Glory of Youth



Temple Bailey

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Glory of Youth

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Glory of Youth

Author: Temple Bailey

Illustrator: C. S. Corson
Henry Hutt

Release date: August 10, 2007 [eBook #22292]

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/22292

Credits: Produced by Suzanne Shell, Paul Stephen and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK GLORY OF YOUTH ***



HE IMPRISONED THE SMALL HAND

GLORY OF

YOUTH

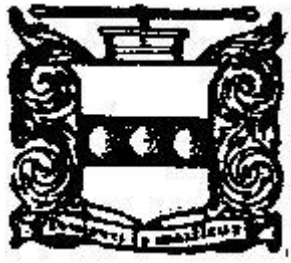
BY

TEMPLE BAILEY

AUTHOR OF
CONTRARY MARY

ILLUSTRATED BY
HENRY HUTT and C. S. CORSON

COPYRIGHT
1913 BY
THE PENN
PUBLISHING
COMPANY



First printing, August, 1913

Second printing, February, 1916
Third printing February, 1917
Fourth printing August, 1919

Manufacturing Plant
Camden, N. J.

To
My Mother

Contents

I.	BETTINA	9
II.	IN THE SHADOWY ROOM	21
III.	IN WHICH DIANA REAPS	36
IV.	WHITE LILACS	51
V.	IN WHICH BETTINA DANCES	64
VI.	"FOR EVERY MAN THERE IS JUST ONE WOMAN"	80
VII.	HARBOR LIGHT	94
VIII.	THE EMPTY HOUSE	105
IX.	THE GOLDEN AGE	116

X. Storm Signals 127
XI. The White Maiden 141
XII. Youth and Beauty 155
XIII. Her Letter to Anthony 170
XIV. The Little Silver Ring 185
XV. In Which Bettina Flies 199
XVI. Voices in the Dark 213
XVII. Glory of Youth 227
XVIII. Penance 242
XIX. Her Father's Ring 257
XX. The "Gray Gull" 272
XXI. Broken Wings 285
XXII. The Enchanted Forest 300
XXIII. The Procession of Pretty Ladies 316
XXIV. The Afterglow 323

Glory of Youth

CHAPTER I

BETTINA

The girl knelt on the floor, feverishly packing a shabby little trunk.

Outside was a streaming April storm, and the rain, rushing against the square, small-paned windows, shut out the view of the sea, shut out the light, and finally brought such darkness that the girl stood up with a sigh, brushed off her black dress with thin white hands, and groped her way to the door.

Beyond the door was the blackness of an upper hall in a tall century-old house. A spiral stairway descended into a well of gloom. An ancient iron lantern, attached to a chain, hung from the low ceiling.

The girl lighted the lantern, and the faint illumination made deeper the shadows below.

And from the shadows came a man's voice.

"May I come up?"

As the girl bent over the railing, the glow of the lantern made of her hair a shining halo. "Oh," she cried, radiantly, "I'm so glad you've come. I—I was afraid——"

The thunder rolled, the waves pounded on the rocks, and the darkness grew more dense, but now the girl did not heed, for what mattered a mere storm, when, ascending the stairs, was one who knew fear neither of life nor of death, nor of the things which come after death?

When at last her visitor emerged from the gloom, he showed himself beyond youthful years, with hair

slightly touched with gray, not tall, but of a commanding presence, with clear, keen blue eyes, and with cheeks which were tanned by out-of-door exercise, and reddened by the prevailing weather.

"I just had to come," he said, as he took her hand. "I knew you'd be frightened."

"Yes," she said, "Miss Matthews is at school, and I am alone——"

"And unhappy?"

Her lips quivered, but she drew her hand from his, and went on into the shabby room, where she lighted a candle in a brass holder, and touched a match to a fire which was laid in the blackened brick fireplace.

The doctor's quick eye noted the preparations for departure.

"What does that mean?" he asked, and pointed to the trunk.

"I—I am going away——"

"Away?"

"Yes," nervously; "I—I can't stay here, doctor."

"Why not?"

"Oh," tremulously, "it was all right when I had mother, because she was so sick that I was too busy to realize how deadly lonely it was here. I knew she needed the sea air, and she could get it better in the top of this old house than anywhere else. But now that she's gone—I can't stand it. I'm young, and Miss Matthews is away all day teaching—and when she comes home at night we have nothing in common,

and there's the money left from the insurance—and so—I'm going away."

He looked at her, with her red-gold hair in high relief against the worn leather of the chair in which she sat, at the flower-like face, the slender figure, the tiny feet in childish strapped slippers.

"You aren't fit to fight the world," he said; "you aren't fit."

"Perhaps it won't be such a fight," she said. "I could get something to do in the city, and——"

He shook his head. "You don't know—you can't know ——" Then he broke off to ask, "What would you do with your furniture?"

"Miss Matthews would be glad to take the rooms just as they are. She was delighted when you asked her to stay with me after mother died. She loves our old things, the mahogany and the banjo clock, and the embroidered peacocks, and the Venetian heirlooms that belonged to Dad's family. But I hate them."

"Hate them—why?"

"Because, oh, you know, because Dad treated mother so dreadfully. He broke her heart."

His practiced eye saw that she was speaking tensely.

"I wish you'd get me a cup of tea," he said, suddenly. "I'm just from the sanatorium. I operated on a bad case—and, well, that's sufficient excuse, isn't it, for me to want to drink a cup of tea with you?"

She was busy in a moment with her hospitality.

"Oh, why didn't you tell me? And you're wet." Her

hand touched his coat lightly as she passed him.

"The rain came so suddenly that I couldn't get the window of my car closed; it's an awful storm.

"And now," he said, when she had brought the tea on an old Sheffield tray, and had set it on a little folding table which he placed between them on the hearth, "and now let's talk about it."

"Please don't try to make me stay——"

"Why not?"

"Because, oh, because you can't know what I suffer here; it isn't just because I've lost mother, but the people—they all know about her and about Dad, and they aren't nice to me."

"My dear child!"

"Perhaps it's because father was a singer and an Italian, and mother came of good old Puritan stock. They seem to think she lowered herself by marrying him. They can't understand that though he was unkind to her, he belonged to an aristocratic Venetian family——"

"It's from those wonderful women of Venice, then, that you get that hair. Do you remember Browning's:

"'Dear dead women, with such hair, too—
what's become of all the gold
Used to hang and brush their bosoms? I
feel chilly and grown old.'"

There was no response to his thought in her young eyes.

"I've never read Browning," she said, negligently,

"and I hate to think of 'dear dead women.' I want to think of live things, of bright things, of gay things. It seems sometimes as if I should die here among the shadows."

She was sobbing now, with her head on the table.

"Bettina," the doctor bent over her, "poor child, poor little child."

"Please let me go," she whispered.

"I can't keep you, of course. I wish I knew what to do. I wish Diana were here."

"Diana?"

"I forgot that you did not know her. She has been away for two years. She's rather wonderful, Bettina."

The girl raised her head. The man was gazing straight into the fire. All the eager light that had made his face seem young had gone, and he looked worn and tired. Bettina had no worldly intuitions to teach her the reason for the change a woman's name had wrought, and so absorbed was she in her own trouble that she viewed the transformation with unseeing eyes.

"What could she do if she were here?" she asked with childish directness.

"She would find some way out of it—she is very wise." He spoke with some hesitation, as a man speaks who holds a subject sacred. "She has had to decide things for herself all her life—her father and mother died when she was a little girl; now she is over thirty and the mistress of a large fortune. She spends her winters in the city and her summers down here by the sea—but for the past two years she has

been staying in Europe with a widowed friend who was a schoolmate of hers in Berlin."

"When is she coming back?"

Out of a long silence, he answered, "I am not sure that she will come back. Her engagement was announced last fall—to a German, Ulric Van Rosen—she is to be married in June."

The fact, to him so pregnant of woeful possibilities, meant little to Bettina.

"Of course if she's not here, she can't do anything—and anyhow most people don't care to do practical things to help, do they?"

She looked so childish, so appealing, so altogether exquisite and young in her black-robed slenderness, that he answered her as he would have answered a child.

"It's too bad that the world should hurt you."

"But I'm going to do wonderful things in the city."

"Wonderful things—poor little girl——"

As he brought his eyes back from the fire to her face, he seemed to bring his thoughts back from an uneasy reverie.

"You ought," he said, "to marry——"

The color flamed into the girl's cheeks. "Mother was always saying that, in those last days. But I hated to have her; it seemed so dreadful to talk of marriage—without love. I know she didn't mean it that way, poor darling! She married for love and her life was such a failure. But I couldn't—not just to get married,

could I—not just to have some one take care of me?"

He stood up, and thrust his hands in his pockets. "No," he agreed bluffly, "you couldn't, of course."

"And there's never been any one in love with me," was her naive confession, "and I've never been in love, not really——"

He was looking down at her with smiling eyes. "There's plenty of time."

"Yes—that's what I always told mother—but she dreaded to think of me—alone."

The eager, dying woman had said the same thing to the doctor, and it had seemed to him, sometimes, that her burning eyes had begged of him a favor which he could not grant.

For there had always been—Diana!

He straightened his shoulders. "I'm going to ask you to stay here," he said, "instead of going to the city. I haven't any real right to keep you, for I'm not legally your guardian, but I promised your mother to look after you. I can find work for you. We need some one at the sanatorium to look after the office——"

For a moment she set her will against his. "But I'd rather go to the city."

He put his strong hands on her shoulders. "Little child, look at me," he said, and when she flashed up at him a startled glance, he went on, gently, "Your mother wanted me to take care of you—to keep you from harm. In the city you'll be too far away. I want you to stay here. Will you?"

And presently she whispered, "I will stay."

Outside the rain was rushing and the wind was blowing, and plain little Miss Matthews battled with the storm. Miss Matthews, who, every day in the year, taught a class of tumultuous children, and whose life dealt always with the commonplace. And it was plain little Miss Matthews who, having weathered the storm and climbed the winding stairs, came in, rain-coated and soft-hatted, to find by the fire the doctor drawing on his gloves and Bettina hovering about him like a gold-tipped butterfly.

"It's a dreadful storm," said Miss Matthews, superfluously, as Bettina went to get boiling water. "There's a young man down-stairs who wants to speak to you, Dr. Blake. He said that he couldn't find you at the sanatorium. He saw your car in front of the house and knew you were here. But the bell wouldn't ring, and so he waited. I told him the bell was broken and that you'd come down at once. He's hurt his hand."

"They would have fixed him up at the sanatorium."

"He said he wanted you, and nobody else, and that he came into the hall because he was like a pussy cat and hated the rain. He is a queer looking creature in a leather cap and leather leggins."

The doctor gave an amused laugh. "That's Justin Ford," he said; "the pussy-cat speech sounds like him, and he wears the leather costume when he flies."

Bettina, coming back with fresh tea for Miss Matthews, asked, "How does he fly?"

"In an aeroplane. He's to try out his hydro-aeroplane to-morrow. He's probably been at work on the machinery and hurt his hand."

Bettina sparkled. "Think of a man who can fly," she said. "Doesn't it sound incredible?"

"It's the most marvelous thing in the world," said the big-hearted surgeon, not knowing that he, as a man of healing, was more marvelous, for he had to do with the mechanics of flesh and blood, while Justin had to do only with steel and aluminum and canvas, which are, at best, unimportant things when compared with nerves and ligaments and bones.

"Would you mind if Ford came up?" the doctor asked. "I've got to go straight to my old man with the pneumonia after I leave here, and I could look at his hand."

Bettina shivered. "Shall I have to look at it?" she asked in a little voice.

He laughed. "Of course not. You can go in the other room."

But when the young man, who had answered the doctors call, entered, she did not go, for the face which was framed by the leather cap was that of a youth whose beauty matched her own, and whose mocking eyes, as he acknowledged the introduction, seemed to beat against the door of her maiden heart and demand admission.

CHAPTER II

IN THE SHADOWY ROOM

The injury to Justin's hand proved to be one of strain and sprain.

"A bandage for a few days," the doctor pronounced, "and then a little carefulness, and you'll be all right."

Justin lingered. The little fire was like a heart of gold in the shadowy room. Plain little Miss Matthews sipped her tea, with her feet on the fender. Bettina, during the doctor's examination of Justin's hand, had seated herself in her low chair on the hearth, and now her eyes were fixed steadily on the flames.

"It's a shivery, shaky sort of day," said Justin, surveying the teapot longingly, and Anthony laughed. "He wants his tea, Bettina," he said, "and a place by your fire. It's another of his pussy-cat traits —so if you'll be good to him, I'll have another cup, and he shall tell us about his hydro-aeroplane."

Justin, standing in front of the fire, was like a young god fresh from Olympus. His nose was straight, his mocking eyes a golden-brown, and, with his cap off, his upstanding shock of hair showed glittering lights. In deference to the prevailing fashion, his fair little mustache was slightly upturned at the corners. He had doffed his rain coat, and appeared in a brown Norfolk suit with leather leggins that reached his knees.

"I'm afraid I've intruded upon your hospitality," he said to Bettina, as she handed him a steaming cup, "but I'm always falling into pleasant things—and I haven't the will power to get out when I should, truly I haven't. But it isn't my fault—it's just a part of my pussy-cat inheritance."

"He can afford to say such things," Anthony

remarked; "he's really more like a bird than a pussy cat. You should see him up in the air."

Justin's eyes flashed. "You should see me coming down on the water after a flight. By Jove, Anthony, that's the most wonderful little machine. I've called her 'The Gray Gull' because she not only flies but swims—cuts through the water like a motor boat."

As he talked his eyes were on Bettina. "You beauty, you beauty," was the thought which thrilled him.

When, at last, he stood up, he apologized somewhat formally. "I've stayed too long," he said, "but Anthony must make my excuses. I was down there in Purgatory—and he showed me—Paradise."

The doctor looked at him sharply. He knew Justin as a man of the world—gay, irresponsible—and Bettina had no one to watch over her.

"I'll take you as far as the shops," he said, crisply, "and then I must get at once to my old man with the pneumonia."

As the two men rode away in the doctor's small covered car, Justin asked, "Where did you discover her?" Anthony, his eyes fixed on the muddy road ahead of them, gave a brief outline: "Professionally. The mother died in those rooms. The girl is alone, except for Miss Matthews and the old Lane sisters who own the house and live in the lower part. I have constituted myself a sort of guardian for Bettina—the mother requested it, and I couldn't refuse."

"I see." Justin asked no more questions, but settled himself back in a cushioned corner, and as the two men rode on in silence, their thoughts were centered on the single vision of a shadowy room, and of a

slender golden-haired, black-robed figure against a background of glowing flame.

All that night and the next day the doctor battled with Death, and came out triumphant. By four o'clock in the afternoon the old man with pneumonia showed signs of holding his own.

Worn out, Anthony drove back toward the sanatorium. The rain was over, but a heavy fog had rolled in, so that the doctor's little car seemed to float in a sea of cloud. Now and then another car passed him, specter-like amid the grayness. Silent figures, magnified by the mist, came and went like shadow pictures on a screen. From the far distance sounded the incessant moan of fog-horns.

Anthony stopped his car in front of a small shop, whose lights struggled faintly against the gloom.

Crossing the threshold, he went from a world of dampness and chill into the warmth and cheer of an old-fashioned fish house.

For fifty years there had been no change in Lillibridge's. The floor of the main room was bare and clean, and, in the middle, a round black stove radiated comfort on cold days. Along one side of the room ran three stalls, in which were placed tables for such patrons as might desire partial privacy. On the spick and span counter were set forth various condiments and plates of crackers. A card, tacked up on the wall, tempted the appetite with its list of sea foods.

Anthony wanted nothing to eat. He ordered coffee, and went into one of the stalls to drink it.

But a man at one of the tables in the main part of the

room wanted more than coffee. He was a little man in a blue reefer, but he had, evidently, more than a little appetite. As Anthony sat down, he was just finishing a bowl of chowder, and was gazing with eyes of hungry appreciation upon various dishes of fried fish and fried potatoes, of hot rolls and pickles which were being set before him.

"You'd better have some, doctor," was his hoarse invitation.

"Too tired," said Anthony. "I'll wait till I've had a bath and rub-down before I eat——"

"What you need," said the little man, between large mouthfuls, "is a good day's fishin'. You come out to-morrow morning, and we'll catch some cod."

The doctor's tired eyes brightened. "There's nothing that I'd like better, captain, but I've got an old man ill of pneumonia, and there's a girl with appendicitis."

"There you go," said the little man; "if it wasn't a girl with appendicitis, it would be a kid with the colic, or a lady with a claim to heart trouble. What you've got to do, doctor, is to cut it all out and come with me."

Anthony shook his head. "Suppose some one had said to you when you sailed the seas that you could leave the ship——?"

"I shouldn't have left," said the little man, "but I didn't have such a look as you've got in your eyes. What you need is a good night's sleep, and a day's fishin'. And you need it now."

Having eaten presently his last morsel, he ordered a piece of pie. "There's nothing like sea air to blow

your brains clear," he stated. "And when this fog lifts, it'll be fine fishin' weather."

Again the doctor shook his head. "I'd like it, more than a little, but I've got to stick to my post."

Captain Stubbs began on his pie, and remarked, "The trouble with you is that you're mixed up with too many wimmen."

Anthony's head went up. "What do you mean?"

"Wimmen," said the little captain, "are bad enough anyhow. But when you have to handle a lot of wimmen with nerves, then the Lord help you."

He said it so solemnly that Anthony threw back his head and laughed.

"Now, up at that sannytarium of yours," said the captain, "there's about ten of them that need to be dipped into the good salt sea and hung up in the sun to dry, and that's all they need, no coddling and medicine and operations—but just a cold shock and a warm-up—and a day's fishin'."

And now Anthony did not laugh. "By Jove," he said, "I believe you're right. I'm going to try some personally conducted parties, and you shall take them out, captain——"

"Me——?" the captain demanded, incredulously. "Me take those wimmen out fishin'?"

Anthony nodded. "Yes, once a week. Is it a bargain?"

The captain stood up. "No, it ain't," he said, firmly. "I'll take you and gladly. But not any of that nervous bunch."

He settled his cap firmly on his head, and went toward the door. Then he turned. "Some day," he said, "I'm going to ask that Betty child to go out in my boat."

"Bettina?" Anthony's mind went swiftly to the shadowed room.

"Yes. She's lonesome, and so was her mother. I used to take fish up to them, and I showed the Betty child how to make chowder."

"She told me," said Anthony. "You're one of her best friends, captain."

"Well, goodness only knows she needs friends," said the little captain, adding with a significant emphasis which escaped the preoccupied Anthony, "She needs somebody to take care of her."

Receiving no response, the little man lighted his pipe, buttoned his coat, and, remarking genially, "Well, you let me know about that day's fishin'," he steamed out.

After his departure Anthony sat for some time in the deserted room. He knew that rest and refreshment were waiting for him and he knew that he needed them, but his mind was weighed down by the problem of that helpless child in the old house. All through the night as he had battled for the life of his patient, he had thought of her, who must battle with the world. He could get her work, of course, but he shrank from the thought of her pale loveliness set to sordid uses.

With a sudden gesture of resolution, he stood up and drew on his gloves.

Ten minutes later he was climbing the winding stairway, where the iron lantern again illumined the darkness.

There had been no response to his call from below, and when he reached the upper landing he found the door shut. He knocked and presently Bettina came. He saw at a glance that she had been crying.

"I can stay only a minute," he said. "I haven't had much sleep since I saw you yesterday."

"I'll make you some tea," she offered, but he stopped her with a quick, "No, no,—I've just had coffee, and I must get home."

They sat down, somewhat stiffly, on opposite sides of the hearth.

"What made you cry?" he asked, with his keen eyes on her downcast face.

"Everything—the rain yesterday—the fog to-day. I wish the sun would shine—I wish—I were—dead ——"

With a sharp exclamation, he stood up. "You're too young to say such things—there's all of life before you."

"Yes," she said dully, "there's all of life——"

To him she was a most appealing figure. Her weakness seemed to stand out against the background of his strength. Suddenly he held out his hands to her. "Come here, Betty child," he said, using, unconsciously, the little captain's name for her, "come here."

Some new note in his voice made her cheeks flame,

but she obeyed him. He took both of her hands in his. "I've been thinking of you, and your future. Somehow I can't see you, a little slip of a thing like you, being beaten and bruised by the hard things of life. The world is cruel and you are so—sweet. You need some one to take care of you——"

"Yes," she whispered; "but there isn't any one."

"Except me. And I'm such an old fellow—years too old for you. But I'm alone, and you're alone. Could I make you happy, Betty child?"

She stared at him, all the bright color gone from her face.

"Why, how?" Her voice fluttered and died.

"As my wife. There's the big house on the rocks that I am building."

He faltered. The great house had been built for Diana, on a sudden hopeful impulse that when it was finished she would consent to be its mistress.

"There's the big house," he went on, after a moment, "and there's money enough and to spare. Not that I want you to marry me for that, but I think I could comfort you in your loneliness, Bettina."

In her secluded girlhood there had been no opportunity for masculine adoration; hence there seemed nothing lacking when this man of men, whose coming during her mother's illness had made the one bright spot in her day, whose sympathy had comforted her in her sorrow, whose friendship had sustained her in the months which had followed her great loss, when he spoke of marriage with never a word of love.

"But I'm not wise enough or good enough," she said, with a quick catch of her breath.

He drew her to him, holding her gently.

"Would you like," he asked, "would you like to think that all your life I should take care of you?"

She lay quietly, not answering for a while, then she whispered, "Do you really want me?"

Perhaps his arm relaxed a little, but his voice was very steady. "I really want to make you happy."

"And you'll let me love you with all my heart?" Her eyes were hidden.

He put his hand against the softness of her hair, turning her face up toward him. "I shall hope that you may love me with all your heart, and that I may be worthy of it."

Her hand crept up and touched his cheek. "Kiss me," she whispered, like a child.

He would have been less than a man if his heart had not leaped a little, if he had not responded to the love call of this wistful white and gold woman creature.

"My dear," he said, brokenly, and bent his head.

On the foggy streets below men and women passed and repassed like ghosts in the stillness. Little Miss Matthews, meeting Captain Stubbs on a street corner, was unconscious of his nearness until the little captain, guided by that sixth sense, which is given to sailors for their protection at sea, hailed her.

"You needn't hurry home," he told her; "that Betty

child don't want you. Dr. Blake is there. That's his car."

"He was there yesterday," said Miss Matthews, disturbed by the doctor's departure from his usual routine.

"And he'll probably be there to-morrow; he's getting sweet on that Betty child, Miss Mattie."

"Oh, dear, no," said the shocked Miss Matthews. "Why, he's in love with Diana Gregory."

The captain gazed at her blankly. "You don't mean it," he protested.

"Yes, I do," said Miss Matthews; "they've known each other all their lives. But she doesn't want to settle down."

"Well, she'd better look out," said the little captain; "men won't wait forever."

"Men like Anthony Blake," returned Miss Matthews with conviction, "will. And as for Bettina, she's nothing but a child!"

The little captain carried the conversation over, tactfully, to his favorite topic. "I want you and that Betty child to go with me for a day's fishin' soon," he said; "you just name the day."

Little Miss Matthews hated the sea, with the hatred of a woman whose ancestors had made their living on the Banks and had been drowned in storms. But she liked the captain. "I am sure you are very kind," she said, primly, "but it will have to be Saturday when there isn't any school."

"All right," said the captain,—"make it a week from

Saturday, and we'll probably have clearing weather."

The doctor, going down, met little Miss Matthews. Bettina, leaning over the rail, greeted the little lady somewhat self-consciously. "I'll make your tea in a minute," she said; "the doctor didn't want any."

When Anthony reached the bottom of the stair, he looked up. The faint light of the lantern drew a circle of radiance about Bettina's head.

"Wait," she called softly, and came down to him, and in the darkness whispered that she was happy, so very happy—and would she see him soon?

"To-morrow," he promised, and went away with his pulses pounding.

All the way home he thought of her. She had been charming. He felt like an adventuring knight, who, having killed all the dragons, rescues the captive princess from her tower. She was a dear child. A dear —child.

At the sanatorium he had a bath and a good dinner, and made his rounds. One little woman, when he had passed, spoke to another of his smile. "It is as if he were happy in his heart," she said, quaintly; "before this his eyes have been sad."

Later the doctor found time to read his mail. On the top of the pile of letters was a thick one in a gray envelope addressed in feminine script. He opened it and read eagerly. Then he sat very still, trying, amid all the beating agony of emotion, to grasp the truth as she had told it. Diana was free. Her engagement was broken. She was coming back to America. "I am coming home to the big house—and to you—Anthony." And she would be there in just ten days!

CHAPTER III

IN WHICH DIANA REAPS

All the way down in the train Diana kept saying to her friend, "I am so glad you are going to see my house, Sophie. You can't imagine how lovely it is."

But even then Mrs. Martens was not prepared. She was given a room on the third floor from which glass doors opened on a little balcony which overhung the harbor. It was like the upper deck of a ship with the open sea to the right and left, and with a strip of green peninsula cutting into it beyond the causeway.

"That's the Neck," Diana explained; "the yacht clubs are over there and some hotels and big houses. But I like it on this side, in the town. It's so quaint and lovely. I'll show you some of it to-morrow morning."

"I'm not going anywhere to-morrow morning. I am going to sleep until noon."

Diana bent and kissed her. "Poor thing, is she tired?"

"Dead."

"Well, I won't wake you. But I am going to be up with the dawn, Sophie."

Mrs. Martens turned and looked at her. "Is Anthony here?"

"Yes."

Diana caught her breath as she said it, and the two friends stood, silently, looking over the harbor.

The twilight was taking the blue out of the water, but the beauty was still there—with the lights on the anchored boats twinkling like stars in the grayness, and the lighthouse making a great moon above them.

"When will you see him, Diana?"

"To-night."

"Then I'm going to bed."

"You're not—I want you to meet him, Sophie."

"You want him every bit for yourself. Don't be a hypocrite, Diana."

Diana laid her hands on Sophie's shoulders and shook her a little, laughing.

"Sophie, do you ever feel so young that you are almost wild with it—as if there hadn't been any years since you wore pinafores and pigtails?"

"No—I'm thirty-five, Diana."

"Don't shout it from the housetops. I'm a very few years behind. What a lot of wasted years, Sophie."

"It's your own fault, Diana."

"But I wanted to be free——"

"And now you are longing for your prison——"

"With Anthony—yes."

"You'd better go down and dress, dear. Put on that pale blue, with your pearls, Diana. It fits in with the moonlight."

"Then you won't come down?"

"No. I'll have Peter for company."

Peter Pan was Diana's cat. He was as yellow as a harvest moon, he was fed on fish, and was of a prodigious fatness. During Diana's sojourn abroad he had been looked after by Delia Hobbs.

Delia was Diana's housekeeper. She had a lame hip and a lovely mind. She went up to Mrs. Martens' room after Diana had left to see if the little lady was comfortable for the night.

She eyed Peter Pan, who was in the middle of the big bed.

"Peter," she said, severely, "that's no place for you."

Peter rolled over, and clawed the lace spread luxuriously.

"Shall I take him off, ma'am?" Delia asked.

"It's nice to have him here," said Mrs. Martens, doubtfully, "but perhaps I ought not to let him stay. You know best, Delia."

Delia, a little flattered by such deference, hesitated. "I might bring his basket up here," she said; "he isn't a bit of trouble. He just goes to sleep and doesn't wake up until morning."

As Delia opened the door to go down, the rippling measures of "The Spring Song," played softly, came up to them. Sophie had a vision of Diana in her shimmering gown, waiting in the moonlight for Anthony.

Delia came back with the basket. It was of brown

wicker with brown cushions. Peter, curled up in it, made a sunflower combination.

"You are sure you're all right, Miss Sophie?" Delia asked as she stood on the threshold. "If you don't want the electric light, there's a candle on your table, and if you like the air straight from the sea you can open the door on the porch. Miss Diana used to like to lie and look at the moonlight."

The whole world seemed obsessed by the moonlight. Its white radiance, when Mrs. Martens at last turned off the glaring bulbs, seemed to cast a spell over sea and land. She stepped out on the porch, and was awed by the beauty of the wide sweep of shining sky and sea. Then, far below on the hidden road, she heard the beat of a motor.

The sound ceased and a man's quick step came up the path. There was the whirr of an electric bell, and she knew that Anthony had come.

Well, Diana had her Anthony—and she had—Peter! She laughed a little to stifle a sigh. Diana had the substance—she her shadowy memories.

A faint breeze had sprung up. The yachts tugged at their moorings as the tide turned. Far to the southeast Minot's light blinked its one-four-three—"I-warn-you"—message to the ships. Diana had once said of it, "The sweethearts off the coast translate it differently—'I-love-you.' That's what Anthony told me."

How she had always quoted him! Even when for a brief time she had drifted toward that other, she had clung to her belief in Anthony's faith and goodness—and when she had shaken herself free she had flown

back to him.

And now—in the dim room below Diana was coming at last into her own!

The little lady crept into bed, shivering—perhaps with the chill of the spring night, perhaps with the thought of the happiness from which she was left out.

Presently she heard again the beat of the motor. Beginning in front of the house, it grew fainter in the distance; then silence, and at last a soft step on the stairs.

"Sophie," there was that in Diana's voice which made her sit up and listen, "Sophie, are you asleep?"

Mrs. Martens lighted the bedside candle with shaking hands. Diana came forward into the circle of light. Diana—with all of youth gone from her. Diana stripped of joy. Diana with the shimmering blue gown seeming to mock the tragedy in her face.

She came up to the bed and stood looking down at her friend.

"Listen, Sophie," she said, brokenly, "see what I've done. Anthony is engaged, Sophie. Engaged to another girl!"

Peter, in his basket, slept soundly all night. But Sophie slept not at all. And early in the morning she went down to her friend.

Diana had taken the room which had been her mother's. She had kept the carved canopy bed and

other massive pieces, but she had changed the hangings and the wall covering from mauve to rose-color.

"You see, Sophie," she had explained one day in Berlin, "there comes a time in the life of every woman when she needs rose-color to counteract the gray of her existence. If you put blue with gray you get gray. But if you put pink with gray you get rose-color. Perhaps you didn't know that before, Sophie, but now you do. And you'll know also that when I dare wear a blue gown I am feeling positively infantile."

Diana, in négligé, had always made Mrs. Martens think of a rose in bloom. She had a fashion of swathing her head, cap-fashion, in wide pink ribbon, and her crêpe kimonos always reflected the same enchanting hue.

But this morning it was a white rose which lay back on the pillows. Diana's loose brown braids hung straight down on each side of her pale face. There were shadows under her eyes.

"Don't look at me that way, Sophie," she said, sharply, as Mrs. Martens came up to the bed. "I—I'm not going into a decline—or break my heart—or——"

She broke off and said in a changed voice, "You're a dear." Then with a pitiful little laugh, "It wouldn't be so hard—but she's so young, Sophie."

"Eighteen—poor Anthony!"

"Do you think he is really unhappy, Sophie?"

The night before when she had lain in Mrs. Martens' comforting arms, she had thought only of her own

misery. For a time she had been just a little sobbing child to be consoled. All her poise, all her self-restraint had gone down under the force of the overwhelming shock.

But now a wild hope sprang up in her breast. Why should two people suffer for the sake of one? And the other girl was so young—she would get over it.

Yet, remembering Anthony's face as he had left her, she had little hope.

"I wish you might have been prepared for this," he had said. "I wrote a letter, but it must have missed you. Perhaps it has been best to talk it out—that's why I came. May I still come, sometimes, Diana?"

Then her pride had risen to meet the crisis.

"As if anything could spoil our friendship, Anthony," she had told him bravely. "I want you to come—and some day you must bring—the Girl."

