemed to belong there, not as a guest but as a member of the household, and even as one exercising authority there. For not only had the girl apologized for leaving Aunt Polly to order the luncheon, but at table and after the meal was finished, it was she, and not the elder woman who gave directions to the servants, who seemed accustomed to think of her as the source of authority, and finally, as she withdrew from the dining room, she turned to Arthur and said:

"Doctor, it is the custom at Wyanoke to dine at four o'clock. Shall I have dinner served at that hour, or do you wish it changed?"

The young man declared his wish that the traditions of the house should be preserved, adding playfully—"I doubt if you could change the dinner hour, Miss Dorothy, even if we all desired it so. I remember Aunt Kizzey, the cook, and I for one should hesitate to oppose my will to her conservatism."

"Oh, as to that," answered the girl, "I never have any trouble managing the servants. They know me too well for that."

"What could you do if you told Kizzey to serve dinner at three and she refused?" asked the young man, really curious to hear the answer.

"I would send for Aunt Kizzey to come to me. Then I would look at her. After that she would do as I bade her."

"I verily believe she would," said the young man to himself as he went to the sideboard and filled one of the long stemmed pipes. "But I really cannot understand why."

He had scarcely finished his pipe when Dorothy came into the hall accompanied by a negro girl of about fourteen years, who bore a work basket with her. Seating herself, Dorothy gave the girl some instruction concerning the knitting she had been doing, and added: "You may sit in the back porch to-day. It is warm."

"Is it too warm, Miss Dorothy, for you to make a little excursion with me to the stables?"

"Certainly not," she quickly answered. "I'll go at once."

"Thank you," he said, "and we'll stop in the orchard on our way back and get some June apples. I remember where the trees are."

"You want me to show you the horses, I suppose," she said as the two set off side by side.

"No; any of the negroes could do that. I want you to render me a more skilled service."

"What is it?"

"I want you, please, to pick out a horse for me to ride while I stay at Wyanoke."

"While you stay at Wyanoke!" echoed the girl. "Why, that will be for all the time, of course."

"I hardly think so," answered the young man, with a touch of not altogether pleased uncertainty in his tone. "You see I have important work to do, which I cannot do anywhere but in a great city—or at any rate,—as the glamour of the easy, polished and altogether delightful contentment of Virginia life came over him anew, and its attractiveness sang like a siren in his ears,—“at any rate it cannot be so well done anywhere else as in a large city. I have come down here to Virginia only to see what duties I have to do here. If I find I can finish them in a few months or a year, I shall go back to my more important work.”"

The girl was silent for a time, as if pondering his words. Finally she said:

"Is there anything more important than to look after your estate? You see I don't understand things very well."

"Perhaps it is best that you never shall," he answered. "And to most men the task of looking after an ancestral estate, and managing a plantation with more than a hundred negroes—"

"There are a hundred and eighty seven in all, if you count big and little, old and young together," broke in the girl.

"Are there? How did you come to know the figures so precisely?"

"Why, I keep the plantation book, you know."

"I didn't know," he answered.

"Yes," she said, "I've kept it ever since I came to Wyanoke three or four years ago. You see your uncle didn't like to bother with details, and so I took this off his hands, when I was so young that I wrote a great big, sprawling hand and spelled my words ever so queerly. But I wanted to help Uncle Robert. You see I liked him. If you'd rather keep the plantation book yourself, I'll give it up to you when we go back to the house."

"I would much rather have you keep it, at least until you make up your mind whether you like me or not. Then, if you don't like me I'll take the book."

"Very well," she replied, treating his reference to her present uncertainty of mind concerning himself quite as she might have treated his reference to a weather contingency of the morrow or of the next week. "I'll go on with the book till then."

By this time the pair had reached the stables, and Miss Dorothy, in that low, soft but penetrating voice which Arthur had observed and admired, called to a negro man who was dozing within:

"Ben, your master wants to see the best of the saddle horses. Bring them out, do you hear?"

The question "do you hear?" with which she ended her command was one in universal use in Virginia. If an order were given to a negro without that admonitory tag to it, it would fall idly upon heedless ears. But the moment the negro heard that question he gathered his wits together and obeyed the order.

"What sort of a horse do you like, Doctor?" asked the girl as the animals were led forth. "Can you ride?"

"Why, of course," he answered. "You know I spent a year in Virginia when I was a boy."

"Oh, yes, of course—if you haven't forgotten. Then you don't mind if a horse is spirited and a trifle hard to manage?"

"No. On the contrary, Miss Dorothy, I should very much mind if my riding horse were not spirited, and as for managing him, I'm going to get you to teach me the art of command, as you practise it so well on your dogs, your horse and the house servants."

"Very well," answered the girl seeming not to heed the implied compliment. "Put the horses back in their stalls, Ben, and go over to Pocahontas right away, and tell the overseer there to send Gimlet over to me. Do you hear? You see, Doctor," she added, turning to him, "your uncle's gout prevented him from riding much during the last year or so of his life, and so there are no saddle horses here fit for a strong man like you. There's one fine mare, four years old, but she's hardly big enough to carry your weight. You must weigh a hundred and sixty pounds, don't you?"

"Yes, about that. But whose horse is Gimlet?"

"He's mine, and he'll suit you I'm sure. He is five years old, nearly seventeen hands high and as strong as a young ox."

"But are you going to sell him to me?"

"Sell him? No, of course not. He is my pet. He has eaten out of my hand ever since he was a colt, and I was the first person that ever sat on his back. Besides, I wouldn't *sell* a horse to *you*. I'm going to lend him to you till—till I make up my mind. Then, if I like you I'll give him to you. If I don't like you I'll send him back to Pocahontas. Hurry up, Ben. Ride the gray mare and lead Gimlet back, do you hear?"

"You are very kind to me, Miss Dorothy, and I—"

"Oh, no. I'm only polite and neighborly. You see Wyanoke and Pocahontas are adjoining plantations. There comes Jo with your trunks, so we shall not have time for the June apples to-day—or may be we might stop long enough to get just a few, couldn't we?"

With that she took the young man's hand as a little girl of ten might have done, and skipping by his side, led the way into the orchard. The thought of the June apples seemed to have awakened the child side of her nature, completely banishing the womanly dignity for the time being.

V

ARTHUR BRENT'S TEMPTATION

DURING the next three or four days Arthur was too much engaged with affairs and social duties to pursue his scientific study of the young girl—half woman, half child—with anything like the eagerness he would have shown had his leisure been that of the Virginians round about him. He had much to do, to "find out where he stood," as he put the matter. He had with him for two days Col. Majors the lawyer, who had the estate's affairs in charge. That comfortable personage assured the young man that the property was "in good shape" but that assurance did not satisfy a man accustomed to inquire into minute details of fact and to rest content only with exact answers to his inquiries.

"I will arrange everything for you," said the lawyer; "the will gives you everything and it has already been probated. It makes you sole executor with no bonds, as well as sole inheritor of the estate. There is really nothing for you to do but hang up your hat. You take your late uncle's place, that is all."

"But there are debts," suggested Arthur.

"Oh, yes, but they are trifling and the estate is a very rich one. None of your creditors will bother you."

"But I do not intend to remain in debt," said the young man impatiently. "Besides, I do not intend to remain a planter all my life. I have other work to do in the world. This inheritance is a burden to me, and I mean to be rid of it as soon as possible."

"Allow me to suggest," said the lawyer in his self-possessed way, "that the inheritance of Wyanoke is a sort of burden that most men at your time of life would very cheerfully take upon their shoulders."

"Very probably," answered Arthur. "But as I happen not to be 'most men at my time of life' it distinctly oppresses me. It loads me with duties that are not congenial to me. It requires my attention at a time when I very greatly desire to give my attention to something which I regard as of more importance than the growing of wheat and tobacco and corn."

"Every one to his taste," answered the lawyer, "but I confess I do not see what better a young man could do than sit down here at Wyanoke and, without any but pleasurable activities, enjoy all that life has to give. Your income will be large, and your credit quite beyond question. You can buy whatever you want, and you need never bother yourself with a business detail. No dun will ever beset your door. If any creditor of yours should happen to want his money, as none will, you can borrow enough to pay him without even going to Richmond to arrange the matter. I will attend to all such things for you, as I did for your late uncle."

"Thank you very much," Arthur answered in a tone which suggested that he did not thank him at all. "But I always tie my own shoe strings. I do not know whether I shall go on living here or not, whether I shall give up my work and my ambitions and settle down into a life of inglorious ease, or whether I shall be strong enough to put that temptation aside. I confess it is a temptation. Accustomed as I am to intensity of intellectual endeavor, I confess that the prospect of sitting down here in lavish plenty, and living a life unburdened by care and unvexed by any sense of exacting duty, has its allurements for me. I suppose, indeed, that any well ordered mind would find abundant satisfaction in such a life programme, and perhaps I shall presently find myself growing content with it. But if I do, I shall not consent to live in debt."

"But everybody has his debts—everybody who has an estate. It is part of the property, as it were. Of course it would be uncomfortable to owe more than you could pay, but you are abundantly able to owe your debts, so you need not let them trouble you. All told they do not amount to the value of ten or a dozen field hands."

"But I shall never sell my negroes."

"Of course not. No gentleman in Virginia ever does that, unless a negro turns criminal and must be sent south, or unless nominal sales are made between the heirs of an estate, simply by way of distributing the

property. Far be it from me to suggest such a thing. I meant only to show you how unnecessary it is for you to concern yourself about the trifling obligations on your estate—how small a ratio they bear to the value of the property.”

“I quite understand,” answered Arthur. “But at the same time these debts do trouble me and will go on troubling me till the last dollar of them is discharged. This is simply because they interfere with the plans I have formed—or at least am forming—for so ordering my affairs that I may go back to my work. Pray do not let us discuss the matter further. I will ask you, instead, to send me, at your earliest convenience, an exact schedule of the creditors of this estate, together with the amount—principal and interest—that is owing to each. I intend to make it my first business to discharge all these obligations. Till that is done, I am not my own master, and I have a decided prejudice in favor of being able to order my own life in my own way.”

Behind all this lay the fact that Arthur Brent was growing dissatisfied with himself and suspicious of himself. The beauty and calm of Wyanoke, the picturesque contentment of that refined Virginia life which was impressed anew upon his mind every time a neighboring planter rode over to take breakfast, dinner, or supper with him, or drove over in the afternoon with his wife and daughters to welcome the new master of the plantation—all this fascinated his mind and appealed strongly to the partially developed æsthetic side of his nature, and at times the strong, earnest manhood in him resented the fact almost with bitterness.

There was never anywhere in America a country life like that of Virginia in the period before the war. In that state, as nowhere else on this continent, the refinement, the culture, the education and the graceful social life of the time were found not in the towns, but in the country. There were few cities in the state and they were small. They existed chiefly for the purpose of transacting business for the more highly placed and more highly cultivated planters. The people of the cities, with exceptions that only emphasized the general truth, were inferior to the dwellers on the plantations, in point of education, culture and social position. It had always been so in Virginia. From the days of William Byrd of Westover to those of Washington, and Jefferson and Madison and John Marshall, and from their time to the middle of the nineteenth century, it had been the choice of all cultivated Virginians to live upon their plantations. Thence had always come the scholars, the statesmen, the great lawyers and the masterful political writers who had conferred untold lustre upon the state.

Washington’s career as military chieftain and statesman, had been one long sacrifice of his desire to lead the planter life at Mount Vernon. Jefferson’s heart was at Monticello while he penned the Declaration of Independence, and it was the proud boast of Madison that he like Jefferson, quitted public office poorer than he was when he undertook such service to his native land, and rejoiced in his return to the planter life of his choice at Montpéliér.

In brief, the entire history of the state and all its traditions, all its institutions, all its habits of thought tended to commend the country life to men of refined mind, and to make of the plantation owners and their families a distinctly recognized aristocracy, not only of social prestige but even more of education, refinement and intellectual leadership.

To Arthur Brent had come the opportunity to make himself at once and without effort, a conspicuous member of this blue blooded caste. His plantation had come to him, not by vulgar purchase, but by inheritance. It had been the home of his ancestors, the possession and seat of his family for more than two hundred years. And his family had been from the first one of distinction and high influence. One of his great, great, great grandfathers, had been a member of the Jamestown settlement and a soldier under John Smith. His great, great grandfather had shared the honor of royal proscription as an active participant in Bacon’s rebellion. His great grandfather had been the companion of young George Washington in his perilous expeditions to “the Ohio country,” and had fallen by Washington’s side in Braddock’s blundering campaign. His grandfather had been a drummer boy at Yorktown, had later become one of the great jurists of the state and had been a distinguished soldier in the war of 1812. His father, as we know, had strayed away to the west, as so many Virginians of his time did, but he had won honors there which made Virginia proud of him. And fortunately for Arthur Brent, that father’s removal to the west was not made until this his son had been born at the old family seat.

“For,” explained Aunt Polly to the young man, in her own confident way, “in spite of your travels, you are a native Virginian, Arthur, and when you have dropped into the ways of the country, people will overlook the fact that you have lived so much at the north, and even in Europe.”

“But why, Aunt Polly,” asked Arthur, “should that fact be deemed something to be ‘overlooked?’ Surely travel broadens one’s views and—”

“Oh, yes, of course, in the case of people not born in Virginia. But a Virginian doesn’t need it, and it upsets his ideas. You see when a Virginian travels he forgets what is best. He actually grows like other people. You yourself show the ill effects of it in a hundred ways. Of course you haven’t quite lost your character as a Virginian, and you’ll gradually come back to it here at Wyanoke; but ‘evil communications corrupt good manners,’ and I can’t help seeing it in you—at least in your speech. You don’t pronounce your words correctly. You say ‘cart’ ‘carpet’ and ‘garden’ instead of ‘cyart’ ‘cyarpet’ and ‘gyarden.’ And you flatten your a’s dreadfully. You say ‘grass’ instead of ‘grawss’ and ‘basket’ instead of ‘bawsket’ and all that sort of thing. And you roll your r’s dreadfully. It gives me a chill whenever I hear you say ‘master’ instead of ‘mahstah.’ But you’ll soon get over that, and in the meantime, as you were born in Virginia and are the head of an old Virginia family, the gentlemen and ladies who are coming every day to welcome you, are very kind about it. They overlook it, as your misfortune, rather than your fault.”

“That is certainly very kind of them, Aunt Polly. I can’t imagine anything more generous in the mind than that. But—well, never mind.”

“What were you going to say, Arthur?”

“Oh, nothing of any consequence. I was only thinking that perhaps my Virginia neighbors do not lay so much stress upon these things as you do.”

“Of course not. That is one of the troubles of this time. Since we let the Yankees build railroads through Virginia, everybody here wants to travel. Why, half the gentlemen in this county have been to New York!”

"How very shocking!" said Arthur, hiding his smile behind his hand.

"That's really what made the trouble for poor Dorothy," mused Aunt Polly. "If her father hadn't gone gadding about—he even went to Europe you know—Dorothy never would have been born."

"How fortunate that would have been! But tell me about it, Aunt Polly. You see I don't quite understand in what way it would have been better for Dorothy not to have been born—unless we accept the pessimist philosophy, and consider all human life a curse."

"Now you know, I don't understand that sort of talk, Arthur," answered Aunt Polly. "I never studied philosophy or chemistry, and I'm glad of it. But I know it would have been better for Dorothy if Dr. South had stayed at home like a reasonable man, and married—but there, I mustn't talk of that. Dorothy is a dear girl, and I'm fitting her for her position in life as well as I can. If I could stop her from thinking, now, or—"

"Pray don't, Aunt Polly! Her thinking interests me more than anything I ever studied,—except perhaps the strange and even inexplicable therapeutic effect of champagne in yellow fever—"

"There you go again, with your outlandish words, which you know I don't understand or want to understand, though sometimes I remember them."

"Tell me of an instance, Aunt Polly."

"Why, you said to me the other night that Dorothy was a 'psychological enigma' to your mind, and that you very much wished you might know 'the conditions of heredity and environment' that had produced 'so strange a phenomenon.' There! I remember your words, though I haven't the slightest notion what they mean. I went upstairs and wrote them down. Of course I couldn't spell them except in my own way—and that would make you laugh I reckon if you could see it, which you never shall—but I haven't a glimmering notion of what the words mean. Now I want to tell you about Dorothy."

"Good! I am anxious to hear!"

"Oh, I'm not going to tell you what you want to hear. That would be gossip, and no Virginia woman ever gossips."

That was true. The Virginians of that time, men and women alike, locked their lips and held their tongues in leash whenever the temptation came to them to discuss the personal affairs of their neighbors. They were bravely free and frank of speech when telling men to their faces what opinions they might hold concerning them; but they did that only when necessity, or honor, or the vindication of truth compelled. They never made the character or conduct or affairs of each other a subject of conversation. It was the very crux of honor to avoid that.

"Then tell me what you are minded to reveal, Aunt Polly," responded Arthur. "I do not care to know anything else."

"Well, Dorothy is in a peculiar position—not by her own fault. She *must* marry into a good family, and it has fallen to me to prepare her for her fate."

"Surely, Aunt Polly," interjected the young man with a shocked and distressed tone in his voice, "surely you are not teaching that child to think of marriage—yet?"

"No, no, no!" answered Aunt Polly. "I'm only trying to train her to submissiveness of mind, so that when the time comes for her to make the marriage that is already arranged for her, she will interpose no foolish objections. It's a hard task. The girl has a wilful way of thinking for herself. I can't cure her of it, do what I will."

"Why should you try?" asked Arthur, almost with excitement in his tone. "Why should you try to spoil nature's fine handiwork? That child's intellectual attitude is the very best I ever saw in one so young, so simple and so childlike. For heaven's sake, let her alone! Let her live her own life and think in her own honest, candid and fearless way, and she will develop into a womanhood as noble as any that the world has seen since Eve persuaded Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge and quit being a fool."

"Arthur, you shock me!"

"I'm sorry, Aunt Polly, but I shall shock you far worse than that, if you persist in your effort to warp and pervert that child's nature to fit it to some preconceived purpose of conventionality."

"I don't know just what you mean, Arthur," responded the old lady, "but I know my duty, and I'm going to do it. The one thing necessary in Dorothy's case, is to stop her from thinking, and train her to settle down, when the time comes, into the life of a Virginia matron. It is her only salvation."

"Salvation from what?" asked Arthur, almost angrily.

"I can't tell you," the old lady answered. "But the girl will never settle into her proper place if she goes on thinking, as she does now. So I'm going to stop it."

"And I," the young man thought, though he did not say it, "am going to teach her to think more than ever. I'll educate that child so long as I am condemned to lead this idle life. I'll make it my business to see that her mind shall not be put into a corset, that her extraordinary truthfulness shall not be taught to tell lies by indirection, that she shall not be restrained of her natural and healthful development. It will be worth while to play the part of idle plantation owner for a year or two, to accomplish a task like that. I can never learn to feel any profound interest in the growing of tobacco, wheat and corn—but the cultivation of that child into what she should be is a nobler work than that of all the agriculturists of the south side put together. I'll make it my task while I am kept here away from my life's chosen work."

That day Arthur Brent sent a letter to New York. In it he ordered his library and the contents of his laboratory sent to him at Wyanoke. He ordered also a good many books that were not already in his library. He sent for a carpenter on that same day, and set him at work in a hurry, constructing a building of his own designing upon a spot selected especially with reference to drainage, light and other requirements of a laboratory. He even sent to Richmond for a plumber to put in chemical sinks, drain pipes and other laboratory fittings.

ARTHUR BRENT had now come to understand, in some degree at least, who Dorothy South was. He remembered that the Pocahontas plantation which immediately adjoined Wyanoke on the east, was the property of a Dr. South, whom he had never seen. At the time of his own boyhood's year at Wyanoke he had understood, in a vague way that Dr. South was absent somewhere on his travels. Somehow the people whom he had met at Wyanoke and elsewhere, had seemed to be sorry for Dr. South but they never said why. Apparently they held him in very high esteem, as Arthur remembered, and seemed deeply to regret the necessity—whatever it was—which detained him away, and to all intents and purposes made of Pocahontas a closed house. For while the owner of that plantation insisted that the doors of his mansion should always remain open to his friends, and that dinner should be served there at the accustomed hour of four o'clock every day during his absence, so that any friend who pleased might avail himself of a hospitality which had never failed,—there was no white person on the plantation except the overseer. Gentlemen passing that way near the dinner hour used sometimes to stop and occupy places at the table, an event which the negro major-domo always welcomed as a pleasing interruption in the loneliness of the house. The hospitality of Pocahontas had been notable for generations past, and the old servant recalled a time when the laughter of young men and maidens had made the great rooms of the mansion vocal with merriment. Arthur himself had once taken dinner there with his uncle, and had been curiously impressed with the rule of the master that dinner should be served, whether there were anybody there to partake of it or not. He recalled all these things now, and argued that Dr. South's long absence could not have been caused by anything that discredited him among the neighbors. For had not those neighbors always regretted his absence, and expressed a wish for his return? Arthur remembered in what terms of respect and even of affection, everybody had spoken of the absent man. He remembered too that about the time of his own departure from Wyanoke, there had been a stir of pleased expectation, over the news that Dr. South was soon to return and reopen the hospitable house.

He discovered now that Dr. South had in fact returned at that time and had resumed the old life at Pocahontas, dispensing a graceful hospitality during the seven or eight years that had elapsed between his return and his death. This latter event, Arthur had incidentally learned, had occurred three years or so before his own accession to the Wyanoke estate. Since that time Dorothy had lived with Aunt Polly, the late master of Wyanoke having been her guardian.

So much and no more, Arthur knew. It did not satisfy a curiosity which he would not satisfy by asking questions. It did not tell him why Aunt Polly spoke of the girl with pity, calling her "poor Dorothy." It did not explain to him why there should be a special effort made to secure the girl's marriage into a "good family." What could be more probable than that that would happen in due course without any managing whatever? The girl was the daughter of as good a family as any in Virginia. She was the sole heir of a fine estate. Finally, she promised to become a particularly beautiful young woman, and one of unusual attractiveness of mind.

Yet everywhere Arthur heard her spoken of as "poor Dorothy," and he observed particularly that the universal kindness of the gentlewomen to the child was always marked by a tone or manner suggestive of compassion. The fact irritated the young man, as facts which he could not explain were apt to do with one of his scientific mental habit. There were other puzzling aspects of the matter, too. Why was the girl forbidden to sing, to learn music, or even to enjoy it? Where had she got her curious conceptions of life? And above all, what did Aunt Polly mean by saying that this mere child's future marriage had been "already arranged?"

"The whole thing is a riddle," he said to himself. "I shall make no effort to solve it, but I have a mind to interfere somewhat with the execution of any plans that a stupid conventionality may have formed to sacrifice this rarely gifted child to some Moloch of social propriety. Of course I shall not try in any way to control her life or direct her future. But at any rate I shall see to it that she shall be compelled to nothing without her own consent. Meanwhile, as they won't let her learn music, I'll teach her science. I see clearly that it will take me three or four years to do what I have planned to do at Wyanoke—to pay off the debts, and set the negroes up as small farmers on their own account in the west. During that time I shall have ample opportunity to train the child's mind in a way worthy of it, and when I have done that I fancy she will order her own life with very little regard to the plans of those who are arranging to make of her a mere pawn upon the chess board. Thank heaven, this thing gives me a new interest. It will prevent my mind from vegetating and my character from becoming mildewed. It opens to me a duty and an occupation—a duty untouched with selfish indulgence, an occupation which I can pursue without a thought of any other reward than the joy of worthy achievement."

"Miss Dorothy," he said to the girl that evening, "I observe that you are an early riser."

"Oh, yes," she replied. "You see I must be up soon in the morning"—that use of "soon" for "early" was invariable in Virginia—"to see that the maids begin their work right. You see I carry the keys."

"Yes, I know, you are housekeeper, and a very conscientious one I think. But I wonder if your duties in the early morning are too exacting to permit you to ride with me before breakfast. You see I want to make a tour of inspection over the plantation and I'd like to have you for my guide. The days are so warm that I have a fancy to ride in the cool of the morning. Would it please you to accompany me and tell me about things?"

"I'll like that very much. I'm always down stairs by five o'clock, so if you like we can ride at six any morning you please. That will give us three hours before breakfast."

"Thank you very much," Arthur replied. "If you please, then, we'll ride tomorrow morning."

When Arthur came down stairs the next morning he found the maids busily polishing the snow-white floors with pine needles and great log and husk rubbers, while their young mistress was giving her final instructions to Johnny, the dining room servant. Hearing Arthur's step on the stair she commanded the negro to bring the coffee urn and in answer to the young master's cheery good morning, she handed him a cup of steaming coffee.

"This is a very pleasant surprise," he exclaimed. "I had not expected coffee until breakfast time."

"Oh, you must never ride soon in the morning without taking coffee first," she replied. "That's the way to

keep well. We always have a big kettle of coffee for the field hands before they go to work. Their breakfast isn't ready till ten o'clock, and the coffee keeps the chill off."

"Why is their breakfast served so late?"

"Oh, they like it that way. They don't want anything but coffee soon in the morning. They breakfast at ten, and then the time isn't so long before their noonday dinner."

"I should think that an excellent plan," answered the doctor. "As a hygienist I highly approve of it. After all it isn't very different from the custom of the French peasants. But come, Miss Dorothy, Ben has the horses at the gate."

The girl, fresh-faced, lithe-limbed and joyous, hastily donned her long riding skirt which made her look, Arthur thought, like a little child masquerading in some grown woman's garments, and nimbly tripped down the walk to the gate way. There she quickly but searchingly looked the horses over, felt of the girths, and, taking from her belt a fine white cambric handkerchief, proceeded to rub it vigorously on the animals' rumps. Finding soil upon the dainty cambric, she held it up before Ben's face, and silently looked at him for the space of thirty seconds. Then she tossed the handkerchief to him and commanded:—"Go to the house and fetch me another handkerchief."

There was something almost tragic in the negro's humiliation as he walked away on his mission. Arthur had watched the little scene with amused interest. When it was over the girl, without waiting for him to offer her a hand as a step, seized the pommel and sprang into the saddle.

"Why did you do that, Miss Dorothy?" the young man asked as the horses, feeling the thrill of morning in their veins, began their journey with a waltz.

"What? rub the horses?"

"No. Why did you look at Ben in that way? And why did it seem such a punishment to him?"

"I wanted him to remember. He knows I never permit him to bring me a horse that isn't perfectly clean."

"And will he remember now?"

"Certainly. You saw how severely he was punished this time. He doesn't want that kind of thing to happen again."

"But I don't understand. You did nothing to him. You didn't even scold him."

"Of course I didn't. Scolding is foolish. Only weak-minded people scold."

"But I shouldn't have thought Ben fine enough or sensitive enough to feel the sort of punishment you gave him. Why should he mind it?"

"Oh, everybody minds being looked at in that way—everybody who has been doing wrong. You see one always knows when one has done wrong. Ben knew, and when I looked at him he saw that I knew too. So it hurt him. You'll see now that he'll never bring you or me a horse on which we can soil our handkerchiefs."

"Where did you learn all that?" asked Arthur, full of curiosity and interest.

"I suppose my father taught me. He taught me everything I know. I remember that whenever I was naughty, he would look at me over his spectacles and make me ever so sorry. You see even if I knew I had done wrong I didn't think much about it, till father looked at me. After that I would think about it all day and all night, and be, oh, so sorry! Then I would try not to displease my father again."

"Your father must have been a very wise as well as a very good man!"

"He was," and two tears slipped from the girl's eyes as she recalled the father who had been everything to her from her very infancy. "That is why I always try, now that he is gone, never to do anything that he would have disliked. I always think 'I won't do that, for if I do father will look at me.' You see I must be a great deal more careful than other girls."

"Why? I see no reason for that."

"That's because you don't know about—about things. I was born bad, and if I'm not more careful than other girls have to be, I shall be very bad when I grow up."

"Will you forgive me if I say I don't believe that?" asked Arthur.

"Oh, but it's true," answered the girl, looking him straight in the face, with an expression of astonishment at his incredulity.

Arthur saw fit to change the conversation. So he returned to Ben's case.

"Most women would have sent Ben to the overseer for punishment, wouldn't they?"

"Some would, but I never find that necessary. Besides I hate *your* overseer."

"Why? What has he done to incur your displeasure, Miss Dorothy?"

"Now you're mocking me for minding things that are none of my business," said the girl with a touch of contrition in her voice.

"Indeed I am not," answered the young man with earnestness. "And you have not been doing anything of the kind. I asked you to tell me about things here at Wyanoke, because it is necessary that I should know them. So when you tell me that you hate the overseer here, I want to know why. It is very necessary for me to know what sort of man he is, so that I may govern myself accordingly. I have great confidence in your judgment, young as you are. I am very sure you would not hate the overseer without good cause. So you will do me a favor if you'll tell me why you hate him."

"It is because he is cruel and a coward."

"How do you know that?"

"I've seen it for myself. He strikes the field hands for nothing. He has even cruelly whipped some of the women servants with the black snake whip he carries. I told him only a little while ago that if I ever caught him doing that again, I'd set my dogs on him. No Virginia gentleman would permit such a thing. Uncle Robert—that's the name I always called your uncle by—would have shot the fellow for that, I think."

"But why did Uncle Robert employ such a man for overseer?"

"He never did. Uncle Robert never kept any overseer. He used to say that the authority of the master of a

plantation was too great to be delegated to any person who didn't care for the black people and didn't feel his responsibility."

"But how did the fellow come to be here then? Who employed him?"

"Mr. Peyton did—Mr. Madison Peyton. When your uncle was ill, Mr. Peyton looked after things for him, and he kept it up after Uncle Robert died. He hired this overseer. He said he was too busy on his own plantation to take care of things here in person."

"Uncle Robert was quite right," said Arthur meditatively. "And now that I am charged with the responsibility for these black people, I will not delegate my power to any overseer, least of all to one whom you have found out to be a cruel coward. Where do you suppose we could find him now?"

"Down in the tobacco new grounds," the girl answered. "I was going there to-day to set my dogs on him, but I remembered that you were master now."

"What was the special occasion for your anger this time?" Arthur asked in a certain quiet, seemingly half-indifferent tone which Dorothy found inscrutable.

"He whipped poor old Michael, the gardener last night," answered the girl with a glint as of fire in her eyes. "He had no right to do that. Michael isn't a field hand, and he isn't under the overseer's control."

"Do you mean the shambling old man I saw in the garden yesterday? Surely he didn't whip that poor decrepit old man!"

"Yes, he did. I told you he was a cruel coward."

"Let's ride to the tobacco new grounds at once," said Arthur quite as he might have suggested the most indifferent thing. But Dorothy observed that on the way to the new grounds Arthur Brent spoke no word. Twice she addressed him, but he made no response.

Arrived at the new grounds Arthur called the overseer to him and without preface asked him:

"Did you strike old Michael with your whip last night?"

"Yes, and there wan't a lick amiss unless I made a lick at him and missed him."

The man laughed at his own clumsy witticism, but the humor of it seemed not to impress the new master of the plantation. For reply he said:

"Go to your house at once and pack up your belongings. Come to me after I have had my breakfast, and we'll have a settlement. You are to leave my plantation to-day and never set foot upon it again. Come, Miss Dorothy, let's continue our ride!"

With that the two wheeled about, the girl saying:

"Let's run our horses for a stretch." Instantly she set off at breakneck speed across the fields and over two stiff fences before regaining the main plantation road. There she drew rein and turning full upon her companion she said:

"Now you may call me Dorothy."

VII

SHRUB HILL CHURCH

THE following day was Sunday, and to Arthur's satisfaction it was one of the two Sundays in the month, on which services were held at Shrub Hill Church. For Arthur remembered the little old church there in the woods, with the ancient cemetery, in which all the Brents who had lived before him were buried, and in which rested also all the past generations of all the other good families of the region round about.

Shrub Hill Church represented one of the most attractive of Virginia traditions. Early in his career as statesman, Thomas Jefferson had rendered Virginia a most notable service. He had secured the complete separation of church from state, the dissolution of that unholy alliance between religion and government, with which despotism and class privilege have always buttressed the fabric of oppression. But church and family remained, and in the course of generations that relation had assumed characteristics of a most wholesome, ameliorating and liberalizing character.

Thus at Shrub Hill all the people of character and repute in the region round about, found themselves at home. They were in large degree Baptists and Presbyterians in their personal church relations, but all of them deemed themselves members of Shrub Hill—the Episcopal church which had survived from that earlier time when to be a gentleman carried with it the presumption of adherence to the established religion. All of them attended service there. All contributed to the cost of keeping the edifice and the graveyard grounds in repair. All of them shared in the payment of the old rector's salary and he in his turn preached scrupulously innocuous sermons to them—sermons ten minutes in length which might have been repeated with entire propriety and acceptance in any Baptist or Presbyterian pulpit.

When the Easter elections came, all the gentlemen of the neighborhood felt themselves entitled to vote for the wardens and vestrymen already in office, or for the acceptable person selected by common consent to take the place of any warden or vestryman who might have been laid to rest beneath the sod of the Shrub Hill churchyard during the year. And the wardens and vestrymen were Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians or gentlemen professing no faith, quite indifferently.

These people were hot debaters of politics and religion—especially religion. When the question of immersion or pedo-baptism was up, each was ready and eager to maintain the creed of his own church with all the arguments that had been formulated for that purpose generations before and worn smooth to the tongue by oft-repeated use. But this fervor made no difference whatever in the loyalty of their allegiance to their old family church at Shrub Hill. There they found common ground of tradition and affection. There they were all alike in right of inheritance. There all of them expected to be buried by the side of their forefathers.

It has been said already that services were held at Shrub Hill on two Sundays of the month. As the old rector lived within a few minutes' walk of the church, and had no other duty than its ministry, there might have been services there every Sunday in the year, except that such a practice would have interfered with the

desire of those who constituted its congregation to attend their own particular Baptist or Presbyterian churches, which held services on the other Sundays. It was no part of the spirit or mission of the family church thus to interfere with the religious preferences of its members, and so, from time immemorial, there had been services at Shrub Hill only upon two Sundays of the month.

Everybody attended those services—every gentleman and every gentlewoman at least. That is to say, all went to the church and the women with a few of the older men went in. The rest of the gentlemen gathered in groups under the trees outside—for the church stood in the midst of an unbroken woodland—and chatted in low tones while the service was in progress. Thus they fulfilled their gentlemanly obligations of church going, without the fatigue of personal participation in the services.

The gentlemen rode to church on horseback. The ladies, old and young alike, went thither in their family carriages. Many of these, especially the younger ones, were accustomed to go everywhere else in the saddle, but to church, propriety and tradition required them to go decorously in the great lumbering vehicles of family state.

The gentlemen arrived first and took their places at the church door to greet the gentlewomen and give them a hand in alighting from the high-hung carriages.

As soon as the service was over the social clearing-house held its session. It was not known by that name, but that in fact was what it amounted to. Every young woman present invited every other young woman present to go home with her to dinner and to stay for a few days or for a week. There was a babel of insistent tongues out of which nothing less sagacious than feminine intelligence could have extracted a resultant understanding. But after a few minutes all was as orderly as the domestic arrangements over which these young women were accustomed to preside. Two or three of them had won all the others to their will, and the company, including all there was of young and rich voiced femininity in the region round about, was divided into squads and assigned to two or three hospitable mansions, whither trunks would follow in the early morning of the Monday.

The young men accommodated themselves at once to these arrangements, each accepting at least a dinner invitation to the house, to which the young woman most attractive to himself had elected to go. As there was no afternoon or evening service, the religious duties of the day were at an end before one of the clock.

Out under the trees before and during the service the men discussed affairs of interest to themselves, and on this his first Sunday, Arthur found that his own affairs constituted the subject of most general interest. He was heartily welcomed as the new master of Wyanoke, the welcome partaking somewhat of the nature of that given to one who returns to right ways of living after erratic wanderings. There was a kindly disposition to recognize Arthur's birthright as a Virginian, together with a generous readiness to forgive his youthful indiscretion in living so much elsewhere.

Only one man ventured to be censorious, and that was Madison Peyton, who was accustomed to impress himself upon the community in ways which were sometimes anything but agreeable, but to which everybody was accustomed to submit in a nameless sort of fear of his sharp tongue—everybody, that is to say, except Aunt Polly and John Meaux.

Aunt Polly was not afraid of Madison Peyton for several reasons. The first was that Aunt Polly was not accustomed to stand in awe of anybody. The second was that her blood was quite the bluest in all that part of the State and she had traditions behind her. Finally she was a shrewdly penetrative person who had long ago discovered the nature of Madison Peyton's pretensions and subjected them to sarcastic analysis. As for John Meaux, everybody knew him as by odds the most successful planter and most capable man of business in the county. Madison Peyton could teach him nothing, and he had a whiplash attachment to his tongue, the sting of which Peyton did not care to invoke.

For the rest, Madison Peyton was dominant. It was his habit to lecture his neighbors upon their follies and short-comings and rather arrogantly, though with a carefully simulated good nature, to dictate to them what they should or should not do, assuming with good-natured insolence an authority which in no way belonged to him. In this way, during the late Robert Brent's last illness, Peyton had installed as overseer at Wyanoke, a man whom the planters generally refused to employ because of his known cruelty, but whose capacity to make full crops was well attested by experience.

Arthur Brent had summarily dismissed this man as we know, and Peyton was distinctly displeased with him for doing so. Taking the privilege of an old friend of the young man's uncle, Peyton called him by his first name, without any prefix whatever.

"Why in the world, Arthur," he said by way of introducing the subject, "why in the world have you sent Williams away?"

Something in Peyton's manner, something that was always in his manner, had given Arthur a feeling of resentment when the man had called upon him soon after his arrival. This direct interrogatory concerning a matter exclusively his own, almost angered the young man, as the others saw when, instead of answering it directly, he asked:

"Are you specially interested in Williams's welfare, Mr. Peyton?"

Peyton was too self-satisfied to be sensitive, so he took the rebuff with a laugh.

"Oh, no," he answered. "It is you that I'm troubled about. Knowing nothing of planting you need a capable overseer more than anybody else does, and here you've sent away the best one in the county without even consulting anybody."

"I did not need to consult anybody," answered Arthur, "in order to know that I did not want that man on my plantation."

"Oh, of course! But you can't get another overseer at this time of year, you know."

"On the whole, I don't think I want another at any time of year."

"You imagine perhaps that you know something about planting. I've known other young men to make the same mistake."

"Perhaps I can learn," answered Arthur in placid tones. "I have learned some things quite as difficult in my life."

"But you don't know anything about planting, and if you try it without an overseer you'll find your account at your commission merchant's distressingly short at the end of the year."

"I don't know about that," broke in John Meaux. "You predicted the same thing in my case, you remember, Mr. Peyton, when I came back after graduating at West Point, and yet I've managed to keep some hams in my meat house for fifteen years now,—and I never had an overseer."

Ignoring Meaux's interruption Peyton said to Arthur:

"And you know you've got a law-suit on your hands."

"Have I? I didn't know it."

"Why, of course, Williams will sue. You see he was engaged for the year, and the contract lasts till January."

"Who made the contract?" asked Arthur.

"Well, I did—acting for your uncle."

"Had you my uncle's power of attorney to bind him to a year's arrangement?"

"Of course not. He was ill and I merely did a neighbor's part."

"Then suppose Williams should sue you instead of me? You see it is you who are liable for non-fulfilment of that contract. You bargained with this man to serve you for a year as overseer on my plantation, and I have declined to accept the arrangement. If he has a right of action against anybody, it is against you. However, I don't think he will sue you, for I have paid him his wages for the full year. Fortunately I happened to have money enough in bank for that. There is the voluntary—let's go into church."

Arthur Brent entered the place of service, one or two of the gentlemen following him.

He had made an enemy of Madison Peyton—an enemy who would never admit his enmity but would never lose an opportunity to indulge it.

VIII

A DINNER AT BRANTON

IT fell to Arthur Brent's share to dine on that Sunday at Branton, the seat of the most princely hospitality in all that part of Virginia. The matter was not at all one of his own arranging, although it was altogether agreeable to him. The master of Branton—a young man scarcely older than himself, who lived there with his only sister, Edmonia Bannister, had been the first of all the neighbors to visit Arthur, dining with him and passing the night at Wyanoke. He had been most kindly and cordial in his welcome and Arthur had been strongly drawn to him as a man of character, intelligence and very winning manners. No sooner had Arthur dismounted at church on that first Sunday, than young Archer Bannister had come to shake his hand and say—"I want to preëempt you, Doctor Brent. All your neighbors will clamor for your company for the dinner and the night, but I have done my best to establish the priority of my claim. Besides my good sister wants you—and as a confidence between you and me, I will tell you that when my sister wants anything she is extremely apt to get it. I'm something of a laggard at dressing myself for church, but this morning she began upon me early, sending three servants to help me put on my clothes, and laying her particular commands upon me to be the first man to arrive at Shrub Hill, lest some other get before me with an invitation to dinner. So you are to be my guest, please, and I'll send one of my people over to Wyanoke for anything you want. By the way I've cleared out a wardrobe for you at Branton, and a dressing case. You'll need to send over a supply of linen, coats, boots, underwear, and the like and leave it in your room there, so that you shall be quite at home to come and go at your will, with the certainty of always finding ready for you whatever you need in the way of costume."

Arthur Brent's one extravagance was in the matter of clothes. He always dressed himself simply, but he was always dressed well, and especially it was his pleasure to change his garments as often as the weather or the circumstances might suggest the desirability of a change. Accordingly he had brought fat trunks to Wyanoke, but by the time that three others of his new neighbors had informed him, quite casually and as a matter of course, that they had prepared rooms for him and expected him to send to those rooms a supply of clothing sufficient for any need, he was pleased to remember that he had left careful measurements with his tailor, his shirt maker, his fabricator of footwear, and his "gents' furnisher" in New York. And he had also acquired a new and broader conception than ever before, of the comprehensive heartiness of Virginia hospitality.

"You see," said young Bannister, later in the day, "Branton is to be one of your homes. As a young man you will be riding about a good deal, and you mustn't be compelled to ride all the way to Wyanoke every time you want to change your coat or substitute low quarter shoes for your riding boots. If you'll ask little Miss Dorothy to show you my room at Wyanoke you'll find that I have everything there that any gentleman could possibly need with which to dress himself properly for any occasion, from a fish fry to a funeral, from a fox hunt to a wedding. You are to do the same at Branton. You don't do things in that way in a city, of course, but here it is necessary, because of the distance between plantations. A man doesn't want all his belongings in one place when that place may be ten or a dozen miles away when he wants them."

Arthur found Branton to be substantially a reproduction of Wyanoke, except that the great gambrel-roofed house had many wings and extensions, and several one storied, two roomed "offices" built about the grounds for the accommodation of any overflow of guests that might happen there. The house had been built about the time at which the Wyanoke mansion had come into being. It was of wood, but by no means of such structure as we now expect in a wooden house. The frame was made of great hewn timbers of forest pine, twelve inches square as to floor beams and rafter plates, and with ten inch timbers in lieu of studding. The vast chimneys were supported, not upon arches nicely calculated to sustain their superincumbent weight with a factor of safety, but upon a solid mass of cellar masonry that would have sustained the biggest of Egyptian

monoliths. The builders of the old colonial time may not have known the precise strength of materials or the niceties of calculation by which the supporting capacity of an arch is determined, but they knew—and they acted upon the knowledge—that twelve inch, heart pine timbers set on end will sustain any weight that a dwelling is called upon to bear, and that a chimney built upon a solid mass of masonry, twenty feet in diameter, is not likely to fall down for lack of underpinning.

