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CASTLE NOWHERE

BY

CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON

Not many years ago the shore bordering the head of Lake Michigan, the northern curve of that silver sea, was a wilderness unexplored. It is a wilderness still, showing even now on the school-maps nothing save an empty waste of colored paper, generally a pale, cold yellow suitable to the climate, all the way from Point St. Ignace to the iron ports on the Little Bay de Noquet, or Badderknock in lake phraseology, a hundred miles of nothing, according to the map-makers, who, knowing nothing of the region, set it down accordingly, withholding even those long-legged letters, 'Chip-pe-was,' 'Ric-ca-rees,' that stretch accommodatingly across so much townless territory farther west. This northern curve is and always has been off the route to anywhere; and mortals, even Indians, prefer as a general rule, when once started, to go somewhere. The earliest Jesuit explorers and the captains of yesterday's schooners had this in common, that they could not, being human, resist a cross-cut; and thus, whether bark canoes of two centuries ago or the high, narrow propellers of to-day, one and all, coming and going, they veer to the southeast or west, and sail gayly out of sight, leaving this northern curve of ours unvisited and alone. A wilderness still, but not unexplored; for that railroad of the future which is to make of British America a garden of roses, and turn the wild trappers of the Hudson's Bay Company

into gently smiling congressmen, has it not sent its missionaries thither, to the astonishment and joy of the beasts that dwelt therein? According to tradition, these men surveyed the territory, and then crossed over (those of them at least whom the beasts had spared) to the lower peninsula, where, the pleasing variety of swamps being added to the labyrinth of pines and sand-hills, they soon lost themselves, and to this day have never found what they lost. As the gleam of a camp-fire is occasionally seen, and now and then a distant shout heard by the hunter passing along the outskirts, it is supposed, that they are in there somewhere surveying still.

Not long ago, however, no white man's foot had penetrated within our curve. Across the great river and over the deadly plains, down to the burning clime of Mexico and up to the arctic darkness, journeyed our countrymen, gold to gather and strange countries to see; but this little pocket of land and water passed them by without a glance, inasmuch as no iron mountains rose among its pines, no copper lay hidden in its sand ridges, no harbors dented its shores. Thus it remained an unknown region, and enjoyed life accordingly. But the white man's foot, well booted, was on the way, and one fine afternoon came tramping through. 'I wish I was a tree,' said this white man, one Jarvis Waring by name. 'See that young pine, how lustily it grows, feeling its life to the very tip of each green needle! How it thrills in the sun's rays, how strongly, how completely it carries out the intention of its existence! It never, has a headache, it—Bah! what a miserable, half-way thing is man, who should be a demigod, and is—a creature for the very trees to pity!' And then he built his camp-fire, called in his dogs, and slept the sleep of youth and health, none the less deep because of that Spirit of Discontent that had driven him forth, into the wilderness; probably the Spirit of Discontent knew what it was about. Thus for days, for weeks, our white man wandered through the forest and wandered at random, for, being an exception, he preferred to go nowhere; he had his compass, but never used it, and, a practised hunter, eat what came in his way and planned not for the morrow. 'Now am I living the life of a good, hearty, comfortable bear,' he said to himself with satisfaction.

'No, you are not, Waring,' replied the Spirit of Discontent, 'for you know you have your compass in your pocket and can direct yourself back to the camps on Lake Superior or to the Sault for supplies, which is more than the most accomplished bear can do.'

'O come, what do you know about bears?' answered Waring; 'very likely they too have their depots of supplies,—in caves perhaps—'

'No caves here.'

'In hollow trees, then.'

'You are thinking of the stories about bears and wild honey,' said the pertinacious Spirit.

'Shut up, I am going to sleep,' replied the man, rolling himself in his blanket; and then the Spirit, having accomplished his object, smiled blandly and withdrew.

Wandering thus, all reckoning lost both of time and place, our white man came out one evening unexpectedly upon a shore; before him was water stretching away grayly in the fog-veiled moonlight; and so successful had been his determined entangling of himself in the webs of the wilderness, that he really knew not whether it was Superior, Huron or Michigan that confronted him, for all three bordered on the eastern end of the upper peninsula. Not that he wished to know; precisely the contrary. Glorifying himself in his ignorance, he built a fire on the sands, and leaning back against the miniature cliffs that guard the even beaches of the inland seas, he sat looking out over the water, smoking a comfortable pipe of peace, and listening meanwhile to the regular wash of the waves. Some people are born with rhythm in their souls, and some not; to Jarvis Waring everything seemed to keep time, from the songs of the birds to the chance words of a friend; and during all this pilgrimage through the wilderness, when not actively engaged in quarrelling with the Spirit, he was repeating bits of verses and humming fragments of songs that kept time with his footsteps, or rather they were repeating and humming themselves along through his brain, while he sat apart and listened. At this moment the fragment that came and went apropos of nothing was Shakespeare's sonnet,

'When to the sessions of sweet silent thought,
I summon up remembrance of things past.'

Now the small waves came in but slowly, and the sonnet in keeping time with their regular wash, dragged its syllables so dolorously that at last the man woke to the realisation that something was annoying him.

'When to—the ses—sions of—sweet si—lent thought,'

chanted the sonnet and waves together.

'O double it, double it, can't you?' said the man impatiently, 'this way:—

"When to the ses—sions of sweet si—lent thought, te-tum,
—te-tum, te-tum."

But no; the waves and the lines persisted in their own idea, and the listener finally became conscious of a third element against him, another sound which kept time with the obstinate two and encouraged them in obstinacy,—the dip of light oars somewhere out in the gray mist.

'When to—the ses—sions of—sweet si—lent thought,
I sum—mon up—remem—brance of—things past,'

chanted the sonnet and the waves and the oars together, and went duly on, sighing the lack of many things they sought away down to that 'dear friend' who in some unexplained way made all their 'sorrows end.' Even then, while peering through the fog and wondering where and what was this spirit boat that one could hear but not see, Waring found time to make his usual objections. 'This summoning up remembrance of things past, sighing the lack, weeping afresh, and so forth, is all very well,' he remarked to himself, 'we all do it. But that friend who sweeps in at the death with his opportune dose of comfort is a poetical myth whom I, for one, have never yet met.'

'That is because you do not deserve such a friend,' answered the Spirit, briskly reappearing on the scene. 'A man who flies in the wilderness to escape—'

'Spirit, are you acquainted with a Biblical personage named David?' interrupted Waring, executing a flank movement.

The spirit acknowledged the acquaintance, but cautiously, as not knowing what was coming next.

'Did he or did he not have anything to say about flying to wildernesses and mountain-tops? Did he or did he not express wishes to sail thither in person?'

'David had a voluminous way of making remarks,' replied the Spirit, 'and I do not pretend to stand up for them all. But one thing is certain; whatever he may have wished, in a musical way, regarding wildernesses and mountain-tops, when it came to the fact he did not go. And why? Because he—'

'Had no wings,' said Waring, closing the discussion with a mighty yawn. 'I say, Spirit, take yourself off. Something is coming ashore, and were it old Nick in person I should be glad to see him and shake his clawed hand.'

As he spoke out of the fog and into the glare of the fire shot a phantom skiff, beaching itself straight and swift at his feet, and so suddenly that he had to withdraw them like a flash to avoid the crunch of the sharp bows across the sand. 'Always let the other man speak first,' he thought; 'this boomerang of a boat has a shape in it, I see.'

The shape rose, and, leaning on its oar, gazed at the camp and its owner in silence. It seemed to be an old man, thin and bent, with bare arms, and a yellow handkerchief bound around its head, drawn down almost to the eyebrows, which, singularly bushy and prominent, shaded the deep-set eyes, and hid their expression.

'But supposing he won't, don't stifle yourself,' continued Waring; then aloud, 'Well, old gentleman, where do you come from?'

'Nowhere.'

'And where are you going?'

'Back there.'

'Couldn't you take me with you? I have been trying all my life to go nowhere, but never could learn the way: do what I would, I always found myself going in the opposite direction, namely, somewhere.'

To this the shape replied nothing, but gazed on.

'Do the nobodies reside in Nowhere, I wonder,' pursued the smoker; 'because if they do, I am afraid I shall meet all my friends and relatives. What a pity the somebodies could not reside there! But perhaps they do; cynics would say so.'

But at this stage the shape waved its oar impatiently and demanded, 'Who are you?'

'Well I do not exactly know. Once I supposed I was Jarvis Waring, but the wilderness has routed that prejudice. We can be anybody we please; it is only a question of force or will; and my latest character has been William Shakespeare. I have been trying to find out whether I wrote my own plays. Stay to supper and take the other side; it is long since I have had an argument with flesh and blood. And you are that,—aren't you?'

But the shape frowned until it seemed all eyebrow. 'Young man,' it said, 'how came you here? By water?'

'No; by land.'

'Alongshore?'

'No; through the woods.'

'Nobody ever comes through the woods.'

'Agreed; but I am somebody.'

'Do you mean that you have come across from Lake Superior on foot?'

'I landed on the shore of Lake Superior a month or two ago, and struck inland the same day; where I am now I neither know nor want to know.'

'Very well,' said the shape,—'very well.' But it scowled more gently. 'You have no boat?'

'No.'

'Do you start on to-morrow?'

'Probably; by that time the waves and "the sessions of sweet silent thought" will have driven me distracted between them.'

'I will stay to supper, I think,' said the shape, unbending still farther, and stepping out of the skiff.

'Deeds before words then,' replied Waring, starting back towards a tree where his game-bag and knapsack were standing. When he returned the skiff had disappeared; but the shape was warming its moccassined feet in a very human sort of way. They cooked and eat with the appetites of the wilderness, and grew sociable after a fashion. The shape's name was Fog, Amos Fog, or old Fog, a fisherman and a hunter among the islands farther to the south; he had come inshore to see what that fire meant, no person having camped there in fifteen long years.

'You have been here all that time, then?'

'Off and on, off and on; I live a wandering life,' replied old Fog; and then, with the large curiosity that solitude begets, he turned the conversation back towards the other and his story.

The other, not unwilling to tell his adventures, began readily; and the old man listened, smoking meanwhile a second pipe produced from the compact stores in the knapsack. In the web of encounters and escapes, he placed his little questions now and then; no, Waring had no plan for exploring the region, no intention of settling there, was merely idling away a summer in the wilderness and would then go back to civilization never to return, at least, not that way; might go west across the plains, but that would be farther south. They talked on, one much, the other little; after a time, Waring, whose heart had been warmed by his flask, began to extol his ways and means.

'Live? I live like a prince,' he said. 'See these tin cases; they contain concentrated stores of various kinds. I carry a little tea, you see, and even a few lumps of white sugar as a special treat now and then on a wet night.'

'Did you buy that sugar at the Sault?' said the old man, eagerly.

'O no; I brought it up from below. For literature I have this small edition of Shakespeare's sonnets, the cream of the whole world's poetry; and when I am tired of looking at the trees and the sky, I look at this, Titian's lovely daughter with her upheld salver of fruit. Is she not beautiful as a dream?'

'I don't know much about dreams,' replied old Fog, scanning the small picture with curious eyes 'but isn't she a trifle heavy in build? They dress like that nowadays, I suppose,—flowered gowns and gold chains around the waist?'

'Why, man, that picture was painted more than three centuries ago.'

'Was it now? Women don't alter much, do they?' said old Fog, simply.
'Then they don't dress like that nowadays?'

'I don't know how they dress, and don't care,' said the younger man, repacking his treasures.

Old Fog concluded to camp with his new friend that night and be off at dawn. 'You see it is late,' he said, 'and your fire's all made and everything comfortable. I've a long row before me to-morrow: I'm on my way to the Beavers.'

'Ah! very intelligent animals, I am told. Friends of yours?'

'Why, they're islands, boy; Big and Little Beaver! What do you know, if you don't know the Beavers?'

'Man,' replied Waring. 'I flatter myself I know the human animal well; he is a miserable beast.'

'Is he?' said old Fog, wonderingly; 'who'd have thought it!' Then, giving up the problem as something beyond his reach,—'Don't trouble yourself if you hear me stirring in the night,' he said; 'I am often mighty restless.' And rolling himself in his blanket, he soon became, at least as regards the camp-fire and sociability, a nonentity.

'Simple-minded old fellow,' thought Waring, lighting a fresh pipe; 'has lived around here all his life apparently. Think of that,—to have lived around here all one's life! I, to be sure, am here now; but then, have I not been—' And here followed a revery of remembrances, that glittering network of gayety and folly which only young hearts can weave, the network around whose border is written in a thousand hues, 'Rejoice, young man, in thy youth, for it cometh not again.'

'Alas, what sighs from our boding hearts
The infinite skies have borne away!'

sings a poet of our time; and the same thought lies in many hearts unexpressed, and sighed itself away in this heart of our Jarvis Waring that still foggy evening on the beach.

The middle of the night, the long watch before dawn; ten chances to one against his awakening! A shape is moving towards the bags hanging on the distant tree. How the sand crunches,—but he sleeps on. It reaches the bags, this shape, and hastily, rifles them; then it steals back and crosses the sand again, its moccasined feet making no sound. But, as it happened, that one chance (which so few of us ever see!) appeared on the scene at this moment and guided these feet directly towards a large, thin, old shell masked with newly blown sand; it broke with a crack; Waring woke and gave chase. The old man was unarmed, he had noticed that; and then such a simple-minded, harmless old fellow! But simple-minded, harmless old fellows do not run like mad if one happens to wake; so the younger pursued. He was strong, he was fleet; but the shape was fleetier, and the space between them grew wider. Suddenly the shape turned and darted into the water, running out until only its head was visible above the surface, a dark spot in the foggy moonlight. Waring pursued, and saw meanwhile another dark spot beyond, an empty skiff which came rapidly inshore-ward, until it met the head, which forthwith took to itself a body, clambered in, lifted the oars, and was gone in an instant.

'Well,' said Waring, still pursuing down the gradual slope of the beach, 'will a phantom bark come at my call, I wonder? At any rate I will go out as far as he did and see.' But no; the perfidious beach at this instant shelved off suddenly and left him afloat in deep water. Fortunately he was a skilled swimmer, and soon regained the shore wet and angry. His dogs were whimpering at a distance, both securely fastened to trees, and the light of the fire had died down: evidently the old Fog was not, after all, so simple as some other people!

'I might as well see what the old rogue has taken,' thought Waring; 'all the tobacco and whiskey, I'll be bound.' But nothing had been touched save the lump-sugar, the little book, and the picture of Titian's daughter! Upon this what do you suppose Waring did? He built a boat.

When it was done, and it took some days and was nothing but a dug-out after all (the Spirit said that), he sailed out into the unknown; which being interpreted means that he paddled southward. From the conformation of the shore, he judged that he was in a deep curve, protected in a measure from the force of wind and wave. 'I'll find that ancient mariner,' he said to himself, 'if I have to circumnavigate the entire lake. My book of sonnets, indeed, and my Titian picture! Would nothing else content him? This voyage I undertake from a pure inborn sense of justice—'

'Now, Waring, you know it is nothing of the kind,' said the Spirit who had sailed also. 'You know you are tired of the woods and dread going back that way, and you know you may hit a steamer off the

islands; besides, you are curious about this old man who steals Shakespeare and sugar, leaving tobacco and whiskey untouched.'

'Spirit,' replied the man at the paddle, 'you fairly corrupt me with your mendacity. Be off and unlimber yourself in the fog; I see it coming in.'

He did see it indeed; in it rolled upon him in columns, a soft silvery cloud enveloping everything, the sunshine, the shore, and the water, so that he paddled at random, and knew not whither he went, or rather saw not, since knowing was long since out of the question. 'This is pleasant,' he said to himself when the morning had turned to afternoon and the afternoon to night, 'and it is certainly new. A stratus of tepid cloud a thousand miles long and a thousand miles deep, and a man in a dug-out paddling through! Sisyphus was nothing to this.' But he made himself comfortable in a philosophic way, and went to the only place left to him,—to sleep.

At dawn the sunshine colored the fog golden, but that was all; it was still fog, and lay upon the dark water thicker and softer than ever. Waring eat some dried meat, and considered the possibilities; he had reckoned without the fog, and now his lookout was uncomfortably misty. The provisions would not last more than a week; and though he might catch fish, how could he cook them? He had counted on a shore somewhere; any land, however desolate, would give him a fire; but this fog was muffling, and unless he stumbled ashore by chance he might go on paddling in a circle forever. 'Bien,' he said, summing up, 'my part at any rate is to go on; I, at least can do my duty.'

'Especially as there is nothing else to do,' observed the Spirit.

Having once decided, the man kept at his work with finical precision. At a given moment he eat a lunch, and very tasteless it was too, and then to work again; the little craft went steadily on before the stroke of the strong arms, its wake unseen, its course unguided. Suddenly at sunset the fog folded its gray draperies, spread its wings, and floated off to the southwest, where that night it rested at Death's Door and sent two schooners to the bottom; but it left behind it a released dug-out, floating before a log fortress which had appeared by magic, rising out of the water with not an inch of ground to spare, if indeed there was any ground; for might it not be a species of fresh-water boat, anchored there for clearer weather?

'Ten more strokes and I should have run into it,' thought Waring as he floated noiselessly up to this watery residence; holding on by a jutting beam, he reconnoitred the premises. The building was of logs, square, and standing on spiles, its north side, under which he lay, showed a row of little windows all curtained in white, and from one of them peeped the top of a rose-bush; there was but one storey, and the roof was flat. Nothing came to any of these windows, nothing stirred, and the man in the dug-out, being curious as well as hungry, decided to explore, and touching the wall at intervals pushed his craft noiselessly around the eastern corner; but here was a blank wall of logs and nothing more. The south side was the same, with the exception of two loopholes, and the dug-out glided its quietest past these. But the west shone out radiant, a rude little balcony overhanging the water, and in it a girl in a mahogany chair, nibbling something and reading.

'My sugar and my sonnets, as I am alive!' ejaculated Waring to himself.

The girl took a fresh bite with her little white teeth, and went on reading in the sunset light.

'Cool,' thought Waring.

And cool she looked truly to a man who had paddled two days in a hot sticky fog, as, clad in white, she sat still and placid on her airy perch. Her hair, of the very light fleecy gold seldom seen after babyhood, hung over her shoulders unconfined by comb or ribbon, felling around her like a veil and glittering in the horizontal sunbeams; her face, throat and hands were white as the petals of a white camellia, her features infantile, her cast-down eyes invisible under the full-orbed lids. Waring gazed at her cynically, his boat motionless; it accorded with his theories that the only woman he had seen for months should be calmly eating and reading stolen sweets. The girl turned a page, glanced up, saw him, and sprang forward smiling; as she stood at the balcony, her beautiful hair fell below her knees.

'Jacob,' she cried gladly, 'is that you at last?'

'No,' replied Waring, 'it is not Jacob; rather Esau. Jacob was too tricky for me. The damsel, Rachel, I presume!'

'My name is Silver,' said the girl, 'and I see you are not Jacob at all. Who are you, then?'

'A hungry, tired man who would like to come aboard and rest awhile.'

'Aboard? This is not a boat.'

'What then?'

'A castle,—Castle Nowhere.'

'You reside here?'

'Of course; where else should I reside? Is it not a beautiful place?' said the girl, looking around with a little air of pride.

'I could tell better if I was up there.'

'Come, then.'

'How?'

'Do you not see the ladder?'

'Ah, yes,—Jacob had a ladder, I remember; he comes up this way, I suppose?'

'He does not; but I wish he would.'

'Undoubtedly. But you are not Leah all this time?'

'I am Silver, as I told you before; I know not—what you mean with your Leah.'

'But, mademoiselle, your Bible—'

'What is Bible?'

'You have never read the Bible?'

'It is a book, then. I like books,' replied Silver, waving her hand comprehensively; 'I have read five, and now I have a new one.'

'Do you like it, your new one?' asked Waring, glancing towards his property.

'I do not understand it all; perhaps you can explain to me?'

'I think I can,' answered the young man, smiling in spite of himself; 'that is, if you wish to learn.'

'Is it hard?'

'That depends upon the scholar; now, some minds—' Here a hideous face looked out through one of the little windows, and then vanished. 'Ah,' said Waring, pausing, 'one of the family?'

'That is Lorez, my dear old nurse.'

The face now came out on to the balcony and showed itself as part of an old negress, bent and wrinkled with age.

'He came in a boat, Lorez,' said Silver, 'and yet you see he is not Jacob. But he says he is tired and hungry, so we will have supper, now, without waiting for father.'

The old woman smiled and nodded, stroking the girl's glittering hair meanwhile with her black hand.

'As soon as the sun has gone it will be very damp,' said Silver, turning to her guest; 'you will come within. But you have not told me-your name.'

'Jarvis,' replied Waring promptly.

'Come, then, Jarvis.' And she led the way through a low door into a long narrow room with a row of little square windows on each side all covered with little square white curtains. The walls and ceiling were planked and the workmanship of the whole rude and clumsy; but a gay carpet covered the floor, a chandelier adorned with lustres, hung from a hook in the ceiling, large gilded vases and a mirror in a tarnished gilt frame adorned a shelf over the hearth, mahogany chairs stood in ranks against the wall under the little windows and a long narrow table ran down the centre of the apartment from end to end. It all seemed strangely familiar; of what did it remind him? His eyes fell upon the table-legs; they were riveted to the floor. Then it came to him at once,—the long narrow cabin of a lake steamer.

'I wonder if it is not anchored after all,' he thought.

'Just a few shavings and one little stick, Lorez,' said Silver; 'enough to give us light and drive away the damp.'

Up flared the blaze and spread abroad the dear home feeling. (O hearth-fire, good genius of home, with thee a log-cabin is cheery and bright, without thee the palace a dreary waste!)

'And now, while Lorez is preparing supper, you will come and see my pets,' said Silver, in her soft tone of unconscious command.

'By all means,' replied Waring. 'Anything in the way of mermaidens?'

'Mermaidens dwell in the water, they cannot live in houses as we can; did you not know that? I have seen them on moonlight nights, and so has Lorez; but Aunt Shadow never saw them.'

'Another member of the family,—Aunt Shadow?'

'Yes,' replied Silver; 'but she is not here now. She went away one night when I was asleep. I do not know why it is,' she added sadly, 'but if people go away from here in the night they never come back. Will it be so with you, Jarvis?'