"You will like her," he had said, eagerly, with a man's blundering confidence, "and you can help her. She is very lonely, Diana—and I was lonely——"

That had been the one shred of apology which he had vouchsafed for the act which had spoiled their lives.

When he had first entered the moonlighted room, she had turned from the piano and had held out her hands to him.

He had taken them, and had stood looking down at her, with eyes which spoke what his lips would not say.

And at last he had asked, "Why didn't you marry that

fellow in Berlin, Di?"

"Because I didn't love him, Anthony. I found out just in time—and I found out, too, just in time that—it was you—Anthony."

Then he had said, "Hush," and had dropped her hands, and after a long time, he had spoken. "Di, I've asked another woman to marry me, and she has said, 'Yes.'"

Out of a stunned silence she had whispered. "How—did it happen?"

"Don't ask me—it is done—and it can't be undone—we have made a mess of things, Diana——"

He gave the bare details; of the sick mother who had crept back after years of absence to die in her own town, of the girl and her loneliness, of her child-like faith in him.

When he had finished, she had laid her hand on his arm. "But do you love her, do you really love her, Anthony?" had been her desolate demand.

He had drawn back, and not meeting her eyes, had said, very low, "You haven't the right to ask that question, Di, or I to answer it——"

And in that moment she had realized that the barrier which separated herself and Anthony was high enough to shut out happiness.

"Oh—oh." As Diana's thoughts came back to the present, she sat up in bed and wept helplessly. "Oh, I don't know what I am going to do, Sophie. I've always been so self-sufficient, and now it seems as if my whole world revolves about one man——"

Never before had Diana, self-contained Diana, talked to her friend of the things which lay deep beneath the surface, but now she revealed her soul to the little woman who had known love in all its fulfilment, and who, having lost that love, still lived.

"What you must do," said Sophie, softly, "is to face it. You've got to look at the thing squarely, dearest-dear. It is because you and Anthony forgot to keep burning the sacred fires that this trouble has come upon you."

"What do you mean, Sophie?"

"When two people love each other," said Sophie, slowly, "it is a wonderful thing, a sacred thing, Diana. What you gave Ulric was not love—you were fascinated for the moment, and when you found him disappointing, you let him go lightly, yet all the time, deep in your heart, was this great Anthony—is it not so, my Diana?"

"Yes," the other whispered, with her face hidden.

"And Anthony, when he thought he had lost you, took this little girl to fill your place—and she can never fill it, and so because each of you has made of love a light thing, you must have your punishment. We must reap what we sow, Diana.

"Don't think I am not sympathetic, liebchen," she went on, "but, oh, Diana, I'd rather see you this way than with Ulric Van Rosen as your lover."

She knelt by the bed with her arms about her friend. Two years before Diana had comforted Sophie when death had claimed the great-hearted husband who had made the little woman's life complete. Since then they had clung together, and there had developed in

Sophie an almost maternal devotion for the brilliant girl who had hitherto moved through life triumphant and serene.

Delia, at the door, presented a worried face. "I've got some milk toast for Miss Diana," she explained, "and your breakfast is waiting for you, Miss Sophie——"

"Breakfast," Diana pushed back the brown brightness of her hair and laughed hysterically; "is that the way the world must go on for me now, Sophie? You know—for you've been through it—must I eat and drink and be merry when my heart is—broken——?"

"Hush." Again she was in Sophie's arms. "Delia will hear."

But Delia's imagination had not grasped the possibility of any mental or spiritual disturbance. "I guess she's got one of her mother's headaches," she said, as she edged herself further into the room. "I always knew she'd have them some day—although up to now she's been perfectly well."

"Set the tray on the table, Delia," Mrs. Martens spoke over her shoulder, "and I'll come down presently—and you might go up and get Peter. I think I shut the door as I came out——"

Delia took the hint. "There's broiled fish and waffles," she complained, as she departed, "and they don't taste any better for waiting."

"You go down, Sophie," said Diana, when they were alone—"and I'll get up presently, and then—I'll see some way out of it——"

At her tone, her friend who had crossed the room to pull up the shades turned and looked at her. "What

way *can* you see, Diana?"

Diana slipped out of bed and stood up, tall and white, with the long brown braids hanging heavily to her knees.

"There must be some way," she said, "for all of us. I don't believe in sitting down and letting things go wrong, and they may be as wrong for that little girl as for Anthony and me—surely one must use common sense in a case like this——"

Sophie pulled up the curtain, letting in a flood of sunshine.

"One may use common sense," she said, "but one must be very careful——"

Diana twisted her braids into a coronet, and put on a padded Japanese robe, for the air blew cool from the sea. Then she sat down at her desk.

"I am going to ask her to come and visit me, Sophie. I want you to take the letter when you go down to breakfast."

"To visit you—who?"

"Bettina. She can stay until Anthony's big house is ready. I want to know his little girl."

While Diana wrote her note, Sophie stepped out on the porch which matched her own above it. The harbor lay still and beautiful, a sapphire sheet in the morning calm. The anchored boats seemed to sleep like great white birds on its bosom.

Suddenly there broke upon the stillness the sound of a great buzzing, as of some mammoth bee.

"What is it?" asked Diana, standing in the doorway.

"Look, oh, look," cried Sophie, and then they saw above them, darting like a dragon-fly through the golden haze, a magic ship of the air.

"I wonder who's flying," said Diana, as they watched it go up and up until it was a mere speck against the blue. "They are daring folk, these flying men—yet there are men more daring. If you could see Anthony's hands! Those strong, competent hands that work with instruments and surgeon's needles, and a slip may mean some one's life—it's such men who are the bravest, Sophie, not the men who fly."

The little woman stepped back within the circle of her friend's arm. Diana towered a head above her, yet spiritually she leaned on Sophie's fineness and faith.

Their eyes followed that astounding flight, but their thoughts were with a man whose mornings were spent not in the golden radiance of the upper air, but in the bare blackness of an operating room.

Suddenly Diana spoke sharply. "If I have lost him, Sophie, what shall I do?"

"What do all women do," said Sophie, still gazing with rapt face up into the heavens, "what do all women do who lose the men they love? They pray for courage, Diana, and for strength—and then—and then they fight as best they can until the end—Diana."

CHAPTER IV

WHITE LILACS

"Isn't it dear of her to ask me?"

"Very." Anthony took the note which Bettina handed him. In his desk were many letters written on the gray paper with the silver monogram. Subconsciously he realized that he ought to destroy them, but there was time enough for that.

"She says she wants me to stay with her all summer; do you think I ought?"

"She would not have asked you if she had not meant it."

Bettina, with her small feet on the fender, considered the situation.

"You'll have to come and see me there, and I'll miss our twilight talks by the fire, with Miss Matthews away, and tea, and no one to interrupt——"

"The days are growing longer. Soon there will be no twilights and no fire——"

"And you want me to go?"

His nature was perfectly honest, and he meant that there should be no barriers between himself and this child-woman. So he told her the truth. "I don't know. But you'll be very gay. There'll be the dances at the yacht clubs, and you'll be entertained on the boats, and you'll meet lots of people. Diana knows every one, and her money and position and her beauty make her much in demand."

"Isn't it funny she has never married?"

"Funny"—sharply; "no, it's not funny. It's tragic."

"Why?"

"Because such women as Diana should marry. She has all the qualities for a wife and mother—she is wise and true and good, and there aren't many women like that in the world——"

"Oh," the girl drew her breath quickly, "I'm not like that—I'm little and childish, and I'm not wise."

He saw what he had done and tried to make amends.

"You are—you, Bettina."

"Well," Bettina crossed the hearth-rug, and sat down on a stool at his feet, "she's awfully old, isn't she?"

"My dear, she's years younger than I."

"Oh, you," she laughed and laid her cheek against his hand. "Your heart is just my age, isn't it?"

He moved restlessly, then stood up, with Diana's note still in his hand.

"You'd better write and tell her you'll come," he said. "I'll take you over to-morrow in my car."

She surveyed him wistfully. "Oh, must you really go?"

"Yes. There's the old man with the pneumonia, and the girl with appendicitis, and the new baby at the hospital—I can't neglect them, Bettina."

"When we are married," she asked, tremulously, "will all these sick people keep you from me——"

"A doctor belongs to his patients, my dear——"

"I suppose he does," pensively, "but I shall be terribly jealous of your old men with the pneumonia, and your girls with appendicitis. I shall want you."

If she had hoped to please him by her frank avowal she failed, for he stood looking at her with an expression which made her say hastily, "Don't you want me to want you?"

"I was wondering if I could make you happy."

She gave a little musical note of protest. "I am the happiest girl in the world, except—oh, if mother could only know."

With a quick change of mood, she was sobbing in his arms. The masses of her hair lay soft against his lips, one slim white hand crept to touch his cheek. He imprisoned the small hand in his. "We must have a ring for this soon," and she shifted her head so that she could look up at him from under wet lashes. "Oh," she said, "shall I?"

"Of course. What shall it be?"

"Anything but pearls; they mean tears, you know."

With a quick throb of the heart, he remembered that Diana always wore pearls. Was there something after all in the old superstition, and were the rest of Diana's days to be dreary because she had chosen the wrong jewels?

Diana, Diana, Diana, would his mind never leave her?

Then as if his thought had brought her, he heard her voice upon the stairs.

"May I come up? I rang, but no one answered."

"The bell is broken." He hurried out into the hall, and watched her ascend, with her arms full of white lilacs, her gray eyes shaded by a white veil thrown back from a broad hat, and around her throat the inevitable string of pearls.

"I've come to bring some of my flowers to your little Betty child, and to get her answer to my note."

She was smiling now, smiling at him, and at Bettina, who had come forward timidly.

Diana laid the lilacs on the table, and drew the girl into her arms. "When shall it be, my dear? It seems such a perfect plan to me. The big house isn't finished. You can't go into it until fall, and I can help you get things ready. What do you think, Anthony?"

"I don't know. I'll leave it to your wisdom."

"Then I am sure it will be best," she responded cheerfully, "and now, why not to-morrow?"

"I haven't anything to wear," Bettina stated, anxiously.

"There's a sewing woman at the house, and Sophie and I have brought lots of things from Paris."

"Really? And will you tell me all about your trip?"

"Sophie will tell you. She's the talker. I like to listen —Anthony knows that."

If she had meant to stab him by reviving old memories, she succeeded. How he had missed the responsiveness which had spurred him on to talk his best only his hurt heart knew. It had been her belief

in him, which had supplemented his ability, and had brought him success, and he knew it and she knew it, and now Bettina was to try to play that inspiring part.

Nothing of his thought showed, however, in his impassive countenance. He stood up and held out his hand.

"My old man with the pneumonia is waiting," he said, "and you'll want to visit a bit with Bettina."

"But there's one thing," he continued hurriedly "that I'd like to speak of before I leave—to have settled. Do you think it will be wise to make a public announcement of our engagement?"

"Why not?" sharply.

Bettina glanced from one to the other, conscious of some undercurrent of feeling which she did not share.

"It's just this way," said Anthony, slowly; "if Bettina could meet your friends and mine, under your auspices, chaperoned by you, they would discover her charms and loveliness," he smiled at the girl, "and they'd then welcome her with open arms. Now she knows none of them; it would be only on your account that she would be received, not upon her own, and I think she'd like the other better Diana. What do you think, Bettina?" he asked. "It is for you to say."

Bettina, who was making a tiny white nosegay of lilacs to pin on Anthony's coat, turned to them a sparkling countenance.

"Me—does it matter? Does anything matter except

that I am going to marry you, Anthony?"

She held out her hands to him, laughing over her shoulder at Diana. With her flower face, her hair of gold, her figure slim and swaying like a lily on its stem, she was radiantly, almost impertinently young, and, with a sudden sense of age and weariness, Diana buried her face in the lilacs to hide a whiteness which matched their own.

But she had not been quick enough to escape the keen eyes of Anthony.

He dropped Bettina's hands. "I'll stop to-morrow morning, child, on my way to the sanatorium, and take you over."

"And dine with us later," said Diana. "I'm going to have a lot of people. It will be a sort of impromptu housewarming. I've telephoned about a dozen old friends."

"But I haven't anything to wear." Bettina was again in a panic.

"You'll have about twelve hours to get ready," Diana comforted; "we can do a lot in that time."

But her mind was not on clothes, for she followed the doctor out into the hall to say, "She's just sweet, Anthony——"

"Don't," suddenly all the calm of his fine face was broken up, "don't, Diana——"

Then Bettina came out with the little nosegay of white lilacs.

"You were going away without it," she said reproachfully to the doctor, who was half-way down

the stairway.

"Throw it to me and I'll catch it," he called.

But she ran after him and pinned it on and dropped a hasty kiss in the midst of its fragrance, and ran up again, blushing.

And Diana watched the little scene from the top of the stairs and wondered if she had overestimated her own power to endure.

The two women, standing at the window high up in the hallway, saw the doctor depart, then Diana said, suddenly, "Betty, dear, must you wear black?"

The girl's lip trembled.

"But—mother——"

"I know. But, dearie, it wouldn't make her any happier to see you so somber. And there's white for you, and all the pale, pretty tints, and you wouldn't be too gay, nor sadden others."

"But your friend, Mrs. Martens," said Bettina, eagerly; "Anthony pointed her out to me this afternoon—she passed here on her way to the post-office, and she was in deep mourning——"

"Sophie's life is all behind her; yours is ahead of you."

"Wouldn't it seem like—forgetting?"

"You can never forget. But when you come to me there will be young people, and I want you to share their life. Shall we call it settled, and plan a white dress for to-morrow night?"

Diana had a fashion of calling things settled, and of bringing others to her point of view. Bettina had no

sense of injury, but only boundless confidence in the decisions of the wonderful woman creature who was to fill her life with gladness.

"There will be twelve of us to-morrow night," she sketched rapidly. "Anthony and you and Sophie and I will make four, then there will be two comfortable married couples, and Justin Ford, who is flying his hydro-aeroplane over the harbor, and Bobbie Tucker, who has his yacht in commission, and Sara Duffield, whom you won't care for, because she is a bit of a snob, and Doris Sears, who is sweet and girlish and about your age.

"Sophie and I have picked out the dress you are to wear," she continued. "I think you are just about Sophie's size, and there's an embroidered white, very sheer and fine, with a round low neck and short sleeves, and a girdle of amethyst, and silk stockings and satin slippers of the same color. I'm not sure whether the slippers will fit, but I fancy that a bit of cotton tucked into the toes would make them all right.

"And I want you to wear your hair like I saw the girls in Paris—curled over your ears with a soft fringe—you'll look adorably young, Betty, and so dear and sweet."

The girl's cheeks were brilliant with excitement. "Why, it doesn't seem true. Two days ago I was like Cinderella sitting in the ashes, and now I'm a fairy princess, and you are the fairy godmother."

"Am I, my dear?" Diana spoke absently; her eyes were on a wonderful piece of lace, which, framed quaintly against a background of velvet, hung above a cabinet in the corner.

"Where did you get that collar, Bettina?" she asked.

"It was one of the things that belonged to father's family," the girl explained. "You know he was an Italian, a Venetian—and mother would never let me wear the collar or the old jewels. There's a queer ring. I'm going to give it to Anthony for a wedding ring."

She spoke the last words with a charming hesitation, then went to the little cabinet in the corner and unlocked a drawer. Within was a carved box which when opened showed a massive golden circlet.

"Dad wore it," said Bettina, "on his little finger, but his hands were fat. Anthony's fingers are slim, and he can fit it on the third finger. If he can't get it on the third finger, he shan't wear it."

Diana stared at her in surprise. "Why not?"

"Because it would remind me of Dad," said Bettina, "and I hated Dad."

Here was a new phase of a nature which Diana had judged gentle and yielding.

"But, my dear," she protested, "surely he was your father."

"He broke mother's heart," said Bettina, obstinately; "he loved so many times, and there's only one love that is worth while, and people who can go from one person to another aren't worth thinking about."

It was the judgment of a child ignorant of life, but so aptly did her condemnation fit in with Sophie's words of the night before, that Diana drew a sharp breath. "Perhaps he was only mistaken," she said; "perhaps he didn't understand until it was too late

what he had lost."

"He should have understood. I don't want to be harsh—he was my father, and I wouldn't talk this way to every one. But suppose Anthony treated me the way my father treated mother. Suppose he told me he loved me, and then—some day, I found that he cared—for some one else. What would you think of him then—what would you think of Anthony?"

As she brought her argument to a triumphant close, Diana put up her white-gloved hands as if to ward off a blow, then she said, a little breathlessly, "Don't let Anthony wear the ring—not yet——"

Bettina, unconscious of the emotion she had roused, put the ring back in the box.

"I don't believe I shall," she said, thoughtfully; "there's an old superstition that a ring worn by an inconstant person carries inconstancy with it—and while I don't believe it—it would make me uncomfortable."

"It would—indeed," was Diana's fervent confirmation.

She was still shivering with the shock of the girlish outburst.

"She loves him," she said to herself in dismay. "She really loves him."

She rose and laid her hand on Bettina's shoulder. "Forget to be unhappy while you are with me, Betty, dear. You are going to be very gay—and, oh, so very, very young——" She bent and kissed her. "And now, I want you to do two things for me;—first, you must call me Diana—and second, you must believe that I am really your friend. If I ever do anything to make

you doubt, remember this, that in my heart is just one wish, to help my old friend Anthony to happiness——"

The girl laughed softly, her head up, her eyes shining. "You can't make him much happier than he is," she said; "it may sound awfully conceited, but I think he's happy—because he's going to marry me—Diana."

CHAPTER V

IN WHICH BETTINA DANCES

Diana's house, set high on the rocks, hung over the harbor. In the quaint old town, front doors became back doors, kitchens looked out on the street, and the windows of living-rooms and dining-rooms faced the sea. But there were two seasons when the rocky and ignored gardens of the town were ablaze with beauty—in the lilac month of the spring, and in the dahlia month of the fall.

It was at the time of lilac bloom that Bettina came to make her wonderful visit to Diana, and, after an exciting day in which she had been swept from the hands of the dressmaker to the hands of the hair-dresser, thence to Sophie for inspection and to Diana for confirmation of the completeness of her attire, she found herself, arrayed in all her glory, alone in the wide hallway.

The door was open at the end which faced the town, and the fragrance of the lilacs poured in. The soft wind swayed the branches of the bushes so that they seemed to float like white and purple clouds against a background of blue.

On the step sat Peter Pan, and as Bettina came toward him he rose to meet her and together they went down the path.

It was there in the old garden that Justin and Bobbie came upon her. They were in the white flannels and blue coats which Diana's informality permitted. The insignia on Bobbie's cap proclaimed him a yachtsman.

Justin, having presented Bobbie, smiled straight into Bettina's eyes.

"To think of finding you here," he said.

"How is your hand?" was her practical question.

"Dr. Anthony cured it. I was able to fly yesterday over the harbor. When are you going to fly with me?"

"Never." Bettina shivered with apprehension.

"Oh, but you'd like it," broke in Bobbie, eagerly. "I've been up with him, and it's like floating on a sea of sunshine. I give you my word the sensation is delightful."

Justin said no more on the subject. He could wait, but some day he was going to fly with this little golden girl. He wondered who had been inspired to dress her in that white and amethyst combination. She was as flower-like as the lilacs themselves—she belonged to them; she was exquisite.

He walked beside her, content to let Bobbie monopolize the conversation, which was unusual, for Justin liked to be the center of things. He had always been the center of things, and he was not diffident, as a rule, in his approaches toward friendship.

"The funny thing about this place," Bobbie was saying, "is that you have to pass the kitchen door to get to the front. When I was a little boy Delia used to roll out cookies on that table by the window, and I'd sit on the step and wait for them."

"Delia's a dear," said Bettina. "I fell in love with her the minute I came. And I fell in love with Peter."

Peter, hearing his name, jumped down from the stone wall, where he had been watching the robins, and again joined them.

"Peter and I are old friends," said Bobbie, and stopped to pet him.

"So you are going to stay with Diana?" Justin asked.

Bettina nodded. "Yes. Isn't she wonderful?"

"Wonderful. It's a pity we aren't a monarchy, so that Diana could rule as a queen. She's that kind of woman. A man instinctively looks up to her."

"That's what Anthony says."

Marveling somewhat at her familiar use of the name of the distinguished surgeon, Justin replied, "Oh, of course, Anthony thinks she's perfect. He'll marry her some day."

Bettina's startled glance questioned him. "What makes you say that? He won't, of course, but what makes you say it?"

"Because it would be such a perfect arrangement. They are so well matched."

"It wouldn't be perfect at all. People who are alike never ought to marry. And, anyhow, they've never thought of such a thing."

"How do you know?"

"Because they are not in love. Any one can see that who sees them together. They are just good friends—and friendship is a very different thing from love."

Justin stared at her in amazement for a moment, then he threw back his head and laughed. "Oh, wise young woman," he said, "talk to me some more of love——"

"Who's talking of love?" asked Bobbie, coming up.

"Bobbie doesn't think of anything else," said Justin; "only he's never sure of its object. Last month it was Sara, and now it is Doris—next week it will be——"

"Next week," said Bobbie, firmly, "it will be Doris,—and the next and the next—and always——"

They were on the porch now—the wide porch with its rugs and low wicker chairs, its gay striped awning and its bowls of white and purple lilacs.

Sophie was waiting for them, and Justin greeted her with all the light carelessness gone from his voice.

"Dear lady, it is good to see you again, but hard to see this," and his eyes went to her black gown.

Her lips were tremulous. "I know. But when I meet people who knew him, it does not make me sad; it makes me glad because all of his friends are my good

friends."

"There are two men whom I always place side by side as peers; one is Anthony Blake and the other your husband. The surgeon and the scientist——"

"Yes," she said, "and they never met. But Diana knew him—and loved him."

"And she loves—Anthony——"

Mrs. Martens gave him a startled look. "Hush," she said. "Oh, no, you mustn't think that."

"Perhaps she doesn't realize," he said, slowly, "but the world can see it with half an eye. And everybody knows Anthony's devotion."

He stopped short as Diana appeared in the doorway. She wore white lace, with a crescent of pearls set just above the parting of her dark hair.

Justin was on his feet in a moment. "Diana, the huntress," he said. "You shouldn't appear like that suddenly on a moonlight night unless you want to be worshiped as a goddess——"

Diana laughed. "Please don't call me 'the huntress' again. It has a sort of 'woman still pursued him' sound."

Justin, with Diana, was his light mocking self. With Bettina he had been self-conscious, with Sophie tenderly sympathetic—but Diana played up, as it were, to his boyish attitude of adoration.

"Are we all here but Anthony?" she asked, with her eyes sweeping the length of the porch where the guests had gathered. "He's probably looking after somebody with appendicitis, or with a broken arm

——"

"No, he isn't." Bettina spoke with the assurance of direct knowledge. "This time it is a man's nose; it had to be sewed up."

She shivered as she said it, and her audience roared.

"I'm glad it's not Bobbie's nose," said Justin, "it's the only really handsome feature he possesses isn't it, Doris?"

The blushing Doris murmured inarticulately. She thought Bobbie beautiful, and wondered why any one should designate his nose so explicitly.

Diana regretted that she had not warned Bettina against such assumption of intimacy with Anthony. If people were not to know of the engagement, it was not well—

But Anthony had come, perfectly groomed, from the tips of his white shoes to the top of his head, and presently he was bending over her hand, and saying, pleasantly, "It's a jolly lot of us you've got together, Di. Did I keep you waiting?"

"If you had, it wouldn't be me, but Delia, to whom you'd have to apologize. She's the real head of the house, you know."

Justin took Bettina out, Anthony took Sophie, and one of the married men Diana. At the table Bettina sat between the other married man and Justin, much to her discomfort, for she craved the seat next to the doctor, where perchance she might slip her fingers into his; he seemed so far away, and they were all strangers.

But no one could be shy with Justin. "Of course we're

going to be great friends," he said.

Bettina eyed him doubtfully.

"Why?" she asked.

Here at least was no meek surrender to his charms, and Justin girded himself for the flirtation.

"Well, I'm Diana's friend," he ventured.

"Yes?"

"Isn't that reason enough?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I like to choose my friends for myself."

"Won't you choose me?"

She smiled up at him. "Of course; don't be silly."

After that they got on famously. Justin exerted himself to please, and Bettina, with shining eyes, laughed softly in response to his clever wit.

Sara Duffield watched and wondered. Justin had of late seemed her especial property. Yet she had heard him offer to take this strange young woman in his aeroplane, and he had never taken Sara.

"Who is she?" Sara asked of Bobbie, who was next to her.

"A friend of Diana's. She has been looking after her sick mother for a year. Then Mrs. Dolce died, and Diana asked the girl here. She's a beauty, isn't she?"

"Yes," said Sara, who, in certain shimmering greens

and blues, looked like a shining little peacock, an effect which was further emphasized by a slender feather caught by an emerald which she wore in her black hair. "Where did she live before she came to Diana?"

"In the top of the Lane mansion."

"The Lane mansion." Sara's tone was scornful. "But it's an awful old place——"

"I fancy they didn't have much money. But she doesn't need it, not with that face."

"Doris had better look out," said Sara, unpleasantly.

"Doris?" Bobbie's round young face grew red. "Doris is the last one, Sara, and there won't be any other. You and Justin can just let that subject alone."
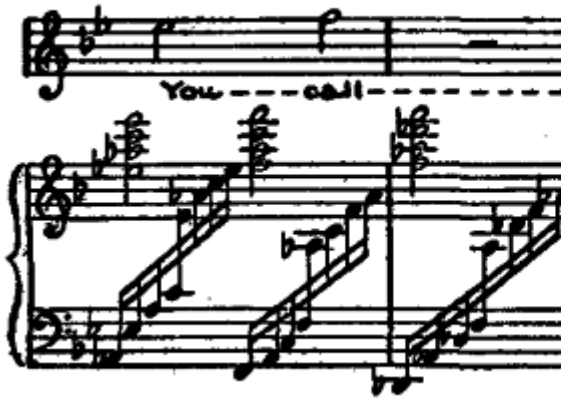
Sara shrugged her shoulders, and returned to her survey of Bettina. "I wonder where she got that stunning gown, if she's so poor. It's straight from Paris."

"Oh, you women," Bobbie exploded, and rested his eyes on Doris, across the table, and the thought of her gentleness was like soothing balm in contrast to Sara's sharpness.

After dinner Diana sang. She sat at the piano, which was placed just within the door of the unlighted music room, and her guests grouped themselves on the porch outside.

She gave them, first, a little German serenade, then a gay bit of Paris music-hall frivolity, and finally her fingers strayed into the accompaniment of a song which she had written for Anthony. It was called "The Wind From the Sea," and it had a haunting

refrain.



Diana's thrilling voice rose and fell with the beating cadences. She had sung the song for Anthony on the night before she sailed for Berlin, and when she had finished he had made once more his insistent plea, and she had said, "Wait."

Bettina, next to Anthony, in a corner of the porch, had had a rapturous moment when he had murmured, "How lovely you are to-night," and had laid his hand over hers in the darkness.

But as Diana sang, her joy was suddenly shadowed. Why was Diana singing things that seemed to drag the heart out of one, and why had Anthony taken his hand away, and why was he so still?

Even as she questioned the search-light from the little ferry that plied between the Head and the Neck sent a shaft of blinding radiance across the harbor. Bettina caught a glimpse of her lover's face, and of

the longing look in his eyes as they rested on Diana.

Why did Anthony look at Diana like that?

As the insistent question obsessed her, Bettina was conscious of no feeling of jealousy. Her faith in Anthony made impossible any thought that his heart was not wholly hers. She merely coveted the look in his eyes as they rested on another woman.

"Of course it's just the way she sings," she told herself, restlessly. "Why, it almost makes me cry."

The music ceased abruptly, and Diana sat very still in the darkness.

It was Sophie's voice which broke the silence.

"Betty, dear, haven't you a song for us?"

"No," came the response from the far corner. "Dad sang. I can only dance."

"Really?" Justin was on his feet at once. "If you'll dance, we will light all the candles in the music room."

Bettina came forward. "It's an interpretive dance. Can you play the 'Spring Song,' Diana?"

Sophie, observing anxiously, wondered what further test would try her friend. But she saw no sign of an emotion which had to do with a night when Diana had waited in the moonlight for the lover who belonged to another woman, as with firm touch she played the first chords of the rippling melody.

And Bettina danced.

Justin, watching her, thought of lilacs blown by light breezes, of clouds on a May morning, of the drift of

white petals from blossoming trees. Was she a woman or a wraith, this slender thing swaying in the candle-light?

Anthony watched, too, leaning back, tired, in his chair.

Diana watched, and asked herself, "Can any man resist such youth and beauty?"

And Sophie watched, and said to herself, out of the pity of her great and loving heart, "She is such a child—and things are going to be hard for her."

When Bettina finished, she went straight back to Anthony. "Did you like it?" she demanded.

But his answer was lost in the applause which forced her to face the rest of them, and explain:

"Dad taught me. He loved beauty, and he felt that the dance was beauty in motion."

"Sit here by me," urged Justin, in a wheedling tone, and placed a chair for her.

Bettina yearned wistfully for her corner and Anthony, but Sara was there now, and her light hard laugh floated out to them.

"I think I'm tired," said Bettina, as she dropped into the chair, and Justin, the much sought after Justin, looked at her with chagrin.

"Are you tired of me?" he asked in an injured voice.

She shook her head. "No—but it's been an exciting day."

Somewhere back in the house the telephone rang, and presently Delia came out for the doctor. "You're

wanted at the Neck, sir," she said; "it's the old gentleman with the pneumonia."

As Anthony went to answer the call, the other guests said their farewells.

Justin reproached Bettina. "You haven't been a bit good to me; if I come again will you talk to me?"

Bettina smiled. "I'll let you talk to me."

"When?"

She turned to Sophie. "When shall I let him come?"

"He'll see you to-morrow on Bobbie's boat," said Sophie; "he wants us for lunch——"

"Till to-morrow, then," said Justin, and bent over her hand; then he ran down the porch steps to Sara, who was waiting with her head held high.

When Anthony came back from the telephone Bettina said, mournfully, "Now you must go, and I haven't talked to you for a single minute."

He looked down into the wistful face, and hesitated, then he asked, "Would you like to ride with me over to the Neck? It won't take long, but you'd have time to tell me all about your beautiful day."

She was radiant at once.

"Of course I can go."

"Take my cloak," said Sophie; "the long black one; it's warmer, and the air is cool."

Diana, returning from a conference with Delia, asked, "Where's Betty?"

"Gone for a little ride with Anthony."

"But, Sophie, what will people say—at this hour?"

"I told her to wear my black cloak," said Sophie; "it's less conspicuous, and she was so eager."

Diana stood very still in the darkness. How she coveted the intimacy of the little car! She had ridden so often with Anthony, and he never talked so well as when driving; he never revealed so fully the depth and fineness of his great nature. Would he reveal himself to Bettina? Would he? And was she shut out from his life forever?

She went up-stairs slowly. "You wait for them, Sophie," she said. "I'm tired—it's been a hard day ——"

"Poor dear." Sophie stood looking up at her from the foot of the stairs. "I'll come up and rub your head presently."

"It isn't my head," Diana answered over her shoulder.

"Poor dear," said Sophie again, softly, and saw with anxious eyes the droop of the ascending figure in the white gown.

An hour later Bettina came.

"We rode across the causeway, and down the shore drive. It was beautiful and Anthony is going to take me again. It's been such a lovely, lovely day, Mrs. Martens."

All the doubts of the early evening had been swept away, and Bettina was triumphantly happy.

When they reached the second floor, she stopped

outside of Diana's room.