One full half of the ground floor of the great mansion constituted the single drawing room, wainscoted to the ceiling and provided with three huge fire places built for the burning of cord wood. The floors were as white as snow, the wainscoting as black as night with age and jealous polishing with beeswax. After the architectural manner of the country, there was a broad porch in front and another in rear, each embowered in honeysuckles and climbing rose bushes. A passageway, more than twenty feet in width ran through the building, connecting the two porches and constituting the most generally used sitting room of the house. It had broad oaken doors reaching across its entire width. They stood always open except during the very coldest days of the mild Virginia winter, there being no thought of closing them even at night. For there were no criminal classes in that social fabric, and if there had been, the certainty that the master of the mansion slept upon its ground floor and knew what to do with a shot gun, would have been a sufficient deterrent to invasion of the premises.

There were two large fire places in the hall for winter use. But the glory of the place was the stairway, with its broad ashen steps and its broader landings. Up and down it had passed generations of happy maidens and matrons. Up and down it, prattling children had played and romped and danced in happy innocence. Up and down it wedding guests and funeral attendants had come and gone, carrying their burdens of flowers for the bride and blossoms for the bier. Upon it had been whispered words of love and tenderness that prepared the way for lives of happiness, and sorrowful utterances that soothed and softened grief. Upon its steps young men of chivalric soul had wooed maidens worthy of their devotion. Upon its landings young maidens had softly spoken those words of consent which ushered in lives of rejoicing.

The furniture of the house was in keeping with its spaciousness and its solidity. Huge sofas were everywhere, broad enough for beds and long enough for giants to stretch their limbs upon. Commodious, plantation-made chairs of oak invited every guest to repose in the broad hallway. In the drawing room, and in the spacious dining hall the sedate ticking of high standing clocks marked time only to suggest its abundance in that land of leisure, and to invite its lavish use in enjoyment.

Now add to all this still life, the presence of charming people—men of gracious mien and young women of immeasurable charm, young women whose rich and softly modulated voices were exquisite music, and whose presence was a benediction—and you may faintly understand the surroundings in which Arthur Brent found himself on that deliciously perfect Sunday afternoon in June, in the year of our Lord, 1859.

Is it surprising that the glamour of it all took hold upon his soul and tempted him to rest content with a life so picturesquely peaceful? Is it surprising that his set purpose of speedily returning to his own life of strenuous, scientific endeavor, somewhat weakened in presence of a temptation so great? All this was his for the taking. All of it was open to him to enjoy if he would. All of it lay before him as a gracious inheritance. Why should he not accept it? Why should he return to the struggle of science, the pent life of cities? Why should he prowl about tenement houses in an endeavor to solve the problem of mephitic gases, when all this free, balsamic air offered itself gratis to his breathing? He had but one life to live, he reflected. Why should he not live it here in sweet and wholesome ways? Why should he not make himself a part of this exquisitely poised existence?

All these vexed and vexing questions flitted through his brain even before he had opportunity to meet his hostess in her own home, surrounded by her bevy of variously attractive young women.

Edmonia Bannister was everywhere recognized as the belle of the state in which she lived. Suitors for her hand had come from afar and anear to woo this maiden of infinite charm, and one by one they had gone away sorrowing but with only the kindest memory of the gentleness with which she had withheld her consent to their wooings.

She was scarcely beautiful. The word “comely” seemed a better one with which to describe her appearance, but her comeliness was allied to a charm at once indefinable and irresistible. John Meaux had said that “it is a necessary part of every young man’s education to fall in love with Edmonia Bannister at least once,” and had predicted that fate for Arthur Brent. Whether the prediction was destined to be fulfilled or not, Arthur could not decide on this his first day as a guest at Branton. He was sure that he was not in love with the girl at the end of his visit, but he drew that assurance chiefly from his conviction that it was absurd to fall in love with any woman upon acquaintance so slight. While holding firmly to that conviction he nevertheless felt strongly that the girl had laid a spell upon him, under control of which he was well nigh helpless. He was by no means the first young man to whom this experience had come, and he was not likely to be the last.

And yet the young woman was wholly free from intent thus to enslave those who came into her life. Her artlessness was genuine, and her seriousness profound. There was no faintest suggestion of frivolity or coquetry in her manner. She was too self-respecting for that, and she had too much of character. One of those who had “loved and lost” her, had said that “the only art she used was the being of herself,” and all the rest who had had like experience were of the same mind. So far indeed was she from seeking to bring men to her feet that on more than one occasion she had been quick to detect symptoms of coming love and had frankly and solemnly said to prospective wooers for whom she felt a particular kindness—“please don’t fall in love with me. I shall never be able to reciprocate the sentiment, and it would distress me to reject your suit.” It is not upon record, however, that any one of those who were thus warned profited by the wise counsel. On the contrary, in many instances, this mark of kindness on her part had served only to precipitate the catastrophe she sought to avert.

Arthur Brent had a stronger shield. He saw clearly that for him to marry this or any other of that fair land’s maidens would make an end of his ambitions.

“If I should fall in love down here in Virginia,” he reflected, “I should never have strength of mind enough to shake off the glamour of this life and go back to my work. The fascination of it all is already strong upon

me. I must not add another to the sources of danger. I must be resolute and strong. That way alone safety lies for me. I will set to work at once to carry out my mission here, and then go away. I shall know this week how matters stand with the estate. I shall busy myself at once with my fixed purpose. I shall find means of discharging all the debts of the plantation. Then I shall sell the land and with the proceeds take the negroes to the west and settle them there on little farms of their own. Then I shall be free again to resume my proper work in the world. Obviously I must not complicate matters by marrying here or even falling in love. A man with such a duty laid upon him has no right to indulge himself in soft luxury. I must be strong and resolute."

Nevertheless Arthur Brent felt an easily recognizable thrill of delight when at dinner he found himself assigned to a seat on Edmonia Bannister's left hand.

There were sixteen at dinner, and all were happy. Arthur alone was a guest unused to occupy that place at Branton, and to him accordingly all at table devoted special attention. Three at least of the younger men present, had been suitors in their time for their hostess's hand, for it was a peculiarity of Edmonia's rejections of her wooers, that they usually soothed passion into affection and made of disappointed lovers most loyal friends. Before the dinner came to an end, Arthur found himself deliberately planning to seek this relation of close friendship without the initiatory process of a love making. For he found his hostess to be wise in counsel and sincere in mind, beyond her years. "She is precisely the person to advise me in the delicate affairs that I must manage," he thought. "For in the present state of public feeling"—it was the era of Kansas-Nebraska bills and violent agitation—"it will require unusual tact and discretion to carry out my plans without making of myself an object of hatred and loathing. This young woman has tact in infinite measure; she has discretion also, and an acquaintance with sentiment here, such as I cannot even hope to acquire. Above all she has conscience, as I discover every time she has occasion to express an opinion. I'll make her my friend. I'll consult her with regard to my plans."

By way of preparation for this he said to Edmonia as they sat together in the porch one evening: "I am coming often to Branton, because I want you to learn to know me and like me. I have matters in hand concerning which I very much want your counsel. Will you mind giving it to me if I behave well, resist the strong temptation to pay court to you as a lover, and teach you after a while to feel that I am a friend to whom your kindness will owe counsel?"

"If you will put matters on that level, Cousin Arthur, and keep them there I shall be glad to have it so. I don't know that I can give you advice of any account, but, at any rate, as I think your impulses will be right and kindly, I can give you sympathy, and that is often a help. I'll give you my opinion also, whenever you want it—especially if I think you are going wrong and need admonition. Then I'll put on all the airs of a Minerva and advise you oracularly. But remember that you must win all this, by coming often to Branton and—and the rest of it."

"I'll come often to Branton, be sure of that," he answered. But he did not feel himself quite strong enough of purpose, to promise that he would not make love to the mistress of the mansion.

At the dinner each gentleman had a joint or a pair of fowls before him to carve, and every gentleman in that time and country was confidently expected to know how to carve whatever dish there might be assigned to him. Carving was deemed as much a necessary part of every gentleman's education as was the ability to ride and shoot and catch a mettlesome fish. The barbarity of having the joints clumsily cut up by a butler at a side table and served half cold in an indiscriminating way, had not then come into being. Dining was a fine art in that time and country, a social function, in which each carver had the joy of selecting tidbits for those he served, and arranging them daintily and attractively upon the plate brought to him for that purpose by a well trained servant. Especially each took pleasure in remembering and ministering to the particular fancies of all the rest in the act of helping. Refined people had not yet borrowed from barbaric Russians the practice of having themselves fed, like so many cattle, by servitors appointed to deal out rations.

There was no wine served with the meal. That came later in its proper place. Each gentleman had been invited to partake of a "toddy"—a mild admixture of whiskey, water, sugar and nutmeg—before sitting down to the meal. After that there was no drink served until the meal was over. When the cloth was removed after the dessert, there came upon the polished board some dishes of walnuts of which all partook sparingly. Then came the wine—old sherry or, if the house were a fortunate one, rare old Madeira, served from richly carved decanters, in daintily stemmed cut glasses. The wine was poured into all the glasses. Then the host proposed "the ladies," and all drank, standing. Then the host gallantly held the broad dining room door open while the ladies, bowing and smiling, graciously withdrew. After that politics and walnuts, religion and raisins, sherry and society divided the attention of the gentlemen with cigars that had been kept for a dozen years or more drying in a garret. For the modern practice of soaking cigars in a refrigerator and smoking them limp and green was an undreamed of insult to the tongues and palates of men who knew all about tobacco and who smoked for flavor, not for the satisfaction of a fierce and intemperate craving for narcotic effect.

After half an hour or so over the rich, nutty wine, the gentlemen joined the gentlewomen in the drawing room, the hallway or the porches according to the weather, and a day well spent ended with a light supper at nine o'clock. Then there was an ordering of horses and a making of adieux on the part of such of the gentlemen as were not going to remain over night.

"You will stay, Cousin Arthur," Edmonia said. "You will stay, of course. You and I have a compact to carry out. We are to learn to like each other. It will be very easy, I think, but we must set to work at it immediately. Will you ride with me in the morning—soon?"

She called him "Cousin Arthur," of course. Had not a distant relative of his once married a still more distant kinswoman of her own? It would have been deemed in Virginia a distinct discourtesy in her not to call him "Cousin Arthur."

IX

DOROTHY'S CASE

AFTER a few weeks of work Arthur Brent's laboratory was ready for use, with all its apparatus in place and

all its reserve supply of chemicals safely bestowed in a small, log built hut standing apart.

His books too had been brought to the house and unpacked. He provided shelf room for them in the various apartments, in the broad hallway, and even upon the stairs. There were a multitude of volumes—largely the accumulations of years of study and travel on his own and his father's part. The collection included all that was best in scientific literature, and much that was best in history, in philosophy and in *belles lettres*. To this latter department he had ordered large additions made when sending for his books—this with an eye to Dorothy's education.

There was already a library of some importance at Wyanoke, the result of irregular buying during two hundred years past. Swift was there in time stained vellum. The poets, from Dryden and Pope to the last quarter of the eighteenth century were well represented, and there were original editions of "Childe Harold," and "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" on the shelves. Scott was present in leathern cuirass of binding—both in his novels and in his poems. But there was not a line of Coleridge or Wordsworth or Shelley or Rogers or Campbell or John Keats, not a suggestion of Matthew Arnold. Tennyson, Browning and their fellows were completely absent, though Bailey's "Festus" was there to represent modern poetry.

The latest novels in the list, apart from Scott, were "Evelina," "The Children of The Abbey," "Thaddeus of Warsaw," "Scottish Chiefs" and some others of their kind. But all the abominations of Smollett, all the grossness of Fielding, all the ribaldry of Richardson, and all the sentimental indecency of Laurence Sterne were present in full force—on top shelves, out of consideration for maidenly modesty.

In history there were Josephus and Rollin, and scarcely anything else. Hume was excluded because of his scepticism, and Gibbon had been passed over as a monster of unbelief.

Arthur found that Dorothy had browsed somewhat in this old library, particularly among the British Essayists and in some old volumes of Dramas. Her purity had revolted at Fielding, Smollett and their kind, and she had found the sentimentalities of Miss Burney insipid. But she knew her "Don Quixote" almost by heart, and "Gil Blas" even more minutely. She had read much of Montaigne and something of Rousseau in the original also, and the Latin classics were her familiars. For her father had taught her from infancy, French and Latin, not after the manner of the schools, as grammatical gymnastics, but with an eye single to the easy and intelligent reading of the rich literatures that those languages offer to the initiated. The girl knew scarcely a single rule of Latin grammar—in text book terms at least—but she read her Virgil and Horace almost as easily as she did her Bible.

It was with definite reference to the deficiencies of this and other old plantation libraries, that Arthur Brent ordered books. He selected Dorothy's own sitting room—opening off her chamber—as the one in which to bestow the treasures of modern literature—Tennyson, Dickens, Thackeray, Bulwer, Coleridge, Keats, Rogers, Campbell, Shelley and their later successors—Longfellow, Bryant, Willis, Halleck, and above all Irving, Paulding and Hawthorne.

In arranging these treasures in Dorothy's outer room, Arthur resorted to a little trick or two. He would pick up a volume with ostensible purpose of placing it upon a shelf, but would turn to a favorite passage and read a little aloud. Then, suddenly stopping, he would say:—

"But you'll read all that for yourself," and would add some bit of comment or suggestion of a kind to awaken the girl's attention and attract her to the author in question. Before he had finished arranging the books in that room Dorothy was almost madly eager to read all of them. A new world was opening to her, a world of modern thought far more congenial to her mind than the older literature which alone she had known before. Here was a literature of which she had scarcely known even the existence. It was a clean, wholesome, well-aired literature; a literature founded upon modern ways of thinking; a literature that dealt with modern life and character; a literature instinct with the thought and sentiment of her own time. The girl was at once bewildered by the extent of it and fascinated by its charm. Her sleep was cut short in her eagerness to read it all. Its influence upon her mind and character became at once and insistently manifest.

"Here endeth the first lesson," quoted Arthur Brent when he had thus placed all that is best in modern literature temptingly at this eager girl's hand. "It will puzzle them to stop her from thinking now," he added, "or to confine her thinking within their strait-laced conventions. Now for science."

The age of Darwin, Huxley and Herbert Spencer had not yet come, in 1859. Haeckel was still unheard of, outside of Berlin and Jena. The science of biology, in which all other science finds its fruition and justifies its being, was then scarcely "a borning." Otherwise, Arthur Brent would have made of Dorothy's amateurish acquaintance with botany the basis of a systematic study, leading up to that conception which came later to science, that all life is one, whether animal or vegetable; that species are the results of differentiation by selection and development, and that the scheme of nature is one uniform, consistent whole, composed of closely related parts. But this thought had not yet come to science. Darwin's "Origin of Species" was not published until later in that year, Wallace was off on his voyages and had not yet reached those all embracing conclusions. Huxley was still only a young man of promise. Virchow was bound in those trammels of tradition from which he was destined never quite to disentangle himself, even with the stimulus of Haeckel, his wonderful pupil. But the thought that has since made science alive had been dreamed of even then. There were suggestions of it in the manuscripts,—written backwards—of Leonardo da Vinci, and Goethe had foreshadowed much of it.

Nevertheless, it was not for such sake or with a purpose so broad that Arthur Brent set out to interest Dorothy South in science. His only purpose was to teach her to think, to implant in her mind that divine thirst for sound knowledge which he clearly recognized as a specific remedy for conventional narrowness of mind.

The girl was quick to learn rudiments and general principles, and in laboratory work she soon surpassed her master as a maker of experiments. In such work her habits of exactitude stood her in good stead, and her conscientiousness had its important part to play.

But science did not become a very serious occupation with Dorothy. It was rather play than study at first, and when she had acquired some insight into it, so that its suggestions served to explain the phenomena about her, she was fairly well content. She had no passion for original research and of that Arthur was rather glad. "That sort of thing is masculine," he reflected, "and she is altogether a woman. I don't want her to grow

into anything else.”

But to her passion for literature there was no limit. “Literature concerns itself with people,” she said to Arthur one day, “and I care more for people than for gases and bases and reactions.”

But literature, in its concern for people, records the story of human life through all the centuries, and the development of human thought. It includes history and speculative philosophy and Dorothy manifested almost a passion for these.

It was at this point that trouble first arose. So long as the girl was supposed to be devouring novels and poetry, the community admired and approved. But when it was noised abroad that she knew Gibbon as familiarly as she did her catechism, that she had read Hume’s Essays and Locke on the Understanding, together with the elder Mill, and Jeremy Bentham and much else of like kind, the wonder was not unmixed with doubt as to the fitness of such reading for a young girl.

For a time even Aunt Polly shared this doubt but she was quickly cured of it when Madison Peyton, with his customary impertinence protested. Aunt Polly was not accustomed to agree in opinion with Madison Peyton, and she resented the suggestion that the girl could come to any harm while under her care. So she combated Peyton’s view after a destructive fashion. When he spoke of this literature as unfit, Aunt Polly meekly asked him, “Why?” and naturally he could not answer, having never read a line of it in his life. He sought to evade the question but Aunt Polly was relentless, greatly to the amusement of John Meaux and Col. Majors, the lawyer of the old families. She insisted upon his telling her which of the books were dangerous for Dorothy to read. “How else can I know which to take away from her?” she asked. When at last he unwisely ventured to mention Gibbon—having somehow got the impression, which was common then, that the “Decline and Fall” was a sceptical work, Aunt Polly—who had been sharing Dorothy’s reading of it,—plied him with closer questions.

“In what way is it harmful?” she asked, and then, quite innocently, “what is it all about any how, Madison?”

“Oh, well, we can’t go into that,” he said evasively.

“But why not? That is precisely what we must go into if we are to direct Dorothy’s reading properly. What is this book that you think she ought not to read? What does it treat of? What is there in it that you object to?”

Thus baited on a subject that he knew nothing about, Peyton grew angry, though he knew it would not do for him to manifest the fact. He unwisely, but with an air of very superior wisdom, blurted out:—

“If you had read that book, Cousin Polly, you wouldn’t like to make it the subject of conversation.”

“So?” asked the old lady. “It is in consideration of my ignorance then that you graciously pardon my discretion?”

“It’s a very proper ignorance. I respect you for never having indulged in such reading,” he answered.

“Then you must respect me less,” calmly responded the old lady, “for I have read the book and I’m reading it a second time. I don’t see that it has hurt me, but I’ll bow to your superior wisdom if you’ll only tell me what there is in the book that is likely to undermine my morals.”

The laugh that followed from Col. Majors and John Meaux—for the idea that anything, literary or otherwise, could undermine the vigorous morals of this high bred dame was too ludicrous to be resisted—nettled Peyton anew. Still further losing his temper he broke out:

“How should I know what is in the book? I never read such stuff. But I know it is unfit for a young girl, and in this case I have a right to dictate. I tell you now, Cousin Polly, that I will not have Dorothy’s mind perverted by such reading. My interest in this case is paramount and I mean to assert it. I have been glad to have her with you for the sake of the social and moral training I expected you to give her. But I tell you now, that if you don’t stop all this kind of reading and all this slopping in a laboratory, trying to learn atheistical science—for all science is atheistical as you well know—”

“Pardon me, Madison,” broke in the old lady, “I didn’t know that. Won’t you explain it to me, please?”—this with the meekness of a reverent disciple, a meekness which Peyton knew to be a mockery.

“Oh, everybody knows that,” testily answered the man. “And it is indecent as well. I hear that Arthur has been teaching Dorothy a lot about anatomy and that sort of thing that no woman ought to know, and—”

“Why shouldn’t a woman know that?” asked Aunt Polly, still delivering her hot shot as if they had been balls of the zephyr she was knitting into a nubia. “Does it do her any harm to know how—”

“Oh, please don’t ask me to go into that, Cousin Polly,” the man impatiently responded. “You see it isn’t a proper subject of conversation.”

“Oh, isn’t it? I didn’t know, you see. And as you will not enlighten me, let us return to what you were about to say. I beg pardon for interrupting.”

“I don’t remember what I was going to say,” said Peyton, anxious to end the discussion. “Besides it was of no consequence. Let’s talk of something else.”

“Not yet, please,” placidly answered the old lady. “I remember that you were about to threaten me with something. Now I never was threatened in my life, and I’m really anxious to know how it feels. So please go on and threaten me, Madison.”

“I never thought of threatening you, Cousin Polly, I assure you. You’re mistaken in that, surely.”

“Not at all. You said you had been pleased to have Dorothy under my charge. I thank you for saying that. But you added that if I didn’t stop her reading and her scientific studies you’d—you didn’t say just what you’d do. That is because I interrupted. I beg pardon for doing so, but now you must complete the sentence.”

“Oh, I only meant that if the girl was to be miseducated at Wyanoke, I should feel myself obliged to take her away to my own house and—”

“You need not continue,” answered the old lady, rising in stately wrath. “You have said quite enough. Now let me make my reply. It is simply that if you ever attempt to put such an affront as that upon me, you’ll wish you had never been born.”

She instantly withdrew from the piazza of the house in which all were guests, John Meaux gallantly accompanying her. She paid no more heed to Peyton's clamorous protestations of apology than to the buzzing of the bees that were plundering the honeysuckles of their sweets.

When she had gone Peyton began to realize the mistake he had made. In that Col. Majors, who was left alone with him, greatly assisted him. In the slow, deliberate way in which he always spoke, Col. Majors said:

"You know, Peyton, that I do not often volunteer advice before I am asked to give it, but in this case I am going to do so. It seems to me that you have overlooked certain facts which present themselves to my mind, as important, and of which I think the courts would take cognizance."

"Oh, I only meant to give Cousin Polly a hint," broke in Peyton. "Of course I didn't seriously mean that I would take the girl away from her."

"It is well that you did not," answered the lawyer, "for the sufficient reason that you could not do that if you were determined upon it."

"Why, surely," Peyton protested. "I have a right to look after the girl's welfare?"

"Absolutely none whatever."

"Why, you forget the arrangement between me and Dr. South."

"Not at all. That arrangement was at best a contract without consideration, and therefore nonenforcible. Even if it had been reduced to writing and formally executed, it would be so much waste paper in the eyes of a court. Dorothy is a ward in chancery. The court would never permit the enforcement of a contract of that kind upon her, so long as she is under age; and when she attains her majority she will be absolutely free, if I know anything of the law, to repudiate an arrangement disposing of her life, made by others without her consent."

"Do you mean that on a mere whim of her own, that girl can upset the advantageous arrangements made for her by her father and undo the whole thing?"

"I mean precisely that. But pardon me, the time has not come to consider that question. What I would impress upon your mind at present is that on the whole you'd better make your peace with Miss Polly. She has the girl in charge, and if you antagonize her, she may perhaps train Miss Dorothy to repudiate the arrangement altogether. In that case you may not wish that you had never been born, as Miss Polly put the matter, but you'll wish that you hadn't offended the dear old lady."

"Then I must take the girl away from her at once," exclaimed Peyton in alarm. "I mustn't leave her for another day under Cousin Polly's influence."

"But you cannot take her away, Peyton. That is what I am trying to impress upon your mind."

"But why not? Surely I have a right—"

"You have absolutely *no* rights in the premises. The will of the late Dr. South, made Robert Brent Dorothy's guardian."

"But Robert Brent is dead," broke in Peyton, impatiently, "and I am to be the girl's guardian after the next term of the court."

"Perhaps so," answered the lawyer. "The court usually allows the ward to choose her guardian in such a case, and if you strongly commend yourself to her, she may choose you. But I may be allowed to suggest that that will depend a good deal upon what advice Miss Polly may give her. She is very fond of Miss Polly, and apt to be guided by her. However that again is a matter that has no bearing upon the question in hand. Even were you already appointed guardian of Miss Dorothy's estate you could not take the girl away from Miss Polly."

"Why not? Has a guardian no authority?"

"Oh, yes—a very large authority. But it happens in this case that by the terms of the late Dr. South's will, Miss Polly is made sole and absolute guardian of Miss Dorothy's person until such time as she shall come of age or previously marry with Miss Polly's consent. Neither Robert Brent, during his life, nor any person appointed to succeed him as guardian of Miss Dorothy's estate, had, or has, or can have the smallest right to take her away from the guardian of her person. That could be done only by going into court and showing that the guardian of the person was of immoral life and unfit to have charge of a child. It would be risky, to say the least of it, to suggest such a thing as that in the case of Miss Polly, wouldn't it? She has no very near relatives but there isn't a young or a middle-aged man in this county who wouldn't, in that case, adopt the relation of nearest male relation to her and send inconvenient billets-doux to you by the hands of insistent friends."

"Oh, that's all nonsense," answered Peyton. "Of course nobody would think of such a thing as questioning Cousin Polly's eminent fitness to bring up a girl."

"And yet that is precisely what you did, by implication at least, a little while ago. My advice to you is to repair your blunder at the earliest possible moment."

Peyton clearly saw the necessity of doing so, especially now that he had learned that Dorothy must in any case remain in Aunt Polly's charge. It would ruin all his plans to have Aunt Polly antagonize them even passively. But how to atone for his error was a difficult problem. With anybody else he would have tried his favorite tactics of "laughing the thing off," treating it as a jest and being more good naturedly insolent than ever. But with Aunt Polly he could not do that. She was much too shrewdly penetrative to be deceived by such measures and much too sensitively self-respectful to tolerate familiarity as a substitute for an apology.

Moreover he knew that he needed something more than Aunt Polly's forgiveness. He wanted her coöperation. For the dread which had inspired his blundering outbreak, was not mainly, if at all, a dread of English literature as a perverting educational force. He knew next to nothing of literature and he cared even less. Under ordinary circumstances he would never have bothered himself over any question of Dorothy's reading. But Dorothy was doing her reading under the tutelage and with the sympathy of Arthur Brent, and Madison Peyton foresaw that the close, daily association of the girl—child as she was—with a man so gifted and so pleasing was likely, after a year or two at least to grow into a warmer attachment. And even if that should not happen, he felt that her education under the influence of such a man might give her ideals and standards which would not be satisfied by the life plans made for her between himself and her father.

It was not to remove her from Aunt Polly's control, or even to save her from too much serious reading—though he was suspicious of that—that he cared. He wanted to keep her away from Arthur Brent's influence, and it was in a blundering attempt to bring that about that he had managed to offend Aunt Polly, making a possible enemy of his most necessary ally.

It was with a perturbed mind therefore that he rode away from the hospitable house where the discussion had occurred, making some hastily manufactured excuse to the hostess, for not remaining to dinner.

X

DOROTHY VOLUNTEERS

ALL this while Arthur Brent was a very busy man. It was true, as Madison Peyton had said, that he knew little of planting, but he had two strong coadjutors in the cultivation of his crops. John Meaux—perhaps in unconscious spite of Peyton—frequently rode over to Wyanoke and visited all its fields in company with the young master of the plantation. There was not much in common between Meaux and Arthur, not much to breed a close intimacy. Meaux was an educated man, within the rather narrow limits established by the curriculum at West Point—for Robert E. Lee had not yet done his work of enlargement and betterment at the military academy when Meaux was a cadet in that institution—but he was not a man of much reading, and intellectually he was indolent. Nevertheless he was a pleasant enough companion, his friendship for Arthur was genuine, and he knew more about the arts of planting than anybody else in that region. He freely gave Arthur the benefit of his judgment and skill greatly to the advantage of the growing crops at Wyanoke.

Archer Bannister, too, was often Arthur's guest. He came and went as he pleased, sometimes remaining for three or four days at a time, sometimes staying only long enough to advise Arthur to have a tobacco lot cut before a rain should come to wash off the "molasses"—as the thick gum on a ripening tobacco leaf was called. He was himself a skilful planter and his almost daily counsel was of great value to Arthur's inexperience.

But it was not of things agricultural only that these two were accustomed to talk with each other. There had quickly grown up between them an almost brotherly intimacy. They were men of congenial tastes and close intellectual sympathies, and there was from the first a strong liking on either side which was referable rather to similarity of character than to anything merely intellectual. Both men cherished high ideals of conduct, and both were loyal to those ideals. Both were thoroughly educated, and both had been broadened by travel. Both indulged in intellectual activities not always attractive even to men of culture. Arthur loved science with the devotion of a disciple; Archer rejoiced in a study of its conclusions and their consequences rather than of its processes, its methods, its details. Above all, so far as intellectual sympathies were concerned, both young men were almost passionately devoted to literature. Between two such men, thrown together in that atmosphere of leisure which was the crowning glory of Virginia plantation life, it was inevitable that something more and stronger than ordinary friendship should grow up. And between them stood also Archer's sister Edmonia—a woman whom both held in tender affection, the one loving her as a sister, the other as—he scarcely knew what. She shared the ideas, the impulses, the high principles of both, and in her feminine way she shared also their intellectual tastes and aspirations.

Arthur had still another coadjutor in his management of affairs, in the person of Dorothy. Throughout the summer and autumn the girl rode with him every morning during the hours before breakfast, and, in her queer, half childish, half womanly way, she instructed him mightily in many things. Her habits of close observation had given her a large and accurate knowledge of plantation affairs which was invaluable to him, covering as it did many points of detail left unmentioned by Meaux and Bannister.

But his interest in the girl was chiefly psychological. The contradiction he observed between her absolutely child-like simplicity and the strangely sage and old way she had of thinking now and then, interested him beyond measure. Her honesty was phenomenal—her truthfulness astonishing.

One morning as the two rode together through the corn they came upon a watermelon three fourths grown. Instantly the girl slipped to the ground with the request:—

"Lend me your knife, please."

He handed her the knife wondering what she would do with it. After an effort to open it she handed it back, saying: "Won't you please open it? Knives are not fit for women's use. Our thumb nails are not strong enough to open them. But we use them, anyhow. That's because women's masters are not severe enough with them."

Receiving the knife again, with a blade opened, the girl stooped and quickly scratched Arthur's initials "A. B.," upon the melon.

"I've observed you do that before, Dorothy," said Arthur as the girl again mounted Chestnut, without assistance. "Why do you do it?"

"To keep the servants from stealing the melon," she replied. "Everybody does that. I wonder if it's right."

"But how can that keep a negro from taking the melon some dark night after it is ripe and secretly eating it?"

"Oh, that's because of their ignorance. They are very ignorant—much more so than you think, Cousin Arthur. I may call you 'Cousin Arthur,' may I not? You see I always called your uncle 'Uncle Robert,' and if your uncle was my uncle, of course you and I are cousins. Besides I like to call you 'Cousin Arthur.' "

"And I like to have you call me so. But tell me about the marking of the watermelon."

"Oh, that's simple enough. When you have marked your initials on a melon, the negroes know you have seen it and so they are afraid to steal it."

"But how should I know who took it?"

"That's their ignorance. They never think of that. Or rather I suppose they think educated people know a

great deal more than they do. I wonder if it is right?"

"If what is right, Dorothy?"

"Why, to take advantage of their ignorance in that way. Have educated people a right to do that with ignorant people? Is it fair?"

"I see your point, Dorothy, and I'm not prepared to give you an answer, at least in general terms. But, at any rate, it is right to use any means we can to keep people from stealing."

"Oh, yes, I've thought of that. But is it stealing for the negroes to take a watermelon which they have planted and cultivated? They do the work on the plantation. Aren't they entitled to all they want to eat?"

"Within reasonable bounds, yes," answered Arthur, meditatively. "They are entitled to all the wholesome food they need, and to all the warm clothing, and to comfortable, wholesome quarters to live in. But we mustn't leave the smoke house door unlocked. If we did that the dishonest ones among them would take all the meat and sell it, and the rest would starve. Besides, the white people are entitled to something. They take care of the negroes in sickness and in childhood and in old age. They must feed and clothe them and nurse them and have doctors for them no matter what it may cost. It is true, the negroes do the work that produces the food and clothing and all the rest of it, but their masters contribute the intelligent management that is quite as necessary as the work. Imagine this plantation, Dorothy, or your own Pocahontas, left to the negroes. They could do as much work as they do now, but do you suppose their crops would feed them till Christmas if there were no white man to manage for them?"

"Of course not. Indeed they never would make a crop. Still I don't like the system."

"Neither do I, Dorothy, but in the present state of the public mind neither of us must say so."

"Why not, Cousin Arthur? Is there any harm in telling the truth?"

"Sometimes I suppose it is better to keep silence," answered Arthur, hesitating.

"For women, yes," quickly responded the girl. "But men can fight. Why shouldn't they tell the truth?"

"I don't quite understand your distinction, Dorothy."

"I'm not sure," she answered, "that I understand it myself. Oh, yes, I do, now that I think of it. Women tell lies, of course, because they can't fight. Or, if they don't quite tell lies they at least keep silent whenever telling the truth would make trouble. That's because they can't fight. Men can fight, and so there's not the slightest excuse for them if they tell lies or even if they keep silent."

"But, Dorothy, I don't yet understand. Women can't fight, of course, but then they are never called upon to fight. Why—"

"That's just it, Cousin Arthur. If a woman speaks out, nobody can hold her responsible. But anybody can hold her nearest male friend responsible and he must fight to maintain what she has said, whether he thinks she was right in saying it or not. The other day Jeff. Peyton—Mr. Madison Peyton's son, you know,—was over at Wyanoke, when you had gone to Branton. So I had to entertain him." Dorothy did not know that the youth had been sent to Wyanoke by his father for the express purpose of being entertained by herself. "I found him a pretty stupid fellow, as I always do, but as he pretends to have been a student at the University, I supposed he had read a great deal. So I talked to him about Virgil but he knew so little that I asked him if he had read 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' and he told me a deliberate lie. He professed a full acquaintance with that book, and presently I found out that he had never read a line of it. I was so shocked that I forgot myself. I asked him, 'Why did you lie to me?' It was dreadfully rude, of course, but I could not help it. Now of course he couldn't challenge *me* for that. But if he had been a man of spirit, he would have challenged *you*, and you see how terribly wrong I should have been to involve you in a quarrel of that kind. Of course if I had been a man, instead of a woman—if I had been answerable for my words—I should have been perfectly free to charge him with lying. But what possible right had I to risk your life in a duel by saying things that I might as well have left unsaid?"

"But you said the other day," responded Arthur, "that you did not believe in duelling?"

"Of course I don't. It is a barbarous thing. But it is the custom of our country and we can't help it. I've noticed that if a man fights a duel on proper provocation, everybody says he ought not to have done it. But if he refuses to fight, everybody says he's a coward. So, under certain circumstances, a man in Virginia who respects himself is absolutely compelled to fight. If Jefferson Peyton had asked you to meet him on account of what I said to him, you couldn't have refused, could you, Cousin Arthur?"

"I wouldn't," was all the answer the young man made; but he put a strong stress upon the last word.

"Oh, I know you wouldn't," answered the girl, treating his response as quite a matter of course. "But you see now why a woman must keep silent where a man should speak out. If a man tells the truth he can be called to account for it; so if he is manly he will tell it and take the consequences. But a woman has to remember that if she tells the truth, and the truth happens to be ugly, some man must be shot at for her words."

"Dorothy," asked Arthur, with unusual seriousness, "are you afraid of anything?"

"Afraid? No. Of course not."

"If you were needed very badly for the sake of other people—even negroes—if you could save their lives and ease their sufferings, you'd want to do it, wouldn't you?"

"Why, of course, Cousin Arthur. I've read in Aunt Polly's old newspapers, how you went to Norfolk in the yellow fever time, and how bravely you—never mind. I've read all about that, over and over again, and it's part of what makes me like you."

"But courage is not expected of women."

"Oh, yes, it is," quickly responded the girl. "Not the courage of fighting, of course—but that's only because men won't fight with women, except in mean ways. Women are expected to show courage in other ways, and they do it too. In the newspapers that tell about your heroism at Norfolk, there is a story of how one of your nurses went always to the most dangerous cases, and how, when she died, you officiated at her funeral, instead of the clergyman who had got scared and run away like a coward that did not trust his God. I remember what the newspaper says that you said at the grave, Cousin Arthur. I've got it all by heart. You

said, at the end of your address:—'We are accustomed to pay honor and to set up monuments to men who have dared, where daring offered its rich reward of fame and glory. Let us reverently bow our heads and abase our feeble, selfish souls, in presence of the courage of this frail woman, who, in her weakness, has achieved greater things in the sight of God than any that the valor and strength of man have ever accomplished since the foundations of the world were laid. Let us reverently and lovingly make obeisance to the courage of a devoted woman—a courage that we men can never hope to match.' You see I remember all that you said then, Cousin Arthur, and so you needn't tell me now that you do not expect courage at the hands of women."

Arthur made no immediate reply, and the two rode on in silence for a time. After a while, as they neared the house gates, he spoke.

"Dorothy," he said, "I need your help very badly. You cannot render me the help I want without very serious danger to yourself. So I don't want you to give me any answer to what I am about to say until tomorrow. I want you to think the matter over very carefully first."

"Tell me what it is, Cousin Arthur."

"Why, I find that we are to have a very dangerous epidemic of typhoid fever among the negroes here. When the first case occurred ten days ago I hoped that might be all; but two days later I found two more cases; day before yesterday there were five more. So it is obvious that we are to have an epidemic. All the cases have appeared among the field hands and their families out at the far quarters, and so I hope that the house servants and the people around the stables will escape. But the outbreak is really very serious and the disease is of the most virulent type. I must literally fight it with fire. I have already set men at work building new quarters down by the Silver Spring, a mile away from the infected place, and as soon as I can I'm going to move all the people and set fire to all the old quarters. I've bought an old circus tent in Richmond, and I expect it by express today. As soon as it comes I'm going to set it up on the Haw Branch hill, and put all the sick people into it, so as to separate them from those that are well. As fast as others show symptoms of the disease, I'll remove them also to the hospital tent, and for that purpose I have ordered forty cots and a lot of new blankets and pillows."

Dorothy ejaculated her sorrow and sympathy with the poor blacks, and quickly added the question: "What is it that I can do, Cousin Arthur? Tell me; you know I will do it."

"But, Dorothy, dear, I don't want you to make up your mind till you have thought it all over."

"My mind is already made up. You want me to nurse these poor sick people, and of course I'm going to do it. You are thinking that the disease is contagious—"

"No, it is only infectious," he broke in with the instinct of scientific exactitude strong upon him.

"Well, anyhow, it's catching, and you think I may catch it, and you want me to think out whether I'm afraid of that or not. Very well. I've already thought that out. *You* are going to be with the sick people night and day. Cousin Arthur, I am only a girl, but I'm no more a coward than you are. Tell me what I'm to do. It doesn't need any thinking out."

"But, Dorothy, listen to me. These are not your people. If this outbreak had occurred at Pocahontas, the matter would have been different. You might well think that you owed a duty to the people on your own plantation, but you owe none to these people of mine."

"Oh, yes, I do. I live at Wyanoke. Besides they are human beings and they are in need of help. I don't know how I can help, but you are going to tell me, and I'm going to do what you want. I will not waste a day in thinking."

"But, my child, the danger in this case is really very great. Indeed it is extremely probable that if you do what you propose to do, you will have the fever, and as I have already said, it has assumed an unusually virulent form."

"It can't be more dangerous than the yellow fever was at Norfolk, and you braved that in order to save the lives of people you had never heard of—people to whom you owed nothing whatever. Cousin Arthur, do you think me less brave than you are?"

"No, dear, but—"

"Very well. You shall tell me after breakfast precisely what I can do, and then I'll do it. Women are naturally bad, and so they mustn't lose any opportunity of doing good when they can."

At that moment they arrived at the house gates. Slipping from her saddle, Dorothy turned her great, earnest eyes full upon her companion, and said with tense lips:

"Promise me one thing, Cousin Arthur! Promise me that if I die in this work you won't ask any clergyman to mutter worn-out words from a prayer book over my grave, but will yourself say to my friends that I did not shirk like a coward!"

Instantly, and without waiting for the promise she had besought, the girl turned, caught up her long riding skirt and fled like a deer to the house.

XI

THE WOMAN'S AWAKENING

*I*T was upon a momentary impulse that Arthur Brent had suggested to Dorothy that she should help him in the battle with pestilence which lay before him. As a physician he had been accustomed to practise his profession not in the ordinary, perfunctory way, and not for gain, but in the spirit of a crusader combating disease as the arch enemy of humanity, and partly too for the joy of conquering so merciless a foe. His first thought in this case therefore had been to call to his aid the best assistance available. His chief difficulty, he clearly foresaw, would be in getting his measures intelligently carried out. He must secure the accurate, prompt and intelligent execution of his directions, whether for the administration of medicines prescribed or for hygienic measures ordered. The ignorance, the prejudice, and the inert carelessness of the negroes, he

felt, would be his mightiest and wildest foes in this, and there could be no abler adjutant for this purpose than Dorothy, with her quick wit, her scrupulous conscientiousness and her habit of compelling exact and instant obedience to all her commands. So he had thought first of calling upon Dorothy for help. But when she had so promptly responded, he began to feel that he had made a mistake. The physician in him, and the crusader too, sanctioned and approved the use of the best means available for the accomplishment of his high purpose. But the man in him, the friend, the affectionate protector, protested against such an exposure of the child to dreadful danger.

When he reflected upon the matter and thought of the peril; when he conjured up a picture of dear little Dorothy stricken and perhaps dead in a service of humanity to which no duty called her, and to which she had been induced only by her loyalty to him, he shrank back in horror from the program he had laid out.

Yet he knew that he could not easily undo what he had done. There was a child side to Dorothy, and it was that which usually presented itself to his mind when he thought of her. But there was a strong woman side to her also, as he very well knew, and over that he had established no influence or control. He had won the love of the child. He had not yet won the love of the woman. He realized that it was the masterful, woman side of her nature that he had called into activity in this matter. Now that the heroism of the brave woman's soul was enlisted, he knew that he could not easily bid it turn back.

Yet something might be done by adroit management, and he resolved upon that. After breakfast he sent for Dorothy and said, lightly:

"I'm glad I have taught you to handle drugs skilfully, Dorothy. I shall need certain medicines frequently in this conflict. They are our ammunition for the battle, and we must have them always ready. I'm going to write some prescriptions for you to fill. I want you to spend today and tomorrow in the laboratory preparing them. One of them will tax your skill a good deal. It may take you several days to get it ready. It involves some very careful chemical processes—for you must first manufacture a part of your chemicals out of their raw materials. I'll write detailed instructions for that, but you may fail half a dozen times before you succeed. You must be patient and you'll get it right. You always do in the end. Then there's another thing I want you to do for me. I'm going to burn all the clothing, bedding and so forth at the quarters. I'll make each of the well negroes put on the freshest clothing he has before removing to the sanitary camp, and I'll burn all the rest. I sent Dick early this morning to the Court House, telling Moses to send me all the blankets and all the cloth he has of every kind, from calico and osnaburgs to heavy woollen goods, and I've written to Richmond for more. We must clothe the negroes anew—men, women and children. So I want you to get together all your seamstresses—every woman on the plantation indeed who can sew even a little bit—and set them all at work making clothes. I've cleared out the prize barn for the purpose, and the men are now laying a rough floor in it and putting up some tables on which you and Aunt Polly can 'cut out'—that's what you call it, isn't it?"

"Cousin Arthur," said the girl, looking at him with something of reproach in her great, dark blue eyes, "I'll do all this of course, and everything else that you want done. But please, Cousin Arthur, don't tell lies to me, even indirectly. I couldn't stand that from you."

"What do you mean, child?"

"Oh, you have made up your mind to keep me busy with all these things so that I shall not go into your hospital to serve as a nurse. I'll do these things for you, but I'll do the nursing too. So please let us be good friends and please don't try to play tricks."

The young man was astonished and abashed. Under ordinary circumstances he might truthfully have pleaded that the work he was thus laying out for her was really and pressingly necessary. But Dorothy anticipated him in that.