'No; for I will take you with me,' replied the young man lightly.

'Very well; and father will go too, and Lorez,' said Silver.

To this addition, Waring, like many another man in similar circumstances, made no reply. But Silver did not notice the omission. She had opened a door, and behold, they stood together in a bower of greenery and blossom, flowers growing everywhere,—on the floor, up the walls, across the ceiling, in pots, in boxes, in baskets, on shelves, in cups, in shells, climbing, crowding each other, swinging, hanging, winding around everything,—a riot of beauty with perfumes for a language. Two white gulls stood in the open window and gravely surveyed the stranger.

'They stay with me almost all the time,' said the water-maiden; 'every morning they fly out to sea for a while, but they always come back.'

Then she flitted to and fro, kissed the opening blossoms and talked to them, tying back the more riotous vines and gravely admonishing them.

'They are so happy here,' she said; 'it was dull for them on shore. I would not live on the shore! Would you?'

'Certainly not,' replied Waring, with an air of having spent his entire life upon a raft. 'But you did not find all these blossoms on the shores about here, did you?'

'Father found them,—he finds everything; in his boat almost every night is something for me. I hope he will come soon; he will be so glad to see you.'

'Will he? I wish I was sure of that,' thought Waring. Then aloud, 'Has he any men with him?' he asked carelessly.

'O no; we live here all alone now,—father, Lorez, and I.'

'But you were expecting a Jacob?'

'I have been expecting Jacob for more than two years. Every night I watch for him, but he comes not. Perhaps he and Aunt Shadow will come together,—do you think they will?' said Silver, looking up into his eyes with a wistful expression.

'Certainly,' replied Waring.

'Now am I glad, so glad! For father and Lorez will never say so. I think I shall like you, Jarvis.' And, leaning on a box of mignonette, she considered him gravely with her little hands folded.

Waring, man of the world,—Waring, who had been, under fire,—Waring, the impassive,—Waring,—the unflinching,—turned from this scrutiny.

Supper was eaten at one end of the long table; the dishes, tablecloth, and napkins were marked with an anchor, the food simple but well cooked.

'Fish, of course, and some common supplies I can understand,' said the visitor; 'but how do you obtain flour like this, or sugar?'

'Father brings them,' said Silver, 'and keeps them locked in his storeroom. Brown sugar we have always, but white not always, and I like it so much! Don't you?'

'No; I care nothing for it,' said Waring, remembering the few lumps and the little white teeth.

The old negress waited, and peered at the visitor out of her small bright eyes; every time Silver spoke to her, she broke into a radiance of smiles and nods, but said nothing.

'She lost her voice some years ago,' explained the little mistress when the black had gone out for more coffee; 'and now she seems to have forgotten how to form words, although she understands us.'

Lorez returned, and, after refilling Waring's cup, placed something shyly beside his plate, and withdrew into the shadow. 'What is it?' said the young man, examining the carefully folded parcel.

'Why, Lorez, have you given him that!' exclaimed Silver as he drew out a scarlet ribbon, old and frayed, but brilliant still. 'We think it must have belonged to her young master,' she continued in a low tone. 'It is her most precious treasure, and long ago she used to talk about him, and about her old home in the South.'

The old woman came forward after a while, smiling and nodding like an animated mummy, and taking the red ribbon threw it around the young man's neck, knotting it under the chin. Then she nodded with treble radiance and made signs; of satisfaction.

'Yes, it is becoming,' said Silver, considering the effect thoughtfully, her small head with its veil of hair bent to one side, like a flower swayed by the wind.

The flesh-pots of Egypt returned to Jarvis Waring's mind: he remembered certain articles of apparel left behind in civilization, and murmured against the wilderness. Under the pretence of examining the vases, he took an early opportunity of, looking into the round mirror. 'I am hideous,' he said to himself, uneasily.

'Decidedly so,' echoed the Spirit in a cheerful voice. But he was not; only a strong dark young man of twenty-eight, browned by exposure, clad in a gray flannel shirt and the rough attire of a hunter.

The fire on the hearth sparkled gayly. Silver had brought one of her little white gowns, half finished, and sat sewing in its light, while the old negress came and went about her household tasks.

'So you can sew?' said the visitor.

'Of course I can. Aunt Shadow taught me,' answered the water-maiden, threading her needle deftly. 'There is no need to do it, for I have so many dresses; but I like to sew, don't you?'

'I cannot say that I do. Have you so many dresses then?'

'Yes; would you like to see them? Wait.'

Down went the little gown trailing along the floor, and away she flew, coming back with her arms full, —silks, muslins, laces, and even jewelry. 'Are they not beautiful?' she asked, ranging her splendor over the chairs.

'They are indeed,' said Waring, examining the garments with curious eyes. 'Where did you get them?'

'Father brought them. O, there he is now, there he is now! I hear the oars. Come, Lorez.'

She ran out; the old woman hastened, carrying a brand from the hearth; and after a moment Waring followed them. 'I may as well face the old rogue at once,' he thought.

The moon had not risen and the night was dark; under the balcony floated a black object, and Lorez, leaning over, held out her flaming torch. The face of the old rogue came out into the light under its yellow handkerchief, but so brightened and softened by loving gladness that the gazer above hardly knew it. 'Are you there, darling, safe and well?' said the old man, looking up fondly as he fastened his skiff.

'Yes, father; here I am and so glad to see you,' replied the water-maiden, waiting at the top of the ladder. 'We have a visitor, father dear; are you not glad, so glad to see him?'

The two men came face to face, and the elder started back. 'What are you doing here?' he said sternly.

'Looking for my property.'

'Take it, and begone!'

'I will, to-morrow.'

All this apart, and with the rapidity of lightning.

'His name is Jarvis, father, and we must keep him with us,' said Silver.

'Yes, dear, as long as he wishes to stay; but no doubt he has home and friends waiting for him.'

They went within, Silver leading the way. Old Fog's eyes gleamed and his hands were clinched. The younger man watched him warily.

'I have been showing Jarvis all my dresses, father, and he thinks them beautiful.'

'They certainly are remarkable,' observed Waring, coolly.

Old Fog's hands dropped, he glanced nervously towards the visitor.

'What have you brought for me to-night, father dear?'

'Nothing, child; that is, nothing of any consequence. But it is growing late; run off to your nest'

'O no, papa, you have had no supper, nor—'

'I am not hungry. Go, child, go; do not grieve me,' said the old man in a low tone.

'Grieve you? Dear papa, never!' said the girl, her voice softening to tenderness in a moment. 'I will run straight to my room.—Come, Lorez.'

The door closed. 'Now for us two,' thought Waring.

But the cloud had passed from old Fog's face, and he drew up his chair confidentially. 'You see how it is,' he began in an apologetic tone; 'that child is the darling of my life, and I could not resist taking those things for her; she has so few books, and she likes those little lumps of sugar.'

'And the Titian picture?' said Waring, watching him doubtfully.

'A father's foolish pride; I knew she was lovelier, but I wanted to see the two side by side. She is lovelier, isn't she?'

'I do not think so.'

'Don't you?' said old Fog in a disappointed tone. 'Well, I suppose I am foolish about her; we live here all alone, you see: my sister brought her up.'

'The Aunt Shadow who has gone away?'

'Yes; she was my sister, and—and she went away last year,' said the old man. 'Have a pipe?'

'I should think you would find it hard work to live here.'

'I do; but a poor man cannot choose. I hunt, fish, and get out a few furs sometimes; I traffic with the Beaver people now and then. I bought all this furniture in that way; you would not think it, but they have a great many nice things down at Beaver.'

'It looks like steamboat furniture.'

'That is it; it is. A steamer went to pieces down there, and they saved almost all her furniture and stores; they are very good sailors, the Beavers.'

'Wreckers, perhaps?'

'Well I would not like to say that; you know we do have terrible storms on these waters. And then there is the fog; this part of Lake Michigan is foggy half the time, why, I never could guess: but twelve hours out the twenty-four the gray mist lies on the water here and outside, shifting slowly backwards and forwards from Little Traverse to Death's Door, and up into this curve, like a waving curtain. Those silks, now, came from the steamer; trunks, you know. But I have never told Silver; she might ask where were the people to whom they belonged. You do not like the idea? Neither do I. But how could we help the drowning when we were not there, and these things were going for a song down at Beaver. The child loves pretty things; what could a poor man do? Have a glass of punch; I'll get it ready in no time.'

He bustled about, and then came back with the full glasses. 'You won't tell her? I may have done wrong in the matter, but it would kill me to have the child lose faith in me,' he said, humbly.

'Are you going to keep the girl shut up here forever?' said Waring, half touched, half disgusted; the old fellow had looked abject as he pleaded.

'That is it; no,' said Fog, eagerly. 'She has been but a child all this time, you see, and my sister taught her well. We did the best we could. But as soon as I have a little more, just a little more, I intend to move to one of the towns down the lake, and have a small house and everything comfortable. I have planned it all out, I shall have—'

He rambled on, garrulously detailing all his fancies and projects while the younger man sipped his punch (which was very good), listened until he was tired, fell into a doze, woke and listened awhile longer, and then, wearied out, proposed bed.

'Certainly. But, as I was saying—'

'I can hear the rest to-morrow,' said Waring, rising with scant courtesy.

'I am sorry you go so soon; couldn't you stay a few days?' said the old man, lighting a brand. 'I am going over to-morrow to the shore where I met you. I have some traps there; you might enjoy a little hunting.'

'I have had too much of that already. I must get my dogs, and then I should like to hit a steamer or vessel going below.'

'Nothing easier; we'll go over after the dogs early in the morning, and then I'll take you right down to the islands if the wind is fair. Would you like to look around the castle,—I am going to draw up the ladders. No? This way, then; here is your room.'

It was a little side-chamber with one window high up over the water; there was an iron bolt on the door, and the walls of bare logs were solid. Waring stood his gun in one corner, and laid his pistols by the side of the bed,—for there was a bed, only a rude framework like a low-down shelf, but covered with mattress and sheets none the less,—and his weary body longed for those luxuries with a longing that only the wilderness can give,—the wilderness with its beds of boughs, and no undressing. The bolt and the logs shut him in safely; he was young and strong, and there were his pistols. 'Unless they burn down their old castle,' he said to himself, 'they cannot harm me.' And then he fell to thinking of the lovely childlike girl, and his heart grew soft. 'Poor old man,' he said, 'how he must have worked and stolen and starved to keep her safe and warm in this far-away nest of his hidden in the fogs! I won't betray the old fellow, and I'll go to-morrow. Do you hear that, Jarvis Waring? I'll go to-morrow!'

And then the Spirit, who had been listening as usual, folded himself up silently and flew away.

To go to sleep in a bed, and awake in an open boat drifting out to sea, is startling. Waring was not without experiences, startling and so forth, but this exceeded former sensations; when a bear had him, for instance, he at least understood it, but this was not a bear, but a boat. He examined the craft as well as he could in the darkness. 'Evidently boats in some shape or other are the genii of this region,' he said; 'they come shooting ashore from nowhere, they sail in at a signal without oars, canvas, or crew, and now they have taken to kidnapping. It is foggy too, I'll warrant; they are in league with the fogs.' He looked up, but could see nothing, not even a star.

'What does it all mean anyway? Where am I? Who am I? Am I anybody? Or has the body gone and left me only as an any?' But no one answered. Finding himself partly dressed, with the rest of his clothes at his feet, he concluded that he was not yet a spirit; in one of his pockets was a match, he struck it and came back to reality in a flash. The boat was his own dug-out, and he himself and no other was in it: so far, so good. Everything else, however, was fog and night. He found the paddle and began work. 'We shall see who will conquer,' he thought, doggedly, 'Fate or I!' So he paddled on an hour for more.

Then the wind arose and drove the fog helter-skelter across to Green Bay, where the gray ranks curled themselves down and lay hidden until morning. 'I'll go with the wind,' thought Waring, 'it must take me somewhere in time.' So he changed his course and paddled on. The wind grew strong, then stronger. He could see a few stars now as the ragged dark clouds scudded across the heavens, and he hoped for the late moon. The wind grew wild, then wilder. It took all his skill to manage his clumsy boat. He no longer asked himself where he was or who; he knew,—a man in the grasp of death. The wind was a gale now, and the waves were pressed down flat by its force as it flew along. Suddenly the man at the paddle, almost despairing, espied a light, high up, steady, strong. 'A lighthouse on one of the islands,' he said, and steered for it with all his might. Good luck was with him; in half an hour he felt the beach under him, and landed on the shore; but the light he saw no longer. 'I must be close in under

it,' he thought. In the train of the gale came thunder and lightning. Waring sat under a bush watching the powers of the air in conflict, he saw the fury of their darts and heard the crash of their artillery, and mused upon the wonders of creation, and the riddle of man's existence. Then a flash came, different from the others in that it brought the human element upon the scene; in its light he saw a vessel driving helplessly before the gale. Down from his spirit-heights he came at once, and all the man within him was stirred for those on board, who, whether or not they had ever perplexed themselves over the riddle of their existence, no doubt now shrank from the violent solution offered to them. But what could he do? He knew nothing of the shore, and yet there must be a harbor somewhere, for was there not the light? Another flash showed the vessel still nearer, drifting broadside on; involuntarily he ran out on the long sandy point where it seemed that soon she must strike. But sooner came a crash, then a grinding sound; there was a reef outside then, and she was on it, the rocks cutting her, and the waves pounding her down on their merciless edges. 'Strange!' he thought. 'The harbor must be on the other side I suppose, and yet it seems as though I came this way.' Looking around, there was the light high up behind him, burning clearly and strongly, while the vessel was breaking to pieces below. 'It is a lure,' he said, indignantly, 'a false light.' In his wrath he spoke aloud; suddenly a shape came out of the darkness, cast him down, and tightened a grasp around his throat. 'I know you,' he muttered, strangling. One hand was free, he drew out his pistol, and fired; the shape fell back. It was old Fog. Wounded? Yes, badly.

Waring found his tinder-box, made a blaze of driftwood, and bound up the bleeding arm and leg roughly. 'Wretch,' he said, 'you set that light.'

Old Fog nodded.

'Can anything be done for the men on board? Answer or I'll end your miserable life at once; I don't know why, indeed, I have tried to save it.'

Old Fog shook his head. 'Nothing,' he murmured; 'I know every inch of the reef and shore.'

Another flash revealed for an instant the doomed vessel, and Waring raged at his own impotence as he strode to and fro, tears of anger and pity in his eyes. The old man watched him anxiously. 'There are not more than six of them,' he said; 'it was only a small schooner.'

'Silence!' shouted Waring; 'each man of the six now suffering and drowning is worth a hundred of such as you!'

'That may be,' said Fog.

Half an hour afterwards he spoke again. 'They're about gone now, the water is deadly cold up here. The wind will go down soon, and by daylight the things will be coming ashore; you'll see to them, won't you?'

'I'll see to nothing, murderer.'

'And if I die what are you?'

'An avenger.'

'Silver must die too then; there is but little in the house, she will soon starve. It was for her that I came out to-night.'

'I will take her away; not for your sake, but for hers.'

'How can you find her?'

'As soon as it is daylight I will sail over.'

'Over? Over where? That is it, you do not know,' said the old man, eagerly, raising himself on his unwounded arm. 'You might row and sail about here for days, and I'll warrant you'd never find the castle; it's hidden away more carefully than a nest in the reeds, trust me for that. The way lies through a perfect tangle of channels and islands and marshes, and the fog is sure for at least a good half of the time. The sides of the castle towards the channel show no light at all; and even when you're once through the outlying islets, the only approach is masked by a movable bed of sedge which I contrived, and which turns you skilfully back into the marsh by another way. No; you might float around there for days but you'd never find the castle.'

'I found it once.'

'That was because you came from the north shore. I did not guard that side, because no one has ever

come that way; you remember how quickly I saw your light and rowed over to find out what it was. But you are miles away from there now.'

The moon could not pierce the heavy clouds, and the night continued dark. At last the dawn came slowly up the east and showed an angry sea, and an old man grayly pallid on the sands near the dying fire; of the vessel nothing was to be seen.

'The things will be coming ashore, the things will be coming ashore,' muttered the old man, his anxious eyes turned towards the water that lay on a level with his face; he could not raise himself now.

'Do you see things coming ashore?'

Waring looked searchingly at him. 'Tell me the truth,' he said, 'has the girl no boat?'

'No.'

'Will any one go to rescue her; does any one know of the castle?'

'Not a human being on this earth.'

'And that aunt,—that Jacob?'

'Didn't you guess it? They are both dead. I rowed them out by night and buried them,—my poor old sister and the boy who had been our serving-lad. The child knows nothing of death. I told her they had gone away.'

'Is there no way for her to cross, to the islands or mainland?'

'No; there is a circle of deep water all around the castle, outside.'

'I see nothing for it, then, but to try to save your justly forfeited life,' said Waring, kneeling down with an expression of repugnance. He was something of a surgeon, and knew what he, was about. His task over, he made up the fire, warmed some food, fed the old man, and helped his waning strength with the contents of his flask. 'At least you placed all my property in the dug-out before you set me adrift,' he said; 'may I ask your motive?'

'I did not wish to harm you; only to get rid of you. You had provisions, and your chances were as good as many you had had in the woods.'

'But I might have found my way back to your castle?'

'Once outside, you could never do that,' replied the old man, securely.

'I could go back along-shore.'

'There are miles of piny-wood swamps where the streams come down; no, you could not do it, unless you went away round to Lake Superior again, and struck across the country as you did before. That would take you a month or two, and the summer is almost over. You would not risk a Northern snowstorm, I reckon. But say, do you see things coming ashore?'

'The poor bodies will come, no doubt,' said Waring, sternly.

'Not yet; and they don't often come in here, anyway; they're more likely to drift out to sea.'

'Miserable creature, this is not the first time, then?'

'Only four times,—only four times in fifteen long years, and then only when she was close to starvation,' pleaded the old man. 'The steamer was honestly wrecked,—the Anchor, of the Buffalo line,—honestly, I do assure you; and what I gathered from her—she did not go to pieces for days—lasted me a long time, besides furnishing the castle. It was a godsend to me, that steamer. You must not judge me, boy; I work, I slave, I go hungry and cold, to keep her happy and warm. But times come when everything fails and starvation is at the door. She never knows it, none of them ever knew it, for I keep the keys and amuse them with little mysteries; but, as God is my judge, the wolf has been at the door, and is there this moment unless I have luck. Fish? There are none in shore where they can catch them. Why do I not fish for them? I do; but my darling is not accustomed to coarse fare, her delicate life must be delicately nourished. O, you do not know, you do not know! I am growing old, and my hands and eyes are not what they were. That very night when I came home and found you there, I had just lost overboard my last supplies, stored so long, husbanded so carefully! If I could walk, I would show you my cellar and storehouse back in the woods.'

'Many things that they have held were honestly earned, by my fish and my game, and one thing and another. I get out timber and raft it down to the islands sometimes, although the work is too hard for an old man alone; and I trade my furs off regularly at the settlements on the islands and even along the mainland,—a month's work for a little flour or sugar. Ah, how I have labored! I have felt my muscles crack, I have dropped like a log from sheer weariness. Talk of tortures; which of them have I not felt, with the pains and faintness of exposure and hunger racking me from head to foot? Have I stopped for snow and ice? Have I stopped for anguish? Never; I have worked, worked, worked, with the tears of pain rolling down my cheeks, with my body gnawed by hunger. That night, in some way, the boxes slipped and fell overboard as I was shifting them; just slipped out of my grasp as if on purpose, they knowing all the time that they were my last. Home I came, empty-handed, and found you there! I would have taken your supplies, over on the north beach, that night, yes, without pity, had I not felt sure of those last boxes; but I never rob needlessly. You look at me with scorn? You are thinking of those dead men! But what are they to Silver,—the rough common fellows,—and the wolf standing at the castle door! Believe me, though, I try everything before I resort to this, and only twice out of the four times have I caught anything with my tree-hung light; once it was a vessel loaded with provisions, and once it was a schooner with grain from Chicago, which washed overboard and was worthless. O, the bitter day when I stood here in the biting wind and watched it float by out to sea! But say, has anything come ashore? She will be waking soon, and we have miles to go.'

But Waring did not answer; he turned away. The old man caught at his feet. 'You are not going,' he cried in a shrill voice, '—you are not going? Leave me to die,—that is well; the sun will come and burn me, thirst will come and madden me, these wounds will torture me, and all is no more than I deserve. But Silver? If I die, she dies. If you forsake me, you forsake her. Listen; do you believe in your Christ, the dear Christ? Then, in his name I swear to you that you cannot reach her alone, that only I can guide you to her. O save me, for her sake! Must she suffer and linger and die? O God, have pity and soften his heart!' The voice died away in sobs, the weak slow sobs of an old man.

But Waring, stern in avenging justice, drew himself from the feeble grasp, and walked down towards the boats. He did not intend fairly to desert the miserable old creature. He hardly knew what he intended, but his impulse was to put more space between them, between himself and this wretch who gathered his evil living from dead men's bones. So he stood gazing out to sea. A faint cry roused him, and, turning, he saw that the old man had dragged himself half across the distance between them, marking the way with his blood, for the bandages were loosened by his movements. As Waring turned, he held up his hands, cried aloud, and fell as if dead on the sands. 'I am a brute,' said Waring. Then he went to work and brought back consciousness, rebound the wounds, lifted the body in his strong arms and bore it down the beach. A sail-boat lay in a cove, with a little skiff in tow. Waring arranged a couch in the bottom, and placed the old man in an easy position on an impromptu pillow made of his coat. Fog opened his eyes. 'Anything come ashore?' he asked faintly, trying to turn his head towards the reef. Conquering his repugnance, the young man walked out on the long point. There was nothing there; but farther down the coast barrels were washing up and back in the surf, and one box had stranded in shallow water. 'Am I, too, a wrecker?' he asked himself, as with much toil and trouble he secured the booty and examined it. Yes, the barrels contained provisions.

Old Fog, revived by the sight, lay propped at the stern, giving directions. Waring found himself a child obeying the orders of a wiser head. The load on board, the little skiff carrying its share behind, the young man set sail and away they flew over the angry water; old Fog watching the sky, the sail, and the rudder, guiding their course with a word now and then, but silent otherwise.