"Good-night, dear lady," she called softly, with her lips against the door.

"Good-night," came faintly, then after a moment, "dear child."

But Diana did not open the door.

CHAPTER VI

"FOR EVERY MAN THERE IS JUST ONE WOMAN"

When Sophie, having donned a smoke-gray kimono and brushed her shining hair, went down to Diana, she expected to find her pensive. She found her, instead, with various little white jars and silver bottles set before her on her dressing table.

"When a woman takes to cold cream, Sophie," she remarked, as her friend came in, "it's a deadly sign. It shows that she has found her first wrinkle."

"Diana, how can you! You know that you are beautiful without such aids."

"When I was in Paris," Diana continued, "I was persuaded into buying these. I was told that they held the secret of perpetual youth."

"Perpetual youth is from the heart, Diana."

"Then my heart is as old as the ages."

Diana was gazing into the mirror, which reflected her tired face.

"I can't think of anything but that child, dancing in the candle-light. Oh, youth, youth, Sophie; is there anything like it in the whole wide world!"

"Diana," Sophie's voice was sharpened by her solicitude, "come away from that mirror."

Diana obediently turned her back on her dressing table, and presently she said, "I wonder if it was wise to have her here?"

"Bettina?"

"Yes."

Sophie was thoughtful. "I'm not sure. Yet it seemed to me to-night that perhaps—you had been wise——"

"What made you think that?"

"Anthony's face when you played, Diana."

"Oh!" Diana crossed the room and dropped down on the rug at her friend's feet. "Tell me how he looked," she said, softly, with her arm outflung across the other's knees.

"It was just in a flash that I saw his face—under the search-light from the ferry. It was the face of a man who had lost the one woman in the world for him, Diana."

"If I could believe that," said Diana, tensely, "nothing else would matter."

"Yet, believing it, how can it be right for him to

marry some one else?"

Diana, with her chin propped between her hands, stared with wide eyes into space. "It isn't right—but she loves him, Sophie."

"Yet she's not the one woman—oh, what a muddle, Diana."

"What a muddle," and for a time they sat in silence.

Then Sophie said, "Perhaps it's because I was so happy in my marriage—that I can see so clearly. I've worked it out this way, dearest, dear—that in all the world there's just one woman for one man. If he meets and marries her, no matter how hard their life may be, they will be drawn together, not separated, by the hardness; no matter how the world may use them, they will cling together against the world. But when a man marries the wrong woman, he goes through life a half-man, crippled in mind and spirit, because of his mistake. Sometimes the man finds the one woman in a second marriage; sometimes he finds her too late; sometimes he is too blind to know that she is the one woman, and he lets her go, to discover afterward that no other can fill his life. That's the pity of it. If Anthony marries Bettina, she will know some day—that she is—the wrong woman——"

Diana rose and moved restlessly about the room. "But she's so slim and white and young—and no man can resist that sort of thing long. She has youth to give him, Sophie, and I, why, soon I'll be middle-aged."

"You—oh, Diana——"

Diana's laugh had a sob in it. "Well, I shall be."

"You'll never be anything but lovely—when you're an

old lady you'll be stately and distinguished, and your eyes will shine like stars, and men will still fall in love with you——"

"Oh, Sophie, you're such a comfort——"

The next morning Delia sent up three breakfasts on trays.

"If it wasn't for that pretty child," she said to little Jane Trefry, who helped her in the kitchen, "there wouldn't be any satisfaction in getting things ready. Miss Sophie has learned foreign ways and wants rolls and coffee, and Miss Diana wants grape fruit. I don't know what's the matter with her appetite; she hasn't eaten enough for a bird since she came, and yet that first night she said to me, 'Oh, Delia, I'm just dying for some of your good New England cooking!'"

"Maybe she's in love," said little Jane, who was romantic.

Delia turned her omelette deftly. "Of course she is. Everybody knows she just about worships Dr. Blake, only she won't marry him till she gets good and ready. That's the house he's building for her—up the road, with the red-tiled roof and the wide stone porches. He had the window of her room toward Minot's, so that the light could say, 'I love you' to her at night."

"She'd better look out," stated little Jane, with provincial frankness; "if she waits too long he'll be finding some one else to say 'I love you' to."

"You keep your mind on that toast," Delia was

dishing up the omelette, "and don't you forget that Miss Diana isn't the kind that a man goes back on. She could have had a dozen richer men than the doctor. But she didn't want them, and maybe she doesn't want him, but don't you get it into your head that he wants anybody else."

Little Jane sniffed. "You can't tell about men," she said, as she went out of the door with Bettina's tray.

Bettina, sitting up in bed, welcomed little Jane with enthusiasm. She ate everything from strawberries to omelette with a hearty appetite, then she lay comfortably, looking out toward the eastern horizon where the smoky streak of a steamer showed faintly.

Presently Sophie came in with a gown of white serge —of simple lines, with wide collar and cuffs of sheer embroidered muslin. "Diana insisted that I should get some white things in Paris," she said, as she laid it over a chair. "She hoped that I might be induced to dress in something besides black, but I can't, and so I am sure that you will be willing to wear these out for me, my dear."

Bettina put one bare foot on the floor, then the other, then she fluttered across the room like a white butterfly and embraced Mrs. Martens.

"It's lovely, only it doesn't seem quite right for me to take everything."

"It is right. They would lie in my trunks until they were out of fashion. There's a white felt hat that goes with this, and a long white coat, and Diana is going to take you over to town this morning to get white shoes and gloves and a veil."

"I thought we were to lunch on Bobbie Tucker's

yacht."

"We were—but Bobbie has just telephoned that his yacht has to go to the yard for repairs—something happened last night—so Justin will take us for a ride."

"Oh," said Bettina. "Mr. Ford?"

"Yes. Justin has put his car at our disposal. He'll drive us to-day, but when he can't there's the chauffeur—it's very kind of him."

"He's awfully good looking," said Bettina in a cool little voice, "but don't you think he's terribly conceited, Mrs. Martens?"

Sophie nodded. "He's been spoiled. But back of it all he's a man. His lightness is on the surface. I know, for he was in Berlin when my husband was living. I saw the other side then. He was poor; it was before he came so unexpectedly into his uncle's money. You know the old man and his son were drowned in a dreadful accident. Justin was studying aviation when we first knew him. He lived in shabby rooms, and ate at shabby little places, and he used to come in the afternoons to call on me, and I'd fill him up with thick bread and butter and coffee, and we'd talk for hours of America. He was lonely poor lad, and I was like a big sister. I shall never forget one bitter cold afternoon, when he came in with his hands all red and rough, and with a hoarse cough, and I had the maid bring him a bowl of soup hot from the kitchen, and he tried to make a joke of it, but his voice broke, and presently he said, 'Dear big sister, some day I can thank you, but not now.'

"And when my husband died," she went on, softly,

"he did thank me in a most generous way. He had just received his fortune when he heard of my—trouble. He sent a wonderful cross to mark where my husband sleeps—and I could have afforded only a little stone—and there are flowers every week, even when I am far away, and there will always be flowers because of his great generosity."

Here was a background for the light-hearted young Justin which appealed to Bettina's imagination. "Why, how lovely," she said with her eyes shining; "he didn't seem like that to me. He seemed so—shallow."

"But he isn't," Sophie defended; "if it had not been for him and for Diana I should have lost heart many times—the world knows Justin as a rich young man, ready for a good time, but I know him as the Knight of the Tender Heart."

"How old is he?"

"Twenty-six. I didn't realize until I reached here that he was flying again. He does such dangerous things. I saw the aeroplane yesterday morning, and found out afterward that he was up—and since then my heart seems to stop every time I think of him in the air ——"

With all the optimism of youth, Bettina tried to reassure her.

"He said last night that he was very careful. He wants to take me up."

"Oh, don't ever do anything so dreadful."

"I couldn't if I wanted to. Anthony made me promise last night that I wouldn't——"

She said it with a comfortable sense of her lover's care for her; "I'd rather ride any day with Anthony in his little car."

"My dear," Sophie said with some hesitation, "I'm going to suggest that except to Diana and myself, you try not to seem too much interested in—your doctor—the world might suspect—and you don't want to announce your engagement yet, Diana tells me——"

Bettina shrugged her white shoulders. "I don't care if everybody knows," she said; "but Diana thought that Anthony's friends might like to get acquainted with me first. But if you could know what he's been to me, Mrs. Martens—why, when I waked this morning it seemed like a dream to think that I wasn't in the top floor of the old Lane house, with Miss Matthews making her breakfast coffee over an alcohol stove, and a little impatient because I hadn't the toast ready, and with the prospect ahead of me of another lonely day, when I should try to read and try not to think, and miss mother until I nearly died.

"Do you wonder that I love him?" She came up to Mrs. Martens and put her hands on her shoulders. "He's so wonderful and good—and he loves me——"

Sophie could not meet the frank young eyes. "It's nice that you feel that way," she said, "and I hope you don't mind what I said—it was only that it might save you some future—embarrassment."

"I'll be careful," said Bettina, "only I'm perfectly sure that everybody will know every time I look at Anthony that he's the one man in the world for me. You can't imagine how uninteresting other men seem beside him—and then his manner, isn't it lovely and protecting and—sure?"

Sophie had a sudden sense of the comedy which was intermingled with the tragic of the situation. Diana and Bettina each harped incessantly on one string, "Anthony, Anthony, Anthony," and she must play listener to their ecstatic songs of praise.

During the trip to town, Bettina sat beside Justin.

"Since Bobbie's yacht is out of commission," suggested Justin, "why not extend our ride up the North Shore road? There's a war-ship anchored just off Beverly, and a tea room where we can have lunch."

"I must stop at the sanatorium first," said Diana. "Anthony has a patient there who is to be operated on. She's a little young thing, and she's afraid, and I want to take her some lilacs. I told Jane to pick some and have them ready when we returned, so perhaps you'd better go first to our house, and then to the sanatorium, then we can do as we please——"

"A sanatorium," said Justin to Bettina, "always used to suggest vague horrors. But Dr. Anthony's doesn't. He has a wonderful way with his patients, puts their hands to work, because it's their minds that make them sick; they weave and make pottery. The last time I was there an anxious-eyed, beautifully-gowned woman was working on a rug, with three rabbits as a design. She was having trouble with the bunnies' ears when Dr. Blake came up.

"'I simply can't do it, doctor,' she said, and began to cry.

"Anthony stood very still for a moment, then in his quiet, strong voice, he said, 'Dear lady, it must be done—for your soul's sake.'

"She looked up at him in a startled way. 'Why my soul?' she asked. 'It's my body that's sick.'

"He shook his head. 'It's deeper than that,' he answered; 'you've lost your grip because life has never meant labor to you. The people who work have healthy minds and healthy bodies. Those who do not, waver between weakness and wickedness. That's what's the matter with society to-day—that's what's the matter with you. You must finish your bunnies' ears, therefore, for the sake of your soul—your body will respond——'

"She went back to her loom," Justin continued, "with a different look on her face. The lines were smoothed out from her forehead. Neither of them had seemed to notice that I was there. It was a psychological moment when the doctor had to speak, and it was wonderful to hear him talk like that."

Bettina's puzzled eyes met his. "Oh, but do you think that people have to work to be happy?" she said. "I hate work. I like to be warm and comfortable, and have pretty clothes, and—everything."

"Of course you do," said Justin, responding to her mood, lightly, "but you don't want to get Dr. Blake after you—he preaches a gospel of endeavor."

"Oh!" There was a note of dismay in Bettina's voice. "But not all of us can be bees. Some of us must be the butterflies."

Justin spoke, somewhat seriously: "I've been a butterfly for three years, and I give you my word I'm not getting much out of it. Seeing Mrs. Martens has brought back the days when I worked over there in Germany to get the money to finish my studies. Has

she told you how I used to go to her and drink her delicious coffee and eat thick bread and butter, and bask in her sympathy until I got the courage to go on again? Yet I felt all the time that I was getting somewhere, and here I'm stagnating——"

Bettina settled herself back comfortably in her cushioned seat. "Well, I don't think it's anything to worry about. It seems perfectly wonderful to me not to have anything to do—if I had mother back," her voice trembled, "I wouldn't care how much I had to work for her—but after she—left me, everything seemed so—so sordid, and hard—and——Oh, I hated it—and then——" She drew herself up sharply.

"Then——?" Justin prompted her.

"Diana came," she went on, after a moment's hesitation, "and now everything will be different."

Justin had a baffled sense of some mystery from the solution of which he was shut out, but he merely said, heartily, "I hope you'll stay forever," and felt his heart leap as the ends of her white veil fluttered against his lips.

CHAPTER VII

HARBOR LIGHT

Anthony's sanatorium was an enlargement of an old mansion which had belonged to his grandfather. The

wide green lawns swept down to the sea. There was an orchard to the left of the house, and to the right a rose garden, and the barn had been turned into a weaving room.

Within the house everything was restful and harmonious. Money had been spent without stint to produce beauty in its most subtle expression; each window framed a view of sea or sky or of sunlighted trees; the walls, the hangings, the rugs were of that ashes-of-rose tint which give light to an interior without glare.

Diana, entering, with her arms full of lilacs, was met by a nurse.

"Dr. Blake wants you at once," she said; "he's in his office."

"Take these, Betty." Diana thrust the lilacs into the girl's arms. "Perhaps you'd better go back and sit in the car with Justin and Sophie, or you can wait in the reception room. I won't be long."

But she was longer than she had anticipated. The seconds lengthened into minutes, and the minutes in quarters and into half hours. Justin came in once and found Bettina sitting stiffly on the edge of a chair with the flowers in her arms.

"Come out and we'll take a spin across the causeway, while we wait," he said.

Bettina shook her head. "Diana said she wouldn't be long. I don't see what's keeping her."

"There's that operation this morning, you know, on the girl with appendicitis. And Diana has always been a great help with Anthony's patients. He told

me that when she went to Europe her loss was felt deeply here——"

"But the girl—with appendicitis?" Bettina's face was white. "Is she afraid——?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I should be afraid. I—I don't see how Anthony can do it."

"Do what?"

"Operate on such a little scared thing——" She was shivering.

"You mustn't stay here," Justin insisted; "you'll get nervous, you know, and all that; you really mustn't stay—you weren't made to have your mind on such things."

"But Diana's mind is on them."

"Diana is—different."

That Diana was different was being demonstrated at that very moment in an upper room, where a little white slip of a girl had welcomed her with a wailing cry—"I'm afraid."

"My dear," Diana bent over the bed, "there's nothing to be afraid of, not with your doctor."

"But—if I should die."

"You're not going to die."

"But how do you know?"

"Because your good doctor has said so—and he knows——"

"But sometimes people do—die."

Diana signed to the nurse to go out, and then she knelt by the bed.

"Dear child," she said, softly, "life is such a short journey for all of us, and beyond is a wonder land. When I was a little girl I used to wish that I might die, and I thought that my lonely little soul might sail and sail in a silver boat until I came to the shores of that far country where I should find my father and mother waiting. I was such a dreary little orphan, and I wanted love. And I knew that in that country Love waited for me—as it is waiting for you. Would it be so hard to go after all the pain, if Love willed it so?"

"I hadn't thought of it that way."

"Then think of it now. But most of all think of life, and of what it will mean to you when wise Dr. Blake has made you well. And think of this, too, that when you wake up from your long sleep there will be a bunch of white lilacs right here on this little table—to welcome you back to the world—will you promise to think of the white lilacs until you go to sleep?"

She was talking against time, trying to get the tense look out of the girl's eyes. And now she was rewarded by the lowered lids and the relaxing of the little figure in her arms.

"I am going to think of the lilacs," the girl whispered. "Are you very sure they will be there?"

"Very sure, dear."

"Then I'm ready——"

Diana, going out, met Anthony.

"She's all right," she said. "I'm glad you had me come.

"She confided in me at once. She just needed her mind diverted, and I turned it on white lilacs. I will have a bunch for her when she wakes, and she is going to think of them. Is there really any danger, Anthony?"

"Scarcely any—and there was no choice. She couldn't live without it."

"How wonderful that you can save life, Anthony."

"In saving others I save myself, Diana. It has kept me in these later years from—chaos——"

Something in his voice made Diana say, quickly, "Betty is down-stairs. Poor child, she has waited for a long time. Can you come down?"

"No. She ought not to be here, Diana."

"She would come. I think she hoped to see you. And why shouldn't she come? Your work is here."

"She isn't fitted for it. She is born for the brightness of life, not for its shadows. I fancy if she could see me in my operating outfit that she'd look upon me as something between a brute and a butcher. Poor child!" His laugh was grim.

Diana's progress down the corridor partook of the nature of an ovation. From one room to another she went, and was welcomed by patients, many of whom made periodical visits to "Harbor Light"—which was the picturesque name Anthony had given his house because, as he explained, it was to be a beacon to such derelicts as drifted there. There were men and

women of wealth who came to be fortified for another season of excitement, and there were men and women to whom the doctor gave lodging and his skill without financial recompense. But no one knew to whom such charity was extended, and all were equal in care and treatment.

Most of the nurses, too, had been there long enough to know the inspiration and uplift which was brought by the gracious lady in the white gown.

When the patients asked, "Who is she?" the reply was whispered, "Diana Gregory. Everybody hopes she'll marry the doctor. He's dead in love with her."

At last Diana slipped away, promising to come again soon to look at the weaving, to see the new pottery—

"But not now," she insisted, brightly; "there's some one waiting for me down-stairs."

She found Bettina still sitting stiffly on the edge of the chair. She had sent Justin back to Sophie, and a nurse had taken away the lilacs. All the glory had gone out of her morning when Anthony had asked for Diana.

"Why didn't he want me?" she demanded, when Diana came toward her with an eager apology. "Why didn't Anthony want me?"

"My dear, he always wants you, but there's an operation on now."

"On that girl with appendicitis?"

"Yes."

"Oh, how can he do it, Diana? I think it's dreadful—to—to hurt people——"

"He doesn't hurt them, dear."

"But it's horrid. I—I hate it."

"Betty!"

"I—I shan't ever let him talk about it to me." The child's breath was coming quickly. "Never—never—never, when we are married—and I'm going to make him give it up——"

"Give it up?" Diana's voice rang clear and sharp. "Give what up?"

"His surgery. I didn't mind the other—when he came to mother and gave her medicine in bottles—but this is different, and the women here——Why, Diana, some of them looked in at the door, and they were—freaks."

"They're sick, dear."

"I don't like sick things. I loved mother, and I could stand it, but Anthony mustn't let me see such people—not now, so soon after——!"

"Hush, Betty! Oh, you shouldn't have come in. We'll go now and have a long ride with Justin, and to-night you'll see Anthony—and some day you'll realize what a great man he is."

"I know he's a great surgeon, and, of course, I'll have to put up with it—but I shall hate it just the same, Diana."

Put up with it—oh, Diana! For years she had urged him toward this end, that he might stand at the head of that profession which combats death with a flaming sword. For years she had watched him struggle upward, and had gloried, not only in his

fame, but in his power of healing.

Together the two women went down the path.

"Are you tired of waiting?" Diana asked as they came up to the car.

"Justin took me for a little ride," said Sophie, "and I sat in front with him. We tried to get Bettina to go, but she wouldn't. She thought she ought to wait for you."

"I wish I hadn't waited," said Bettina, as Justin helped her in. "I—I don't like sick people, and I hate that queer smell——"

"Ether," said Justin, promptly; "it's because of the operation."

He leaned forward, and the car shot out toward the causeway. The way led first through a street overarched with elms; beyond the elms there was a vista of sea and sky. A fragrant wind blew from the blossoming trees, and swept Bettina's veil away from her face so that it billowed above her hat like the wings of some great bird.

The hospital was behind; ahead was the long white road. Justin was smiling down into her eyes. For the first time she noticed his look of joyous youth.

"I begin to understand why it is that you fly," she said, as they came out upon the causeway and saw the stretch of harbor beyond.

"Why?"

"Because you feel that you must get up high enough to flap your wings."

"I could do that on a barn-yard fence, couldn't I—like Chantecler, and make the sun rise?"

"You could never get up early enough."

"I flew past your window at six."

"How did you know it was my window?"

Justin glanced down at her. Her soft white hat was pulled low, so that it almost hid her eyes, but through the veil he could see that they were softly shining. Her lips were red, and her cheeks touched by the wind with vivid color.

"I knew—because my heart told me," he said, ardently.

But she did not blush. "You knew it because you know which is Diana's guest room," she stated.

"Were you awake?"

"No. I am never awake at six—I love to be lazy."

"Don't tell that to Dr. Anthony or he'll set you to weaving. You know what I told you; he said that idleness leads to weakness or wickedness——"

"I haven't had time to see what it leads to," Bettina informed him. "I've always been so busy. I'm going to play for a while."

"Will you play with me?" Justin challenged her.

Shining eyes met shining eyes—youth responded to youth.

"It will be glorious," said Bettina, meeting his mood.

They laughed together, the care-free laughter of their

golden age. Diana, catching the echo of it, waked from a reverie which had to do with Anthony back there in a big, bare room, contending with skilful and steady hands against the evil forces which sought to destroy; saving a life, giving to a little unknown girl a future of hope and of health.

Every breath that she had drawn since she had left him had been a prayer that his hand might not fail, that his nerves might be like steel—she felt as if her heart were beating with his to uphold him, as if she could bear him on the wings of love and be his talisman against harm.

Yet in front of her was the girl he was to marry, laughing lightly up into the eyes of a boy, unconscious of her lover's need, unconscious of everything except that she was young and free from care—and that the morning world was beautiful!

CHAPTER VIII

THE EMPTY HOUSE

When the doctor came that night he was tired. The day had been a hard one, and he felt weighed down by the woes of those weak folk who bore so heavily on his strength.

He found Bettina alone. Diana and Sophie had gone to play bridge across the harbor, and only Delia in the garden and Peter Pan on the porch remained for

chaperonage.

Bettina greeted her betrothed soberly, and held up her face to be kissed. "I said things about you yesterday," she confessed, as she and Anthony settled themselves on the porch where they could look out upon the lights. "I said things about you to Diana, and afterward we went to the Pirate House with Justin Ford for lunch, and I flirted with him——"

"What did you say about me?"

"That I hated your surgery—that it seemed dreadful."

He had been smiling, but he grew grave at once.

"You can't separate me from my work, child; you must take us together."

"Of course; I know that now. Diana was talking to me after we came home from our ride. She told me some of the wonderful things you had done, and of how people almost said their prayers to you."

"Not quite that—but it's my reward that so many of my patients are my friends because I have helped them."

"And Diana said that if I loved you I'd be glad—to let you—cut people up."

In spite of himself he laughed. She was irresistible.

"I shan't exact that of you. But at least you must not worry."

"And I won't have to live there?" anxiously.

"Where?"

"At the sanatorium?"

"Of course not. You'll live over there."

He pointed to a jutting rock on the top of which a big house loomed white in the moonlight.

"There? Oh, I'd love to go over it. Couldn't we, now?"

He hesitated. "Perhaps it would be better to wait till there are others." Then, seeing her disappointment, he agreed. "Well, if Delia will come too."

"Delia?"

"To open the rooms." He had not the heart to tell her how sharp were the tongues of the gossips of the little town.

So Delia, a little later, limped after them with Peter following, confidently.

"And you flirted with Justin," Anthony remarked on the way over.

"Yes. In the little tea room. Diana and Mrs. Martens sat at one table, and Mr. Ford and I at the other—and he was so funny—and I——Well, *any one* looking on might have thought I was in earnest."

"What did Diana think?"

"Oh, she knows how I feel about you——"

"And Justin, does he know?"

"Of course not. It's not announced, you know."

"But if he should take you in earnest."

"Silly," Bettina tucked her hand in his arm, "nobody takes me in earnest—but you——"

Her hesitation was charming, but he did not respond

ardently, and perhaps she missed something in his manner, for presently she asked, "Are you jealous?"

"My dear, no. Children must play——"

She sighed a little. "Am I such a child?"

He laughed again. "Of course, you're a mere baby—but a dear baby, Betty mine."

And with that she was content.

The big house was not furnished.

"I am going to put in the things which were in the old house before I turned it into a sanatorium. My grandfather was a sea captain, and I have a model of a ship carved by one of his sailors out of soup bones, and there are two great china tureens in the shape of swans, and some ivories and queer embroidered screens that I wouldn't take anything for. It's a sort of jumble for a modern residence, but I like it. And I have had the house built in a style which will be in keeping with my belongings. It's rocky and rugged and there's a fireplace in every room. I like to burn logs for cheerfulness even when there's a furnace—and to come home to the light of them on winter nights."

"I love pretty new things," Bettina informed him. "May I have all white for my room? With ivory things on my dresser with silver monograms, and—white fur rugs?"

Her room!

It came to Anthony, with the force of a blow, that there was no room in the big house for Bettina.

Why, that room was Diana's—that room which

looked out on Minot's. He had thought of her as inhabiting it. He had never meant that the great light should say, "I love you," to Bettina.

For months, even when he felt that he had lost Diana, her spirit had seemed to dwell in the place he had planned for her. Whenever he had entered her room it had not seemed bare, for his imagination had filled it with the furniture which had been his grandmother's wedding set—the big canopied bed, the winged chair on the hearth, the quaint lyre-legged sewing table by the window. And on the other side of the hearth would be another chair—his own. And in that room he had seen Diana, his bride, in the moonlight; his wife, waiting in the winged chair to welcome him after a weary day.

And now this pretty child—and Diana banished? What had he done? What dreadful thing had he done?

Bettina, unconscious, said pleasant things about the living-room, the library, the great hall, the broad stairway—

As yet there was no connection for lighting, so they carried candles, Anthony holding one aloft for himself and Bettina, and Delia coming after with a taper. Peter, like a flash of flame, slipped ahead of Delia and was lost in the shadows.

They went into every room on the second floor before they entered the one which faced Minot's. To him it was the Holy of Holies, but Bettina stepped in boldly.

It was a great high-ceiled chamber with its distant corners made darker by the moonlight. Through the

wide window which faced the south was a vast expanse of sky and sea. Anthony's house stood near the end of the harbor, so that across the causeway was the open water, a stretch of limitless blue.

Bettina shivered. "It's so big and dark."

"When it's furnished and the lights are on it will seem different."

Delia, arriving at that moment, added her contribution to the conversation.

"Miss Diana came over yesterday. Them's her white lilacs on the shelf."

The doctor held his candle higher. The flowers, in a great bowl of gray pottery, showed ghostly outlines beneath the flickering flame. To Anthony the air seemed thick and faint with their perfume.

"Let us go," he said to Bettina, quickly, and with his hand on her arm he led her away and shut the door.

Diana and Sophie, coming home at half-past ten, found the lovers on the porch, and the four talked together until Anthony said "Good-bye."

He made a professional call in a side street and found himself, afterward, turning toward the big empty house on the rocks. In that south room Diana's lilacs were wasting their sweetness, and he coveted the subtle suggestion they gave of her presence there.

Diana, helping Delia to lock up, asked, "Where's Peter?"

"Goodness knows," said Delia; "he followed me when we went over to the doctor's house, and I ain't seen him since."

Diana turned and looked at her. "The doctor's house? Who went?"

"Dr. Anthony and Miss Betty and me. They asked me. She hadn't ever seen it, and he wanted to show it to her."

Diana felt her heart stand still.

"Did you go—into every room, Delia?"

"Yes."

So he had taken little Betty there. They had entered that room to which, that very morning, she had carried white lilacs, moved by some impulse to call it her own until some one else should have the right to claim it.

"I'll look up Peter," she told Delia, hastily. "You needn't wait for me."

The town clock struck half-past eleven as she went through the garden—wraith-like in her long white wrap.

"Peter," she called softly, "Peter, Peter."

Following the path over the rocks, she came at last to the empty house.

A faint mew sounded from within. She turned the knob, and found the door unlocked. "Peter," she called again, and the big cat came forth, his tail waving like a plume.

Diana, facing the darkness of the great hall, felt

impelled to enter, to slip silently up the stairs, to stand on the threshold of the moonlighted chamber, whence came the perfume of white lilacs.

And as she stood there, she saw, with a sudden leap of the heart, that Anthony was before her. Silhouetted against the wide space of the open window he was looking out at the flashing light.

She put her hand to her throat. She stepped back as if to escape. Then, swayed by an impulse which cast prudence to the winds, she spoke his name.

"Anthony!"

"Diana!"

He had turned from the window, and was peering through the dimness. He came toward her. She held out her hands to keep him back.

"Oh, please—no—no——"

But he took her in his arms.

When he let her go his face was white.

"There is no excuse for me," he said. "I know that. I've given my word of honor to that little child—who trusts me. Yet—this room belongs to you. Before you came to-night I touched the lilacs with my lips, and it seemed to me as if they were your lips—that I touched. And when I turned and saw you—white—like a bride—on the threshold—it was as I had seen you, night after night—in my dreams. You belong here and no other, Diana!"

What she said in reply Diana could never remember with any great distinctness. She only knew that she was trying to hold on as best she could to the best

that was within her. Anthony in this moment of weakness was hers. Whatever she did now would bring him to her or send him away—perhaps forever. She struggled to think clearly—to raise some barrier between his awakened passion and her own wild desire to take what the gods had placed within easy reach of her hand.

Suddenly she found herself speaking. Her throat was dry and she was shaking from head to foot. But she was telling him that she had tried to use common sense. That she had asked Bettina to come to her hoping that there might be found some way out. But there *wasn't* any way out, not any honorable way. And she didn't dare play Fate any longer. Not after to-night. Not after—*to-night*.

Her voice broke.

"Diana—dear girl——"

He put both of his strong hands on her shoulders, and so they faced each other in the illumined night.

"For just one little moment," he said, "we will have the truth. If I had not asked Betty you would have married me, Diana?"

"Yes."

"If there is any honorable way in which I can release myself, will you marry me now?"

She had a sudden vision of the slender, lonely child in shabby black as she had first seen her in the shadowy room.

"No, oh, *no*," she whispered.

"Why not?"

"Because there isn't any honorable way; because I should feel little and mean; because it would make me think less—of you, Anthony."

Her eyes met his steadily. She was as pale as the spectral lilacs, whose perfume floated about them. But her nervous fears were gone. She knew now that they would triumph—she and Anthony—that they were not to leave the heights.

When at last he spoke, it was in a moved voice. "If you were less than you are I should not love you so much. You know that, Diana?"

"Yes, I know——"

"In the years to come, what you have been to me will be my light—in the darkness——"

Unable to speak, she held out her hands to him. He took them, and bent his head.

With a little murmured cry she released herself, and flitted away into the engulfing darkness. The echoes of her swift descent came whispering up the stairs; in the distance a door was shut. The emptiness of the unfinished house seemed symbolic of the future which stretched before him.

CHAPTER IX

THE GOLDEN AGE

Justin Ford had not been unsuccessful with women. Many of them had liked him, and might have loved him if he had cared to make them, but until he met Bettina Dolce he had not cared.

There was about Bettina, however, a certain remoteness which puzzled him. She responded to his advances with girlish gayety, but her cool sweet glance held no hint of self-consciousness, and beyond a certain point of light flirtation he had, as yet, dared not go.

He pondered these things one morning as he worked on his delicate machine in the great shed with its wide opening toward the water.

Why had little Bettina erected a barrier? She knew nothing of the arts of sophisticated coquetry, so he absolved her from any intention to rouse his interest. Was she unawakened? Was there another man?

He laid down his pipe to think out that last startling proposition. There had been no men in her secluded life.

Except Anthony Blake! Gracious Peter, could it be Anthony? There came to Justin, suddenly, a vision of Bettina in the shadowy room. Of her childish dependence upon the doctor, of her little claims of intimacy, her evident preference for the older man's society, her vehement denial the night of the dinner that there could be anything but friendship between Anthony and Diana.