"Don't tell me that these things are necessary, Cousin Arthur. I know that perfectly well. But you know that I am not necessary to them—except so far as the prescriptions are concerned. Aunt Polly can direct the clothes making better than I can, and her maid, Jane, is almost as good. So after I compound the prescriptions I shall go to my duty at the hospital. I don't think I like you very well today, Cousin Arthur, and I'll not like you at all if you go on trying to make up things to keep me busy, away from the sick people. If you do that again I'll stop calling you 'Cousin Arthur' and you'll be just 'Dr. Brent' to me."

"Please don't do that, Dorothy," he said very pleadingly. "I only meant—"

"Oh, I know what you meant," she interrupted. "But you shouldn't treat me in that way. I won't call you 'Dr. Brent,' unless you do that sort of thing again, and if you let me do my duty without trying to play tricks, I'll go on liking you just as much as ever."

"Thank you, Dorothy," he replied with fervor. "You must forgive me, please. I didn't want to expose you to this danger—that was all."

"Oh, I understand all that," she quickly responded. "But it wasn't treating me quite fairly—and you know I hate unfairness. And—why shouldn't I be exposed to the danger if I can do any good? Even if the worst should happen—even if I should take the fever and die, after saving some of these poor creatures' lives, could you or anybody have made a better use of a girl like me than that?"

Arthur looked at the child earnestly, but the child was no longer there. The eyes that gazed into his were those of a woman!

XII

MAMMY

WHEN Arthur Brent reached the "quarters" that morning he found matters in worse condition than he had feared.

"The whole spot is pestilential," he said. "How any sane man ever selected it for quarters, I can't imagine. Gilbert," calling to the head man who had come in from the field at his master's summons, "I want you to take all the people out of the crop at once, and send for all the house servants too. Take them with you over to the Haw Branch hill and put every one of them at work building some sort of huts. You must get

enough of them done before night, to hold the sick people, for I'm going to clear out these quarters today. I must have enough huts for the sick ones at once. Those who are well will have to sleep out of doors at the Silver Spring tonight."

"But, Mahstah," remonstrated Gilbert, "dey ain't no clapboa'ds to roof wif. Dey ain't no nuffin—"

"Use fence rails then and cover them with pine tops. I'll ride over and direct you presently. Send me eight or ten of the strongest young women at once, and then get everybody to work on the shelters. Do you hear?"

When the women came he instructed them how to carry the sick on improvised litters, and half an hour later, with his own hand he set fire to the little negro village. He had allowed nothing to be carried away from it, and he left nothing to chance. One of the negroes came back in frantic haste to save certain "best clothes" and a banjo that he had laboriously made. Arthur ordered him instead to fill up the well with rubbish, so that no one might drink of its waters again.

As soon as the fire was completely in possession the young master rode away to Haw Branch hill to look after the sick ones and direct the work of building shelters for them. Dorothy was already there, tenderly looking to the comfort of the invalids. The litter-bearers would have set their burdens down anywhere and left them there but for Dorothy's quiet insistence that they should place them in such shade as she could find, and gather an abundance of broomstraw grass for them to lie upon. To Arthur she offered no explanation of her presence, nor was any needed. Arthur understood, and all that he said was:

"God bless you, Dorothy!" a sentiment to which one of the stricken ones responded:

"He'll do dat for shuah, Mahstah, ef he knows he business."

"Dick has returned from the Court House," said Dorothy reporting. "He says the big tent is there and I've sent a man with a wagon to fetch it. These shelters will do well enough for tonight, and we'll get our hospital tent up soon tomorrow morning."

"Very well," responded Arthur. "Now, Dorothy, won't you ride over to Silver Spring and direct the men there how to lay out the new quarters? I drew this little diagram as I rode over here. You see I want the houses built well apart for the sake of plenty of air. I'm going to put the quarters there 'for all the time' as you express it. That is to say I'm going to build permanent quarters. I've already looked over the ground carefully as to drainage and the like and roughly laid out the plan of the village so that it shall be healthy. Please go over there and show the men what I want, I'll be over there in an hour and then you can come back here. I must remain here till the doctors come."

"What doctors, Cousin Arthur?"

"All the doctors within a dozen miles. I've sent for all of them."

"But what for? Surely you know more about fighting disease than our old-fashioned country doctors do."

"Perhaps so. But there are several reasons for consulting them. First of all they know this country and climate better than I do. Secondly, they are older men, most of them, and have had experience. Thirdly, I don't want all the responsibility on my shoulders, in case anything goes wrong, and above all I don't want to offend public sentiment by assuming too much. These gentlemen have all been very courteous to me, and it is only proper for me to send for them in consultation. I shall get all the good I can out of their advice, but of course I shall myself remain physician in charge of all my cases."

The explanation was simple enough, and Dorothy accepted it. "But I don't like anybody to think that country doctors can teach you anything, Cousin Arthur," she said as she mounted. "And remember you are to come over to Silver Spring as soon as you can. I must be back here in an hour or so at most."

Just as she was about to ride away Dorothy was confronted with an old negro woman—obviously very old indeed, but still in robust health, and manifestly still very strong, if one might estimate her strength from the huge burden she carried on her well poised head.

"Why, Mammy, what are you doing here?" asked the girl in surprise. "You don't belong here, and you must go back to Pocahontas at once."

"What's you a talkin' 'bout, chile?" answered the old woman. "Mammy don't b'long heah, don't she? Mammy b'longs jes whah somever her precious chile needs her. So when de tidins done comes dat Mammy's little Dorothy's gwine to 'spose herself in de fever camp jes to take kyar of a lot o' no 'count niggas what's done gone an' got dey selves sick, why cou'se dey ain't nuffin fer Mammy to do but pack up some necessary ingridiments an come over and take kyar o' her baby. So jes you shet up yer sweet mouf, you precious chile, an' leave ole Mammy alone. I ain't a gwine to take no nonsense from a chile what's my own to kyar fer."

"You dear old Mammy!" exclaimed the girl with tears in her voice. "But I really don't need you, and I will not have you exposed to the fever."

"What's Mammy kyar fer de fever? Fever won't nebber dar tetch Mammy. Mammy ain't nebber tuk no fevers an' no nuffin else. Lightnin' cawn't hu't Mammy anymore'n it kin split a black gum tree. G'long 'bout yer business, chile, an don't you go fer to give no impidence to yer ole Mammy. She's come to take kyar o' her chile an' she's a gwine to do it. Do you heah?"

Further argument and remonstrance served only to make plain the utter futility of any and every endeavor to control the privileged and devotedly loving old nurse. She had come to the camp to stay, and she was going to stay in spite of all protest and all authority.

"There's nothing for it, Cousin Arthur," said Dorothy, with the tears slipping out from between her eyelids, "but to let dear old Mammy have her way. You see she's had charge of me ever since I was born, and I suppose I belong to her. It was she who taught me how badly women need somebody to control them and how bad they are if they haven't a master. She'll stay here as long as I do, you may be sure of that, and she'll love me and scold me, and keep me in order generally, till this thing is over, no matter what you or anybody else may say to the contrary. So please, Cousin Arthur, make some of the men build a particularly comfortable shelter for her and me. She wouldn't care for herself, even if she slept on the ground out of doors, but she'll be a turbulent disturber of the camp if you don't treat me like a princess—though personally I only want to serve and could make myself comfortable anywhere."

"I'll see that you have good quarters, Dorothy," answered the young man in a determined tone. "I'd do that anyhow. But what's all that you've got there in your big bundle, Mammy?"

"Oh, nuffin but a few dispensable ingridiments, Mas' Arthur. Jes' a few blankets an' quilts an' pillars an' four cha'rs an' a feather bed an' a coffee pot an' some andirons an' some light wood, an' a lookin' glass, and a wash bowl and pitcher an' jes a few other little inconveniences fer my precious chile."

For answer Arthur turned to Randall, the head carpenter of the plantation, and said:

"Randall, there's a lot of dressed lumber under the shed of the wheat barn. I'll have it brought over here at once. I want you to take all the men you need—your Mas' Archer Bannister is sending over four carpenters to help and your Mas' John Meaux is sending three—and if you don't get a comfortable little house for your Miss Dorothy built before the moon rises, I shall want to know why. Get to work at once. Put the house on this mound. Build a stick and mud chimney to it, so that there can be a fire tonight. Three rooms with a kitchen at the back will be enough, but mind you are to have it ready before the moon rises, do you hear?"

"It'll be ready Mahstah, er Randall won't let nobody call him a carpenter agin fer a mighty long time. Ef Miss Dorothy is a gwine to nuss de folks while dey's sick you kin jes bet yer sweet life de folks what's well an' strong is a gwine to make her comfortable."

"Amen!" shouted three or four of the others in enthusiastic unison. Dorothy was not there to hear. She had already ridden away on her mission to direct matters at the Silver Spring.

"It's queer," thought the young master of the plantation, "how devotedly loyal all the negroes are to Dorothy. Nobody—not even Williams the overseer,—was ever so exacting as she is in requiring the most rigid performance of duty. Ever since she punished Ben for bringing her an imperfectly groomed horse, that chronically lazy fellow has taken the trouble every night to put her mare's mane and tail into some sort of equine crimping apparatus, so that they may flow gracefully in the morning. And he does it for affection, too, for when she told him, one night, that he needn't do it, as we were late in returning from Pocahontas, I remember the fervor with which he responded: 'Oh, yes, Miss Dorothy, I'll do de mar' up in watered silk style tonight cause yar's a gwine to Branton fer a dinin' day tomorrer, an' Ben ain't a gwine fer to let his little Missus ride in anything but de bes' o' style.' The fact is," continued Arthur, reflecting, "these people understand Dorothy. They know that she is always kindly, always compassionate, always sympathetic in her dealings with them. But they realize that she is also always just. She never grows angry. She never scolds. She punishes a fault severely in her queer way, but after it is punished she never refers to it again. She never 'throws up things,' to them. In a word, Dorothy is just, and after all it is justice that human beings most want, and it is the one thing of which they get least in this world. What a girl Dorothy is, anyhow!"

XIII

THE "SONG BALLADS" OF DICK

*I*T was "endurin of de feveh"—to use his own phrase by which he meant during the fever—that Dick's genius revealed itself. Dick had long ago achieved the coveted dignity of being his master's "pussonal servant." It was Dorothy who appointed him to that position and it was mainly Dorothy who directed his service and saw to it that he did not neglect it.

For many of the services of a valet, Arthur had no use whatever. It was his habit, as he had long ago said, to "tie his own shoe strings." He refused from the first very many of Dick's proffered attentions. But he liked to have his boots thoroughly polished and his clothing well brushed. These things he allowed Dick to attend to. For the rest he made small use of him except to send him on errands.

The position suited Dick's temperament and ambition thoroughly and he had no mind to let the outbreak of fever on the plantation rob him of it. When Arthur established himself at the quarantine camp, taking for his own a particularly small brush shelter, he presently found Dick in attendance, and seriously endeavoring to make himself useful. For the first time Arthur felt that the boy's services were really of value to him. He was intelligent, quick-witted, and unusually accurate in the execution of orders. He could deliver a message precisely as it was given to him, and his "creative imagination" was kept well in hand when reporting to his master and when delivering his messages to others—particularly to those in attendance upon the sick. Arthur was busy night and day. He saw every patient frequently, and often he felt it necessary to remain all night by a bedside. In the early morning, before it was time for the field hands to go to their work in the crops, he inspected them at their new quarters, and each day, too, he rode over all the fields in which crop work was going on.

In all his goings Dick was beside him, except when sent elsewhere with messages. In the camp he kept his master supplied with fuel and cooked his simple meals for him, at whatever hours of the night or day the master found time to give attention to his personal wants.

In the meanwhile—after the worst of the epidemic was over—Dick made himself useful as an entertainer of the camp. Dick had developed capacities as a poet, and after the manner of Homer and other great masters of the poetic art, it was his custom to chant his verses to rudely fashioned melodies of his own manufacture. Unfortunately Dorothy, who took down Dick's "Song Ballads," as he called them, and preserved their text in enduring form, was wholly ignorant of music, as we know, and so the melodies of Dick are lost to us, as the melodies of Homer are. But in the one case as in the other, some at least of the poems remain to us.

Like all great poets, Dick was accustomed to find his inspiration in the life about him. Thus the fever outbreak itself seems to have suggested the following:

Nigga got de fevah,
Nigga he most daid;
Long come de Mahstah,
Mahstah shake he haid.

Mahstah he look sorry,
Nigga fit to cry;
Mahstah he say "Nebber min',
Git well by am by."

Mahstah po' de medicine,
Mix it in de cup,
Nigga mos' a chokin'
As he drinks it up.

Nigga he git well agin
Den he steal de chicken,
Den de Mahstah kotches him
An' den he gits a lickin'.

The simplicity and directness of statement here employed fulfil the first of the three requirements which John Milton declared to be essential to poetry of a high order, which, he tells us must be "simple, sensuous, passionate." The necessary sensuousness is present also, in the reference made to the repulsiveness of the medicine. But that quality is better illustrated in another of Dick's Song Ballads which runs as follows:

Possam up a 'simmon tree—
Possam dunno nuffin,
He nebber know how sweet and good
A possum is wid stuffin.

Possam up a 'simmon tree—
A eatin' of de blossom,
Up creeps de nigga an'
It's "good-by Mistah Possam."

Nigga at de table
A cuttin' off a slice,
An' sayin' to de chillun—
"Possam's mighty nice."

Here the reader will observe the instinctive dramatic skill with which the poet, having reached the climax of the situation, abruptly rings down the curtain, as it were. There is no waste of words in unnecessary explanations, no delaying of the action with needless comment. And at the end of the second stanza we encounter a masterly touch. Instead of telling us with prosaic literalness that the nigga succeeded in slaying his game, the poet suggests the entire action with the figurative phrase—"It's 'good-by, Mistah Possam.' "

There is a fine poetic reserve too in the abrupt shifting of the scene from tree to table, and the presentation of the denouement without other preparation than such as the reader's imagination may easily furnish for itself. We are not told that the possum was dressed and cooked; even the presence of stuffing as an adjunct to the savor of the dish is left to be inferred from the purely casual suggestion made in the first stanza of the fact that stuffing tends to enrich as well as to adorn the viand.

These qualities and some others of a notable kind appear in the next example we are permitted to give of this poet's work.

Ole crow flyin' roun' de fiel',
A lookin' fer de cawn;
Mahstah wid he shot gun
A settin' in de bawn.

Ole crow see a skeer crow
A standin' in the cawn;
Nebber see de Mahstah
A settin' in de bawn.

Ole crow say:—"De skeer crow,
He ain't got no gun,—
Jes' a lot o' ole clo'es
A standin' in de sun;

Ole crow needn't min' him,
Ole crow git some cawn;
But he nebber see de Mahstah
A settin' in de bawn.

Ole crow wuk like nigga
A pullin' up de cawn—
Mahstah pull de trigga,
Ober in de bawn.

Ole crow flop an' flutter—
He's done got it, *sho'*!
Skeer crow shakin' in he sleeve
A laughin' at de crow.

There is a compactness of statement here—a resolute elimination of the superfluous which might well commend the piece to those modern theatrical managers who seem to regard dialogue as an impertinence in a play.

Sometimes the poet went even further and presented only the barest suggestion of the thought in his mind, leaving the reader to supply the rest. Such is the case in the poem next to be set down as an example, illustrative of the poet's method. It consists of but a single stanza:

De day's done gone, de wuk's done done,
An' Mahstah he smoke he pipe;
But nigga he ain't done jes yit,
Cause—de watermillion's ripe.

Here we have in four brief lines an entirely adequate suggestion of the predatory habits of "Nigga," and of his attitude of mind toward "watermillions." With the bare statement of the fact that the fruit in question has attained its succulent maturity, we are left to discover for ourselves the causal relation between that fact and the intimated purpose of "Nigga" to continue his activities during the hours of darkness. The exceeding subtlety of all this cannot fail to awaken the reader's admiring sympathy.

Perhaps the most elaborately wrought out of these song ballads is the one which has been reserved for the last. Its text here follows:

Possum's good an' hoe cake's fine,
An' so is mammy's pies,
But bes' of all good t'ings to eat
Is chickens, fryin' size.

How I lubs a moonlight night
When stars is in de skies!
But sich nights ain't no good to git
De chickens, fryin' size.

De moonlight night is shiny bright,
Jes' like a nigga's eyes,
But dark nights is the bes' to git
De chickens, fryin' size.

When Mahstah he is gone to sleep,
An' black clouds hides de skies,
Oh, den's de time to crawl an' creep
Fer chickens, fryin' size.

Fer den prehaps you won't git kotched
Nor hab to tell no lies,
An' mebbe you'll git safe away
Wid chickens, fryin' size.

But you mus' look out sharp fer noise
An' hush de chicken's cries,
Fer mighty wakin' is de squawks
Of chickens, fryin' size.

To gross minds this abrupt, admonitory ending of the poem will be disappointing. It leaves the reader wishing for more—more chicken, if not more poetry. And yet in this self-restrained ending of the piece the poet is fully justified by the practice of other great masters of the poetic art. Who that has read Coleridge's superb fragment "Kubla Khan," does not long to know more of the "stately pleasure dome" and of those "caverns measureless to man" through which "Alph the sacred river ran, down to a sunless sea"?

We present these illustrative examples of Dick's verse in full confidence that both his inspiration and his methods will make their own appeal to discriminating minds. If there be objection made to the somewhat irregular word forms employed by this poet, the ready answer is that the same characteristic marks many of the writings of Robert Burns, and that Homer himself employed a dialect. If it is suggested that Dick's verbs are sometimes out of agreement with their nominatives, it is easy to imagine Dick contemptuously replying, "Who keers 'bout dat?"

XIV

DOROTHY'S AFFAIRS

AGOOD many things happened "endurin' of the feveh"—if Dick's expressive and by no means inapt phrase may again be employed.

First of all the outbreak gave Madison Peyton what he deemed his opportunity. It seemed to him to furnish occasion for that reconciliation with Aunt Polly which he saw to be necessary to his plans, and, still more important, it seemed to afford an opportunity for him to withdraw Dorothy from the influence of Dr. Arthur Brent.

Accordingly, as soon as news came to him of the epidemic, and of Arthur Brent's heroic measures in meeting it, he hurried over to Wyanoke, full of confident plans.

"This is dreadful news, Cousin Polly," he said, as soon as he had bustled into the house.

"What news, Madison?" answered the old lady. "What have you come to tell me?"

"Oh I mean this dreadful fever outbreak—it is terrible—"

"I don't know," answered Aunt Polly, reflectively. "We have had only ten or a dozen cases so far, and you had three or four times that many at your quarters last year."

"Oh, yes, but of course this is very much worse. You see Arthur has had to burn down all the quarters, and destroy all the clothing. He's a scientific physician, you know, and—"

"But all science is atheistic, Madison. You told me so yourself over at Osmore, and so of course you don't pay any attention to Arthur's scientific freaks."

"Now you know I didn't mean that, Cousin Polly," answered Peyton, apologetically. "Of course Arthur knows all about fevers. You know how he distinguished himself at Norfolk."

"Yes, I know, but what has that to do with this case?"

"Why, if this fever is so bad that a scientific physician like Arthur finds it necessary to burn all his negro quarters and build new ones, it must be very much worse than anything ever known in this county before. Nobody here ever thought of such extreme measures."

"No, I suppose not," answered Aunt Polly. "At any rate you didn't do anything of the kind when an epidemic broke out in your quarters last year. But you had fourteen deaths and thus far we have had only one, and Arthur tells me he hopes to have no more. Perhaps if you had been a scientific physician, you too would have burned your quarters and moved your hands to healthier ones."

This was a home shot, as Aunt Polly very well knew. For the physicians who had attended Peyton's people, had earnestly recommended the destruction of his negro quarters and the removal of his people to a more healthful locality, and he had stoutly refused to incur the expense. He had ever since excused himself by jeering at the doctors and pointing, in justification of his neglect of their advice to the fact that in due time the epidemic on his plantation had subsided. He therefore felt the sting of Aunt Polly's reference to his experience, and she emphasized it by adding:

"If you had done as Arthur has, perhaps you wouldn't have so many deaths to answer for when Judgment Day comes!"

"Oh, that's all nonsense, Cousin Polly," he quickly responded. "And besides we're wasting time. Of course you and Dorothy can't remain here, exposed to this dreadful danger. So I've ordered my driver to bring the carriage over here for you this afternoon. You two must be our guests at least as long as the fever lasts at Wyanoke."

Aunt Polly looked long and intently at Peyton. Then she slowly said:

"The Bible forbids it, Madison, though I never could see why."

"Forbids what, Cousin Polly?"

"Why, it says we mustn't call anybody a fool even when he is so, and I never could understand why."

"But I don't understand you, Cousin Polly—"

"Of course you don't. I didn't imagine that you would. But that's because you don't want to."

"But I protest, Cousin Polly, that I've come over only because I'm deeply anxious about your health and Dorothy's. You simply mustn't remain here."

"Madison Peyton," answered the old lady, rising in her stately majesty of indignation, "I won't call you a fool because the Bible says I mustn't. But it is plain that you think me one. You know very well that you're not in the least concerned about my health. You know there hasn't been a single case of fever in this house



"I WON'T CALL YOU A FOOL BECAUSE THE BIBLE SAYS I MUSTN'T."

or within a mile of it. You know you never thought of removing your own family from your house when the fever was raging in your negro quarters. You know that I know what you want. You want to get Dorothy under your own control, by taking her to your house. Very well, I tell you you cannot do that. It would endanger the health of your own family, for Dorothy has been in our fever camp for two days and nights now, as head nurse and Arthur's executive officer. Why do you come here trying to deceive me as if I were that kind of person that the Bible doesn't allow me to call you? Isn't it hard enough for me to do my duty in Dorothy's case without that? Do you imagine I find it a pleasant thing to carry out my orders and train that splendid girl to be the obedient wife of such a booby as your son is? You are making a mistake. You tried once to intimidate me. You know precisely how far you succeeded. You are trying now to deceive me. You may guess for yourself what measure of success you are achieving. There are spirits in the sideboard, if you want something to drink after — well, after your ride. I must ask you to excuse me now, as I have to go to the prize barn to superintend the work of the sewing women."

With that the irate old lady courtesied low, in mock respect, and took her departure, escorted by her maid.

Madison Peyton was angry, of course. That, indeed is a feeble and utterly inadequate term with which to describe his state of mind. He felt himself insulted beyond endurance—and that, probably, was what Aunt Polly intended that he should feel. But he was baffled in his purpose also, and he knew not how to endure that. He was not a coward. Had Aunt Polly been a man he would instantly have called her to account for her words. Had she been a young woman, he would have challenged her brother or other nearest male relative. As it was he had only the poor privilege of meditating such vengeance as he might wreak in sly and indirect ways. He was moved to many things, as he madly galloped away, but one after another each suggested scheme of vengeance was abandoned as manifestly foolish, and with the abandonment of each his chagrin grew greater and his anger increased. When he met his carriage on its way to Wyanoke in obedience to the orders he had given in the morning, he became positively frantic with rage, so that the driver and the black boy who rode behind the vehicle grew ashen with terror as the carriage was turned about in its course, and took up its homeward way.

A few weeks later the court met, and a message was sent to Aunt Polly directing her to bring Dorothy before the judge for the purpose of having her choose a guardian. When Dorothy was notified of this she sent Dick with a note to Col. Majors, the lawyer. It was not such a note as a young woman more accustomed than she to the forms of life and law would have written. It ran as follows:

"DEAR COL. MAJORS:—Please tell the judge I can't come. Poor Sally is very, very ill and I mustn't leave her for a moment. The others need me too, and I've got a lot of work to do putting up prescriptions—for I'm the druggist, you know. So tell the judge he must wait till he comes to this county next time. Give my love to Mrs. Majors and dear Patty.

"Sincerely yours,
"DOROTHY SOUTH."

On receipt of this rather astonishing missive, Colonel Majors smiled and in his deliberate way ordered his horse to be brought to him after dinner. Riding over to Wyanoke he "interviewed" Dorothy at the fever camp.

He explained to the wilful young lady the mandatory character of a court order, particularly in the case of a ward in chancery.

"But why can't you do the business for me?" she asked. "I tell you Sally is too ill for me to leave her."

"But you must, my dear. In any ordinary matter I, as your counsel, could act for you, but in this case the

court must have you present in person, because you are to make choice of a guardian and the court must be satisfied that you have made the choice for yourself and that nobody else has made it for you. So you simply must go. If you don't the court will send the sheriff for you, and then it will punish Miss Polly dreadfully for not bringing you."

This last appeal conquered Dorothy's resistance. If only herself had been concerned she would still have insisted upon having her own way. But the suggestion that such a course might bring dire and dreadful "law things," as she phrased it, upon Aunt Polly appalled her, and she consented.

"How long shall I have to leave poor Sally?" she asked.

"Only an hour or two. You and Miss Polly can leave here in your carriage about ten o'clock and as soon as you get to the Court House I'll ask the judge to suspend other business and bring your matter on. He will ask you whom you choose for your guardian, and you will answer 'Madison Peyton.' Then the judge will ask you if you have made your choice without compulsion or influence on the part of anybody else, and you will answer 'yes.' Then he will politely bid you good morning, and you can drive back to Wyanoke at once."

"Is that exactly how the thing is done?" she asked, with a peculiar look upon her face.

"Exactly. You see it will give you no trouble."

"Oh, no! I don't mind anything except leaving Sally. Tell the judge I'll come."

Col. Majors smiled at this message, but made no answer, except to say:

"I'll be there of course, and you can sit by me and speak to me if you wish to ask any question."

The lawyer made his adieux and rode away. Dorothy, with a peculiar smile upon her lips returned to her patients.

XV

DOROTHY'S CHOICE

THE judge himself was not so stately or so imposing of presence as was Aunt Polly, when she and Dorothy entered the court, escorted by Col. Majors. Dorothy was entirely self possessed, as it was her custom to be under all circumstances. "When people feel embarrassed," she once said, "it must be because they know something about themselves that they are afraid other people will find out." As Dorothy knew nothing of that kind about herself, she had no foolish trepidation, even in the solemn presence of a court.

The judge ordered her case called, and speaking very gently explained to her what was wanted.

"You are a young girl under the age at which the law supposes you to be capable of managing your own affairs. The law makes it the duty of this Court to guard you and your estate against every danger. By his will your father wisely placed your person in charge of an eminently fit and proper lady, whose character and virtues this Court and the entire community in which we live, hold in the highest esteem and honour." At this point the judge profoundly bowed to Aunt Polly, and she acknowledged the courtesy with stately grace. The judge then continued:

"By his will your father also placed the estate which he left to you, in charge of the late Mr. Robert Brent, a gentleman in every possible way worthy of the trust. Thus far, therefore, this Court has had no occasion to take action of any kind in your behalf or for your protection. Unhappily, however, your guardian, the late Robert Brent, has passed away, and it becomes now the duty of this Court to appoint some fit person in his stead as guardian of your estate. The Court has full authority in the matter. It may appoint whomsoever it chooses for this position of high responsibility. But it is the immemorial custom of the Court in cases where the ward in chancery has passed his or her sixteenth year—an age which you have attained—to permit the ward to make choice of a guardian for himself or herself, as the case may be. If the ward is badly advised, and selects a person whom the Court deems for any reason unfit, the Court declines to make the appointment asked, and itself selects some other. But if the person selected by the ward is deemed fit, the Court is pleased to confirm the choice. It is now my duty to ask you, Miss Dorothy, what person you prefer to have for guardian of your estate."

"May I really choose for myself?" asked the girl in a clear and perfectly calm voice, to the astonishment of everybody.

"Certainly, Miss Dorothy. Whom do you choose?"

"Did my father say in his will that I must choose some particular person?" she continued, interrogating the Court as placidly as she might have put questions to Aunt Polly.

"No, my dear young lady. Your father's will lays no injunction whatever upon you respecting this matter."

"Then, if you please, I choose Dr. Arthur Brent for my guardian. May we go now?"

No attention was given to the naive question with which the girl asked permission to withdraw. Her choice of guardian was a complete surprise. There was astonishment on every face except that of the judge, who officially preserved an expression of perfect self-possession. Even Aunt Polly was astounded, and she showed it. It had been understood by everybody that Madison Peyton was to succeed to Dorothy's guardianship, and the submission of the choice to her had been regarded as a matter of mere form. Even to Aunt Polly the girl had given no slightest intimation of her purpose to defeat the prearranged program, and so Aunt Polly shared the general surprise. But Aunt Polly was distinctly pleased with the substitution as soon at least as she had given it a moment's thought. She had come to like Arthur Brent even more in his robust manhood than she had done during his boyish sojourn at Wyanoke. She had learned also to respect his judgment, and she saw clearly, now that it was suggested, that he was obviously the best person possible to assume the office of guardian. She was pleased, too, with Madison Peyton's discomfiture. "He needed to have his comb cut," she reflected in homely metaphor. "It may teach him better manners."

As for Peyton, who was present in Court, having come for the purpose of accepting the guardianship, his rage exceeded even his astonishment. He had in his youth gone through what was then the easy process of securing admission to the bar, and so, although he had never pretended to practise law, he was entitled to

address the Court as an attorney. He had never done so before, but on this occasion he rose, almost choking for utterance and plunged at once into a passionate protest, in which the judge, who was calm, presently checked him, saying:

"Your utterance seems to the Court to be uncalled for, while its manner is distinctly such as the Court must disapprove. The person named by the ward as her choice for the guardianship, bears a high reputation for integrity, intelligence and character. Unless it can be shown to the Court that this reputation is undeserved, the ward's choice will be confirmed. At present the Court is aware of nothing whatever in Dr. Brent's character, circumstances or position that can cast doubt upon his fitness. If you have any information that should change the Court's estimate of his character you will be heard."

"He is unfit in every way," responded the almost raving man. "He has deliberately undermined my fatherly influence over the girl. He has taken a mean advantage of me. He has overpersuaded the girl to set aside an arrangement made for her good and—"

"Oh, no, Mr. Peyton," broke in Dorothy, utterly heedless of court formalities, "he has done nothing of the kind. He knows nothing about this. I don't think he will even like it."

"Pardon me, Miss Dorothy," interrupted the judge. "Please address the Court—me—and not Mr. Peyton. Tell me, have you made your choice of your own free will?"

"Why, certainly, Judge, else I wouldn't have made it."

"Has anybody said anything to you on the subject?"

"No, sir. Nobody has ever mentioned the matter to me except Col. Majors, and he told me I was to choose Mr. Peyton, but you told me I could choose for myself, you know. I suppose Col. Majors didn't know you'd let me do that."

A little laugh went up in the bar, and even the judge smiled. Presently he said:

"The Court knows of no reason why it should not confirm the choice made by the ward. Accordingly it is ordered that Dr. Arthur Brent of Wyanoke be appointed guardian of the property and estate of Dorothy South, with full authority, subject only to such instructions as this Court may from time to time see fit to give for his guidance. Mr. Clerk, make the proper record, and call the next case. This proceeding is at an end. You are at liberty now to withdraw, Miss Dorothy, you and Miss Polly."

Aunt Polly rose and bowed her acknowledgments in silence. Dorothy bowed with equal grace, but added: "Thank you, Judge. I am anxious to get back to my sick people. So I will bid you good morning. You have been extremely nice to me."

With that she bowed again and swept out of the court room, quite unconscious of the fact that even by her courteous adieu she had offended against all the traditions of etiquette in a court of Justice. The judge bowed and smiled, and every lawyer at the bar instinctively arose, turned his face respectfully toward the withdrawing pair, and remained standing till they had passed through the outer door, Col. Majors escorting them.

XVI

UNDER THE CODE

H*T* was Madison Peyton's habit to have his own way, and he greatly prided himself upon getting it, in other people's affairs as well as in those that concerned himself. He loved to dominate others, to trample upon their wills and to impose his own upon them. In a large degree he accomplished this, so that he regarded himself and was regarded by others as a man of far more than ordinary influence. He was so, in a certain way, but it was not a way that tended to make men like him. On the contrary, the aggressive self assertion by which he secured influence, secured for him also the very general dislike of his neighbors, especially of those who most submissively bowed to his will. They hated him because they felt themselves obliged to submit their wills to his.

There was, therefore, a very general chuckle of pleasure among the crowd gathered at the Court House—a crowd which included nearly every able-bodied white man in the county—as the news of his discomfiture and of his outbreak of anger over it, was discussed. There were few who would have cared to twit him with it, and if he had himself maintained a discreet and dignified silence concerning the matter, he would have heard little or nothing about it. But he knew that everybody was in fact talking of it, out of his hearing. He interpreted aright the all pervading atmosphere of amused interest, and the fact that every group of men he approached became silent and seemed embarrassed when he joined it. After his aggressive manner, therefore, he refused to remain silent. He thrust the subject upon others' attention at every turn. He protested, he declaimed, at times he very nearly raved over what he called the outrage. He even went further in some cases and demanded sympathy and acquiescence in his complainings. For the most part he got something quite different. His neighbors were men not accustomed to fear, and while they were politely disposed to refrain from voluntary expressions of opinion on this matter, at least in his presence, they were ready enough with answers unwelcome to him when he demanded their opinions.

"Isn't it an outrage," he asked of John Meaux, "that Arthur Brent has undermined me in this way?"

"Oh, I don't know," answered Meaux with a drawl which always affected his speech when he was most earnest, "I cannot see it in that light. Dorothy declares that he knew nothing of her intentions, and we all know that Dorothy South never tells anything but the truth. Besides, I don't see why he isn't entitled to serve as her guardian if she wants him to do so. He is a man of character and brains, and I happen to know that he has a good head for business."

"Yes," snarled Peyton, "I know you've been cultivating him—"

"I'll trouble you to leave me out of your remarks, Mr. Peyton," interrupted Meaux. "If you don't you may have a quarrel on your hands."

"Oh, you know me, Meaux; you know I didn't mean any harm so far as you are concerned. You know my

way—”

“Yes, I know your way, and I don’t like it. In fact I won’t tolerate it.”

“Oh, come now, come now, John, don’t fly off the handle like that. You see I’m not angry with you, but how you can like this interloper—”

“His family is as old in Virginia as your own is,” answered Meaux, “and he is the master of the very oldest plantation in this county. Besides he was born in Virginia and—but never mind that. I’m not counsel for his defence. I only interrupted to tell you that I am accustomed to choose my own friends, and that I fully intend to adhere to that custom.”

In another group Peyton used even less temperate terms than “interloper” in characterizing Arthur, and added:

“He didn’t even dare come to court and brazen out his treachery. He left the job, like a sneak, to the little girl whose mind he has poisoned.”

Archer Bannister was standing near, and heard the offensive words. He interrupted:

“Mr. Peyton, I earnestly advise you to retract what you have just said, and to put your retraction into writing, giving it to me to deliver to my friend Dr. Brent; who is absent today, as you very well know, simply because he has imperative duties of humanity elsewhere. I assure you that I shall report your offensive utterance to him, and it will be well for you if your retraction and apology can be delivered to him at the same time. Arthur Brent is rapidly falling into Virginia ways—adopting the customs of the country, he calls it—and there is one of those customs which might subject you to a deal of inconvenience, should he see fit to adopt it.”

“What have you to do with my affairs?” asked Peyton in a tone of offence.

“Nothing whatever—at present,” answered the young man, turning upon his heel.

But the warning sobered Peyton’s anger. It had not before occurred to him that Arthur might have become so far indoctrinated with Virginia ways of thinking as to call him to account for his words, in the hostile fashion usual at that time. Indeed, relying upon the fixed habit of Virginians never to gossip, he had not expected that Arthur would ever hear of his offensive accusations. Bannister’s notification that he would exercise the privilege accorded by custom to the personal friend of a man maligned when not present to defend himself, suggested grave possibilities. He knew that custom fully warranted Bannister in doing what he had threatened to do, and he had not the smallest doubt that the young man would do it.

It was in a mood of depression, therefore, that Peyton ordered his horse and rode homeward. His plantation lay within two or three miles of the Court House, but by the time that he had arrived there he had thought out a plan of procedure. He knew that Bannister would remain at the village inn over night, having jury service to perform the next morning. There was time, therefore, in which to reach him with a placative message, and Peyton set himself at once to work upon the preparation of such a message.

“I hope you will forgive me,” he wrote, “for the rudeness with which I spoke to you today. I was extremely angry at the time, and I had reasons for being so, of which you know nothing, and of which I must not tell you anything. Perhaps in my extreme irritation, I used expressions with regard to Dr. Brent, which I should not have used had I been calmer. For my discourtesy to you personally, I offer very sincere apologies, which I am sure your generous mind will accept as an atonement. For the rest I must trust your good feeling not to repeat the words I used in a moment of extreme excitement.”

Archer Bannister wrote in reply:

“The apology you have made to me was quite unnecessary. I had not demanded it. As for the rest, I shall do my duty as a friend unless you make apology where it is due, namely to Dr. Arthur Brent whom you have falsely accused, and to whom you have applied epithets of a very offensive character. If you choose to make me the bearer of your apology to him, I will gladly act for you. I prefer peace to war, at all times.”

This curt note gave Peyton a very bad quarter hour. He was not a coward; or, to put the matter more accurately, he was not that kind of a coward that cannot face physical danger. But he was a man of middle age or a trifle more. He was the father of a family and an elder in the Presbyterian church. Conscience did not largely influence him in any case, but he was keenly sensitive to public opinion. He knew that should he fight a duel, all the terrors of religious condemnation would fall upon him. Worse still, he would be laughed at for having so entangled himself in a matter his real relation to which he was not free to explain. Madison Peyton dreaded and feared nothing in the world so much as being laughed at. Added to this, he knew that the entire community would hold him to be altogether in the wrong. Arthur Brent’s reputation achieved by his heroic devotion under fearful danger at Norfolk, had been recalled and emphasized by his conduct in the present fever outbreak on his own plantation. It was everywhere the subject of admiring comment, and Peyton very well knew that nobody in that community would for a moment believe that Arthur Brent was guilty of any meanness or cowardly treachery. His own accusations, unless supported by some sort of proof, would certainly recoil upon himself with crushing force. He could in no way explain the anger that had betrayed him into the error of making such accusations. He could not make it appear to anybody that he had been wronged by the fact that Dorothy South had chosen another than himself for her guardian. His anger, upon such an occasion, would be regarded as simply ridiculous, and should he permit the matter to come to a crisis he must at once become the butt of contemptuous jesting.

There was but one course open to him, as he clearly saw. He wrote again to Archer Bannister, withdrawing his offensive words respecting Arthur, apologizing for them on the ground of momentary excitement, asking Archer to convey this his apology to Dr. Brent, and authorizing the latter to make any other use of the letter which he might deem proper.

This apology satisfied all the requirements of “the code.”

XVII

IT was Dorothy who gave Arthur the first news of his appointment as her guardian. On her return from court to the fever camp she went first to see Sally and the two or three others whose condition was particularly serious. Then she went to Arthur, and told him what had happened.

"The judge was very nice to me, Cousin Arthur, and told me I might choose anybody I pleased for my guardian, and of course I chose you."

"You did?" asked the young man in a by no means pleased astonishment. "Why on earth did you do that, Dorothy?"

"Why, because I wanted you to be my guardian, of course. Don't you want to be my guardian, Cousin Arthur?"

"I hardly know, child. It involves a great responsibility and a great deal of hard work."

"Won't you take the responsibility and undertake the work for my sake, Cousin Arthur?"

"Certainly I will, my child. I wasn't thinking of that exactly—but of some other things. But tell me, how did you come to do this? Who suggested it to you?"

"Why, nobody. That's what I told the judge, and when Mr. Peyton got angry and said you had persuaded me to do it, I told him he was wrong. Then the judge stopped him from speaking and asked me about the matter and I told him. Then he said very nice things about you, and said you were to be my guardian, and then he told me I might go home and I thanked him and said good day, and Col. Majors escorted us to the carriage. I wonder why Mr. Peyton was so angry about it. He seems to have been very anxious to be my guardian. I wonder why?"

"I wonder, too," said Arthur, to whom of course the secret of Peyton's concern with Dorothy's affairs was a mystery. He had not been present on the occasion when Peyton entered his protest against the girl's reading, nor had any one told him of the occurrence. Neither had he heard of Peyton's visit to Aunt Polly on the occasion of the outbreak of fever. He therefore knew of no reason for Peyton's desire to intermeddle in Dorothy's affairs, beyond his well known disposition to do the like with everybody's concerns. But Arthur had grown used to the thought of mystery in everything that related to Dorothy.

Presently the girl said, "I'm going to write a note to Mr. Peyton, now, and send it over by Dick."

"What for, Dorothy?"

"Oh, I want to tell him how wrong and wicked he is when he says you persuaded me to do this."

"Did he say that?"

"Yes, I told you so before, but you weren't paying attention. Perhaps you were thinking about the poor sick people, so I'll forgive you and you needn't apologize. I must run away now and write my note."

"Please don't, Dorothy."

"But why not?"

"He will say I persuaded you to do that, too. It would embarrass me very seriously if you should send him any note now."

Dorothy was quick to see this aspect of the matter, though without suggestion it would never have occurred to her extraordinarily simple and candid mind.

It was not long after Dorothy left him when Edmonia Bannister made her daily visit to the fever camp, accompanied by her maid and bearing delicacies for the sick. After her visit to Dorothy's quarters Arthur engaged her in conversation. He told her of what had happened, and expressed his repugnance to the task thus laid upon him.

"I cannot sympathize with you in the least," said the young woman. "I am glad it has happened—glad on more accounts than one."

"Yes, I suppose you are," he answered, meditatively, "but that's because you do not understand. I wish I could have a good, long talk with you, Edmonia, about this thing—and some other things."

He added the last clause after a pause, and in a tone which suggested that perhaps the "other things" were weightier in his mind than this one.

"Why can't you?" the girl asked.

"Why, I can't leave my sick people long enough for a visit to Branton. It will be many weeks yet before I shall feel free to leave this plantation."

The girl thought a moment, and then said, with unusual deliberation:

"I can spare an hour now; surely you might give a like time. Why can't we sit in Dorothy's little porch and have our talk now? Dorothy has gone to the big tent, and is busy with the sick, and if you should be needed you will be here to respond to any call. I see how worried you are, and perhaps I may be able to help you with advice—or at the least with sympathy."

Arthur gladly assented and the two repaired to the little shaded verandah which Dick had built out of brushwood and boughs across the front of Dorothy's temporary dwelling.

"This thing troubles me greatly, Edmonia," Arthur began, "and it depresses me as pretty nearly everything else does nowadays. It completely upsets my plans and defeats all my ambitions. It adds another to the ties of obligation that compel me to remain here and neglect my work."

"Is it not possible, Arthur"—their friendship had passed the "cousining" stage and they used each other's names now without prefix—"Is it not possible, Arthur, for you to find work enough here to occupy your life and employ your abilities worthily? There is no doubt that you have already saved many lives by the skill and energy with which you have met this fever outbreak, and your work will bear still better fruit. You have taught all of us how to save lives in such a case, how to deal with the epidemics that are common enough on plantations. You may be sure that nobody in this region will ever again let a dozen or twenty negroes perish in unwholesome quarters after they have seen how easily and surely you have met and conquered the fever. Dorothy tells me you have had only two deaths out of forty-two cases, and that no new cases are appearing. Surely your conscience should acquit you of neglecting your work, or burying your talents."

"Oh, if there were such work for me to do all the time," the young man answered, "I should feel easy on that score. But this is an extraordinary occasion. It will pass in a few weeks, and then—"

"Well, and then—what?"