'Shall we see the castle soon?' asked Waring, after several hours had passed.

'We may be there by night, if the wind doesn't shift.'

'Have we so far to go, then? Why, I came across in the half of a night.'

'Add a day to the half and you have it. I let you down at dawn and towed you out until noon; I then spied that sail beating up, and I knew there would be a storm by night, and—and things were desperate with me. So I cast you off and came over to set the light. It was a chance I did not count on, that your dug-out should float this way; I calculated that she would beach you safely on an island farther to the south.'

'And all this time, when you were letting me down—By the way, how did you do it?'

'Lifted a plank in the floor.'

'When you were letting me down, and towing me out, and calculating chances, what was I, may I ask?'

'O, just a body asleep, that was all; your punch was drugged, and well done too! Of course I could not have you at the castle; that was plain.'

They flew on a while longer, and then veered short to the left. 'This boat sails well,' said Waring, 'and that is your skiff behind I see. Did you whistle for it that night?'

'I let it out by a long cord while you went after the game bag, and the shore-end I fastened to a little stake just under the edge of the water on that long slope of beach. I snatched it up as I ran out, and kept hauling in until I met it. You fell off that ledge, didn't you? I calculated on that. You see I had found out all I wanted to know; the only thing I feared was some plan for settling along that shore, or exploring it for something. It is my weak side; if you had climbed up one of those tall trees you might have caught sight of the castle,—that is, if there was no fog.'

'Will the fog come up now?'

'Hardly; the storm has been too heavy. I suppose you know what day it is?' continued the old man, peering up at his companion from under his shaggy eyebrows.

'No; I have lost all reckonings of time and place.'

'Purposely?'

'Yes.'

'You are worse than I am, then; I keep a reckoning, although I do not show it. To-day is Sunday, but Silver does not know it; all days are alike to her. Silver has never heard of the Bible,' he added, slowly.

'Yes, she has, for I told her.'

'You told her!' cried old Fog, wringing his hands.

'Be quiet, or you will disturb those bandages again. I only asked her if she had read the book, and she said no; that was all. But supposing it had not been all, what then? Would it harm her to know of the Bible?'

'It would harm her to lose faith in me.'

'Then why have you not told her yourself?'

'I left her to grow up as the flowers grow,' said old Fog, writhing on his couch. 'Is she not pure and good? Ah, a thousand times more than any church or school could make her!'

'And yet you have taught her to read?'

'I knew not what might happen. I could not expose her defenceless in a hard world. Religion is fancy, but education is like an armor. I cannot tell what may happen.'

'True. You may die, you know; you are an old man.'

The old man turned away his face.

They sailed on, eating once or twice; afternoon came, and then an archipelago closed in around them; the sail was down, and the oars out. Around and through, across and back, in and out they wound, now rowing, now poling, and now and then the sail hoisted to scud across a space of open water. Old Fog's face had grown gray again, and the lines had deepened across his haggard cheek and set mouth; his strength was failing. At last they came to a turn, broad and smooth like a canal. 'Now I will hoist the sail again,' said Waring.

But old Fog shook his head. 'That turn leads directly back into the marsh,' he said, 'Take your oar and push against the sedge in front.'

The young man obeyed, and lo! it moved slowly aside and disclosed a narrow passage westward; through this they poled their way along to open water, then set the sail, rounded a point, and came suddenly upon the castle. 'Well, I am glad we are here,' said Waring.

Fog had fallen back. 'Promise,' he whispered with gray lips,—'promise that you will not betray me to the child.' And his glazing eyes fixed themselves on Waring's face with the mute appeal of a dying animal in the hands of its captor.

'I promise,' said Waring.

But the old man did not die; he wavered, lingered, then slowly rallied,—very slowly. The weeks had grown into a month and two before he could manage his boat again. In the mean time Waring hunted and fished for the household, and even sailed over to the reef with Fog on a bed in the bottom of the boat, coming back loaded with the spoil; not once only, not twice did he go; and at last he knew the way, even through, the fog, and came and went alone, bringing home the very planks and beams of the ill-fated schooner. 'They will make a bright fire in the evenings,' he said. The dogs lived on the north shore, went hunting when their master came over and the rest of the time possessed their souls in patience. And what possessed Waring, do you ask? His name for it was 'necessity.' 'Of course I cannot leave them to starve,' he said to himself.

Silver came and went about the castle, at first wilfully, then submissively, then shyly. She had folded away all her finery in wondering silence, for Waring's face had shown disapproval, and now she wore always her simple white gown, 'Can you not put up your hair?' he had asked one day; and from that moment the little head appeared crowned with braids. She worked among her flowers and fed her gulls as usual, but she no longer talked to them or told them stories. In the evenings they all sat around the hearth, and sometimes the little maiden sang; Waring had taught her new songs. She knew the sonnets now, and chanted them around the castle to tunes of her own; Shakespeare would not have known his stately measures, dancing along to her rippling melodies.

The black face of Orange shone and simmered with glee; she nodded perpetually, and crooned and laughed to herself over her tasks by the hour together,—a low chuckling laugh of exceeding content.

And did Waring ever stop to think? I know not. If he did, he forgot the thoughts when Silver came and sat by him in the evening with the light of the hearth-fire shining over her. He scarcely saw her at other times, except on her balcony, or at her flower window as he came and went in his boat below; but in the evenings she sat beside him in her low chair, and laid sometimes her rose leaf palm in his rough brown hand, or her pretty head against his arm. Old Fog sat by always; but he said little, and his face was shaded by his hand.

The early autumn gales swept over the hikes, leaving wreck and disaster behind, but the crew of the castle stayed safely at home and listened to the tempest cosily, while the flowers bloomed on, and the gulls brought all their relations and colonized the balcony and window sills, fed daily by the fair hand of Silver. And Waring went not.

Then the frosts came, and turned the forests into splendor; they rowed over and brought out branches, and Silver decked the long room with scarlet and gold. And Waring went not.

The dreary November rains began, the leaves fell, and the dark water surged heavily; but a store of wood was piled on the flat roof, and the fire on the hearth blazed high. And still Waring went not.

At last the first ice appeared, thin flakes forming around the log foundations of the castle; then old Fog spoke. 'I am quite well now, quite strong again; you must go to-day, or you will find yourself frozen in here. As it is, you may hit a late vessel off the islands that will carry you below. I will sail over with you, and bring back the boat.'

'But you are not strong enough yet,' said Waring, bending over his work, a shelf he was carving for Silver; 'I cannot go and leave you here alone.'

'It is either go now, or stay all winter. You do not, I presume, intend to make Silver your wife,—Silver, the daughter of Fog the wrecker.'

Waring's hands stopped; never before had the old man's voice taken that tone, never before had he even alluded to the girl as anything more than a child. On the contrary, he had been silent, he had been humble, he had been openly grateful to the strong young man who had taken his place on sea and shore, and kept the castle full and warm. 'What new thing is this?' thought Waring, and asked the same.

'Is it new?' said Fog. 'I thought it old, very old, I mean no mystery, I speak plainly. You helped me in my great strait, and I thank you; perhaps it will be counted unto you for good in the reckoning up of your life. But I am strong again, and the ice is forming. You can have no intention of making Silver your wife?'

Waring looked up, their eyes met. 'No,' he replied slowly, as though the words were being dragged out of him by the magnetism of the old man's gaze, 'I certainly have no such intention.'

Nothing more was said; soon Waring rose and went out. But Silver spied him from her flower-room, and came down to the sail-boat where it lay at the foot of the ladder. 'You are not going out this cold day,' she said, standing by his side as he busied himself over the rigging. She was wrapped in a fur mantle, with a fur cap on her head, and her rough little shoes were fur-trimmed. Waring made no reply.

'But I shall not allow it,' continued the maiden, gayly. 'Am I not queen of this castle? You yourself have said it many a time. You cannot go, Jarvis; I want you here.' And with her soft hands she blinded him playfully.

'Silver, Silver,' called old Fog's voice above, 'come within; I want you.'

After that the two men were very crafty in their preparations.

The boat ready, Waring went the rounds for the last time. He brought down wood for several days and stacked it, he looked again at all the provisions and reckoned them over; then he rowed to the north shore, visited his traps, called out the dogs from the little house he had made for them, and bade them good by. 'I shall leave you for old Fog,' he said; 'be good dogs, and bring in all you can for the castle.'

The dogs wagged their tails, and waited politely on the beach until he was out of sight; but they did not seem to believe his story, and went back to their house tranquilly without a howl. The day passed as usual. Once the two men happened to meet in the passage-way. 'Silver seems restless, we must wait till darkness,' said Fog in a low tone.

'Very well,' replied Waring.

At midnight they were off, rowing over the black water in the sail-boat, hoping for a fair wind at dawn, as the boat was heavy. They journeyed but slowly through the winding channel, leaving the sedge-gate open; no danger now from intruders; the great giant, Winter, had swallowed all lesser foes. It was cold, very cold, and they stopped awhile at dawn on the edge of the marsh, the last shore, to make a fire and heat some food before setting sail for the islands.

'Good God!' cried Waring.

A boat was coming after them, a little skiff they both knew, and in it paddling, in her white dress, sat Silver, her fur mantle at her feet where it had fallen unnoticed. They sprang to meet her knee-deep in the icy water; but Waring was first, and lifted her slight form in his seems.

'I have found you, Jarvis,' she murmured, laying her head down upon his shoulder; then the eyes closed, and the hand she had tried to clasp around his neck fell lifeless. Close to the fire, wrapped in furs, Waring held her in his arms, while the old man bent over her, chafing her hands and little icy feet, and calling her name in an agony.

'Let her but come back to life, and I will say not one word, more,' he cried with tears. 'Who am I that I should torture her? You shall go back with us, and I will trust it all to God,—all to God.'

'But what if I will not go back, what if I will not accept your trust?' said Waring, turning his head away from the face pillowed on his breast.

'I do not trust you, I trust God; he will guard her.'

'I believe he will,' said the young man, half to himself. And then they bore her home, not knowing whether her spirit was still with them, or already gone to that better home awaiting it in the next country.

That night the thick ice came, and the last vessels fled southward. But in the lonely little castle there was joy; for the girl was saved, barely, with fever, with delirium, with long prostration, but saved!

When weeks had passed, and she was in her low chair again, propped with cushions, pallid as a snow-drop, weak and languid, but still there, she told her story, simply and without comprehension of its meaning.

'I could not rest that night,' she said, 'I know not why; so I dressed softly and slipped past Orange asleep on her mattress by my door, and found you both gone,—your father, and you, Jarvis. You never go out at night, and it was very cold; and Jarvis had taken his bag and knapsack, and all the little things I know so well. His gun was gone from the wall, his clothes from his empty room, and that picture of the girl holding up the fruit was not on his table. From that I knew that something had happened; for it is dear to Jarvis, that picture of the girl,' said Silver with a little quiver in her voice. With a quick gesture Waring drew the picture from his pocket and threw it into the fire; it blazed, and was gone in a moment. 'Then I went after you,' said Silver with a little look of gratitude. 'I know the passage through the south channels, and something told me you had gone that way. It was very cold.'

That was all, no reasoning, no excuse, no embarrassment; the flight of the little sea-bird straight to its mate.

Life flowed on again in the old channel, Fog quiet, Silver happy, and Waring in a sort of dream. Winter was full upon them, and the castle beleaguered with his white armies both below and above, on the water and in the air. The two men went ashore on the ice now, and trapped and hunted daily, the dogs following. Fagots were cut and rough roads made through the forest. One would have supposed they were planning for a lifelong residence, the young man and the old, as they came and went together, now on the snow-crust, now plunging through breast-deep into the light dry mass. One day Waring said, 'Let me see your reckoning. Do you know that to-morrow will be Christmas?'

'Silver knows nothing of Christmas,' said Fog, roughly.

'Then she shall know,' replied Waring.

Away he went to the woods and brought back evergreen. In the night he checked the cabin-like room, and with infinite pains constructed a little Christmas-tree and hung it with everything he could collect or contrive.

'It is but a poor thing, after all,' he said, gloomily, as he stood alone surveying his work. It was indeed a shabby little tree, only redeemed from ugliness by a white cross poised on the green summit; this cross glittered and shone in the firelight,—it was cut from solid ice.

'Perhaps I can help, you,' said old Fog's voice behind. 'I did not show you this, for fear it would anger you, but—but there must have been a child on board after all.' He held a little box of toys, carefully packed as if by a mother's hand,—common toys, for she was only the captain's wife, and the schooner a small one; the little waif had floated ashore by itself, and Fog had seen and hidden it.

Waring said nothing, and the two men began to tie on the toys in silence. But after a while they warmed to their work and grew eager to make it beautiful; the old red ribbon that Orange had given was considered a precious treasure-trove, and, cut into fragments, it gayly held the little wooden toys in place on the green boughs.

Fog, grown emulous, rifled the cupboards and found small cakes baked by the practised hand of the old cook; these he hung exultingly on the higher boughs. And now the little tree was full, and stood bravely in its place at the far end of the long room, while the white cross looked down on the toys of the drowned child and the ribbon of the slave, and seemed to sanctify them for their new use.

Great was the surprise of Silver the next morning, and many the questions she asked. Out in the world, they told her, it was so; trees like that were decked for children.

'Am I a child?' said Silver, thoughtfully; 'what do you think, papa?'

'What do you think?' said Waring, turning the question.

'I hardly know; sometimes I think I am, and sometimes not; but it is of no consequence what I am as long as I have you,—you and papa. Tell me more about the little tree, Jarvis. What does it mean? What is that white shining toy on the top? Is there a story about it?'

'Yes, there is a story; but—but it is not I who should tell it to you,' replied the young man, after a moment's hesitation.

'Why not! Whom have I in all the world to tell me, save you?' said fondly the sweet child-voice.

They did not take away the little Christmas-tree, but left it on its pedestal at the far end of the long room through the winter; and as the cross melted slowly, a new one took its place, and shone aloft in the firelight. But its story was not told.

February came, and with it a February thaw; the ice stirred a little, and the breeze coming over the floes was singularly mild. The arctic winds and the airs from the Gulf Stream had met and mingled, and the gray fog appeared again, waving to and fro. 'Spring has come,' said Silver; 'there is the dear fog.' And she opened the window of the flower room, and let out a little bird.

'It will find no resting-place for the sole of its foot, for the snow is over the face of the whole earth,' said Waring. 'Our ark has kept us cosily through bitter weather, has it not, little one?' (He had adopted a way of calling her so.)

'Ark,' said Silver; 'what is that?'

'Well,' answered Waring, looking down into her blue eyes as they stood together at the little window, 'it was a watery residence like this, and if Japheth,—he was always my favorite of the three—had had you there, my opinion is that he would never have come down at all, but would have resided

permanently on Ararat.'

Silver looked up into his face with a smile, not understanding what he said, nor asking to understand; it was enough for her that he was there. And as she gazed her violet eyes grew so deep, so soft, that the man for once (give him credit, it was the first time) took her into his arms. 'Silver,' he whispered, bending over her, 'do you love me?'

'Yes,' she answered in her simple, unconscious way, 'you know I do, Jarvis.'

No color deepened in her fair face under his ardent gaze; and, after a moment, he released her, almost roughly. The next day he told old Fog that he was going.

'Where.'

'Somewhere, this time. I've had enough of Nowhere.'

'Why do you go?'

'Do you want the plain truth, old man? Here it is, then; I am growing too fond of that girl,—a little more and I shall not be able to leave her.'

'Then stay; she loves you.'

'A child's love.'

'She will develop—'

'Not into my wife if I know myself,' said Waring, curtly.

Old Fog sat silent a moment. 'Is she not lovely and good?' he said in a low voice.

'She is; but she is your daughter as well.'

'She is not.'

'She is not! What then?'

'I—I do not know; I found her, a baby, by the wayside.'

'A foundling! So much the better, that is even a step lower,' said the younger man, laughing roughly. And the other crept away as though he had been struck.

Waring set about his preparations. This time Silver did not suspect his purpose. She had passed out of the quick, intuitive watchfulness of childhood. During these days she had taken up the habit of sitting by herself in the flower-room, ostensibly with her book or sewing; but when they glanced in through the open door, her hands were lying idle on her lap and her eyes fixed dreamily on some opening blossom. Hours she sat thus, without stirring.

Waring's plan was a wild one; no boat could sail through the ice, no foot could cross the wide rifts made by the thaw, and weeks of the bitterest weather still lay between them and the spring. 'Along-shore,' he said.

'And die of cold and hunger,' answered Fog.

'Old man, why are you not afraid of me?' said Waring, pausing in his work with a lowering glance. 'Am I not stronger than you, and the master, if I so choose, of your castle of logs?'

'But you will not so choose.'

'Do not trust me too far.'

'Do not trust you,—but God.'

'For a wrecker and murderer, you have, I must say, a remarkably serene conscience,' sneered Waring.

Again the old man shrank, and crept silently away.

But when in the early dawn a dark figure stood on the ice adjusting its knapsack, a second figure stole down the ladder. 'Will you go, then,' it said, 'and leave the child?'

'She is no child,' answered the younger man, sternly; 'and you know it.'

'To me she is.'

'I care not what she is to you; but she shall not be more to me.'

'More to you?'

'No more than any other pretty piece of wax-work,' replied Waring, striding away into the gray mist.

Silver came to breakfast radiant, her small head covered from forehead to throat with the winding braids of gold, her eyes bright, her cheeks faintly tinged with the icy water of her bath. 'Where is Jarvis?' she asked.

'Gone hunting,' replied old Fog.

'For all day?'

'Yes; and perhaps for all night. The weather is quite mild, you know.'

'Yes, papa. But I hope it will soon be cold again; he cannot stay out long then,' said the girl, gazing out over the ice with wistful eyes.

The danger was over for that day; but the next morning there it was again, and with it the bitter cold.

'He must come home soon now,' said Silver, confidently, melting the frost on one of the little windows so that she could see out and watch for his coming. But he came not. As night fell the cold grew intense; deadly, clear, and still, with the stars shining brilliantly in the steel-blue of the sky. Silver wandered from window to window, wrapped in her fur mantle; a hundred times, a thousand times she had scanned the ice-fields and the snow, the lake and the shore. When the night closed down, she crept close to the old man who sat by the fire in silence, pretending to mend his nets, but furtively watching her every movement. 'Papa,' she whispered, 'where is he, where is he?' And her tears fell on his hands.

'Silver,' he said, bending over her tenderly, 'do I not love you? Am I not enough for you? Think, dear, how long we have lived here and how happy we have been. He was only a stranger. Come, let us forget him, and go back to the old days.'

'What! Has he gone, then? Has Jarvis gone?'

Springing to her feet she confronted him with clinched hands and dilated eyes. Of all the words she had heard but one; he had gone! The poor old man tried to draw her down again into the shelter of his arms, but she seemed turned to stone, her slender form was rigid. 'Where is he? Where is Jarvis? What have you done with him,—you, you!'

The quick unconscious accusation struck to his heart. 'Child,' he said in a broken voice, 'I tried to keep him. I would have given him my place in your love, in your life, but he would not. He has gone, he cares not for you; he is a hard, evil man.'

'He is not! But even if he were, I love him,' said the girl, defiantly.

Then she threw up her arms towards heaven (alas! it was no heaven to her, poor child) as if in appeal. 'Is there no one to help me?' she cried aloud.

'What can we do, dear?' said the old man, standing beside her and smoothing her hair gently. 'He would not stay,—I could not keep him!'

'I could have kept him.'

'You would not ask him to stay, if he wished to go?'

'Yes, I would; he must stay, for my sake.'

'But if he had loved you, dear, he would not have gone.'

'Did he say he did not love me?' demanded Silver, with gleaming eyes.

Old Fog hesitated.

'Did he say he did not love me? Did Jarvis say that?' she repeated, seizing his arm with grasp of fire.

'Yes; he said that.'

But the lie meant to rouse her pride, killed it; as if struck by a visible hand, she swayed and fell to the floor.

The miserable old man watched her all the night. She was delirious, and raved of Waring through the long hours. At daylight he left her with Orange, who, not understanding these white men's riddles, and sorely perplexed by Waring's desertion, yet cherished her darling with dumb untiring devotion, and watched her every breath.

Following the solitary trail over the snow-covered ice and thence along-shore towards the east journeyed old Fog all day in the teeth of the wind, dragging a sledge loaded with furs, provisions, and dry wood; the sharp blast cut him like a knife, and the dry snow-pellets stung as they touched his face, and clung to his thin beard coated with ice. It was the worst day of the winter, an evil, desolate, piercing day; no human creature should dare such weather. Yet the old man journeyed patiently on until nightfall, and would have gone farther had not darkness concealed the track; his fear was that new snow might fall deeply enough to hide it, and then there was no more hope of following. But nothing could be done at night, so he made his camp, a lodge under a drift with the snow for walls and roof, and a hot fire that barely melted the edges of its icy hearth. As the blaze flared out into the darkness, he heard a cry, and followed; it was faint, but apparently not distant, and after some search he found the spot; there lay Jarvis Waring, helpless and nearly frozen. 'I thought you farther on,' he said, as he lifted the heavy, inert body.

'I fell and injured my knee yesterday; since then I have been freezing slowly,' replied Waring in a muffled voice. 'I have been crawling backwards and forwards all day to keep myself alive, but had just given it up when I saw your light.'

All night the old hands worked over him, and they hated the body they touched; almost fiercely they fed and nourished it, warmed its blood, and brought back life. In the dawning Waring was himself again; weak, helpless, but in his right mind. He said as much, and added, with a touch of his old humor, 'There is a wrong mind you know, old gentleman.'

The other made no reply; his task done; he sat by the fire waiting. He had gone after this fellow, driven by fate; he had saved him, driven by fate. Now what had fate next in store? He warmed his wrinkled hands mechanically and waited, while the thought came to him with bitterness that his darling's life lay at the mercy of this man who had nothing better to do, on coming back from the very jaws of death, than make jests. But old Fog was mistaken; the man had something better to do, and did it. Perhaps he noted the expression of the face before him; perhaps he did not, but was thinking, young man fashion, only of himself; at any rate this is what he said: 'I was a fool to go. Help me back, old man; it is too strong for me,—I give it up.'

'Back,—back where?' said the other, apathetically.