Putting, thus, two and two together, he decided that Bettina believed herself in love with Anthony. Yes, that was it—and Anthony—well, for Anthony there was just Diana!

There you had it, and the only way to save Bettina and, incidentally, himself from heartbreak was to take things into his own hands, and play Prince to this exquisite Cinderella.

Unconsciously his mind assumed a sort of King Cophetua attitude toward the charming Beggar Maid. He found himself humming:

"In robe and crown the king stept down,
To meet and greet her on her way——"

Justin knocked the ashes out of his pipe and put it in his pocket. There was no time like the present, and he at once went toward Diana's, "clothed all in leather," like the old man in the nursery rhyme.

He found Bettina in the garden. She wore a strong little suit of blue serge with a crimson silk scarf knotted under her sailor collar. On her fair head was a shady hat. She stood by the stone wall looking expectantly down the road. But it was not Justin whom she expected, although she smiled at him, and gave him her hand.

"Did you meet Miss Matthews?" she inquired.

"Miss Matthews?"

"You know. You met her the first time you saw me."

"I can only remember that time that I met—you."

She laughed. "How nicely you say it."

"But you do not take me seriously."

"Does anybody take you seriously?"

"Kind people do."

"And I'm not kind?"

"Not to me—you just give me remnants and fragments of your time. I have hardly seen you for three days."

"Nobody has seen me," she informed him. "I've been doing all sorts of stunts in the shops. I was in town

yesterday with Mrs. Martens, and you should see my hats——"

"I'd rather see your hair. Do you know how lovely it is with the sunshine on it——"

"Silly—wait till you see my dream of a picture hat—with yellow roses—to be worn with a shadow lace robe over a primrose slip."

"White and gold—Sophie was foxy to choose that," he said.

"Foxy—why?"

"Oh, the pinks and blues don't suit you. You need the unusual tints. That amethyst frock you had on the other night fitted in with the twilight, and the old garden and the lilacs; and in the yellow and white you'll be a primrose, flashing in the sun."

"Mrs. Martens has the most wonderful taste," she informed him. "There's a tea-gown of white crape with a little lace wrap—I don't know when I'll wear it, but Mrs. Martens insisted—and a new gown for the yacht club dance to-morrow night,—and you should see my shoes—five pairs of them."

"Such richness!" He smiled into her eager eyes. "Did Diana help you choose?"

"Diana's away—on business in the city. That's why I'm free to do as I please to-day."

"Are you free to do as you please——?" He seized his opportunity. "Then come up to the shed and see my air-ship. We can have a little flight across the harbor."

She shook her head. "Oh, I can't. I have an

engagement with Captain Stubbs and Miss Matthews. We are going fishing in the captain's boat, and have lunch on the rocks later."

Justin looked at her thoughtfully for a moment, then he said, "Three's a crowd. You ought to have four."

"Are you asking—to be invited?"

"Please——"

"But it's Captain Stubbs' party."

"I am perfectly sure that if you'll give me a certificate of good character Captain Stubbs will take me aboard."

She seemed to be summing up the situation. "I'm not sure," she said, at last, "that you'd fit in——"

"Why not?"

"Oh, the captain's old-fashioned, and Miss Matthews is old-fashioned, and I love them both, and so I don't care. But you don't love them."

He flushed. "I see. You're afraid that I'll make them feel uncomfortable. I am sorry you should think that. I'm not quite a cad, you know."

There were sparks in his eyes. He wondered that he should be so angry. But he was desperately angry with this cool little creature who didn't seem to care.

And now she was passing frigid judgment on his blazing words. "Of course you aren't a cad. I didn't say you were. But you aren't like Bobbie Tucker or Dr. Blake. They have always known these people, and they understand them. There are no class distinctions in a town like this, you know——"

"Have I seemed such a prig to you?"

She cocked her head on one side and considered him, "Not since I talked to Mrs. Martens about you. She told me how nice you were in Germany."

In Germany; ye gods! Was he nice only in *Germany*?

He stared at her blankly. He had a feeling that he would like to shake her; that he would like to—kiss her.

In the midst of her conflicting emotions little Miss Matthews arrived, and behind her steamed Captain Stubbs.

Justin, murmuring inarticulately, acknowledged the introduction to the captain, and greeted Miss Matthews.

Miss Matthews was very prim and trim in a white shirt-waist and stiff collar. She had a gray sweater over her arm, and a green veil was tied over her soft felt hat. She carried in her hand a brown Boston bag, the contents of which she explained to Bettina.

"I told the captain I would bring some home-made pickles."

Justin gave immediate attention.

"Miss Matthews," he said, "do you mean to say that you three will eat fish chowder and home-made pickles, and that I shan't be there?"

The little captain, in a glow of hospitality, said heartily, "Now, look here; can't you come with us?"

Justin showed his white teeth in a flashing smile. "It's an invitation that I've been fishing for all the

morning, but Miss Dolce won't ask me."

"Don't you want him?" the little captain demanded of Bettina.

"Of course," in the tone of one to whom it didn't really matter. "Perhaps he can help you with the boat, captain."

Justin, carrying Miss Matthews' bag, helping the captain over with the supplies, lifting Bettina over the side of the boat with strong arms which yearned to show their strength, was in a mental attitude far removed from his King Cophetua mood of the earlier morning. He was at this moment a slave chained to Bettina's chariot wheel. And the strange part of it was that he gloried in his chains! He realized that he was going out with her on a forced invitation, but he was going! And the sea was like sapphire, and the sun shone!

Little Miss Matthews, looking back afterward on that glorified fishing trip, was forced to confess that Justin left nothing undone for her which could be done. Never in her life had she been deferred to by such a charming youth, never had her little budget of small talk received such respectful consideration, never had she been waited on, hand and foot, by such a cavalier!

Rarely did Justin's eyes stray to where Bettina sat beside the captain, chatting to him in her confiding voice, making his old heart happy by her interest in his sea-seasoned reminiscences.

It was really a most altruistic performance. One might have imagined that for Justin there was just one woman in the world—Miss Matthews; and for

Bettina, just one man—Captain Stubbs. Yet, as the little boat rounded the lighthouse point and came into the rougher waters outside, young hearts were thrilling to the sound of young voices, and the music of the spheres was being played to the accompaniment of beating waves.

When at last they anchored, the fishing was really incidental. To be sure it was exciting, and they had an excellent catch, but Bettina's hat was off and Justin could see her hair. And Justin, standing up in the bow of the boat with his line outflung, was, in Bettina's eyes, more than ever like a young Olympian god.

It was the same at lunch time. They landed on a crescent-shaped strip of beach, backed by rocky walls, where there was plenty of driftwood for their fire. There the captain gave his mind to the making of chowder, and Miss Matthews rendered expert service in the cutting up of onions and potatoes, and in the frying of salt pork.

Justin opened the pickle bottle and did other prosaic and ungodlike acts, and Bettina laid the table on the sands like a real girl instead of a transported nymph, yet each saw the other through a golden haze which magnified the most trivial act and made it important.

Thus, when Bettina set four blue bowls at exact geometric distances on the cloth, Justin thought not of the bowls, but of Bettina's slim white hands; and likewise Justin, gathering driftwood, commended himself to Bettina not for his industry, but for his swinging walk and square shoulders.

For several days Bettina had been heavy-hearted. She had not seen Anthony. He had called her up over the

telephone, and had made his excuses; there was the little girl with the appendicitis and the old man with the pneumonia—how Bettina hated the repetition. He would come and see her as soon as possible, he promised, but he had not come.

Diana, too, had not been like herself. On the morning after Bettina's visit to Anthony's house she had not appeared until luncheon. She had looked like a ghost, and had been very busy all the afternoon. She had hinted at affairs which would take her to town for a time, and finally she had gone away. Even Mrs. Martens had seemed disturbed and restless. Hence Bettina had welcomed the invitation from Captain Stubbs. Justin's high spirits, his evident delight in her society, his anger at her rebuffs—these things soothed and flattered her. Above all there was the charm of his glorious youth. She found herself swayed to his mood. Might she not for one little fleeting moment dance to the tune that he piped?

Letting herself go, therefore, she was at luncheon bewildering in her beauty. Justin's mocking eyes grew tender as he watched her. Here was no pretty Beggar Maid for masculine condescension, but rather a little goddess to be put on a pedestal and worshiped.

Captain Stubbs and Miss Matthews, unconscious of the forces which were charging the air about them, ate their chowder and took their enjoyment placidly.

"A fish chowder," said the little captain, "never tastes so good in the house as it does out-of-doors, with the cod fresh caught, and with the smell of the sea for sauce."

Bettina passed her bowl for more.

"It is delicious," she said; "everything is—lovely."

"Isn't it?" said Justin. "There never was such a feast—there never was such a day——!"

Yet there had been many such days; there had been many such feasts. But not for them! It was the golden age of their existence. The moment of youth and joy, unmarred by disillusion.

CHAPTER X

STORM SIGNALS

The wind, rising, blew Miss Matthews' green veil into a long thin wisp which flapped toward the northwest.

The captain, noticing it, glanced over his shoulder.

"We'll have a storm before we know it," he said. "It's dark enough over there in the south——"

Above the horizon rose the clouds, black with wind; the waves began to murmur and run in, in long lines of white.

"There'll be no getting back now," said the captain.

Justin's eyes searched the land for shelter. Beyond the rocky wall was a hillside of hemlock, which formed part of the estate of a magnate from the West. Beyond the trees was a great house, shut up

now, and in the hands of a caretaker. Nothing else seemed to offer refuge from the storm.

"What do you think, captain?" he asked. "Had we better try to make the house?"

"I've got my oilskins," the captain said. "I'll stay here, but perhaps you folks had better run in."

Miss Matthews protested. "I've lived too long on this coast to mind a storm. I'll wrap up in my rubber coat and let it rain. But we'd better get that child in somewhere; she's scared of storms."

"Are you?" Justin asked Bettina.

"If there's going to be wind," she said, "I'm awfully afraid."

"Then we'll run for it," he told her; "up the hill to the house."

As he helped her climb the rocks, they took a last glance back at the stolid pair who didn't mind storms. Captain Stubbs in brilliantly yellow new oilskins and Miss Matthews in a sad-colored waterproof coat sat side by side with their backs against the beached boat.

"Perhaps we should have stayed with them," said Bettina, doubtfully, as Justin drew her up to his level.

But Justin had no doubts. Ahead of them was the dimness of the hemlock forest; the solitude of the storm. He coveted the brief moments when they might be alone together.

"Come," he urged, and they entered upon the darkness of the wood.

As they sped along over the cushioned earth, Justin helped her strongly, half lifting her at times over the rough places.

"Are you afraid?" he asked her, and she shook her head.

With a roar and a rush the storm was upon them. For a few moments they were in the midst of chaos. The air was full of flying things, and the branches crashed and fell.

To Bettina, emotionally tense, the real world had disappeared. She was a disembodied spirit, floating through infinite space with another spirit as joyous, as exalted, as triumphant as her own.

When he asked her again, "Are you afraid?" and she again shook her head, it came to her, suddenly, that she was not afraid because she was with him. She felt no wonder that it was so. In this wild world there was no place for wonder. She and Justin were laughing madly as they raced. Her hair, loosed by the wind, streamed out behind her. Once it caught on a button of Justin's coat, and held her so close to him that, when he unwound it, she felt the quickened beating of his heart.

As they again sped on, she felt as if never before had she been alive in such a radiant wonderful sense.

"Are you afraid?" he asked for the third time, bending down to catch her answer.

"It's glorious," she panted. Then as the rain came, he shielded her with his arm, and shouted:

"We'll have to make a dash through the open; here's the house ahead!"

The great house was closed and deserted, but they found a cloistered porch from which they could look out on the storm.

Below them the trees were whipped and bent by the gale. Against the horizon the sea rose like a great gray wall. Straining their eyes, they could catch a glimmer of the captain's yellow coat on the strip of sand.

"The worst of the wind is over," said Justin; "we were lucky to escape the heavy rain."

Bettina, who was braiding her hair, looked up at him. "Wasn't it wonderful down there in the wood?"

"Did you think it wonderful?"

Something in his eyes made her say, hastily "I've never been out in a storm before."

He did not reply at once. He was watching her slender fingers twist the shining strands.

"Let me do that for you," he said, suddenly.

"No, oh, no——"

"Why not?"

"Because." She walked away from him, and seated herself on a marble bench under one of the closed windows.

He sat down beside her. "I didn't mean that impertinently; truly I did not. I used to braid my little sister's hair. She was lame and I took care of her, and, as I watched you, I thought of—my little sister."

"Tell me about her."

"There isn't much to tell, except that when I was a great hulking youngster, with only her to love—she died——"

"Oh,—I'm so sorry——"

He went on slowly, still watching her busy fingers "Since then I have never had a friend. Not the kind she was. Why, she used to love to listen to my boy's talk—of how I was going to be great, of how I was going to conquer the world,—and she has been dead ten years—and I have done nothing."

It was a new Justin who spoke in this fashion. To Bettina he had always seemed as light as air, and she had enjoyed his frivolity, but now she felt something more than enjoyment,—a yearning to be of use to this big boy who was all alone, and who missed his little sister.

Surely to be his friend need not interfere in any way with Anthony's claims. She loved Anthony and was going to marry him, of course. But friendship and love were different things. Why, Mrs. Martens was married, and she had been Justin's friend in Germany.

She spoke her thought. "But Mrs. Martens?"

"She was a dear—but she is older than I—and I stood a bit in awe of her—she sympathized with me—but she could not dream with me, and I wanted some one to share my dreams."

Bettina's blue eyes were wistful. What a wonderful thing it would be to share somebody's dreams. She was perfectly sure that she did not share Anthony's. He had never told her of his dreams. Perhaps he didn't have any. His life was so practical and full of

work, and then he was old—oh, yes, indeed, he was older than Mrs. Martens—and Justin had said that Sophie was too old to understand.

She found herself asking, "What were your dreams?"

"Shan't I bore you?"

"No—please——"

"Well, there was one dream which my little sister and I used to discuss as I braided her hair at night. It was a dream that some day I should be great. She had a different idea of greatness from mine, and we used to argue the question. I don't think she ever wanted me to be President of the United States or to hold high office; she wanted me to do something which would help humanity. She used to wish that I might preach or teach; she was such a good little thing. And I would tell her that none of these vocations were for me; I must win fame in a different way. I wanted to invent something which would make the world stare. Perhaps that's the reason I took up aviation after she died. I thought I might make some great advance on the inventions of other men. But the other men made them first, you see, and I've just frivoled and played. Yet, as I saw you braiding your hair, it brought back my little sister so vividly, and I wondered what she would think of me—now."

For the first time in her life her heart was stirred by the maternal tenderness which is the heritage of good women. Her timid hand touched his sleeve, lightly.

"I am sure," said her little voice, unsteadily, "that if she knew you now, she would think you were—very nice."

"You darling," he was saying in his heart, but he dared not say it with his lips. And he went on as calmly as he could.

"I wish I could make you see my little sister as I knew her. She was such a pale little thing, with pale gold hair, and a little narrow face, and pale blue eyes. When I began to read Tennyson, I found my little sister again in 'Elaine'—and do you know, I was half glad she didn't live to grow up. Some man might have hurt her as Lancelot hurt Elaine. I know I haven't realized her dreams for me—but I've tried to hold on a bit to her ideal of goodness, and it has kept me from things which might have made me less of a man——"

She was thrilled as she had never been. Justin began to loom up in her mind's eye as the Knight of the Tender Heart—that was what Sophie had called him. And how wonderful that he should be telling her all this!

"Then," he continued, "the money came to me, and since then I've been a butterfly. I have not made good use of my wealth. I have needed a friend, you see, to help me make my dreams come true."

He looked down at her. "Would you?" he asked.

"Be your friend?"

"Yes."

"Oh, but I'm not good enough. I've always been a little selfish thing, except with mother. I loved her and I wasn't selfish with her. But I've wanted a good time, and I haven't cared for anything but my own pleasure. I'm not like your little sister, you see. I'm just a butterfly, too."

"Oh, you—you're an angel," ardently.

Again she was thrilled. Anthony had never said such things to her. Anthony had called her a child, and he had not needed her. And Justin wanted her friendship! All her awakened womanhood rose to meet his demand.

So intent was she on her thought that she did not feel the cold. But her lips were blue, and she shivered as the wind swept around the corner.

Justin jumped at once to his feet.

"I'm a brute to keep you here. There must be some one around the place who can take us in."

He left her, to come back presently with the news that there was a man down at the stables, and that there was a fire in the harness room. He brought a rain coat, and wrapped her in it, scolding himself all along the way for his neglect of her comfort.

The stables of the Western magnate were vast and wonderful. They had been divorced somewhat from their original use as a place for horses, two-thirds of the space being given up to motor cars and electrics. But the riding horses were in their stalls, and, as Bettina entered, their heads went up.

She stopped to pet them, then the groom led the way to the harness room.

It was a picturesque place, with its lacquered leather, its shining brass, its racing trophies, blue ribbons, gold-handled whips and crops, silver cups and medals.

"I'll telephone for my car," Justin said, "and send a boy down to Captain Stubbs and Miss Matthews.

They'll probably go back in the boat, now that the storm is over."

With the message sent, and the smiling groom, pleased with Justin's generous tip, dismissed, the two were again alone.

"This is better," said Justin, as they settled themselves in front of the fire. "Now you'll get some color in your cheeks."

With her chin on her hand, she said slowly, "Do you know that nobody ever asked me to be his friend before?"

"That's luck for me. There'll be no one else to share ____"

She glanced up at him with enchanting shyness. "The trouble with most men is, I imagine, that they don't want friendship—they want love, and that isn't easy for a woman to give, is it?"

Silence, then at last, uncertainly, "I suppose not."

"Any man can fall in love with a woman," she informed him, "but it seems to me that it must take certain kinds of men and women to be friends. That's why it seems so wonderful. Why, even if I married some one else, I could still be your friend, couldn't I?"

"Ye-es. Oh, yes, of course."

"Perhaps that's what I've missed all my life—the chance to really inspire some one. You know it's nice to feel that you're helping. And some men are so self-sufficient, so secure. You wouldn't feel that you'd dare to suggest. You'd only be a child to them—and while it might be nice to marry a man like that, it

would be nice, too, to have the other kind for a friend."

Of all the bewildering little creatures! If she married some other man, forsooth! He set his teeth. Well, she *shouldn't* marry any other man.

"Look here," he asked, suddenly, "have you ever been in love?"

She nodded, all rosy color and drooped lashes. The unexpectedness of her answer made him hesitate, but finally he ventured, "How did it feel?"

She considered gravely. "Why, it's comfortable to know that you'll always have some one to take care of you, some one who's tender and good—too good, perhaps——"

Justin was perplexed. She had spoken in the present tense. Was it possible that her fancy was really held by Anthony? Had their wild race in the storm meant nothing to her? To him it had seemed a sort of spiritual mating, with the storm crashing out a brilliant bridal chorus.

He leaned forward. "What you're talking of isn't love," he said, almost roughly. "Love doesn't mean being comfortable; it doesn't mean being petted and coddled like a pussy cat, or being looked after like a child. It means what it meant to Romeo when he killed himself for love of Juliet. It means what it meant to Orpheus when he followed Eurydice to the underworld. It means what it will mean to me when I have found the one woman—that I'll work for her, live for her, die for her, and count the future blank if she does not love me in return."

"How wonderful!" she whispered after a moment

"How wonderful—to be loved—like that——"

His heart leaped. Some day he would make it wonderful! But not now. It was too soon to say the things he had to say.

"The most wonderful thing right now," he said, "is that you are going to be—my friend."

She responded radiantly. "It will be lovely to have a —big brother."

"It will be lovelier to have—a little sister."

He held out his hand to her, and she took it, laughing lightly. And just then the smiling groom came to say that the gentleman's car was at the door.

The rain had stopped, but storm signals still showed in the south where the heavy clouds hung over the horizon. Overhead the sun shone, making kaleidoscope effects of the spring flowers in the checkered beds. Against the gray wall of the terraced garden the peach trees had been trained in foreign fashion and were full of rosy bloom.

Bettina, coming out of the darkened stable, opened her eyes wide.

"What a different world it seems," she said, "from the one we left in the storm."

Justin helped her into the car. "We'll reach home before the next storm breaks," he remarked, as he took his seat beside her, "but there's trouble ahead."

To him the words held no sinister meaning, nor to Bettina. In their hearts was no fear of the future, nor of the storms which might some day wreck their happiness.

CHAPTER XI

THE WHITE MAIDEN

Bettina, lonely in her tower, had often looked across enviously to the brilliantly lighted yacht club on the nights of the weekly dances.

And now she was going to a yacht club dance with Justin in attendance, and with Sophie for chaperon; with Sara and Doris and Sara's brother Duke to be added to the party when they reached the club-house pier.

The question of Bettina's gown had been a puzzling one. Sophie had brought out everything of her own, and Diana, white-faced after a sleepless night, had tried to put her mind on the matter.

"These are all too elaborate," she said; "she is such a child. Perhaps it will be best for her to get some new things now, and if you will help her choose them, it will be a great favor to me, Sophie."

Sophie came over and kissed her. "Poor dear," she murmured.

Diana leaned back against her friend. "Don't," she said in a stifled voice. "I can't bear it."

They clung together for a moment, then Diana went on steadily, "I am going to town for a few days, Sophie—I *must* get away for a bit, and if you don't mind, you can take Bettina in while I am gone and get her things. She insists that they shall not be gifts from me. She says that she's already under great obligations—and that her own little bank account is sufficient for her needs. Then, too, she can use all of

her new things in her trousseau, and it does seem rather sensible, doesn't it?"

Diana had said nothing to Sophie of the meeting with Anthony in the empty house. It was an experience too sacred for discussion. But Sophie had guessed much. Anthony's continued absence, Diana's restlessness, her haggard eyes, her insistent tenderness and care of Bettina, showed the sympathetic and anxious friend that something unusual had occurred, and that Diana was fighting a tremendous battle alone.

"Just let things run on here," Diana said, "as they always do. You can take my place as Bettina's chaperon, and Delia will take care of the house. I shan't be missed, and I can—get a perspective on the situation."

Sophie protested. "It's too great a strain on you—you'd better send Bettina away—she and I could have a little trip somewhere."

"No, it is I who must go," Diana insisted. "Bettina must get acquainted with Anthony's friends. If he is going to marry her, he must be proud of her. You know that, Sophie," sharply, "it won't do for him to take a girl as the mistress of his home whom nobody ever heard of, and who could be criticized."

Sophie rubbed her fingers lightly across Diana's forehead. "You think only of Anthony—do you never think of yourself?"

Diana stood up. "It's because I think of how foolish I have been," she said, "that I can get no rest. I should never have come back to America, Sophie."

"But, dearest-dear, how could you know?"

"I couldn't know. But, oh, I wish that I had never come."

Thus it happened that Sophie and Bettina had gone into town, and the primrose gown and the little serge suit and the new hats and the five pairs of shoes, together with a wonderful creation for the yacht club dance, had been sent out, and tried on, and pronounced perfect.

Sophie's taste had supplemented Bettina's meager funds. From her own store of exquisite laces and brocades, of buckles and bows, she had added finishing touches to frocks which might otherwise have been commonplace.

When, therefore, on the day after her adventure with Justin Bettina took off her wrap in the cloak room of the yacht club, Sara Duffield drew a sharp breath of amazement.

"Will you look at that gown, Doris?" she said to her placid friend. "Would any one but an artist have dared to put on that side sash of rose-colored tulle with the silver tassel, and the wide collar of silver lace?"

Justin Ford, knowing nothing of dressmakers, was none the less aware of the inspired creation.

"And I said yesterday that you could not wear pink! But this isn't pink, is it? It's a rosy cloud on a May morning."

"Do you really like it?" demanded Bettina.

"I love—it."

Bettina laughed light-heartedly. It was great fun to have such a friendly understanding with this very

charming young man. She wondered how she had quite—dared. Things seemed so different under this blaze of light. Had she really promised to be a "little sister" to this most distinguished gentleman?

They had come over in Bobbie's motor boat, and just before they reached the club-house pier, Justin had said, "The first dance is mine, you know. I'd like the second and the third, but I suppose that is forbidden. But you must give me all you can. I feel that I have special brotherly privileges."

She danced exquisitely, her little satin-shod feet slipping silently through all the difficult twists and turns of the syncopated modern dances. Justin, guiding her expertly, knew that many glances were being leveled at them, knew that questions were being asked, that Bettina was being weighed in the social balance by the men and women who could make her success secure.

When he gave her over, presently, to another partner he became aware of undercurrents. The girl with whom he danced shrugged her shoulders when he spoke with enthusiasm of Bettina's beauty.

"Sara was telling me," she said, "that she used to live in the old Lane mansion, and that Diana Gregory has taken her up."

"Sara?"

Justin looked across the room to where Sara was dancing with Bobbie. And he made up his mind that before the evening was ended he should have something to say to the haughty little lady in blue.

His opportunity came, presently, when he claimed Sara for a Spanish variation of the ever-popular

Boston, in which his step particularly suited hers.

"Look here," he remarked, as they swayed to the music, "it's up to us, Sara, to see that Bettina makes a hit."

Sara, tilting her chin, demanded, "Why?"

"Because she is Diana Gregory's friend, and Diana's anxious to have people like her."

"Why?"

He gazed down at the irritating profile.

"You know why," he said with great distinctness. "Diana Gregory has a big heart, and this child has had a hard time. Diana wants to make her happy ——"

"But *why* is Diana so interested, Justin? There are plenty of lonely and unhappy girls. So why should Diana especially pick out Bettina? She's years younger than Diana, and they really haven't much in common."

"She's very sweet——" Justin was quite unaware of the intense fervor of his tones.

Sara's eyes narrowed to little flashing points, as she asked, "Are you in love with her?"

Their eyes met. "Oh, Sara, Sara," he teased, "do you expect me to wear my heart upon my sleeve?"

"I expect you to keep it from wandering toward the daughter of an Italian singer," she said, sharply. "I always fancied that you had rather decided ideas about family, Justin."

"If you mean that I'm proud of my Knickerbocker

ancestry, I am," he told her; "just as you are proud of your Pilgrim forefathers. But Bettina Dolce's blood is bluer than any that ran in the veins of our middle-class English and Dutch grandsires. Her father was a Venetian, and Bettina has the beauty of those lovely ladies of old Italy."

Sara's beauty was of an essentially modern type. "I don't see," she said, somewhat resentfully, "why I should be expected to fight the social battles of a girl who is really nothing to me."

"Surely not," easily, "but I rather fancy that any one who snubs Bettina will have to reckon with Diana—and with me——"

Sara's lashes hid her sharp little eyes. She was thinking rapidly. She did not care to offend Diana—but more, oh, much more than that, she did not care to offend Justin.

She capitulated pensively. "Why, Justin, I don't know why you are calling me to account in this way. I'm sure I'm perfectly willing to help things along."

"Good," was his delighted comment, and after that he danced with a heart as light as his heels.

When the music stopped, Duke Duffield made his way toward them. "Oh, look here," he said to his sister; "why didn't you present me sooner to Miss Dolce? Gee, Sara, she's some dream—and her dance card was filled before I could get to it."

Justin smiled at this slangy confirmation of his own opinion. He drifted presently through the room, looking for Bettina, and just as the music began again its rhythmical beat he saw her.

Far at the other end of the room she was dancing with Anthony Blake!

Bettina had never been so happy. Anthony's coming had pleased her. He had half promised that he might come, but there had been, as always, the possibility in the background that he would be kept away by some inconsiderate patient. But now he was here, and she was to have her next dance with Justin. Could anything be lovelier than to spend her evening thus between lover and friend, having Anthony's strength and kindliness to make her feel secure, and Justin's glowing youth to match her own.

She decided that when she and Anthony were alone she would tell him about the race in the storm, and about her friendly compact with Justin. She was never going to keep anything from Anthony. Why, he was the best man in the whole wide world—the very best.

She looked up at him with her eyes like stars and he, meeting that radiant glance, asked, "Are you happy, child?"

She blushed and nodded. "Very, very happy!"

And after that she danced in dreamy silence until Justin came for her.

At supper, Anthony claimed Bettina as a matter of course, leaving Mrs. Martens to Justin. The four of them, with Bobbie and Doris and Sara and her brother ate at a little table on the club-house porch. In the pale light of the lanterns Bettina's beauty was more than ever ethereal.

Justin, watching her with puzzled eyes, took note of her dependence upon Anthony, of her confiding

manner, of her undoubted interest in him. Now and then she flashed a glance at Justin, and he was forced to content himself with such occasional crumbs from the queen's table.

But he grew restless and uneasy. Anthony easily dominated the little group. It was in such moments that he was at his best. His brilliant wit, his forceful personality, had never been displayed to better advantage.

Justin, beside him, felt young and crude. He told himself that he had nothing to fear. Everybody knew that Anthony cared only for Diana. Yet, even as he comforted himself, he saw Bettina's look of triumphant pride as Anthony brought a clever story to its climax, and his heart raged in impotent jealousy.

They all went back together in Bobbie's motor boat, and in the darkness Justin managed to say to Bettina, "So you've deserted me."

"Oh, no," she protested, "but you see I couldn't desert —Anthony."

"Has he, then, the first claim?" his voice shook as his dull resentment flamed.

She hesitated. "He—has been so kind—and he's a sort of guardian—you know——"

She dared not tell him more than that, for had she not promised Diana that she would not? Her nature was so crystal clear that she would have been glad to set things straight, to tell him that she was going to marry Anthony, but that she would always be his friend. It was such a perfect arrangement; he would surely understand.

She sighed a little, wishing that she had nothing to hide. And with her sigh his moodiness vanished.

"If it's because he's your guardian, all right—but I'm not going to give you up always so easily."

"Why must you give me up at all?" she challenged.

"Why?" he echoed. "There is no 'why.' I shall never give you up."

At Diana's door she said "Good-bye." "It has been the loveliest evening of my life," she told him. "I shall never forget."

Anthony came in, ostensibly to telephone, but really to have a moment alone with Bettina. Sophie, with sympathetic insight, made the excuse of a letter, which Anthony could mail, and withdrew to write it.

In the dimly-lighted music room, Anthony said, "You must forgive me, dear child, for seeming to neglect you, but I've been such a busy man."

"I know." She looked up at him. "But it seems nice to have you now."

"And it seems nice to have you."

He smiled at her, but he did not touch her. Somehow since that night in the empty house with Diana he had felt that there were things which must come slowly. If he was to play the lover to little Betty, it must be when he could shut out from his heart the image of that pale tall woman in the lilac-scented room.

But Bettina missed nothing from his manner. She felt for him a grateful affection, an unbounded respect, but her wish for impulsive demonstration was gone.

She was content to be near him, to know that he cared for her—beyond that she had no conscious desires.

Still smiling at her, he took from his pocket a little box. "I haven't been too busy to remember that I wanted to give you this," he said, and handed it to her.

Set in a slender ring were three great diamonds, and for a guard there was a little circlet of sapphires.

"Perhaps you won't care to wear it now," he said, as she gave a gasp of delight, "but I wanted you to have it. I wanted it to be the sign and seal of the bond which is between us."

She came to him, then all gratitude and clinging sweetness, and put up her face to be kissed.

He touched his lips to her forehead. And he said he was glad that he had made her happy. But he did not tell her that he had forced himself to plight thus, tangibly, his troth to her that there might be no escape from the path of honor which he must follow.

Little Bettina, alone that night in her room, took off the rosy dress and laid it on her bed. Then, enveloped in her long white motor coat, she went out on her porch, and curled up in one of the big chairs. Across the harbor the lights were out at the yacht club. Between the Neck and the main shore little starlike points showed where the lanterns were swung on the sleeping boats. It was long after midnight, and the cold morning mists were already coming in.