"Why, then a life of idleness and ease, with no duties save such as any man of ordinary intelligence could do as well as I, or better—a life delightful enough in its graceful repose, but one which must condemn me to rust in all my faculties, to stand still or retrograde, to leave undone all that I have spent my youth and early manhood in fitting myself to do. Please understand me, Edmonia. I love Virginia, its people, and all its traditions of honor and manliness. But I am not fit for the life I must lead here. All the education, all the experience I have had have tended to unfit me for it in precisely that degree in which they have helped to equip me for something quite different. Then again the work I had marked out for myself in the world needs me far more than you can easily understand. There are not many men so circumstanced that they could do it in my stead. Other men as well or better equipped with scientific acquirements, and all that, are not free as I am—or was before this inheritance in Virginia came to blight my life. They have their livings to make and must work only in fields that promise a harvest of gain. I was free to go anywhere where I might be needed, and to minister to humanity in ways that make no money return. My annuities secured me quite all the money I needed for my support so that I need never take thought for the morrow. I have never yet received a fee for my ministry—for I regard my work as a ministry, for which I am set apart. Other men have families too, and owe a first duty to them, while I—well, I decided at the outset that I would never marry."

Arthur did not end that sentence as he would have ended it a year or even half a year before. He was growing doubtful of himself. Presently he continued:

"I am free to work for humanity. My time is my own. I can spend it freely in making experiments and investigations that can hardly fail to benefit mankind. Few men who are equipped for such studies can spare time for them from the breadwinning. Then again when great epidemics occur anywhere, and multitudes need me, I am free to go and serve them. I have no family, no wife, no children, nobody dependent upon me, in short no obligations of any kind to restrain me from such service. Such at least was my situation before my Uncle Robert died. His death imposed upon me the duty of caring for all these black people. My first thought was of how I might most quickly free myself of this restraining obligation. Had the estate consisted only of houses and lands and other inanimate property I should have made short work of the business. I should have sold the whole of it for whatever men might be willing to give me for it; I should have devoted the proceeds to some humane purpose, and then, being free again I should have returned to my work. Unfortunately, however, in succeeding to my uncle's estate I succeeded also to his obligations. I planned to fulfil them once for all by selling the plantation and using the proceeds in carrying the negroes to the west and establishing them upon farms of their own. I still cherish that purpose, but I am delayed in carrying it out by the fact that other obligations must first be discharged. There are debts—the hereditary curse of us Virginians—and I find that the value of the plantation, without the negroes, would not suffice to discharge them and leave enough to give the negroes the little farms that I must provide for them if I take the responsibility of setting them free. Still I see ways in which I think I can overcome that difficulty within two or three years, by selling crops that Virginians never think of selling and devoting their proceeds to the discharge of debts. But now comes this new and burdensome duty of caring for Dorothy's estate. She is now sixteen years of age, so that this new burden must rest upon my shoulders for five full years to come."

"I quite understand," Edmonia slowly replied, "and in great part I sympathize with you. But not altogether. For one thing I do not share your belief in freedom for the negroes. I am sure they are unfit for it, and it would be scarcely less than cruelty to take them out of the happy life to which they were born, exile them to a strange land, and condemn them to a lifelong struggle with conditions to which they are wholly unused, with poverty for their certain lot and starvation perhaps for their fate. They are happy now. Why should you condemn them to unhappy lives? They are secure now in the fact that, sick or well, in age and decrepitude as well as in lusty health, they will be abundantly fed and clothed and well housed. Why should you condemn them to an incalculably harder lot?"

"So far as the negroes are concerned, you may be right. Yet I cannot help thinking that if I make them the owners of fertile little farms in that rapidly growing western country, without a dollar of debt, they will find it easy enough to put food into their mouths and clothes on their backs and keep a comfortable roof over their heads. However that is a large question and perhaps a difficult one. If it could have been kept out of politics Virginia at least would long ago have found means to free herself of the incubus. But it is not of the negroes chiefly that I am thinking. I am trying to set Arthur Brent free while taking care not to do them any unavoidable harm in the process. I want to return to my work, and I am sufficiently an egotist to believe that my freedom to do that is of some importance to the world."

"Doubtless it is," answered the young woman, hesitatingly, "but there are other ways of looking at it, Arthur. I have read somewhere that the secret of happiness is to reconcile oneself with one's environment."

"Yes, I know. That is an abominable thought, a paralyzing philosophy. In another form the privileged classes have written it into catechisms, teaching their less fortunate fellow beings that it is their duty to 'be content in that state of existence to which it hath pleased God' to call them. As a buttress to caste and class privilege and despotism of every kind, that doctrine is admirable, but otherwise it is the most damnable teaching imaginable. It is not the duty of men to rest content with things as they are. It is their duty to be always discontented, always striving to make conditions better. 'Divine discontent' is the very mainspring of human progress. The contented peoples are the backward peoples. The Italian lazzaroni are the most contented people in the world, and the most worthless, the most hopeless. No, no, no! No man who has brains should ever reconcile himself to his environment. He should continually struggle to get out of it and into a better. We have liberty simply because our oppressed ancestors refused to do as the prayer book told them they must. Men would never have learned to build houses or cook their food if they had been content to live in caves or bush shelters and eat the raw flesh of beasts. We owe every desirable thing we have—intellectual, moral and physical—to the fact that men are by nature discontented. Contentment is a blight."

Edmonia thought for a while before answering. Then she said:

"I suppose you are right, Arthur. I never thought of the matter in that way. I have always been taught

that discontent was wicked—a rebellion against the decrees of Providence.”

“You remember the old story of the miller who left to Providence the things he ought to have done for himself, and how he was reminded at last that ‘ungreased wheels will not go?’ ”

“Oh, yes.”

“Well, in my view the most imperative decree of Providence is that we shall use the faculties it has bestowed upon us in an earnest and ceaseless endeavor to better conditions, for ourselves and for others.”

“But may it not sometimes be well to accept conditions as a guide—to let them determine in what direction we shall struggle?”

“Certainly, and that is precisely my case. When I consider the peculiar conditions that specially fit me to do my proper work in the world it is my duty, without doubt, to fight against every opposing influence. I feel that I must get rid of the conditions that are now restraining me, in order that I may fulfil the destiny marked out for me by those higher conditions.”

“Perhaps. But who knows? It may be that some higher work awaits you, here, some nobler use of your faculties, to which the apparently adverse conditions that now surround you, are leading, guiding, compelling you. It may be that in the end your unwilling detention here will open to you some opportunity of service to humanity, of which you do not now dream.”

“Of course that is possible,” Arthur answered doubtfully, “but I see no such prospect. I see only danger in my present situation, danger of falling into the lassitude and inertia of contentment. I saw that danger from the first, especially when I first knew you. I felt myself in very serious danger of falling in love with you like the rest. In that case I might possibly have won you, as none of the rest had done. Then I should joyfully, and almost without a thought of other things, have settled into the contented life of a well to do planter, leaving all my duties undone.”

Edmonia flushed crimson as he so calmly said all this, but he, looking off into the nothingness of space, failed to see it, and a few seconds later she had recovered her self-control. Presently he added, still unheeding the possible effect of his words:

“You saved me from that danger. You put me under bonds not to fall in love with you, and you have helped me to keep the pact. That danger is past, but I begin to fear another, and my only safety would be to go back to my work if that were possible.”

For a long time Edmonia did not speak. Perhaps she did not trust herself to do so. Finally, in a low, soft voice, she asked:

“Would you mind telling me what it is you fear? We are sworn friends and comrades, you know.”

“It is Dorothy,” he answered. “From the first I have been fond of the child, but now, to my consternation, I find myself thinking of her no longer as a child. The woman in her is dawning rapidly, especially since she has been called upon to do a woman’s part in this crisis. She still retains her childlike simplicity of mind, her extraordinary candor, her trusting truthfulness. She will always retain those qualities. They lie at the roots of her character. But she has become a woman, nevertheless, a woman at sixteen. You must have observed that.”

“I have,” the young woman answered in a voice that she seemed to be managing with difficulty. “And with her womanhood her beauty has come also. You must have seen how beautiful she has become.”

“Oh, yes,” he answered; “no one possessed of a pair of eyes could fail to observe that. Now that we are talking so frankly and in the sympathy of close friendship, let me tell you all that I fear. I foresee that if I remain here, as apparently I must, I shall presently learn to love Dorothy madly. If that were all I might brave it. But in an intercourse so close and continual as ours must be, there is danger that her devoted, childlike affection for me, may presently ripen into something more serious. In that case I could not stifle her love as I might my own. I could not sacrifice her to my work as I am ready to sacrifice myself. I almost wish you had let me fall in love with you as the others did.”

Again Edmonia paused long before answering. When she spoke at last, it was to say:

“It is too late now, Arthur.”

“Oh, I know that. The status of things between you and me is too firmly fixed now—”

“I did not mean that,” she answered, “though that is a matter of course. I was thinking of the other case.”

“What?”

“Why, Dorothy. It is too late to prevent her from loving you. She has fully learned that lesson already though she does not know the fact. And it is too late for you also, though you, too, do not know it—or did not till I told you.”

It was now Arthur’s turn to pause and think before replying. Presently, in a voice that was unsteady in spite of himself, he asked:

“Why do you think these dreadful things, Edmonia?”

“I do not think them. I know. A woman’s instinct is never at fault in such a case—at least when she feels a deep affection for both the parties concerned. And there is nothing dreadful about it. On the contrary it offers the happiest possible solution of Dorothy’s misfortune, and it assures you of something far better worth your while to live for than the objects you have heretofore contemplated. I must go now. Of course you will say nothing of this to Dorothy for the present. That must wait for a year or two. In the meantime in all you do toward directing Dorothy’s education, you must remember that you are educating your future wife. Help me into my carriage, please. I will not wait for my maid. Dick can bring her over later, can’t he?”

“But tell me, please,” Arthur eagerly asked as the young woman seated herself alone in the carriage, “what is this ‘misfortune’ of Dorothy’s, this mystery that is so closely kept from me, while it darkly intervenes in everything done or suggested with regard to her.”

“I cannot—not now at least.” Then after a moment’s meditation she added:

“And yet you are entitled to know it—now. You are her guardian in a double sense. Whenever you can find time to come over to Branton, I’ll tell you. Good-bye!”

As the carriage was starting Edmonia caught sight of Dick and called him to her.

"Have you any kittens at Wyanoke, Dick?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss Mony, lots uv 'em."

"Will you pick out a nice soft one, Dick, and bring it to me at Branton? Every old maid keeps a cat, you know, Dick, and so I want one."

All that was chivalric in Dick's soul responded.

"I'll put a Voodoo^[A] on anybody I ever heahs a callin' you a ole maid, Miss Mony, but I'll git you de cat."

As she sank back among the cushions the girl relaxed the rein she had so tightly held upon herself, and the tears slipped softly and silently from her eyes. For the first time in her life this brave woman was sorry for herself.

XVIII

ALONE IN THE CARRIAGE

AFTER the blind and blundering fashion of a man, Arthur Brent was utterly unconscious of the blow he had dealt to this woman who had given him the only love of her life. For other men she had felt friendship, and to a few she had willingly given that affection which serves as a practical substitute for love in nine marriages out of ten, and which women themselves so often mistake for love. But to this woman love in its divinest form had come, the love that endureth all things and surpasseth all things, the love that knows no ceasing while life lasts, the love that makes itself a willing sacrifice. Until that day she had not herself known the state of her own soul. She had not understood how completely this man had become master of her life, how utterly she had given herself to him. And in the very moment that revealed the truth to her the man she loved had, with unmeant cruelty, opened her eyes also to that other truth that her love for him was futile and must ever remain hopeless.

She bade her driver go slowly, that she might think the matter out alone, and she thought it out. She was too proud a woman to pity herself for long. She knew and felt that Arthur had never dreamed of the change which had so unconsciously come upon her. She knew that had he so much as entertained a hope of her love a little while ago, he would have bent all the energies of his soul to the winning of her. She knew in brief that this man to whom she had unconsciously given the one love of her life, would have loved her in like manner, if she had permitted that. She knew too that it was now too late.

As the carriage slowly toiled along the sandy road, she meditated, sometimes even uttering her thought in low tones.

"There is no fault in him," she reflected. "It is not that he is blind, but that I have hoodwinked him. In deceiving myself, I have deceived him."

Then came the pleasanter thought:

"At any rate in ruining my own life, I have not ruined his, but glorified it. Had he loved and married me he would have been happy, but it would have been in a commonplace way. His ambitions would have died slowly but surely. That discontent, which he has taught me to understand as the mainspring of all that is highest and noblest in human endeavor, would have given place to a blighting contentment in such a life as that which he and I would have led together. It will be quite different when he marries Dorothy. She too has the 'divine discontent' that does things. She will be a help immeasurably more meet for him than I could ever have hoped to be. She will share his enthusiasms, and strengthen them. And it is his enthusiasm that makes him worthy of a woman's love. It is that which takes him out of the commonplace. It is that which sets him apart from other men. It is that which makes him Arthur Brent."

Then her thought reverted for a moment to her own pitiful case.

"What am I to do?" she asked herself. "What use can I make of my life that shall make it worthy of him? First of all I must be strong. He must never so much as suspect the truth, and of course nobody else must be permitted even to guess it. I must be a help to him, and not a hindrance. He must feel that my friendship, on which he places so high an estimate, is a friendship to be trusted and leant upon. I must more and more make myself his counsellor, a stimulating helpful influence in his life. His purposes are mainly right, and I must encourage him to seek their fulfilment. Such a man as he should not be wasted upon a woman like me, or led by such into a life of inglorious ease and inert content. After all perhaps I may help him as his friend, where, as his wife, my influence over his life and character would have been paralyzing. If I can help, him, my life will not be lost or ruined. It need not even be unhappy. If my love for him is such as he deserves, it will meet disappointment bravely. It will discipline itself to service. It will scorn the selfishness of idle bemoaning. The sacrifice that is burnt upon the altar is not in vain if the odors of it placate the gods. Better helpful sacrifice than idle lamentation."

Then after a little her mind busied itself with thoughts less subjective and more practical.

"How shall I best help?" she asked herself. "First of all I must utterly crush selfishness in my heart. I must be a cheerful, gladsome influence and not a depressing one. From this hour there are no more tears for me, but only gladdening laughter. I must help toward that end which I see to be inevitable. I must do all that is possible to make it altogether good. I must help to prepare Dorothy to be the wife he needs. She has not been educated for so glorious a future. She has been carefully trained, on the contrary, for a humdrum life for which nature never intended her, the life of submissive wifedom to a man she could never love, a man whom she could not even respect when once her eyes were opened to better things in manhood. I must have her much with me. I must undo what has been done amiss in her education. I must help to fit her for a high ministry to the unselfish ambitions of the one man who is worthy of such a ministry. I must see to it that she is taught the very things that she has been jealously forbidden to learn. I must introduce her to that larger life from which she has been so watchfully secluded. So shall I make of my own life a thing worth while. So shall my love find a mission worthy of its object. So shall it be glorified."

WHEN Edmonia drove away, leaving Arthur alone, he bade Dick bring his horse, and, mounting, he set off at a gallop toward the most distant part of the plantation. He was dazed by the revelation that Edmonia's words had made to him as to the state of his own mind, and almost frightened by what she had declared with respect to Dorothy's feeling. He wanted to be alone in order that he might think the matter out.

It seemed to him absurd that he should really be in love with the mere child whom he had never thought of as other than that. And yet—yes, he must admit that of late he had half unconsciously come to think of the womanhood of her oftener than of the childhood. He saw clearly, when he thought of it, that his fear that he might come to love the girl had been born of a subconsciousness that he had come to love her already.

It was a strange condition of mind in which he found himself. His strongest impulse was to run away and thus save the girl from himself and his love. But would that save her? She was not the kind of woman—he caught himself thinking of her now as a woman and not as a child—she was not the kind of woman to love lightly or to lay a love aside as one might do with a misfit garment. What if it should be true, as Edmonia had declared, that Dorothy had already given him her heart? What would happen to her in that case, should he go away and leave her? "But, psha!" he thought; "that cannot be true. The child does not know what love is. And yet, and yet. Why did she choose me to be her guardian, and why, when I expressed regret that she had done so, did she look at me so, out of those great, solemn, sad eyes of hers, and ask me, with so much intensity if I did not *want* to be her guardian? Was it not that she instinctively, and in obedience to her love, longed to place her life in my keeping? After all she is not a child. It is only habit that makes me think of her in that way—habit and her strangely childlike confidence in me. But is that confidence childlike, after all? Do not women feel in that way toward the men they love? Dorothy is fully grown and sixteen years of age. Many a woman is married at sixteen."

Of his own condition of mind Arthur had now no doubt. The thought had come to him that should he go away she would forget him, and he had angrily rejected it as a lie. He knew she would never forget. The further thought had come to him that in such case she would marry some other man, and it stung him like a whip lash to think of that. In brief he knew now, though until a few hours ago he had not so much as suspected it, that he loved Dorothy as he had never dreamed of loving any woman while he lived. He remembered how thoughts of her had colored all his thinking for a month ago and had shaped every plan he had formed.

But what was he now to do? "My life—the life I have marked out for myself," he reflected, "would not be a suitable one for her." He had not fully formulated the thought before he knew it to be a falsehood. "She would be supremely happy in such a life. It would give zest and interest to her being. She would rejoice in its sacrifices and share mightily in its toil and its triumphs. She cares nothing for the life of humdrum ease and luxury that has been marked out for her to live. She would care intensely for a life of high endeavor. And yet I must save her from the sacrifice if I can. I must save her from myself and from my love if it be not indeed too late."

His horse had long ago slowed down to a walk, and was pursuing a course of its own selection. It brought him now to the hickory plantation near the outer gate of the Wyanoke property. Awakening to consciousness of his whereabouts, Arthur drew rein.

"It was here that I first met Dorothy"—he liked now the sound of her name in his ears—"on that glorious June morning when the hickory leaves that now strew the ground were in the full vigor of their first maturity. How confidently she whistled to her hounds, and how promptly they obeyed her call! What a queen she seemed as she disciplined them, and with what stately grace she passed me by without recognition save that implied in a sweeping inclination of her person! That was a bare five months ago! It seems five years, or fifty! How much I have lived since then! And how large a part of my living Dorothy has been!"

Presently he turned and set off at a gallop on his return to the fever camp, his mien that of a strong man who has made up his mind. His plan of action was formed, and he was hastening to carry it out.

It was growing dark when he arrived at the camp, and Dorothy met him with her report as to the condition of the sick. She took his hand as he dismounted, and held it between her own, as was her custom, quite unconscious of the nature of her own impulses.

"I'm very tired, Cousin Arthur," she said after her report was made. "The journey to Court and all the rest of it have wearied me; and I sat up with Sally last night. You're glad she's better, aren't you?"

"I certainly am," he replied. "I feared yesterday for her life, but your nursing has saved her, just as it has saved so many others. Sally has passed the crisis now, and has nothing to do but obey you and get well."

He said this in a tone of perplexity and sadness, which Dorothy's ears were quick to catch.

"You're tired too, Cousin Arthur?" she half said, half asked.

"Oh, no. I'm never tired. I—"

"Then you are troubled. You are unhappy, and you must never be that. You never deserve it. Tell me what it is! I won't have you troubled or unhappy."

"I'm troubled about you, Dorothy. You've been over-straining your strength. There are dark shadows under your eyes, and your cheeks are wan and pale. You must rest and make up your lost sleep. Here, Dick! Go over to the great house and bring Chestnut for your Miss Dorothy, do you hear?"

"No, no, no!" Dorothy answered quickly. "Don't go, Dick. I do not want the mare. No, Cousin Arthur, I'm not going to quit my post. I only want to sleep now for an hour or two,—just to rest a little. The sick people can't spare me now."

"But they must, Dorothy. I will not have you make yourself ill. You must go back to the great house tonight and get a good night's rest. I'll look after your sick people."

Dorothy loosened her hold of his hand, and retreated a step, looking reproachfully at him as she said:

"Don't you want me here, Cousin Arthur? Don't you care?"

"I do care, Dorothy, dear! I care a great deal more than I can ever tell you. That is why I want you to go home for a rest tonight. I am seriously anxious about you. Let me explain to you. When one is well and strong and gets plenty of sleep, there is not much danger of infection. But when one is worn out with anxiety and loss of sleep as you are, the danger is very great. You are not afraid of taking the fever. I don't believe you are afraid of anything, and I am proud of you for that. But I am afraid for you. Think how terrible it would be for me, Dorothy, if you should come down with this malady. Will you not go home for my sake, and for my sake get a good night's sleep, so that you may come back fresh and well and cheery in the morning? You do not know, you can't imagine how much I depend upon you for my own strength and courage. Several things trouble me just now, and I have a real need to see you bright and well and strong in the morning. Won't you try to be so for my sake, Dorothy? Won't you do as I bid you, just once?"

"Just once?" she responded, with a rising inflection. "Just *always*, you ought to say. As long as I live I'll do whatever you tell me to do—at least when you tell me the truth as you are doing now. You see I always know when you are telling the truth. With other people it is different. Sometimes I can't tell how much or how little they mean. But I know you so well! And besides you're always clumsy at fibbing, even when you do it for a good purpose. That's why I like you so much—or," pausing,—“that's one of the reasons. Has Dick gone for Chestnut?"

"Yes, Dick always obeys me."

"Oh, but that's quite different. You are Dick's master you know—" Then she hesitated again, presently adding, "of course you are my master too—only in a different way. Oh, I see now; you're my guardian. Of course I must obey my guardian, and I'll show him a bright, fresh face in the morning. Here comes Dick with Chestnut. Good night—Master!"

From that hour Dorothy thought of Arthur always by that title of "master," though in the presence of others she never so addressed him.

Arthur watched her ride away in the light of the rising November moon, Dick following closely as her groom. And as he saw her turn at the entrance to the woodlands to wave him a final adieu, he said out loud:

"I fear it is indeed too late!"

XX

A SPECIAL DELIVERY LETTER

WHEN Dorothy had disappeared, Arthur became conscious of a great loneliness, which he found it difficult to shake off. Presently he remembered that he had a letter to write, a letter which he had decided upon out there under the hickory trees. He had writing materials and a table in his own small quarters, but somehow he felt himself impelled to write this letter upon Dorothy's own little lap desk and in Dorothy's own little camp cottage.

"Positively, I am growing sentimental!" he said to himself as he walked toward Dorothy's house. "I didn't suspect such a possibility in myself. After all a man knows less about himself than about anybody else. I can detect tuberculosis in another, at a glance. I doubt if I should recognize it in myself. I can discover cardiac trouble by a mere look at the eyes of the man afflicted with it. I know instantly when I look at a man, what his temperament is, what tendencies he has, what probabilities, and even what possibilities inhere in his nature. But what do I know about Arthur Brent? I suppose that any of my comrades at Bellevue could have told me years ago the things I am just now finding out concerning myself. If any of them had predicted my present condition of mind a year ago, I should have laughed in derision of the stupid misconception of me. I thought I knew myself. What an idiot any man is to think that!"

Touching a match to the little camphene lamp on Dorothy's table, he opened her desk and wrote.

"MY DEAR EDMONIA:

"When you left me this afternoon, it was with a promise that on my next visit to Branton you would tell me of the things that limit Dorothy's life. It was my purpose then to make an early opportunity for the hearing. I have changed my mind. I do not want to hear now, because when this knowledge comes to me, I must act upon it, in one way or another, and I must act promptly. Should it come to me now, I should not be free to act. I simply cannot, because I must not, leave my work here till it is done. I do not refer now to those plans of which we spoke today, but simply to the fever. I must not quit my post till that is at an end. I am a soldier in the midst of a campaign. I cannot quit my colors till the enemy is completely put to rout. This enemy—the fever—is an obstinate one, slow to give way. It will be many weeks, possibly several months, before I can entirely conquer it. Until then I must remain at my post, no matter what happens. Until then, therefore, I do not want to know anything that might place upon me the duty of withdrawing from present surroundings. I shall ride over to Branton now and then, as matters here grow better, and I hope, too, that you will continue your compassionate visits to our fever camp. But please, my dear Edmonia, do not tell me anything of this matter, until the last negro in the camp is well and I am free to take the next train for New York, and perhaps the next ship for Havre.

"You will understand me, I am sure. I do not want to play a halting, hesitating part in a matter of such consequence. I do not wish to be compelled to sit still when the time comes for me to act. So I must wait till I am free again from this present and most imperative service, before I permit myself to hear that which may make it my duty to go at once into exile.

"In the meantime I shall guard my conduct against every act, and lock my lips against every utterance that might do harm.

"I have formulated a plan of action, and of that I will tell you at the first opportunity, because I want your counsel respecting it. As soon as I am free, I shall act upon it, if you do not think it too late.

"I cannot tell you, my dear Edmonia, how great a comfort it is to me in my perplexity, that I have your sympathy and may rely upon your counsel in my time of need. I have just now begun to realize how little I

know of myself, and your wise words, spoken today, have shown me clearly how very much you know of me. To you, therefore, I shall look, in this perplexity, for that guidance for which I have always, hitherto, relied,—in mistaken and conceited self-confidence,—upon my own judgment. Could there be anything more precious than such friendship and ready sympathy as that which you give to me? Whatever else may happen, now or hereafter, I shall always feel that in enriching my life with so loyal, so unselfish a friendship as that which you have given to me, my Virginian episode has been happy in its fruit.

“Poor Dorothy is almost broken down with work and loss of sleep. You will be glad to know that I have sent her to the house for a night of undisturbed rest. I had to use all my influence with her to make her go. And at the last she went, I think, merely because she felt that her going would relieve me of worry and apprehension. She is a real heroine, but she has so much of the martyr’s spirit in her that she needs restraint and control.”

Dick returned to the camp before this letter was finished, and his master delivered it into his hands with an injunction to carry it to Branton in the early morning of the next day. He knew the habit of young women in Virginia, which was to receive and answer all letters carried by the hands of special messengers, before the nine o’clock breakfast hour. And there were far more of such letters interchanged than of those that came and went by the post. For the post, in those years, was not equipped with free delivery devices. Most of the plantations were nearer to each other than to the nearest postoffice, and there were young negroes in plenty to carry the multitudinous missives with which the highly cultured young women of the time and country maintained what was in effect a continuous conversation with each other. They wrote to each other upon every conceivable occasion, and often upon no occasion at all, but merely because the morning was fine and each wanted to call the other’s attention to the fact. If one read a novel that pleased her, she would send it with a note,—usually covering two sheets and heavily crossed,—to some friend whom she desired to share her enjoyment of it. Or if she had found a poem to her liking in *Blackwood*, or some other of the English magazines, for American periodicals circulated scarcely at all in Virginia in those days—except the *Southern Literary Messenger*, for which everybody subscribed as a matter of patriotic duty—she would rise “soon” in the morning, make half a dozen manuscript copies of it, and send them by the hands of little darkeys to her half dozen bosom friends, accompanying each with an astonishingly long “note.” I speak with authority here. I have seen Virginia girls in the act of doing this sort of thing, and I have read many hundreds of their literary criticisms. What a pity it is that they are lost to us! For some of them were mightily shrewd both in condemnation and in ecstatic approval, and all of them had the charm of perfect and fearless honesty in utterance, and all of them were founded upon an actual and attentive reading of the works criticised, as printed criticism usually is not.

XXI

HOW A HIGH BRED DAMSEL CONFRONTED FATE AND DUTY

QUITE unconsciously Arthur Brent had prepared a very bad morning hour for the best friend he had ever known. His letter was full of dagger thrusts for the loving girl’s soul. Every line of it revealed his state of mind, and that state of mind was a very painful thing for the sensitive woman, who loved him so, to contemplate. The very intimacy of it was a painful reminder; the affection it revealed so frankly stung her to the quick. The missive told her, as no words so intended could have done, how far removed this man’s attitude toward her was from that of the lover. Had his words been angry they might not have indicated any impossibility of love—they might indeed have meant love itself in such a case,—love vexed or baffled, but still love. Had they been cold and indifferent, they might have been interpreted merely as the language of reserve, or as a studied concealment of passion. But their very warmth and candor of friendship would have set the seal of impossibility upon her hope that he might ever come to love her, if she had cherished any such hope, as she did not.

The letter told her by its tone more convincingly than any other form of words could have done, that this man held her in close affection as a friend, and that no thought of a dearer relationship than that could at any time come to him.

Edmonia Bannister was a strong woman, highly bred and much too proud to give way to the weakness of self-pity. She made no moan over her lost love as she laid it away to rest forever in the sepulchre of her heart. Nor did she in her soul repine or complain of fate.

“It is best for him as it is,” she told herself, as she had told herself before during that long, solitary drive in the carriage; “and I must rejoice in it, and not mourn.”

The sting of it did not lie in disappointment. She met that with calm mind as the soldier faces danger without flinching when it comes to him hand in hand with duty. The agony that tortured her was of very different origin. All her pride of person, all her pride of race and family, even her self-respect itself, was sorely stricken by the discovery that she had given her love unasked.

This truth she had not so much as suspected until that conversation in Dorothy’s little porch on the day before had revealed it to her. Then the revelation had so stunned her that she did not realize its full significance. And besides, her mind at that time was fully occupied with efforts so to bear herself as to conceal what she regarded as her shame. Now that she had passed a sleepless night in company with this hideous truth, and now that it came to her anew with its repulsive nakedness revealed in the gray of the morning, she appreciated and exaggerated its deformity, and the realization was more than she could bear.

She had been bred in that false school of ethics which holds a woman bound to remain a stock, a stone, a glacier of insensibility to love until the man shall graciously give her permission to love, by declaring his own love for her. She believed that false teaching implicitly. She was as deeply humiliated, as mercilessly self-reproachful now as if she had committed an immodesty. She told herself that her conduct in permitting herself, however unconsciously, to love this man who had never asked for her love, had “unsexed” her—a term not understood of men, but one to which women attach a world of hideous meaning.

"I am not well this morning," she said to her maid as she passed up the stairs in retreat. "No, you need not attend me," she added quickly upon seeing the devoted serving woman's purpose; "stay here instead and make my apologies to my brother when he comes out of his room, for leaving him to breakfast alone."

"Why, Miss Mony, is you done forgot? Mas' Archer he ain't here. You know he done stayed at de tavern at de Co't House las' night, an' a mighty poor white folksey breakfas' he'll git too."

"Oh, yes, I had forgotten. So much the better. But don't accompany me. I want to be alone."

The maid stared at her in blank amazement. When she had entered her chamber and carefully shut the door, the woman exclaimed:

"Well, I 'clar to gracious! I ain't never seed nuffin like dat wid Miss Mony before!"

Then with that blind faith which her class at that time cherished in the virtues of morning coffee as a panacea, Dinah turned into the dining room, and with a look of withering scorn at the head dining room servant, demanded:

"Is you a idiot, Polydore? Couldn't you see dat Miss Mony is seriously decomposed dis mawnin'? What you means by bein' so stupid? What fer didn't you give her a cup o' coffee? An' why don't you stir yourself now an' bring me de coffee urn, an' de cream jug? Don't stan' dar starin', nigga! Do you heah?"

Having "hopes" in the direction of this comely maid, Polydore was duly abashed by her rebuke while full of admiration for the queenly way in which she had administered it. He brought the urn and its adjuncts and admiringly contemplated the grace with which Dinah prepared a cup for her mistress.

"I 'clar, Dinah, you'se mos' as fine as white ladies dey selves!" he ventured to say in softly placative tones. But Dinah had no notion of relaxing her dignity, so instead of acknowledging the compliment she rebuffed it, saying:

"Why don't Mas' Archer sen' you to the cawnfiel', anyhow? Dat's all you'se fit for. Don' you see I'se a waitin' fer you to bring me a tray an' a napkin, an' a chane plate with a slice o' ham on it?"

Equipped at last, the maid, disregarding her mistress's injunction, marched up the stairs and entered Edmonia's room. The young woman gently thanked her, and then, after a moment's thought, said:

"Dinah, I wish you would get some jellies and nice things ready this morning and take them over to your Miss Dorothy for her sick people. You can use the carriage, but go as soon as you can get away; and give my love to your Miss Dorothy, and tell her I am not feeling well this morning. But tell her, Dinah, that I'll drive over this afternoon about two o'clock and she must be ready to go with me for a drive. Poor child, she needs some relaxation!"

Having thus secured immunity from Dinah's kindly but at present unwelcome attentions, Edmonia Bannister proceeded, as she phrased it in her mind, to "take herself seriously in hand."

After long thought she formulated a program for herself.

"My pride ought to have saved me from this humiliation," she thought. "Having failed me in that, it must at least save me from the consequences of my misconduct. I'll wear a cheerful face, whatever I may feel. I'll cultivate whatever there is of jollity in me, and still better, whatever I possess of dignity. I'll be social. I'll entertain continually, as brother always wants me to do. I'll have some of my girl friends with me every day and every night. I'll busy myself with every duty I can find to do, and especially I shall devote myself to dear Dorothy. By the way, Arthur will expect a reply to his letter. I'll begin my duty-doing with that."

And so she wrote:

"You are by all odds the most ridiculous fellow, my dear Arthur, that I have yet encountered—the most preposterous, wrong headed, cantankerous (I hope that word is good English—and anyhow it is good Virginian, because it tells the truth) sort of human animal I ever yet knew. Do you challenge proof of my accusations? Think a bit and you'll have it in abundance. Let me help you think by recounting your absurdities.

"You were a young man, practically alone in the world, with no fortune except an annuity, which must cease at your death. You had no associates except scientific persons who never think of anything but trilobites and hydrocyanic acid and symptoms and all that sort of thing. Suddenly, and by reason of no virtuous activity of your own, you found yourself the owner of one of the finest estates in Virginia, and the head of one of its oldest and most honored houses. In brief you came into an inheritance for which any reasonable young man of your size and age would have been glad to mortgage his hopes of salvation and cut off the entail of all his desires. There, that's badly quoted, I suppose, but it is from Shakespeare, I think, and I mean something by it—a thing not always true of a young woman's phrases when she tries her hand at learned utterance.

"Never mind that. This favored child of Fortune, Arthur Brent, M. D., Ph. D., etc., bitterly complains of Fate for having poured such plenty into his lap, rescuing him from a life of toil and trouble and tuberculosis—for I'm perfectly satisfied you would have contracted that malady, whatever it is, if Fate hadn't saved you from it by compelling you to come down here to Virginia.

"Don't criticise if I get my tenses mixed up a little, so long as my moods are right. Very well, to drop what my governess used to call 'the historical present,' this absurd and preposterous young man straightway 'kicked against the pricks'—that's not slang but a Biblical quotation, as you would very well know if you read your Bible half as diligently as you study your books on therapeutics. Better than that, it is truth that I'm telling you. You actually wanted to get rid of your heritage, to throw away just about the finest chance a young man ever had to make himself happy and comfortable and contented. You might even have indulged yourself in the pastime of making love to me, and getting your suit so sweetly rejected that you would ever afterwards have thought of the episode as an important part of your education. But you threw away even that opportunity.

"Now comes to you the greatest good fortune of all, and it positively frightens you so badly that you are planning to run away from it—if you can.

"Badinage aside, Arthur,—or should that word be 'bandinage?' You see I don't know, and my dictionary is

in another room, and anyhow the phrase sounds literary. Now to go on. Really, Arthur, you are a ridiculous person. You have had months of daily, hourly, intimate association with Dorothy. With your habits of observation, and still more your splendid gifts in that way, you cannot have failed to discover her superiority to young women generally. If you have failed, if you have been so blind as not to see, let me point out the fact to you. Did you ever know a better mind than hers? Was there ever a whiter soul? Has she not such a capacity of devotion and loyalty and love as you never saw in any other woman? Isn't her courage admirable? Is not her truthfulness something that a man may trust his honor and his life to, knowing absolutely that his faith must always be secure?

"Fie upon you, Arthur. Why do you not see how lavishly Providence has dealt with you?"

"But that is only one side of the matter, and by no means the better side of it. On that side lies happiness for you, and you have a strange dislike of happiness for yourself. You distrust it. You fear it. You put it aside as something unworthy of you, something that must impair your character and interrupt your work. Oh, foolish man! Has not your science taught you that it is the men of rich, full lives who do the greatest things in this world, and not the starvelings? Do you imagine for a moment that any monkish ascetic could have written Shakespeare's plays or Beethoven's music or fought Washington's campaigns or rendered to the world the service that Thomas Jefferson gave?"

"But there, I am wandering from my point again. Don't you see that it is your duty to train Dorothy, to give to her mind a larger and better outlook than the narrow horizon of our Virginian life permits?"

"Anyhow, you shall see it, and you shall see it now. For in spite of your unwillingness to hear, and in spite of your injunction that I shall not tell you now, I am going to tell you some things that you must know. Listen then.

"Certain circumstances which I may not tell you either now or hereafter, render Dorothy's case a peculiar one. She was only a dozen years old, or so, when her father died, and he never dreamed of her moral and intellectual possibilities. He was oppressed with a great fear for her. He foresaw for her dangers so grave and so great that he ceaselessly planned to save her from them. To that end he decreed that she should learn nothing of music, or art or any other thing which he believed would prove a temptation to her. His one supreme desire was to save her from erratic ways of living, and so to hedge her life about that she should in due course marry into a good Virginia family and pass all her days in a round of commonplace duties and commonplace enjoyments. He had no conception of her character, her genius or her capacities for enjoyment or suffering. He fondly believed that she would be happy in the life he planned for her as the wife of young Jefferson Peyton, to whom, in a way, he betrothed her in her early childhood, when Jeff himself was a well ordered little lad, quite different from the arrogant, silly young donkey he has grown up to be, with dangerous inclinations toward dissoluteness and depravity.

"Dr. South and Mr. Madison Peyton planned this marriage, as something that was to be fulfilled in that future for which Dr. South was morbidly anxious to provide. Like many other people, Dr. South mistook himself for Divine Providence, and sought to order a life whose conditions he could not foresee. He wanted to save his daughter from a fate which he, perhaps, had reason to fear for her. On the other side of the arrangement Madison Peyton wanted his eldest son to become master of Pocahontas plantation, so that his own possessions might pass to his other sons and daughters. So these two bargained that Dorothy should become Jefferson Peyton's wife when both should be grown up. Dr. South did not foresee what sort of man the boy was destined to become. Still less did he dream what a woman Dorothy would be. His only concern was that his daughter should marry into a family as good as his own.

"Now that Peyton sees what his son's tendencies are he is more determined than ever to have that mistaken old bargain carried out. He is willing to sacrifice Dorothy in the hope of saving his son from the evil courses to which he is so strongly inclined.

"Are you going to let this horrible thing happen, Arthur Brent? You love Dorothy and she loves you. She does not yet suspect either fact, but you are fully aware of both. You alone can save her from a fate more unhappy than any that her father, in his foolishness, feared for her, and in doing so you can at the same time fulfil her father's dearest wish, which was that she should marry into a Virginia family of high repute. Your family ranks as well in this commonwealth as any other—better than most. You are the head of it. You can save Dorothy from a life utterly unworthy of her, a life in which she must be supremely unhappy. You can give to her mind that opportunity of continuous growth which it needs. You can offer to her the means of culture and happiness, and of worthy intellectual exercise, which so rare and exceptional a nature must have for its full development.

"Are you going to do this, Arthur Brent, or are you not? Are you going to do the high duty that lies before you, or are you going to put it aside for some imagined duty which would be of less consequence even if it were real? Is it not better worth your while to save Dorothy than to save any number of life's failures who dwell in New York's tenements? Are not Dorothy South's mind and soul and superb capacities of greater consequence than the lives of thousands of those whose squalor and unwholesome surroundings are after all the fruit of their own hereditary indolence and stupidity? Is not one such life as hers of greater worth in the world, than thousands or even millions of those for whose amelioration you had planned to toil and toil? You know, Arthur, that I have little sympathy with the thought that those who fail in life should be coddled into a comfort that they have not earned. I do not believe that you can rescue dulness of mind from the consequences of its own inertia. Nine tenths of the poverty that suffers is the direct consequence of laziness and drink. The other tenth is sufficiently cared for. I am a heretic on this subject, I suppose. I do not think that such a man as you are should devote his life to an attempt to uplift those who have sunk into squalor through lack of fitness for anything better. Your abilities may be much better employed in helping worthier lives. I never did see why we should send missionaries to the inferior races, when all our efforts might be so much more profitably employed for the betterment of worthier people. Why didn't we let the red Indians perish as they deserve to do, and spend the money we have fruitlessly thrown away upon them, in providing better educational opportunities for a higher race?"

"The moral of all this is that you have found your true mission in the rescue of Dorothy South from a fate she does not deserve. I'm going to help you in doing that, but I will not tell you my plans till you get through

with your fever crusade and have time to listen attentively to my superior wisdom.

"In the meantime you are to humble yourself by reflecting upon your great need of such counsel as mine and your great good fortune in having a supply of it at hand.

"I hope your patients continue to do credit to your medical skill and to Dorothy's excellent nursing. I have sent Dinah over this morning with some delicacies for the convalescent among them, and in the afternoon I shall go over to the camp myself and steal Dorothy from them and you, long enough to give her a good long drive.

"Always sincerely your Friend,
"EDMONIA BANNISTER."

XXII

THE INSTITUTION OF THE DUELLO

WHEN Arthur Brent had read Edmonia's letter, he mounted Gimlet and rode away with no purpose except to think. The letter had revealed some things to him of which he had not before had even a suspicion. He understood now why Madison Peyton had been so anxious to become Dorothy's guardian and so angry over his disappointment in that matter. For on the preceding evening Archer Bannister had ridden over from the Court House to tell him of Peyton's offensive words and to deliver the letter of apology into his hands.

"I don't see how you can challenge him after that" said Archer, with some uncertainty in his tone.

"Why should I wish to do so?" Arthur asked in surprise. "I have something very much more important to think about just now than Madison Peyton's opinion of me. You yourself tell me that when he was saying all these things about me, he only got himself laughed at for his pains. Nobody thought the worse of me for anything that he said, and certainly nobody would think the better of me for challenging him to a duel and perhaps shooting him or getting shot. Of course I could not challenge him now, as he has made a written withdrawal of his words and given me an apology which I am at liberty to tack up on the court house door if I choose, as I certainly do not. But I should not have challenged him in any case."

"I suppose you are right," answered Archer; "indeed I know you are. But it requires a good deal of moral courage—more than I suspect myself of possessing—to fly in the face of Virginia opinion in that way."

"But what is Virginia opinion on the subject of duelling, Archer? I confess I can't find out."

"How do you mean?" asked the other.

"Why, it seems to me that opinion here on that subject is exceedingly inconsistent and contradictory. Dorothy once said, when she was a child,"—there was a world of significance in the past tense of that phrase—"that if a man in Virginia fights a duel for good cause, everybody condemns him for being so wicked and breaking the laws in that fashion; but if he doesn't fight when good occasion arises, everybody calls him a coward and blames him more than in the other case. So I do not know what Virginia opinion is. And even the laws do not enlighten me. Many years ago the Legislature adopted a statute making duelling a crime, but I have never heard of anybody being punished for that crime. On the contrary the statute seems to have been carefully framed to prevent the punishment of anybody for duelling. It makes a principal in the crime of everybody who in any capacity participates in a duel, whether as fighter or second, or surgeon or mere looker on. In other words it makes a principal of every possible witness, and then excuses all of them from testifying to the fact of a duel on the ground that to testify to that fact would incriminate themselves. I saw a very interesting farce of that sort played in a Richmond court a month or so ago. Are you interested to hear about it?"

"Yes, tell me!"