Waring raised his head from his pillow of furs. 'Why do you ask when you know already! Back to Silver, of course; have you lost your mind?'

His harshness came from within; in reality it was meant for himself; the avowal had cost him something as it passed his lips in the form of words; it had not seemed so when in the suffering, and the cold, and the approach of death, he had seen his own soul face to face and realized the truth.

So the two went back to the castle, the saved lying on the sledge, the savior drawing it; the wind was behind them now, and blew them along. And when the old man, weary and numb with cold, reached the ladder at last, helped Waring, lame and irritable, up to the little snow-covered balcony, and led the way to Silver's room,—when Silver, hearing the step, raised herself in the arms of the old slave and looked eagerly, not at him, no, but at the man behind,—did he shrink? He did not; but led the reluctant, vanquished, defiant, half-angry, half-shamed lover forward, and gave his darling into the arms that seemed again almost unwilling, so strong was the old opposing determination that lay bound by love's bonds.

Silver regained her life as if by magic; not so Waring, who lay suffering and irritable on the lounge in the long room, while the girl tended him with a joy that shone out in every word, every tone, every motion. She saw not his little tyrannies, his exacting demands, his surly tempers; or rather she saw and loved them as women do when men lie ill and helpless in their hands. And old Fog sat apart, or came and went unnoticed; hours of the cold days he wandered through the forests, visiting the traps mechanically, and making tasks for himself to fill up the time; hours of the cold evenings, he paced the snow-covered roof alone. He could not bear to see them, but left the post to Orange, whose black face shone with joy and satisfaction over Waring's return.

But after a time fate swung around (as she generally does if impatient humanity would but give her a

chance). Waring's health grew, and so did his love. He had been like a strong man armed, keeping his palace; but a stronger than he was come, and, the combat over, he went as far the other way and adored the very sandals of the conqueror. The gates were open, and all the floods were out.

And Silver? As he advanced, she withdrew. (It is always so in love, up to a certain point; and beyond that point lies, alas! the broad monotonous country of commonplace.)

This impetuous, ardent lover was not the Jarvis she had known, the Jarvis who had been her master, and a despotic one at that. Frightened, shy, bewildered, she fled away from all her dearest joys, and stayed by herself in the flower-room with the bar across the door, only emerging timidly at mealtimes and stealing into the long room like a little wraith; a rosy wraith now, for at last she had learned to blush. Waring was angry at this desertion, but only the more in love; for the violet eyes veiled themselves under his gaze, and the unconscious child-mouth began to try to control and conceal its changing expressions, and only succeeded in betraying them more helplessly than ever. Poor little solitary maiden-heart!

Spring was near now; soft airs came over the ice daily, and stirred the water beneath; then the old man spoke. He knew what was coming, he saw it all, and a sword was piercing his heart; but bravely he played his part. 'The ice will move out soon, in a month or less you can sail safely,' he said, breaking the silence one night when they two sat by the fire, Waring moody and restless, for Silver had openly repulsed him, and fled away early in the evening. 'She is trifling with me,' he thought, 'or else she does not know what love is. By heavens, I will teach her though—' As far as this his mind had journeyed when Fog spoke. 'In a month you can sail safely, and I suppose you will go for good this time?'

'Yes.'

Fog waited. Waring kicked a fallen log into place, lit his pipe then let it go out, moved his chair forward, then pushed it back impatiently, and finally spoke. 'Of course I shall take Silver; I intend to make Silver.'

'At last?'

'At last. No wonder you are glad—'

'Glad,' said Fog,—'glad!' But the words were whispered, and the young man went on unheeding.

'Of course it is a great thing for you to have the child off your hands and placed in a home so high above your expectations. Love is a strange power. I do not deny that I have fought against it, but—but why should I conceal? I love Silver with all my soul, she seems to have grown into my very being.'

It was frankly and strongly uttered; the good side of Jarvis Waring came uppermost for the moment.

Old Fog leaned forward and grasped his hand. 'I know you do,' he said. 'I know something of men, and I have watched you closely, Waring. It is for this love that I forgive—I mean that I am glad and thankful for it, very thankful.'

'And you have reason to be,' said the younger man, withdrawing into his pride again. 'As my wife, Silver will have a home, a circle of friends, which—But you could not understand; let it pass. And now, tell me all you know of her.'

The tone was a command, and the speaker leaned back in his chair with the air of an owner as he relighted his pipe.

But Fog did not shrink. 'Will you have the whole story?' he asked humbly.

'As well now as ever, I suppose, but be as brief as possible,' said the young man in a lordly manner. Had he not just conferred an enormous favor, an alliance which might be called the gift of a prince, on this dull old backwoodsman?

'Forty years ago or thereabouts,' began Fog in a low voice, 'a crime was committed in New York City. I shall not tell you what it was, there is no need; enough that the whole East was stirred, and a heavy reward was offered for the man who did the deed. I am that man.'

Waring pushed back his chair, a horror came over him, his hand sought for his pistol; but the voice went on unmoved. 'Shall I excuse the deed to you, boy? No, I will not. It was done and I did it, that is enough, the damning fact that confronts and silences all talk of motive or cause. This much only will I say; to the passion of the act deliberate intention was not added, and there was no gain for the doer; only loss, the black eternal loss of everything in heaven above, on the earth beneath, or in the waters that are under the earth, for hell itself seemed to spew me out. At least so I thought as I fled away, the

mark of Cain upon my brow; the horror was so strong upon me that I could not kill myself, I feared to join the dead. I went to and fro on the earth, and walked up and down in it; I fled to the uttermost parts of the sea, and yet came back again, moved by a strange impulse to be near the scene of my crime. After years had passed, and with them the memory of the deed from the minds of others, though not from mine, I crept to the old house where my one sister was living alone, and made myself known to her. She left her home, a forlorn place, but still a home, and followed me with a sort of dumb affection,—poor old woman. She was my senior by fifteen years, and I had been her pride; and so she went with me from the old instinct, which still remained, although the pride was dead, crushed by slow horror. We kept together after that, two poor hunted creatures instead of one; we were always fleeing, always imagining that eyes knew us, that fingers pointed us out. I called her Shadow, and together we took the name of Fog, a common enough name, but to us meaning that we were nothing, creatures of the mist, wandering to and fro by night, but in the morning gone. At last one day the cloud over my mind seemed to lighten a little, and the thought came to me that no punishment can endure forever, without impugning the justice of our great Creator. A crime is committed, perhaps in a moment; the ensuing suffering, the results, linger on earth, it may be for some years; but the end of it surely comes sooner or later, and it is as though it had never been. Then, for that crime, shall a soul suffer forever,—not a thousand years, a thousand ages if you like, but forever? Out upon the monstrous idea! Let a man do evil every moment of his life, and let his life be the full threescore years and ten; shall there not come a period in the endless cycles of eternity when even his punishment shall end? What kind of a God is he whom your theologians have held up to us,—a God who creates us at his pleasure, without asking whether or not we wish to be created, who endows us with certain wild passions and capacities for evil, turns us loose into a world of suffering, and then, for our misdeeds there, our whole lives being less than one instant's time in his sight, punishes us forever! Never-ending tortures throughout the countless ages of eternity for the little crimes of threescore years and ten! Heathendom shows no god so monstrous as this. O great Creator, O Father of our souls, of all the ills done on the face of thy earth, this lie against thy justice and thy goodness, is it not the greatest? The thought came to me, as I said, that no punishment could endure forever, that somewhere is the future I, even I, should meet pardon and rest. That day I found by the wayside a little child, scarcely more than a baby; it had wandered out of the poorhouse, where its mother had died the week before, a stranger passing through the village. No one knew anything about her nor cared to know, for she was almost in rags, fair and delicate once they told me, but wasted with illness and too far gone to talk. Then a second thought came to me,—expiation. I would take this forlorn little creature and bring her up as my own child, tenderly, carefully,—a life for a life. My poor old sister took to it wonderfully, it seemed to brighten her desolation into something that was almost happiness; we wandered awhile longer, and then came westward through the lakes, but it was several years before we were fairly settled here. Shadow took care of the baby and made her little dresses; then, when the time came to teach her to sew and read, she said more help was needed, and went alone to the towns below to find a fit servant, coming back in her silent way with old Orange; another stray lost out of its place in the world, and suffering from want in the cold Northern city. You must not think that Silver is totally ignorant; Shadow had the education of her day, poor thing, for ours was a good old family as old families go in this new country of ours, where three generations of well-to-do people constitute aristocracy. But religion, so called, I have not taught her. Is she any the worse for its want?

'I will teach her,' said Waring, passing over the question (which was a puzzling one), for the new idea, the strange interest he felt in the task before him, the fair pure mind where his hand, and his alone, would be the first to write the story of good and evil.

'That I should become attached to the child was natural,' continued old Fog; 'but God gave it to me to love her with so great a love that my days have flown; for her to sail out over the stormy water, for her to hunt through the icy woods, for her to dare a thousand deaths, to labor, to save, to suffer,—these have been my pleasures through all the years. When I came home, there she was to meet me, her sweet voice calling me father, the only father she could ever know. When my poor old sister died, I took her away in my boat by night and buried her in deep water; and so I did with the boy we had here for a year or two, saved from a wreck. My darling knows nothing of death; I could not tell her.'

'And those wrecks,' said Waring; 'how do you make them balance with your scheme of expiation?'

The old man sat silent a moment; then he brought his hand down violently on the table by his side. 'I will not have them brought up in that way, I tell you I will not! Have I not explained that I was desperate?' he said in an excited voice. 'What are one or two miserable crews to the delicate life of my beautiful child? And the men had their chances, too, in spite of my lure. Does not every storm threaten them with deathly force? Wait until you are tempted, before you judge me, boy. But shall I tell you the whole? Listen, then. Those wrecks were the greatest sacrifices, the most bitter tasks of my hard life, the nearest approach I have yet made to the expiation. Do you suppose I wished to drown the men? Do you suppose I did not know the greatness of the crime? Ah, I knew it only too well, and yet I sailed out

and did the deed! It was for her,—to keep her from suffering; so I sacrificed myself unflinchingly. I would murder a thousand men in cold blood, and bear the thousand additional punishments without a murmur throughout a thousand ages of eternity, to keep my darling safe and warm. Do you not see that the whole was a self-immolation, the greatest, the most complete I could make? I vowed to keep my darling tenderly. I have kept my vow; see that you keep yours.'

The voice ceased, the story was told, and the teller gone. The curtain over the past was never lifted again; but often, in after years, Waring thought of this strange life and its stranger philosophy. He could never judge them. Can we?

The next day the talk turned upon Silver. 'I know you love her,' said the old man, 'but how much?'

'Does it need the asking?' answered Waring with a short laugh; 'am I not giving up my name, my life, into her hands?'

'You could not give them into hands more pure.'

'I know it; I am content. And yet, I sacrifice something,' replied the young man, thinking of his home, his family, his friends.

Old Fog looked at him. 'Do you hesitate?' he said, breaking the pause.

'Of course I do not; why do you ask?' replied Waring, irritably. 'But some things may be pardoned, I think, in a case like mine.'

'I pardon them.'

'I can teach her, of course, and a year or so among cultivated people will work wonders; I think I shall take her abroad, first. How soon did you say we could go?'

'The ice is moving. There will be vessels through the straits in two or three weeks,' replied Fog. His voice shook. Waring looked up; the old man was weeping. 'Forgive me,' he said brokenly, 'but the little girl is very dear to me.'

The younger man was touched. 'She shall be as dear to me as she has been to you,' he said; 'do not fear. My love is proved by the very struggle I have made against it. I venture to say no man ever fought harder against himself than I have in this old castle of yours. I kept that Titian picture as a countercharm. It resembles a woman who, at a word, will give me herself and her fortune,—a woman high in the cultivated circles of cities both here and abroad, beautiful, accomplished, a queen in her little sphere. But all was useless. That long night in the snow, when I crawled backwards and forwards to keep myself from freezing, it came to me with power that the whole of earth and all its gifts compared not with this love. Old man, she will be happy with me.'

'I know it.'

'Did you foresee this end?' asked Waring after a while, watching, as he spoke, the expression of the face before him. He could not rid himself of the belief that the old man had laid his plans deftly.

'I could only hope for it: I saw that she loved you.'

'Well, well,' said the younger man magnanimously, 'it was natural, after all. Your expiation has ended better than you hoped; for the little orphan child you have reared has found a home and friends, and you yourself need work no more. Choose your abode here or anywhere else in the West, and I will see that you are comfortable.'

'I will stay on here.'

'As you please. Silver will not forget you; she will write often. I think I will go first up the Rhine and then into Switzerland,' continued Waring, going back to himself and his plans with the matter-of-course egotism of youth and love. And old Fog listened.

What need to picture the love-scene that followed? The next morning a strong hand knocked at the door of the flower-room, and the shy little maiden within had her first lesson in love, or rather in its expression, while all the blossoms listened and the birds looked on approvingly. To do him justice, Waring was an humble suitor when alone with her; she was so fair, so pure, so utterly ignorant of the world and of life, that he felt himself unworthy, and bowed his head. But the mood passed, and Silver liked him better when the old self-assertion and quick tone of command came uppermost again. She knew not good from evil, she could not analyze the feeling in her heart; but she loved this stranger, this master, with the whole of her being. Jarvis Waring knew good from evil (more of the latter knew he

than of the former), he comprehended and analyzed fully the feeling that possessed him; but, man of the world as he was, he loved this little water-maiden, this fair pagan, this strange isolated girl, with the whole force of his nature. 'Silver,' he said to her, seriously enough, 'do you know how much I love you? I am afraid to think what life would seem without you.'

'Why think of it, then, since I am here?' replied Silver.

'Do you know, Jarvis, I think if I had not loved you so much, you would not have loved me, and then—it would have been—that is, I mean—it would have been different—' She paused; unused to reasoning or to anything like argument, her own words seemed to bewilder her.

Waring laughed, but soon grew serious again. 'Silver,' he said, taking her into his arms, 'are you sure that you can love me as I crave?' (For he seemed at times tormented by the doubt as to whether she was anything more than a beautiful child.) He held her closely and would not let her go, compelling her to meet his ardent eyes. A change came over the girl, a sudden red flashed up into her temples and down into her white throat. She drew herself impetuously away from her lover's arms and fled from the room. 'I am not sure but that she is a water-sprite, after all,' grumbled Waring, as he followed her. But it was a pleasure now to grumble and pretend to doubt, since from that moment he was sure.

The next morning Fog seemed unusually cheerful.

'No wonder,' thought Waring. But the character of benefactor pleased him, and he appeared in it constantly.

'We must have the old castle more comfortable; I will try to send up some furniture from below,' he remarked, while pacing to and fro in the evening.

'Isn't it comfortable now?' said Silver. 'I am sure I always thought this room beautiful.'

'What, this clumsy imitation of a second-class Western steamer? Child, it is hideous!'

'Is it?' said Silver, looking around in innocent surprise, while Fog listened in silence. Hours of patient labor and risks not a few over the stormy lake were associated with each one of the articles Waring so cavalierly condemned.

Then it was, 'How you do look, old gentleman! I must really send you up some new clothes.—Silver, how have you been able to endure such shabby rags so long?'

'I do not know,—I never noticed; it was always just papa, you know,' replied Silver, her blue eyes resting on the old man's clothes with a new and perplexed attention.

But Fog bore himself cheerily. 'He is right, Silver,' he said, 'I am shabby indeed. But when you go out into the world, you will soon forget it.'

'Yes,' said Silver, tranquilly.

The days flew by and the ice moved out. This is the phrase that is always used along the lakes. The ice 'moves out' of every harbor from Ogdensburg to Duluth. You can see the great white floes drift away into the horizon, and the question comes, Where do they go? Do they meet out there the counter floes from the Canada side, and then do they all join hands and sink at a given signal to the bottom? Certainly, there is nothing melting in the mood of the raw spring winds and clouded skies.

'What are your plans?' asked old Fog, abruptly, one morning when the gulls had flown out to sea, and the fog came stealing up from the south.

'For what?'

'For the marriage.'

'Aha!' thought Waring, with a smile of covert amusement, 'he is in a hurry to secure the prize, is he? The sharp old fellow!' Aloud he said, 'I thought we would all three sail over to Mackinac; and there we could be married, Silver and I, by the fort chaplain, and take the first Buffalo steamer; you could return here at your leisure.'

'Would it not be a better plan to bring a clergyman here, and then you two could sail without me? I am not as strong as I was; I feel that I cannot bear—I mean that you had better go without me.'

'As you please; I thought it would be a change for you, that was all.'

'It would only prolong—No, I think, if you are willing, we will have the marriage here, and then you can sail immediately.'

'Very well; but I did not suppose you would be in such haste to part with Silver,' said Waring, unable to resist showing his comprehension of what he considered the manoeuvres of the old man. Then, waiving further discussion,—'And where shall we find a clergyman?' he asked.

'There is one over on Beaver.'

'He must be a singular sort of a divine to be living there.'

'He is; a strayed spirit, as it were, but a genuine clergyman of the Presbyterian church, none the less. I never knew exactly what he represented there, but I think he came out originally a sort of missionary.'

'To the Mormons,' said Waring, laughing; for he had heard old Fog tell many a story of the Latter-Day Saints, who had on Beaver Island at that time their most Eastern settlement.

'No; to the Indians.—sent out by some of those New England societies, you know. When he reached the islands, he found the Indians mostly gone, and those who remained were all Roman Catholics. But he settled down, farmed a little, hunted a little, fished a little, and held a service all by himself occasionally in an old log-house, just often enough to draw his salary and to write up in his semiannual reports. He isn't a bad sort of a man in his way.'

'And how does he get on with the Mormons?'

'Excellently. He lets them talk, and sells them fish, and shuts his eyes to everything else.'

'What is his name?'

'Well, over here they call him the Preacher, principally because he does not preach, I suppose. It is a way they have over on Beaver to call people names; they call me Believer.'

'Believer?'

'Yes, because I believe nothing; at least so, they think.'

A few days later, out they sailed over the freed water, around the point, through the sedge-gate growing green again, across the channelled marsh, and out towards the Beavers,—Fog and Waring, armed as if for a foray.

'Why,' asked Waring.

'It's safer; the Mormons are a queer lot,' was the reply.

When they came in sight of the islands, the younger man scanned them curiously. Some years later an expedition composed of exasperated crews of lake schooners, exasperated fishermen, exasperated mainland settlers, sailed westward through the straits bound for these islands, armed to the teeth and determined upon vengeance and slaughter. False lights, stolen nets, and stolen wives were their grievances; and no aid coming from the general government, then as now sorely perplexed over the Mormon problem, they took justice into their own hands and sailed bravely out, with the stars and stripes floating from the mast of their flag-ship,—an old scow impressed for military service. But this was later; and when Fog and Waring came scudding into the harbor, the wild little village existed in all its pristine outlawry, a city of refuge for the flotsam vagabondage of the lower lakes.

'Perhaps he will not come with us,' suggested Waring.

'I have thought of that, but it need not delay us long,' replied Fog, 'we can kidnap him.'

'Kidnap him?'

'Yes? he is but a small chap,' said the old man, tranquilly.

They fastened their boat to the log-dock, and started ashore. The houses of the settlement straggled irregularly along the beach and inland towards the fields where fine crops were raised by the Saints, who had made here, as is their custom everywhere, a garden in the wilderness; the only defence was simple but strong,—an earthwork on one of the white sand-hills back of the village, over whose rampart peeped two small cannon, commanding the harbor. Once on shore, however, a foe found only a living rampart of flesh and blood, as reckless a set of villains as New World history can produce. But this rampart only came together in times of danger; ordinary visitors, coming by twos and threes, they welcomed or murdered as they saw fit, or according to the probable contents of their pockets, each

man for himself and his family. Some of these patriarchal gentlemen glared from their windows at Fog and Waring as they passed along; but the worn clothes not promising much, simply invited them to dinner; they liked to hear the news, when there was nothing else going on. Old Fog excused himself. They had business, he said, with the Preacher; was he at home?

He was; had anything been sent to him from the East,—any clothes, now, for the Indians?

Old Fog had heard something of a box at Mackinac, waiting for a schooner to bring it over. He was glad it was on the way, it would be of so much use to the Indians,—they wore so many clothes.

The patriarchs grinned, and allowed the two to pass on. Waring had gazed within, meanwhile, and discovered the plural wives, more or less good-looking, generally less; they did not seem unhappy, however, not so much as many a single one he had met in more luxurious homes, and he said to himself, 'Women of the lower class are much better and happier when well curbed.' It did not occur to him that possibly the evil tempers of men of the lower class are made more endurable by a system of co-operation; one reed bends, breaks, and dies, but ten reeds together can endure.

The Preacher was at home on the outskirts,—a little man, round and rosy, with black eyes and a cheery voice. He was attired entirely in blanket-cloth, baggy trousers and a long blouse, so that he looked not unlike a Turkish Santa Claus, Oriental as to under, and arctic as to upper rigging. 'Are you a clergyman?' said Waring, inspecting him with curious eyes.

'If you doubt it, look at this,' said the little man; and he brought out a clerical suit of limp black cloth, and a ministerial hat much the worse for wear. These articles he suspended from a nail, so that they looked as if a very poor lean divine had hung himself there. Then he sat down, and took his turn at staring. 'I do not bury the dead,' he remarked after a moment, as if convinced that the two shabby hunters before him could have no other errand.

Waring was about to explain, but old Fog stopped him with a glance. 'You are to come with us, sir,' he said courteously; 'you will be well treated, well paid, and returned in a few days.'

'Come with you! Where?'

'Never mind where; will you come?'

'No,' said the little blanket-man, stoutly.

In an instant Fog had tripped him up, seized a sheet and blanket from the bed, bound his hands and feet with one, and wrapped him in the other. 'Now, then,' he said shouldering the load, 'open the door.'

'But the Mormons,' objected Waring.

'O, they like a joke, they will only laugh! But if, by any chance, they show fight, fire at once,' replied the old man, leading the way. Waring followed, his mind anything but easy; it seemed to him like running the gantlet. He held his pistols ready, and glanced furtively around as they skirted the town and turned down towards the beach. 'If any noise is made,' Fog had remarked, 'I shall know what to do.'