But she could not sleep. She had so many wonderful things to think of. A few weeks ago she had been a

little lonely child with no one who cared whether she lived or died—now she was rich in love and friendship.

She turned the ring on her finger. How strange it seemed to think that in a few short months she would be—married. That she would belong to Anthony until death should part them.

Her breath came quickly. She stood up, slim and white in her long coat. Then suddenly she slipped to her knees.

"Oh, please, please," she prayed, with her face upturned to the waning stars, "make me worthy of his love. Make me worthy to be his wife."

CHAPTER XII

YOUTH AND BEAUTY

It was two days after the dance at the yacht club that Diana came home. She arrived late and unexpectedly. Bettina had gone to bed, and the only light which burned to welcome her was Sophie's, on the third floor.

Diana paid her cabman, and set her key in the lock, to be welcomed by Peter Pan's purring note as she opened the door.

She stooped and picked up the big cat. "Dear Peter," she whispered.

Peter, held against her heart, sang his little song of content, and, standing for a moment in the darkness, Diana fought for self-control before she went up to Sophie's room.

Mrs. Martens, wrapped in her gray kimono, was writing letters. She looked up with a glad cry as Diana entered.

"Why, Diana," she said, "you darling!"

"I didn't telegraph," Diana said, as she kissed her friend, "for there wasn't any use. I had my key, and I knew I could get a cab——"

"You're tired, dearest-dear." Sophie's worried eyes noted the weariness of gesture and tone, and the shadows under Diana's eyes as she untied her veil and took off her hat.

"Yes, I'm tired, dead tired." Diana dropped into a chair, and laid her head against the cushioned back.

Sophie bent over her. "You're not comfortable," she said; "come on down to your room and take a hot bath, and I'll heat a cup of milk, and then you can rest all warm and comfy, and I'll rub your head."

"Sophie," said Diana, suddenly, "I wonder if I ever rubbed anybody's head?"

"Of course," said Sophie; "what makes you say that?"

"Because I've been thinking a lot since I went to town, and it seems to me that all my life I've just taken and have not given. I took Anthony's love—I've taken your service——" She held out her hand. "Oh, I've been a selfish pig, Sophie, darling."

Sophie took the extended hand and patted it. "What

a silly thing to say," soothingly; "you've always been everything—to me, Diana. You've done so much for me that I can never repay."

"Oh, yes, in giving big things—but it's the little things that count—like heating cups of milk and rubbing people's heads."

She said it whimsically, but there were tears in her eyes.

"You come right down and go to bed," Sophie advised. "And we can talk all about it afterward."

Diana, propped up among her pillows, watched her friend as she flitted like a gray moth about the room, intent on various comforting offices, and when at last Sophie brought to her a steaming cup Diana said, "Do you know, Sophie, I've always thought myself a rather superior person."

"Well, you are," Sophie agreed.

"I'm not. Oh, I've made up my mind about things at last, and I know that it hasn't been Bettina's happiness, nor Anthony's happiness that I have been thinking about, but my own.

"If I had not stayed on after I found out the state of things here," she continued, "Anthony would have learned to care for Betty—every man loves youth and beauty——"

Sophie shook her head. "It takes us women all of our lives to learn that it is not for the red of our lips or the blue of our eyes that we are loved——"

"Oh, but you know it is the beautiful women who draw men——"

"But it is not the beautiful women who hold them. I'll set any demure little soul with a loving heart against all the faultlessly-regular -splendidly-null persons in the world when it comes to keeping the affections of a husband—and what has Bettina that she can give Anthony to take the place of the things which he has loved in you?"

"She has youth."

"How you harp on that string! You have a mind and soul which meets Anthony's. And your beauty equals hers. You must not forget that, Diana."

"I don't forget it. I know what I mean to Anthony. But Bettina will mean other things to him. And who shall say which of us would make the better wife?

"Oh, I've thought these things all out, and I know that I could never be happy, Sophie, if my happiness were founded on the hurt heart of that child. And so —I am going away—and let things go back to where they would have been if I had never come——"

"Do you think they can—ever go back, Diana?"

Diana, remembering Anthony's face in the moonlight, hesitated, then she said, bravely, "I shall not ask myself that question, Sophie. I shall simply do the thing which will seem right to me, and I am sure it is right for me to go away."

"And Bettina?"

"She must stay here with you until she is married. You won't mind, will you? There will be plenty of things to do. You can help with her wedding outfit. And after they are—married, you and I will go back —to Berlin. No, we won't, Sophie. We'll go to the

desert, and down the Nile, and we'll go to Japan, and see Fujiyama; and we'll visit the temples in China, and we'll find out from some of those old Buddhists how they acquire—peace——"

"We will go to the ends of the earth if you wish—but there's only one place that I shall ask you to take me, Diana."

"Where, dear heart?"

"To that quiet spot over there in Germany, where the big cross stands up against the sky——"

"Sophie—of course you shall go there, dear."

Mrs. Martens knelt by the bed. "I've been thinking of my lover, too, while you've been away. We have each lost the man who made the world a wonderful place—henceforth you and I must live among the shadows—but because we have each other, it shall not be quite so hard."

It was a long time before they came back to the question of Diana's departure.

"But what excuse can you give for going now, Diana?"

"My health," said Diana, promptly. "Everybody knows that I first went to Germany for the baths, and I can say what is true,—that the dampness here disagrees with me, with my throat."

"But where will you go?"

"To the mountains; oh, Sophie, I shall lift up my eyes to the hills, and hope for strength——"

Out of the ensuing silence came the sound of a little

tap at the door.

"Is Diana there?" asked Bettina on the other side. "I thought I heard her voice."

As Bettina came in, the radiance of youth shone from within and round about her. She kissed Diana. "Oh, so many things have happened," rapturously, "since you went away. Do you want me to tell you about them?"

"You blessed baby," said Diana, and it seemed to Sophie that in her voice was a note of sincere affection.

Bettina curled herself up on the foot of Diana's bed. "Well, in the first place," she said, "Anthony gave me a ring—a lovely ring, and a little guard to wear with it."

Diana did not flinch. "And why aren't you wearing your lovely ring," she asked, "for all the world to see?"

"Oh, but you said I mustn't," Bettina told her, "and so I keep it here."

She tugged at a slender chain which hung around her neck, and brought forth from beneath the embroidered thinness of her gown the two rings, which gave out flashing lights as she bent toward Diana.

Diana did not touch them. "They're lovely," she said, steadily; "aren't they, Sophie?"

"I'm glad he didn't give me pearls," Bettina went on, as Mrs. Martens exclaimed at their beauty, "because pearls mean tears."

"I've always worn pearls," said Diana.

"Oh, but not as love gifts," said Bettina, quickly. "It's only when your lover gives you a pearl that you weep—my mother's gift from my father was a great pearl—and when—he went away—she dropped it—into the sea.

"And I didn't blame her." Bettina was swinging her own rings back and forth, and they gave out a silvery tinkle like a chime of fairy bells. "I didn't blame her, although the pearl was worth a great deal of money and we were poor. I shouldn't want a ring after a man had ceased to love me, would you?"

"Of course not," said Diana, "and now—tell me, what were the other nice things which happened while I was away?"

"Oh," Bettina laughed, "I went fishing with Captain Stubbs and Miss Matthews, and Justin——"

"Justin?"

"Yes. Justin Ford. He invited himself. I told Mrs. Martens when I came home that I tried not to have him go, but he would, and it stormed—— Oh, well, we had a lovely time."

Somehow she had found it hard to tell Mrs. Martens, as she was finding it hard to tell Diana, just what had made the day so lovely. And as for her compact of friendship, she would tell Anthony but no other.

"Then there was the yacht club dance," she continued, "and oh, Diana, you should have seen my gown—it was a dream."

Sophie confirmed her verdict. "She was lovely in it, Diana," she said, "and everybody is talking of the

success she made."

"And Anthony came," said Bettina, "and when we reached home he gave me the ring, and yesterday I had a long ride with him; oh, yes, and the day before, Justin and Sara and Doris and I had lunch on Bobbie's boat."

"I thought Bobbie's boat was in the yard for repairs?"

"It is," said Bettina, "and that's the fun of it. He's living on board, and yesterday he and Justin looked up and saw me on the porch, and they insisted on having a lunch party, and Bobbie made his man get up a perfectly wonderful little lunch, and he telephoned for the other girls, and Duke, and we climbed the ladder and ate up there in the air, and Sophie chaperoned us from your front porch."

"They wanted me to climb the ladder too," said Sophie, "but I told them I would be a little angel up aloft, and play propriety at a safe distance. It's a good thing the yacht yard happens to be at the foot of your rocks, Diana, or I'm afraid Bettina would have gone unchaperoned. It's a dizzy height up that ladder."

"And Bobbie sent things up to her in a basket," Bettina related; "we let down a piece of hammock rope, and we tied the basket to it."

Diana, listening to the light chatter, felt set apart by the tragedy of her own unhappiness. Once she would have enjoyed an escapade like the lunch party; now she was glad that she could go away—and leave it all behind her and perhaps—forget.

"Bobbie is such a funny fellow"—Bettina was still swinging the tinkling rings—"and he's awfully in love

with Doris. And Doris worships him, and it makes Sara furious."

"But, my dear, Sara isn't the least bit in love with Bobbie."

"I know, but she thinks Doris is so silly to let Bobbie see—but that's just what Bobbie adores in her. He likes to be worshiped, and he's positively puffed up with pride like a pouter pigeon because he's going to marry Doris."

"Then it's settled?" Diana asked.

"Yes. It seems he proposed on the night of the yacht club dance, and yesterday at lunch Bobbie announced it, and he blushed and Doris blushed—but really it was awfully sweet, Diana—they are so happy."

"At first I thought Bobbie liked Sara," Bettina stated, later.

"Oh, no." Diana laughed. "It's Justin, you know, with Sara."

The flashing rings tinkled, tinkled. Bettina's eyes were on them.

"Oh, are they—engaged?"

"Oh, no; it's just a friendship, I fancy."

So? Other girls were his friends! Bettina's head went up, and she slipped the rings back in their hiding place.

"They've always known each other," Diana explained. "You see Sara was a sharp-tongued little girl, and Justin could get along with her better than the other

boys because of his easy-going ways. And he gets along with her now, but usually it is a sort of armed truce."

Bettina felt better, but needing further assurance, she ventured, "I suppose he has a sort of brotherly feeling for her."

It was Sophie who answered that question.

"No, he hasn't. Justin adores the memory of his own little sister. She was a dear child and lame. And she was about as like Sara, I imagine, as a white dove is like a peacock. Justin has often told me that when he marries he wants to find a woman to whom he can tell his dreams as he told them to his little sister—it is perhaps because he has failed to find such a woman that he is unmarried."

It seemed to Bettina, suddenly, that all the stars sang! "Oh, it's such a lovely world"—she was all aglow—"and you've made it lovely for me, Diana, by having me here, and doing wonderful things for me."

"I want you to stay for a long time, dear, until you are married. But you'll forgive me if I go away and leave you alone with Sophie for a while?"

"Oh, must you go away again?"

"Yes. I'm not well. This air doesn't agree with—my throat," Diana stammered, not caring to meet the clear eyes.

"Oh, but I'm afraid that I'm terribly in the way," Bettina said distressfully. "You'll want Mrs. Martens to go with you. You mustn't have her stay on my account. I can go back to my rooms with Miss Matthews. Really I can—I shouldn't mind."

"My dear, I should mind very much." Diana reached out her hand to her. "Don't make me unhappy by taking it that way—I want you here."

"But you've done enough for me, putting yourself out in this way——"

"I have done only the things that I wanted to do. And now don't make me unhappy by suggesting that you won't keep poor Sophie company. What would she do without you?"

Bettina looked from one to the other. "Are you very sure you shouldn't go away together, if it weren't for me?"

"Very sure—I should bore her terribly."

They all laughed, and Bettina said, "Of course I know you're doing it all for my sake——"

"And for Anthony," said Diana, softly; "for the sake of my old friend Anthony."

"How wonderful your friendship is," said Bettina, softly. "It makes me believe in all friendship, Diana."

A little later she slid down from the bed. "You're tired and I'm keeping you up. I'll run along."

But Diana held her for a moment.

"Anthony will soon want to be going into the big house—when will you be ready, Bettina?"

"Oh, not yet," said Bettina, breathlessly, "not yet. I'd rather wait. Don't you think it will be best to wait?"

"Why?"

"Oh," her cheeks flamed, "I don't know why—only I

don't want to get married—for a long time, Diana."

Diana looked at her with puzzled eyes. There was some change in the child which she could not fathom. What had happened to little Bettina in the short time since she had been away? She would ask Sophie—she would ask—Anthony.

In the adjoining room the telephone rang. Sophie, going to answer it, came back with the announcement, "It's Anthony. He wanted to know if you had returned. He needs you at the hospital. That little girl with the appendicitis is very much worse. But I told him that you had just reached home, and that you were so tired, and it was so late——"

"Sophie, how could you? Tell him I'll come. Ask him to send his car for me. Bettina, dear, hand me my slippers, and help me with my hair."

Bettina was shivering and white. "Is it the girl Anthony operated on?" she asked.

"Yes. Sophie, I'll wear the white serge. It's the easiest to get into, and my long coat——"

Bettina's shaking voice went on: "Wouldn't it be—dreadful—if anything happened? Wouldn't it be dreadful—if she should die?"

Sophie laid her hand on the girl's shoulder. "Help Diana now, dear," she advised; "we'll talk about it afterward."

CHAPTER XIII

HER LETTER TO ANTHONY

Diana never forgot that ride in the dark to Harbor Light. It was a clear night, with the sea like a sheet of silver under the moon. The big building, which loomed up, at last, before her, seemed, with its yellow-lighted windows, like some monster of giant size, gazing wide-eyed upon the waters.

The gardens, through which she passed, were heavy with the scent of hyacinths; the slight wash of the waves on the beach only emphasized the stillness.

As she drove up to the doorway, two night nurses flitted through the corridor, ghost-like in their white uniforms.

Then came Anthony. His face looked worn and worried.

"We couldn't save her, Diana," he said, tensely.

"Oh, the poor little thing!"

"We made a fight for it. I sent for you because if she roused I wanted you to be there."

"If you had telephoned sooner."

"I could not. The change was very sudden." He flung himself into a chair. "Oh, what is all my skill worth, Diana, when I couldn't save that child?"

She had seen him in such moods before, when he had felt powerless against all the opposing forces of disease and death.

But she did not care that others should see him. It was enough that she should know that this great doctor Anthony had his weaknesses. The rest of the world should not know it.

"Come out into the garden," she coaxed; "the air will do you good."

As they walked up and down the garden paths he gave her more definite details. "She did not know that she was going. There was no reason to trouble her gentle soul with fears. And so, at last, when she drifted off into the silence, she was smiling."

"And I am sure that she was still smiling when on the other side she found Love waiting."

"How wonderfully you put it, Di."

"It is not because I put it that way; it is because it is wonderful. Do you know, Anthony, that has always been my idea of heaven—as a place where Infinite Love waits. If that little child had lived she would have faced a future of loneliness—now she will never be lonely—never sick—never unhappy."

"But she wanted to live."

"But she didn't know life, Anthony—as some of us know it, as a place of unfulfilled dreams——"

They had reached the beach, and the track of the moon spread out before them, ending only at the horizon.

"She followed the path o' the moon," said Diana, softly, "a little white soul in a silver boat. Death is a great adventure, Anthony."

"Sometimes I feel as if I were merely a

longshoreman, who helps to load the boats as they start on that great adventure——"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, we doctors see so much of pain which we cannot ease, so much misery which we cannot prevent. We see the innocent suffering for the guilty —the weak bearing the burdens which belong to the strong—and even if we try our hardest we can't change these things—and the boats still go sailing out to the Unknown——"

"Anthony, I wish I might be sure of one thing——"

"What, dear girl——?"

"That you would never change your present point of view. So many doctors lose faith in human nature because they see only the diseased side, and their vision becomes distorted. And, losing their faith in man, they lose faith in God. The thing which has always made you, in my eyes, a great man as well as a great surgeon has been the fact that you have seemed to understand that you were working with Infinite Love toward the completion of a perfect plan; you have seemed to understand that life is good as long as it is lived wisely and well; that death is good when it ends suffering and sorrow. These things you have seen and known—I want you always to see and know them."

"If any one could make me see and know them it is you, Diana."

They were silent after that, and presently she said that she must go.

Anthony took her home himself in his little car, and

when at last they reached her door he said, gratefully: "What should I do without your friendship? At least I have that, Diana."

She hesitated. "It must be a long distance friendship, Anthony."

"What do you mean?"

"I am going away."

"Oh, why should you? We are self-controlled man and woman, not impulsive boy and girl. We have set our feet on a hard path. Why shouldn't we cheer each other along the way?"

"I'm afraid it wouldn't be fair—to Bettina."

"Why not? My friendship for you need deprive her of nothing."

"I must think it over."

"Don't think. Don't analyze at all. Just stay." A grave smile lighted his face. "I'm not making this as a selfish proposition, Diana. I shan't expect to absorb you, to take you away from other friendships. But I want you to be near me at such times as this; when my world was without a ray of light, you illumined it with your friendly taper."

Diana climbed the steps in an uplifted mood. This, then, was the solution of the difficulty. She had been making high tragedy of the situation when it might be solved sensibly. She remembered a quotation which she had copied in her school note-book: "My friend is one with whom I can associate my choicest thought." Her friendship with Anthony could go on as before. She could be an inspirational force in his life. Had she the right to refuse?

She found Bettina and Sophie sitting up for her.

"Oh, you're back so soon," Bettina said. "Is she better? Is that little girl better?"

Diana returned to realities with a shock. How selfish she had been! She had almost forgotten that poor little soul at the hospital.

"No, she isn't better." She shrank from voicing the truth. "They couldn't save her, and before I reached there she was—gone."

"*Dead!*" Bettina shuddered. "Oh, I think such things are dreadful; I don't see how Anthony stands it."

"It has made him very miserable," Diana told her; "he hates to lose a case."

"Then why does he do it?" Bettina demanded. "Why doesn't he give up his surgery? He has enough to do with his freaks at the sanatorium, and his sick people who need medicine."

"Would you have a man give up a thing which he can do better than other men?"

Sophie, looking on, wondered if there had ever been a greater contrast than these two women who faced each other in the rose-colored room. Diana, tall and pale, with wisps of hair flying a bit untidily from beneath her soft hat, yet still beautiful and with the light of high resolve shining in her steady eyes; Bettina, a little slender slip of a child, her fair shining braids falling below her knees, her eyes demanding why men and women should be dedicated to hardness.

"I have been telling Bettina," Mrs. Martens interposed, gently, "that she will understand some

day what such a man means to the world."

For once in her life Diana, tired Diana, lost patience. "She ought to know what such a man means," she said.

Bettina put her hands before her face and stood very still.

"Oh, dear child," said Diana, remorsefully, "I shouldn't have said such a thing to you. I didn't mean it."



"I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID SUCH A THING"

Bettina's hands dropped straight at her sides. Her blue eyes were misty. "But it's true," she said. "I'm

afraid—I'm afraid I'm not the wife for Anthony."

Never had there been a truer saying. Yet the two older women stood abashed before the hurt look on the little white face.

"He has always seemed to me to be the noblest man," Bettina went on. "I don't think I have ever felt that he was anything but great. You people, who have always had everything, can't understand what he seemed to me when he used to come when mother was ill. You can't understand what it meant when he came to me when I was almost dead with loneliness, and told me that he wanted to marry me—you can't understand how every night—I pray—on my knees, that I'll be good enough for him—you can't understand how grateful I am—and how I try to appreciate his work; but I'm made that way—to hate pain. I hate to know about it—to see it——" Again she shuddered.

Diana drew her close. "Oh, you poor little thing," she said, "you poor little thing."

When the dawn, not many hours later, peeped into the three rooms, it showed, in one, Sophie asleep beneath the picture of her lost lover. In another Bettina, asleep, with tears still on her lashes, and with the flashing rings rising and falling above her heart. In the third room it showed Diana, awake, after hours of weariness—writing a letter to Anthony.

When Anthony had read that letter, he left the sanatorium and took a path which led him to the hills and into the hemlock forest. The walk up the hills was long, and the sun was hot, so that when he reached the depths of the wood he threw himself

down with a grateful sense of the stillness which could not be disturbed by telephone or tap at the door. For a little while he lay with his eyes shut, steeping himself in that blessed silence.

When at last he sat up, he took from his pocket Diana's letter, and read it again, passing his hand now and then nervously through his hair, until it stood up like the ruffled plumage of an eagle.

"DEAR ANTHONY:—

"It will be easier for me to talk with you in this way than face to face. When you are with me, my point of view seems to get mixed up with your point of view, and before I know it, I find myself making promises which I cannot keep, as to-night, when I almost said I would stay—and be your friend.

"I have always been your friend, Anthony. Haven't I? Even when I was a little girl, and you were a big boy, you seemed to find something in me which made it worth while for you to leave the other big boys and stay with me and talk about my books. Will I ever forget how you read some of them aloud to me? I never open now my thumbed little copy of 'Cranford' without hearing your laughing voice stumbling over the mincing phrases, and as for 'Little Women,' I believe that I worshiped in you the personification of 'Laurie.'

"But those were not the best times, Anthony.

The best were when it was too dark to read, and I would curl up on the big bench by the side of the fire, and you would lie at full length on the hearth-rug, and the wind would blow and the waves would boom, and you would weave tales for me out of your wonderful wealth of boyish dreams.

"Blessed memories! But even then I believe I resented your masterfulness a bit, Anthony. There was that time when you told me that I must get my lessons before you would finish the story which was so near the end. And I cried and coaxed, but you stood firm—and I respected you for it, and hated you and loved you in one breath.

"Oh, my big boy Anthony! Shall I ever forget you, with your brown lock over your blue eyes, your unswerving honesty of purpose, your high ideals. When you came home from college, and I had just put up my hair, and lengthened my dresses, you started to kiss me, then stopped. 'I thought I could,' you said, with such a funny note of surprise in your voice, 'but there's something about you that sort of—holds me off, Di.'

"I think then that I began to know my power over you. And how I have used it, Anthony! I have kept you single and alone all these years, because something in me would not yield to your kind of wooing.

"If only you could have been a cave man and could have carried me off! So many women wish that of men, especially proud women. It isn't that we admire brutality, but we want to

have all of our little feminine doubts and fears overcome by the man's decisive action. And you made the mistake of waiting patiently, asking me now and then, 'Will you?' instead of saying, 'You must.'

"Yet while you could not win me, in other ways you dominated me. Do you remember the holidays when I came home from boarding-school, and you were interne at a hospital? You asked me to go to the theater with you, and at the last moment you were called to the operating room to help one of the surgeons. You telephoned that you'd send a carriage for me and my chaperon, but that you couldn't go;—and I wouldn't go either, but stayed at home and sulked, and looked at myself in the glass, now and then, to mourn over the fact that you couldn't see me in my pink organdie with the rosebuds.

"But you wouldn't even apologize for what I called your neglect. I said I should never go with you. You said it wasn't neglect, and that I should go. And go I did, finally, as meekly as possible, and I wore the pink organdie and had a lovely time.

"It's the memory of that night when you couldn't fit your plans to mine which has made me write this letter. When I came home from Harbor Light I found Bettina waiting up for me, and she broke down as the depressing realities of your work were forced upon her. I was very toploftical, Anthony—and was prepared to read her a sermon on the duties of a doctor's wife, when

all at once I had a vision of myself in that rosebud organdie. I hated your work then, and I felt that you lacked something of devotion to me, to let it keep you from me.

"But later I felt differently. The world began to call you a great man—and I began to see with clearer eyes what you were doing for the world. And so I helped you at Harbor Light, and saw you there at your best—with your forceful control of all those helpless people, with your steadiness of hand and eye, a king who ruled by virtue of his power over life and death.

"It was in those days, I think, that I began to worship you. But I never called my worship love. I wanted to be Me, Myself, and somehow I felt that when I was once promised to you I should have no separate identity. It was the rebellion of a strong personality against a stronger one. I was not wise enough to see that you who protected others from the storms of life might want some little haven of your own—a haven which would be—Home.

"But because you failed to be masterful in the one way which would have won me, because you said, always, 'Will you?' instead of, 'Come—let there be no more of this between you and me, Diana,' I went away, not understanding you, not understanding myself.

"And over there with Sophie, I met Van Rosen. As I look back upon it, I do not wonder that he charmed me. He was

different from our American men, a lover of pleasure. He typified the spirit of joy to me—there was never a moment when he had not some vivid plan for me. We did things of which I had always dreamed.

"He gave a house party for me in his ancestral castle on the Rhine. And he proposed to me in an ancient chapel with the moonlight making the effigies of his old ancestors seem like living knights in golden armor.

"It was all so picturesque that practical America—that you, oh, I must confess it, Anthony,—seemed miles away. It seemed to me that in my own country we lived dreary lives in a workaday atmosphere. It was only in that castle on the Rhine that there were people who knew how to play. So I became engaged, and through all those months, Van Rosen and I played together.

"But I grew so tired of it, so deadly tired of it! Life seemed to have no meaning. And after a time I grew a little afraid. Van Rosen was different. I can't define exactly where the difference lay. But between us was the barrier of centuries of opposing traditions. I began to feel that as his wife I should be a Princess in name, but a slave in fact. Always laughing, always seeming to dance in the sunshine, he had a hardness which nothing could soften. I saw him now and then with those whom he considered his inferiors. I saw his treatment of his servants, his horses, his dogs. I heard him speak once to an old

and dependent aunt, at another time to a young governess—and my cheeks burned—and I was afraid.

"It came back to me then how you had always treated those who were weaker than yourself. You had always been a champion of old ladies and children. Every animal, from Peter Pan to your old fat horse—that old fat horse now is living in clover since you acquired your motor cars—adored and followed you.

"And one day I told Van Rosen—that I couldn't marry him. You don't know how humble I felt to think that I might have hurt him. But in that moment his real self showed. He was angry, furiously angry, and I knew all at once that it was my money, and not me that he wanted.

"And so I came back to you——

"But you had Bettina, and there was no place for me. No place for the little dark-eyed girl who had listened to the big boy on stormy nights, no place for the woman who had not known her own heart——

"And now you want me to be your friend. But I can't be your friend—Anthony. Friendship is for the man and woman who have never loved. A friendship which is the aftermath of love is the shadow after the substance. Can't you see that it is so? Can't you see that there would be just two things which might happen? If I stayed here and tried to be your friend, either I should knit

myself to you by ties which should bind you to your wife, or we should drift apart, having the perfect memory neither of love nor of friendship.

"Bettina is very young, but she has depths of which you have not dreamed, of which I had not dreamed, until I talked with her last night. I went up to her room, and we had a very sweet and tender confidence. It was almost dawn before I left her. She showed me much of her heart, as she will, I hope, some day show it to you——

"Hers is a little white soul, dear friend. On the surface she has her girlish petulances, her youthful prejudices. But these? Why, I had a thousand of them, Anthony. How I snubbed those poor students whom you brought with you one afternoon to tea because their elbows were shiny and their shoes rusty. I was such a little snob, Anthony. How I should welcome them now—those great doctors, who have done so much for humanity.

"It is life which teaches us, dear friend. It will teach Bettina. And it must teach me this: To bear the hard things. Do you remember in those days when we read of knights on the battle-field that we loved those who died fighting? And how we hated those who ran away? Well, I'm going to fight—but my fight must begin by running away.

"It isn't a battle which we can fight together. The two who must do things together are you and Bettina. Any friendship of ours

would shut her out. That's the plain truth, and you and I are old enough to know it, Anthony.

"There's much more that I could say to you. Much more. But you must read between the lines. All my days I shall have in my heart the memory of my dear—big boy. Some day when I am old and you are old, we can be friends. I'll look forward to that day, and it shall be my beacon light in the darkness.

"It's good-bye, dear, for a long time—good-bye.

DIANA.

How still it was in the hemlock forest! A squirrel which had ventured down from the branches flattened himself against the trunk of a tree and peered curiously at the figure which lay face downward on the fragrant carpet. One hand, outflung, caught at a little bush and held on as if in agony. The other hand grasped the sheets of gray paper, which, close-written, in feminine script, had brought a message of infinite pain and loss.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LITTLE SILVER RING

The yacht yard in which Bobbie's boat was hauled up for repairs lay at the foot of the rocks to the north of Diana's house. From the north porch, therefore, one could look down on the activities which had to do with the bringing in, and putting into shape the fine craft which through the summer were anchored in the harbor. A marine railway floated the boats in and out at high tide, and at such times creaked complainingly.

It was on the north porch that Sophie and Bettina sat on the morning after Diana's departure—Sophie knitting a motor scarf for Anthony, Bettina hemstitching white frills.

Below in the yacht yard the master gave orders, and the machinery of the marine railway began its clanking chorus. Bettina glanced over the rail. "Bobbie's boat is going out," she said, "and he and Justin are on board."

Justin saw her and called, "May I come up?"

Bettina shook her head at him. "If he thinks I'm going to shriek an answer to the housetops, he's mistaken."

Again she shook her head at him, and Justin immediately offered excuses to Bobbie.

"You won't mind," he said, "if I go up there?"

Bobbie jeered. "Talk about me! You're here to-day and there to-morrow. Yesterday it was Sara, and now it's Betty Dolce."

"It was never Sara."

"That's what I said when I fell in love with Doris, but you wouldn't believe me. And I can't quite see the difference."

"I've never cared for Sara in that way."

"Then you have jolly well flirted with her."

"Don't try to be English with your 'jolly wells.'"

Bobbie turned his back on Justin. "I suppose, then, you're not going to have lunch with me?" he said over his shoulder.

"Why can't we all have lunch with you?"

"Who is—all?"

"Betty, and Mrs. Martens—and me——"

"Doesn't Doris come into it?"

"Of course, if you can get her up."

"I can always get her up. You know that. But there's nobody just now in the world for you but Betty Dolce."

Nobody but Bettina! Justin admitted it to himself triumphantly. Please God, there should never be any one but Bettina!

Perhaps something of his thought showed in his face, for Bobbie clapped him on the shoulder with a hearty, "Go in and win her, old man, and we'll have a double wedding."

"If my wedding," solemnly, "were as sure as yours, I'd burn incense to the gods."

"Well, why don't you make it sure?"

"I can't. She stands on her pedestal, and I can't reach up to her."

"Man, you're afraid of her."

"It isn't that. But I'm not in this race to fall out, Bobbie. I guess you can see that."

Bobbie nodded. "Anybody who has eyes can see it," he said.

The little yacht was in the water now, still helpless because of her furled sails.

Justin, making a bridge of the small boats tied to the floating pier, gained dry land, and continued his conversation with Bobbie across the intervening space. "Suppose we cut the luncheon out, and go for a sail this afternoon. We can land off Gloucester way and have tea at the Lobster Pot."

"Tea, meaning lobster sandwiches," said Bobbie. "Do you know, Justin, that the whole coast is blossoming with lobster sandwiches? Once upon a time one ate muffins with their tea. But now nobody takes tea. They take coffee and lobster sandwiches. And I don't like sea foods, and I don't drink coffee. Otherwise it is all right."

"We'll have muffins and jam. And you and Doris shall have a table by yourselves, and Bettina and I, and we'll ask Anthony to look after Mrs. Martens." He stopped. "No, we won't ask Anthony—he has a fashion of claiming Bettina. He's her guardian, you know."

"Look here, Justin. Did it ever occur to you that he'd like to be more—than a guardian?"