"Well, Mr. P."—Arthur named a man who has since become a famous judge—"had had something to do with a duel. As I understand it he was neither principal nor second, but at any rate he saw the duel fought. The principals, or one of them, had been brought before the judge for trial, and Mr. P. was called as a witness. When a question was put to him by the judge himself, Mr. P. replied: 'I am not a lawyer. I ask the privilege of consulting counsel before answering that question.' To this the judge responded: 'To save time Mr. P., I will myself be your counsel. As such I advise you to decline to answer the question. Now, as the judge of this court, and not in my capacity as your counsel, I again put the question to you and require you, under penalty of the law to answer it.' Mr. P. answered: 'Under advice of counsel, your Honor, I decline to answer the question.' The judge responded: 'Mr. Sheriff, take Mr. P. into custody. I commit him for contempt of court.' Then resuming his attitude as counsel, the judge said: 'Mr. P., as your counsel I advise you to ask for a writ of Habeas Corpus.'

" 'I ask for a writ of Habeas Corpus, your Honor,' answered P.

" 'The court is required to grant the writ,' said the judge solemnly, 'and it is granted. Prepare it for signature, Mr. Clerk, and serve it on the sheriff.'

"The clerical work occupied but a brief time. When it was done the sheriff addressing the court said: 'May it please your Honor, in obedience to the writ of Habeas Corpus this day served upon me, I produce here the body of R. A. P., and I pray my discharge from further obligation in the premises.'

"Then the judge addressed the prisoner, saying: 'Mr. P. you are arraigned before this court, charged with contempt and disobedience of the court's commands. What have you to say in answer to the charge?' Then instantly he added: 'In my capacity as your counsel, Mr. P., I advise you to plead that the charge of contempt which is brought against you, rests solely upon your refusal to answer a question the answer to which might tend to subject you to a criminal accusation.'

" 'I do so make my answer, your Honor,' said Mr. P.

" 'The law in this case,' said the judge, 'is perfectly clear. No citizen can be compelled to testify against himself. Mr. P., you are discharged under the writ. There being no other testimony to the fact that the prisoners at the bar have committed the crime charged against them, the court orders their discharge. Mr.

Clerk, call the next case on the calendar.^[B] Now wasn't all that a roaring farce, with the judge duplicating parts after the 'Protean' manner of the low comedians?"

"It certainly was," answered young Bannister. "But what are we to do?"

"Why, make up your minds—or our minds I should say, for I am a Virginian now with the best of you—whether we will or will not permit duelling, and make and enforce the laws accordingly. If duelling is right let us recognize it and put an end to our hypocritical paltering with it. I'm not sure that in the present condition of society and opinion that would not be the best course to pursue. But if we are not ready for that, if we are to go on legislating against the practice, for heaven's sake let us make laws that can be enforced, and let us enforce them. The little incident I have related is significant in its way, but it doesn't suggest the half or the quarter or the one-hundredth part of the absurdity of our dealing with this question."

"Tell me about the rest of it," responded Archer, "and then I shall have some questions to ask you."

"Well, as to the rest of it, you have only to look at the facts. Years ago the Virginia Legislature went through the solemn process of enacting that no person should be eligible to a seat in either house of our law making body, who had been in any way concerned in a duel, either as principal or second, since a date fixed by the statute. If that meant anything it meant that in the opinion of the Legislature of Virginia no duellist ought to be permitted to become a lawgiver. It was a statute prescribing for those who have committed the crime of duelling precisely the same penalty of disfranchisement that the law applies to those who have committed other felonies. But there was this difference. The laws forbidding other felonies, left open an opportunity to prove them and to convict men of committing them, while the law against duelling carefully made it impossible to convict anybody of its violation. To cover that point, the Legislature enacted that every man elected to either house of that body, should solemnly make oath that he had not been in any wise engaged in duelling since the date named in the statute. Again the lawgivers were not in earnest, for every year since that time men who have been concerned in duelling within the prohibited period have been elected to the Legislature; and every year the Legislature's first act has been to bring forward the date of the prohibition and admit to seats in the law making body all the men elected to it who have deliberately defied and broken the law. It deals in no such fashion with men disfranchised for the commission of any other crime. Is not all this in effect an annual declaration by the Legislature that its laws in condemnation of duelling do not mean what they say? Is it not a case in which a law is enacted to satisfy one phase of public sentiment and deliberately nullified by legislative act in obedience to public sentiment of an opposite character?"

"It certainly seems so. And yet I do not see what is to be done. You said just now that perhaps it would be best to legalize duelling. Would not that be legalizing crime?"

"Not at all. Duelling is simply private, personal war. It is a crime only by circumstance and statute. Under certain conditions such war is as legitimate as any other, and the right to wage it rests upon precisely the same ethical grounds as those upon which we justify public, national war. In a state of society in which the law does not afford protection to the individual and redress of wrongs inflicted upon him, I conceive that he has an indisputable right to wage war in his own defence, just as a nation has. But we live in a state of society quite different from that. If Madison Peyton or any other man had inflicted hurt of any kind upon me, I could go into court with the certainty of securing redress. I have no right, therefore, to make personal war upon him by way of securing the redress which the courts stand ready to give me peaceably. So I say we should forbid duelling by laws that can be enforced, and public sentiment should imperatively require their enforcement. Till we are ready to do that, we should legalize duelling and quit pretending."

"After all, now that I think of it," said young Bannister, "most of the duels of late years in Virginia have had their origin in cowardice, pure and simple. They have been born of some mere personal affront, and the principals on either side have fought not to redress wrongs but merely because they were afraid of being called cowards. You at least can never be under any necessity of proving that you are not a coward. The people of Virginia have not forgotten your work at Norfolk. But I'm glad Peyton apologized. For even an open quarrel between you and him, and especially one concerning Dorothy, would have been peculiarly embarrassing and it would have given rise to scandal of an unusual sort."

"But why, Archer? Why should a quarrel between him and me be more productive of scandal than one between any other pair of men? I do not understand."

"And I cannot explain," answered the other. "I can only tell you the fact. I must go now. I have a long ride to a bad bed at the Court House, with tedious jury duty to do tomorrow. So, good night."

XXIII

DOROTHY'S REBELLION

THE conversation reported in the last preceding chapter of this record, occurred on the evening before Edmonia Bannister's letter was written. The letter, therefore, when Arthur received it at noon of the next day, supplemented and in some measure explained what Archer had said with respect to the peculiar inconvenience of a quarrel between Dr. Brent and Madison Peyton.

Yet it left him in greater bewilderment than ever concerning Dorothy's case. That is why he mounted Gimlet and rode away to think.

He understood now why Madison Peyton so eagerly desired to become Dorothy's guardian. That would have been merely to take charge of his own son's future estate. But why should any such fate have been decreed for Dorothy under a pretence of concern for her welfare? What but wretchedness and cruel wrong could result from a marriage so ill assorted? Why should a girl of Dorothy's superior kind have been expected to marry a young man for whom she could never feel anything but contempt? Why should her rare and glorious womanhood have been bartered away for any sort of gain? Why had her father sought to dispose of her as he might of a favorite riding horse or a cherished picture?

All these questions crowded upon Arthur's mind, and he could find no answer to any of them. They made him the angrier on that account, and presently he muttered:

"At any rate this hideous wrong shall not be consummated. Whether I succeed in setting myself free, or fail in that purpose, I will prevent this thing. Whether I marry Dorothy myself or not, she shall never be married by any species of moral compulsion to this unworthy young puppy."

Perhaps Doctor Brent's disposition to call young Peyton by offensive names, was a symptom of his own condition of mind. But just at this point in his meditations a thought occurred which almost staggered him.

"What if Dr. South has left somewhere a written injunction to Dorothy to carry out his purpose? Would she not play the part of martyr to duty? Would she not, in misdirected loyalty, obey her dead father's command, at whatever cost to herself?"

Arthur knew with how much of positive worship Dorothy regarded the memory of her father. He remembered how loyally she had accepted that father's commands forbidding her to learn music or even to listen to it in any worthy form. He remembered with what unquestioning faith the girl had accepted his strange dictum about every woman's need of a master, and how blindly she believed his teaching that every woman must be bad if she is left free. Would she not crown her loyalty to that dead father's memory by making this final self-sacrifice, when she should learn of his command, as of course she must? In view of the extreme care and minute attention to detail with which Dr. South had arranged to hold his daughter's fate in mortmain, there could be little doubt that he had somehow planned to have her informed of this his supreme desire, at some time selected by himself.

At this moment Arthur met the Branton carriage, bearing Edmonia and Dorothy.

"You are playing truant, Arthur," called Edmonia. "You must go back to your sick people at once, for I've kidnapped your head nurse and I don't mean to return her to you till six. She is to dine with me at Branton. So ride back to your duty at once, before Dick shall be seized with an inspiration to give somebody a dose of strychnine as a substitute for sweet spirits of nitre."

"Oh, no, Edmonia," broke in Dorothy, "we must drive back to the camp at once. Cousin Arthur needs his ride. You don't know. I tell you he's breaking down. Yes you are, Cousin Arthur, so you needn't shake your head. That isn't quite truthful in you. You work night and day, and lately you've had a dreadfully worn and tired look in your eyes. I've noticed it and all last night, when you had sent me away to sleep, I lay awake thinking about it."

Edmonia smiled at this. Perhaps she recognized it as a symptom—in Dorothy. She only said in reply:

"Don't worry about Arthur. I am worried only about you, and I'm going to take you to Branton. Am I not, Arthur?"

"I sincerely hope so," he replied. "And there is not the slightest reason why you shouldn't keep her for the night if you will. She is really not needed at the hospital till tomorrow. I'm honest and truthful when I say that, Dorothy. Dick and I can take care of everything till tomorrow, and I'll see to it that Dick's inspirations are restricted to poetry. So take her, Edmonia, and keep her till tomorrow. And don't let her talk too much."

"Oh, I'm going to take her. She is impolite enough not to want to go but she is much too young to have a will of her own—yet. As for Dick, he's already in the throes. He is constructing a new 'song ballad' on the sorrowful fate of the turkey. It begins:

"Tukkey in de bacca lot,
A pickin' off de hoppa's,"

but it goes no further as yet because Dick can't find any rhyme for 'hopper' except 'copper' and 'proper' and 'stopper,' which I suggested, and they don't serve his turn. He came to me to ask if 'gobblers' would not do, but I discouraged that extreme of poetic license."

"Edmonia," said Dorothy as soon as the carriage had renewed its journey, "did you really think it impolite in me not to want to go with you?"

"No, you silly girl."

"I'm glad of that. You see I think there is nothing so unkind as impoliteness. But really I think it is wrong for me to go. Why didn't you take Cousin Arthur instead? You don't know how badly he needs rest."

Edmonia made no direct reply to this. Instead, she said presently:

"Arthur is one of the best men I know. Don't you think so, Dorothy?"

"Oh, he's altogether the best. I can't think of anybody to compare him with—not even Washington. He's a hero you know. I often read over again all the newspapers that told about what he did in Norfolk, and of course he's just like that now. He never thinks of himself, but always of others. There never was any man like him in all the world. That's why I can't bear to think of going to Branton and leaving him alone when if I were at my post, he might get some of the sleep that he needs so much. Edmonia, I'm not going to Branton! Positively I can't and I won't. So if you don't tell the driver to turn back, I'll open the carriage door and jump out and walk back."

Curiously enough Edmonia made no further resistance. Perhaps she had already accomplished the object she had had in view. At any rate she bade the driver turn about, and upon her arrival at the camp she offered Arthur no further explanation than he might infer from her telling him:

"I've brought back the kidnapped nurse. I couldn't win her away from you even for a few hours. See that you reward her devotion with all possible good treatment."

"You are too funny for anything, Edmonia," said Dorothy as she stepped from the carriage. "As if Cousin Arthur could treat me in any but the best of ways!"

"Oh, I'm not so sure on that point. He'll bear watching anyhow. He's 'essenteric' as Dick said the other day in a brave but hopeless struggle with the word 'eccentric.' But I must go now or I shall be late for dinner, and I'm expecting some friends who care more than Dorothy does for my hospitality."

"Oh, please, Edmonia—"

"Don't mind me, child. I was only jesting. You are altogether good and sweet and *lovable*."

She looked at Arthur significantly as she emphasized that last word.

The young man thereupon took Dorothy's hands in his, looked her in the eyes, and said:

"Edmonia is right, dear. You are altogether good and sweet and lovable. But you ought to have taken some rest and recreation."

"How could I, when I knew you needed me?"

XXIV

TO GIVE DOROTHY A CHANCE

It was nearly the Christmas time when Arthur finally broke up the fever camp. He decided that the outbreak was at an end and the need of a hospital service no longer pressing. The half dozen patients who remained at the camp were now so far advanced on the road to recovery that he felt it safe to remove them to the new quarters at the Silver Spring.

He had sent Dorothy home a week before, saying:

"Now, Dorothy, dear, we have conquered the enemy—you and I—and a glorious conquest it has been. We have had forty-seven cases of the disease, some of them very severe, and there have been only two deaths. Even they were scarcely attributable to the fever, as both the victims were old and decrepit, having little vitality with which to resist the malady. It is a record that ought to teach the doctors and planters of Virginia something as to the way in which to deal with such outbreaks. I shall prepare a little account of it for their benefit and publish it in a medical journal. But I never can tell you how greatly I thank you for your help."

"Please don't talk in that way," Dorothy hastily rejoined. "Other people may thank me for things whenever they please, but you never must."

"But why not, Dorothy?"

"Why, because—well, because you are the Master. I won't have you thanking me just like other people. It humiliates me. It is like telling me you didn't expect me to do my duty. No, that isn't just what I mean. It is like telling me that you think of Dorothy just as you do of other people, or something of that kind. I can't make out just what I mean, but I will not let you thank me."

"I think I understand," he answered. "But at any rate you'll permit me to tell you, that in my honest judgment as a physician, there would have been many more deaths than there have been, if I had not had you to help me. Your own tireless nursing, and the extraordinary way in which you have made all the negro nurses carry out my orders to the letter, have saved many lives without any possibility of doubt."

"Then I have really helped?"

"Yes, Dorothy. I cannot make you know how much you have helped—how great an assistance, how great a comfort you have been to me in all this trying time."

"I am very glad—very glad."

That was all the answer she could make for tears. It was quite enough.

"Now I'm going to send you home, Dorothy, to get some badly needed rest and sleep, and to bring the color back to your cheeks. I am going home myself too. I need only ride over here twice a day to see that the getting well goes on satisfactorily, and in a week's time I shall break up the camp entirely, and send the convalescents to their quarters. It will be safe to do so then. In the meantime I want you to think of Christmas. We must make it a red letter day at Wyanoke, to celebrate our victory. We'll have a 'dining day,' as a dinner party is queerly called here in Virginia, with a dance in the evening. I'll have some musicians up from Richmond. You are to send out the invitations at once, please, and we'll make this the very gladdest of Christmases."

"May I take my Mammy home with me?" the girl broke in. "She has been so good to me, you know."

"Yes, Dorothy, and I wish you would keep her there 'for all the time,' as you sometimes say. There's a comfortable house by the garden you know, and we'll give her that for her home as long as she lives. You shall pick out one or two of the nicest of the negro girls to wait on her and keep house for her, and make her old age comfortable."

Dorothy ejaculated a little laugh.

"Mammy would drive them all out of the house in ten seconds," she said, "and call them 'dishfaced devils' and more different kinds of other ugly names than you ever heard of. Old as she is, she's very strong, and she'll never let anybody wait on her. She calls the present generation of servants 'a lot o' no 'count niggas, dat ain't fit fer nothin' but to be plaguesome.' But you are very good to let me give her the house. Thank you, Cousin Arthur."

"Oh, Dorothy," answered Arthur, "I thought you always 'played fair' as the children say."

"Why, what have I done?" the girl asked almost with distress in her tone.

"Why, you thanked me, after forbidding me to thank you for an immeasurably greater service."

"Oh, but that's different," she replied. "You are the Master. I am only a woman."

"Dorothy," said Arthur seriously, "don't you know I think there is nothing in the world better or nobler than a woman?"

"That's because you are a man and don't know," she answered out of a wisdom so superior that it would not argue the point.

During the next week Arthur found time in which to prepare and send off for publication a helpful article on "The Plantation Treatment of Typhoid Epidemics." He also found time in which to ride over to Branton and hold a prolonged conference with Edmonia Bannister. Before a hickory wood fire in the great drawing room they went over all considerations bearing upon Arthur's affairs and plans and possibilities.

"This is the visitation you long ago threatened me with," said Edmonia. "You said you would come when the stress of the fever should be over, and you told me you had some plan in your mind. Tell me what it was."

"Oh, your past tense is correct there; that was before you wrote to me about Dorothy. Your letter put an end to that scheme at once."

"Did it? I'm very glad."

"But why? You don't know what it was that I had in mind."

"Perhaps not. Perhaps I have a shrewd idea as to the general features of your plan. At any rate I'm perfectly sure that it was unworthy of you."

"Why do you think that, Edmonia? Surely I have not—"

"Oh, yes you have—if you mean that you haven't deserved to be thought ill of. You have wanted to run away from your duty and your happiness, and it was that sort of thing you had in mind. Otherwise you wouldn't have needed to plan at all. Besides, you said you didn't want to have this conversation with me, or to hear about Dorothy till you should be 'free to act.' You meant by that 'free to run away.' That is why I wrote you about Dorothy."

"Listen, Edmonia!" said the young man pleadingly. "Don't think of me as a coward or a shirk! Don't imagine that I have been altogether selfish even in my thoughts! I did plan to run away, as you call it. But it was not to escape duty—for I didn't know, then, that I had a duty to do. Or rather I thought that my duty called upon me to 'run away.' Will you let me tell you just what I felt and thought, and what the plan was that I had in mind?"

"Surely, Arthur. I did not really think you selfish, and certainly I did not think you cowardly. If I had, I should have taken pains to save Dorothy from you. But tell me the whole story."

"I will. When we began our conversation in Dorothy's little porch, I was just beginning to be afraid that I might learn to love her. She had so suddenly matured, somehow. Her womanhood seemed to have come upon her as the sunrise does in the tropics without any premonitory twilight. It was the coming of serious duty upon her, I suppose that wrought the change. At any rate, with the outbreak of the fever, she seemed to take on a new character. Without losing her childlike trustfulness and simplicity, she suddenly became a woman, strong to do and to endure. And her beauty came too, so that I caught myself thinking of her when I ought to have been thinking of something else."

"Oh, yes," Edmonia broke in. "I know all that and sympathize with it. You remember I found it all out before you did."

"Yes, I was coming to that. Perhaps I wandered from my story a bit—"

"You did, of course. But under the circumstances I forgive you. Go on."

"Well, when you told me it was too late for me to save myself from loving Dorothy, I knew you were right, though I had not suspected it before. I hoped, however, that it might not be too late to save Dorothy from myself. I did not want to lure her to a life that was sure to bring much of trial and hard work and sympathetic suffering to her."

"But why not? Isn't such a life, with the man she loves, very greatly the happiest one she could lead? Have you studied her character to so little purpose as to imagine—"

"No, no, no!" he broke in. "I saw all that when I thought the matter out, after you left the camp that day. But at first I didn't see it, and I didn't want Dorothy sacrificed—especially to me."

"No woman is sacrificed when she is permitted to share the work, the purposes, the aspirations of the man she loves. How men do misjudge women and misunderstand them! It is not ease, or wealth, or luxury that makes a woman happy—for many a woman is wretched with all these—it is love, and love never does its work so perfectly in a woman's soul as when it demands sacrifice at her hands."

Edmonia said this oracularly, as she sat staring into the fire. Arthur wondered where she had learned this truth, seeing that love had never come to her either to offer its rewards or to demand sacrifice at her hands. She caught his look and was instantly on her guard lest his shrewd gift of observation should penetrate her secret.

"You wonder how I know all this, Arthur," she quickly added. "I see the question in your face. For answer I need only remind you that I am a woman, and a woman's intuitions sometimes serve her as well as experience might. Go on, and tell me what it was you planned before I wrote you concerning Dorothy's case. What was the particular excuse you invented at that time for running away?"

"It is of no consequence now, but I don't mind telling you. I conceived the notion of freeing myself from the obligations that tie me here in Virginia by giving Wyanoke and all that pertains to it to Dorothy."

"I almost wish you had proposed that to Dorothy. I should have been an interested witness of the scorn and anger which she would have visited upon your poor foolish head. It would have taken you five years to undo that mistake. But those five years would have been years of suffering to Dorothy; so on the whole I'm glad you didn't make the suggestion. What spasm of returning reason restrained you from that crowning folly?"

"Your letter, of course. When you told me that those who had assumed the rôle of Special Providence to Dorothy had planned to marry her to that young Jackanapes—"

"Don't call him contemptuous names, Arthur. He doesn't need them as a label, and it only ruffles your temper. Go on with what you were saying."

"Well, of course, you see how the case stood. Even if I had not cared for Dorothy in any but a friendly way, I should have felt it to be the very highest duty of my life to save her from this hideous thing. I decided instantly that whatever else might happen I would save Dorothy from this fate. So I have worked out a new plan, and I want you to help me carry it out."

"Go on. You know you may count upon me."

"Well, I want you to take Dorothy away from here. I want you to show her a larger world than she has ever dreamed of. I want you to take her to Washington, Baltimore and New York and introduce her to the best society there is there. Then I want you to take her to Europe for a year. She must see pictures and sculpture, and the noblest examples of architecture there are in the world. That side of her nature which has been so wickedly cramped and crippled and dwarfed, must be cultivated and developed. She must hear the

greatest music there is, and see the greatest plays and the greatest players. Fortunately she is fluent in her French and she readily understands Italian. Her capacity for enjoyment is matchless. It is that of a full-souled woman who has been starved on this side of her nature. You once bade me remember that in anything I did toward educating her I was educating my future wife. I don't know whether it will prove to be so or not. But in any case this thing must be done. She must know all these higher joys of life while yet she is young enough to enjoy them to the full, and she must have the education they will bring to her. She will be seventeen in March—only three months hence. She is at the age of greatest susceptibility to impressions."

"Your thought mightily pleases me, Arthur," said Edmonia. "But I warn you there is serious danger in it."

"Danger for Dorothy?"

"No. But danger for you."

"That need not matter. You mean that—"

"I mean just that. In all this Dorothy will rapidly change—at least in her points of view. Her conceptions of life will undergo something like a revolution. At the end of it all she may not care for any such life as you can offer her, especially as she will meet many brilliant men under circumstances calculated to make the most of their attractions. She may transfer her love for you, which is at present a thing quite unconsciously felt, to some one who shall ask for it. For I suppose you will say nothing to her now that might make her conscious of her state of mind and put her under bonds to you?"

"Quite certainly, no! My tongue shall be dumb and even my actions and looks shall be kept in leash till she is gone. Can't you understand, Edmonia—"

"I understand better than you think, and I honor you for your courage and your unselfishness. You want this thing done in order that Dorothy may have the fullest possible chance in life and in love—in order that if there be in this world a higher happiness for her than any that you can offer, she may have it?"

"That is precisely my thought, Edmonia. You have expressed it far better than I could have done. I don't want to take an unfair advantage of Dorothy, as I suppose I easily might. I don't want her to accept my love and agree to share my life, in ignorance of what better men and better things there may be for her elsewhere. If I am ever to make her my own, it must be after she knows enough to choose intelligently. Should she choose some other life than that which I can offer, some other love than mine, she must never know the blight that her choice cannot fail to inflict upon me. As for myself, I have my crucibles and my work, and I should be better content, knowing that she was happy in some life of her own choosing, than knowing that I had made her mine by taking unfair advantage of her inexperience."

"Arthur Brent," said Edmonia, rising, not to dismiss him, but for the sake of giving emphasis to her utterance, "you are—well, let me say it all in a single phrase—you are *worthy of Dorothy South*. You are such a man as women of the higher sort dream of, but rarely meet. It is not quite convenient for me to undertake this mission for you just now, but convenience must courtesy to my will. I'll arrange the matter with Dorothy at once and we'll be off in a fortnight or less. Fortunately no dressmaking need detain us, for we must have our first important gowns made in Richmond and Baltimore, a larger supply in New York, and then Paris will take care of its own. I'll have some trouble with Aunt Polly, of course; she regards travel very much as she does manslaughter, but you may safely leave her to me."

"But, Edmonia, you said this thing would subject you to some inconvenience?"

"So it will. But that's a trifle. I had half promised to spend July at the White Sulphur, but that can wait for another July. Now you are to tell me goodbye a few minutes hence and ride away. For I must write a note to Dorothy—no, on second thoughts I'll drive over and see her and Aunt Polly, and you are to remain here and dine with brother. Dorothy and I are going to talk about clothes, and we shan't want any men folk around. I'll dine at Wyanoke, and by tomorrow we'll have half a dozen seamstresses at work making things enough to last us to Baltimore."

"But tell me, Edmonia," said Arthur, beginning to think of practical things, "can you and Dorothy travel alone?"

"We could, if it were necessary. You know I've been abroad twice and I know 'the tricks and the manners' of Europe. But it will not be necessary. I enjoy the advantage of having been educated at Le Febvre's School, in Richmond. That sort of thing has its compensations. Among them is the fact that it is apt to locate one's friendships variously as to place. I have a schoolmate in New York—a schoolmate of five or six years ago, and a very dear friend—Mildred Livingston. She is married and rich and restless. She likes nothing so much as travel and I happen to know that she is just now planning a trip to Europe. I'll write to her today and we'll go together. As her husband, Nicholas Van Rensselaer Livingston, hasn't anything else to do he'll go along just to look after the baggage and swear in English, which they don't understand, at the Continental porters and their kind. He's really very good at that sort of thing."

"It is well for a man to be good at something."

"Yes, isn't it? I've often said so to Mildred. Besides he worships the ground—or the carpets, rather,—that she walks on. For he never lets her put her foot on the ground if he can help it. He's a dear fellow—in his way—and Mildred is really fond of him—especially when he's looking after the tickets and the baggage. Now you must let me run away. You are to stay here and dine with brother, you know."

XXV

AUNT POLLY'S VIEW OF THE RISKS

ODDLY enough Edmonia had very little of the difficulty she had anticipated in securing Aunt Polly's consent to the proposed trip. Perhaps the old lady's opinions with respect to the detrimental effects of travel were held like her views on railroads and the rotundity of the earth, humorously rather than with seriousness. Perhaps she appreciated, better than she would admit, the advantages Dorothy was likely to reap from an introduction to a larger world. Perhaps she did not like the task set her of cramping Dorothy's mind and soul to the mould of a marriage with young Jeff Peyton. Certain it is that she did not look forward to that fruition

of her labors as Dorothy's personal guardian with anything like pleasure. While she felt herself bound to carry out her instructions, she felt no alarm at the prospect of having their purpose defeated in the end by an enlargement of horizon which would prompt Dorothy to rebellion. Perhaps all these things, and perhaps something else. Perhaps Aunt Polly suspected the truth, and rejoiced in it. Who shall say? Who shall set a limit to the penetration of so shrewd a woman, after she has lived for more than half a century with her eyes wide open and her mind always quick in sympathy with those whom she loves?

Whatever the reason of her complaisance may have been, she yielded quickly to Edmonia's persuasions, offering only her general deprecation of travel as an objection and quickly brushing even that aside.

"I can't understand," she said, "why people who are permitted to live and die in Virginia should want to go gadding about in less desirable places. But we've let the Yankees build railroads down here, and we must take the consequences. Everybody wants to travel nowadays and Dorothy is like all the rest, I suppose. Anyhow, you'll be with her, Edmonia, and so she can't come to any great harm, unless it's true that the world is round. If that's so, of course your ship will fall off when you get over on the other side of it."

"But Europe isn't on the other side of it Aunt Polly, and besides I've been there twice already you know, and I didn't fall off the earth either time."

"No, you were lucky, and maybe you'll be lucky this time. Anyhow you have all made up your minds and I'll interpose no objections."

It was by no means so easy to win Dorothy's consent to the proposed journey.

"I ought not to run away from my duty," she said, in objection to a proposal which opened otherwise delightful prospects to her mind.

"But it's your duty to go, child," Edmonia answered. "You need the trip and all the education it will give you. What is there for you to do here, anyhow?"

"Why, Cousin Arthur might need me! You know he never tells lies, and he says I have really helped him to save people's lives in this fever time."

"But that is all over now and it won't occur again. Arthur has taken care of that by burning the old quarters and building new ones in a wholesome place. By the way, Dorothy, you'll be glad to know that his example is already having its influence. Brother has decided to build new quarters for our servants at a spot which Arthur has selected as the best one for the purpose on the plantation. Anyhow there'll be no further fever outbreaks at Wyanoke or at Pocahontas, now that Arthur is master there also."

"But he might need me in other ways," answered the persistently reluctant Dorothy. "And besides he is teaching me chemistry and other scientific things that will make me useful in life. No, I can't go away now."

"But, you absurd child," answered Edmonia, "there will be plenty of time to learn all that when you come back. You are ridiculously young yet. You won't be seventeen till March, and you know a great deal more about science than Arthur did at your age. Besides this is his plan for you, not mine. He wants you to learn the things this trip will teach you, a great deal more than he wants you to learn chemistry and that sort of thing. He knows what you need in the way of education, and it is at his suggestion that I'm going to take you North and to Europe. He appreciates your abilities as you never will, and it is his earnest wish that you shall make this trip as a part of your education."

"Very well," answered Dorothy. "I'll ask him if he wants me to go, and if he says yes, I'll go. Of course it will be delightful to see great cities and the ocean and Pompeii and pictures and all the rest of it. But a woman mustn't think of enjoyment alone. That's the way women become bad. My father often told me so, and I don't want to be bad."

"You never will, Dorothy, dear. You couldn't become bad if you wanted to. And as for Arthur, I assure you it was he who planned this journey for you and asked me to take you on it. Don't you think he knows what is best for you?"

"Why, of course, he does! I never questioned that. But maybe he isn't just thinking of what is best for me. Maybe he is only thinking of what would give me pleasure. Anyhow I'll ask him and make sure. He won't deceive me. And he couldn't if he tried. I always know when he's making believe and when I get angry with him for pretending he always quits it and tells me the truth."

"Then you'll go if Arthur tells you he really wants you to go, and really thinks it best for you to go?"

"Of course, I will! I'll do anything and everything he wants me to do, now and always. He's the best man in the world, and the greatest, Edmonia. Don't you believe that? If you don't I shall quit loving you."

"Oh, you may safely go on loving me then," answered Edmonia bowing her head very low to inspect something minute in the fancy work she had in her lap, and in that way hiding her flushed face for the moment. "I think all the good things about Arthur that you do, Dorothy. As I know what his answer to your questions will be, we'll order the seamstresses to begin work tomorrow morning. I'll have everything made at Branton, so you are to come over there soon in the morning."

The catechising of Arthur yielded the results that Edmonia had anticipated.

"Yes, Dorothy," he said, "I am really very anxious that you shall make this trip. It will give you more of enjoyment than you can possibly anticipate, but it will do something much better than that. It will repair certain defects in your education, which have been stupidly provided for by people who did not appreciate your wonderful gifts and your remarkable character. For Dorothy, dear, though you do not know it, you are a person of really exceptional gifts both of mind and character—gifts that ought to be cultivated, but which have been suppressed instead. You do not know it, and perhaps you won't quite believe it, but you have capacities such as no other woman in this community can even pretend to possess. You are very greatly the superior of any woman you ever saw."

"Oh, not of Edmonia!" the girl quickly replied.

"Yes—even of Edmonia," he answered.

The girl's face was hotly flushed. She did not know why, but such praise, so sincerely given, and coming from the man whom she regarded as "the best man in the world, and the greatest," was gladsome to her soul. Her native modesty forbade her to believe it, quite, "but," she argued with herself, "of course he knows better

than I do, better than anybody else ever can. And, of course, I must do all I can to improve myself in order that I may satisfy his expectations of me. I'll ask him all about that before I leave."

And she did.

"Cousin Arthur," she said one evening as they two sat with Aunt Polly before a crackling fire in "the chamber"—let the author suspend that sentence in mid air while he explains.

The chamber, in an old plantation house, was that room on the ground floor in which the master of the plantation, whether married or unmarried, slept. It was the family room always. Into it came those guests whose intimacy was sufficient to warrant intrusion upon the penetralia. The others were entertained in the drawing room. The word chamber was pronounced "chawmber," just as the word "aunt" was properly pronounced "awnt." The chamber had a bed in it and a bureau. In a closet big enough for a modern bedroom there was a dressing case with its fit appurtenances. In the chamber there was a lounge that tempted to afternoon siestas, and there were great oaken arm chairs whose skilful fashioning for comfort rendered cushions an impertinence. In the chamber was always the broadest and most cavernous of fire places and the most satisfactory of fires when the weather was such as to render artificial heating desirable. In the chamber was usually a carpet softly cushioned beneath, itself and its cushions being subject to a daily flagellation out-of-doors in the "soon" hours of morning in order that they might be relaid before the breakfast-time. All other rooms in the house were apt to be carpetless, their immaculate white ash floors undergoing a daily polishing with pine needles and rubbing brushes. The chamber alone was carpeted in most houses. Why this distinction the author does not undertake to say. He merely records a fact which was well-nigh universal in the great plantation houses.

So much for the chamber. Let us return to the sentence it interrupted.

"Cousin Arthur," Dorothy said, "I wish you would mark out a course of study for me to pursue during this journey, so that I may get out of it all the good I can."

Arthur picked up a dry sponge and dropped it into a basin of water.

"Look, Dorothy," he said. "That is the only course I shall mark out for you."

"It is very dull of me, I suppose," said the girl, "but I really don't understand."

"Why, I didn't tell the sponge what to absorb, and yet as you see it has drunk up all the water it can hold. It is just so with you and your journey. You need no instruction as to what you shall learn by travel or by mingling in the social life of great cities. You are like that sponge. You will absorb all that you need of instruction, when once you are cast into the water of life. You have very superior gifts of observation. There is no fear that you will fail to get all that is best out of travel and society. It is only the stupid people who need be told what they should see and what they should think about it, and the stupid people would much better stay at home."

XXVI

AUNT POLLY'S ADVICE

IF Aunt Polly had entertained any real desire to forbid the expedition planned for Dorothy, the prompt interference of Madison Peyton in that behalf would have dissipated it.

No sooner had Peyton learned of the contemplated journey than he hustled over to Wyanoke to see Aunt Polly regarding it.

It is not a comfortable thing to visit a man with whom one has recently quarrelled and to whom one has had to send a letter of apology. Even Peyton, thick-skinned and self-assured as he was, would probably have hesitated to make himself a guest at Wyanoke at this time but for the happy chance that Arthur was absent in Richmond for a few days.

Seizing upon the opportunity thus afforded, Peyton promptly visited Aunt Polly to enter a very earnest and insistent protest. He was genuinely alarmed. He realized Dorothy's moral and intellectual superiority to his son. He was shrewd enough to foresee that travel and a year's association with men and women of attractive culture and refined intellectual lives would, of necessity, increase this disparity and perhaps—nay, almost certainly—make Jefferson Peyton seem a distinctly unworthy and inferior person in Dorothy's eyes. He realized that the arrangement made some years before between himself and Dr. South, was not binding upon Dorothy, except in so far as it might appeal to her conscience and to her loyalty to her father's memory when the time should be ripe to reveal it to her. For as yet she knew nothing of the matter.

She had liked young Peyton when he and she were children together. His abounding good nature had made him an agreeable playmate. But as they had grown up, the sympathy between them had steadily decreased. The good nature which had made him agreeable as a playmate, had become a distinct weakness of character as he had matured. He lacked fixity of purpose, industry and even conscience—while Dorothy, born with these attributes, had strengthened them by every act and thought of her life.

The young man had courage enough to speak the truth fearlessly on all occasions that strongly called for truth and courage, but Dorothy had discovered that in minor matters he was untruthful. To her integrity of mind it was shocking that a young man should make false pretences, as he had done when they had talked of literature and the like. She could not understand a false pretence, and she had no toleration for the weakness that indulges in it.

Moreover in intellectual matters, Dorothy had completely outgrown her former playmate. The bright boy, whom Dorothy's father had chosen as one destined to be a fit life companion for her, had remained a bright boy. And that which astonishes us as brilliancy in a child ceases to impress us as the child grows into manhood, if the promise of it is not fulfilled by growth. A bright boy, ten or twelve years old, is a very pleasant person to contemplate; but a youth who remains nothing more than a bright boy as he grows into manhood, is distinctly disappointing and depressing.

It is to be said to the credit of Madison Peyton that he had done all that he could—or rather all that he knew how—to promote the intellectual development of this his first born son. He had lavished money upon

tutors for him, when he ought instead to have sent him to some school whose all dominating democracy would have compelled the boy to work for his standing and to realize the value of personal endeavor. In brief Madison Peyton had made that mistake which the much richer men of our day so often make. He had tried to provide for his son a royal road to learning, only to find that the pleasures of the roadside had won the wayfarer away from the objects of his journey.

Madison Peyton now realized all this. He understood how little profit his son had got out of the very expensive education provided for him, how completely he had failed to acquire intellectual tastes, and in a dimly subconscious way, he understood how ill equipped the young man was to win the love of such a girl as Dorothy, or to make her happy as his wife. And he realized also that if travel and culture and a larger thinking should weaken in Dorothy's mind—as it easily might—that sense of obligation to fulfil her father's desires, on which mainly he had relied for the carrying out of the program of marriage between these two, with Pocahontas plantation as an incidental advantage, the youth must win Dorothy by a worthiness of her love, or lose her for lack of it.

The worthiness in his son was obviously wanting. There remained only Dorothy's overweening loyalty to her father's memory and will as a reliance for the accomplishment of Madison Peyton's desires. It was to prevent the weakening of that loyalty that he appealed to Aunt Polly to forbid the travel plan.

Aunt Polly from the first refused. "Dorothy is a wonderful girl," she said, "and she has wonderful gifts. I shall certainly not stand in the way of their development."

"But let me remind you, Cousin Polly," answered Peyton, "that Dorothy's life is marked out for her. Don't you think it would be a distinct injustice to her to unfit her as this trip cannot fail to do, for the life that she must lead? Will not that tend to render her unhappy?"

"Happiness is not a matter of circumstance, Madison. It is a matter of character. But that isn't what I meant to say. You want me to keep Dorothy here in order that she may not grow, or develop, or whatever else you choose to call it. You want to keep her as ignorant as you can, simply because you know she is already the superior of the young man whom you and Dr. South, in your ignorant assumption of the attributes of Divine Providence, have selected to be her husband. You are afraid that she will outgrow him. Isn't that what you mean, Madison?"

"Well, yes, in a way. You put it very baldly, but——"

"But that's the truth, isn't it? That's what you're afraid of?"

"Well, the fact is I don't believe in educating girls above their station in life."

"How can anything be above Dorothy's station, Madison? She is the daughter and sole heir of one of the oldest and best families in Virginia. I have never heard of anything higher than that."

"Oh, certainly. But that isn't what I mean. You see Dorothy has been permitted to read a lot of books that young women don't usually read, and study a lot of subjects that young women don't usually study. She has got her head full of notions, and this trip will make the matter worse. I think women should look up to their husbands and not down upon them, and how can Dorothy——"

"How would it do, Madison, for the young men to make an effort on their own account, to improve their minds and build up their characters so that their wives might look up to them without an effort? There are some men to whom the most highly cultivated women can look up in real respect, and it is quite natural that the best of the young women should choose these for their husbands. Many young men refuse to make themselves worthy in that way, or fail in such efforts as they may make to accomplish it. If I understand you properly, you would forbid the girls to cultivate what is best in them lest they grow superior to their coming husbands."

"That's it, Cousin Polly. The happy women are those who feel the superiority of their husbands and find pleasure in bowing to it."

"I thought that was your idea. It is simply abominable. It makes no more of a woman than of a heifer or a filly. It regards her as nothing more or better than a convenience. I'll have nothing to do with such a doctrine. Dorothy South is a girl of unusual character, and unusual mind, so far as I can judge. She has naturally done all she could to cultivate what is best in herself, and, so far as I can control the matter she shall go on doing so, as every woman and every man ought to do. When she has made the best she can of herself, she may perhaps meet some man worthy of her, some man fit to be her companion in life. If she does, she'll probably marry him. If she meets none such she can remain single. That isn't at all the worst thing that can happen to a woman. It is a hideous thing to marry a girl to her inferior. You have yourself suggested that such a marriage can only mean wretchedness to both. And your plan of avoiding such marriages is to keep the girls inferior by denying them the privilege of self-cultivation. I tell you it is an abominable plan. It's Turkish, and the only right way to carry it out is to shut women up in harems and forbid them to learn how to read. For if a woman or a man of brains learns that much, the rest cannot be prevented. So you may make up your mind that Dorothy is going to make this trip. I've already consented to it, and the more I think about it, the more I am in favor of it. My only fear is that she may fall off the earth when she gets to the other side, and I reckon that will not happen, for both Arthur and Edmonia assure me they didn't fall off when they were over there."

Peyton saw the necessity of making some stronger appeal to Aunt Polly, than any he had yet put forward. So he addressed himself to her conscience and her exalted sense of honor.

"Doubtless you are right, Cousin Polly," he said placatively, "at least as to the general principle. But, as you clearly understand, this is a peculiar case. You see Dorothy *must* marry Jefferson in any event. Don't you think it would be very unfair and even cruel to her, to let her unfit herself for happiness in the only marriage she is permitted to make? Will it not be cruel to let her get her head full of notions, and perhaps even accept some man's attentions, and then find yourself in honor bound to show her the letter you hold from Dr. South, instructing her to carry out his will? You know she will obey her dead father and marry Jefferson. Isn't it clearly your duty to shield and guard her against influences that cannot fail to unfit her for happiness in the marriage she must make?"

"I am sole judge of that matter, Madison. I am the guardian of Dorothy's person during her nonage—four years longer. By the terms of Dr. South's will she must not marry until she is twenty-one, except with my

consent. With my consent she may marry at any time. As to the letter you speak of, you have never had the privilege of reading it, and I do not intend to show it to you. It is less peremptory, perhaps than you think. It does not command Dorothy to marry your son. It only recommends such a marriage to her as a safe and prudent one, securing to her the advantages of marriage into as good a family as her own. But there are other families than yours as good as her own, and I may see fit not to show Dorothy her father's letter at all. I am not bound to let her read it, by any clause in his will, or by any promise to him, or even by any injunction from him. I am left sole judge as to that. If I had not been so left free to use my own discretion I should never have accepted the responsibility of the girl's guardianship."

"You astonish me!" exclaimed Peyton. "I had supposed this matter settled beyond recall. I had trusted Dr. South's honor——"

"Stop, Madison!" interposed Aunt Polly. "If you say one word in question of Dr. South's honor and integrity, I will burn that letter now, and never, so long as I live mention its existence."

"Oh, I didn't mean——"

"It seems to me you say a good many things you do not mean today, Madison. As for me, I am saying only what I mean, and perhaps not quite all of that. Let me end the whole matter by telling you this: I am going to let Dorothy make this trip. I am going to give her every chance I can to cultivate herself into a perfect womanhood—many chances that I longed for



DOROTHY
SOUTH.

in my own girlhood, but could not command. I may or may not some day show her Dr. South's letter. That shall be as my judgment dictates. I shall not consent now or hereafter, while my authority or influence lasts, to Dorothy's marriage to anybody except some man of her own choosing, who shall seem to me fit to make her happy. If you want Jefferson to marry her, I notify you now that he must fairly win her. And my advice to you is very earnest that he set to work at once to render himself worthy of her; to repair his character; to cultivate himself, if he can, up to her moral and intellectual level; to make of himself a man to whom she can look up, as you say, and not down. There, that is all I have to say."