Whereupon the captive swallowed down his wrath and a good deal of woollen fuzz, and kept silence. He was no coward, this little Preacher. He held his own manfully on the Beavers; but no one had ever carried him off in a blanket before, So he silently considered the situation.

When near the boat they came upon more patriarchs. 'Put a bold face on it,' murmured old Fog. 'Whom do you suppose we have here?' he began, as they approached. 'Nothing less than your little Preacher; we want to borrow him for a few days.'

The patriarchs stared.

'Don't you believe it?—Speak up, Preacher; are you being carried off?'

No answer.

'You had better speak,' said Fog, jocosely, at the same time giving his captive a warning touch with his elbow.

The Preacher had revolved the situation rapidly, and perceived that in any contest his round body would inevitably suffer from friend and foe alike. He was not even sure but that he would be used as a missile, a sort of ponderous pillow swung at one end. So he replied briskly, 'Yes, I am being carried as you see, dear brethren; I don't care about walking to-day.'

The patriarchs laughed, and followed on to the boat, laughing still more when Fog gayly tossed in his load of blanket, and they could hear the little man growl as he came down. 'I say, though, when are you going to bring him back, Believer?' said one.

'In a few days,' replied Fog, setting sail.

Away they flew; and, when out of harbor, the captive was released, and Waring told him what was required.

'Why didn't you say so before?' said the little blanket-man; 'nothing I like better than a wedding, and a drop of punch afterwards.'

His task over, Fog relapsed into silence; but Waring, curious, asked many a question about the island and its inhabitants. The Preacher responded freely in all things, save when the talk glided too near himself. The Mormons were not so bad, he thought; they had their faults, of course, but you must take them on the right side.

'Have they a right side?' asked Waring.

'At least they haven't a rasping, mean, cold, starving, bony, freezing, busy-bodying side,' was the reply, delivered energetically; whereat Waring concluded the little man had had his own page of history back somewhere among the decorous New England hills.

Before they came to the marsh they blindfolded their guest; and did not remove the bandage until he was safely within the long room of the castle. Silver met them, radiant in the firelight.

'Heaven grant you its blessing, maiden,' said the Preacher, becoming Biblical at once. He meant it, however, for he sat gazing at her long with moistened eyes, forgetful even of the good cheer on the table; a gleam from his far-back youth came to him, a snow-drop that bloomed and died in bleak New Hampshire long, long before.

The wedding was in the early morning. Old Fog had hurried it, hurried everything; he seemed driven by a spirit of unrest, and wandered from place to place, from room to room, his eyes fixed in a vacant way upon the familiar objects. At the last moment he appeared with a prayer-book, its lettering old, its cover tarnished. 'Have you any objection to using the Episcopal service?' he asked in a low tone. 'I—I have heard the Episcopal service.'

'None in the world,' replied the affable little Preacher.

But he too grew sober and even earnest as Silver appeared, clad in white, her dress and hair wreathed with the trailing arbutus, the first flower of spring, plucked from under the vanishing snows. So beautiful her face, so heavenly its expression, that Waring as he took her hand, felt his eyes grow dim, and he vowed to himself to cherish her with tenderest love forever.

'We are gathered together here in the sight of God,' began the Preacher solemnly; old Fog, standing behind, shrank into the shadow, and bowed his head upon his hands. But when the demand came, 'Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?' he stepped forward, and gave away his child without a tear, nay, with even a smile on his brave old face.

'To love, cherish, and to obey,' repeated Silver in her clear sweet voice.

And then Waring placed upon her finger the little ring he himself had carved out of wood. 'It shall never be changed,' he said, 'but coated over with heavy gold, just as it is.'

Old Orange, radiant with happiness, stood near, and served as a foil for the bridal white.

It was over; but they were not to start until noon.

Fog put the Preacher almost forcibly into the boat and sailed away with him, blindfolded and lamenting.

'The wedding feast,' he cried, 'and the punch! You are a fine host, old gentleman.'

'Everything is here, packed in those baskets. I have even given you two fine dogs. And there is your fee. I shall take you in sight of the Beavers, and then put you into the skiff and leave you to row over alone. The weather is fine, you can reach there to-morrow.'

Remonstrance died away before the bag of money; old Fog had given his all for his darling's marriage-fee. 'I shall have no further use for it,' he thought, mechanically.

So the little blanket-man paddled away in his skiff with his share of the wedding-feast beside him; the two dogs went with him, and became Mormons.

Old Fog returned in the sail-boat through the channels, and fastened the sedge-gate open for the outgoing craft. Silver, timid and happy, stood on the balcony as he approached the castle.

'It is time to start,' said the impatient bridegroom. 'How long you have been, Fog!'

The old man made no answer, but busied himself arranging the boat; the voyage to Mackinac would last two or three days, and he had provided every possible comfort for their little camps on shore.

'Come,' said Waring, from below.

Then the father went up to say good by. Silver flung her arms around his neck and burst into tears. 'Father, father,' she sobbed, 'must I leave you? O father, father!'

He soothed her gently; but something in the expression of his calm, pallid face touched the deeper feelings of the wakening woman and she clung to him desperately, realizing, perhaps, at this last moment, how great was his love for her, how great his desolation. Waring had joined them on the balcony. He bore with her awhile and tried to calm her grief, but the girl turned from him and clung to the old man; it was as though she saw at last how she had robbed him. 'I cannot leave him thus,' she sobbed; 'O father, father!'

Then Waring struck at the root of the difficulty. (Forgive him; he was hurt to the core.) 'But he is not your father,' he said, 'he has no claim upon you. I am your husband now, Silver, and you must come with me; do you not wish to come with me, darling?' he added, his voice sinking into fondness.

'Not my father!' said the girl. Her arms fell, and she stood as if petrified.

'No, dear; he is right. I am not your father,' said old Fog, gently. A spasm passed over his features, he kissed her hastily, and gave her into her husband's arms. In another moment they were afloat, in two the sail filled and the boat glided away. The old man stood on the castle roof, smiling and waving his hand; below, Orange fluttered her red handkerchief from the balcony, and blessed her darling with African mummeries. The point was soon rounded, the boat gone.

That night, when the soft spring moonlight lay over the water, a sail came gliding back to the castle, and a shape flew up the ladder; it was the bride of the morning.

'O father, father, I could not leave you so, I made him bring me back, if only for a few days! O father, father! for you are my father, the only father I can ever know,—and so kind and good!'

In the gloom she knelt by his bedside, and her arms were around his neck. Waring came in afterwards, silent and annoyed, yet not unkind. He stirred the dying brands into a flame.

'What is this?' he said, starting, as the light fell across the pillow.

'It is nothing,' replied Fog, and his voice sounded far away; 'I am an old man, children, and all is well.'

They watched him through the dawning, through the lovely day, through the sunset. Waring repentant, Silver absorbed in his every breath; she lavished upon him now all the wealth of love her unconscious years had gathered. Orange seemed to agree with her master that all was well. She came and went, but not sadly, and crooned to herself some strange African tune that rose and fell more like a chant of triumph than a dirge. She was doing her part, according to her light, to ease the going of the soul out of this world.

Grayer grew the worn face, fainter the voice, colder the shrivelled old hands in the girl's fond clasp.

'Jarvis, Jarvis, what is this?' she murmured, fearfully.

Waring came to her side and put his strong arm around her. 'My little wife,' he said, 'this is Death. But do not fear.'

And then he told her the story of the Cross; and, as it came to her a revelation, so, in the telling, it became to him, for the first time, a belief.

Old Fog told them to bury him out in deep water, as he had buried the others; and then he lay placid, a great happiness shining in his eyes.

'It is well,' he said, 'and God is very good to me. Life would have been hard without you, darling. Something seemed to give way when you said good by; but now that I am called, it is sweet to know

that you are happy, and sweeter still to think that you came back to me at the last. Be kind to her, Waring. I know you love her; but guard her tenderly,—she is but frail. I die content, my child, quite content; do not grieve for me.'

Then, as the light faded from his eyes, he folded his hands. 'Is it expiated, O God? Is it expiated?' he murmured. There was no answer for him on earth.

They buried him as he had directed, and then they sailed away, taking the old black with them. The castle was left alone; the flowers bloomed on through the summer, and the rooms held the old furniture bravely through the long winter. But gradually the walls fell in and the water entered. The fogs still steal across the lake, and wave their gray draperies up into the northern curve; but the sedge-gate is gone, and the castle is indeed Nowhere.

JEANNETTE

Before the war for the Union, in the times of the old army, there had been peace throughout the country for thirteen years. Regiments existed in their officers, but the ranks were thin,—the more so the better, since the United States possessed few forts and seemed in chronic embarrassment over her military children, owing to the flying foot-ball of public opinion, now 'standing army pro,' now 'standing army con,' with more or less allusion to the much-enduring Caesar and his legions, the ever-present ghost of the political arena.

In those days the few forts were full and much state was kept up; the officers were all graduates of West Point, and their wives graduates of the first families. They prided themselves upon their antecedents; and if there was any aristocracy in the country, it was in the circles of army life.

Those were pleasant days,—pleasant for the old soldiers who were resting after Mexico,—pleasant for young soldiers destined to die on the plains of Gettysburg or the cloudy heights of Lookout Mountain. There was an esprit de corps in the little band, a dignity of bearing, and a ceremonious state, lost in the great struggle which came afterward. That great struggle now lies ten years back; yet, to-day, when the silver-haired veterans meet, they pass it over as a thing of the present, and go back to the times of the 'old army.'

Up in the northern straits, between blue Lake Huron, with its clear air, and gray Lake Michigan, with its silver fogs, lies the bold island of Mackinac. Clustered along the beach, which runs around its half-moon harbor, are the houses of the old French village, nestling at the foot of the cliff rising behind, crowned with the little white fort, the stars and stripes floating above it against the deep blue sky. Beyond, on all sides, the forest stretches away, cliffs finishing it abruptly, save one slope at the far end of the island, three miles distant, where the British landed in 1812. That is the whole of Mackinac.

The island has a strange sufficiency of its own; it satisfies; all who have lived there feel it. The island has a wild beauty of its own; it fascinates; all who have lived there love it. Among its aromatic cedars, along the aisles of its pine trees, in the gay company of its maples, there is companionship. On its bald northern cliffs, bathed in sunshine and swept by the pure breeze, there is exhilaration. Many there are, bearing the burden and heat of the day, who look back to the island with the tears that rise but do not fall, the sudden longing despondency that comes occasionally to all, when the tired heart cries out, 'O, to escape, to flee away, far, far away, and be at rest!'

In 1856 Fort Mackinac held a major, a captain, three lieutenants, a chaplain, and a surgeon, besides those subordinate officers who wear stripes on their sleeves, and whose rank and duties are mysteries to the uninitiated. The force for this array of commanders was small, less than a company; but what it lacked in quantity it made up in quality, owing to the continual drilling it received.

The days were long at Fort Mackinac; happy thought! drill the men. So when the major had finished, the captain began, and each lieutenant was watching his chance. Much state was kept up also. Whenever the major appeared, 'Commanding officer; guard, present arms,' was called down the line of men on duty, and the guard hastened to obey, the major acknowledging the salute with stiff precision. By day and by night sentinels paced the walls. True, the walls were crumbling, and the whole force was constantly engaged in propping them up, but none the less did the sentinels pace with dignity. What was it to the captain if, while he sternly inspected the muskets in the block-house, the lieutenant, with a detail of men, was hard at work strengthening its underpinning? None the less did he inspect. The sally-port, mended but imposing; the flag-staff with its fair-weather and storm flags; the frowning iron

grating; the sidling white causeway, constantly falling down and as constantly repaired, which led up to the main entrance; the well-preserved old cannon,—all showed a strict military rule. When the men were not drilling they were propping up the fort and when they were not propping up the fort they were drilling. In the early days, the days of the first American commanders, military roads had been made through the forest,—roads even now smooth and solid, although trees of a second growth meet overhead. But that was when the fort was young and stood firmly on its legs. In 1856 there was no time for road-making, for when military duty was over there was always more or less mending to keep the whole fortification from sliding down hill into the lake.

On Sunday there was service in the little chapel, an upper room overlooking the inside parade-ground. Here the kindly Episcopal chaplain read the chapters about Balaam and Balak, and always made the same impressive pause after 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' (Dear old man! he has gone. Would that our last end might indeed be like his!) Not that the chaplain confined his reading to the Book of Numbers; but as those chapters are appointed for the August Sundays, and as it was in August that the summer visitors came to Mackinac, the little chapel is in many minds associated with the patient Balak, his seven altars, and his seven rams.

There was state and discipline in the fort even on Sundays; bugle-playing marshalled the congregation in, bugle-playing marshalled them out. If the sermon was not finished, so much the worse for the sermon, but it made no difference to the bugle; at a given moment it sounded, and out marched all the soldiers, drowning the poor chaplain's hurrying voice with their tramp down the stairs. The officers attended service in full uniform, sitting erect and dignified in the front seats. We used to smile at the grand air they had, from the stately gray-haired major down to the youngest lieutenant fresh from the Point. But brave hearts were beating under those fine uniforms; and when the great struggle came, one and all died on the field in the front of the battle. Over the grave of the commanding officer is inscribed, 'Major-General,' over the captain's is 'Brigadier,' and over each young lieutenant is 'Colonel.' They gained their promotion in death.

I spent many months at Fort Mackinac with Archie; Archie was my nephew, a young lieutenant. In the short, bright summer came the visitors from below; all the world outside is 'below' in island vernacular. In the long winter the little white fort looked out over unbroken ice-fields, and watched for the moving black dot of the dog-train bringing the mails from the main land. One January day I had been out walking on the snow-crust, breathing the cold, still air, and, returning within the walls to our quarters, I found my little parlor already occupied. Jeannette was there, petite Jeanneton, the fisherman's daughter. Strange beauty sometimes results from a mixed descent, and this girl had French, English and Indian blood in her veins, the three races mixing and intermixing among her ancestors, according to the custom of the Northwestern border. A bold profile delicately finished, heavy blue-black hair, light blue eyes looking out unexpectedly from under black lashes and brows; a fair white skin, neither the rose-white of the blonde nor the cream-white of the Oriental brunette; a rounded form with small hands and feet, showed the mixed beauties of three nationalities. Yes, there could be no doubt but that Jeannette was singularly lovely, albeit ignorant utterly. Her dress was as much of a melange as her ancestry: a short skirt of military blue, Indian leggings and moccasins, a red jacket and little red cap embroidered with beads. The thick braids of her hair hung down her back, and on the lounge lay a large blanket-mantle lined with fox-skins and ornamented with the plumage of birds. She had come to teach me bead-work; I had already taken several lessons to while away the time, but found myself an awkward scholar.

'Bonjou', madame,' she said, in her patois of broken English and degenerate French. 'Pretty here.'

My little parlor had a square of carpet, a hearth-fire of great logs, Turkey-red curtains, a lounge and arm-chair covered with chintz, several prints on the cracked walls, and a number of books,—the whole well used and worn, worth perhaps twenty dollars in any town below, but ten times twenty in icy Mackinac. I began the bead-work, and Jeannette was laughing at my mistakes, when the door opened, and our surgeon came in, pausing to warm his hands before going up to his room in the attic. A taciturn man was our surgeon, Rodney Prescott, not popular in the merry garrison circle, but a favorite of mine; the Puritan, the New-Englander, the Bostonian, were as plainly written upon his face as the French and Indian were written upon Jeannette.

'Sit down, Doctor,' I said.

He took a seat and watched us carelessly, now and then smiling at Jeannette's chatter as a giant might smile upon a pygmy. I could see that the child was putting on all her little airs to attract his attention; now the long lashes swept the cheeks, now they were raised suddenly, disclosing the unexpected blue eyes: the little moccasined feet must be warmed on the fender, the braids must be swept back with an impatient movement of the hand and shoulder, and now and then there was a coquettish arch of the red lips, less than a pout, what she herself would have called 'une p'tite moue.'

Our surgeon watched this pantomime unmoved.

'Isn't she beautiful?' I said, when, at the expiration of the hour, Jeannette disappeared, wrapped in her mantle.

'No; not to my eyes.'

'Why, what more can you require, Doctor? Look at her rich coloring, her hair—'

'There is no mind in her face, Mrs. Corlyne.'

'But she is still a child.'

'She will always be a child; she will never mature,' answered our surgeon, going up the steep stairs to his room above.

Jeannette came regularly, and one morning, tired of the bead-work, I proposed teaching her to read. She consented, although not without an incentive in the form of shillings; but, however gained, my scholar gave to the long winter a new interest. She learned readily; but as there was no foundation, I was obliged to commence with A, B, C.

'Why not teach her to cook?' suggested the major's fair young wife, whose life was spent in hopeless labors with Indian servants, who, sooner or later, ran away in the night with spoons and the family apparel.

'Why not teach her to sew?' said Madame Captain, wearily raising her eyes from the pile of small garments before her.

'Why not have her up for one of our sociables?' hazarded our most dashing lieutenant, twirling his moustache.

'Frederick!' exclaimed his wife, in a tone of horror: she was aristocratic, but sharp in outlines.

'Why not bring her into the church? Those French half-breeds are little better than heathen,' said the chaplain.

Thus the high authorities disapproved of my educational efforts. I related their comments to Archie, and added, 'The surgeon is the only one who has said nothing against it.'

'Prescott? O, he's too high and mighty to notice anybody, much less a half-breed girl. I never saw such a stiff, silent fellow; he looks as if he had swallowed all his straightlaced Puritan ancestors. I wish he'd exchange.'

'Gently, Archie—'

'O, yes, without doubt; certainly, and amen! I know you like him, Aunt Sarah,' said my handsome boy-soldier, laughing.

The lessons went on. We often saw the surgeon during study hours as the stairway leading to his room opened out of the little parlor. Sometimes he would stop awhile and listen as Jeannette slowly read, 'The good boy likes his red top'; 'The good girl can sew a seam', or watched her awkward attempts to write her name, or add a one and a two. It was slow work, but I persevered, if from no other motive than obstinacy. Had they not all prophesied a failure? When wearied with the dull routine, I gave an oral lesson in poetry. If the rhymes were of the chiming, rhythmic kind, Jeannette learned rapidly, catching the verses as one catches a tune, and repeating them with a spirit and dramatic gesture all her own. Her favorite was Macaulay's 'Ivry.' Beautiful she looked, as, standing in the centre of the room, she rolled out the sonorous lines, her French accent giving a charming foreign coloring to the well-known verses:—

'Now by the lips of those ye love, fair gentlemen of France,
Charge for the golden lilies,—upon them with the lance!
A thousand spears are striking deep, a thousand spears in rest,
A thousand knights are pressing close behind the snow-white crest;
And in they burst, and on they rushed, while, like a guiding star,
Amidst the thickest carnage blazed the helmet of Navarre.'

And yet, after all my explanations, she only half understood it; the 'knights' were always 'nights' in her mind, and the 'thickest carnage' was always the 'thickest carriage.'

One March day she came at the appointed hour, soon after our noon dinner. The usual clear winter

sky was clouded, and a wind blew the snow from the trees where it had lain quietly month after month. 'Spring is coming,' said the old sergeant that morning, as he hoisted the storm-flag; it's getting wildlike.'

Jeannette and I went through the lessons, but towards three o'clock a north-wind came sweeping over the Straits and enveloped the island in a whirling snow-storm, partly eddies of white splinters torn from the ice-bound forest, and partly a new, fall of round snow pellets careering along on the gale, quite unlike the soft, feathery flakes of early winter. 'You cannot go home now, Jeannette,' I said, looking out through the little west window; our cottage stood back on the hill, and from this side window we could see the Straits, going down toward far Waugoschance; the steep fort-hill outside the wall; the long meadow, once an Indian burial-place, below; and beyond on the beach the row of cabins inhabited by the French fishermen, one of them the home of my pupil. The girl seldom went round the point into the village; its one street and a half seemed distasteful to her. She climbed the stone-wall on the ridge behind her cabin, took an Indian trail through the grass in summer, or struck across on the snow-crust in winter, ran up the steep side of the fort-hill like a wild chamois, and came into the garrison enclosure with a careless nod to the admiring sentinel, as she passed under the rear entrance. These French, half-breeds, like the gypsies, were not without a pride of their own. They held themselves aloof from the Irish of Shantytown, the floating sailor population of the summer, and the common soldiers of the garrison. They intermarried among themselves, and held their own revels in their beach-cabins during the winter, with music from their old violins, dancing and, songs, French ballads with a chorus after every two lines, quaint chansons handed down from voyageur ancestors. Small respect had they for the little Roman Catholic church beyond the old Agency garden; its German priest they refused to honor; but, when stately old Father Piret came over to the island from his hermitage in the Chenaux, they ran to meet him, young and old, and paid him reverence with affectionate respect. Father Piret was a Parisian, and a gentleman; nothing less would suit these far-away sheep in the wilderness!

Jeannette Leblanc had all the pride of her class; the Irish saloon-keeper with his shining tall hat, the loud-talking mate of the lake schooner, the trim sentinel pacing the fort walls, were nothing to her, and this somewhat incongruous hauteur gave her the air of a little princess.

On this stormy afternoon the captain's wife was in my parlor preparing to return to her own quarters with some coffee she had borrowed. Hearing my remark she said, 'O, the snow won't hurt the child, Mrs. Corlyne; she must be storm-proof, living down there on the beach! Duncan can take her home.'

Duncan was the orderly, a factotum in the garrison.

'Non,' said Jeannette, tossing her head proudly, as the door closed behind the lady, 'I wish not of Duncan; I go alone.'

It happened that Archie, my nephew, had gone over to the cottage of the commanding officer to decorate the parlor for the military sociable; I knew he would not return, and the evening stretched out before me in all its long loneliness. 'Stay, Jeannette,' I said. 'We will have tea together here, and when the wind goes down, old Antoine shall go back with you.' Antoine was a French wood-cutter, whose cabin clung half-way down the fort-hill like a swallow's nest.

Jeannette's eyes sparkled; I had never invited her before; in an instant she had turned the day into a high festival. 'Braid hair?' she asked, glancing toward the mirror, 'faut que je m' fasse belle.' And the long hair came out of its close braids enveloping her in its glossy dark waves, while she carefully smoothed out the bits of red ribbon that served as fastenings. At this moment the door opened, and the surgeon, the wind, and a puff of snow came in together. Jeannette looked up, smiling and blushing; the falling hair gave a new softness to her face, and her eyes were as shy as the eyes of a wild fawn.