"It's Diana for Anthony, Bobbie."

"I'm not so sure. Doris says there is something queer about it all——"

"Queer?"

"Oh, about Diana having Bettina here, and then going away and leaving her——"

"Sara's been talking. Doris wouldn't think such unpleasant things, Bobbie—there isn't anything between Anthony and Betty. There can't be anything ——"

But even as he said it he was stabbed by the memory of Bettina's radiant look of pride as she sat beside Anthony on the night of the yacht club dance.

"No man," said Bobbie, "is going to wait forever, and Betty Dolce is a very lovely little lady. All the boys at the club are crazy about her, and if it hadn't been for Doris there's no telling how I might have felt—but Doris is the last one, Justin."

"Good. I'll wigwag from the porch, Bobbie. Keep your eyes open for my signal."

Bettina, still hemstitching on white frills, welcomed Justin with a charming smile, but with a decided negative to his invitation.

"I'm going out with Anthony."

Justin eyed her reproachfully. "I told you once before that three was a crowd——"

"Oh, but this time it isn't three, but two—Anthony and I are going alone in his little car, and we are to have dinner at Green Gables."

All the laughter died out of his face. "Oh, I'm afraid you must think me all kinds of fool." He turned abruptly to Sophie. "Mrs. Martens, you'll go in Bobbie's boat, won't you? He's dying to ask Doris."

"Do you really want me?" Sophie asked, brightly.

"Always, dear lady."

Bettina, bending over her frills, felt a sudden sense of desolation.

"Oh, dear," she said, wistfully. "Why do all the nice things come at once?"

With that sigh, joy came back to Justin.

He dropped into a chair beside her. "What time will you get home to-night?" he asked.

"At eight. Anthony's office hours begin then."

"May I come up?"

"May he, Sophie?"

"It's my bridge night at the club, dear——"

"Oh——"

"Please," Justin pleaded.

Sophie laughed. "Well, Delia shall chaperon you. Of course you may come, Justin."

Justin, signaling Bobbie a moment later, was conscious of a wild desire to shout to the four winds of heaven the fact that for one little hour he was to have his goddess to himself.

For Justin's coming that night Bettina put on her white crêpe tea gown with the little lace mantle. She was very tired after her ride with Anthony. There had been no reason for fatigue. He had been most kind and considerate. But Bettina's little efforts at conversation had seemed to her childishly inadequate. She had felt a sense of deadly depression. What should she do to interest him

through all the years? Would he always have his mind on the things of which she knew nothing? Would she always try and never make a success of her efforts to enter into his life?

She had tried to tell him about Justin—about their compact of friendship—yet the words had died on her lips. Suppose he did not understand? Suppose he did not approve? Suppose he should forbid her to have a big brother—as he had forbidden her to fly in the "Gray Gull" with Justin?

She dared not risk such a catastrophe. She clung desperately to the thought of Justin's youth and gayety. No, Anthony might not understand, so why should she discuss it with him?

At dinner Anthony roused himself and had played the gracious host. Yet on the return trip he had relapsed into silence, and she had again felt that sense of desperate failure. Oh, what kind of wife was she going to make for this grave Anthony, this great Dr. Anthony, who loved her and whom she loved?

It was on the return trip, too, that he had spoken of their coming marriage. "Why can't it be soon, Bettina?" he had said. "Why should we wait, you and I?"

She knew that there was no good reason. That a few weeks ago she would have been radiant at the prospect.

Yet she told him, nervously, that if he didn't mind, it would be better to wait—a little. There were things to do.

And he had acquiesced, because of his masculine ignorance of the things which must really be done.

"The big house will be ready," he said, "when you are ready."

As she changed her gown on her return home, Bettina meditated soberly on the situation. Diana, when they had talked together, had pointed out that the women who married such men as Anthony must be content to make sacrifices. "He belongs to the world, dear child," she had said; "you must remember that, if you would be happy. It must be your joy to help him in his great work."

Bettina was beginning to be a little afraid of the future. It was not that she did not love Anthony—why, Anthony was the best man in the whole wide world. But everybody expected so much of her, and she was not quite sure that she should come up to the full measure of their expectations.

As she came down the stairs, Justin was waiting for her.

"Oh, you little beauty," his heart whispered; "you little white and gold beauty."

She had twisted her hair low on her neck, and her delicate lace mantle fell about her like folded gossamer wings.

"We will sit in the library," she said. "I have had a fire built. It is so damp and foggy outside. Sophie said you had to come in early from your sail on account of it."

"We came near not coming in at all," Justin told her. "Doris was terribly scared. But Mrs. Martens was as cool as possible. It's rather risky business outside on such a day. The rocks are like needle points under the water."

"I'm a terrible coward."

"You only think you are. When are you going to fly with me?"

"Never—please."

He had placed a chair for her by the fire, and stood leaning over the back of it.

"Never is a long time—little sister."

"But I should be afraid."

"Not with me."

Silence.

"Not with me." He came around so that he could look into her face. "Would you be afraid with me?"

She knew that she would not. She had not been afraid in the storm. But these things were not to be told.

She did not meet his eyes, but shook her head.

He was struck by her troubled look.

"Tired—little sister?" he asked.

Her lips quivered. "Very tired."

His heart yearned over her. She seemed such a little thing in that stately room with its high ceilings, its massive furniture, its book-lined walls. The only light came from the fire, and from a silver lamp which hung over Diana's desk. On the table near Bettina was a bowl of pink hyacinths, which filled the room with the fresh fragrance of spring.

He was conscious of these things, however, only as a

setting for her beauty. And he was more than ever conscious of his desire to place himself between her and the world which might hurt her. "Let me help you," he said, earnestly. "Don't you know that my only desire is to serve you?"

She considered him, wistfully. "It's dear of you to say that."

He sat down, leaning toward her.

"It isn't dear of me. It isn't even good of me. It's simply self-preservation. Don't you know, can't you see that I have only one thought—your happiness; only one wish—to be always near you?"

There was no mistaking the significance of his flaming words.

She shrank back. "Oh, you must not say such things."

"Why not?"

"Because. Oh, you called yourself my friend."

"I am more than that," he said, steadily. "I am your lover."

"Please—oh, please."

She began to sob like a little child. "Oh, big brother," she told him, "you have spoiled everything."

He knelt beside her chair. "How have I spoiled things?"

"I wanted you for my friend."

"I am your friend, dear one."

Very still and pale she fought against the sweetness

of the truth he was forcing upon her.

"Please—go away," she whispered.

He rose to his feet. "I shall not give you up."

She rose also, a frail little thing in her floating draperies, and laid her hand lightly on his arm.

"There are things which I cannot tell you. But I need a friend. If you care for me you'll let me be your—little sister; you won't trouble me by saying such things as you have said—to-night."

He tried with all the strength of his young manhood to hide his own hurt and meet her need.

"I could kill myself for making you cry. I'm going to be good now. Really and truly your good big brother."

She glanced up at him with charming shyness.

"I'll forget the things that you have said to-night—if you won't say them again."

"I shall not tie myself to an impossible promise," he repeated, "but I am going to tie you to a promise."

"Me?" She faced him.

"Yes. Oh, see here," boyishly, "I brought something for you to-night. I have noticed that you don't wear rings, but I want you to wear this." He opened his hand and showed her, lying on the palm, a little silver ring. "It's just a simple trinket that my sister wore as a child. I'd like to think that it would tie you to me always—for remembrance. I had hoped that you would let me give you another some time. But this—why, you can't object to wearing it—and it

would mean a lot to me if you would——"

Her slender fingers touched it. "How sweet of you to think of it——"

"Then you'll wear it?"

"Yes—because you are—my friend."

He took her hand in his and fitting the slender band first on one finger and then on another found a place for it at last on the little finger of her left hand.

"With this ring," he said, softly, "I take you always—for my friend——"

Then he stood looking down at her. "What a lovely little thing you are," he said. "You're so tiny that I could pick you up and carry you off, yet I tremble when I touch your hand."

She drew a quick short breath.

"You aren't to say such things to me—you know."

"I'll be good."

She knelt down like a child on the hearth-rug, and held her hand forward so that the light of the fire might shine on the silver circlet.

"Why, it's engraved," she said, "with two hearts."

"Yes," he said; "your heart and mine."

As she bent forward, the thin chain which she wore about her neck swung forward from among the laces of her gown, and, "tinkle, tinkle," sounded the chime of the flashing rings which Anthony had given her.

Justin saw her catch at them, saw her look of

frightened appeal as she thrust them hurriedly back into their hiding-place.

She rose slowly from the rug; slowly she took the little silver ring from her finger; slowly she handed it back to him.

"Please, I must not wear it," she said, with a break in her voice. "I must give it back to you—my friend."

CHAPTER XV

IN WHICH BETTINA FLIES

In the clear days which followed, Justin gave his undivided attention to flying. Not once did he see Bettina. Not once did he join the party of young people of which he had been the leading spirit.

In vain did Bobbie formulate enticing plans.

"We'll go to Cat Island with Captain Stubbs, fish all day, and have chowder on the rocks."

There had been one glorified fishing trip for Justin with Bettina. He wanted no other.

"I've wasted enough time," he said shortly. "I came here to practice flying, not to do social stunts."

Sara urged him also. "You haven't played a set of tennis with me since you came up," she complained. "Of course I know you're simply crazy over Betty

Dolce, but that needn't cut me out entirely. I thought my friendship meant something to you, Justin."

"It does," Justin told her, honestly, "but I'm not in a mood for tennis, and as for Betty Dolce, I haven't seen her for a week."

Sara was cheered by his statement. If his absorption was simply in his flying machine, she could wait. Men always returned finally from machines to femininity.

So Justin flew and flew, looking down at times upon the tops of the houses in the quaint coast towns, at other times having beneath him and above him blue sea and blue sky.

And everywhere he went, he knew that people were craning their necks and crying out in wonder, for in this part of the world, at least, such aerial craft were rare visitors.

And when he grew tired of great heights, he would let his shining ship slide down the air currents until it touched the water; then like a mammoth aquatic bird it would swim the surface, and the sailors on the big yachts would lean out over the sides and hail him, and the motor boats would follow him, until, at last, growing impatient of their close observance, he would rise again, higher and higher in the golden haze; earth would be left behind, and he would be alone with his thoughts.

And he thought always of Bettina.

He thought of her as he had first seen her, in the shadowy room, with her shabby black dress and her white and gold beauty. He thought of her as she had come toward him under the lilacs, a flower among

the flowers. Again he saw her dancing, like a wraith, in the moonlight; he saw her, in the little blue serge frock and shady hat, measuring him with her cool eyes; and again, laying plates on the flapping cloth with white hands, or racing with him against the wildness of the storm. He saw her with her fair wet braids hanging to her knees, and her slender fingers twisting among the gold. He saw her with the light of the harness-room fire upon her as she promised to be his friend.

But most of all he saw her as she had been that last night in the great library, frail and white in her floating draperies.

"You have spoiled everything," she had said.

How had he spoiled everything?

In one moment he would resolve to have it out with her. In the next he would plan to go away, to give her up, to forget her.

A few weeks ago he had not known her. He had liked many women, but had loved none. He had been heart-whole and fancy free. And now his life, his happiness, all of his future, were bound up in this little pale child with the wonderful hair!

Up and up, higher and higher. It was like the flight of an eagle.

And far below, on a porch which overhung the harbor, two women watched with beating hearts.

"Oh, why will he do it?" Sophie asked, in agonized tones. "It is so dangerous."

Bettina caught her breath. "Somehow I can't think of the danger," she said. "He isn't afraid, and to me it

seems—very wonderful—as if he had wings, and could fly—straight up—to heaven——"

As Justin had thought all that week of Bettina, so she had thought of him; every moment of the day, and into the night, the vision was upon her.

Again she was held by those mocking eyes, again she was thrilled by that mad race in the rain. She saw him as he had been on the night of the yacht club dance, with his laughing air of conquest; as he had been in the great library, saying steadily, "I am your lover——"

He had gone from her, angry, that night because she would give him no explanation of her refusal to take the silver ring.

"I cannot, I cannot," she had repeated.

He had caught hold of her hands. "You are not a flirt," he had said; "you are too sweet and good for that—but what do you mean by your mysteries—— Oh, why can't you tell me the truth?"

She had looked at him, dumbly, and he had rushed away, leaving her unforgiven.

She had written at once to Diana, asking to be released from her promise to keep her engagement secret. "People ought to know," was the reason she gave.

She had also telephoned to Anthony. She wanted to see him. To tell him that she would marry him as soon as he wished. That would be the solution. Then Justin would understand, and would forgive her.

She felt that more than anything in the whole wide world she wanted Justin's forgiveness.

Anthony had come, and they had gone into the library where she had talked with Justin, and Anthony, preoccupied and silent, had placed a chair for her, and had stood where Justin had stood. And she had shivered and had begged, "Sit down where I can see you."

He had taken the chair opposite her, and suddenly she had surprised herself and him by coming over to him, and slipping to her knees beside his chair, and sobbing with her face hidden.

He had lifted her in his arms, and had soothed her like a child. "What is it, dear heart?" he had demanded.

And, like a child, she had answered:

"Oh, please, let's get married right away——"

She had explained haltingly that she had been lonely since Diana went away, and unhappy. She—she missed her mother—and Diana's house wasn't her home. Sophie was dear, but, oh, it would be much better to be married as soon as she could get ready.

"And how soon will that be?" gravely.

"In a month. I think everybody should be told now."

He agreed. "Perhaps it should have been announced at once, but Diana seemed to think that it was best to wait."

"Diana doesn't know—everything."

"No, but she is wise in many things."

"Anthony?"

"Yes?"

"When we are—married, will you and Diana be just as good friends?"

"I hope that we may——"

Something in his tone had made her look up and say quickly, "Oh, I *want* you to be friends. You didn't think that I was jealous—of *Diana*?"

He had thought she might be. If she knew the truth she would surely have a right to be. But she did not know the truth.

"Why did you ask?" he probed.

"Because," feverishly, "it doesn't seem right, does it, that just because a man and a woman are married they should never have any men or women friends? There's Bobbie, for example—and—and Justin—I shan't have to be just your wife, shall I? I can have them for friends?"

"Of course." Yet even as he said it he wondered if he would care to have her allegiance divided—as his was divided. Oh, wise Diana, who had refused to be what she had no right to be, what he would not want his own wife to be, when once she was bound to him —the dear friend of another man.

"You and I," he said, "must try to be all in all to each other." Then after a pause, "Do you really love me, child?"

"Oh, yes." Again she drew a sobbing breath.

"I am such an old fellow," he said, in a troubled way, "and you are made for bright things and gay things. I wonder if you will be happy with an old tired fellow like me——"

In her simplicity she believed that his appeal was that of love, and out of the gratitude which she felt that she owed him she tried to respond.

"Oh, I do love you," she whispered, "and when we are married—we shall be happy——"

Presently she tugged at the thin chain about her neck, and brought forth the rings.

"After this I shall wear them," she said, "for all the world to see."

When Anthony went home he answered Diana's letter. He had sent her flowers on the day that she had left—her favorite violets and valley lilies. Beyond that he had made no sign.

But now he wrote:

"OH, DEAR WISE WOMAN:

"During all the days since I received your letter I have not been able to see things as you wanted me to see them. I have raged against Fate, and have been pursued by Furies. I have shut myself away, as far as possible, from the world. At one moment I have doubted your love for me; at the next, I have resolved to follow you, play cave man, and carry you off.

"I have read and reread your letter, trying to find some weakness to which I could appeal —but I could find none. But finally, as I read, one sentence began to stand out: 'We loved those who died—fighting.' When I got into the swing of that thought it stirred me. I am

going to live—fighting—perhaps I shall die—fighting——

"To-day Bettina has told me that she will marry me in a month. She says that she has written you that it is best that people should know at once. And I think that it is best. I shall try to make her happy, but if I conquer life, if I ever do any great thing or good thing or wise thing, it will be because you have shown me the way.

"You say, 'When we are old, we can be friends.' How I shall welcome old age, Diana! May the years fly swiftly!

ANTHONY.

Having squared himself thus with the inevitable, Anthony, a little grayer, perhaps, a little more worn and worried, took up life where he had left off before Diana came home from Europe.

He had seen nothing, of late, of Justin, except as he had glimpsed him, now and then, in the air.

But on the morning on which Bettina and Sophie had watched the flight from their porch he came upon the young aviator, near the sheds, standing in the midst of an eager group of young folks, adored by the girls, envied by the boys.

Amid the clamor of voices he caught the question, "Are you going up again this afternoon?"

"Yes."

Then, over their heads, Justin saw Anthony.

"Bring Betty Dolce up this afternoon," he called, "and I'll show you through the shops. There are four ships beside mine in the sheds, and they'll be sent out to-morrow. You and she may never have a chance to see so many together."

Anthony agreed, and called up Bettina.

She assented eagerly. To-day, then, Justin should see her rings. He would ask for an explanation. She would tell him,—and he would understand. When he knew that she belonged to Anthony he would forget that he had wanted to be anything but her friend, and things would be as they had been before.

So, knowing nothing of the hearts of men, she argued in her innocence.

When she saw Justin, she felt that even through her gloves he must see the rings. But his eyes were on her face, and she burned red beneath his glance.

On an impulse he had asked her. If Anthony brought her, he should see her, talk to her. That, for the moment, would give his heart respite from the pain which gnawed it.

In the dimness of the great sheds Bettina flitted silently like a white moth from place to place. She left the conversation to Justin and to Anthony. When Justin made explanations she seemed to listen, but she did not look up.

As a matter of fact, she heard not a word. Her mind was on her rings. She began to take off her gloves, slowly; dreading, yet craving the moment, when Justin should look at her hands.

But he was still explaining to Anthony: "These

pontoons do the trick. An aeroplane simply flies. But the hydro-aeroplanes fly and swim, and that's what makes them so safe when there's water to cross."

As he touched the delicate wires of the framework they gave forth a humming noise. "When you're up in the air," he said, "it sounds like the crash of chords."

Bettina's gloves were off now. The big diamonds on her left hand seemed to catch all the light in the dim room and to blaze like suns!

But Justin was thinking only of Bettina's eyes under her drooping veil, and of her cheeks which burned red, and of her lips which were closed against any speech with him.

They went on to the last shed, which was open, and from which a track descended into the water.

Poised there, in the half-darkness, like a bird at rest, was another ship, ready for flight.

"This is mine," said Justin; "the 'Gray Gull.' I wanted to call her 'The Wild Hawk,' but changed my mind. Do you remember Kipling's

> "'The wild hawk to the wind-swept sky,
> The deer to the wholesome wold,
> And the heart of a man to the heart of a maid,
> As it was in the days of old'?"

"It is one of Diana's favorites," said Anthony. But Bettina said never a word.

And just then a boy came to say that Dr. Blake was wanted at the telephone.

"It's a hurry call," Anthony came back to tell them.

"Would you mind walking home with Bettina, Justin?"

Would he mind? Suddenly all the stars sang!

The moment that Anthony's back was turned Bettina felt a frantic desire to hide her rings. What would Justin say when he saw them? With Anthony there she had felt brave. But now—she turned the rings inward and began hastily to put on her gloves. Oh, to-night, after she reached home, she would write Justin a prim little note and tell him of her engagement! That would be better, of course! She should have thought of it before!

Crashing across her trembling decision came Justin's demand.

"Look here. Why can't you fly with me now? Just a little way, low over the harbor? Come——"

It seemed to her that between them was beating and throbbing darkness, out of which his eager eyes said, "Come."

"Oh, no," she protested, with dry lips. "Anthony wouldn't like it."

"What has Anthony to do with it?" He had taken her hands in his and was crushing them. The rings cut and hurt, but she made no sign; she only looked at him large-eyed, and said, not knowing what she said, "He has nothing to do with it——"

"Then come——"

She was conscious that he was taking the pins out of her big hat. That he was winding her white chiffon veil, nun-like, about her head, so that her face was framed. And within this frame glowed her hot cheeks

and questioning eyes.

"Come," he said, again, and lifted her to her seat and fastened her in, and took his place beside her. He whistled, and two men came, and the buoyant ship slid down the track toward the water; the big propeller waved for a moment its octopus arms, then started with a mighty roar.

For a moment they swam the surface, then, light as a bird, the "Gray Gull" soared.

Up and up, with the white yachts in the harbor just beneath them, with the gold of the sunshine surrounding them; and out of it his face bending down to her.

"Are you afraid?" he asked, as he had asked in the storm.

And she, with her cheeks still burning hot, looked up at him and laughed.

"Afraid—with you? Oh, Justin, Justin, I could fly like this—forever."

CHAPTER XVI

VOICES IN THE DARK

Captain Stubbs' cottage was one of the show places of the town. Built before the Revolution, it was of typical English rural architecture—one-storied, with

a square chimney, and with a garden which made it the delight of artists who came from far and near to paint it; in the spring crocuses starred the borders, violets studded the lawn with amethyst, pale irises and daffodils, narcissus and jonquils stood in slim beauty. Later came sweet peas, and the roses followed, hiding with their beauty the weather-beaten boards. The late summer brought nasturtiums in all their richness of orange and bronze-brown, and in the fall, the dahlias blazed.

The captain lived alone, attending to his domestic affairs in a fashion which was the envy of less spick and span housekeepers. He would not have his home invaded by prying folk, but to his invited and welcome guests he would show his carved ivories, his embroideries, heavy with gold, his dragon-encircled jars and vases. Everywhere was the charm of shining neatness, and flowers were everywhere.

"I think I should have looked for a wife," the captain had told Bettina and Miss Matthews one day when they had lunched with him, "if it hadn't been for my flowers. I don't need a wife to cook for me. I'm a better cook than most women. And I don't need a wife to mend my clothes, because every sailor can handle a needle. And I don't need a wife to keep the house clean for me—there isn't any woman on earth that makes things shine like a man who has been taught to rub brasses and scrub down decks. What I'd need a wife for would be to make things pretty, and to look pretty herself. But Lord, I ain't the kind to attract a pretty woman—and so I just gave it up."

A faint glimmer of resentment had shone in Miss Matthews' eyes. "I guess most women are kept so busy that they haven't time to think about their

looks."

"Well, if I had a wife," the captain had said, "I'd like to have her wear bright things. My mother had dimity dresses—there was a pink one, like a rose, and a green one that looked like the young grass in the spring, and there was one that made me think of forget-me-nots, or the sky when there isn't a cloud in it."

Bettina had smiled at him. "How pretty your mother must have been."

"It wasn't that she was so pretty; it was her soft, quiet ways, and those bright-colored roses. And I've been looking for that kind of woman ever since."

"If your mother," little Miss Matthews had told him, "had lived in this day of shirt-waists and short skirts, she'd probably be wearing high collars and sad colors with the rest of us."

The emphasis with which the little lady had offered her opinion and the flush on her face had made Bettina look at her with awakened eyes. "Why—I believe she likes him. She'd be really nice-looking if she'd fix her hair——"

To-day, as Miss Matthews stopped for a moment at the captain's gate to admire his sweet peas, she was not even "nice-looking." She was pale and thin, and had a hoarse cough.

"I'm going home and to bed," she said. "I took cold that day in the rain, captain, and it hasn't left me since, and I took more cold yesterday, going to school without my overshoes."

"You come right in, and I'll make you a cup of tea,"

said the captain, hospitably. But Miss Matthews refused, wearily.

As she turned away, however, Mrs. Martens came to get the flowers which were the captain's daily offering for Diana's table, and the little man extended a beaming invitation to both of them.

"You pick your posies," he said, "and I'll get some tea for you and bring it right out here. You make her stay, Mrs. Martens; she needs a rest."

Sophie smiled at the little teacher. "You ought not to be out at all," she said, sympathetically.

"School closes in four days," explained little Miss Matthews; "after that I think I shall fall down and die, but I've got to keep up until then."

As the two women stood there at the gate together, they presented a striking contrast: Sophie in her black, modish garments, with the look upon her face of the woman who has been loved, and who has bloomed because of it; Miss Matthews, a faded shadow of what she might have been if love had not passed her by.

"How's Betty?" Miss Matthews asked, as she sat down on a bench on the little covered porch, and watched Sophie's slender fingers pull the sweet peas.

Sophie straightened up. "I'm worried about her," she said. "She and Anthony Blake went to see the air-ships, and I had a telephone message from Anthony that he had had a hurry call, and that Justin would look after Betty. That was two hours ago, and Betty hadn't returned when I left to come here——"

Captain Stubbs, appearing with a big loaded tray,

gave important information.

"Did she have on a white dress?"

"Yes."

"Then she's gone flying with Justin Ford."

"What?" Sophie stood up, and all the fragrant blooms fell at her feet. "Oh, surely he wouldn't take Betty up with him. It would be dreadful."

"Now, don't you worry," said the captain; "he ain't goin' to let a hair of her head get hurt—he's daffy over her."

"Daffy?" Sophie stared.

"Yep." The captain set his tray on the rustic table. "He and that Betty child went with me and Miss Matthews for a day's fishin', and at first we didn't notice anything, but after a while we began to open our eyes—and, well, we ain't blind, are we, Miss Matthews?"

Miss Matthews, drinking her tea thirstily, took up the captain's story. "It rained, and the captain and I wrapped up and stayed by the boat. But those young folks ran off, and he was helping her along, and she was looking up at him—and—everybody knows what's going to happen when two people look at each other that way."

"And if they are flying," the captain chuckled, "they're probably as near heaven as it's possible to be this side of the pearly gates."

But Sophie would not treat the subject lightly. "It's bad enough for a man to fly," she said, "but he had no right to take that child up with him. Where did

you see them, captain?"

"I was standing on those rocks out there, and I saw him rise up over the harbor. I could see that he had someone with him, so I went in, and got my glass, and sure enough, there she was, all in white, with a white veil wrapped tight about her head."

"Which way did they go?"

"Straight out beyond the harbor, and up toward Gloucester way—but don't you worry, Mrs. Martens; they'll be back before they know it."

"But I do worry," Sophie declared, "and I shall certainly tell Justin what I think of his foolhardiness."

"Well, you take your tea," said the captain, soothingly, "and I'll call up and see if they have come in."

Taking tea with the captain meant the tasting of many strange and wonderful flavors. The little man had clung to all the traditions of his seagoing forefathers, who had brought back from the Orient spicy things and sweet things—conserved fruits and preserved ginger, queer nuts in syrup, golden-flavored tea, and these he served with thick slices of buttered bread of his own making.

"You might have had a lobster," he said to Sophie, "if it hadn't been so near your dinner time. I've got 'em fresh cooked."

But Sophie shook her head. "I like your sweet things better. Bobbie and I are the ones who don't like lobster. He says that I'm a sort of oasis in a desert of shell-fish."

"He's got a nice boat," said the captain, "and he's got a nice girl. I like Doris."

Sophie's mind went back to Bettina. "Oh, will you telephone, please, captain?"

The captain came back with the news that nothing had been seen of the "Gray Gull," but that there was no need to worry, as the day was perfectly calm, and that, as he had Miss Dolce with him, he would certainly not fly high.

Sophie refused to be comforted. "I shall tell Anthony," she said; "he must speak to Justin."

"I don't see what Blake's got to do with it," said the blunt captain; "young Ford may tell him to mind his business——"

Sophie's head went up. "Dr. Blake is Bettina's guardian," she said, "and if Justin resents his interference, I shall certainly be much disappointed in Justin."

Miss Matthews bristled. "You ought to have seen the care he took of her that day in the rain. I shall never forget the sight of those two young creatures running up the hill—the captain said then he had never seen a prettier pair."

In the midst of her worry Sophie felt an insane desire to laugh. Was this tragedy only or, after all, a comedy? If Betty loved Justin? Her imagination could scarcely compass the consequences of this possibility.

Sophie walked home with Miss Matthews, and, returning to Diana's, met Sara half-way.

"Is Bettina flying with Justin?" Sara asked, abruptly.

"Captain Stubbs says that she is. I am very much displeased with Justin. It is really unpardonable that Bettina should be subjected to such danger."

"She didn't have to go if she didn't want to," said Sara, sharply, "but she's crazy about him——"

"My dear——How do you know?"

"Anybody can see it. And I guess it's the real thing this time with Justin."

The wistful expression on the sharp little face touched Sophie's kind heart.

"It's hardly likely. They have known each other for such a short time."

"Time has nothing to do with love," said the sophisticated Sara. "A man and a girl can meet and love in a week and live happy ever after. Oh, yes, they can. And they can know each other all their lives and be perfectly miserable. Dad and mother grew up together, and you've heard, Mrs. Martens, what a life they lived."

The story of the unhappiness of Sara's parents was common property. Yet it hurt Sophie to see the hard look in the girl's eyes.

"My dear child," she said, "everything depends on the amount of affection which two people give each other—time doesn't count."

Sara was digging the point of her parasol into the sand. "I've never seen anything like it with Justin. Why, he's *never* asked any woman to fly with him. And when I looked up a while ago, and saw that he had—her—I knew he wouldn't have—asked her—if he hadn't—cared——"

"Perhaps we are making things more serious than they really are," Sophie said. But as the two women walked on together, her mental disturbance continued. What if Miss Matthews and Sara had spoken the truth? How would it affect Bettina—how would it affect—Diana?

"I can't quite understand what all the men see in her," Sara was saying. "Of course she's a beauty. But she's so little and white—and she doesn't seem so terribly clever——"

"There's a charm she has inherited from those sleepy Venetian ladies, who only waked now and then to flash a glance at some man—and hold him captive. Those beauties were without conscience. But Bettina has a Puritan streak in her which she gets from her mother—that's what makes her such a fascinating combination, Sara. She's like a little nun; yet one feels instinctively that back of that calm exterior there is force and fire."

Sara nodded. "I know. Men don't like the obvious. That's why so many of us American girls fail to inspire grand passions. We have no surprises—no high lights or shadows—it's all glare——"

"I'm not sure, my dear, but that, in the long run, such women make men happier than the other kind. In this practical world there's little room for varying moods."

"If Justin marries Bettina," said Sara, "they'll live on rhapsodies." She drew a quick short breath. "There won't be any commonplaces. They're both made that way. It will be all romance and roses——"

"My dear—aren't we taking things a bit for granted?"

"You'll see. You haven't watched them as I have."

They had reached Diana's house, and Sophie asked Sara to come in.

"I can't. It's getting late and I must dress for dinner ——"

"Some other time then, dear?"

"Yes—I shall love it." Then, with some hesitation, "I'm afraid I've said more than I should——"

Sophie bent and kissed her. "Not a bit. I'm a perfect keeper of confidences—and not a soul shall share what you've told me——"

Delia met Mrs. Martens in the hall.

"Dr. Blake's on the porch," she said, "and he's asking about Bettina——"

"Hasn't she come?"

"No."

"What time is it, Delia——"

"Half-past six——"

"Of all the mad things to do," said Anthony, as Sophie went out to him. "I shall certainly call Justin to strict account—for asking her——"

"She shouldn't have gone," Sophie said. "I can't imagine how he induced her. She's such a little coward."

"They've been away three hours. I went over to the sheds and started a motor boat to search for them. They are beginning to realize over there that

something may have happened."

"Did Justin ask Betty while you were with her?"

"No. He simply showed us around, and said he'd walk home with her. Oh, the young fool, the young fool. He can risk his own life if he chooses—but he had no right to take—that child——"

The telephone rang, and Sophie, answering, found Justin at the other end.

"We're at Gloucester, safe and sound. I'm awfully sorry if you've worried, Mrs. Martens. But I could not get to a 'phone before this. We'll come back by train, and Betty says you're not to wait dinner. We'll get something here. We're all right, really—only sorry if you are upset."

"We are very much upset," Sophie told him, severely. "Anthony is here, and he is extremely anxious."