Madison Peyton saw this to be good advice, and he decided to act upon it. But, as so often happens with good advice, he "took it wrong end first," in the phrase of that time and country. He decided that his son should also go north and to Europe, following the party to which Dorothy belonged as closely as possible, seeing as much as he could of her, and paying court to her upon every opportunity.

XXVII

DIANA'S EXALTATION

IT was the middle of January, 1860, when Dorothy bade Arthur good-by and went away upon her mission of enjoyment and education.

It is not easy for us now to picture to ourselves what travel in this country was in that year which seems to the older ones among us so recent. In 1860 there was not such a thing as a sleeping car in all the world. The nearest approach to that necessity of modern life which then existed, was a car with high backed seats, which was used on a few of the longer lines of railroad. For another thing there were no such things in existence as through trains. Every railroad in the country was an independent line, whose trains ran only between its own termini. The traveller must "change cars" at every terminus, and usually the process

involved a delay of several hours and a long omnibus ride—perhaps at midnight—through the streets of some city which had thriftily provided that its several railroads should place their stations as far apart as possible in order that their passengers might “leave money in the town.” The passenger from a south side county of Virginia intending to go to New York, for example, must take a train to Richmond; thence after crossing the town in an omnibus and waiting for an hour or two, take another train to Acquia Creek, near Fredericksburg; there transfer to a steamboat for Washington; there cross town in an omnibus, and, after another long wait, take a train for the Relay House; there wait four hours and then change cars for Baltimore, nine miles away; then take another omnibus ride to another station; thence a train to Havre de Grace, where he must cross a river on a ferry boat; thence by another train to Philadelphia, where, after still another omnibus transfer and another delay, one had a choice of routes to New York, the preferred one being by way of Camden and Amboy, and thence up the bay twenty miles or so, to the battery in New York. There was no such thing as a dining car, a buffet car or a drawing room car in all the land. There were none but hand brakes on the trains, and the cars were held together by loose coupling links. The rails were not fastened together at their badly laminated ends, and it was the fashion to call trains that reached a maximum speed of twenty miles an hour, “lightning expresses,” and to stop them at every little wayside station. The engines were fed upon wood, and it was a common thing for trains to stop their intolerable jolting for full twenty minutes to take fresh supplies of wood and water.

There was immeasurably more of weariness then, in a journey from Richmond or Cincinnati or Buffalo to New York, than would be tolerated now in a trip across the continent. As a consequence few people travelled except for short distances and a journey which we now think nothing of making comfortably in a single night, was then a matter of grave consequence, to be undertaken only after much deliberation and with much of preparation. New York seemed more distant to the dweller in the West or South than Hong Kong and Yokohama do in our time, and the number of people who had journeyed beyond the borders of our own country was so small that those who had done so were regarded as persons of interestingly adventurous experience.

Quite necessarily all parts of the country were markedly provincial in speech, manner, habits and even in dress. New England had a nasal dialect of its own, so firmly rooted in use that it has required two or three generations of exacting Yankee school marmes to eradicate it from the speech even of the educated class. New York state had another, and the Southerner was known everywhere by a speech which “bewrayed” him.

And as it was with speech, so also was it with manners, customs, ideas. Prejudice was everywhere rampant, opinion intolerant, and usage merciless in its narrow illiberality. Only in what was then the West—the region between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi—was there anything of cosmopolitan liberality and tolerance. They were found in that region because the population of the West had been drawn from all parts of the country. Attrition of mind with mind, and the mingling of men of various origin had there in a large degree worn off the angles of provincial prejudice and bred a liberality of mind elsewhere uncommon in our country.

Edmonia and Dorothy were to make their formidable journey to New York in easy stages. They remained for several days with friends in Richmond, while completing those preliminary preparations which were necessary before setting out for the national capital. They were to stay in Washington for a fortnight, in Baltimore for three weeks, in Philadelphia for a week or two, and in New York for nearly two months before sailing for Europe in May.

The time was a very troubled one, on the subject of slavery. Not only was it true that if the owner of a slave took the negro with him into any one of the free states he by that act legally set him free, but it was also true that the most devoted and loyal servant thus taken from the South into a Northern state was subjected to every form of persuasive solicitation to claim and assert his freedom. It was nevertheless the custom of Southern men, and still more of Southern women, to take with them on their travels one or more of their personal servants, trusting to their loyalty alone for continued allegiance. For the attitude of such personal servants in Virginia at that time was rather that of proud and voluntary allegiance to loved masters and mistresses who belonged to them as a cherished possession, than that of men and women held in unwilling bondage.

Accordingly it was arranged that Edmonia’s maid, Dinah—or Diana as she had come to call herself since hearing her mistress read a “history pome” aloud—should accompany the two young women as their joint servitor.

As soon as this arrangement was announced at Branton, Diana began what Polydore called “a puttin’ on of airs.” In plainer phrase she began to snub Polydore mercilessly, whereas she had recently been so gracious in her demeanor towards him as to give him what he called “extinct discouragement.”

After it was settled that she was to accompany “Miss Mony an’ Miss Dorothy” to “de Norf” and to “Yurrop”—as she wrote to all her friends who were fortunate enough to know how to “read writin’,” there was, as Polydore declared, “no livin’ in de house wid her.” She sailed about the place like a frigate, delivering her shots to the right and left—most of them aimed at Polydore, with casual and contemptuous attention, now and then, to the other house servants.

“I ’clar’ to gracious,” said Elsie, one of the housemaids, “ef Diana ain’t a puttin’ on of jes’ as many airs as ef she’d been all over a’ready, an’ she ain’t never been out of dis county yit.”

“Wonder ef she’ll look at folks when she gits back,” said Fred, the cadet of the dining room, who was being trained under Polydore’s tutelage to keep his nails clean and to offer dishes to guests at their left hands.

“Don’ you be in too big a hurry to fin’ out dat, you nigga,” rejoined Polydore, the loyalty of whose love for Diana would brook no criticism of her on the part of an underling. “You’s e got enough to attend to in gittin’ yer manners into shape. Diana’s a superior pusson, an’ you ain’t got no ’casion to criticise her. You jes’ take what yer gits an’ be thankful like Lazarus wuz when de rich man dropped water outer his hand on his tongue.”

Polydore’s biblical erudition seems to have been a trifle at fault at this point. But at any rate his simile had its intended effect upon the young darkey, who, slipping a surreptitious beaten biscuit into his pocket,

retreated to the distant kitchen to devour it.

At that moment Diana entered the dining room with the air of a Duchess, and, with unwonted sweetness, said:

"Please, Polydore, bring me de tea things. De ladies is faint."

Polydore, anxious that Diana's gentle mood should endure, made all haste to bring what she desired. He made too much haste, unluckily, for in his hurry he managed to spill a little hot water from a pitcher he was carrying on a tray, and some drops of it fell upon the sleeve of Diana's daintily laundered cambric gown.

The stately bronze colored namesake of the ancient goddess rose in offended dignity, and looked long at the offender before addressing him. Then she witheringly put the question:

"Whar's your manners dis mawnin', Polydore? Jes' spose I was Miss Mony now; would you go sloppin' things over her dat way?"

Even a worm will turn, we are told, and Polydore was prouder than a worm. For once he lost his self-control so far as to say in reply:

"But you *ain't* Miss Mony, dough you seems to think you is. I'se tired o' yer highy tighty airs. Git de tea things for yerse'f!" With that Polydore left the dining room, and Diana, curiously enough, made no reference to the incident when next she encountered him, but was all smiles and sweetness instead.

XXVIII

THE ADVANCING SHADOW

No sooner were Dorothy and Edmonia gone than Arthur turned again to affairs. It was a troubled uneasy time in Virginia, a time of sore apprehension and dread. The "irrepressible conflict" over slavery had that year taken on new and more threatening features than ever before.

There was now a strong political party at the North the one important article of whose creed was hostility to the further extension of slavery into the territories. It was a strictly sectional party in its composition, having no existence anywhere at the South. It was influential in Congress, and in 1856 it had strongly supported a candidate of its own for president. By the beginning of 1860 its strength had been greatly increased and circumstances rendered probable its success in electing a president that year, for the hopeless division of the Democratic party, which occurred later in the year, was already clearly foreshadowed, an event which in fact resulted in the nomination of three rival candidates against Mr. Lincoln and made his election certain in spite of a heavy popular majority against him.

Had this been all, Virginia would not have been greatly disturbed by the political situation and prospect. But during the preceding autumn the Virginians had been filled with apprehension for the safety of their homes and families by John Brown's attempt, at Harper's Ferry, to create a negro insurrection, the one catastrophe always most dreaded by them. That raid, quickly suppressed as it was, wrought a revolution in Virginian feeling and sentiment. The Virginians argued from it, and from the approval given to it in some parts of the North, that Northern sentiment was rapidly ripening into readiness for any measures, however violent they might be, for the extinction of slavery and the destruction of the autonomy of the Southern States.

They found it difficult under the circumstances to believe the Republican party's disclaimer of all purpose or power to interfere with the institution in the states. They were convinced that only opportunity was now wanting to make the Southern States the victims of an aggressive war, with a servile insurrection as a horrible feature of it. They cherished a warm loyalty to that Union which Virginia had done so much to create, but they began seriously to fear the time when there would be no peace or safety for their state or even for their wives and children within the Union. They were filled with resentment, too, of what they regarded as a wanton and unlawful purpose to interfere with their private concerns, and to force the country into disunion and civil war.

There were hot heads among them, of course, who were ready to welcome such results; but these were very few. The great body of Virginia's people loved the Union, and even to the end—a year later—their strongest efforts were put forth to persuade both sides to policies of peace.

But in the meantime a marked change came over the Virginian mind with respect to slavery. Many who had always regarded the institution as an inherited evil to be got rid of as soon as that might be safely accomplished, modified or reversed their view when called upon to stand always upon the defensive against what they deemed an unjust judgment of themselves.

Arthur Brent did not share this change of view, but he shared in the feelings of resentment which had given it birth. In common with other Virginians he felt that this was a matter belonging exclusively to the individual states, and still more strongly he felt that the existing political situation and the methods of it gravely menaced the Union in ways which were exceedingly difficult for Southern men who loved the Union to meet. He saw with regret the great change that was coming over public and private sentiment in Virginia—sentiment which had been so strongly favorable to the peaceable extinction of slavery, that John Letcher—a lifelong advocate of emancipation as Virginia's true policy—had been elected Governor the year before upon that as the only issue of a state campaign.

But Arthur was still bent upon carrying out his purpose of emancipating himself and, incidentally his slaves. And the threatening aspect of political affairs strengthened his determination at any rate to rid both his own estate and Dorothy's of debt.

"When that is done, we shall be safe, no matter what happens," he told himself.

To that end he had already done much. In spite of his preoccupation with the fever epidemic he had found time during the autumn to institute many economies in the management of both plantations. He had shipped and sold the large surplus crops of apples and sweet potatoes—a thing wholly unprecedented in that part of Virginia, where no products of the soil except tobacco and wheat were ever turned to money account. He was laughed at for what his neighbors characterized as "Yankee farming," but both his conscience and his

bank account were comforted by the results. In the same way, having a large surplus of corn that year, he had fattened nearly double the usual number of hogs, and was now preparing to sell so much of the bacon as he did not need for plantation uses. In these and other ways he managed to diminish the Wyanoke debt by more than a third and that of Pocahontas by nearly one-half, during his first year as a planter.

"If they don't quit laughing at me," he said to Archer Bannister one day, "I'll sell milk and butter and even eggs next summer. I may conclude to do that anyhow. Those are undignified crops, perhaps, but I'm not sure that they could not be made more profitable than wheat and tobacco."

"Be careful, Arthur," answered his friend. "It isn't safe to make planting too profitable. It is apt to lead to unkindly remark."

"How so? Isn't planting a business, like any other?"

"A business, yes, but not like any other. It has a certain dignity to maintain. But I wasn't thinking of that. I was thinking of Robert Copeland."

"I wish you'd tell me about him, Archer. What has he done? I observe that everybody seems to shun him—or at least nobody seems quite willing to recognize him as a man in our class, though they tell me his family is fairly good, and personally he seems agreeable. Nobody says anything to his discredit, and yet I observe a general shoulder shrugging whenever his name is mentioned."

"He makes too many hogsheads of tobacco to the hand," answered Archer smiling but speaking with emphasis and slowly.

"Is he cruel to his negroes?"

"Yes, and no. He is always good natured with them and kindly in his fashion, but he works them much too hard. He doesn't drive them particularly. Indeed I never heard of his striking one of them. But he has invented a system of money rewards and the like, by which he keeps them perpetually racing with each other in their work. They badly overtax themselves, and the community regards the matter with marked disfavor. In the matter of family he isn't in our class at all, but his father was much respected. He was even a magistrate for some years before his death. But the son has shut himself out of all social position by over working his negroes, and the fact that he does it in ways that are ingenious and not brutal doesn't alter the fact, at least not greatly. Of course, if he did it in brutal ways he would be driven out of the county. As it is he is only shut out of society. I was jesting when I warned you of danger of that sort. But if you are not careful in your application of 'practical' methods down here, you'll get a reputation for money loving, and that wouldn't be pleasant."

Arthur stoutly maintained his right and his duty to market all that the two plantations produced beyond their own needs, especially so long as there were debts upon them. Till these should be discharged, he contended, he had no moral right to let products go to waste which could be turned into money. Archer admitted the justice of his view, but laughingly added:

"It isn't our way, down here, and we are so conservative that it is never quite prudent to transgress our traditions. At the same time I wish we could all rid our estates from debt before the great trouble comes. For it is surely coming and God only knows what the upshot of it all will be. Don't quote me as saying that, please. It isn't fashionable with us to be pessimistic, or to doubt either the righteousness or the ultimate triumph of our cause. But nobody can really foresee the outcome of our present troubles, and whatever it may be, the men who are out of debt when it comes—if there are any—will be better equipped to meet fate with a calm mind than the rest of us."

XXIX

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF DOROTHY

FROM the very beginning of her travels Dorothy revealed herself to Arthur in rapidly succeeding letters which were—at the first, at least—as frank as had been her talks with him during their long morning rides together. If in the end her utterance became more guarded, with a touch of reserve in it, and with a growing tendency to write rather of other things than of her own emotions, Arthur saw in the fact only an evidence of that increasing maturity of womanhood which he had intended her to gain. For Arthur Brent studied Dorothy's letters as scrutinizingly as if they had been lessons in biology. Or, more accurately speaking, he studied Dorothy herself in her letters, in that way.

From Richmond she wrote half rejoicings, half lamentations over the long separation she must endure from him and from all else that had hitherto constituted her life. Arthur observed that while she mentioned as a troublesome thing the necessity of having still another gown made before leaving for the North, she told him nothing whatever about the gown itself.

"Gowns," he reflected, "are merely necessary adjuncts of life to Dorothy—as yet. She'll think of them differently after a while."

From Washington she wrote delightedly of things seen, for although the glory of the national capital had not come upon it in 1860, there was even then abundant interest there for a country damsel.

From Baltimore she wrote:

"I've been wicked, and I like it. Edmonia took me to Kunkel and Moxley's Front Street Theatre last night to hear an opera, and I haven't yet wakened from the delicious dream. I think I never shall. I think I never want to. Yet I am very sorry that I went, for I shall want to go again and again and again, and you know that I mustn't listen to such music as that. It will make me bad, and really and truly I'd rather die than be bad. I don't understand it at all. Why is it wrong for me to hear great music when it isn't wrong for Edmonia? And Edmonia has heard the greatest music there is, in New York and Paris and Vienna and Naples, and it hasn't hurt her in the least. I wish you would tell me why I am so different, won't you, Cousin Arthur?"

From New York she wrote of music again and many times, for she had accepted Arthur's assurance that there was no harm but only good for her in listening to music; and in obedience to his injunction she went twice each week to the opera, where Edmonia's friends, whose guest she was, had a box of their own.

Presently came from her a pleading letter, asking if she might not herself learn to play a little upon the violin, and availing herself of Arthur's more than ready permission, she toiled ceaselessly at the instrument until after a month or so Edmonia reported that the girl's music master was raving about the extraordinary gifts she was manifesting.

"I am a trifle worried about it, Arthur," Edmonia added. "Perhaps her father was right to forbid all this. Music is not merely a delight to her—it is a passion, an intoxication, almost a madness. She is very fond of dancing too, but I think dancing is to her little more than a physical participation in the music.

"And she mightily enjoys society. Still more does society enjoy her. Her simplicity, her directness and her perfect truthfulness, are qualities not very common, you know, in society, in New York or anywhere else. People are delighted with her, and, without knowing it, she is the reigning attraction in every drawing room. Ah me! She will have to know it presently, for I foresee that 'the young Virginia belle' as they all call her, will have many suitors for her hand before we sail—two weeks hence.

"She astonishes society in many ways. She is so perfectly well always, for one thing. She is never tired and never has a headache. Most astonishing of all, to the weary butterflies of fashion, she gets up early in the morning and takes long rides on horseback before breakfast.

"In certain companies—the sedater sort—she is reckoned a brilliant conversationalist. That is because she reads and thinks, as not many girls of her age ever do. In more frivolous society she talks very little and is perhaps a rather difficult person for the average young man to talk to. That also is because she reads and thinks.

"On the whole, Arthur, Dorothy is developing altogether to my satisfaction, but I am troubled about the music. Dr. South had a reason, of which you know nothing, for fearing music in her case, as a dangerous intoxication. Perhaps we ought not to disobey his instructions on the subject. Won't you think the matter over, Arthur, and advise me?"

To this request Arthur's reply came promptly. It was an oracular deliverance, such as he was accustomed to give only when absolutely sure of his judgment.

"Have no fear as to the music," he wrote. "It is not an intoxication to Dorothy, as your report shows that indulgence in it is not followed by reaction and lassitude. That is the sure test of intoxication. For the rest Dorothy has a right to cultivate and make the most of the divine gifts she possesses. Every human being has that right, and it is a cruel wrong to forbid its exercise in any case. I am delighted to see from your letters and hers that she has not permitted her interest in music to impair her interest in other things. She tells me she has been reading a book on 'The Origin of Species' by Charles Darwin. I have heard of it but haven't seen it yet, as it was published in England only a few months ago and had not been reprinted here when I last wrote to New York for some books. So please ask Dorothy to send me her copy as soon as she has finished it, and tell her please not to rub out the marginal notes she tells me she has been making in it. They will be helpfully suggestive to me in my reading, and, as expressions of her uninfluenced opinion, I shall value them even more than the text of the book itself. She tells me she thinks the book will work a revolution in science, giving us a new foundation to build upon. I sincerely hope so. We have long been in need of new foundations. But, pardon me, you are not interested in scientific studies and I will write to Dorothy herself about all that."

At this point in her reading Edmonia laid the letter in her lap and left it there for a considerable time before taking it up again. She was thinking, a trifle sadly, perhaps, but not gloomily or with pain.

"He is right," she reflected. "I sympathize with him in his high purposes and I share the general admiration of his character and genius. But I do not share his real enthusiasms as Dorothy does. I have none of that love for scientific truth for its own sake, which is an essential part of his being. I have none of his self-sacrificing earnestness, none of that divine discontent which is the mainspring of all his acts and all his thinking. It is greatly better as Fate has ordered it. I am no fit life partner for him. Had he married me I should have made him happy in a way, perhaps, but it would have been at cost of his deterioration. It is better as it is—immeasurably better,—and I must school myself to think of it in that way. If I am worthy even of the friendship that he so generously gives me, I shall learn to rejoice that he gives the love to Dorothy instead, and not to me. I must learn to think of his good and the fit working out of his life as the worthiest thing I can strive for. And I *am* learning this lesson. It is a little hard at first, but I shall master it."

A few days later Dorothy, in one of her unconsciously self-revealing letters, wrote:

"I am sending you the Darwin book, with all my crude little notes in the margins. I have sealed it up quite securely and paid full letter postage on it, because it would be unjust to the government to send a book with writing in it, at book postage rates. Besides, I don't want anybody but you to read the notes. Edmonia asked me to let her see the book before sending it, but I told her I couldn't because I should die of shame if anybody should read my presumptuous comments on so great a book. For it is great, really and truly great. It is the greatest explanation of nature that anybody ever yet offered. At least that is the way it impresses me. Edmonia asked me why I was so chary of letting her see notes that I was entirely willing for you to see, and at first I couldn't explain it even to myself, for, of course, I love Edmonia better than anybody else in the world, and I have no secrets from her. I told her I would have to think the matter over before I could explain it, and she said: 'Think it out, child, and when you find out the explanation you may tell me about it or not, just as you please.' She kindly laughed it off, but it troubled me a good deal. I couldn't understand why it was that I couldn't bear to let her see the notes, while I rather *wanted* you to read them. I found it all out at last, and explained it to her, and she seemed satisfied. It's because you know so much. You are my Master, and you always know how to allow for your pupil's wrong thinking even while you set me right. Besides, somehow I am never ashamed of my ignorance when only you know of it. Edmonia said that was quite natural, and that I was entirely right not to show the scribbled book to her. So I don't think I hurt her feelings, do you?"

"Now, I want to tell you about another thought of mine which may puzzle you—or it may make you laugh as it does other people. There's a woman here—a very bright woman but not, to my taste, a lovely one—who is very learned in a superficial way. She knows everything that is current in science, art, literature, and fashion, though she seems to me deficient in thoroughness. She 'has the patter of it all at her tongue's end,' as they say here, but I don't think she knows much behind the patter. A wise editor whom I met at dinner a few days ago, described her as 'a person who holds herself qualified to discuss and decide anything in heaven

or earth from the standpoint of the cyclopædia and her own inner consciousness.' She writes for one of the newspapers, though I didn't know it when she talked with me about Darwin. I told her I thought of Darwin's book as a great poem. You would have understood me, if I had said that to you, wouldn't you? You know I always think of the grass, and the trees and the flowers, and the birds and the butterflies, and all the rest, as nature's poems, and this book seems to me a great epic which dominates and includes, and interprets them all, just as Homer and Milton and Virgil and Tasso and especially Shakespeare, dominate all the little twitterings of all the other poets. Anyhow it seems to me that a book which tells us how all things came about, is a poem and a very great one. I said so to this woman, and next day I saw it all printed in the newspaper for which she writes. I shouldn't have minded that as she didn't tell my name, but I thought she seemed to laugh and jeer at my thought. She said something witty about trying to turn Darwin into dactyls and substitute dithyrambics for dogmatics in the writings of Sir Isaac Newton. Somehow it all sounded bright and witty as one read it in the newspaper. But is that the way in which a serious thought ought to be treated? Do the newspapers, when they thus flippantly deal with serious things, really minister to human advancement? Do they not rather retard it by making jests of things that are not jests? I have come to know a good many newspaper writers since I have been here, and I am convinced that they have no real seriousness in their work, no controlling conscience. 'The newspaper' said one of the greatest of them to me not long ago, 'is a mirror of today. It doesn't bother itself much with tomorrow or yesterday.' I asked him why it should not reflect today accurately, instead of distorting it with smartness. 'Oh,' he answered, 'we can't stop to consider such things. We must do that which will please and attract the reader, regardless of everything else. Dulness is the only thing we must avoid as we shun the pestilence, and erudition and profundity are always dull.'

" 'But doesn't the newspaper assume to teach men and women?' I asked. 'And is it not in conscience bound to teach them the truth and not falsehood?'

" 'Oh, yes, that's the theory,' he answered. 'But how can we live up to it? Take this matter of Darwinism, for example. We can't afford to employ great scientific men to discuss it seriously in our columns. And if we did, only a few would read what they wrote about it. We have bright fellows on our editorial staffs who know how to make it interesting by playing with it, and for our purpose that is much better than any amount of learning.'

"I have been thinking this thing over and I have stopped the reading of newspapers. For I find that they deal in the same way with everything else—except politics, perhaps, and, of course, I know nothing of politics. I read a criticism of a concert the other day in which a singer was—well, never mind the details. The man that wrote that criticism didn't hear the concert at all, as he confessed to me. He was attending another theatre at the time. Yet he assumed to criticise a singer to her detriment, utterly ignoring the fact that she has her living to make by singing and that his criticism might seriously affect her prospects. He laughed the matter off, and when I seemed disturbed about it he said: 'For your sake, Miss South, I'll make amends. She sings again tomorrow, and while I shall not be able to hear her, I'll give her such a laudation as shall warm the cockles of her heart and make her manager mightily glad. You'll forgive me, then, for censuring her yesterday, I'm sure.' I'm afraid I misbehaved myself then. I told him I shouldn't read his article, that I hated lies and shams and false pretences, and that I didn't consider his articles worth reading because they had no truth or honesty behind them. It was dreadfully rude, I know, and yet I'm not sorry for it. For it seemed to make an impression on him. He told me that he only needed some such influence as mine to give him a conscience in his work, and he actually asked me to marry him! Think of the absurdity of it! I told him I wasn't thinking of marrying anybody—that I was barely seventeen, that—oh, well, I dismissed the poor fellow as gently as I could."

But while the proposal of marriage by the newspaper man, and several other such solicitations which followed it, struck Dorothy at first as absurdities, they wrought a marked change in her mental attitude. Two at least of these proposals were inspired by higher considerations than those of the plantation which Dorothy represented, and were pressed with fervor and tenderness by men quite worthy to aspire to Dorothy's hand. These were men of substance and character, in whose minds the fascination which the Virginia girl unwittingly exercised over everybody with whom she came into contact—men and women alike—had quickly ripened into a strong and enduring passion. Dorothy suffered much in rejecting such suits as theirs, but she learned something of herself in the process. She for the first time realized that she was a woman and that she had actually entered upon that career of womanhood which had before seemed so far away in the future that thoughts of it had never before caused her to blush and tremble as they did now.

These things set her thinking, and in her thinking she half realized her own state of mind. She began dimly to understand the change that had come over her attitude and feeling towards Arthur Brent. She would not let herself believe that she loved him as a woman loves but one man while she lives; but she admitted to herself that she might come to love him in that way if he should ever ask her to do so with the tenderness and manifest sincerity which these others had shown. But of that she permitted herself to entertain no hope and even no thought. His letters to her, indeed, seemed to put that possibility out of the question. For at this time Arthur held himself under severe restraint. He was determined that he should not in any remotest way take advantage of his position with respect to Dorothy, or use his influence over her as a means of winning her. He knew now his own condition of mind and soul in all its fulness. He was conscious now that the light of his life lay in the hope of some day winning Dorothy's love and making her all and altogether his own. But he was more than ever determined, as he formulated the thought in his own mind, to give Dorothy a chance, to take no advantage of her, to leave her free to make choice for herself. It was his fixed determination, should she come back heart whole from this journey, to woo her with all the fervor of his soul; but the more determined he became in this resolution, the more resolutely did he guard his written words against the possibility that they might reveal aught of this to her. "If she ever comes to love me as my wife," he resolved, "it shall be only after she has had full opportunity to make another choice."

Accordingly his letters to her continued to concern themselves with intellectual and other external things. He wrote her half a ream of comment upon Darwin's book, taking up for discussion every marginal note she had made concerning it. But that part of his letter was as coldly intellectual as any of their horseback conversations had been. In all the intimate parts of that and his other letters, he wrote only as one might to a sympathetic friend, as he might have written to Edmonia, for example. He even took half

unconscious pains to emphasize the fatherly character of his relations with her, lest they assume some other aspect to her apprehension.

On her side Dorothy began now to write outside of herself, as it were. She described to him all her new gowns and bonnets, laughing at the confusion of mind in which a study of such details must involve him. In her childlike loyalty she told him of the wooings that so distressed her, but she did so quite as she might have written to him of the loves of Juliet and Ophelia and the Lady of Lyons. For the rest she wrote objectively now, in the main, and speculatively concerning certain of those social problems in which she knew him to be profoundly interested, and which she was somewhat studying now, because of the interest they had for him.

The word "slumming" had not been invented at that time by the insolence that does the thing it means. But Dorothy, chiefly under the guidance of her friends among the newspaper men, went to see how the abjectly poor of a great city lived, and she wrote long letters of comment to Arthur in which she told him how great and distressing the revelation was, and how she honored his desire to do something for the amelioration of these people's lives. "Your aspiration is indeed a noble one," she wrote in one of her letters; "the life you proposed to yourself, and from which you were diverted by your inheritance of a plantation, is the very greatest, the very noblest that any man could lead. I once thought you were doing even better in the care you are taking of the negroes at Wyanoke and Pocahontas, and in your efforts ultimately to set them free. But that was when I did not know. I know now, in part at least, and I understand your feeling in the matter as I never could have done had I not seen for myself.

"People here sometimes say things to me that hurt. But I am ready with my answer now. One woman—very intellectual, but a cat—asked me yesterday how I could bear to hold negroes in slavery, and to buy fine gowns with the proceeds of their toil. I told her frankly that I didn't like it, but that I couldn't help it, and in reply to her singularly ignorant inquiries as to why I didn't end the wrong or at least my participation in it, I explained some difficulties to her that she had never taken the trouble to ask about. I told her how hard you were working to discharge the debts of your estate in order that you might send your negroes to the west to be free, and that you might yourself return to New York to do what you could for the immeasurably worse slaves here. She caught at my phrase and challenged it. I told her what I meant, and as it happened to be in a company of highly intellectual people, I suppose I ought not to have talked so much, but somehow they seemed to want to hear. I said:

" 'In Virginia I always visit every sick person on the plantation every day. We send for a doctor in every case, and we women sit up night after night to nurse every one that needs it. We provide proper food for the sick and the convalescent from our own tables. We take care of the old and decrepit, and of all the children. From birth to death they know that they will be abundantly provided for. What poor family around the Five Points has any such assurance? Who provides doctors and medicine and dainties for them when they are ill? Who cares for their children? Who assures them, in childhood and in old age, of as abundant a supply of food and clothing, and as good a roof, as we give to the negroes? I go every morning, as I just now said, to see every sick or afflicted negro on my own plantation and on that of my guardian. How often have you gone to the region of the Five Points to minister to those who are ill and suffering and perhaps starving there?'

" 'Oh, that is all cared for by the charitable organizations' she said, 'and by the city missionaries.'

" 'Is it?' I answered. 'I do not find it so. I have emptied my purse a dozen times in an effort to get a doctor for a very ill person here, and to buy the medicines he prescribed, and to provide food for starving ones. And then, next day I have found that the sick have died because the well did not know how to cook the food I had provided, or how to follow the doctor's directions in the giving of medicine. I tell you these poor people are immeasurably worse off than any negro slave at the South is, or ever was. So far as I can learn there is no working population in the world that gets half so much of comfort and care and reward of every sort for its labor, as the negroes of Virginia get.'

"Then the woman broke out. She said: 'You are dressed in a superb satin'—it was at a social function—'and every dollar of its cost was earned by a negro slave on your plantation.' I answered, 'You are equally well dressed. Will you tell me who earned the money that paid for your satin gown?' Then, Cousin Arthur, I lost my temper and my manners. I told her that while we in Virginia profited by the labor of our negroes, we gave them, as the reward of their labor, every desire of their hearts and, besides that, an assurance of support in absolute comfort for their old age, and for their children; while the laboring class in New York, from whose labor she profited, and whose toil purchased her gown, had nobody to care for them in infancy or old age, in poverty and illness and suffering. 'It is all wrong on both sides,' I said. 'The toilers ought to have the full fruits of their toil in both cases. The luxury of the rich is a robbery of the poor always and everywhere. There ought not to be any such thing anywhere. The woman who made your underclothing was robbed when you bought it at the price you did. You wronged and defrauded the silk spinners and weavers and the sewing women when you bought your gown. Worse than that; you have among you men who have accumulated great fortunes in manufactures and commerce. How did they do it? Was it not in commerce by paying the producers for their products less than they were worth? Was it not in manufactures by paying men and women and children less than they have earned? Was not the great Astor estate based upon a shrewd robbery of the Indian trappers and hunters? And has it not been swelled to its present proportions by the growth of a city to whose growth the Astors have never contributed a single dollar? Isn't the whole thing a wrong and a robbery? Isn't the "Song of the Shirt" a reflection of truth? Isn't there slavery in New York as actually as in Virginia, and isn't it infinitely more cruel?'

"Then the woman shifted her ground. 'But at least our laborers are free,' she said. 'Are they?' I answered. 'Are they free to determine for whom they will work or at what wages? Cannot their masters, who are their employers, discharge them at will, when they get old or feeble or otherwise incompetent, and leave them to starve? No master of a Virginia plantation can do that. His neighbors would actually lynch him should he turn a decrepit old negro out to die or even should he deny to him the abundant food and clothing and housing that he gives to the able-bodied negroes who make crops. And,' I added, for I was excited, 'this cruelty is not confined to what are ordinarily called the laboring classes. I know a man of unusual intellectual capacity, who has worked for years to build up the fortunes of his employers. He has had what is regarded as a very high salary. But being a man of generous mind he has spent his money freely in educating the ten or a

dozen sons and daughters of his less fortunate brother. He is growing old now. He has earned for his master, a thousand dollars for every dollar of salary that he ever received just as all his fellow workers in the business have done. But he is growing old now, and under the strain of night and day work, he has acquired the habit of drinking too much. He hasn't a thousand dollars in the world as his reward for helping to make this other man, his master, absurdly, iniquitously rich. Yet in his age and infirmity, the other man, luxuriating in his palatial summer home which is only one of the many palaces that other men's toil late into the night has provided for him, decides that the old servitor is no longer worth his salary, and decrees his discharge. Is there anything so cruel as that in negro slavery? Is that man half so well off as my negro mammy, who has a house of her own and all the food and clothes she wants at the age of eighty, and who could have the service of a dozen negro attendants for the mere asking?'

"Now, Cousin Arthur, please don't misunderstand me. Even what I have seen at the Five Points doesn't tempt me to believe in slavery. I want of all things to see that exterminated. But, really and truly, I find an immeasurably worse slavery here in New York than I ever saw in Virginia, and I want to see it all abolished together, not merely the best and kindest and most humane part of it. I want to see the time when every human being who works shall enjoy the full results of his work; when no man shall be any other man's master; when no man shall grow rich by pocketing the proceeds of any other man's genius or industry. I said all this to that woman, and she replied: 'You are obviously a pestilent socialist. You are as bad as Fourier and Albert Brisbane and Horace Greeley.' That was very rude of her, seeing that Mr. Greeley was present, but I've noticed that the people who most highly pride themselves on good manners are often rude and inconsiderate of others to a degree that would not be tolerated in Virginia society—except perhaps from Mr. Madison Peyton. By the way, Mr. Jefferson Peyton was present, and to my regret he said some things in defence of slavery which I could not at all approve. Mr. Greeley interrupted him to say something like this:

"The dear young lady is quite right. We have a horrible slavery right here in New York, and we ought to make war on that as earnestly as we do on African slavery at the South. I'm trying to do it in the Try-bune—that's the way he pronounces the name of his paper—and I'm going to keep on trying.'

"That encouraged me, for I find myself more and more disposed to respect Mr. Greeley as I come to know him better. I don't always agree with him. I sometimes think he is onesided in his views, and of course he is enormously self-conceited. But he is, at any rate, an honest man, and a brave and sincere one. He isn't afraid to say what he thinks, any more than you are, and I like him for that. Another great editor whom I have met frequently, seems to me equally courageous, but far less conscientious. He is inclined to take what he calls 'the newspaper view' of things,—by which he means the view that appeals to the multitude for the moment, without much regard for any fixed principle. Socially he is a much more agreeable man than Mr. Greeley, but I don't think him so trustworthy. Mr. Greeley impresses me as a man who may be enormously wrong-headed, under the influence of his prejudiced misconceptions, but who, wrong-headed or right-headed, will never consciously wrong others. If he had been born the master of a Virginia plantation he would have dealt with his negroes in the same spirit in which he has insisted upon giving to his fellow workers on the Tribune a share in the profits of their joint work. Mr. Greeley is odd, but I like him better than any editor I have met."

So the girl went on, writing objectively and instinctively avoiding the subjective. But she did not always write so seriously. She had "caught the patter" of society and she often filled pages with a sparkling, piquant flippancy, which had for Arthur a meaning all its own.

XXX

AT SEA

THE voyage to Europe in 1860 was a much more serious undertaking than the like voyage is in our later time. It occupied a fortnight or three weeks, for one thing, where now a week is ample time for the passage. The steamers were small and uncomfortable—the very largest of them being only half the size of the very smallest now regarded as fit for passenger service. There was no promenade deck or hurricane deck then, above the main deck, which was open to the sky throughout its length and breadth, except for the interruption of one small deck house, covering the companion way, a ventilator pipe here and there, and perhaps a chicken coop to furnish emaciated and sea sick fowls for the table d'hôte. There was no ice machine on board, and no distilling apparatus for the production of fresh water. As a consequence, after two days out, the warm water which passengers must drink began to taste of the ancient wood of the water tanks; at the end of a week it became sickeningly foul; and before the end of the voyage it became so utterly undrinkable that the most aggressive teetotaler among the passengers was compelled to order wine for his dinner and to abstain from coffee at breakfast.

The passenger who did not grow seasick in those days was a rare exception to an otherwise universal rule, while, in our time, when the promenade deck is forty or fifty feet above the waves, and the passengers are abundantly supplied both with palatable food and with wholesome water, only those suffer with *mal de mer* who are bilious when they go on board, or who are beset by a senseless apprehension of the sea.

The passenger lists were small, too, even allowing for the diminutive size of the ships. One person crossed the ocean then where perhaps a hundred cross in our time.

There were perhaps twenty passengers in the cabin of the ship in which Dorothy sailed. By the second day out only two of the ship's company appeared at meals or at all regularly took the air on deck. Dorothy was one of these two. The other she herself introduced, as it were, to Arthur, in a long, diary-like letter which she wrote on shipboard and mailed at Liverpool.

"I'm sitting on a great coil of rope, just behind the deck house," she wrote, "where I am sheltered from the wind and where I can breathe my whole body full of the delicious sea air. The air is flavored with great quantities of the finest sunshine imaginable. Every now and then I lay my paper down, and a very nice old sailor comes and puts two big iron belaying pins on it, to keep it from blowing overboard while I go skipping like a ten-year-old girl up and down the broad, clean deck, and enjoying the mere being alive, just as I do on horseback in Virginia when the sun is rising on a perfect morning.

"I ought to be down stairs—no, I mustn't say 'down stairs,' when I'm at sea, I must say 'below.' Well, I ought to be below ministering to Edmonia and her friend Mrs. Livingston,—or Mildred, as she insists on my calling her—both of whom are frightfully sick; but really and truly, Edmonia won't let me. She fairly drove me out, half an hour ago. When I didn't want to go she threatened to throw her shoes at my head, saying 'You dear little idiot, go on deck and keep your sea-well on, if you can.' And when I protested that she seemed very ill and that I hadn't the heart to go on the beautiful deck and be happy in the delicious air and sunshine while she was suffering so, she said: 'Oh, I'm always so for the first three or four days, and I'm best let alone. My temper is frightful when I'm seasick. That's why I took separate staterooms for you and me. I don't want you to find out what a horribly ill-tempered, ill-mannered woman I am when I'm seasick. How can I help it? I've got a mustard plaster on my back and two on my chest, and I've drunk half a bottle of that detestable stuff, champagne, and I'm really fighting mad. Go away, child, and let me fight it out with myself and the stewardesses. They don't mind it, the dear good creatures. They're used to it. I threw a coffee cup full of coffee all over one of them this morning because she presumed to insist upon my swallowing the horrible stuff, and she actually laughed, Dorothy. I couldn't get up a quarrel with her no matter what I did, and so I tried my hand on the ship's doctor. I don't like him anyhow. He's just the kind that would make love to me if he dared, and I don't like men that do that.' Then Edmonia added: 'He wouldn't quarrel at all. When I told him he was trying to poison me with bicarbonate of soda in my drinking water, he seriously assured me that bicarbonate of soda isn't poisonous in the least degree, that it corrects acidity, and all that sort of thing. I gave him up as hopeless,—but remind me, Dorothy, that when we go ashore I must put half a dozen sovereigns into his hand—carefully wrapped up in paper, so that he shan't even guess what they are—as his well earned fee for enduring my bad temper. But now, Dorothy, you see clearly that this ship doesn't provide any proper person for me to quarrel with, and so I must fall back upon you, if you persist in staying here and arrogantly insulting me with your sublime superiority to seasickness. So get out of my room and stay out till I come on deck with my mind restored to a normal condition.' I really think she meant it, and so I'm obeying her. And I should be very happy with the air and the sunshine and my dear old sailorman who tells me sailor stories and sings to me the very quaintest old sailor songs imaginable, if I could be sure that I'm doing right in being happy while Edmonia is so very miserable.

"As for Mildred—Mrs. Livingston—she lies white-faced and helpless in her bunk—there, I got the sailor term right that time at the first effort—while her husband simply sleeps and moans on the sofa. The doctor says they are 'progressing very satisfactorily' and so I am taking his advice and letting them alone. But why anybody should be seasick, *how* anybody *can* be sick at sea, I simply cannot understand. The ship's doctor tried to explain it to me this morning, but he forgot his explanation. He—well, never mind. He ought to have a wife with a plantation or something of that sort, so that his abilities might have an opportunity. I don't think much of his abilities, and I don't like him half as well as I do my old sailor. He is going to tell me—the old sailor, I mean and not the doctor—all about his life history tonight. We are to have a moon, you know, and, as he's on the 'port watch,' whatever that may mean, he's going to come on deck and tell me all about himself. I'll tell you about it in tomorrow's instalment of this rambling letter."

On the following day, or perhaps a day later even than that, Dorothy wrote:

"This is another day. I don't just know what day. You know they keep changing the clock at sea, and I've got mixed up. Edmonia still throws shoes and medicine bottles and coffee cups at me whenever I thrust my head inside the portière of her stateroom, and Mildred, though she has sufficiently recovered to come on deck, lies helpless in a deck chair which my sailor has 'made fast'—you see I'm getting to be an expert in nautical terms—to a mast or a spar or something, and when I speak to her, says, 'Go away, child, and be happy in the midst of human misery, if you can. Let me alone.' When I ask her concerning her husband she answers: 'I suppose he's comfortable in his misery. At any rate, he has two bottles of champagne by his side, and he is swearing most hopefully. I always know he is getting over it when he begins to swear in real earnest, and with a certain discretion in the choice of his oaths. Now, run away, you ridiculously well girl or I'll begin to borrow from Rex's vituperative vocabulary.' Rex is her husband you know.

"The sailor's story didn't amount to anything, so I'll not bother you with a repetition of it."

[As a strictly confidential communication, not to be mentioned to anybody, the author so far intrudes upon attention at this point, as to report that the sailorman, at the end of his picturesque and imaginative narrative, professed a self-sacrificing willingness to abandon the delights of a sea-faring existence, and to content himself thereafter with the homelier and less romantic duties of master of Pocahontas plantation. Dorothy, in continuing her letter, was quite naturally reticent upon this point. But she went on liking that old sailorman, in whose devotion to her comfort on deck nothing seemed to make the slightest difference. Perhaps this chronic mariner already had 'a wife in every port' and was only 'keeping his hand in' at courtship. At any rate after duly disciplining him, Dorothy went on liking him and accepting his manifold, sailorly attentions. Ah, these women! How very human they are in face of all their airs and pretensions!]