Only the previous day I had noticed that Rodney Prescott listened with marked attention to the captain's cousin, a Virginia lady, as she advanced a theory that Jeannette had negro blood in her veins. 'Those quadroon girls often have a certain kind of plebeian beauty like this pet of yours, Mrs. Corlyne,' she said, with a slight sniff of her high-bred, pointed nose. In vain I exclaimed, in vain I argued; the garrison ladies were all against me, and, in their presence, not a man dared come to my aid; and the surgeon even added, 'I wish I could be sure of it.'

'Sure of the negro blood?' I said indignantly.

'Yes.'

'But Jeannette does not look in the least like a quadroon.'

'Some of the quadrone girls are very handsome, Mrs. Corlyne,' answered the surgeon, coldly.

'O yes!' said the high-bred Virginia lady. 'My brother has a number of them about his place, but we do not teach them to read, I assure you. It spoils them.'

As I looked at Jeannette's beautiful face, her delicate eagle profile, her fair skin and light blue eyes, I recalled this conversation with vivid indignation. The surgeon, at least, should be convinced of his mistake. Jeannette had never looked more brilliant; probably the man had never really scanned her features,—he was such a cold, unseeing creature; but to-night he should have a fair opportunity, so I invited him to join our storm-bound tea-party. He hesitated.

'Ah, do, Monsieur Rodenai,' said Jeannette, springing forward. 'I sing for you, I dance; but, no, you not like that. Bien, I tell your fortune then.' The young girl loved company. A party of three, no matter who the third, was to her infinitely better than two.

The surgeon stayed.

A merry evening we had before the hearth-fire. The wind howled around the block-house and rattled the flag-staff, and the snow pellets sounded on the window-panes, giving that sense of warm comfort within that comes only with the storm. Our servant had been drafted into service for the military sociable, and I was to prepare the evening meal myself.

'Not tea,' said Jeannette, with a wry face; 'tea,—c'est medecine!' She had arranged her hair in fanciful braids, and now followed me to the kitchen, enjoying the novelty like a child. 'Cafe?' she said. 'O, please, madame! I make it.'

The little shed kitchen was cold and dreary, each plank of its thin walls rattling in the gale with a dismal creak; the wind blew the smoke down the chimney, and finally it ended on our bringing everything into the cosy parlor, and using the hearth fire, where Jeannette made coffee and baked little cakes over the coals.

The meal over, Jeannette sang her songs, sitting on the rug before the fire,—Le Beau Voyageur, Les Neiges de la Cloche, ballads in Canadian patois sung to minor airs brought over from France two hundred years before.

The surgeon sat in the shade of the chimney-piece, his face shaded by his hand, and I could not discover whether he saw anything to admire in my protegee, until, standing in the centre of the room, she gave as 'Ivry' in glorious style. Beautiful she looked as she rolled out the lines,—

'And if my standard-bearer fall, as fall full well he may,—
For never saw I promise yet of such a bloody fray,—
Press where ye see my white plume shine amidst the ranks of war,
And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of Navarre.'

Rodney sat in the full light now, and I secretly triumphed in his rapt attention.

'Something else, Jeannette,' I said in the pride of my heart. Instead of repeating anything I had taught her, she began in French:—

"Marie, enfant, quitte l'ouvrage,
Voici l'etoille du berger."
—"Ma mere, un enfant du village
Languit captif chez l'etranger;
Pris sur mer, loin de sa patrie,
Il c'est rendu,—mais le dernier."
File, file, pauvre Marie,
Pour secourir le prisonnier;
File, file, pauvre Marie,
File, file, pour le prisonnier.

"Pour lui je filerais moi-meme
Mon enfant,—mais—j'ai tant vieilli!"
—"Envoyez a celui que j'aime
Tout le gain par moi recueilli.
Rose a sa noce en vain me prie;—
Dieu! j'entends le menetrier!"
File, file, pauvre Marie,
Pour secourir le prisonnier;

File, file, pauvre Marie,
File, file, pour le prisonnier.

"Plus pres du feu file, ma cherie;
La nuit vient de refroidir le temps"
—"Adrien, m'a-t-on dit, ma mere,
Gemit dans des cachots flottants.
On repousse la main fletrie
Qu'il etend vers an pain grossier."

File, file, pauvre Marie,
Pour secourir le prisonnier;
File, file, pauvre Marie,
File, file pour le prisonnier.'

[Footnote: 'Le Prisonnier de Guerre,' Beranger.]

Jeannette repeated these lines with a pathos so real that I felt a moisture rising in my eyes.

'Where did you learn that, child?' I asked.

'Father Piret, madame.'

'What is it?'

'Je n'sais.'

'It is Beranger,—'The Prisoner of War,' said Rodney Prescott. 'But you omitted the last verse, mademoiselle; may I ask why?'

'More sad so,' answered Jeannette. 'Marie she die now.'

'You wish her to die?'

'Mais oui: she die for love; c'est beau!'

And there flashed a glance from the girl's eyes that thrilled through me, I scarcely knew why. I looked towards Rodney, but he was back in the shadow again.

The hours passed. 'I must go,' said Jeannette, drawing aside the curtain. Clouds were still driving across the sky, but the snow had ceased falling, and at intervals the moon shone out over the cold white scene; the March wind continued on its wild career toward the south.

'I will send for Antoine,' I said, rising, as Jeannette took up her fur mantle.

'The old man is sick, to-day,' said Rodney. 'It would not be safe for him to leave the fire, to-night. I will accompany mademoiselle.'

Pretty Jeannette shrugged her shoulders. 'Mais, monsieur,' she answered, 'I go over the hill.'

'No, child; not tonight,' I said decidedly. 'The wind is violent, and the cliff doubly slippery after this ice-storm. Go round through the village.'

'Of course we shall go through the village,' said our surgeon, in his calm authoritative way. They started. But in another minute I saw Jeannette fly by the west window, over the wall and across the snowy road, like a spirit, disappearing down the steep bank, now slippery with glare ice. Another minute, and Rodney Prescott followed in her track.

With bated breath I watched for the reappearance of the two figures on the white plain, one hundred and fifty feet below; the cliff was difficult at any time, and now in this ice! The moments seemed very long, and, alarmed, I was on the point of arousing the garrison, when I spied the two dark figures on the snowy plain below, now clear in the moonlight, now lost in the shadow. I watched them for some distance; then a cloud came, and I lost them entirely.

Rodney did not return, although I sat late before the dying fire. Thinking over the evening, the idea came to me that perhaps, after all, he did admire my protegee, and, being a romantic old woman, I did not repel the fancy; it might go a certain distance without harm, and an idyl is always charming, doubly so to people cast away on a desert island. One falls into the habit of studying persons very closely in the limited circle of garrison life.

But, the next morning, the major's wife gave me an account of the sociable. 'It was very pleasant,' she said. 'Toward the last Dr. Prescott came in, quite unexpectedly. I had no idea he could be so agreeable.'

Augusta can tell you how charming he was!

Augusta, a young lady cousin, of pale blond complexion, neutral opinions, and irreproachable manners, smiled primly. My idyl was crushed!

The days passed. The winds, the snows, and the high-up fort remained the same. Jeannette came and went, and the hour lengthened into two or three; not that we read much, but we talked more. Our surgeon did not again pass through the parlor; he had ordered a rickety stairway on the outside wall to be repaired, and we could hear him going up and down its icy steps as we sat by the hearth-fire. One day I said to him, 'My protegee is improving wonderfully. If she could have a complete education, she might take her place with the best in the land.'

'Do not deceive yourself, Mrs. Corlyne,' he answered. 'It is only the shallow French quickness.'

'Why do you always judge the child so harshly, Doctor?'

'Do you take her part, Aunt Sarah?' (For sometimes he used the title which Archie had made so familiar.)

'Of course I do, Rodney. A poor, unfriended girl living in this remote place, against a United States surgeon with the best of Boston behind him.'

'I wish you would tell me that every day, Aunt Sarah,' was the reply I received. It set me musing, but I could make nothing of it. Troubled without knowing why, I suggested to Archie that he should endeavor to interest our surgeon in the fort gayety; there was something for every night in the merry little circle,—games, suppers, tableaux, music, theatricals, readings, and the like.

'Why, he's in the thick of it already, Aunt Sarah,' said my nephew. 'He's devoting himself to Miss Augusta; she sings "The Harp that once—" to him every night.'

('The Harp that once through Tara's Halls', was Miss Augusta's dress-parade song. The Major's quarters not being as large as the halls aforesaid, the melody was somewhat overpowering.)

'O, does she?' I thought, not without a shade of vexation. But the vague anxiety vanished.

The real spring came at last,—the rapid, vivid spring of Mackinac. Almost in a day the ice moved out, the snows melted, and the northern wild-flowers appeared in the sheltered glens. Lessons were at an end, for my scholar was away in the green woods. Sometimes she brought me a bunch of flowers, but I seldom saw her; my wild bird had flown back to the forest. When the ground was dry and the pine droppings warmed by the sun, I, too, ventured abroad. One day, wandering as far as the Arched Rock, I found the surgeon there, and together we sat down to rest under the trees, looking off over the blue water flecked with white caps. The Arch is a natural bridge over a chasm one hundred and fifty feet above the lake,—a fissure in the cliff which has fallen away in a hollow, leaving the bridge by itself far out over the water. This bridge springs upward in the shape of an arch; it is fifty feet long, and its width is in some places two feet, in others only a few inches,—a narrow, dizzy pathway hanging between sky and water.

'People have crossed it,' I said.

'Only fools,' answered our surgeon, who despised foolhardiness. 'Has a man nothing better to do with his life than risk it for the sake of a silly feat like that! I would not so much as raise my eyes to see any one cross.'

'O yes, you would, Monsieur Rodenai,' cried a voice behind us. We both turned and caught a glimpse of Jeannette as she bounded through the bushes and out to the very centre of the Arch, where she stood balancing herself and laughing gayly. Her form was outlined against the sky; the breeze, swayed her skirt; she seemed hovering over the chasm. I watched her, mute with fear; a word might cause her to lose her balance; but I could not turn my eyes away, I was fascinated with the sight. I was not aware that Rodney had left me until he, too, appeared on the Arch, slowly finding a foothold for himself and advancing toward the centre. A fragment of the rock broke off under his foot and fell in the abyss below.

'Go back, Monsieur Rodenai,' cried Jeannette, seeing his danger.

'Will you come back too, Jeannette?'

'Moi? C'est aut'chose,' answered the girl, gayly tossing her pretty head.

'Then I shall come out and carry you back, wilful child,' said the surgeon.

A peal of laughter broke from Jeannette as he spoke and then she began to dance on her point of rock, swinging herself from side to side, marking the time with a song. I held my breath; her dance seemed unearthly; it was as though she belonged to the Prince of the Powers of the Air.

At length the surgeon reached the centre and caught the mocking creature in his arms: neither spoke, but I could see the flash of their eyes as they stood for an instant motionless. Then they struggled on the narrow foothold and swayed over so far that I buried my face in my trembling hands, unable to look at the dreadful end. When I opened my eyes again all was still; the Arch was tenantless, and no sound came from below. Were they, then, so soon dead? Without a cry? I forced myself to the brink to look down, over the precipice; but while I stood there, fearing to look, I heard a sound behind me in the woods. It was Jeannette singing a gay French song. I called to her to stop. 'How could you!' I said severely, for I was still trembling with agitation.

'Ce n'est rien, madame. I cross l'Arche when I had five year. Mais, Monsieur Rodenai le Grand, he raise his eye to look this time, I think,' said Jeannette, laughing triumphantly.

'Where is he?'

'On the far side, gone on to Scott's Pic [Peak]. Feroce, O feroce, comme un louppgarou! Ah! c'est joli, ca!' And over-flowing with the wildest glee the girl danced along through the woods in front of me, now pausing to look at something in her hand, now laughing, now shouting like a wild creature, until I lost sight of her. I went back to the fort alone.

For several days I saw nothing of Rodney. When at last we met, I said, 'That was a wild freak of Jeannette's at the Arch.'

'Planned, to get a few shilling out of us.'

'O Doctor! I do not think she had any such motive,' I replied, looking up deprecatingly into his cold scornful eyes.

'Are you not a little sentimental over that ignorant, half-wild creature, Aunt Sarah?'

'Well,' I said to myself, 'perhaps I am!'

The summer came, sails whitened the blue straits again, steamers stopped for an hour or two at the island docks, and the summer travellers rushed ashore to buy 'Indian curiosities,' made by the nuns in Montreal, or to climb breathlessly up the steep fort-hill to see the pride and panoply of war. Proud was the little white fort in those summer days; the sentinels held themselves stiffly erect, the officers gave up lying on the parapet half asleep, the best flag was hoisted daily, and there was much bugle-playing and ceremony connected with the evening gun, fired from the ramparts at sunset; the hotels were full, the boarding-house keepers were in their annual state of wonder over the singular taste of these people from 'below,' who actually preferred a miserable white-fish to the best of beef brought up on ice all the way from Buffalo! There were picnics and walks, and much confusion of historical dates respecting Father Marquette and the irrepressible, omnipresent Pontiac. The officers did much escort duty; their buttons gilded every scene. Our quiet surgeon was foremost in everything.

'I am surprised! I had no idea Dr. Prescott was so gay,' said the major's wife.

'I should not think of calling him gay,' I answered.

'Why, my dear Mrs. Corlyne! He is going all the time. Just ask Augusta.'

Augusta thereupon remarked that society, to a certain extent, was beneficial; that she considered Dr. Prescott much improved; really, he was now very 'nice.'

I silently protested against the word. But then I was not a Bostonian.

One bright afternoon I went through the village, round the point into the French quarter, in search of a laundress. The fishermen's cottages faced the west; they were low and wide, not unlike scows drifted ashore and moored on the beach for houses. The little windows had gay curtains fluttering in the breeze, and the room within looked clean and cheery; the rough walls were adorned with the spoils of the fresh-water seas, shells, green stones, agates, spar, and curiously shaped pebbles; occasionally there was a stuffed water-bird, or a bright-colored print, and always a violin. Black-eyed children played in the water which bordered their narrow beach-gardens; and slender women, with shining black hair, stood in their doorways knitting. I found my laundress, and then went on to Jeannette's home, the last house in the row. From the mother, a Chippewa woman, I learned that Jeannette was with her French father at the fishing-grounds off Drummond's Island.

'How long has she been away?' I asked.

'Weeks four,' replied the mother, whose knowledge of English was confined to the price-list of white-fish and blueberries, the two articles of her traffic with the boarding-house keepers.

'When will she return?'

'Je n'sais.'

She knitted on, sitting in the sunshine on her little doorstep, looking out over the western water with tranquil content in her beautiful, gentle eyes. As I walked up the beach I glanced back several times to see if she had the curiosity to watch me; but no, she still looked out over the western water. What was I to her? Less than nothing. A white-fish was more.

A week or two later I strolled out to the Giant's Stairway and sat down in the little rock chapel. There was a picnic at the Lovers' Leap, and I had that side of the island to myself. I was leaning back, half asleep, in the deep shadow, when the sound of voices roused me; a birch-bark canoe was passing close in shore, and two were in it,—Jeannette and our surgeon. I could not hear their words, but I noticed Rodney's expression as he leaned forward. Jeannette was paddling slowly; her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes brilliant. Another moment and a point hid them from my view. I went home troubled.

'Did you enjoy the picnic, Miss Augusta?' I said with assumed carelessness, that evening. 'Dr. Prescott was there, as usual, I suppose?'

'He was not present, but the picnic was highly enjoyable,' replied Miss Augusta, in her even voice and impartial manner.

'The Doctor has not been with us for some days,' said the major's wife, archly; 'I suspect he does not like Mr. Piper.'

Mr. Piper was a portly widower, of sanguine complexion, a Chicago produce-dealer, who was supposed to admire Miss Augusta, and was now going through a course of 'The Harp that once.'

The last days of summer flew swiftly by; the surgeon held himself aloof; we scarcely saw him in the garrison circles, and I no longer met him in my rambles.

'Jealousy!' said the major's wife.

September came. The summer visitors fled away homeward; the remaining 'Indian curiosities' were stored away for another season; the hotels were closed, and the forests deserted; the bluebells swung unmolested on their heights and the plump Indian-pipes grew in peace in their dark corners. The little white fort, too, began to assume its winter manners; the storm-flag was hoisted; there were evening fires upon the broad hearth-stones; the chaplain, having finished everything about Balak, his seven altars and seven rams, was ready for chess-problems; books and papers were ordered; stores laid in, and anxious inquiries made as to the 'habits' of the new mail carrier—for the mail carrier was the hero of the winter, and if his 'habits' led him to whiskey, there was danger that our precious letters might be dropped all along the northern curve of Lake Huron.

Upon this quiet matter-of-course preparation, suddenly, like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, came orders to leave. The whole garrison, officers and men, were ordered to Florida.

In a moment all was desolation. It was like being ordered into the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Dense everglades, swamp-fevers, malaria in the air, poisonous underbrush, and venomous reptiles and insects, and now and then a wily unseen foe picking off the men, one by one, as they painfully cut out roads through the thickets,—these were the features of military life in Florida at that period. Men who would have marched boldly to the cannon's mouth, officers who would have headed a forlorn hope, shrank from the deadly swamps.

Families must be broken up, also; no women, no children, could go to Florida. There were tears and the sound of sobbing in the little white fort, as the poor wives, all young mothers, hastily packed their few possessions to go back to their fathers' houses, fortunate if they had fathers to receive them. The husbands went about in silence, too sad for words. Archie kept up the best courage; but he was young, and had no one to leave save me.

The evening of the fatal day—for the orders had come in the early dawn—I was alone in my little parlor, already bare and desolate with packing-cases. The wind had been rising since morning, and now blew furiously from the west. Suddenly the door burst open and the surgeon entered. I was shocked at his appearance, as, pale, haggard, with disordered hair and clothing, he sank into a chair, and looked at me in silence.

'Rodney, what is it?' I said.

He did not answer, but still looked at me with that strange gaze. Alarmed, I rose, and went toward him, laying my hand on his shoulder with a motherly touch. I loved the quiet, gray-eyed youth next after Archie.

'What is it, my poor boy! Can I help you?'

'O Aunt Sarah, perhaps you can, for you know her.'

'Her?' I repeated, with sinking heart.

'Yes. Jeannette.'

I sat down and folded my hands; trouble had come, but it was not what I apprehended,—the old story of military life, love, and desertion; the ever-present ballad of the 'gay young knight who loves and rides away.' This was something different.

'I love her,—I love her madly, in spite of myself,' said Rodney, pouring forth his words with feverish rapidity. 'I know it is an infatuation, I know it is utterly unreasonable, and yet—I love her. I have striven against it, I have fought with myself, I have written out elaborate arguments wherein I have clearly demonstrated the folly of such an affection, and I have compelled myself to read them over slowly, word for word, when alone in my room, and yet—I love her! Ignorant, I know she would shame me; shallow, I know she could not satisfy me; as a wife she would inevitably drag me down to misery, and yet—I love her! I had not been on the island a week before I saw her, and marked her beauty. Months before you invited her to the fort I had become infatuated with her angular loveliness; but, in some respects, a race of the blood-royal could not be prouder than these French fishermen. They will accept your money, they will cheat you, they will tell you lies for an extra shilling; but make one step toward a simple acquaintance, and the door will be shut in your face. They will bow down before you as a customer, but they will not have you for a friend. Thus I found it impossible to reach Jeannette. I do not say that I tried, for all the time I was fighting myself; but I went far enough to see the barriers. It seemed a fatality that you should take a fancy to her, have her here, and ask me to admire her,—admire the face that haunted me by day and by night, driving me mad with its beauty.

'I realized my danger, and called to my aid all the pride of my race. I said to my heart, 'You shall not love this ignorant half-breed to your ruin.' I reasoned with myself, and said, 'It is only because you are isolated on this far-away island. Could you present this girl to your mother? Could she be a companion for your sisters? I was beginning to gain a firmer control over myself, in spite of her presence, when you unfolded your plan of education. Fatality again. Instantly a crowd of hopes surged up. The education you began, could I not finish? She was but young; a few years of careful teaching might work wonders. Could I not train this forest flower so that it could take its place in the garden? But, when I actually saw this full-grown woman unable to add the simplest sum or write her name correctly, I was again ashamed of my infatuation. It is one thing to talk of ignorance, it is another to come face to face with it. Thus I wavered, at one moment ready to give up all for pride, at another to give up all for love.

'Then came the malicious suggestion of negro blood. Could it be proved, I was free; that taint I could not pardon. [And here, even as the surgeon spoke, I noticed this as the peculiarity of the New England Abolitionist. Theoretically he believed in the equality of the enslaved race, and stood ready to maintain the belief with his life, but practically he held himself entirely aloof from them; the Southern creed and practice were the exact reverse.] I made inquiries of Father Piret, who knows the mixed genealogy of the little French colony as far back as the first voyageurs of the fur trade, and found—as I, shall I say hoped or feared?—that the insinuation was utterly false. Thus I was thrown back into the old tumult.

'Then came that evening in this parlor when Jeannette made the coffee and baked little cakes over the coals. Do you remember the pathos with which she chanted *File, file, pauvre Marie; File, file, pour le prisonnier?* Do you remember how she looked when she repeated 'Ivry'? Did that tender pity, that ringing inspiration come from a dull mind and shallow heart? I was avenged of my enforced disdain, my love gave itself up to delicious hope. She was capable of education, and then—! I made a pretext of old Antoine's cough in order to gain an opportunity of speaking to her alone; but she was like a thing possessed, she broke from me and sprang over the icy cliff, her laugh coming back on the wind as I followed her down the dangerous slope. On she rushed, jumping from rock to rock, waving her hand in wild glee when the moon shone out, singing and shouting with merry scorn at my desperate efforts to reach her. It was a mad chase, but only on the plain below could I come up with her. There, breathless and eager, I unfolded to her my plan of education. I only went as far as this: I was willing to send her to school, to give her opportunities of seeing the world, to provide for her whole future. I left the story of my love to come afterward. She laughed me to scorn. As well talk of education to the bird of the

wilderness! She rejected my offers, picked up snow to throw in my face, covered me with her French sarcasms, danced around me in circles, laughed, and mocked, until I was at a loss to know whether she was human. Finally, as a shadow darkened the moon she fled away; and when it passed she was gone, and I was alone on the snowy plain.