"He needn't worry," grimly. "I can take care of her."

Mrs. Martens, explaining the situation to Anthony a few minutes later, refrained, tactfully, from giving Justin's exact words.

Anthony dined with her, then went off to see Miss Matthews, who had asked him to prescribe for her cold.

"Call me up when Bettina comes," he said, as he left.

Sophie promised, and watched him drive away in his little car. She had never seen him so nervous, so irritable. Was this what the thwarting of his life would mean—that he would let go of the serenity which had made his presence a benediction to his little world?

Or was it really love for Bettina which so disturbed him? Stranger things had happened. Diana was away—Bettina was beautiful—Justin was in the field to measure lances.

With Peter Pan for company, Sophie waited on the porch for the recreant pair.

When they arrived it was very dark, and she could not see their faces. But what had made that difference in their voices—that subtle, thrilling difference?

CHAPTER XVII

GLORY OF YOUTH

When Bettina cried, "I could fly with you,—forever," the light of a great joy leaped in Justin's eyes. But he said nothing; he merely set his hand more steadily to steering.

And Bettina was content to be silent; to drift on and on in this golden world, where there was just herself and the youth with the shining eyes.

Far beneath them several racing yachts seemed flung like white flower petals on the surface of the sea; two girls in red coats on the club-house tennis courts made glowing spots of color; the crowds of people on the rocks, with their heads upturned to view the fairy ship of the air, were as formless and as lacking

in life and movement as a patchwork quilt.

Bettina felt no wonder. Her mood was one of heavenly enchantment; having passed the first gate of the great adventure, no small detail could seem strange.

If in those exquisite moments she remembered Anthony, she gave no sign. Somewhere, perhaps, down there in the darkness, was a weary man working; there were sick people; pain was there and suffering. But such things belonged to an existence in which she had no part. It was as if she had died, and, rising above the earth, looked pityingly on those who still struggled and strove.

She had a sudden whimsical memory of a Sunday-school song which had appealed to her childish imagination:

"I shall have wings, I shall have wings,
I shall have wings, some day
____"

Years ago she had sung it with a half hundred enthusiastic youngsters. Her vision, then, had dealt, somewhat hazily, with golden crowns, with plumed pinions, and with ultimate bliss; but never had her imagination compassed such a moment as this!

Above the noise of the motor Justin was aware of the lilt of her fresh young voice:

"I shall have wings, I shall have wings
____"

The humming wires keyed the hackneyed tune to a sort of celestial harmony:

"Bright wings of love, from God above,
To bear my glad soul away
____"

Justin glanced down at her rapt face.

"Do you like it?"

"It is—heaven!"

As she again took up the little song, he joined in, and they finished the last verse triumphantly; then they looked at each other and laughed.

"I used to sing it in Sunday-school," Bettina explained.

"So did I," and these simple sentences, in their uplifted mood, seemed fraught with great meaning.

They were beyond the harbor now. Ahead of them and to the right was the open sea; to the left, the town, with its church steeples like pin points beneath them, its most imposing buildings no bigger than mushrooms.

"Are we so very high?"

"Not so high, perhaps, as it seems to you. It is perfectly safe."

On and on they went, leaving the lighthouse behind them, leaving behind them the harbor and the town, passing, finally, the great forest through which they had raced in the rain.

Then Justin had asked, "Do you remember?"

And Bettina had answered, "Shall I ever forget?"

The gulls circled below them, uttering mewing cries. It was as if they protested against the intrusion of this bird man and bird woman in a realm which had belonged to winged things since the world began.

They came presently to a long and lonely stretch of beach, above which Justin sailed, low, and, relaxing his vigilance for the first time, he began his eager wooing—all fire and rapture.

And Bettina trembled—and listened.

It seemed to her that throughout her life she had waited to hear that which Justin was saying to her now.

"You were made for me—dear. In my dreams there has always been a girl like you—little and white and helpless—but vivid, too, in flashes. When I saw you for the first time in that dark room on that rainy day

I knew that you were—mine. I know I'm not good enough for you. I know that if you should ever marry me I should thank God on my knees every day of my life. But it isn't conceit which makes me believe that you and I have been coming toward each other always. I don't know why you gave me back the silver ring. At this moment I don't care—although the other night my world went to pieces—but just now, what you said,—and the way you said it, that you would fly with me forever,—made me feel that all the things I had hoped were true——"

Bettina felt as if their souls were bared. What conventional thing could she say which would hide her joy? Her eyes would tell him though her lips might not.

As if he read her thoughts he bent down to her. "Look at me," he urged, and again, "My dear one—is it, then, really—true?"

She knew now that she was Justin's and he was hers until the end of time. By all the white wonder of her thoughts she knew it. By all the quickened blood in her beating heart. What she had felt for Anthony was the affection of an unawakened nature—she had given him gratitude, friendship—but between them were the years across which she must look somewhat timidly; between them was his sadness, which oppressed her, and his profession, which she feared.

But here was youth, which she understood, and romance, for which she had longed, and love at white-heat.

Thus, as she soared with Justin, she forgot past promises and future judgments, and whispered, "It is true——"

After that they talked in the language of youth and love.

"Do you know how pretty you are?"

"You think that I am pretty because you—like me."

"I think it because I—love you."

The echo of their light laughter went trailing after them as the song of a lark trails through the blue.

Softly, at last, Justin brought his shining ship down to the surface of a little bay.

Two men at work on the beach came out in a dory in answer to his call.

They were eager and curious, and glad to tow the queer craft into shallow water, to make it fast, and to watch it for a time.

"We will walk about for a bit," Justin said to Bettina, "and go back at sunset."

Bettina demurred. "It's really late now," she said, with her eyes on the eastern horizon, where the first gray haze of twilight was beginning to gather.

"Look the other way. There's all the gold of the west, and it won't be dark for hours."

"But Sophie will worry."

"She will think you're with Anthony—he's nice and safe."

"Perhaps some one will have seen us, and have told her, and anyhow, I must get back for dinner."

"Any one may eat a dinner, but for you and me there may never be another moment like this!"

Following a steep path they came presently to a curious and lonely spot. Here was an ancient burying place. On a rocky headland, overlooking the entrance to the harbor and the wide sweep of the sea beyond, the first dead of the colony had been buried; here lay the forefathers of the town. Many of the stones had fallen; others stood sturdily where they had stood for centuries. Strange old stones they were, of gray slate, etched with forbidding symbols of skulls and crossbones.

In one corner was a monument of later erection. It had to do with the memory of more than a hundred men who had been lost in a September gale off the fishing banks.

Bettina shivered as she read the carved history.

"Oh, how did the women stand it," she said, "to come here to the top of this hill, week after week, watching? To wonder and worry and fear. To wake in the middle of the night and know that their husbands and lovers were out in the blackness and storm. And then at last to see the boats coming in, and not know whether the ones they loved were on board—to find, perhaps, at last, that they were not on board. How did they stand it?"

"As you would have stood it, if you had been one of them——"

"Would I?" wistfully. "Do you think I could be brave and patient?"

"You could be everything that is good and beautiful ——"

She did not smile or blush. All the glamour of their flight had fallen from her. The old cemetery with its gruesome headstones oppressed her. The purple shadows of the twilight seemed to circle the world.

She shuddered and one little hand caught at the sleeve of Justin's coat.

He glanced down at her. "My dear one, what is it?"

Her frightened eyes pleaded. "I—I don't like it here. I'm afraid."

"With me—silly. You weren't afraid up there in the clouds."

"This is—different. It seems down here as if the whole world were—dead——"

"You're tired. Look here, I'm going to carry you up this hill."

As he said it, masterfully, she felt herself swept up into his strong young arms.

"Put me down!"

He drew his head back to look at her.

"Why?"

"I'll tell you in a minute. Put me down."

He set her on her feet, and she stood there, swaying, her lips parted.

At last she said, "I love you," but held out her hand as if to keep him from her. "I love you—but I mustn't

let you—love me."

"Why not?"

"Because—oh, Justin," she was stripping off her gloves, "oh, I've tried to hide these," pitifully, "to hide these from you. I wanted my little moment of happiness, too. But now you've got to know."

The gloves were off, and the last rays of the setting sun, striking the great jewels, brought fire which seemed to blind Justin's eyes.

He caught her hands in his, roughly. "Who gave them to you?" he demanded. "Who gave them to you, Bettina?"

But all his doubts and fears had crystallized to certainty before she whispered, "Anthony."

"Do you mean that you are going to marry—Anthony?"

She nodded. "He loves me, Justin."

"And you love him?"

Her head went up. "I told you just now that—I loved—you. But I've promised Anthony. He asked me that day before I went to Diana's. The day after I first saw you. And he was so good, and I was so lonely, that I thought that—I cared. I didn't know then what it meant—to care."

His eyes, which had been stern, softened.

"And now that you know," he asked, "what are you going to do?"

She twisted her fingers nervously.

"I don't know," she faltered. "What shall I do, Justin?"

"Oh, my dear," he said, brokenly, "Anthony is my friend. I can't steal you—like a thief—in the night ——"

Her lips quivered. "I knew that—you'd say that. I am glad—you—said it."

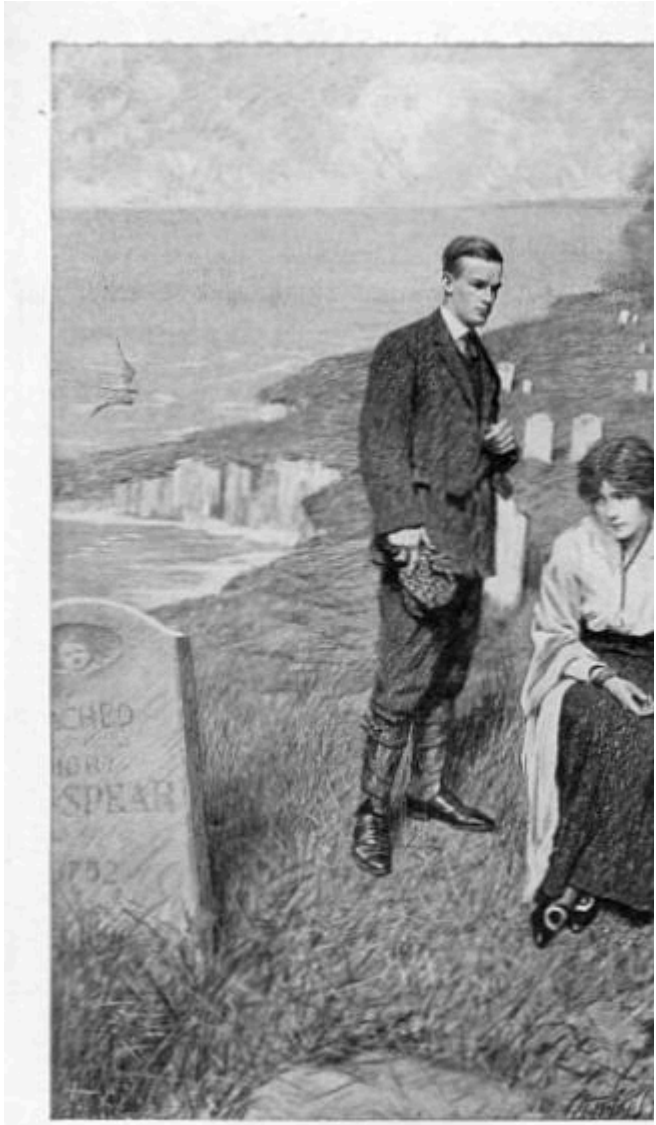
He turned away. "If you knew how hard it is for me to say it."

She laid her little hand on his arm.

"If you only won't be angry with me."

He turned back to her. "I am not angry," he said, "only I have been—all sorts of a fool."

She sank down hopelessly on a broken stone bench, backed by evergreen trees. "You haven't been a fool," she said. "I should have told you. But I couldn't. Diana wouldn't let me."



SHE SANK DOWN HOPELESSLY

"What did Diana have to do with it?"

"She said that Anthony's friends ought to know me before the engagement was announced."

"So you and she have talked it over, and Sophie, I suppose—and how many others?" His laugh was not good to hear.

"Oh, please. I don't think any of us could have guessed that—things would have turned out like this. I didn't dream how you felt and how I felt until the other night, when you tried to give me the little ring. Then I knew."

"That you loved me?"

"No. That you loved me. I—I didn't know the other until to-day when you said—'Come.'"

"Didn't you know that day in the rain?"

"No, oh, *no*. I thought it was just because we were both young, and good friends, and happy together."

"And I thought it was because our spirits met—in the storm."

He flung himself down beside her. "To me the whole thing seems monstrous. Anthony is years too old for you, even if you loved him. And you don't love him."

"Yet I can't break a promise, can I?"

He moved restlessly.

"If you told him, he would release you, of course. But somehow I'd feel an awful cad to have Anthony think that I had taken you from him."

"How do you think I should feel?" The color flamed in her cheeks. "Don't you know that a woman has just as fine a sense of honor in such things as a

man?"

As she made a movement to rise, he caught at the floating ends of her white veil, and held them, as if he would thus anchor her to himself.

"Forgive me," he pleaded. "I'm afraid I'm too desperately unhappy to know what I am saying."

"I know—I'm unhappy, too."

With the fatalism of youth they had accepted their tragedy as final. He still held the end of her veil in his hand, but her face was turned away from him.

A little breeze came from the west, and there was a dark line of cloud below the gold.

"We shall have to go home on the train," Justin said, as he noted the whitecaps beyond the bay. "There's too much wind to make it safe for us to fly."

"Then we must go now. It is very late."

"I can telephone Sophie from the gatekeeper's house. It's on the other side of the church. And I'll telephone to the men to come after the hydro-plane."

She assented listlessly, and they walked on.

The church, when they reached it, showed itself an ancient edifice. Built of English brick, it had withstood the storms of years. Its bell still rang clearly the call to Sunday service, and at its font were baptized the descendants of the men who slept in the old cemetery.

As they reached the steps, a man who was digging a grave hailed them. "If you and your wife would like to look in," he said to Justin, "you can bring the key

to me at the gate. I'll be there when you come."

He unlocked the door for them. They heard his retreating footsteps, and knew that they were alone. Then Justin spoke with quickened breath. "That is as it should be—my wife——"

Out of a long silence she whispered, "Please—we must not—we must not——"

"Surely we have a right to happiness——"

She had left his side, and her voice seemed to come faintly from among the shadows: "Hasn't everybody a right to happiness?"

"Why should we think of everybody—it is my happiness and yours which concerns us—sweetheart."

She did not answer, and, following her, he found that she had entered one of the high-backed, old-fashioned pews, and was on her knees.

Hesitating, he presently knelt beside her.

It was very still in the old church—the old, old church, with its history of sorrow and stress and storm. One final blaze of light illumined the stained glass window above the altar, and touched the bent heads with glory—the bright uncovered head and the veiled one beside it.

Then again came dimness, darkness—silence.

They were in the vestibule of the church before he spoke to her.

"Did you pray," he asked, "for me?"

"I prayed for all men and women—who love——"

He laid his hands on her shoulders and gazed down at her with all of his heart in his sad young eyes. "There must be some way out of this," he said. "Surely God can't be so cruel as to keep us apart. Why, we are so young, dear one, and there's all of life before us—think of all the years."

The look with which she met his glance had in it all the steadfastness of awakened womanhood. "You said out there that I could be brave and patient. Help me to be brave—big brother."

"Don't," he said, hoarsely; "don't call me that. It's got to be all or nothing. But whatever comes, whether you marry me or marry Anthony—I'm going to love you always. I'm going to love you until I die, Bettina."

CHAPTER XVIII

PENANCE

Miss Matthews' cold proved to be bronchitis, and Bettina insisted on nursing her.

"Please let me," she said to Anthony the morning after her flight with Justin. "I suppose I'm in disgrace, anyhow, and this shall be my penance. Only it won't be very severe punishment, for I shall love to take care of her."

"What good is penance if you aren't penitent? I'm

perfectly sure that if that young rascal should ask you to go again you'd go."

"It was glorious."

"But very dangerous."

She shrugged. "You do dangerous things every day. Doesn't he, Sophie?"

"Of course."

"That's different. I do such things to help others."

"And I do them to please myself."

"And to please Justin?" There was an impatient note in his voice. "I have told him that he must not ask you again, Bettina."

"What did he say?"

"He didn't say a word." Anthony smiled at the memory. "He just looked at me as if he would like to punch my head, and turned on his heel and left me."

"Are you angry with him?" anxiously.

"He's angry with me."

"Oh, dear!" Betty sighed. "Sophie gave me a terrible lecture when I came home last night; didn't you, Sophie? And now you and Justin have fallen out, and I'm the cause of all the trouble. I'll go and look after Letty Matthews, and you can learn to love me when I'm gone."

In spite of the lightness of her tone, there was a quiver in her voice which brought both of them to her feet.

"My dear child——!"

"Betty dear——"

Bettina smiled at them with misty eyes. "Please let me go, and when I come back everything will be straightened out—and we'll all live—happy—ever after——"

Nothing that they could say would change her decision, and they were vaguely troubled by it, feeling that she had erected between herself and them some barrier of reserve which they could not break down.

Sophie voiced this in a worried way when Bettina had gone up to pack the little bag which Anthony was to convey with her precious self to Miss Matthews. "Perhaps I shouldn't have said so much, but when she came she seemed so unconscious of the dreadfulness and danger that I'm afraid I scolded a bit."

"She's such a child! Do you think she will ever grow up?"

"Of course. Diana feels that she has many womanly qualities——"

Anthony, standing by the window, fixed his eyes steadily on the blue distance as he asked:

"What do you hear—from Diana?"

"I've a letter." Sophie rummaged among the papers on her desk. "And there's a bit at the end that will please you—you know Diana and her enthusiasms ——"

"Yes, I know——"

His head was still turned away as she opened the thick folded sheets.

"Shall I read it to you?"

"Please."

"She says she likes the hotel, and the people, although she doesn't see much of them. But this is the part you'll appreciate:

"'There's a wonderful bit of woodland, Sophie, back in the hills, and every day I go there and dream. I thought for a while that I had lost my dreams—but now they are coming to me again in flocks—like doves. And yesterday came the best dream of all. I have been trying to think what I could do with my future, and I've thought of this: I'll build a place up here in the forest where Anthony's sick folk can come when they begin to get well, and thus I can finish the work which he begins——'"

She paused, as Anthony faced her. "Why didn't she write that to me?" he demanded, almost roughly. "Didn't she know it would mean more to me than to you—than to anybody——?"

Then with the sudden consciousness that he was showing his heart he stammered, "Forgive me—but you know what I think—of Diana?"

Sophie was infinitely tactful. "Of course I know what you think of her—she's the most wonderful woman in the whole wide world; and that's a great plan of hers—to have a haven for your convalescents."

He made no answer, but just stood very still, looking out, and when Bettina came down with her little bag, they went away together.

Miss Matthews in a gray flannel wrapper was shivering over an inadequate fire.

"Why aren't you in bed?" the doctor asked.

"Because there is no one to answer my bell, and no one to wait on me—and I'm perfectly sure that if I ever let myself go to bed I shall die."

"Nonsense," briskly. "I've brought Betty back with me, and she's going to stay and see that you're made comfortable."

Miss Matthews' face brightened. "She's the only person in the world that I'd have fussing over me."

"I shall stay here and boss you to my heart's content," Bettina told her.

"Oh, dear," Miss Matthews sighed rapturously, "how good that sounds. I—I want to be bossed. I'm so tired of telling other people what to do—that last day at school I thought I should go to pieces."

"Well, you're not going to pieces," Anthony assured her; "you're going to bed. And when I come back I shall expect to find you asleep."

Bettina, coaxing Miss Matthews to be comfortable, brushed her hair in front of the revived fire.

"What pretty hair you have," she said, as she held it up so that the light might shine upon it. "What makes you spoil it by doing it up in that tight knot?"

"I don't know any other way," wailed Miss Matthews. "I've never had time to be pretty."

"I'm going to braid it," said Bettina, "and by evening it will be waved."

Miss Matthews submitted, luxuriously. "It seems so nice to have some one fussing over me. I don't believe anybody ever brushed my hair before."

Bettina, having hunted out a box of her own belongings, was trying different colored ribbons on the little lady's pale brown locks.

"Do you know, Letty, pink is your color? Yes, it is. Blue makes you look ghastly. Now I'm going to tie this twice around your head so that it will hide all the tight pigtails—I got that idea from Diana."

As she finished the somewhat elaborate process, there came steps outside.

"It's just me," said the voice of the little captain.

Bettina peeped through the door, and announced; "Miss Matthews is sick."

"I know. I met Anthony Blake, and he told me; and what I want to know is, can I do anything——?"

"Nothing—thanks."

"Yes, he can," said the hoarse voice of the invalid. "He can come in. If he doesn't mind my head, I shan't mind him."

The captain, entering, found Miss Matthews in a big chair, her feet covered by a steamer rug, her gray flannel apparel hidden by a white wool shawl which had belonged to Betty's mother, and topping all was the wonderful head-dress of rose-colored ribbon, beneath which Miss Matthews' plain little peaked face looked out wistfully.

"Well, now," said the captain, as he shook hands, "that pink becomes her, don't it?"

Miss Matthews blushed. "Betty fixed it."

"I always did like bright things on wimmen," said the captain, earnestly, "and I like that pink."

"Of course you do," said Betty; "all men like pink, except those who like blue, and now you must go away, for I've got to put my patient to bed."

"Don't you cook anything for her," said the captain, as he backed out of the door, his eyes still gloating over the rosy-beribboned lady on the hearth-rug. "I'll bring you over a bowl of hot chowder to-night, and if there's anything else you want, you just let me know."

"Delia will look out for the other things," said Betty; "she's going to send little Jane to help me. But we shall be very glad to have the chowder."

With Miss Matthews asleep at last, Bettina sat down to write a note to Justin.

It was very brief, and began abruptly:

"I am going to tell Anthony. I lay awake all night and thought it out. It wouldn't be fair for me to marry him—unless he knew. I'd get to be just a shivery shadow, Justin, afraid that he would find that I didn't love him—that I loved somebody else.

"But I can never tell him with his grave eyes watching me, so I'm going to write, now—to-night. It almost seems as if poor Letty had been made a sort of instrument of Providence so that I could be here at this time. I couldn't stay at Diana's with everything over between me—and Anthony.

"Oh, Justin, will he ever want to be friends with us again? Will Diana ever forgive us?

"I wish you were here. Yet you mustn't be here—not until everything is settled. Somehow I don't dare think that we can ever be happy. It doesn't seem right to think of it, does it?

"*But I love you.*"

She gave her note to the little captain when he came with the chowder.

He brought something beside the chowder. In a square box, smelling of sandalwood, was an exquisite kimono of palest pink crêpe, embroidered with wisteria blossoms.

"It has been lying in an old trunk for years," he exulted, as he shook it out before her delighted eyes. "When I saw her," he nodded toward the door of the inner room, "when I saw her with that pink ribbon in her hair, it just came to me how nice it would be if she had a wrapper or somethin' to go with it. And after I got home I went rummagin' around until I found this."

"It's lovely," said Bettina; "she'll be simply crazy over it, captain."

"The funny part of it is that I bought it in foreign lands, thinking that some day I might get married, and I'd give it to my wife—and now I'm givin' it to her."

Bettina sparkled. "Oh," she said, "I believe you're in love with her, captain."

The captain sat down in a chair by the fire. "Well," he said earnestly, "it's like this. I ain't ever thought of her that way, exactly. It always seemed to me that she knew so much, and that I was such a rough old

fellow. But lately—well, she's been lonely, and she ain't been well. And all of a sudden it has kind o' seemed to me that, if I ain't smart, I've got a tender heart, and I'd know how to make a soft nest for her to live in, and it seems to me that maybe, after all, she might throw me in along with all the rest of the reasons for getting married. I guess most men are sort of thrown in. Of course the wimmen don't know it, but what they get married for is to have a parlor of their own, and a kitchen of their own, and somebody to fuss over, and it don't make much difference what man they hang their tender affections on, just so he provides the kitchen and parlor. Now here's Letty Matthews, all tired out with teaching, and this is my time to step in. If she'll ever take me she'll take me now, and as soon as she's well enough to hear me say it, I'm going to ask her."

"If Letty marries you, it will be because she loves you —she's that kind. She'd die sooner than take a man for what he could give her."

The captain's face fell. "Oh, Lord," he groaned, "she won't take me just for—myself——"

"You try and see."

"If you can put in a good word for me," the captain urged anxiously, "you do it."

"When a man wants to marry a woman," said his young adviser, "there's just one way to get her. He must just keep at it, captain."

The captain stood up. "Well, what I want to say is this—I shan't ever look at my garden without thinking of her sittin' some day among the flowers, I shan't ever eat a meal without thinking how nice

she'd look pourin' out my coffee in a nice bright dress, and I shan't ever go for a day's fishin' without seein' her in the other end of the boat. And every time I shut my eyes, I'll think of her wearin' pretty things like my mother used to wear. Why, I've got money, that I can't ever use, just lying in the bank and waitin' for somebody to come and spend it. And while I like my own way of doin' things, I can get a likely man to help around the house."

"A man?"

"Yep. I couldn't ever boss a maid. And I ain't goin' to let her"—he jerked his head toward the inner door —"I ain't goin' to let her drudge and cook and scrub. So I'll get some lad that's been a ship's cook, and don't like the sea, and we'll keep things nice for her, and she can fuss around the garden and make calls on the neighbors and sit with me when I smoke. For wimmen, after all," concluded the wise little man, "are liked best by the men when they'll listen. A talkin' woman may catch a man, but the kind that holds him is the kind that sits and listens."

He went away after that, and Bettina carried the pink robe to Miss Matthews. "Oh, Letty, dear," she said, "just see how gorgeous you're going to be."

She opened the box, and let out a whiff of foreign fragrance. But when the beautiful pale-tinted thing was laid across the bed, and Bettina had explained that it was the captain's gift, Miss Matthews looked solemnly at her friend. "If you think I'm going to wear that," she croaked, hoarsely, "you're mistaken."

"Of course you're going to wear it."

"Of course I'm not. I—I'd be afraid."

"Afraid—oh, Letty."

"Yes, I would. I've never worn such things. I'd be afraid I'd get a spot on it, and it wouldn't come out. Now when a woman like me has a thing like that she just lays it away to look at. Then she always knows that she has one lovely garment. But if she wears it, she feels that the day will come when it will be gone, and then—she won't own one beautiful thing in the wide world—not one single beautiful thing."

Bettina bent over her soothingly. "There," she said, "you wear it once, Letty, and then, if you wish, you can put it away."

Late at night, Anthony came on his last round of calls and urged that Bettina should have a nurse to take her place. But Bettina refused.

"I took care of mother alone," she said. "I can surely do this."

Every moment that she was with him she was conscious of the difference in her attitude toward him. She had a nervous fear that he might notice the change in her, that he might read her heart with his keen eyes.

But he seemed preoccupied, and just before he went away he said:

"You haven't promised me one thing, Bettina."

"What, Anthony?"

"That you won't fly again with Justin. I think I shall have to ask that you make it a definite promise."

"Suppose I won't—promise."

"I think you will," he said, in his decided way. "You and I, all through our lives, will each have to defer to the wishes of the other. If I knew that a thing worried you greatly I am sure I should refrain from doing it—I should like to know that you felt that way about me—Bettina."

Something of the old tender quality had crept into his voice. Once more they were alone in the shadowy room—but outside now was the darkness of the night instead of the darkness of the storm. Perhaps some memory of her first impulsive response to his wooing came to him as he took both of her hands in his. "There's some barrier between us of late," he said. "I'm a plain blunt man, and I don't know what I may have said or done. Have I hurt you in any way, child?"

Here was Fate bringing opportunity to her. This was the moment for revelation, confession.

But she could not tell him.

She stood before him with bent head.

"You haven't hurt me, but there is something I should like to say to you. May I write it—Anthony?"

He put a finger under her chin and turned her face up to him.

"Are you afraid of me—dear?"

"Oh, no——"

"Then tell me now——"

"Please—no."

For a moment he studied her drooping face, then he patted her on the cheek. "Write it if you must—but you're making me feel like an awful bear, Bettina."

He sighed and turned away.

She put out her hand as if to stop him, but drew it back. Then she followed him into the hall, and stood watching him, with the light from the old lantern again making a halo of her fair hair. But this time she did not go down to him in the darkness. The spell was upon her of a pair of mocking eyes, and of a voice which had sung with her celestial harmonies.

CHAPTER XIX

HER FATHER'S RING

It was late the next night before Bettina found time to write a letter to Anthony. The town clock had struck ten, and Miss Matthews was asleep in the inner room. As Bettina settled herself at her desk there came through the open window the fragrance of the sea—the night was very still; she could hear across the harbor the beat of the music in the yacht club ballroom, and there was the tinkle of a mandolin on some anchored boat.

She found it difficult to put on paper the things which she decided must be said. Striving to explain she tore up sheet after sheet, then, growing restless at her repeated failure, she rose from her desk and

crossed the room to the cabinet in the corner. In one of the drawers was a packet of letters from her mother. They were exquisite in phrasing and in sentiment. She wondered if she might not borrow from them something of their grace.

As she opened the drawer, her eyes fell on the little carved box. Mechanically she reached for it, and touched the spring. Then she stood staring down at her father's ring!

The words which she had once said to Diana echoed insistently in her ears: "People who can love many times, who can go from one person to another, aren't worth thinking about."

Why—she was like her father! He had loved once, and then he had loved again—and he had broken her mother's heart!

Shuddering, she flung the ring from her, and it rolled under the cabinet. She knelt to grope for it, and, having found it, she shut the box. But, like Pandora, she had let out a whole army of evil fancies, and they continued to oppress her.

When she went back to her desk she could not write, and at last she put away her papers and, wrapping herself in her long white coat, climbed to the cupola.

She had slept there many times with her mother. With only the stars above them, and on each side a view of the wide stretches of the sea, they had talked together, and Bettina had learned the beauty of the older woman's nature; having suffered much, she had forgiven everything.

"Your father," she would say, "was like a child seeking the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. He

was always looking for romance, forgetting that the most wonderful romance is that of the hearthstone and of the quiet heart. If he had ever really loved he would have known the joy of self-sacrifice, of self-effacement—but he did not love——"

"Love is self-sacrifice." Such had been the verdict of the woman who had given all, and who had received nothing. It was a hard philosophy, acquired after years of dreariness, and the child had listened and absorbed and believed. She had heard nothing of love's fulfilment, of the raptures of mutual tenderness. Hence she had been content with Anthony's somewhat somber wooing, until that moment when she had drifted with Justin through infinite space, and had learned the things which might be.

The thought of herself as mistress of Anthony's big house by the sea weighed heavily upon her. In those great rooms she would move softly for the rest of her days. Anthony would work and read and ponder, and when he was at Harbor Light she would sit lonely through the gray winter evenings, and the sad summer twilights. But with Justin—oh, the limitless possibilities!

With him each day would bring its wealth of vivid experience—there would be always the glory of his strength, the uplift of his radiant youth!

She put the vision from her. So had her father striven for joy, and he had missed all the great meanings of life—and she would not be like her father.

The wind was rising, and wailed fretfully above the waters. The stars were blotted out.

Bettina shivered. What a dark world it was!

She rose and went down-stairs. Again she sat down to her desk. But this time she wrote rapidly, and the letter that she wrote was not to Anthony!

When she had sealed and stamped it, she crept down the shadowy stairway, thence to the narrow street.

The mail box was at the corner, and she sped toward it; as she came back on flying feet, a whisper reached her from the darkness of the garden—a whisper which made her heart stand still.