It was a day later that Dorothy wrote:

"There is a very extraordinary lady on board, and I have become acquainted with her, in a way. I didn't see her at all during the first day out. As she tells me she is never seasick, I suppose she kept her cabin for some other reason. At any rate the first time I met her was on the morning of that second day out, when I was skipping about the deck and making believe that I was little Dorothy again—little ten-year-old Dorothy, who didn't care if people were seeing her when she skipped. The captain saw me first. He's a dear old fellow with a big beard and nine children and a nice little baby at home. And, think of it, the people that hire him to run their ship won't let him bring his wife on board or any of his children on any account! That isn't quite correct either, for two voyages ago it was the twenty-first anniversary of his marriage, and when he asked permission to bring his wife and baby with him on his trip to New York and back, just to celebrate, you see, the company gave permission without any hesitation. But when he came on board, he found another captain in command for that one trip, and himself only a passenger. That's because the company don't want a captain's attention distracted, and I suppose a new baby whom he had never seen before would have distracted him a great deal. Anyhow that's the way it was and the only reason the captain told me about it was that I asked him why he didn't have his wife and children on board with him always. But I set out to tell you about the lady. After the

captain had 'captured' me, as he put it, and had taken me up on the bridge, and had shown me how to take an observation and how to steer—he let me steer all by myself for more than a mile and I didn't run the ship into anything, perhaps because there wasn't anything within five hundred miles to run into—I went down on deck again, hoping that maybe Diana had got well enough to come out, but she hadn't. She isn't violently ill, but she's the most entirely, hopelessly, seasick person I've seen yet. She—well, never mind. She'll get well again, and in the meanwhile I must tell you about the lady. She spoke to me kindly and said:

" 'As you and I seem to be the only well passengers on board, I think I'm entitled to a sea acquaintance with you, Miss Dorothy. You know sea acquaintances carry no obligations with them beyond the voyage, and so no matter how chummy we may become out here on the ocean you needn't even bow to me if we meet again on shore.' She seemed so altogether nice that I told her I wouldn't have a mere sea acquaintance with her, but would get acquainted with her 'for truly,' as the children say. She seemed glad when I said that, and we talked for two hours or more, after which we went to luncheon and sat side by side—as everybody else is seasick we had the table all to ourselves and didn't need to mind whose chairs we sat in.

"Well, she is a strangely fascinating person, and the more I know of her the more she fascinates me. Sometimes she seems as young as I myself am; sometimes she seems very old. She is tall and what I call willowy. That is to say she bends as easily in any direction as a willow wand could, and with as much of grace. Indeed grace is her dominant characteristic, as I discovered when she danced a Spanish fandango to my playing—just all to ourselves you know, behind the deck house. She knows everybody worth knowing, too—all the editors and artists and actors and singers and pianists and people in society that I have met, and a great many others that I haven't met at all. And she really does know them, too, for one day in her cabin I saw a great album of hers, and when she saw I was interested in it she bade me take it on deck, saying that perhaps it might amuse me during the hour she must give to sleep. And when I read it, I found it full of charming things in prose and verse, all addressed to her, and all signed by great people, or nearly all. She told me afterwards that she valued the other things most—the things signed by people whose names meant nothing to me. 'For those,' she said, 'are my real friends. The rest—well, no matter. They are professionals, and they do such things well.' I don't just know what she meant by that, but I have a suspicion that she loves truth better than anything else, and that she doesn't think distinguished people always tell the truth when they write in albums. At any rate when I asked her if I might write and sign a little sentiment in her album, she said, with more of emotion than the occasion seemed to call for: 'Not in that book, my child! Not as a tag to all those people. If you will write me three or four lines of your own on a simple sheet of paper and sign it, I'll have it sumptuously bound when I get to Paris, in a book all to itself, and nobody else shall ever write a line to go with it while I live.'

"Wasn't it curious? And especially when you reflect how many distinguished people she knows! But she brought me a sheet of very fine paper that afternoon, and said: 'I don't want you to write now. I don't want you to write till our voyage is nearly over. Then I want you to write the truth as to your feeling for me. No matter what it is, I want it to be the truth, so that I may keep it always.' I took the sheet and wrote on it, 'I wish you were my mother.' That was the truth. I do wish every hour that this woman were my mother. But she refused to read what I had written, saying: 'I will keep it, child, unread until the end of the voyage. Then I'll give it back to you if you wish, and you shall write again whatever you are prompted to write, be it this or something quite different.'

"Curiously enough, her name is in effect the same as my own, translated into French. She is Madame Le Sud. That means Mrs. South, of course, and when I called her attention to the fact, she said: 'perhaps that may suggest an additional bond of affection between us.' "

Several days passed before Dorothy resumed her writing.

"I haven't added a line to my letter for two or three days past. That's because I have been so busy learning to know and love Madame Le Sud. She is the very sweetest and most charming woman I ever saw in my life. She is a trifle less than forty—just old enough I tell her, to be my mother if it had happened in that way. Then she asked me about my real mother and I couldn't tell her anything. I couldn't even tell when she died, or what her name had been or anything about her. Isn't it a strange thing, Cousin Arthur, that nobody has ever told me anything about my mother? It makes me ashamed when I think of it, and still more ashamed when I remember that I never asked anything about her, except once. That time I asked my father some question and he answered only by quickly rising and going out to mount his horse and ride away all alone. That is the way he always did when things distressed him, and as I didn't want to distress him I never asked him anything more about my mother. But why haven't I been told about her? Was she bad? And is that why everybody has been so anxious about me, fearing that I might be bad? Even if that were so they ought to have told me about my mother, especially after I began to grow up and know how to stand things bravely. May be when I was too little to understand it was better to keep silent. But when I grew older there was no excuse for not telling me the truth. I don't think there ever is any excuse for that. The truth is the only thing in the world that a sane person ought to love. I'm only seventeen years old, but I'm old enough to have found out that much, and I don't think I shall ever quite forgive those who have shut out from me the truth about my mother. You, Cousin Arthur, haven't had any hand in that. I never asked you, but I know. If you had known about my mother you'd have told me. You could not have helped it. The only limitation to your ability that I ever discovered is your utter inability to tell lies. If you tried to do that you'd make such a wretched failure of the attempt that the truth would come out in spite of you. So, of course, you are as ignorant as I am about my mother.

"But I wanted to tell you about Madame Le Sud. To me she is the most beautiful woman in the world, and yet most people would call her hideously ugly. Indeed, I've heard people on the ship call her that way, for they're beginning at last to come out on deck and try to get well. She has a terribly disfiguring scar. It begins in her hair and extends down over her left eye which it has put out, and down her cheek by the side of her nose, almost, but not quite to her upper lip. The scar is very ugly, of course, but the woman is altogether beautiful. She impresses me as wonderfully fine and fragile—delicate in the same way that a piece of old Sèvres china is. She plays the violin divinely. She wouldn't play for me at first, and she has since confessed that she feared to make me afraid to play for her. 'For I am a professional musician,' she said, 'or rather I

was, till I got this disfiguring scar. After that how could I present myself to an audience?' Then she told me how she got the scar. She was celebrating something or other with a company of friends. They drank champagne too freely, and one of them, taking from Madame Le Sud's mantelpiece a perfume bottle, playfully emptied its contents on her head. It was a perfume bottle, but it held nitric acid which somebody had been using medicinally. In an instant the mischief was done and Madame Le Sud's career as a famous musician was ended forever.

"When she got well she was very poor, having spent all her money during her illness. A manager came to her and wanted her to go on as 'the veiled violinist,' he pretending that she was some woman of distinguished family and high social position whose love of music tempted her to exercise her skill upon the stage, but whose social position forbade her to show her face or reveal her name. He offered her large sums if she would do this, but she refused to make herself a party to such a deception. She secured employment, as she puts it, in a much humbler capacity which enables her to turn her artistic taste to account in earning a living, and it is in connection with this employment that she is now on her way to Paris. She did not tell me what her employment is, and of course I did not ask her. But now that I have learned something of her misfortunes, and have seen how bravely she bears them, I love her better than ever.

"Diana has come upon deck at last, 'dressed and in her right mind.' She is very proud of having been 'seasick jes' like white folks.' She so far asserts her authority as to order Edmonia—who is quite herself again—and me to array ourselves in some special gowns of her personal selection for the captain's dinner today. It is to be a notable affair and Madame Le Sud is to play a violin solo. They asked me to play also, but I refused, till Madame Le Sud asked me to give 'Home, Sweet Home,' with her to play second violin. Think of it! This wonderful musical artist volunteering to 'play second fiddle' to a novice like me! But she insists upon liking my rendering of the dear old melody and she has taken the trouble to compose a special second part, which, she generously says, 'will bring out the beauty' of my performance.

"We expect to make land during tonight, and by day after tomorrow, I'll mail this letter at Liverpool."

XXXI

THE VIEWS AND MOODS OF ARTHUR BRENT

WHEN Dorothy had gone Arthur Brent felt a double necessity for diligence in the ordering of plantation affairs. He realized for the first time what he had done in thus sending Dorothy away. For the first time he began to understand his own condition of mind and the extent to which this woman had become a necessity to his life. Quite naturally, too, her absence and the loss of his daily association with her served to depress him, as nothing else had ever done before. The sensation of needing some one was wholly novel to him, and by no means agreeable. "What if I should never have her with me again—never as *my* Dorothy?" he reflected. "That may very easily happen. In fact I sent her away in order that it might happen, if it would. Her affection for me is still quite that of a child for one much older than herself. Edmonia does not so regard it, but perhaps she is wrong. Perhaps her conviction that Dorothy the woman loves me even more than Dorothy the child ever did, and that her love will survive acquaintance with other and more attractive men, and other and more attractive ways of life, is born only of her eager desire to have that come about. A year's absence will not make Dorothy forget me or even love me less than she does now. But how much does she love me now, in very truth? May it not happen that when she returns a year hence she will have given her woman's heart to some other, bringing back to me only the old, child love unchanged? I must be prepared for that at all events. I must school myself to think of it as a probability without the distress of mind it gives me now. And I must be ready, when it happens, to go away from here at once and take up again my life of strenuous endeavor and absorbing study. I mustn't let this thing ruin me as it might some weakling in character."

In order that he might be ready thus to leave Virginia when the time should come, rejoicing instead of grieving over Dorothy's good fortune in finding some fitter life than his to share, Arthur knew that he must this year discharge the last dollar of debt that rested upon the Wyanoke estate. He must be a free man on Dorothy's return—free to reënter the world of scientific work, free to make and keep himself master of his own mind, as he had always been until this strange thing had come over his life.

He thus set himself two tasks, one of which he might perhaps fulfil by hard work and discreet management. The other promised to be greatly more difficult. He made a very bad beginning at it by sitting up late at night to read and ponder Dorothy's letters, to question them as to the future, to study every indication of character or impulse, or temporary mood of mind they might give.

With the debt-paying problem he got on much better. He had now a whole year's accumulated income from his annuity, and he devoted all of it at once to the lightening of this burden. He studied markets as if they had been problems in physics, and guided himself in his planting by the results of these studies. He had sold apples and bacon and sweet potatoes the year before, as we know, with results that encouraged him to go further in the direction of "Yankee farming." This year he planted large areas in watermelons and other large areas in other edible things that the people of the cities want, but which no south side Virginia planter had ever thought of growing for sale.

He was laughed at while doing all this, and envied when the results of it appeared.

He deliberately implicated Dorothy in these his misdeeds, also, doing on her plantation precisely as he did on his own, so that when late in the autumn he gave account of his stewardship he was able to inform the court, to its astonishment and to that of the entire community, that he had discharged every dollar of debt that had rested upon his ward's estate. The judge applauded such management of a trust estate, and Arthur Brent's neighbors wondered. Some of them saw in his success ground of approval of "Yankee farming"; all of them conceived a new respect for the ability of a man who had thus, in so brief a time, freed two old estates from the hereditary debts that had been accumulating for slow generations.

Arthur had been additionally spurred and stimulated to the accomplishment of this end, by the forebodings of evil in connection with national politics which had gravely haunted him throughout the year.

In May the Republican party had nominated Mr. Lincoln, and about the same time the Democrats made

his election a practical certainty. There was clearly a heavy majority of the people opposed to his election, but the division of that opposition into three hostile camps with three rival candidates, rendered Republican success a foregone conclusion. By some at least of the politicians the division was deliberately intended to produce that result, while the great mass of the people opposed to Mr. Lincoln and seriously fearing the consequences of his election, deeply deplored the condition thus brought about.

The Republican party at that time existed only at the North. For the first time in history the election threatened the country with the choice of a president by an exclusively sectional vote, and in opposition to the will of the majority of the people. On the popular vote, in fact, Mr. Lincoln was in a minority of nearly a million, and every electoral vote cast for him came from the northern states. In most of the southern states indeed there was no canvass made for him, no electoral nominations presented in his behalf.

Added to this was the fact that the one point on which his party was agreed, the one bond of opinion that held it together for political action, the one impulse held in common by all its adherents, was hostility to slavery, which the men of the South construed to mean hostility—intense and implacable—to the states in which that institution existed and even to the people of those states.

The "platform" on which Mr. Lincoln was nominated, did indeed protest, as he had himself done in many public utterances, that this was a misinterpretation of attitude and purpose; that the party disclaimed all intent to interfere with slavery in the slave states; that it held firmly to the right of each state to regulate that matter for itself, and repudiated the assumption of any power on the part of the Federal government to control the action of the several states or in any wise to legislate for them on this subject.

But these pledges were taken at the South to mean no more than a desire to secure united action in an election. The party proclaimed its purpose, while letting slavery alone in the states, to forbid its extension to the new territories. This alone was deemed a program of injustice by that very active group of Southern men who, repudiating the teachings of Jefferson, and Wythe and Henry Clay, had come to believe in African slavery as a thing right in itself, a necessity of the South, a labor system to be upheld and defended and extended, upon its own merits. These men contended that the new territories were the common and equal possession of all the people; that any attempt by Federal authority to deny to the states thereafter to be formed out of those territories, the right to determine for themselves whether they would permit or forbid slavery, was a wrong to the South which had contributed of its blood and treasure even more largely than the North had done to their acquisition. They further contended that any such legislation would of necessity involve an assumption of Federal authority to control states in advance of their formation,—an assumption which might easily be construed to authorize a like Federal control of states already existing, including those that had helped to create the Union.

All this Arthur Brent contemplated with foreboding from the first. He anticipated Mr. Lincoln's election from the beginning of the absurd campaign. And while he could not at all agree with those who were prepared to see in that event an occasion for secession and revolution, he foreboded those calamities as results likely in fact to follow. And even should a kindly fate avert them for a time, he saw clearly that the alignment of parties in the nation upon sectional issues must be productive of new and undreamed of irritations, full of threatening to the peace of the Republic.

No more than any of his neighbors could he forecast the events of the next few years. "But," he wrote to Dorothy in the autumn "I see that the election of Mr. Lincoln is now a certainty; I foresee that it will lead to a determined movement in the South in favor of secession and the dissolution of the Federal Union. It ought to be possible, if that must come, to arrange it on a basis of peaceable agreement to disagree—the Southern States assuming all responsibility for slavery till they can rid themselves of it with safety to society, and the Northern people washing their hands once for all of an iniquity from which they have derived the major part of the profit. This they did, particularly during those years after 1808, in which the African slave trade was prohibited by law, but was carried on by New England ship masters and New England merchants with so great a profit that Justice Joseph Story of the United States supreme court, though himself a New Englander, was denounced by the New England press and even threatened with a violent ejection from the bench, because he sought to prevent and punish it, in obedience to the national statute.

"But I am wandering from my theme," he continued. "I wanted to say that while I think there is no real occasion for a disruption of the Union, I gravely fear that it is coming. And while I think it should be possible to accomplish it peaceably I do not believe it will be done in that way. There are too many hot heads on both sides, for that. There is too much gunpowder lying around, and there will be too many sparks flying about. Listen, Dorothy! I foresee that Mr. Lincoln will be elected in November. I anticipate an almost immediate attempt on the part of the cotton states to dissolve the Union by secession. I shall do everything I can to help other sober minded Virginians to keep Virginia out of this movement, and if Virginia can be kept out of it, the other border states will accept her action as controlling, and they too will stay out of the revolutionary enterprise. In that case the states farther South will be amenable to reason, and if there is reason and discretion exercised at Washington and in the North, some means may possibly be found for adjusting the matter—Virginia and Kentucky perhaps acting successfully as mediators. But I tell you frankly, I do not expect success in the program to which I intend to devote all my labors and all I have of influence. I look to see Virginia drawn into the conflict. I look for war on a scale far more stupendous than any this country has ever seen.

"I can no more foresee what the result of such a war will be than you can—so far at least as military operations are concerned. But some of the results I think I do see very clearly. Virginia will be the battleground, and Virginia will be desolated as few lands have ever been in the history of the world. Another thing, Dorothy. If this war comes, as I fear it will, it will make an end of African slavery in this country. For if we of the South are beaten in the conflict of arms, the complete extinction of slavery will be decreed as a part of the penalty of war and the price of peace. If we are successful, we shall have set up a Canada at our very doors. The Ohio and the Potomac will become a border beyond which every escaping negro will be absolutely free, and across which every conceivable influence will be brought to bear upon the negroes to induce them to run away. Under such conditions the institution must become an intolerable as well as an unprofitable annoyance, and it will speedily disappear.

"Now I come to what I set out to say. Before election day this present fall I shall have paid off every dollar of the debts that rest upon Pocahontas and Wyanoke. You and I will be free, at least, from that source of embarrassment, and whatever the military or political, or legal or social results of the war may be, you and I will be owners of land that is subject to no claim of any kind against us. I have grievously compromised your dignity as well as my own in my efforts to bring this about, but you are not held responsible for my 'Yankee doings,' at Pocahontas, and as for me, I am not thin-skinned in such matters. I'd far rather be laughed at for paying debts in undignified ways than be dunned for debts that I cannot pay."

This letter reached Dorothy in Paris, on her return through Switzerland, from an Italian journey, undertaken in the early summer before the danger of Roman fever should be threatening. Had such a letter come to her a few months earlier, her response to it would have been an utterly submissive assent to all that her guardian had done, with perhaps a wondering question or two as to why he should feel it necessary to ask her consent to anything he might be minded to do, or even to tell her what he had done. But Dorothy had grown steadily more reserved in her writing to him, as experience had slowly but surely awakened womanly consciousness in her soul. She was still as loyally devoted as ever to Arthur, but she shrank now as she had not been used to do, from too candid an expression of her devotion. The child had completely given place to the woman in her nature and the woman was far less ready than the child had been to reveal her feelings. A succession of suitors for her hand had taught Dorothy to think of herself as a woman bound to maintain a certain reserve in her intercourse with men. They had awakened in her a consciousness of the fact, of which she had scarcely even thought in the old, childish days, that Arthur Brent was a young man and Dorothy South a young woman, and that it would ill become Dorothy South to reveal herself too frankly to this young man. She did not quite know what there was in her mind to reveal or to withhold from revelation, but she instinctively felt the necessity strong upon her to guard herself against her own impulsive truthfulness. She had no more notion that she had dared give her woman's love to Arthur unasked, than she had that he—who had never asked for it—desired her love. He remained to her in fact the enormously superior being that she had always held him to be, but she found herself blushing sometimes when she remembered the utter abandon with which she had been accustomed to lay bare her innermost thoughts and sentiments, her very soul, indeed, to his scrutiny.

She knew of no reason why she should now alter her attitude or her demeanor towards him, and she resolutely determined that she would not in the least change either, yet the letter she wrote to him on this occasion was altogether unlike that which she would have written a few months earlier upon a like occasion. She expressed her approval of all that he had done with respect to her estate, where in like case a few months earlier she would have asked him wonderingly what she had to do with things planned and accomplished by him. She expressed acquiescence as one might who has the right to approve or to criticise, where before she would have concerned herself only with rejoicings that her guardian had got things as he wanted them, in accordance with his unquestioned and unquestionable right to have everything as he wanted it to be in a world quite unworthy of him.

In brief, Dorothy's letter depressed Arthur Brent almost unendurably. Because he missed something from it that long use had taught him to expect in all her utterances to him, he read into it much of coldness, alienation, indifference, which it did not contain. He sat up all night, torturing himself with doubts for which a frequent reperusal of the letter furnished him no shadow of justification; and when the gray morning came he ordered his horse, meaning to ride purposely nowhither. But when the horse was brought, a new and overpowering sense of Dorothy's absence and perhaps her alienation, came over him. He remembered vividly every detail of that first morning's ride he had had with her, and instinctively he copied her proceeding on that occasion. Drawing forth his handkerchief he rubbed the animal's flanks and rumps with it to its soiling.

"I'll not ride this morning, Ben," he said. "I'll go back to the house and write a letter to your Mis' Dorothy and I'll enclose that handkerchief for her inspection."

XXXII

THE SHADOW FALLS

WITH the autumn came that shadow over the land which Arthur Brent had so greatly dreaded. Mr. Lincoln's election was quickly succeeded by the secession of South Carolina. One after another the far Southern States followed, and presently the seceding states allied themselves in a new confederacy.

The whole country was in a ferment. The founders of the Union had made no provision whatever for such a state of things as this, and even the wisest men were at a loss to say what ought to be done or what could be done. There seemed to be nowhere any power or authority adequate to deal with the situation in one way or in another. All was chaos in the coolest minds while the hotheads on either side were daily making matters worse by their intemperate utterances and by the unyielding arrogance of their attitude.

In the meantime the administration at Washington seemed intent only upon preventing the outbreak of open war until its term should end on the fourth of March, 1861, while those into whose hands the government must pass on that date had not only no authority to act but no privilege even of advising.

It seemed fortunate at the time, that Virginia refused to join in the secession movement. Her refusal and her commanding influence over the other border states seemed for a time to provide an opportunity for wise counsels to assert themselves. There were radical secessionists in Virginia and uncompromising opponents of secession on any terms. But the attitude of the great majority of Virginians, as was shown in the election of a constitutional convention on the fourth of February, was one of earnestness for peace and reconciliation and the preservation of the Federal Union.

The Virginians believed firmly in the constitutional right of any state to withdraw from the Union, but the majority among them saw in Mr. Lincoln's election no proper occasion for the exercise of that right. They regarded the course of the cotton states in withdrawing from the Union as one strictly within their right, but as utterly unwise and unnecessary. On the other hand they firmly denied the right of the national government to coerce the seceding states or in any manner to make war upon them.

Arthur Brent was an uncompromising believer in the right of a state to secede, and equally an uncompromising opponent of secession as a policy. That part of Virginia in which he lived was divided in opinion and sentiment, with a distinct preponderance of opinion in behalf of secession. But when the call came for the election of a constitutional convention to decide upon Virginia's course the secessionists of his district were represented by two rival candidates, both fiercely favoring secession. The only discoverable difference in their views was that one of them wanted the convention to adopt the ordinance of secession "before breakfast on the day of its first assembling," while the other contended that it would be more consonant with the dignity of the state to have muffins and coffee first.

Neither of these candidates was a person of conspicuous influence in the community. Neither was a man of large ability or ripe experience or commanding social position—the last counting for much in Virginia in those days when there was no such thing as a ballot in that state, and when every man must go to the polls and openly proclaim his vote.

Under these circumstances a number of the conservative men of the district got together and decided to make Arthur Brent a candidate. It was certain that the secession vote would be in the majority in the district, but if it were divided between the two rival candidates, as it was certain to be, these gentlemen were not without hope that their candidate might secure a plurality and be elected.

Arthur strenuously objected to the program so far at least as it concerned his own candidacy. He had a pronounced distaste for politics and public life, and he stoutly argued that some one who had lived all his life in that community would be better able than he to win all there was of conservatism to his support. He entreated these his friends to adopt that course. It was significant of the high place he had won in the estimation of the community's best, that they refused to listen to his protest, and, by a proclamation over their own signatures, announced him as their candidate and urged all men who sincerely desired wise and prudent counsels to prevail in a matter which involved Virginia's entire future, to support him at the polls.

Thus compelled against his will to be a candidate, Arthur entered at once upon a canvass of ceaseless activity. He did not mean to be defeated. He spoke every day and many times every day, and better still he talked constantly to the groups of men who surrounded him, setting forth his views persuasively and so convincingly that when the polls closed on that fateful fourth of February, it was found that Arthur Brent had been elected by a plurality which amounted almost to a majority, to represent his district in that constitutional convention which must decide Virginia's commanding course, and in large degree, perhaps, determine the final issue of war or peace.

When the convention met nine days later it was found that an overwhelming majority of the members held views identical, or nearly so, with those of Arthur Brent. There were a very few uncompromising secessionists in the body, and also a few unconditional Union men, who declared their hostility to secession upon any terms, at any time, under any circumstances. Among these unconditional Union men, curiously enough were two who afterwards became notable fighters for the Southern cause—namely Jubal A. Early and William C. Wickham.

But the overwhelming majority opposed secession as a mistaken policy, uncalled for by anything in the then existing circumstances, and certain to precipitate a devastating war; while at the same time maintaining the constitutional right of each state to secede, and holding themselves ready to vote for Virginia's secession, should the circumstances so change as to render that course in their judgment obligatory upon the state under the law of honor.

That change occurred in the end, as we shall presently see. But, in the meantime, these representatives of the Virginia people wrought with all their might for the maintenance of peace and the preservation of the Union. They counselled concession and sweet reasonableness, on both sides. They urged upon both the commanding necessity of endeavoring, in a spirit of mutual forbearance, to find some basis of adjustment by which that Union which Virginia had done so much to bring about, and under which the history of the Republic had been a matter of universal pride both North and South, might be preserved and established anew upon secure foundations. More important than all this was the fact that these representative men of Virginia denied to the seceding cotton states the encouragement of Virginia's sanction for their movement, the absolutely indispensable moral and material support of the mother state.

For a time there was an encouraging prospect of the success of these Virginian efforts. Nobody, North or South, believed that the cotton states would long stand alone in their determination, if Virginia and the other border states that looked to her for guidance—Kentucky, North Carolina, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Maryland—should continue to hold aloof.

In the meantime Mr. Lincoln, after his inauguration, had a somewhat similar problem to deal with at the North. There was a party there clamorous for instant war with a declared purpose of abolishing slavery. The advocates of that policy pressed it upon the new president as urgently as the extreme secessionists at the South pressed secession upon Virginia. Mr. Lincoln saw clearly, as these his advisers did not, that their policy was utterly impracticable. From the very beginning he insisted upon confining his administration's efforts rigidly to the task of preserving the Union with the traditional rights of all the states unimpaired. He saw clearly that there were men by hundreds of thousands at the North, who would heart and soul support the administration's efforts to preserve the Union, even by war if that should be necessary, but who would antagonize by every means in their power a war for the extirpation of slavery at cost of Federal usurpation of control over any state in its domestic affairs.

Accordingly, Mr. Lincoln held to his purpose. He would make no attempt to interfere with slavery where it constitutionally existed, and he would make no direct effort to compel seceding states to return to the Union; but he would use whatever force he might find necessary to repossess the forts, arsenals, post-offices and custom houses which the seceding states had seized upon within their borders, and he would endeavor to enforce the Federal laws there.

But in order to accomplish this, military forces were necessary, and the government at Washington did not possess them. There was only the regular army, and it consisted of a mere handful of men, scattered from Eastport, Maine, to San Diego, California, from St. Augustine, Florida to Puget's Sound, and charged with the task—for which its numbers were utterly inadequate—of keeping the Indians in order and proper subjection.

It is doubtful that Mr. Lincoln could have concentrated a single full regiment of regulars at any point, even at risk of withdrawing from the Indian country the men absolutely necessary to prevent massacre there. He therefore called for volunteers with whom to conduct such military operations as he deemed necessary. He apportioned the call among the several states that had not yet seceded. He called upon Virginia for her quota.

That was the breaking point. Virginia had to choose. She must either furnish a large force of volunteers with which the Federal government might in effect coerce the seceding states into submission, or she must herself secede and cast in her lot with the cotton states. To the Virginian mind there was only one course possible. The Virginians believed firmly and without doubt or question in the right of any state to withdraw from the Union at will. They looked with unimagined horror upon every proposal that the Federal power should coerce a seceding state into submission. They regarded that as an iniquity, a crime, a proceeding unspeakably wrongful and subversive of liberty. They could have nothing to do with such an attempt without dishonor of the basest kind. Accordingly, almost before the ink was dry upon the call upon Virginia for volunteers with which to make war upon the seceding Southern States, the Virginia, pro-Union convention, adopted an ordinance of secession, and the Civil War was on.

The men who had, so long and so earnestly, and in face of such contumely, labored to keep Virginia in the Union and to use all that state's commanding influence in behalf of peace, felt themselves obliged to yield to the inevitable, and to consent to a sectional war for which they saw no necessity and recognized no occasion. They had wasted their time in a futile endeavor to bring about a reconciliation where the conflict had been all the while hopelessly "irrepressible." There was nothing for it now but war, and Virginia, deeply deprecating war, set herself at work in earnest to prepare for the conflict.

In accordance with his lifelong habit of mind, Arthur Brent in this emergency put aside all thoughts of self-interest, and looked about him to discover in what way he might render the highest service to his native land, of which he was capable. He was unanimously chosen by each of two companies of volunteers in his native county, to be their captain. In their rivalry with each other, they agreed to make him major in command of a battalion to be formed of those two companies and two others that were in process of organization.

He peremptorily declined. "I know nothing of the military art," he wrote to the committee that had laid the proposal before him. "There are scores of men in the community better fit than I am for military command. Especially there is your fellow citizen, John Meaux, trained at West Point and eminently fit for a much higher command than any that you can offer him. Put him, I earnestly adjure you, into the line of promotion. Elect him to the highest military office within your gift, and let me serve as a private under him, in either of your companies, if no opportunity offers for me to render a larger service and a more valuable one than that. There is scarcely a man among you who couldn't handle a military force more effectively than I could. Let your most capable men be your commanders, big and little. I believe firmly in the dictum 'the tools to him who can use them.' For myself I see a more fruitful opportunity of service than any that military command could bring to me. I have a certain skill which, I think, is going to be sorely needed in this war. It is my firm belief that the struggle upon which we are entering is destined to last through long years of suffering and sore want. We are mainly dependent upon importation not only for the most pressingly necessary of our medicines but for that absolute necessity of life, salt. If war shall shut us in, as it is extremely likely to do, we must find means which we do not now possess of producing these and other things for ourselves, including the materials for that prime requisite of war—gunpowder. It so happens that I have skill in such manufactures as these, and I purpose to turn it to account whenever the necessity shall come upon us. In the meantime, as a surgeon and, upon occasion, as a private soldier I may perhaps be able to do more for Virginia and for the South than I could ever hope to do by assuming those functions of military command for which I have neither natural fitness nor the fitness of training."

All this was deemed very absurd at the time. The war, it was thought, could not last more than sixty days—an opinion which Mr. Secretary of State Seward, on the other side of the line, confidently shared, though his anticipations of the end of it were quite different from those entertained at the South. Why a young man of spirit, such as Arthur Brent was, should refuse to enter upon the brief but glorious struggle in the capacity of a major with the prospect of coming out of it a brigadier-general, his neighbors could not understand. Nor could any of them, with one exception, understand his anticipations of a long war, or his conviction that, end as it might, the war would make an early end of slavery, overturning the South's industrial system and bringing sore poverty upon the people. The one exception was Robert Copeland, the thrifty young man who had lost caste by "making too many hogsheads of tobacco to the hand." He shared Arthur's views, and he acted upon them in ways that Arthur would have scorned to do. He sent all his negroes to Richmond to be sold by auction to the traders to the far South. He converted his plantation, with all its live stock and other appurtenances into money, and with the proceeds of these his sellings he hurried to New York and purchased diamonds. These he bestowed in a belt which he buckled about his person and wore throughout the war, upon the principle that whatever value there might or might not be in other things when the war should be over, diamonds always command their price throughout the civilized world. When after this was done he sought to enlist in one of the companies forming in his neighborhood, he was rejected by unanimous vote, because he had sold negroes, while the men of the company held rigidly to a social standard of conduct which he had flagrantly defied. He went to Richmond. He raised a company of ruffians, which included many "jailbirds" and the like. He made himself its captain, and went into the field as the leader of a "fighting battery." He distinguished himself for daring, and came out of the war, four years later, a brigadier-general. As such he was excluded from the benefits of the early amnesty proclamation. But he cared little about that. He went to New York, sold his diamonds for fifty per cent more than their cost, and accepted high office in the army of the Khedive of Egypt. He thus continued active in that profession of arms in which he had found his best opportunity to exercise his peculiar gift of "getting out of men all there is in them"—which was the phrase chosen by himself to describe his own special capabilities.^[C]

DURING all this year of wandering on the part of Dorothy Edmonia did her duty as a correspondent with conspicuous fidelity. To her letters far more than to Dorothy's own, Arthur was indebted for exact information as to Dorothy's doings and Dorothy's surroundings and Dorothy's self. For Dorothy's reticence concerning herself grew upon her as the months went on. She wrote freely and with as much apparent candor and fulness as ever, but she managed never to reveal herself in the old familiar fashion. Not that there was anything of estrangement in her words or tone, for there was nothing of the kind. It was only that she manifested a certain shyness and reserve concerning her own thought and feeling when these became intimate,—a reserve like that which every woman instinctively practises concerning details of the toilet. A woman may frankly admit to a man that she finds comfort in the use of a little powder, but she does not want him to see the powder box and puff. She may mention her shoe-strings quite without hesitation, but if one of them comes unfastened, she will climb two flights of stairs rather than let him see her readjust it.

In somewhat that way Dorothy at this time wrote to Arthur. If she read a book or saw a picture that pleased her, she would write to him, telling him quite all her external thought concerning it; but if it inspired any emotion of a certain sort in her, she had nothing whatever to say concerning that. In one particular, too, she deliberately abstained from telling him even of her pursuits and ambitions. He was left to hear of that from Edmonia, who wrote:

"Apparently we are destined to remain here in Paris during the rest of our stay abroad. For Dorothy has a new craze which she will in no wise relinquish or abate. For that, you, sir, are responsible, for you planted the seed that are now producing this luxuriant growth of quite unfeminine character. You taught Dorothy the rudiments of chemistry and physics. You awakened in her a taste for such studies which has grown into an uncontrollable passion.

"She has become the special pupil of one of the greatest chemists in France, and she almost literally lives in his laboratory, at least during the daylight hours. She goes to operas about twice a week, and she takes violin lessons from a woman before breakfast; but during the rest of the time she does nothing but slop at a laboratory sink. Her master in this department is madly in love—not with her, though he calls her, in the only English phrase he speaks without accent, 'the apple of his eye,'—but with her enthusiasm in science. He describes it as a 'grand passion' and positively raves in ejaculatory French and badly broken English, over the extraordinary rapidity with which she learns, the astonishing grasp she has of principles, and the readiness with which she applies principles to practice. 'Positively' he exclaimed to me the other day, 'she is no longer a student—she is a chemist,—almost a great chemist. If I had to select one to take absolute control of a laboratory for the nice production of the most difficult compounds, I would this day choose not any man in all France, but Mademoiselle by herself.' Then he paid you a compliment. He added; 'and she tells me she has studied under a master for only a few months! It is marvellous! It is incredible, except that we must believe Mademoiselle, who is the soul of honor and truth. Ah—that is what gives her her love of science—for science loves nothing but truth. But her first master must be a wonder, a born teacher, an enthusiast, a real master who inspires his pupil with a passion like his own.'

"I confirmed Dorothy's statement that she had received only a few months' tuition in a little plantation laboratory, but—at the risk of making you disagreeably conceited, I will tell you this—I fully confirmed the judgment he had formed of Dorothy's master.

" 'Ah, you know him then?' the enthusiastic Frenchman broke out; 'and you will tell me his name, which Mademoiselle refused to speak in answer to my inquiry? And you will give me a letter which may excuse me for the deep presumption when I write to him? I *must* write to him. I must know a master who has no other such in all France. His name Mademoiselle Bannister, his name, I pray you.'

"Now comes the curious part of the story. I told Monsieur your name and address, and his eyes instantly lighted up. 'Ah, that accounts for all!' he exclaimed. 'I know the Dr. Brent. He was my own pupil till I could teach him nothing that he did not know. Then he taught me all the original things he had learned for himself during his stay in my laboratory and before that. Then we ceased to be master and pupil. We were after that two masters working together and every day finding out much that the world can never be enough grateful for. He is truly a wonder, Mister the Doctor Brent! I no longer am surprised at Mademoiselle Sout's accomplishments and her enthusiasm. But why did she not want to speak to me his name? Is it that she loves him and he loves her not—ah, no, that cannot be! He *must* love Mademoiselle Sout' after he has taught her. Nothing else is possible. But is it then that he is dull to find out, and that he doubts the reaction of her love in return for his? Ah, no! He is too great a chemist for that. There must be some other explanation and I cannot find it out. But Mister the Doctor Brent is after all only an American. The Americans are what you call alert in everything but one. Mister the Doctor Brent would quickly discover the smallest error in a reaction and he would know the cause of it. But he did not note the affinity in Mademoiselle for himself. I am not a greater chemist than he is, and yet I see it instantly, when she does not want to speak to me his name! He is a man most fortunate, in that I am old and have Madame at home and three young sons in the École Polytechnique! Ah, how ardently I should have wooed Mademoiselle, the charming, if she had come to me as a pupil twenty five years ago!'

"Now, I'm not quite sure Arthur that your danger in that quarter is altogether past. Yes, I am. That was a sorry jest. But I sincerely hope that on our return you may be a trifle more alert than you have hitherto been in discovering 'reactions.' You don't at all deserve that I should thus enlighten and counsel you. And it may very easily prove to be too late when we return. For, in spite of her absorption in chemistry, and the horribly stained condition of her fingers sometimes, I drag her to all sorts of entertainments, and at the Tuileries especially she is a favorite. The Empress is so gracious to 'the charming American,' as she calls her, that she even summons me to her side for the sake of Dorothy's company. The entire 'eligible list' of the diplomatic corps has gone daft about her beauty, her naïveté and her wonderful accomplishments. The Duc de Morny has even ventured to call twice at our hotel, begging the privilege of 'paying his respects to the charming young American.' But the Duc de Morny is a beast—an accomplished, fascinating beast, if you please, but a beast, nevertheless,—and I have used my woman's privilege of fibbing so far as to send him word, each time,

that Mademoiselle was not at home.

"Why did the Duc de Morny want to call upon me?" queried the simple, honest minded Dorothy, when she heard of the visits of this greatest potentate in France next to the Emperor. I could not explain, so I fibbed a bit further and told her it was only his extreme politeness and the French friendship for Americans.

"Young Jefferson Peyton, you know, has been following us from the beginning. Dorothy expresses surprise, now and then, that his route happens, so singularly to coincide with our own. I think he will explain all that to her presently. He has greatly improved by travel. He has learned that his name and family count for nothing outside Virginia, and that he is personally a man of far less consequence than he has been brought up to consider himself. Now that he has been cured of a conceit that was due rather to his provincial bringing up than to any innate tendency in that direction, now that he has seen enough of the world to acquire a new perspective in contemplating himself, he has become in truth a very pleasing young man. His father did well to act upon Aunt Polly's advice and send him abroad for education and culture. He is going to propose to Dorothy at the very first opportunity. He has told me so himself, and as she has a distinct liking for the amiable and really very handsome young fellow, I cannot venture upon any confident prediction as to the consequences."

That letter came as a Christmas gift to Arthur Brent. One week later, on the New Year's day, came one from Dorothy which made amends by reason of its resumption of much of the old tone of candor and confidence which he had so sadly missed from her letters during many months past.

"I want to go home, Cousin Arthur," she began. "I want to go home at once. I want my dear old mammy to put her arms around me as she used to do when I was a little child, and croon me to sleep, so that I may forget all that has happened to me. And, I want to talk with you again, Cousin Arthur, as freely as I used to do when you and I rode together through the woodlands or the corn at sunrise, when we didn't mind a wetting from the dew, and when our horses and my dear dogs seemed to enjoy the glory of the morning as keenly as we did. It is in memory of those mornings that I send you back the soiled handkerchief you mailed to me. I want you, please, to give it to Ben, and tell him I make him a present of it, because it is no longer fit for you to use. You needn't tell him anything more than that. He will understand. But I mustn't leave you any longer to the mercy of such neglect on the part of servants to whom you are always so good. I must get home again before this terrible war breaks out. I have read all your letters about it a hundred times each, and I have tried to fit myself for my part in it. When you told me how great the need was likely to be for somebody qualified to make medicines, and salt, and saltpetre and soda and potash for gunpowder—no, you didn't tell me of all that, you wrote to Edmonia about it, and that hurt my feelings because it seemed to put me out of your life and work—but when Edmonia told me what you had written about it, I set myself to work again at my chemistry, and I have worked so diligently at it that my master, Mons. X. declares that I am capable of taking complete charge of a laboratory and doing the most difficult and delicate of all the work needed. I believe I am. Anyhow, he has somehow found out,—though I certainly never told him of it—that you taught me at the beginning and he insists upon giving me a letter to you about my qualifications.

"You say you hope Virginia will not secede, and that perhaps, after all, there will be no war. But I see clearly that you have no great confidence in your own hopes. So I am in a great hurry to get home before trouble comes. After it comes it may be too late for me to get home at all.

"So I should just compel Edmonia to take the first ship for New York, if we had any money. But we haven't any, because I have spent all my own and borrowed and spent all of hers. We must wait now until you and Archer Bannister can send us new letters of credit or whatever it is that you call the papers on which the banking people here are so ready to give us all the money we want. Now I must 'fess up about the expenses. They have not been incurred for new gowns or for any other feminine frivolities. I've spent all my own money and all of Edmonia's for chemicals and chemical apparatus, which I foresee that you and I will need in order to make medicines and salt and soda and saltpetre for our soldiers and people. I've ordered all these things sent by a ship that is going to Nassau, in the Bahama Islands, and the captain of the ship promises me that whether there is a blockade or not, he will get them through to you somehow or other. By the way the foolish fellow, who is a French naval officer, detailed for the merchant service, wanted me to marry him—isn't it absurd?—and I told him we'd keep that question open till the chemicals and apparatus should be safe in your hands, and till he could come to you in the uniform of a Virginia officer, and ask you as my guardian, for permission to pay his addresses. Was it wrong, Cousin Arthur, thus to play with a fellow who never really loved anybody, but who simply wanted Pocahontas plantation? You see I've become very bad, and very knowing, since I've been without control, as I told you I would. But, anyhow, that Frenchman will get the things to you in safety.

"But all this nonsense isn't what I wanted to write to you. I want to go home and I will go home, even if I have to accept Jefferson Peyton's offer to furnish the money necessary. We simply mustn't be shut out of Virginia when the war comes, and nobody can tell when it will come now. But of course I shall not let Jeff furnish the money. That was only a strong way of putting it. For Jeff has insulted me, I think. I'm not quite certain, but I think that is what it amounts to. You will know, and I'm going to tell you all about it, just as I used to tell you all about everything, before—well before all this sort of thing. Jeff has been travelling about ever since we began our journey, and he has really been very nice to us, and very useful sometimes. But a few days ago he proposed marriage to me. I was disposed to be very kindly in my treatment of him, because I rather like the poor fellow. But when I told him I didn't in the least think of marrying him or anybody else, he lost his temper, and had the assurance to say that the time would come when I would be very grateful to him for being willing to offer me *such a road out of my difficulties*. He didn't explain, for I instantly rang for a servant to show him out of the hotel parlor, and myself retired by another door. But, I think I know what he meant, because I have found out all about myself and my mother, all the things that people have been so laboriously endeavoring to keep me from finding out. And among other things I have found out that I must marry Jeff Peyton or nobody. So I will marry nobody, so long as I live. I'll be like Aunt Polly, just good and useful in the world.

"I'll write you all about this by the next steamer, if I can make up my mind to do it—that is to say if I find that in spite of all, I may go on thinking of you as my best friend on earth, and telling you everything that

troubles me just as I used to tell dear old mammy, when the bees stung me or the daisies wilted before I could make them into a pretty chain. I have a great longing to tell you things in the old, frank, unreserved way, and to feel the comfort of your strong support in doing what it is right for me to do. Somehow, all this distance has seemed to make it difficult to do that. But now that my fate in life is settled and my career fully marked out as a woman whose only ambition is to be as useful as possible, I may talk to you, mayn't I, in the old, unreserved way, in full assurance that you won't let me make any mistakes?