'Angry, fierce, filled with scorn for myself, I determined resolutely to crush out my senseless infatuation. I threw myself into such society as we had; I assumed an interest in that inane Miss Augusta; I read and studied far into the night; I walked until sheer fatigue gave me tranquillity; but all I gained was lost in that encounter at the arch: you remember it? When I saw her on that narrow bridge, my love burst its bonds again, and, senseless as ever, rushed to save her,—to save her poised on her native rocks, where every inch was familiar from childhood! To save her,—sure-footed and light as a bird! I caught her. She struggled in my arms, angrily, as an imprisoned animal might struggle, but—so beautiful! The impulse came to me to spring with her into the gulf below, and so end the contest forever. I might have done it,—I cannot tell,—but, suddenly, she wrenched herself out of my arms and fled over the Arch, to the farther side. I followed, trembling, blinded, with the violence of my emotion. At that moment I was ready to give up my life, my soul, into her hands.

'In the woods beyond she paused, glanced over her shoulder toward me, then turned eagerly. 'Voila,' she said, pointing. I looked down and saw several silver pieces that had dropped from my pocket as I sprang over the rocks, and, with an impatient gesture, I thrust them aside with my foot.

'Non,' she cried, tuning toward me and stooping eagerly,—'so much! O, so much! See! four shilling!' Her eyes glistened with longing as she held the money in her hand and fingered each piece lovingly.

'The sudden revulsion of feeling produced by her words and gesture filled me with fury. 'Keep it, and buy yourself a soul if you can!' I cried; and turning away, I left her with her gains.

'Merci, monsieur,' she answered gayly, all unmindful of my scorn; and off she ran, holding her treasure tightly clasped in both hands. I could hear her singing far down the path.

'It is a bitter thing to feel a scorn for yourself! Did I love this girl who stooped to gather a few shillings from under my feet? Was it, then, impossible for me to conquer this ignoble passion? No; it could not and it should not be! I plunged again into all the gayety; I left myself not one free moment; if sleep came not, I forced it to come with opiates; Jeannette had gone to the fishing grounds, the weeks passed, I did not see her. I had made the hardest struggle of all, and was beginning to recover my self-respect when, one day, I met her in the woods with some children; she had returned to gather blueberries. I looked at her. She was more gentle than usual, and smiled. Suddenly, as an embankment which has withstood the storms of many winters gives away at last in a calm summer night, I yielded. Myself knew the contest was over and my other self rushed to her feet.

'Since then I have often seen her; I have made plan after plan to meet her; I have—O degrading thought!—paid her to take me out in her canoe, under the pretence of fishing. I no longer looked forward; I lived only in the present, and thought only of when and where I could see her. Thus it has been until this morning, when the orders came. Now, I am brought face to face with reality; I must go; can I leave her behind? For hours I have been wandering in the woods. Aunt Sarah,—it is of no use,—I cannot live without her; I must marry her.'

'Marry Jeannette!' I exclaimed.

'Even so.'

'An ignorant half-breed?'

'As you say, an ignorant half-breed.'

'You are mad, Rodney.'

'I know it.'

I will not repeat all I said; but, at last, silenced, if not convinced, by the power of this great love, I started with him out into the wild night to seek Jeannette. We went through the village and round the village and round the point, where the wind met us, and the waves broke at our feet with a roar. Passing the row of cabins, with their twinkling lights, we reached the home of Jeannette and knocked at the low door. The Indian mother opened it. I entered, without a word, and took a seat near the hearth, where a drift-wood fire was burning. Jeannette came forward with a surprised look. 'You little think what good fortune is coming to you, child,' I thought, as I noted her coarse dress and the poor furniture of the little room.

Rodney burst at once into his subject.

'Jeannette,' he said, going toward her, 'I have come to take you away with me. You need not go to school; I have given up that idea,—I accept you as you are. You shall have silk dresses and ribbons, like the ladies of the Mission-House this summer. You shall see all great cities, you shall hear beautiful music. You shall have everything you want,—money, bright shillings, as many as you wish. See! Mrs. Corlyne has come with me to show you that it is true. This morning we had orders to leave Mackinac; in a few days we must go. But—listen, Jeanette; I will marry you. You shall be my wife. Do not look so startled. I mean it; it is really true.'

'Qu'est-ce-que-c'est?' said the girl, bewildered by the rapid, eager words.

'Dr. Prescott wishes to marry you, child,' I explained, somewhat sadly, for never had the disparity between them seemed so great. The presence of the Indian mother, the common room, were like silent protests.

'Marry,' ejaculated Jeannette.

'Yes, love' said the surgeon, ardently. 'It is quite true; Father Piret shall marry us. I will exchange into another regiment, or, if necessary, I will resign. Do you understand what I am saying, Jeannette? See! I give you my hand, in token that it is true.'

But, with a quick bound, the girl was across the room. 'What?' she cried. 'You think I marry you? Have you not heard of Baptiste? Know, then, that I love one finger of him more than all you, ten times, hundred times.'

'Baptiste?' repeated Rodney.

'Oui, mon cousin, Baptiste, the fisherman. We marry soon— tenez—la fete de Saint Andre.'

Rodney looked bewildered a moment, then his face cleared; 'Oh! a child engagement? That is one of your customs, I know. But never fear; Father Piret will absolve you from all that. Baptiste shall have a fine new boat; he will let you off for a handful of silver pieces. Do not think of that, Jeannette, but come to me—'

'Je vous abhorre; Je vous deteste,' cried the girl with fury as he approached. 'Baptiste not love me? He love me more than boat and silver dollar,—more than all the world! And I love him; I die for him! Allez-vous-en, traître!'

Rodney had grown white; he stood before her, motionless, with fixed eyes.

'Jeannette,' I said in French, 'perhaps you do not understand. Dr. Prescott asks you to marry him; Father Piret shall marry you, and all your friends shall come. Dr. Prescott will take you away from this hard life; he will make you rich; he will support your father and mother in comfort. My child, it is wonderful good fortune. He is an educated gentleman, and loves you truly.'

'What is that to me?' replied Jeannette, proudly. 'Let him go, I care not.' She paused a moment. Then, with flashing eyes, she cried, 'Let him go with his fine new boat and silver dollars! He does not believe me? See, then, how I despise him!' And rushing forward, she struck him on the cheek.

Rodney did not stir, but stood gazing at her while the red mark glowed on his white face.

'You know not what love is,' said Jeannette, with indescribable scorn. 'You! You! Ah, mon Baptiste, ou es-tu? But thou wilt kill him,—kill him for his boats and silver dollars!'

'Child!' I said, startled by her fury.

'I am not a child. Je suis femme, moi!' replied Jeannette, folding her arms with haughty grace. 'Allez!' she said, pointing toward the door. We were dismissed. A queen could not have made a more royal gesture.

Throughout the scene the Indian mother had not stopped her knitting.

In four days we were afloat, and the little white fort was deserted. It was a dark afternoon, and we sat clustered on the stern of the steamer, watching the flag come slowly down from its staff in token of the departure of the commanding officer. 'Isle of Beauty, fare thee well,' sang the major's fair young wife with the sound of tears in her sweet voice.

'We shall return,' said the officers. But not one of them ever saw the beautiful island again.

Rodney Prescott served a month or two in Florida, 'taciturn and stiff as ever,' Archie wrote. Then he resigned suddenly, and went abroad. He has never returned, and I have lost all trace of him, so that I cannot say, from any knowledge of my own, how long the feeling lived,—the feeling that swept me along in its train down to the beach-cottage that wild night.

Each man who reads this can decide for himself.

Each woman has decided already.

Last year I met an islander on the cars going eastward. It was the first time he had ever been 'below'; but he saw nothing to admire, that dignified citizen of Mackinac!

'What has become of Jeannette Leblanc?' I asked.

'Jeannette? O, she married that Baptiste, a lazy, good-for-nothing fellow? They live in the same little cabin around the point, and pick up a living most anyhow for their tribe of young ones.'

'Are they happy?'

'Happy?' repeated my islander, with a slow stare. 'Well I suppose they are, after their fashion; I don't know much about them. In my opinion, they are a shiftless set, those French half-breeds round the point.'

THE OLD AGENCY.

'The buildings of the United States Indian Agency on the island of Mackinac were destroyed by fire December 31, at midnight.'—WESTERN NEWSPAPER ITEM.

The old house is gone then! But it shall not depart into oblivion unchronicled. One who has sat under its roof-tree, one who remembers well its rambling rooms and wild garden, will take the pen to write down a page of its story. It is only an episode, one of many; but the others are fading away, or already buried in dead memories under the sod. It was a quaint, picturesque old place, stretching back from the white limestone road that bordered the little port, its overgrown garden surrounded by an ancient stockade ten feet in height, with a massive, slow-swinging gate in front, defended by loopholes. This stockade bulged out in some places and leaned in at others; but the veteran posts, each a tree sharpened to a point, did not break their ranks, in spite of decrepitude; and the Indian warriors, could they have returned from their happy hunting-grounds, would have found the brave old fence of the Agency a sturdy barrier still. But the Indian warriors could not return. The United States agent had long ago moved to Lake Superior, and the deserted residence, having only a mythical owner, left without repairs year after year, and under a cloud of confusion as regarded taxes, titles, and boundaries, became a kind of flotsam property, used by various persons, but belonging legally to no one. Some tenant, tired of swinging the great gate back and forth, had made a little sally port alongside, but otherwise the place remained unaltered; a broad garden with a central avenue of cherry-trees, on each side dilapidated arbors, overgrown paths, and heart-shaped beds, where the first agents had tried to cultivate flowers, and behind the limestone cliffs crowned with cedars. The house was large on the ground, with wings and various additions built out as if at random; on each side and behind were rough outside chimneys clamped to the wall; in the roof over the central part dormer-windows showed a low second storey; and here and there at intervals were outside doors, in some cases opening out into space, since the high steps which once led up to them had fallen down, and remained as they fell, heaps of stones on the ground below. Within were suites of rooms, large and small, showing traces of workmanship elaborate for such a remote locality; the ceilings, patched with rough mortar, had been originally decorated with moulding, the doors were ornamented with scroll-work, and the two large apartments on each side of the entrance-hall possessed chimney-pieces and central hooks for chandeliers. Beyond and behind stretched out the wings; coming to what appeared to be the end of the house on west, there unexpectedly began a new series of rooms turning to the north, each with its outside door; looking for a corresponding labyrinth on the eastern side, there was nothing but a blank wall. The blind stairway went up in a kind of dark well, and once up it was a difficult matter to get down without a plunge from top to bottom, since the undefended opening was just where no one

would expect to find it. Sometimes an angle was so arbitrarily walled up that you felt sure there must be a secret chamber there and furtively rapped on the wall to catch the hollow echo within. Then again you opened a door, expecting to step into the wilderness of a garden, and found yourself in a set of little rooms running off on a tangent, one after the other, and ending in a windowless closet and an open cistern. But the Agency gloried in its irregularities, and defied criticism. The original idea of its architect—if there was any—had vanished; but his work remained a not unpleasing variety to summer visitors accustomed to city houses, all built with a definite purpose, and one front door.

After some years of wandering in foreign lands, I returned to my own country, and took up the burden of old associations whose sadness time had mercifully softened. The summer was over; September had begun, but there came to me a great wish to see Mackinac once more; to look again upon the little white fort where I had lived with Archie, my soldier nephew killed at Shiloh. The steamer took me safely across Lake Erie, up the brimming Detroit River, through the enchanted region of the St. Clair flats, and out into broad Lake Huron; there, off Thunder Bay, a gale met us, and for hours we swayed between life and death.

The season for pleasure travelling was over; my fellow-passengers, with one exception, were of that class of Americans who dressed in cheap imitations of fine clothes, are forever travelling, travelling,—taking the steamers not from preference, but because they are less costly than an all-rail route. The thin, listless men, in ill-fitting black clothes and shining tall hats, sat on the deck in tilted chairs hour after hour silent and dreary; the thin listless women, clad in raiment of many colors, remained on the fixed sofas in the cabin hour after hour, silent and weary. At meals they ate indiscriminately everything within range, but continued the same, a weary, dreary, silent band. The one exception was an old man, tall and majestic, with silvery hair and bright, dark eyes, dressed in the garb of a Roman Catholic priest, albeit slightly tinged with frontier innovations. He came on board at Detroit, and as soon as we were under way he exchanged his hat for a cloth cap embroidered with Indian bead-work; and when the cold air, precursor of the gale, struck us on Huron, he wrapped himself in a large capote made of skins, with the fur inward.

In times of danger formality drops from us. During those long hours, when the next moment might have brought death, this old man and I were together; and when at last the cold dawn came, and the disabled steamer slowly ploughed through the angry water around the point, and showed us Mackinac in the distance, we discovered that the island was a mutual friend, and that we knew each other, at least by name; for the silver-haired priest was Father Piret, the hermit of the Chenaux. In the old days, when I was living at the little white fort, I had known Father Piret by reputation, and he had heard of me from the French half-breeds around the point. We landed. The summer hotels were closed, and I was directed to the old Agency, where occasionally a boarder was received by the family then in possession. The air was chilly, and a fine rain was falling, the afterpiece of the equinoctial; the wet storm-flag hung heavily down over the fort on the height, and the waves came in sullenly. All was in sad accordance with my feelings as I thought of the past and its dead, while the slow tears of age moistened my eyes. But the next morning Mackinac awoke, robed in autumn splendor; the sunshine poured down, the straits sparkled back, the forest glowed in scarlet, the larches waved their wild, green hands, the fair-weather flag floated over the little fort, and all was as joyous as though no one had ever died; and indeed it is in glorious days like these that we best realise immortality.

I wandered abroad through the gay forest to the Arch, the Lovers' Leap, and old Fort Holmes, whose British walls had been battered down, for pastime, so that only a caved-in British cellar remained to mark the spot. Returning to the Agency, I learned that Father Piret had called to see me.

'I am sorry that I missed him,' I said; 'he is a remarkable old man.'

The circle at the dinner-table glanced up with one accord. The little minister with the surprised eyes looked at me more surprised than ever; his large wife groaned audibly. The Baptist colporteur peppered his potatoes until they and the plate were black; the Presbyterian doctor, who was the champion of the Protestant party on the island, wished to know if I was acquainted with the latest devices of the Scarlet Woman in relation to the county school-fund.

'But my friends,' I replied, 'Father Piret and I both belong to the past. We discuss not religion, but Mackinac; not the school-fund, but the old associations of the island, which is dear to both of us.'

The four looked at me with distrust; they saw nothing dear about the island, unless it was the price of fresh meat; and as to old associations, they held themselves above such nonsense. So, one and all, they, took beef and enjoyed a season of well-regulated conversation, leaving me to silence and my broiled white-fish; as it was Friday, no doubt they thought the latter a rag of popery.

Very good rags.

But my hostess, a gentle little woman, stole away from these bulwarks of Protestantism in the late afternoon, and sought me in my room, or rather series of rooms, since there were five opening one out of the other, the last three unfurnished, and all the doorless doorways staring at me like so many fixed eyes, until, oppressed by their silent watchfulness, I hung a shawl over the first opening and shut out the whole gazing suite.

'You must not think, Mrs. Corlyne, that we islanders do not appreciate Father Piret,' said the little woman, who belonged to one of the old island families, descendants of a chief factor of the fur trade. 'There has been some feeling lately against the Catholics—'

'Roman Catholics, my dear,' I said with Anglican particularity.

'But we all love and respect the dear old man as a father.'

'When I was living at the fort, fifteen years ago, I heard occasionally of Father Piret,' I said, 'but he seemed to be almost a mythic personage. What is his history?'

'No one knows. He came here fifty years ago, and after officiating on the island a few years, he retired to a little Indian farm in the Chenaux, where he has lived ever since. Occasionally he holds a service for the half-breeds at Point St. Ignace, but the parish of Mackinac proper has its regular priest, and Father Piret apparently does not hold even the appointment of missionary. Why he remains here—a man educated, refined, and even aristocratic—is a mystery. He seems to be well provided with money; his little house in the Chenaux contains foreign books and pictures, and he is very charitable to the poor Indians. But he keeps himself aloof, and seems to desire no intercourse with the world beyond his letters and papers, which come regularly, some of them from France. He seldom leaves the Straits; he never speaks of himself; always he appears as you saw him, carefully dressed and stately. Each summer when he is seen on the street, there is more or less curiosity about him among the summer visitors, for he is quite unlike the rest of us Mackinac people. But no one can discover anything more than I have told you, and those who have persisted so far as to sail over to the Chenaux either lose their way among the channels, or if they find the house, they never find him; the door is locked, and no one answers.'

'Singular,' I said. 'He has nothing of the hermit about him. He has what I should call a courtly manner.'

'That is it,' replied my hostess, taking up the word; 'some say he came from the French court,—a nobleman exiled for political offences; others think he is a priest under the ban; and there is still a third story, to the effect that he is a French count, who, owing to a disappointment in love, took orders and came to this far-away island, so that he might seclude himself forever from the world.'

'But no one really knows?'

'Absolutely nothing. He is beloved by all the real old island families, whether they are of his faith or not; and when he dies the whole Strait, from Bois Blanc light to far Waugoschance, will mourn for him.'

At sunset the Father came again to see me; the front door of my room was open, and we seated ourselves on the piazza outside. The roof of bark thatch had fallen away, leaving the bare beams overhead twined with brier-roses; the floor and house side were frescoed with those lichen colored spots which show that the gray planks have lacked paint for many long years; the windows had wooden shutters fastened back with irons shaped like the letter S, and on the central door was a brass knocker, and a plate bearing the words, 'United States Agency.'

'When I first came to the island,' said Father Piret, 'this was the residence par excellence. The old house was brave with green and white paint then; it had candelabra on its high mantles, brass andirons on its many hearthstones, curtains for all its little windows, and carpets for all its uneven floors. Much cooking went on, and smoke curled up from all these outside chimneys. Those were the days of the fur trade and Mackinac was a central mart. Hither twice a year came the bateaux from the Northwest, loaded with furs; and in those old, decaying warehouses on the back street of the village were stored the goods sent out from New York, with which the bateaux were loaded again, and after a few days of revelry, during which the improvident voyagers squandered all their hard-earned gains, the train returned westward into 'the countries,' as they called the wilderness beyond the lakes, for another six months of toil. The officers of the little fort on the height, the chief factors of the fur company, and the United States Indian agent, formed the feudal aristocracy of the island; but the agent had the most imposing mansion, and often have I seen the old house shining with lights across its whole broadside of windows, and gay with the sound of a dozen French violins. The garden, now a wilderness, was the pride of the island. Its prim arbors, its spring and spring-house, its flowerbeds, where, with infinite pains, a few hardy plants were induced to blossom; its cherry-tree avenue, whose early red fruit the

short summer could scarcely ripen; its annual attempts at vegetables, which never came to maturity,—formed topics for conversation in court circles. Potatoes then as now were left to the mainland Indians, who came over with their canoes heaped with the fine, large thin-jacketed fellows, bartering them all for a loaf or two of bread and a little whiskey.

'The stockade which surrounds the place was at that day a not unnecessary defence. At the time of the payments the island swarmed with Indians, who came from Lake Superior and the Northwest, to receive the government pittance. Camped on the beach as far as the eye could reach, these wild warriors, dressed in all their savage finery, watched the Agency with greedy eyes, as they waited for their turn. The great gate was barred, and sentinels stood at the loopholes with loaded muskets; one by one the chiefs were admitted, stalked up to the office,—that wing on the right,—received the allotted sum, silently selected something from the displayed goods, and as silently departed, watched by quick eyes, until the great gate closed behind them. The guns of the fort were placed so as to command the Agency during payment time; and when, after several anxious, watchful days and nights, the last brave had received his portion, and the last canoe started away toward the north, leaving only the comparatively peaceful mainland Indians behind, the island drew a long breath of relief.'

'Was there any real danger?' I asked.

'The Indians are ever treacherous.' replied the Father. Then he was silent, and seemed lost in revery. The pure, ever-present breeze of Mackinac played in his long silvery hair, and his bright eyes roved along the wall of the old house; he had a broad forehead, noble features, and commanding presence, and as he sat there, recluse as he was,—aged, alone, without a history, with scarcely a name or a place in the world,—he looked, in the power of his native-born dignity, worthy of a royal coronet.

'I was thinking of old Jacques,' he said, after a long pause.

'He once lived in these rooms of yours, and died on that bench at the end of the piazza, sitting in the sunshine, with his staff in his hand.'

'Who was he?' I asked. 'Tell me the story, Father.'

'There is not much to tell, madame; but in my mind he is so associated with this old house, that I always think of him when I come here, and fancy I see him on that bench.'

'When the United States agent removed to the Apostle Islands, at the western end of Lake Superior, this place remained for some time uninhabited. But one winter morning smoke was seen coming out of that great chimney on the side; and in the course of the day several curious persons endeavored to open the main gate, at that time the only entrance. But the gate was barred within, and as the high stockade was slippery with ice, for some days the mystery remained unsolved. The islanders, always slow, grow torpid in the winter like bears; they watched the smoke in the daytime and the little twinkling light by night; they talked of spirits both French and Indian as they went their rounds, but they were too indolent to do more. At length the fort commandant heard of the smoke, and saw the light from his quarters on the height. As government property, he considered the Agency under his charge, and he was preparing to send a detail of men to examine the deserted mansion in its ice-bound garden, when its mysterious occupant appeared in the village; it was an old man, silent, gentle, apparently French. He carried a canvas bag, and bought a few supplies of the coarsest description, as though he was very poor. Unconscious of observation, he made his purchases and returned slowly homeward, barring the great gate behind him. Who was he? No one knew. Whence and when came he? No one could tell.