"That is what I want. So I have this moment decided that I will not wait for you to send me a new letter of credit, but will find somebody here to lend me enough money to go home on. In the meantime I'm going to begin being the old, frank, truthful Dorothy, by writing you, by the next steamer, all that I have learned about myself."

XXXIV

DOROTHY'S DISCOVERY

DOROTHY'S next letter came at the beginning of the spring. There were mail steamers at that time only once a fortnight and the passage occupied a fortnight more—or perhaps a longer time as the sea and the west wind might determine.

"I hope this letter will reach you before I do, Cousin Arthur," Dorothy began. "But I'm not quite sure of that, for we hope to sail by the *Asia* on her next trip and she is a much faster ship they say than the one that is to carry this. The money things arranged themselves easily and without effort. For when I asked Mr. Livingston,—Mildred's husband, you know—to go with me to the bankers to see if they wouldn't lend me a few hundred dollars, he laughed and said:

'You needn't bother, you little spendthrift. I provided for all that before we started. I knew you women would spend all your money, so I gave myself a heavy credit with my bankers here, and of course you can have all the money you want.' I didn't like it for him to think we'd spent our money foolishly, but I couldn't explain, so I just thanked him and said, with all the dignity I could command: 'I'll give you a letter of credit on my guardian Dr. Brent.' I suppose I got the terms wrong, for he laughed in his careless way—he always laughs at things as if nothing in the world mattered. He even laughed at his own seasickness on the ship. Anyhow, he told me I needn't give him any kind of papers—that you would settle the bill when the time came, and that I could have all the money I needed. So at first we thought we should get off by the ship that is to carry this letter. But something got the matter with Mildred's teeth, so we had to wait over for the *Asia*. Why do things get the matter with people's teeth? Nothing ever got the matter with mine, and I never heard of anything getting the matter with yours or Edmonia's. Mr. Livingston says that's because we eat corn bread. How I wish I had some at this moment!

"But that isn't what I want to write to you about. I have much more serious things to tell you—things that alter my whole life, and make it sadder than I ever expected it to be.

"I have seen my mother, and she has told me the whole terrible story. She wouldn't have told me now or ever, but that she thought she was going to die under a surgical operation.

"You remember I wrote to you about Madame Le Sud, whom I met on shipboard and learned to love so much. I'm glad I learned to love her, because she is my mother. She calls herself Madame Le Sud, because that is only the French way of calling herself Mrs. South, you know.

"The way of it was this: When we parted at Liverpool I told her what our trip was to be. She was coming direct to Paris, and I made her promise to let me visit her here if she did not leave before our arrival, as she thought she probably would. When we got here I rather hoped to hear from her, for somehow, though I did not dream of the relationship between us, I had formed a very tender attachment to her, and I longed to see her again.

"As the weeks passed and I heard nothing, I made up my mind that she had gone back to New York before we reached Paris, and I was not undeceived until a few weeks ago, when she sent me a sad little note, telling me she was ill and asking me to call upon her in her apartments in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs.

"I went at once and found her in very pitiful condition. Her apartments were mere garrets, ill furnished and utterly uncomfortable, and she herself was manifestly suffering. When I asked her why she had not sent for me before, she answered: 'It was better not, child. You were in your proper place. You were happy. You were receiving social recognition of the highest kind and it was good for you because you are fit for it and deserve it. I have sent for you now only because I have something that I must give to you before I die. For I'm going to die almost immediately.' She wouldn't let me interrupt her. 'I'm going to have a surgical operation tomorrow, and I do not expect to get over it.'

"I found out presently that she was going to a charity hospital for her treatment, and that it was because she is so poor; for by reason of her sickness, she has lost her employment, which was that of a dresser for an opera company. Think of it, Cousin Arthur! My mother,—though I didn't know then that she was my mother—a dresser to those opera people! I'm glad she didn't tell me she was my mother until after I had told her she should not go to a charity hospital, to be operated on before a class of gaping students and treated very much as if she were a subject in a dissecting room. I took all that in my own hands. I went down to the concierge and secured a comfortable apartment for my mother on the entresol, with a nice French maid to look after her. Then I sent for the best surgeon I could hear of to treat her, and he promised me to get her quite well again in a few weeks, which he has done. It was after I had moved her down to the new apartments and sent the maid out for a little dinner—for my mother hadn't anything to eat or any money—it was after all that that she told me her story.

"First she gave me a magnificent ring, a beautiful fire opal set round with diamonds. Think of it! She with that in her possession and belonging to her, which would have sold for enough to keep her in luxury for months, yet shivering there without a fire and without food, and waiting for the morrow, to go to a charity hospital like a pauper, while I have the best rooms in the best hotel in Paris! And she my mother, all the

while!

"When she put the ring on my finger, saying, 'It fits you as it once fitted me—but you are worthy of it as I never was,' I cried a little and begged her to tell me what it all meant. Then she broke down and, clasping me in her arms, told me that she was my own mother. I won't tell you all the details of our weeping time, for they are too sacred even for you to hear. Let me simply copy here, as accurately as I can, my mother's account of herself.

" 'I was born,' she said, 'the daughter of a Virginian of good family—as good as any. My father lived as many Virginians do, far beyond his means. Perhaps he did wrong things—I do not know, and after all it is no matter. At any rate when he died people seemed to care very little for us—my mother and me—when everything we had was sold and we went out into the world to hunt for bread. I was seventeen then, I had what they call a genius for music. We went to New York and lived wretchedly there for a time. But I earned something with my violin and my 'cello, and now and then by singing, for I had a voice that was deemed good. We lived in that wretched, ill-mannered, loose-moraled, dissolute and financially reckless set which calls itself Bohemia, and excuses itself from all social and moral obligation on the ground that its members are persons of genius, though in fact most of them are anything else. My mother never liked these people. She simply tolerated them, and she did that only because she had no choice. She did her best to shield me against harm to my soul in contact with them, but she could not prevent the contact itself. Our bread and butter and the roof over our heads depended upon that. Finally there came into our set a manager who was looking out for opportunities. He heard me play, and he heard me sing. He proposed that I should go to Europe for instruction at his expense, and that he should bring me out as a genius in the autumn. I went, and I received some brief instruction of great value to me—not that it made me a better musician but that it taught me how to captivate an audience with such gifts as I had. Well the manager brought me out, and I succeeded even beyond his expectations. I don't think it was my musical ability altogether, though that was thought to be remarkable, I believe. I was beautiful then, as you are now, Dorothy; I had all the charm of a willowy grace, which, added to my beauty, made men and women go mad over me. I made money in abundance for my manager, and that was all that he cared for. I made money for myself too, and my mother and I were eagerly sought after by the leaders of fashion. We ceased to know the old Bohemia and came to be members of a new and perhaps not a better set—except in its conformity to those rules of life which are supposed to hedge respectability about, without really improving its morals. For I tell you child I saw more of real wickedness in my contact with those who call themselves the socially elect than I ever dreamed of among my old-time Bohemian associates. The only advantage these dissolutes had over the others was, that having bank accounts they drew checks for their debts where the others shirked and shuffled to escape from theirs.

" 'I was glad, therefore, when your father came into my life. He was a man of a higher type than any that I had known since early childhood—a man of integrity, of honor, of high purposes. His courtesy was exquisite, and it was sincere. It is often said of a man that he would not tell a lie to save his life. Your father went further than that, my child. He would not tell a lie even to please a woman, and with such a man as he was, pleasing a woman was a stronger temptation than saving his life. He was in New York taking a supplementary medical course—what they now call a post graduate course,—in order, as he said, that he might the better fulfil his life-saving mission as a physician. He fell madly in love with me, and I—God help me! I loved him as well as one of my shallow nature and irregular bringing up could love any man. After a little I married him. I went with him for a brief trip abroad, and after that I went to be mistress of Pocahontas. I looked forward longingly to the beautiful life of refinement there, as he so often pictured it to me. I was tired of the whirl and excitement. I was weary of the footlights and of having to take my applause and my approval over the heads of the orchestra. I thought I should be perfectly happy, playing grand lady in an old, historic Virginia house. I was only nineteen years old then,—I am well under forty still—and for a time I did enjoy the new life amazingly. But after a little it wearied me. It seemed to me too narrow, too conventional, too uninteresting. When I had company and poured my whole soul into a violin obligato,—rendering the great music in a way which had often brought down the house and called for repeated encores while delighted audiences threatened to bury me under flowers—when I did that sort of thing at Pocahontas, the guests would say coldly how well I played and all the other parrot like things that people say when they mean to be polite but have no real appreciation of music. Little by little I grew utterly weary of the life. The very things in it that had at first delighted and rested me, became like thorns in my flesh. As the rescued children of Israel longed for the flesh pots of Egypt, so at last I came to long again for the delights of the old life on the stage, with its excitements, its ever changing pleasures, its triumphs and even its failures and disappointments. Yet it was not so much a longing for that old life which oppressed me, as an intolerable impatience to get out of the new one from which I had expected so much of happiness. It seemed to me a treadmill life of self-indulgence. I was surrounded by every luxury that a well-ordered woman could desire. But I was not a well-ordered woman, and the very luxury of my surroundings, the very exemption they gave me from all care, all responsibility, all endeavor, seemed to drive me almost insane with impatience. I had nothing to do. I was surrounded by skilled servants who provokingly anticipated every wish I could form. If I wanted even to rinse my fingers after eating a peach, I was not permitted to do it in any ordinary way. There was always a maid standing ready with a bowl and napkin for my use. My bed was prepared for me before I went to it, and the maid waited to put out the candle after I had gone to rest. Your father worshipped me, and surrounded me with attentions on his own part and on that of others, which were intolerable in the perfection of their service. I knew that I was not worthy of his worship and I often told him so, to no effect. He only worshipped me the more. The only time I ever saw him angry was once soon after you were born. I loved you as I had never dreamed of loving anybody or anything before in my life—even better ten thousand times than I had ever loved music itself. I wanted to do something for you with my own hands. I wanted to feel that I was your mother and you altogether my own child.

" 'So, just as old mammy was preparing to give you your bath, I pretended to be faint and sent her below stairs to bring me a cup of coffee. When she had gone I seized you and in ecstatic triumph, set to work to make your little baby toilet with my own hands. Just as I began, your father came stalking up the stairs and entered the nursery. For mammy had told him I was faint, and he had hurried to my relief. When he found me bathing you he rang violently for all the servants within call and as they came one after another upon the

scene he challenged each to know why their mistress was thus left to do servile offices for herself. But for my pleading I think he would have taken the whole company of them out to the barn and chastised them with his own hand, though I had never known him to strike a servant.

“ I know now that I ought to have explained the matter to him. I ought to have told him how the mother love in me longed to do something for you. I know he would have understood even in his rage over what he regarded as neglect of me, and he would have sympathized with my feeling. But I was enraged at the baffling of my purpose, and I hastily put on a riding habit, mounted my horse, which, your father, seeing my purpose, promptly ordered brought to the block, and rode away, unattended except by a negro groom. For when your father offered his escort I declined it, begging him to let me ride alone.

“ ‘It was not long after that that I sat hour after hour by your cradle, composing a lullaby which should be altogether your own, and as worthy of you as I could make it. When the words and the music were complete and satisfying to my soul, I began singing the little song to you, and your father, whose love of music was intense, seemed entranced with it. He would beg me often to sing it, and to play the violin accompaniment I had composed to go with it. I would never do so except over your cradle. Understand me, child, if you can understand one of so wayward a temper as mine. I had put all my soul into that lullaby. Every word in it, every note of the music, was an expression of my mother love—the best there was in me. I was jealous of it for you. I would not allow even your father to hear a note of that outpouring of my love for my child, except as a listener while I sang and played for you alone. So your cradle with you in it must always be brought before I would let your father hear.

“ ‘One day, when you were six or eight months old, we had a houseful of guests, as we often did at Pocahontas. They stayed over night of course, and in the evening when I asked their indulgence while I should go and sing you to sleep, your father madly pleaded that I should sing and play the lullaby in the drawing room in order that the guests might hear what he assured them was his supreme favorite among all musical compositions. I suppose I was in a more than usually complaisant mood. At any rate, I allowed myself to



***I* IN THAT MUSIC MY SOUL LAID ITSELF BARE TO YOURS AND
PRAYED FOR YOUR LOVE.”**

be persuaded against my will, and mammy brought you in, in your cradle. I remember that you had a little pink sack over your night gown—a thing I had surreptitiously knitted for you without anybody’s knowledge, and without even the touch of a servant’s hand.

“ ‘You were crowing with glee at the lights and the great, flaring fire. Everybody in the room wanted to caress you, but I peremptorily ordered them off, and took you for a time into my own arms. At last, when the lights were turned down at my command, and the firelight hidden behind a screen, I took the violin—a rare old instrument for which your father had paid a king’s ransom—and began to play. After the prelude had been twice played, I began to sing. Never in my life had I been so overwhelmingly conscious of you—so completely unconscious of everybody else in the world. I played and sang only to my child. All other human beings were nonexistent. I played with a perfection of which I had never for a moment thought myself capable. I sang with a tenderness which I could never have commanded had I been conscious for the time of any other existence than your own. In that music my soul laid itself bare to yours and prayed for your love. I told you in every tone all that a mother love means—all that an intensely emotional woman is capable of feeling; I gave free rein to all there was in me of passion, and made all of it your own. I was in an ecstasy. I was entranced. My soul was transfigured and all was wrought into the music.

“ ‘In the midst of it all someone whispered a cold blooded, heartlessly appreciative comment upon my playing, or the music, or my voice, or the execution, or something else—it matters not what. It was the sort of

thing that people say for politeness' sake when some screeching girl sings "Hear Me, Norma." It wakened me instantly from my trance. It brought me back to myself. It revealed to me how completely I had been wasting the sacred things of my soul upon a company of Philistines. It filled me with a wrath that considered not consequences. I ceased to play. I seized the precious violin by its neck—worn smooth by the touch of artist hands—and dashed it to pieces over the piano. Then I snatched my baby from the cradle and retreated to your nursery, where I double locked the door, and refused to admit anybody but mammy, whose affection for you I felt, had been wounded as sorely as my own. I sent your father word that I would pass the night in the nursery, and at daylight I left home forever, taking you and mammy with me in the carriage.

" I had taken pains to learn that your father had been summoned that night, on an emergency call, to the bedside of a patient, ten miles away. This gave me my opportunity. With you in my arms and mammy by my side, I drove to Richmond, and sending the carriage back, I drew what money there was to my credit in the bank, and took the steamer sailing that day for New York. All this was seventeen years ago, remember, when there were no railroads of importance, and no quicker way of going from Richmond to New York than by the infrequently sailing steamers. It was in the early forties.

" Your father had loaded my dressing case with splendid jewels, in the selection of which his taste was unusually good. I left them all behind, all but this ring, which he had given me when you were born and asked me to regard as his thank offering for you. I have kept it all these years. I have suffered and starved many times rather than profane it by pawning, though often my need has been so sore that I have had to put even my clothes in pledge for the money with which to buy a dinner of bread and red herrings.

" I had money enough at first, for your father's generosity had made my bank deposit large. But I had to spend the money in keeping myself hidden away with you, and I could not earn more by my music, as that would make me easily found. It was then that I translated my name. Mammy remained with me, caring for nothing in the world but you.

" It was several years before your father found me out. I was shocked and distressed at the way in which sorrow had written its signature upon his face. I loved him then far better than I had ever done before. For the first time I fully understood how greatly good and noble he was. But I would not, I could not, go back with him to the home I had disgraced. I could have borne all the scorn and contempt with which his friends would have looked upon me. I could have faced all that defiantly and with an erect head, giving scorn for scorn and contempt for contempt, where I knew that my censors were such only because in their commonplaceness they could not understand a nature like mine or even believe in its impulses. But I could not bear to go back to Pocahontas and witness the pity with which everybody there would look upon him.

" I resisted all his entreaties for my return, but for your sake I tore my heart out by consenting to give you up to him. You were rapidly growing in intelligence and I perfectly knew that such bringing up as I could give you would ruin your life in one way or another. Never mind the painful memory of all that. I consented at last to let your father take you back to Pocahontas and bring you up in a way suited to your birth and condition. Mammy went with you of course. Your father begged for the privilege of providing for my support in comfort while I should live, but I refused. I begged him to go into the courts and free himself from me. He could have got his divorce in Virginia upon the ground of my desertion. I shall never forget his answer. 'When I married you, Dorothy'—for your name, my child, is the same as my own—'When I married you, Dorothy, it was not during good behavior but forever. You are my wife, and you will be always the one woman I love, the one woman whose name I will protect at all hazards and all costs. No complaint of you has ever passed my lips. I have suffered no human being to say aught to your hurt in my presence or within my knowledge. Nor shall I to the end. You are my wife. I love you. That is all of it.'

" He went away sorrowful, leaving me broken hearted. I could appear in public now and I returned to my profession. The beauty which had been so great an aid to me before, was impaired, and the old vivacity was gone. But I could play still and sing, and with my violin and my voice I easily earned enough for all my wants, until I got the scar. After that I sank into a wretched poverty, and was glad at last to secure employment as a stage dresser. My illness here has lost me that—'

"I cannot tell you any more, Cousin Arthur. It pains me too much. But I am going to take my mother with me to America and provide for her in some way that she will permit. She has recovered from the surgery now, and I have simply taken possession of her. She refuses to go to Pocahontas, or in any other way to take her position as my father's widow. But if this war comes, as you fear it will, she has decided to go into service as a field nurse, and you must arrange that for her.

"I understand now why my father forbade me to learn music, and why he taught me that a woman must have a master. I can even guess what Jefferson Peyton meant when I rejected his suit. My father, I suppose, planned to provide a master for me; but I decline to serve the one he selected. I am a woman and a proud one. I will never consent to be disposed of in marriage by the orders of other people as princesses and other chattel women are. But, oh, you cannot know how sorrowful my soul is, and how I long to be at home again! I hope the war will come. That is wicked in me, I suppose, but I cannot help it. I must have occupation or I shall go mad. I shall set to work at once, on my return, fitting up our laboratory, and there I'll find work enough to fill all my hours, and it will be useful, humane, patriotic work, such as it is worth a woman's while to do."

XXXV

THE BIRTH OF WAR

IT was the seventeenth of April, 1861. It was the fateful day on which the greatest, the most terrible, the most disastrous of modern wars was born.

On that day the long struggle of devoted patriots to keep Virginia in the Union and to throw all her influence into the scale of peace, had ended in failure.

A few days before, Fort Sumter had been bombarded and had fallen. Still the Virginia convention had resisted all attempts to drag or force the Mother State into secession. Then had come Mr. Lincoln's call upon Virginia for her quota of troops with which to make war upon the seceding sister states of the South and the

alternative of secession or dishonor presented itself to this body of Union men. They decided at once, and on that seventeenth day of April they made a great war possible and indeed inevitable, by adopting an ordinance of secession and casting Virginia's fate, Virginia's strength, and Virginia's matchless influence, into the scale of disunion and war.

Richmond was in delirium—a delirium which moved men to ecstatic joy or profound grief, or deeply rooted apprehension, according to their several temperaments. The thoughtless went parading excitedly up and down the streets singing songs, and making a gala time of it, wearing cockades by day and carrying torches by night, precisely as if some long hoped for and supremely desired good fortune had come upon the land of their birth. The more thoughtful looked on and kept silent. But mostly the spirit manifested was one of grim determination to meet fate—be it good or bad—with stout hearts and calmly resolute minds.

In that purpose all men were as one now. The vituperation with which the people's representatives in the convention had been daily assailed for their hesitation to secede, was absolutely hushed. The sentiment of affection for the Union which had been growing for seventy years and more, gave way instantly to a determination to win a new independence or sacrifice all in the attempt.

Jubal A. Early, who had from the beginning opposed secession with all his might, reckoning it not only insensate folly but a political crime as well, voted against it to the last, and then, instantly sent to Gov. Letcher a tender of his services in the war, in whatever capacity his state might see fit to employ him. In the same way William C. Wickham, an equally determined opponent of secession, quitted his seat in the convention only to make hurried preparation for his part as a military leader on the Southern side.

No longer did men discuss the merits and demerits of one policy or another; there could be but one policy now, one course of action, one sentiment of devotion to Virginia, and an undying determination to maintain her honor at all hazards and at all costs.

The state of mind that was universal among Virginians at that time, has never been quite understood in other parts of the Union. These men's traditions extended back to a time before ever the Union was thought of, before ever Virginia had invited her sister states to unite with her, in a convention at Annapolis, called for the purpose of forming that "more perfect Union," from which, in 1861, Virginia decided to withdraw. Devotion to the Union had been, through long succeeding decades, as earnest and as passionate in Virginia as the like devotion had been in any other part of the country. Through three great wars the Virginians had faltered not nor failed when called upon to contribute of their substance or their manhood to the national defence.

The Virginians loved the Union of which their state had been so largely the instigator, and they were self-sacrificingly loyal to it. But they held their allegiance to it to be solely the result of their state's allegiance, and when their state withdrew from it, they held themselves absolved from all their obligations respecting it. Their very loyalty to it had been a prompting of their state, and when their state elected to transfer its allegiance to another Confederacy, they regarded themselves as bound by every obligation of law, of honor, of tradition, of history and of manhood itself, to obey the mandate.

Return we now to Richmond, on that fateful seventeenth day of April, 1861. There had been extreme secessionists, and moderate ones, uncompromising Union men, and Union men under conditions of qualification. There were none such when that day was ended. Waitman T. Willey and a few others from the Panhandle region, who had served in the convention, departed quickly for their homes, to take part with the North in the impending struggle, in obedience to their convictions of right. The rest accepted the issue as determinative of Virginia's course, and ordered their own courses accordingly. They were, before all and above all Virginians, and Virginia had decided to cast in her lot with the seceding Southern States. There was an end of controversy. There was an end of all division of sentiment. The supreme moment had come, and all men stood shoulder to shoulder to meet the consequences.

XXXVI

THE OLD DOROTHY AND THE NEW

JUST as Arthur Brent was quitting his seat in the convention on that day so pregnant of historic happenings, a page put a note into his hands. It was from Edmonia, and it read:

"We have just arrived and are at the Exchange Hotel and Ballard House. We are all perfectly well, though positively dazed by what you statesmen in the convention have done today. I can hardly think of the thing seriously—of Virginia withdrawing from the Union which her legislature first proposed to the other states, which her statesmen—Washington, Jefferson, Marshall, Madison, Mason, and the rest so largely contributed to form, and over which her Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Harrison and Tyler have presided in war and peace. And yet nothing could be more serious. It seems to me a bad dream from which we shall presently wake to find ourselves rejoicing in its untruth.

"You will come to the hotel to a six o'clock dinner, of course. I want to show you what a woman Dorothy has grown to be. Poor dear girl! She has been greatly disturbed by the hearing of her mother's story, and she is a trifle morbid over it. However, you'll see her for yourself this evening. We were charmingly considerate, I think in not telegraphing to announce our coming. We shall expect you to thank us properly for thus refraining from disturbing you. Come to the hotel the moment your public duties will let you."

Arthur hastily left the convention hall and hurried across Capitol Square and on to the big, duplex hostelry. He entered on the Exchange Hotel side and learned by inquiry at the office that Edmonia's rooms were in the Ballard House on the other side of the street. It had begun to rain and he had neither umbrella nor overcoat, having forgotten and left both in the cloak room of the convention. So he mounted the stairway, and set out to cross by the covered crystal bridge that spanned the street connecting the two great caravansaries. The bridge was full of people, gathered there to look at the pageant in the streets below, where companies of volunteer cavalry from every quarter of eastern Virginia were marching past, on their way to the newly-established camp of instruction on the Ashland race track. For Governor Letcher had so far anticipated the inevitable result of the long debate as to establish two instruction camps and to accept the

tenders of service which were daily sent to him by the volunteer companies in every county.

As Arthur was making his way through the throng of sight-seers on the glass bridge some movement in the crowd brought him into contact with a gentlewoman, to whom he hastily turned with apologetic intent.

It was Dorothy! Not the Dorothy who had bidden him good-by a year ago, but a new, a stelier Dorothy, a Dorothy with the stamp of travel and society upon her, a Dorothy who had learned ease and self-possession and dignity by habit in the grandest drawing rooms in all the world. Yet the old Dorothy was there too—the Dorothy of straight-looking eyes and perfect truthfulness, and for the moment the new Dorothy forgot herself, giving place to the old.

"Oh, Master!" she cried, impulsively seizing both his hands, and, completely forgetful of the crowd about her, letting the glad tears slip out between her eyelashes. "I was not looking at the soldiers; I was looking for you, and wondering when you would come. Oh, I am so happy, and so glad!"

An instant later the new Dorothy reasserted herself, and Arthur did not at all like the change. The girl became so far self-conscious as to grow dignified, and in very shame over her impulsive outbreak, she exaggerated her dignity and her propriety of demeanor into something like coldness and stately hauteur.

"How you have grown!" Arthur exclaimed when he had led her to one of the parlors almost deserted now for the sight-seeing vantage ground of the bridge.

"No," she answered as she might have done in a New York or a Paris drawing room, addressing some casual acquaintance. "I have not grown a particle. I was quite grown up before I left Virginia. It is a Paris gown, perhaps. The Parisian dressmakers know all the art of bringing out a woman's 'points,' and they hold my height and my slenderness to be my best claims upon attention."

Arthur felt as if she had struck him. He was about to remonstrate, when Edmonia broke in upon the conversation with her greeting. But Dorothy had seen his face and read all that it expressed. The old Dorothy was tempted to ask his forgiveness; the new Dorothy dismissed the thought as quite impossible. She had already sufficiently "compromised" herself by her impulsiveness, and to make amends she put stays upon her dignity and throughout the evening they showed no sign of bending.

Arthur was tortured by all this. Edmonia was delighted over it. So differently do a man and a woman sometimes interpret another woman's attitude and conduct.

Arthur was compelled to leave them at nine to meet Governor Letcher, who had summoned him for consultation with respect to the organization of a surgical staff, of which he purposed to make Arthur Brent one of the chiefs. Before leaving he asked as to Edmonia's and Dorothy's home-going plans. Learning that they intended to go by the eight o'clock train the next morning, he said:

"Very well, I'll send Dick up by the midnight train to have the Wyanoke carriage at the station to meet you."

"Is Dick with you?" Dorothy asked with more of enthusiasm than she had shown since her outbreak on the bridge. "How I do want to see Dick! Can't you send him here before train time, please?"

Already grieved and resentful, Arthur was stung by the manner of this request. For the moment he was disposed to interpret it as an intended affront. He quickly dismissed that thought and answered with a laugh:

"Yes, Dorothy, he shall come to you at once. Perhaps he has a 'song ballad' ready for your greeting. At any rate he at least will pleasantly remind you of the old life."

"I wonder why he put it in that way—why he said 'he *at least*,'" said Dorothy when Arthur had gone and the two women were left alone.

"I think I know," Edmonia answered. But she did not offer the explanation. Neither did Dorothy ask for it.

XXXVII

AT WYANOKE

IT was three days later before Arthur Brent was able to leave the duties that detained him in Richmond. When at last he found himself free, one of the infrequent trains of that time had just gone, and there would be no other for many hours to come. His impatience to be at Wyanoke was uncontrollable. For three days he had brooded over Dorothy's manner to him at the hotel, and wondered, with much longing, whether she might not meet him differently at home. He recalled the frankly impulsive eagerness with which she had greeted him in the first moment of their meeting, and he argued with himself that her later reserve might have been simply a reaction from that first outburst of joy, a maidenly impulse to atone to her pride for the lapse into old, childlike manners. This explanation seemed a very probable one, and yet—he reflected that there were no strangers standing by when she had relapsed into a reserve that bordered upon hauteur—nobody before whom she need have hesitated to be cordial. He had asked her about her mother, thinking thus to awaken some warmth of feeling in her and reestablish a footing of sympathy. But her reply had been a business-like statement that Madame Le Sud would remain in New York for a few days, to secure the clothing she would need for her field ministrations to the wounded, after which she would take some very quiet lodging in Richmond until duty should call her.

Altogether Arthur Brent's impatience to know the worst or best—whichever it might be—grew greater with every hour, and when he learned that he must idly wait for several hours for the next train, he mounted Gimlet and set out upon the long horseback journey, for which Gimlet, weary of the stable, manifested an eagerness quite equal to his own.

When the young man dismounted at Wyanoke, Dorothy was the first to meet him, and there was something in her greeting that puzzled him even more than her manner on the former occasion had done. For Dorothy too had been thinking of the hotel episode, and repenting herself of her coldness on that occasion. She understood it even less than Arthur did. She had not intended to be reserved with him, and several times during that evening she had made an earnest effort to be natural and cordial instead, but always without success, for some reason that she could not understand. So she had carefully planned to greet him on his

home-coming, with all the old affection and without reserve. To that end she had framed in her own mind the things she would say to him and the manner of their saying. Now that he had come, she said the things she had planned to say, but she could not adopt the manner she had intended.

The result was something that would have been ludicrous had it been less painful to both the parties concerned. It left Arthur worse puzzled than ever and obviously pained. It sent Dorothy to her chamber for that "good cry," which feminine human nature holds to be a panacea.

At dinner Dorothy "rattled" rather than conversed, as young women are apt to do when they are embarrassed and are determined not to show their embarrassment. She seemed bent upon alternately amusing and astonishing Aunt Polly, with her grotesquely distorted descriptions of things seen and people encountered during her travels. Arthur took only so much part in the conversation as a man thinking deeply, but disposed to be polite, might.

When the cloth was removed he lighted a cigar and went to the stables and barns, avowedly to inquire about matters on the plantation.

When he returned, full of a carefully formed purpose to "have it out" with Dorothy, he found guests in the house who had driven to Wyanoke for supper and a late moonlight drive homeward. From that moment until the time of the guests' departure, he was eagerly beset with questions concerning the political situation and the prospects of war.

"The war is already on," he answered, "and we are not half prepared for it. Fortunately the North is in no better case, and still more fortunately, we are to have with us the ablest soldier in America."

"Who? Beauregard?"

"No, Robert E. Lee, to whom the Federal administration a little while ago offered the command of all the United States armies. He has resigned and is now in Richmond to organize our forces."

Arthur talked much, too, of the seriousness of the war, of the certainty in his mind, that it would last for years, taxing the resources of the South to the point of exhaustion. For this some of his guests called him a pessimist, and applauded the prediction of young Jeff Peyton, that "within twenty days we shall have twenty thousand men on the Potomac, and after perhaps one battle of some consequence we shall dictate terms of peace in Washington." He added: "You must make haste to get into the service, Doctor, if you expect to see the fun."

"I do not expect to see the fun," Arthur answered quietly. "I do not see the humorous side of slaughter. But in my judgment you, sir, will have ample time in which to wear out many uniforms as gorgeous as the one you now have on, before peace is concluded at Washington or anywhere else. An army of twenty thousand men will be looked upon as a mere detachment before this struggle is over. We shall hear the tramp of armies numbering hundreds of thousands, and their tramping will desolate Virginia fields that are now as fair as any on earth. We shall see historic mansions vanish in smoke, and thousands of happy homes made prey by the demon War. War was never yet a pastime for any but the most brutish men. It is altogether horrible; it is utterly hellish, if the ladies will pardon the term, and only fools can welcome it as a holiday pursuit. Unhappily there are many such on both sides of the Potomac."

As he paused there was a complete hush among the company for thirty seconds or so. Then Dorothy advanced to Arthur, took his hand, and said:

"Thank you, Master!"

Arthur answered only by a look. But it was a look that told her all that she wanted to know.

When the guests were gone, Dorothy prepared for a hasty retreat to her room, but Arthur called to her as she reached the landing of the stairs, and asked:

"Shall we have one of our old time horseback rides 'soon' in the morning, Dorothy?"

"Yes. It delights me to hear our Virginia phrase 'soon in the morning.' Thank you, I'll be ready. Good night."

XXXVIII

SOON IN THE MORNING

IT was Dick who brought the horses on that next morning—Dick grown into a tall and comely fellow, and no longer dressed in the careless fashion of a year ago. For had not Dick spent two months in Richmond as his master's body servant? And had he not there developed his native dandy instincts? And had not the sight of the well-nigh universal uniforms of that time bred in him a great longing to wear some sort of "soldier clothes"?

His master had indulged the fancy. He meant to keep Dick as his body servant throughout the coming war, and, at any rate while he sat as a member of that august body the constitutional convention, he wanted his "boy" to present the appearance of a gentleman's servitor. So, when he took Dick to a tailor to be dressed in suitable fashion, he readily acquiesced in the young negro's preference for a suit of velveteen and corduroys with brass buttons shining all over it like the stars in Ursa Major. The tailor, recognizing the shapeliness of the young negro's person as something that afforded him an opportunity to display his skill in the matter of "fit" had brought all his art to bear upon the task of perfecting Dick's livery.

Dick in his turn had employed strategy in securing an opportunity to show himself in his new glory to his "Mis' Dorothy." Ben, the hostler who usually brought the horses had recently "got religion"—a bilious process which at that time was apt to render a negro specially indifferent to the obligations of morality with respect to "chickens fryin' size," and gloomily unfit for the performance of his ordinary duties. Dick had labored over night with "Bro' Ben," persuading him that he was really ill, and inducing him to swallow two blue mass pills—the which Dick had adroitly filched from the medicine chest in the laboratory. And as Dick, since his service "endurin' of de feveh," had enjoyed the reputation of knowing " 'mos as much as a sho' 'nuff doctah," Ben readily acquiesced in Dick's suggestion that he, Ben, should lie abed in the morning, Dick kindly volunteering

to feed and curry his mules for him and "bring de hosses."

Dick's strategy accomplished its purpose, and so it was Dick, resplendent in a livery that might have done credit to a field marshal on dress parade, who presented himself at the gate that morning in charge of his master's and Dorothy's mounts.

Arthur looked at him and asked:

"Why are you in full-dress uniform today, General Dick?"

"It's my respect'ful compliments to Mis' Dorothy, sah," answered the boy.

"Thank you, Dick!" said the girl. "I appreciate the attention. But where is Ben?"

"Bro' Ben he dun got religion, Mis' Dorothy, an' he dun taken two blue pills las' night, an'—"

"Give him a dose of Epsom salts at once, Dick," broke in Arthur, "or he'll be salivated. And don't give him oxalic acid by mistake. I'll trouble you to keep your fingers out of the medicine chest hereafter. Come, Dorothy!"

But as Dorothy was about to put her foot into Arthur's hand and spring from it into the saddle, Dick drew forth a white handkerchief, heavily perfumed with a cooking extract of lemon, and offered it to Dorothy, saying:

"You haint rubbed de hosses, Mis' Dorothy, to see ef dey's clean 'nuff fer dis suspicious occasion."

Dick probably meant "auspicious," but he was accustomed, both in prose and in verse, to require complaisant submission to his will on the part of the English language.

"Did you clean them, Dick?" asked Dorothy with a little laugh.

"I'se proud to say I did," answered the boy.

"Then there is no need for me to rub them," she replied. "You always do your work well. Your master tells me so. And now I want you to take this handkerchief of mine, and keep it for your own. I bought it in Paris, Dick. You can carry it in your breast pocket, with a corner of the lace protruding—sticking out, you know. And if you will come to me when we get back from our ride, I'll give you a bottle of something better than a cooking extract to perfume it with."

With that the girl handed him a dainty, lace-edged mouchoir, for which she had paid half a hundred francs in Paris, and which she had carried at the Tuileries.

"It is just in celebration of my home-coming," she said to Arthur in explanation, "and because we are going to have one of our old 'soon in the morning' rides together."

As she mounted, Dorothy turned to Dick and commanded:

"Turn the hounds loose, Dick, and put them on our track." Then to Arthur:

"It is a glorious morning, and I want the dogs to enjoy it."

The horses were full of the enthusiasm of the morning. They broke at once into a gallop, which neither of the riders was disposed to restrain. Five minutes later the hounds, bellowing as they followed the trail, overtook the riders. Dorothy brought her mare upon her haunches, and greeted the dogs as they leaped to caress her hands. Then she cracked her whip and blew her whistle, and sent the excited animals to heel, with moans and complainings on their part that they were thus banished from the immediate presence of their beloved mistress.

"Your dogs still love and obey you, Dorothy," said Arthur as they resumed their ride more soberly than before.

"Yes," she answered. "They are better in that respect than women are."

Arthur thought he understood. At any rate he accepted the remark as one implying an apology, and he saw no occasion for apology.

"Never mind that," he said. "A woman is entitled to her perfect freedom. Every human being born into this world has an absolute right to do precisely as he pleases, so long as in doing as he pleases he does not trespass upon or abridge the equal right of any other human being to do as he pleases. It is this equality of right that furnishes the foundation of all moral codes which are worthy of respect. And this equality of right belongs to women as fully as to men."

"In a way, yes," answered Dorothy. "Yet in another way, no. I control my hounds, chiefly for their own good. My right to control them rests upon my superior knowledge of what their conduct ought to be. It is the same way with women. They do not know as much as men do, concerning what their conduct ought to be. Take my dear mother's case for example. If she had frankly told my father that she could not be happy in the life into which he had brought her, that in fact it tortured her, he would have taken her away out of it. Her mistake was in taking the matter into her own hands. She needed a master. She ought to have made my father her master. She ought to have told him what she suffered, and why she suffered. She ought to have trusted him to find the remedy. Instead of that—well, you know the story. My father loved my mother with all his soul. She loved him in return. He could have been her master, if he had so willed. For when any woman loves any man that man has only to assume that he is her master in order to be so, and in order to make her supremely happy in his being so. If my father had understood that, there would have been no stain upon me now."

"What on earth do you mean, Dorothy?" asked Arthur, intensely, as the girl broke into tears. "There is no stain upon you. I will horsewhip anybody that shall so much as suggest such a thing."

"Yes, I know. You are good and true always. But think of it, Cousin Arthur. My mother is in hiding in Richmond, because of her shame. And my father has posthumously insulted her—pure, clean woman that she is—and insulted me, too, in my helplessness. Let me tell you all about it, please. Oh, Cousin Arthur, you do not know how I have longed for an opportunity to tell you! You alone of all people in this world are broad enough to sympathize with me in my wretchedness. You alone are true to Truth and Justice and Right. Let me tell you!"

"Tell me, Dorothy," he answered tenderly. "I beg of you tell me absolutely all that is in your mind. Tell me as freely as you told me once why you marked a watermelon with my initials. But please, Dorothy, do not tell

me anything at all, unless you can put aside the strange reserve that you have lately set up as a barrier between us, and talk to me in the old, free, unconstrained way. It was in hope of that that I asked you to take this ride."

She replied, "I beg your pardon for that. I could not help the constraint, and it pained me as greatly as it distressed you. We are free now, on our horses. We can talk without restraint, and when we have talked the matter out, perhaps you will understand. Listen, then!"

She waited a full minute, the horses walking meanwhile, before she resumed. Finally Arthur said: "I am listening, Dorothy."

Then she answered.

"My mother was never a bad woman, Arthur Brent. I want you to understand that clearly before we go on. She abandoned my father because she could not endure the life he provided for her. But she was always a pure woman, in spite of all her surroundings and conditions. She offered freedom to my father, but she asked no freedom for herself. She made no complaint of him, and his memory is still to her the dearest thing on earth. It is convention alone that censures her; convention alone that forbids her to come to Pocahontas; convention alone that refuses to me permission to love her openly as my mother and to honor her as such. If I had my way, I should bring her to Pocahontas, and set up housekeeping there; and I should send out a proclamation to everybody, saying in effect: 'My mother, Mrs. South, is with me. You who shall come promptly to pay your respects to her, I will count my friends. All the rest shall be my enemies.' But that may not be. My mother forbids, and I bow to my mother's command. Then comes my father's command, and to that I will never bow."

"What is it, Dorothy?"

"Aunt Polly has shown me his letter. He tells me that because of my mother's misbehavior, he has great fear on my account. He explains that he forbids me to learn music because he thought it was music that led my mother into wrong ways. He tells me that in order to preserve my 'respectability' he has arranged that I shall marry into a Virginia family as good as my own, and as if to make the matter of my inconsequence as detestably humiliating as possible he tells me as I learned before and wrote to you from Paris, that he has betrothed me to Jeff Peyton. If there had been any chance that I would submit to be thus disposed of like a hogshead of tobacco or a carload of wheat, Jeff Peyton's conduct would have destroyed it. The last time I met him in Europe you remember, he threatened me with this command of my father, and I instantly ordered him out of my presence. He had the impudence to come to Wyanoke last night—knowing that I was there, and that I was acting as hostess. It was nearly as bad as if I had been entertaining at Pocahontas. He made it worse by asking me if I had read my father's letter, and if I did not now realize the necessity of marrying him in order that I might ally myself with a good Virginia family. He had just finished that insolence when you made your little speech, not only calling him a fool by plain implication, but proving him to be one. That's why I thanked you, as I did."

"Yes, I quite understood that," answered Arthur. "Let us run our horses for a bit. I have a fancy to do that."

Dorothy understood. She joined him in a quarter mile stretch, and then he suddenly reined in his horse and faced her.

"It was right here, Dorothy, after a run like that," he said, "that you told me I might call you Dorothy. Now I ask you to let me call you Wife."

The girl hesitated. Presently she said:

"I have made up my mind to be perfectly true with you. I don't know whether I had thought of this or not, at any rate I have tried not to think of it."

"But now that I have forced the thought upon you, Dorothy? Is it yes, or no?"

Again the girl paused in thought before answering. Her dogs, seeing that she was paying no attention to them, broke away in pursuit of a hare. She suddenly recovered her self-possession. She whistled through her fingers to recall the hounds, and when they returned, crouching to receive the punishment they knew they deserved, she bade them go to heel, adding: "You're naughty fellows, but you haven't been kept under control, and so I forgive you." Then, turning to Arthur she said,

"Yes, Master."

* * * * *

On their return to the house Arthur was mindful of his duty to Aunt Polly, guardian of the person of Dorothy South, and, as such endowed with authority to approve or forbid any marriage to which that eighteen year old young person might be inclined, before attaining her twenty first year.

"Aunt Polly!" he said abruptly, "I want your permission to marry Dorothy."

"Why of course, Arthur," she replied. "That is what I have intended all the time."

* * * * *

It was four years later, in June, 1865. Arthur and Dorothy—with an abiding consciousness of duty faithfully done—stood together in the porch at Wyanoke. The war was over. Virginia was ruined beyond recovery. All of evil that Arthur had foreseen, had been accomplished. "But the good has also come," said Dorothy as they talked. "Slavery is at an end. You, Arthur, are free. You may again address yourself to your work in the world without the embarrassment of other duty. Shall we go back to New York?"



"AUNT POLLY!" HE SAID ABRUPTLY, "I WANT YOUR PERMISSION TO MARRY DOROTHY."

"No, Dorothy. My work in life lies in the cradle in the chamber there, where our two children sleep."

"Thank you!" said Dorothy, and silence fell for a time.

Presently Dorothy added:

"And my mother's work is done. It consoles me for all, when I remember that she lies where she fell, a martyr. The stone under which she sleeps is a rude one, but soldier hands have lovingly carved upon it the words:

'MADAME LE SUD
THE ANGEL OF THE BATTLEFIELD.' "

Then Dorothy whistled, and Dick came in response.

"Bring the horses at six o'clock tomorrow, Dick, your master and I are going to ride soon in the morning."

THE END

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