'The detail of soldiers from the fort battered at the gate, and when the silent old man opened it they followed him through the garden, where his feet had made a lonely trail over the deep snow, round to the side door. They entered, and found some blankets on the floor, a fire of old knots on the hearth, a long narrow box tied with a rope; his poor little supplies stood in one corner,—bread, salted fish, and a few potatoes,—and over the fire hung a rusty tea-kettle, its many holes carefully plugged with bits of rag. It was a desolate scene; the old man in the great rambling empty house in the heart of an arctic winter. He said little, and the soldiers could not understand his language; but they left him unmolested, and going back to the fort, they told what they had seen. Then the major went in person to the Agency, and gathered from the stranger's words that he had come to the island over the ice in the track of the mail-carrier; that he was an emigrant from France on his way to the Red River of the North, but his strength failing, owing to the intense cold, he had stopped at the island, and seeing the uninhabited house, he had crept into it, as he had not enough money to pay for a lodging elsewhere. He seemed a quiet inoffensive old man, and after all the islanders had had a good long slow stare at him he was left in peace, with his little curling smoke by day and his little twinkling light by night, although no one thought of assisting him; there is a strange coldness of heart in these northern latitudes.'

'I was then living at the Chenaux; there was a German priest on the island; I sent over two half-breeds every ten days for the mail, and through them I heard of the stranger at the Agency. He was French, they said, and it was rumored in the saloons along the frozen docks that he had seen Paris. This warmed my heart; for, madame, I spent my youth in Paris,—the dear, the beautiful city! So I came over to the island in my dog-sledge; a little thing is an event in our long, long winter. I reached the village in the afternoon twilight, and made my way alone to the Agency; the old man no longer barred his gate, and swinging it open with difficulty, I followed the trail through the snowy silent garden round to the side of this wing,—the wing you occupy. I knocked; he opened; I greeted him and entered. He had tried to furnish his little room with the broken relics of the deserted dwelling; a mended chair, a stool, a propped-up table, a shelf with two or three battered tin dishes, and some straw in one corner comprised the whole equipment, but the floor was clean, the old dishes polished, and the blankets neatly spread over the straw which formed the bed. On the table the supplies were ranged in order; there was a careful pile of knots on one side of the hearth; and the fire was evidently husbanded to last as long as possible. He gave me the mended chair, lighted a candle-end stuck in a bottle, and then seating himself on the stool, he gazed at me in his silent way until I felt like an uncourteous intruder. I spoke to him in French, offered my services; in short, I did my best to break down the barrier of his reserve; there was something pathetic in the little room and its lonely occupant, and, besides, I knew from his accent that we were both from the banks of the Seine.

'Well, I heard his story,—not then, but afterward; it came out gradually during the eleven months of our acquaintance; for he became my friend,—almost the only friend of fifty years. I am an isolated man, madame. It must be so. God's will be done!'

The Father paused, and looked off over the darkening water; he did not sigh, neither was his calm brow clouded, but there was in his face what seemed to me a noble resignation, and I have ever since felt sure that the secret of his exile held in it a self-sacrifice; for only self-sacrifice can produce that divine expression.

Out in the straits shone the low-down green light of a schooner; beyond glimmered the mast-head star of a steamer, with the line of cabin lights below, and away on the point of Bois Blanc gleamed the steady radiance of the lighthouse showing the way to Lake Huron; the broad overgrown garden cut us off from the village, but above on the height we could see the lighted windows of the fort, although still the evening sky retained that clear hue that seems so much like daylight when one looks aloft, although the earth lies in dark shadow below. The Agency was growing indistinct even to our near eyes; its white chimneys loomed up like ghosts, the shutters sighed in the breeze, and the planks of the piazza creaked causelessly. The old house was full of the spirits of memories, and at twilight they came abroad and bewailed themselves. 'The place is haunted,' I said, as a distant door groaned drearily.

'Yes,' replied Father Piret, coming out of his abstraction, 'and this wing is haunted by my old French friend. As time passed and the spring came, he fitted up in his fashion the whole suite of five rooms. He had his parlor, sleeping room, kitchen and store-room, the whole furnished only with the articles I have already described, save that the bed was of fresh green boughs instead of straw. Jacques occupied all the rooms with ceremonious exactness; he sat in the parlor, and too I must sit there when I came; in the second room he slept and made his careful toilet, with his shabby old clothes; the third was his kitchen and dining-room; and the fourth, that little closet on the right, was his store-room. His one indulgence was coffee; coffee he must and would have, though he slept on straw and went without meat. But he cooked to perfection in his odd way, and I have often eaten a dainty meal in that little kitchen, sitting at the propped-up table, using the battered tin dishes, and the clumsy wooden spoons fashioned with a jackknife. After we had become friends Jacques would accept occasional aid from me, and it gave me a warm pleasure to think that I had added something to his comfort, were it only a little sugar, butter, or a pint of milk. No one disturbed the old man; no orders came from Washington respecting the Agency property, and the major had not the heart to order him away. There were more than houses enough for the scanty population of the island, and only a magnate could furnish these large rambling rooms. So the soldiers were sent down to pick the red cherries for the use of the garrison, but otherwise Jacques had the whole place to himself, with all its wings, outbuildings, arbors, and garden beds.

'But I have not told you all. The fifth apartment in the suite—the square room with four windows and an outside door—was the old man's sanctuary, here were his precious relics, and here he offered up his devotions, half Christian, half pagan, with never-failing ardor. From the long narrow box which the fort soldiers had noticed came an old sabre, a worn and faded uniform of the French grenadiers, a little dried sprig, its two withered leaves tied in their places with thread, and a coarse woodcut of the great Napoleon; for Jacques was a soldier of the Empire. The uniform hung on the wall, carefully arranged on pegs as a man would wear it, and the sabre was brandished from the empty sleeve as though a hand held it; the woodcut framed in green, renewed from day to day, pine in the winter, maple in the summer, occupied the opposite side, and under it was fastened the tiny withered sprig, while on the

floor below was a fragment of buffalo-skin which served the soldier for a stool when he knelt in prayer. And did he pray to Napoleon, you ask? I hardly know. He had a few of the Church's prayers by heart, but his mind was full of the Emperor as he repeated them, and his eyes were fixed upon the picture as though it was the face of a saint. Discovering this, I labored hard to bring him to a clearer understanding of the faith; but all in vain. He listened patiently, even reverently, although I was much the younger; at intervals he replied, "Oui, mon pere," and the next day he said his prayers to the dead Emperor as usual. And this was not the worst; in place of an amen, there came a fierce imprecation against the whole English nation. After some months I succeeded in persuading him to abandon this termination; but I always suspected that it was but a verbal abandonment, and that, mentally, the curse was as strong as ever.

Jacques had been a soldier of the Empire, as it is called,—a grenadier under Napoleon; he had loved his General and Emperor in life, and adored him in death with the affectionate pertinacity of a faithful dog. One hot day during the German campaign, Napoleon, engaged in conference with some of his generals, was disturbed by the uneasy movements of his horse; looking around for some one to brush away the flies, he saw Jacques, who stood at a short distance watching his Emperor with admiring eyes. Always quick to recognize the personal affection he inspired, Napoleon signed to the grenadier to approach, "Here, mon brave," he said, smiling; "get a branch and keep the flies from my horse a few moments." The proud soldier obeyed; he heard the conversation of the Emperor; he kept the flies from his horse. As he talked, Napoleon idly plucked a little sprig from the branch as it came near his hand, and played with it; and when, the conference over, with a nod of thanks to Jacques, he rode away, the grenadier stopped, picked up the sprig fresh from the Emperor's hand and placed it carefully in his breast-pocket. The Emperor had noticed him; the Emperor had called him 'mon brave'; the Emperor had smiled upon him. This was the glory of Jacques's life. How many times have I listened to the story, told always in the same words, with the same gestures in the same places! He remembered every sentence of the conversation he had heard, and repeated them with automatic fidelity, understanding nothing of their meaning; even when I explained their probable connection with the campaign, my words made no impression upon him, and I could see that they conveyed no idea to his mind. He was made for a soldier; brave and calm, he reasoned not, but simply obeyed, and to this blind obedience there was added a heart full of affection which, when concentrated upon the Emperor, amounted to idolatry. Napoleon possessed a singular personal power over his soldiers; they all loved him, but Jacques adored him.

'It was an odd, affectionate animal,' said Father Piret, dropping unconsciously into a French idiom to express his meaning. 'The little sprig had been kept as a talisman, and no saintly relic was ever more honored; the Emperor had touched it!

'Grenadier Jacques made one of the ill-fated Russian army, and, although wounded and suffering, he still endured until the capture of Paris. Then, when Napoleon retired to Elba, he fell sick from grief, nor did he recover until the Emperor returned, when, with thousands of other soldiers, our Jacques hastened to his standard, and the hundred days began. Then came Waterloo. Then came St. Helena. But the grenadier lived on in hope, year after year, until the Emperor died,—died in exile, in the hands of the hated English. Broken-hearted, weary of the sight of his native land, he packed his few possessions, and fled away over the ocean, with a vague idea of joining a French settlement on the Red River; I have always supposed it must be the Red River of the South; there are French there. But the poor soldier was very ignorant; some one directed him to these frozen regions, and he set out; all places were alike to him now that the Emperor had gone from earth. Wandering as far as Mackinac on his blind pilgrimage, Jacques found his strength failing, and crept into this deserted house to die. Recovering, he made for himself a habitation from a kind of instinct, as a beaver might have done. He gathered together the wrecks of furniture, he hung up his treasures, he had his habits for every hour of the day; soldier-like, everything was done by rule. At a particular hour it was his custom to sit on that bench in the sunshine, wrapped in his blankets in the winter, in summer with his one old coat carefully hung on that peg; I can see him before me now. On certain days he would wash his few poor clothes, and hang them out on the bushes to dry; then he would patiently mend them with his great brass thimble and coarse thread. Poor old garments! they were covered with awkward patches.

'At noon he would prepare his one meal; for his breakfast and supper were but a cup of coffee. Slowly and with the greatest care the materials were prepared and the cooking watched. There was a savor of the camp, a savor of the Paris cafe, and a savor of originality; and often, wearied with the dishes prepared by my half-breeds, I have come over to the island to dine with Jacques, for the old soldier was proud of his skill, and liked an appreciative guest And I—But it is not my story to tell.'

'O Father Piret, if you could but—'

'Thanks, madame. To others I say, "What would you? I have been here since youth; you know my life." But to you I say there was a past; brief, full, crowded into a few years; but I cannot tell it; my lips are

sealed! Again thanks for your sympathy, madame. And now I will go back to Jacques.

'We were comrades, he and I; he would not come over to the Chenaux; he was unhappy if the routine of his day was disturbed, but I often stayed a day with him at the Agency, for I too liked the silent house. It has its relics, by the way. Have you noticed a carved door in the back part of the main building? That was brought from the old chapel on the mainland, built as early as 1700. The whole of this locality is sacred ground in the history of our Church. It was first visited by our missionaries in 1670, and over at Point St. Ignace the dust which was once the mortal body of Father Marquette lies buried. The exact site of the grave is lost; but we know that in 1677 his Indian converts brought back his body, wrapped in birch-bark, from the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, where he died, to his beloved mission of St. Ignace. There he was buried in a vault under the little log-church. Some years later the spot was abandoned, and the resident priests returned to Montreal. We have another little Indian church there now, and the point is forever consecrated by its unknown grave. At various times I told Jacques the history of this strait,—its islands, and points; but he evinced little interest. He listened with some attention to my account of the battle which took place on Dousman's farm, not far from the British Landing; but when he found that the English were victorious, he muttered a great oath and refused to hear more. To him the English were fiends incarnate. Had they not slowly murdered his Emperor on their barren rock in the sea?

'Only once did I succeed in interesting the old soldier. Then, as now, I received twice each year a package of foreign pamphlets and papers; among them came, that summer, a German ballad, written by that strange being, Henri Heine. I give it to you in a later English translation:—

THE GRENADIERS.

To the land of France went two grenadiers,
From a Russian prison returning;
But they hung down their heads on the German frontiers,
The news from their fatherland learning.

For there they both heard the sorrowful tale,
That France was by fortune forsaken;
That her mighty army was scattered like hail,
And the Emperor, the Emperor taken,

Then there wept together the grenadiers,
The sorrowful story learning;
And one said, "O woe!" as the news he hears,
"How I feel my old wound burning!"

The other said, "The song is sung,
And I wish that we both were dying!
But at home I've a wife and a child,—they're young,
On me, and me only, relying."

"O what is a wife or a child to me!
Deeper wants all my spirit have shaken;
Let them beg, let them beg, should they hungry be!
My Emperor, my Emperor taken!

"But I beg you, brother, if by chance
You soon shall see me dying
Then take my corpse with you back to France
Let it ever in France be lying.

"The cross of honor with crimson band
Shall rest on my heart as it bound me;
Give me my musket in my hand,
And buckle my sabre around me.

"And there I will lie and listen still
In my sentry coffin staying,

Till I feel the thundering cannon's thrill
And horses tramping and neighing.

"Then my Emperor will ride well over my grave
'Mid sabres' bright slashing and fighting
And I'll rise all weaponed out of my grave,
For the Emperor, the Emperor fighting!"

'This simple ballad went straight to the heart of old Jacques; tears rolled down his cheeks as I read, and he would have it over and over again. 'Ah! that comrade was happy,' said the old grenadier. 'He died when the Emperor was only taken. I too would have gone to my grave smiling, could I have thought that my Emperor would come riding over it with all his army around him again! But he is dead,—my Emperor is dead! Ah! that comrade was a happy man; he died! He did not have to stand by, while the English—may they be forever cursed!—slowly, slowly murdered him,—murdered the great Napoleon! No; that comrade died. Perhaps he is with the Emperor now,—that comrade-grenadier.'

'To be with his Emperor was Jacques's idea of heaven.

'From that moment each time I visited the Agency I must repeat the verses again and again; they became a sort of hymn. Jacques had not the capacity to learn the ballad, although he so often listened to it, but the seventh verse he managed to repeat after a fashion of his own, setting it to a nondescript tune, and crooning it about the house as he came and went on his little rounds. Gradually he altered the words, but I could not make out the new phrases as he muttered them over to himself, as if trying them.

'What is it you are saying, Jacques?' I asked.

'But he would not tell me. After a time I discovered that he had added the altered verse to his prayers; for always when I was at the Agency I went with him to the sanctuary, if for no other purpose than to prevent the uttered imprecation that served as amen for the whole. The verse, whatever it was, came in before this.

'So the summer passed. The vague intention of going on to the Red River of the North had faded away, and Jacques lived along on the island as though he had never lived anywhere else. He grew wonted to the Agency, like some old family cat, until he seemed to belong to the house, and all thought of disturbing him was forgotten. 'There is Jacques out washing his cloths.' 'There is Jacques going to buy his coffee,' 'There is Jacques sitting on the piazza,' said the islanders; the old man served them instead of a clock.

'One dark autumn day I came over from the Chenaux to get the mail. The water was rough, and my boat, tilted far over on one side, skimmed the crests of the waves in the daring fashion peculiar to the Mackinac craft: the mail-steamer had not come in, owing to the storm outside, and I went on to the Agency to see Jacques. He seemed as usual, and we had dinner over the little fire, for the day was chilly; the meal over, my host put everything in order again in his methodical way, and then retired to his sanctuary for prayers. I followed, and stood in the doorway while he knelt. The room was dusky, and the uniform with its outstretched sabre looked like a dead soldier leaning against the wall; the face of Napoleon opposite seemed to gaze down on Jacques as he knelt, as though listening. Jacques muttered his prayers, and I responded Amen! then, after a silence, came the altered verse; then with a quick glance toward me, another silence, which I felt sure contained the unspoken curse. Gravely he led the way back to the kitchen—for, owing to the cold, he allowed me to dispense with the parlor,—and there we spent the afternoon together, talking and watching for the mail-boat. 'Jacques,' I said, 'what is that verse you have added to your prayers! Come, my friend, why should you keep it from me?'

'It is nothing, mon pere,—nothing,' he replied. But again I urged him to tell me; more to pass away the time than from any real interest. 'Come,' I said, 'it may be your last chance. Who knows but that I may be drowned on my way back to the Chenaux?'

'True,' replied the old soldier calmly. 'Well, then, here it is, mon pere: my death-wish. Voila!'

'Something you wish to have done after death?'

'Yes.'

'And who is to do it?'

'My Emperor.'

'But, Jacques, the Emperor is dead.'

'He will have done it all the same, mon pere.'

'In vain I argued; Jacques was calmly obstinate. He had mixed up his Emperor with the stories of the Saints; why should not Napoleon do what they had done?

'What is the verse, any way?' I said at last.

'It is my death-wish, as I said before, mon pere.' And he repeated the following. He said it in French, for I had given him a French translation, as he knew nothing of German; but I will give you the English, as he had altered it:—

'The Emperor's face with its green leaf-band
Shall rest on my heart that loved him so.
Give me the sprig in my dead hand,
My uniform and sabre around me.
Amen.'

'So prays Grenadier Jacques.

'The old soldier had sacrificed the smooth metre; but I understood what he meant.

'The storm increased, and I spent the night at the Agency, lying on the bed of boughs, covered with a blanket. The house shook in the gale, the shutters rattled, and all the floors near and far creaked as though feet were walking over them. I was wakeful and restless, but Jacques slept quietly, and did not stir until daylight broke over the stormy water, showing the ships scudding by under bare poles, and the distant mail-boat laboring up toward the island through the heavy sea. My host made his toilet, washing and shaving himself carefully, and putting on his old clothes as though going on parade. Then came breakfast, with a stew added in honor of my presence; and as by this time the steamer was not far from Round Island, I started down toward the little post-office, anxious to receive some expected letters. The steamer came in slowly, the mail was distributed slowly, and I stopped to read my letters before returning. I had a picture-paper for Jacques, and as I looked out across the straits, I saw that the storm was over, and decided to return to the Chenaux in the afternoon, leaving word with my half-breeds to have the sail-boat in readiness at three o'clock. The sun was throwing out a watery gleam as, after the lapse of an hour or two, I walked up the limestone road and entered the great gate of the Agency. As I came through the garden along the cherry-tree avenue I saw Jacques sitting on that bench in the sun, for this was his hour for sunshine; his staff was in his hand, and he was leaning back against the side of the house with his eyes closed, as if in revery. 'Jacques, here is a picture-paper for you,' I said, laying my hand on his shoulder. He did not answer. He was dead.

'Alone, sitting in the sunshine, apparently without a struggle or a pang, the soul of the old soldier had departed. Whither? We know not. But—smile if you will, madame—I trust he is with his Emperor.'

I did not smile; my eyes were too full of tears.

'I buried him, as he wished,' continued Father Piret, 'in his old uniform, with the picture of Napoleon laid on his breast, the sabre by his side, and the withered sprig in his lifeless hand. He lies in our little cemetery on the height, near the shadow of the great cross; the low white board tablet at the head of the mound once bore the words Grenadier Jacques, but the rains and the snows have washed away the painted letters. It is as well.'

The priest paused, and we both looked toward the empty bench, as though we saw a figure seated there, staff in hand. After a time my little hostess came out on to the piazza, and we all talked together of the island and its past. 'My boat is waiting,' said Father Piret at length; 'the wind is fair, and I must return to the Chenaux to-night. This near departure is my excuse for coming twice in one day to see you, madame.'

'Stay over, my dear sir,' I urged. 'I too shall leave in another day. We may not meet again.'

'Not on earth; but in another world we may,' answered the priest rising as he spoke.

'Father, your blessing,' said the little hostess in a low tone, after a quick glance toward the many windows through which the bulwarks of Protestantism might be gazing. But all was dark, both without and within, and the Father gave his blessing to both of us, fervently, but with an apostolic simplicity. Then he left us, and I watched his tall form, crowned with silvery hair, as he passed down the cherry-tree avenue. Later in the evening the moon came out, and I saw a Mackinac boat skimming by the house, its white sails swelling full in the fresh breeze.

'That is Father Piret's boat,' said my hostess. 'The wind is fair; he will reach the Chenaux before midnight.'

A day later, and I too sailed away. As the steamer bore me southward, I looked back toward the island with a sigh. Half hidden in its wild green garden I saw the old Agency; first I could distinguish its whole rambling length; then I lost the roofless piazza, then the dormer-windows, and finally I could only discern the white chimneys, with their crumbling crooked tops. The sun sank into the Strait off Wangoschance, the evening gun flashed from the little fort on the height, the shadows grew dark and darker, the island turned into green foliage, then a blue outline, and finally there was nothing but the dusky water.

PATIENCE DOW.

BY MARIAN DOUGLAS.

Home from the mill came Patience Dow;
She did not smile, she would not talk;
And now she was all tears, and now,
As fierce as is a captive hawk.
Unmindful of her faded gown,
She sat with folded hands all day,
Her long hair falling tangled down,
Her sad eyes gazing far away,
Where, past the fields, a silver line,
She saw the distant river shine.
But, when she thought herself alone,
One night, they heard her muttering low,
In such a chill, despairing tone,
It seemed the east wind's sullen moan:
"Ah me! the days, they move so slow
I care not if they're fair or foul;
They creep along—I know not how;
I only know he loved me once—
He does not love me now!"

One morning, vacant was her room;
And, in the clover wet with dew;
A narrow line of broken bloom
Showed some one had been passing through;
And, following the track it led
Across a field of summer grain,
Out where the thorny blackberries shed
Their blossoms in the narrow lane,

Down which the cattle went to drink
In summer, from the river's brink.
The river! Hope within them sank;
The fatal thought that drew her there
They knew, before, among the rank,
White-blossomed weeds upon the bank,
They found the shawl she used to wear,
And on it pinned a little note:
"Oh, blame me not!" it read, "for when
I once am free, my soul will float
To him! He cannot leave me then!
I know not if't is right or wrong—
I go from life—I care not how;
I only know he loved me once—

He does not love me now!"

In the farm graveyard, 'neath the black,
Funereal pine-trees on the hill,
The poor, worn form the stream gave back
They laid in slumber, cold and still.
Her secret slept with her; none knew
Whose fickle smile had left the pain
That cursed her life; to one thought true,
Her vision-haunted, wandering brain,
Secure from all, hid safe from blame,
In life and death had kept his name.
Yet, often, with a thrill of fear,
Her mother, as she lies awake
At night, will fancy she can hear
A voice, whose tone is like the drear,
Low sound the graveyard pine-trees make:
"I know not if't is right or wrong—
I go from life—I care not how;
I only know he loved me once—
He does not love me now!"

End of Project Gutenberg's Castle Nowhere, by Constance Fenimore Woolson

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