"Betty——"

"*Justin*——"

He emerged from the shadows. "I didn't dare to hope I should see you. I ran away from the yacht club dance—and I'm due back there now. But I wanted you. I think I must have wished so hard that I wished you here. I wouldn't ring for fear I should wake poor Miss Matthews."

His eager whisper met no like response. "You shouldn't have come," she said, dully.

He bent down to look at her. Under the light from the street lamp he could see the disorder of her fair hair, the frightened look in her eyes.

"Dear one—what is it?"

"You mustn't call me that. Did you get my letter?"

"Yes. That's why I came—I knew that by this time you would have written to Anthony—that you were —free——"

"But I haven't written to Anthony."

"You haven't? Wasn't that the letter you just mailed?"

"No—I was mailing a letter to you——"

A sudden fear clutched him. "What did you have to say to me?"

"That—oh, Justin, I can't give Anthony up——"

"Why not?"

"Oh——We can't talk here. Come up-stairs quietly—we mustn't disturb Letty."

She glided ahead of him, and when he came into the shadowy room she was standing by the cabinet.

"I've something to show you," she said, and opened the carved box and held it out to him.

"It's my father's ring," she said; "he broke my mother's heart—and I won't break Anthony's."

Then, in halting sentences, she told him how that day she had come upon the ring. She told him her mother's history. And he listened, and insisted at last, tenderly, that she had made mountains out of mole-hills. But he found her obstinate.

"I must not break my promise," she insisted. "Happiness could never come to us."

And, white and wistful in the face of his flaming arguments, she held to her determination until he left her.

He had turned away wrathfully, and had reached the top of the winding stairway, when he heard her sobbing.

He came back swiftly, and gathered her in his arms.

"You're mine," he said, holding her close. "You know that, Betty."

She drew back from him. "Please," she begged, and so he let her go, and made his way blindly out of the room.

Miss Matthews sleeping feverishly, became aware above the sighing of the wind of an intermittent sound of woe.

She sat up and listened, put one foot out of bed, then the other, and throwing on her old gray wrapper, wavered toward the threshold of the door between the two rooms.

By the flickering light of the candle which burned on Bettina's desk she could see the little shaking white figure on the floor.

"Betty child," she said in a hoarse whisper, "dear child—what's the matter?"

"Oh," Bettina sat up and pushed her hair back from her tear-wet face, "oh, I've waked you up. I think I just forgot that there was any one in the whole wide world except myself——"

The expression on her tragic face told keen Miss Matthews that there was some deep trouble which needed help.

"You come right into my room," she said. "I don't dare stay up another minute. But I couldn't sleep if I tried, with a storm coming, and you can tell me all about it——"

But when she was settled luxuriously once more among her pillows, and with Betty curled up at the foot of the bed, an awkward silence fell between

them.

At last Betty said, "Justin Ford was here. He's in love with me—Letty—but I sent him away——"

"Why did you send him away?"

"Because—because I'm not going to marry him, Letty ——"

"Why not——"

"There's some one else. Some one who gave me these —Letty——"

She lifted her left hand with its burden of sparkling jewels.

"Who on earth?" Miss Matthews demanded.

"Anthony."

"Anthony *Blake*?"

"Yes."

Miss Matthews dropped back limply.

"You'll have to tell me from the beginning," she said, faintly. "I can't quite grasp it——"

And Bettina told—of her loneliness, of Anthony's wonderful offer, and of her glad acceptance of it.

"Well, your mother would have been delighted," Miss Matthews said; "but somehow it doesn't seem right."

"Why not——?"

"Oh, I'd fixed it up that you were going to marry Justin Ford. Captain Stubbs and I watched you that day we went fishing, and if ever two young things

seemed to be in love—well——"

"I—we are in love, Letty."

"Then why in the world are you going to marry Anthony Blake?"

"Because I've promised—and I can't be like my—father. And I can't hurt Anthony—not when he has been so good to me."

She was sobbing again, and into the eyes of the little woman who had never had a daughter came a look of motherly solicitude.

"Dear child," she said, "if you are just going to marry Anthony Blake because you are grateful, don't you do it. No man wants a woman who feels that way—and you wouldn't make him happy——"

"But—I've sent Justin away—and he's angry with me. That is why I was crying when you found me——"

She was on her knees now beside the bed, and the old maid's arms were about her.

"There—there, dearie, you've thought too much about it, and you've come to believe that it's the things you like to do which are wrong. And it's really the other way."

Miss Matthews was thinking rapidly. There was some mystery. Anthony Blake was in love with Diana Gregory. He had always been in love with her. No one need try to tell her that he was not, for she *knew*. Then why was he engaged to Betty, and why had Diana gone away?

She had a sudden inspiration.

"Listen, Betty, there's just one person who can straighten things out, and that person is Diana Gregory. Men aren't any good at a time like this. They think with their heads, but women think with their hearts, and that's the kind of thinking that you need most now——"

"But, Letty——"

Miss Matthews waved her away. "You go and write to Diana and mail it to-night, and then come back and keep me company. I'm afraid of the storm."

It was at that very moment that Anthony was also writing to Diana. When he had left Bettina he had gone straight to Harbor Light and into a little inner office where he was guarded from all intruders by the assistant who sat in the anteroom. Not even a telephone could sound its insistent note in this place where the doctor gained, in a reclining chair, his few brief moments of rest, or where he worked out the intricacies of perplexing problems. Now and then he saw a patient there, but rarely. Usually he shut his door against all distracting influences, and gave his attention to the things which concerned himself alone.

What Sophie had told him about Diana had sent his thoughts flying to the wonder-woman up there in the woods. Even when he had talked to Bettina he had felt the consciousness of his thought of her.

Out of a full heart he wrote, holding back nothing, and when he had sealed and stamped his bulky missive, he, like Bettina, went forth to mail it.

As he passed through the garden a sudden gust of wind scattered a shower of rose petals in his path.

That there were storms in the distance was evidenced by the low rumble of thunder and the vivid flashes of light.

It was on nights like this that his patients grew restless—poor abnormal things they were, afraid of life, afraid of death, seeing in wind and rain and in the battle of the elements the terrors of the supernatural.

But the night fitted in with Anthony's mood. He still wore his white linen office coat. His hat was off, and his gray hair was blown back from his forehead. The salt air exhilarated him. He felt a sudden lightness of heart. He wanted to shout like a boy. He had been grave for so long—but now his message had gone forth to Diana—to-morrow she would read it, and in two short days the answer would come.

He made his way to the beach; the vivid flashes showed the heaving blackness of the waters—the waves came in with a sullen roar.

He thought of the night when he had stood there with Diana, and when the moon had made a silver track. To-night there was no light—except Minot's—like a star. "I-love-you," it said to the lonely man who stood there in the darkness.

From somewhere in the garden a voice called him, then a nurse came running.

"I saw you go out," she panted; "perhaps you'd better come, doctor—they are getting all worked up about the storm."

Thus was his life made up of duty. There was never an uninterrupted moment. His strength was always being drawn upon to uphold the weakness of others.

To-night his whole nature craved the tumult of the wild night. Yet he must calm himself to meet the needs of those who leaned upon him.

As he turned to follow the nurse, a big car whirled through the gate, and there sounded the trilling laughter of girls, the deeper jovial bass of young men.

Beneath the brilliantly-lighted entrance of Harbor Light the car stopped, and as Anthony came up, Sara and Doris descended with much shaking out of filmy dancing frocks.

Sophie, with seeming unconsciousness of the havoc which the rain had wrought on her lovely black gown, made a smiling explanation to Anthony.

"Justin and Bobbie tried to get the top up—but something caught and I thought we should all be drenched. And then your Harbor Light shone out to welcome us——"

Anthony was glad that they had come. He craved the lightness and brightness. He seemed suddenly to be one of them again—not a sad and somber being set apart. He had a sense of relief in Bettina's absence. It was as if her youth and beauty showed the contrast of his age.

He took them up to his sitting-room, then excused himself to make his rounds. "I'm going to have something sent up for you to eat—I know what slim fare they give at the club on the nights of the dances. I'll be with you soon."

While they waited for him Sara played; Bobbie and Doris danced—and Justin talked with Sophie.

He looked worn and white, and a line cut deeply into his forehead.

"I owe you an apology," he said, "for yesterday. But I couldn't help it. Bettina was so little and lovely—you know I wouldn't harm a hair of her head——"

Something in his voice made Sophie lay her hand on his. "My dear boy, my dear boy——"

"I'm awfully hard hit," he said, "but she—she's turned me down. I fancy it was our last flight together. Do you remember Browning's 'Last Ride'—

"'And heaven just prove that I and she,
Ride, ride—together—forever
ride——'?

"Well, my heaven will be a place where she and I shall drift through infinite space—together——"

He stood up. Sara was coming toward them—a brilliant little figure in a flame-colored gown.

"I'm not going to bore you with my worries," Justin said, quickly—"but—I—I wish you'd be awfully good —to Bettina."

Sophie carried away with her that night the vision of his tragic young face, and before she went to bed she wrote to Diana, and her letter ended thus:

"Oh, dearest girl, oh, dearest girl, what have we done, what have we done——!"

CHAPTER XX

THE "GRAY GULL"

The morning after the storm Justin went forth, moodily, for his morning flight.

He found opposition, however, to his ascension. "Wait until the afternoon," was the advice given him; "there's a nasty wind."

He would not listen, but he delayed his departure, preferring to start alone, and eventually the other aviators drifted off, and he made the "Gray Gull" ready.

Going down to the pier for a last peep at the weather, he was hailed by Captain Stubbs.

"I am going to take Anthony Blake out for a day's fishin'," the little man said, as his motor boat chugged comfortably within easy talking distance. "He telephoned last night that he wanted a day away from his work, and I said that the fish would be running after the rain. I'm always mighty glad to have him go with me. He's a born fisherman. His great-grandfather and mine fished together on the banks, and our grandfathers were part owners in the same schooner. But Anthony's father went to the city and studied medicine, and his son followed in his footsteps, so that's the way the Blake boys got switched off from fishin' as a business. But it's in their blood."

"Look here," Justin interrupted, "I want to ask you a question, captain, and it's about Anthony. Did you ever think he was in love with Diana Gregory?"

"Well," the captain meditated, "I ain't ever thought much about it. But Miss Matthews sees a lot, and she told me once that Anthony Blake wouldn't ever look at any other woman but Diana, and that Diana was just keeping him on the string."

"I can't exactly fancy Diana as that sort of woman."

"Well, it ain't anything against a woman that she don't know her own mind," was the captain's philosophical reflection. "Most men don't know their own mind when it comes to marryin'. Only the difference is this: a man loses his head and asks a girl, and then he wonders if she's going to make him happy. And a woman hesitates about sayin' 'Yes,' but when she once decides, she sticks to a man through thick and thin."

In spite of his gloom Justin smiled. "Where did you learn it all, captain? You are as wise as if you had been married to a half dozen wives."

"There's a sayin'," the captain explained, "that a sailor has a wife in every port. That ain't true. Sailors as a rule are constant men. But they see a lot of wimmen creatures, and they learn that there ain't much difference, when it comes to lovin', between a Spanish lady who flirts with her eyes, and a Boston lady who flirts with her brain. They're all after the same thing, and that's a home, with a big H, and it's a credit to them that they are—otherwise we men wouldn't ever know when to settle down."

"Yet it's because of a woman that some of us never settle down." Justin's young eyes were looking out stormily upon the gray world. "It's because of some woman that we wander and are never satisfied."

The little captain gave him a keen glance. "Well, you won't ever have to worry," he said; "all you've got to do is to keep at it till you find the right woman. That's what that Betty child said to me the other day. 'Captain, if a man wants a woman, he's got to keep after her until she says 'Yes.'"

"Did Betty Dolce say that?"

"Yes—she's a smart little thing."

But Justin's thoughts were not of her "smartness" but of her pathetic loveliness. All night her sobs had echoed in his heart. When he had driven his gay party home after their stop at Anthony's, he had ridden for miles alone in the storm. He had welcomed the beat of the rain in his face. He had yearned for some adventure which would shut out that vision of the shadowy room.

But no adventure had been forthcoming, and so he had sought his uneasy couch, and had tried to sleep, and had risen at the first crow of cocks.

He brought his mind back with difficulty to the captain. "I'm going up this morning, captain. I'll wigwag to you and Anthony if you're outside."

"Don't you go," the little captain advised earnestly; "this isn't any morning to fly. There's all sorts of storms about, and you can't tell what minute you'll get into one."

"Didn't you like to sail your ship in a storm—didn't you like the excitement of it—the battle with the wind and waves?"

"That's different. I knew my ship was seaworthy. I knew what I had to face in an ordinary storm. But

you take one of those Chinese typhoons, or a hurricane that blew up from the Gulf, and I didn't enjoy it. Not a bit. I'd go miles to get out of one, and I learned this, after I had looked death in the face a hundred times, that foolhardiness doesn't pay. You go slow, and wait for a quiet day."

Justin laughed recklessly. "I'll take my chances."

"Well, there's no fool like a young fool." The little captain started his motor with a jerk, and its comfortable chugging was at once changed to an angry snort.

Justin did not at once go back to the sheds. He climbed a path which led to the adjoining hotel, and made his way to the writing rooms.

The people who lounged on the porches looked at him curiously as he passed. Those who had been there longest whispered to the newcomers the magic of his name. More than one girl remarked the beauty of the somber young countenance, and the strength of the straight young figure.

In the writing room of the big hotel Justin wrote to Diana. It was his last hope. He wrote hurriedly, using the elaborately monogrammed house paper, and his script was interspersed with dashes, with now and then a boyish blot.

When he had finished he went to the desk of the girl in the corridor who sold post-cards and magazines, and bought a stamp.

Anthony was delayed, somewhat, in starting out with Captain Stubbs by the news that Miss Matthews was worse.

He found her with a high fever, and he also found Bettina in a state of agitated apology.

"I'm afraid I talked to her too late. But we—we were afraid of the storm."

"She'll be all right in a few hours, but you've got to get some rest. I'll send a nurse."

"No—Sophie said she would come—early this afternoon—and then I can sleep—and I've had little naps on the couch——"

As he turned to go he stopped and said, with some hesitation: "You didn't write the letter to the Big Bear, Betty."

She blushed. "I'm not going to write it."

"Why not?"

"Because—I've changed my mind about it—I've really nothing to tell you—and every woman has a right to change her mind."

She tried to say it saucily, but was not successful, and he, vaguely relieved, responded, "I'm glad—that you are not troubled," kissed her lightly on her forehead, and went away. And she looked after him and sighed, and wondered if all the years which stretched before them would be as dreary as this.

The arrival of the little captain broke in upon her thoughts. "You give her these," he said. "I can't stay a minute. I'm going out with Anthony for a day's fishin'."

He rushed away, leaving Bettina with her arms full of pink roses.

She took them in to Miss Matthews. "Letty," she said, "the captain brought them. Isn't he romantic? He is making pink your color. I think it's dear of him."

Miss Matthews blushed. "I'd surely never have picked out Captain Stubbs for the romantic kind, but you never can tell."

"No, you never can tell," Betty agreed, and stood looking idly out of the window.

All at once she gave startled attention.

"Letty," she said, "Justin is flying."

Miss Matthews, half asleep, murmured, "Well, I'm glad you're not with him," and Bettina, recalled to her obligations to the invalid, answered with assumed carelessness, "So am I," and measured out Miss Matthews' medicine, and talked no more.

But her heart was beating madly as she followed his flight. He was up there—alone. Up there in that wonderful world! Was he thinking of her? Was he hearing, again, those celestial harmonies?

To-day there was no sunshine—but as he circled against the background of moving clouds her thoughts went to that wild hawk in "the wind swept sky."

She knew nothing of the danger. She did not know that, as yet, his machine was not perfected to a point where it could brave with immunity such weather as was threatened by the brooding sky. She only saw his flight—and her hurt heart craved the place which had been hers for a few brief moments of rapture.

When at last he was out of sight, she went about her little duties, but came back again and again to the

window, watching for the time when he should reappear.

Anthony and the captain, half-way across the harbor, said things about Justin's recklessness, and spoke of the danger.

"Some day he'll get hurt," was the captain's conclusion, "and then he won't ever fly again."

"Yes." Anthony's eyes were following the "Gray Gull," which was now beyond the harbor and heading for the open sea; growing smaller and smaller, it was at last a mere speck on the horizon.

Then the captain and Anthony, having reached a place offshore which promised a good catch, put out their lines and entered at once upon that ecstatic state of watchfulness which is the heritage of the true fisherman.

The relief which Anthony felt from the cares which had oppressed him was magical. He was sailor enough to love the swell of the waves and the rippling music of the water as it slipped under the anchored boat; he was fisherman enough to be thrilled by the chances of capture; he was artist enough to gloat over the beauty of the dull morning —the white gulls circling overhead, the black rocks sticking their spines above the gray sea, a phantom four-masted ship sailing straight toward them out of the mists.

And he was man enough to think of the woman he loved, and to forget the pensive appealing child in the shadowy room. He had a vision of Diana up there in the forest—strong of spirit, wresting from life, even in her exile, the things which were worth while.

As they ate their lunch the little captain confided to Anthony the hope of his heart. "I'm going to ask Letty Matthews to marry me—I want to get her away from that school——"

"Good. I'll dance at your wedding."

"When am I to dance at yours?" the captain demanded, bluntly. "I should think it was about time that you were putting your furniture in that big house for Diana Gregory."

"Some of the furniture is in." Anthony slurred over the greater question by tactfully emphasizing the lesser. "I had my mother's piano sent over yesterday, and some of the things for the living-room and library. We haven't a place for them at Harbor Light —and then there's the china. I wish I could match up some of those pieces of White Canton, captain. I wonder if we could make an exchange. I've a lot of Crown Medallion which would fill out your set——"

Having thus started the little captain on his chief hobby, Anthony breathed a sigh of relief, and went on with his fishing.

The subject of the china sufficed to fill the captain's mind until the fish stopped biting, and they decided to go in.

It was just as they began their trip toward the harbor that Justin came back.

The wind was blowing now straight from the south, and the "Gray Gull" was making slow headway against it.

"Why don't he come down to the water? It's safer," said the little captain, anxiously. "There's every sign

of a squall——"

But Justin kept on; between him and the harbor was the Neck, with its jagged shore line of rocks. He was evidently planning to cross the strip of land obliquely, as, in rounding the point to come up the harbor, he must get the full force of the wind—

As he sailed over them they caught the strong beat of his motor. It seemed, too, that he waved his hand; then he left them behind, keeping close to shore and above that jagged line of rocks.

"Oh, the fool," the captain murmured. "Why don't he get away from the land?"

The wind came with a mighty sweep; the air-ship gave a backward tilt, fluttered for a moment like a bird in a storm—then shot down with sickening swiftness!

"His motor has stopped," the captain shouted, "and he's lost control! If he strikes the rocks he's done for!"

Down—down! They had one glimpse of Justin struggling to free himself; they saw him jump clear, and the big machine crashed on the beach.

It was the little captain who forced his boat to record speed, but it was Anthony who went over the side and through the breakers to where Justin lay prostrate, half in and half out of the water.

Wet and dripping the doctor bent over the boy, put his hand to his heart and felt it beating faintly, then looked at the broken body and said, unsteadily:

"There's only a slim chance of saving him. We must get him to Harbor Light."

The accident had been seen from the harbor, and as the captain's boat shot around the Point with its precious burden, it met other boats coming out to meet it, and orders were shouted back and forth, so that when the rescuers reached the pier, there was a car ready for that which had gone out full of life and strength and which had come back beaten and bruised.

The girls on the porch of the big hotel cried in each other's arms, hysterically, as the car passed, and talked of the way the young aviator had looked in the morning.

But far up in a tall old house, crowned by a cupola, was a girl who did not cry. She had seen the "Gray Gull" come down and had guessed at the catastrophe. She had fainted away quietly, and lay now on the floor by the window with all of her fair hair shaken over her still white face.

CHAPTER XXI

BROKEN WINGS

It was Sophie who found Bettina. She came in quietly, wondering at the silence, then growing suddenly afraid she passed swiftly to the inner room to discover Miss Matthews still asleep and Bettina in a huddled heap on the floor.

She picked the girl up in her strong arms, and carried

her back to the big room and brought water and bathed her face, murmuring anxiously, "My dear, what is it? What has happened?"

And, after a little while, Bettina whispered, "Justin," and then, a little louder, "Justin," and coming to the surface through the darkness for a third time, she clutched Sophie's arm, and cried, "Oh, is he killed? Is Justin killed?"

Holding the shuddering little creature close, Sophie protested: "My dear, what is it? What have you dreamed?"

"I didn't dream. Oh, Sophie, I didn't dream. I saw him up in the air, and I saw him—fall——"

So it had come. So it came to all men who flew. Every bit of blood was drained from Sophie's face. But, fighting for composure, she held out such hope as she could. "My dear, are you sure? How did you know?"

"I was standing by the window when he—came down ——"

"But there may have been some one to help him—and he was over the water—and he can—swim——"

Footsteps were ascending the stairs lightly but hurriedly. The two women turned their white faces to the door. Captain Stubbs stood on the threshold.

"He's hurt," he said. "Justin's hurt. He's at Harbor Light—and he's asked for Betty—and Anthony says that she must come."

In a big room that overlooked the sea lay the bird man with broken wings. After that first murmured plea for "Betty" he had showed no sign of returning

consciousness.

On the floor above him they were getting ready for the operation. Nurses and doctors, in ghostly white, had set themselves to various preparatory tasks. And presently everything was in readiness for the great Dr. Anthony.

He was delayed by a white-faced slip of a thing, whom he led at once into his private office, leaving Captain Stubbs outside as a proud and patient sentinel.

When he had closed the door, Anthony took the little cold hands in his. "He is going to get well, Betty, if my skill can make him. I've got to operate at once—and there's a big chance—the other way——" He hesitated, then said, gently, "You love him, child?"

"Yes—oh, yes."

"And he loves you—how blind I've been! How much trouble might have been saved if I had known."

There was no bitterness in his voice, only a great regret.

"And now," he went on, "I'm going to save him for you, if I can. And I've sent a nurse to take care of Letty Matthews so that you can have Sophie with you."

He had thought of everything. It came to Bettina then what he meant to the world—this great Dr. Anthony—she had hated his mission of healing—and the skill which might now mean to her a lifetime of happiness instead of unutterable woe.

She tried, faltering, to tell him something of what she was feeling.

"Hush, dear child. You could not know. And now you must be very brave, and pray your little white prayers for Justin, and, please God, we shall bring him through."

Then he had gone away and Sophie had come, and the dreadful time of waiting had begun.

Sophie, who had walked in the Valley of the Shadow with her own beloved, knew the right things to say to the child who clung to her.

"Dearest, think of all you will mean to him when he gets well. Why, there's never an opportunity for a woman like that of having the man she loves dependent upon her—you can do all of the lovely little things for him."

"But if he should not—get well?"

"You are not to think of that."

"I must think of it."

"Hush, dear, *don't*. You can't help him or yourself by crying—I know how you feel—but think of this. If you should lose him, you will still have known love at its best. And you will never be content with a lesser thing. Oh, Betty, child, it is the shallow people who ask, 'Is it better to have loved and lost than never to have loved?' How *can* there be any doubt? The woman who has not loved is only a half creature."

"I know. Oh, Sophie, it seems such an awful thing to say, but if this hadn't happened I should never have been sure that for me there could never be any one else but Justin."

Tactfully, the older woman led her on to talk of her

doubts and fears, and of her terror lest she might deal with love lightly, as her father had done. And then Sophie spoke reverently of her own perfect marriage.

"It was during his illness," she said, "that I learned to know my husband. I think I had always been a bit selfish. He had seemed so strong that I had heaped my burdens upon him. He wanted me to be happy, so he withheld all cares from me. But the time came when he knew it was not right to withhold such cares. He knew that I was to face separation and loneliness, and so he helped me to get ready. Oh, Betty, dear, I can't tell you how wonderful he was. He knew that death must come to him, and yet he never whimpered. He was a brave soldier going down to battle, and not once did he flinch. But gradually he came to lean on me; once he cried in my arms—not from fear, but because he must leave me. These things are not easy to speak of—but where at first I had merely loved, I came to worship. I saw how he had shielded me, and when he left me I had the precious memory not only of his care for me—but of my care for him—and his appreciation of it."

There was a silence in which not only the "white prayers" of Bettina ascended, but the fervent ones of the woman who had suffered and lost.

Then came a nurse with the message, "Dr. Blake wishes me to say that all conditions are favorable," and they permitted themselves to hope.

Other people were coming now to Harbor Light—great men from the yachts, people from the big hotels, fellow-aviators of Justin's—the townsfolk and sailors—children who had worshiped the flying man of the smiling countenance.

But no one was shown into the inner office except Bobbie and Doris and Sara.

It was in that first moment of her meeting with Bettina that Sara blotted out the last vestige of smallness and of jealousy.

She went straight up to the girl whom Justin loved, and put her arms about her. "Oh, you poor dear thing," and they wept together.

Then Bettina asked, "How did you know?"

"Everybody knows," Sara said, hysterically. "Did you think you could hide it?"

Doris was weeping, too, in Bobbie's arms, and Bobbie's white, set face showed what he was feeling for his friend. "Oh, what made him go out on such a day—of all the crazy things——"

"I told him not to," said Captain Stubbs, who had kept hitherto in the background, "but there's no fool like a young fool, and I said it at the time. But it was God's own providence that we were there when he fell. And if any one can fix him up it's Anthony."

Bettina heard, and thought of her former fear of this place, which seemed now a sacred house of healing. Was she the same girl who had railed so bitterly against Anthony's profession? She felt that she wanted to tell him how great he was. Why, he was a wonderful man—and he was going to save Justin as he had saved others. Daily he fought battles with death and conquered. He must conquer now!

Up-stairs in the operating room was being played a game of skill which had for its pawns human life and human reason.

The worst trouble lay in the wounds about the head. But there were other dreadful complications, and many times in the hours that followed it seemed that the game was lost.

All through the tiresome ordeal not once did a muscle of the great surgeon quiver. Not once did he show dismay at that which was most baffling; not once did he show weakness at that which was most pitiful.

But when at last his great task was ended, his face was worn and gray.

Yet as he went to change his clothes, through the fabric of his weariness and of his anxiety ran a thread of joy in the thought that the barriers were down between himself and Diana, and that he might love her now without reproach.

When at last he descended to his little office, he spoke hopefully. "His strength and youth are in his favor—and I'm going to pull him through."

Yet he knew in his heart that he was flinging a defiance at destiny.

He arranged to keep Bettina at Harbor Light.

"Justin might ask for you again," was his explanation.

So Bobbie and Doris and Sara and Sophie went away together, and when there was no one else to hear, Anthony said to Bettina, gently, "My dear, why didn't you tell me?"

Curled up in a big leather chair, she spoke of her fear of hurting him, of being inconstant—like her father.

She seemed such a child in her blue serge suit with

its red silk tie, and with the shady hat which had been pinned on hastily when the summons came. But the things she was saying were womanly things, and for the first time since he had known her Anthony perceived the possibilities of which Diana had been so sure—this little Betty child, transformed by love, would one day be an inspiration and a help to the man she would marry.

"If I have hurt you," she said, as she finished, "I—I can only ask you to forgive me. If this had not happened, I think I should have—kept my promise. But now you know—and you will not want me to keep it."

"No. I do not want you to keep it. Oh, what a tragedy we have made of it all. I might have made it so easy for you."

"You, Anthony?"

"Yes."

He sat silent for a moment, his fingers tapping the arm of his chair, those strong flexible fingers which an hour ago had done such magical feats of surgery. Bettina's eyes were held by them.

"I hardly know how to begin; it has to do with—Diana."

"Diana?"

"I love her, dear——"

"Diana?" Bettina spoke, breathlessly. "Oh, and does she love you—Anthony?"

"I have always loved her—but I thought I had lost her—then when she came back from Europe I found

that she was still free—and that—she cared. But by that time I had engaged myself to a dear child who really didn't love me at all."

"But why didn't you tell me, Anthony?"

"Because, my dear, I thought you might be made unhappy."

To others there might have seemed something humorous in the situation—in its almost farcical complications and misunderstandings. But these two saw none; the issues were too deep, too serious; death was too near in that upper room.

"Was that why—she went away——?" Bettina whispered.

"Yes."

"Oh, write and tell her to come back."

"I have written. I wrote yesterday. I saw that you were not happy. I felt that I had no right to permit you to marry me when my heart was bound up in another woman—as it was bound up in her. I felt that in marriage there is something which goes beyond conventional honor. As a physician I have seen much of unhappiness—and I could not sanction in myself that which I would not have sanctioned in another. So I told Diana. I think instinct warned me there was some one else, after your flight with Justin."

"And now—if he gets—well."

Anthony stood up. "He shall get well," he said, steadily. "I scarcely dare think of the things which are coming to you and to me, dear child. But when I think of them my heart says, 'Thank God.'"

If she wept now in his arms, it was as a daughter might weep in the arms of a father—there was love between them at last, but it was the love of tried friendship, of passionate gratitude on her part, of protective affection on his.

When he had quite soothed her, she drew off the sparkling rings. "These must go back to you," she said; "some day you must give them to Diana."

He shook his head. "I shall give her pearls. She belongs to the sea, Bettina; she's the wife for a man of sailor instincts like myself—we love the harbor, and the great lights that are high above it, and the little lights that are low—and so I shall give her pearls.

"But you must keep these," he went on; "not to wear on your third finger—Justin, please God, shall some day look after that—but to wear on your right hand, as my gift to you—for luck and a long and happy life."

In the evening they rode over to see Miss Matthews, and found her sitting up. "I feel better," she said, "and there's something in the air. I want to know why I have a nurse, and why Bettina went away while I was asleep?"

"And I want to know," said Anthony, sternly, "why you are out of bed?"

"Because I am better," said Letty Matthews, "there's nothing in this world that can cure a person like curiosity—and I had to know what was going on."

So Anthony told her, and she wept to think of the fate of the bird man with the broken wings.

But she was cheered by the coming of Captain Stubbs. He bore on a tray such a supply of delicious viands that Miss Matthews urged that Bettina and Anthony should stay and have supper.

Bettina could not eat.

"Please, I'm not hungry," she said, and went down the winding stairway, and when she came back her arms were full of roses.

"Will you let him have them in his room?" she asked Anthony.

"He shall see them first when he opens his eyes," Anthony promised; "they shall carry all of your messages to him."

In the hushed room at Harbor Light there was darkness—and there was the fragrance of many flowers.

Out of the darkness a faint voice wavered, "Lilacs?"

The nurse bent over the high hospital bed. "Roses—lovely ones."

A long silence. Then, "Lovely ladies?" said the faint voice.

He could see them with his eyes shut—a whole procession of pretty ladies, all floating in the dimness. Just their faces on a broad band of light, over which the gray mists rolled now and then and blurred the outlines. Then the faces would again shine out, smiling—gay and sad, pensive and glad.

"Lovely ladies," he said again.

They followed him into his dreams, and kept him

company until the pain began—that racking, wrenching pain; then they flew from him and left him alone to suffer.

After a long time, when the nurse had bared his shoulder and had pricked it with something that felt like a pin, they came back—all those lovely faces; only now they seemed to peep from behind clouds of smoke, heavier than the mists, and more tantalizing in their concealments.

So they came and went through the long night, leaving when the pain racked him, returning always when the nurse did things to his shoulder with her little shining instrument.

They fled from him, too, when he opened his eyes and saw hazily that there was a light, and a great many flowers, and that Anthony was standing in a sort of bower of them.

And Anthony was saying to some unseen person who stood at the head of the bed, "Did he notice the flowers?"

"Yes."

"Good—you can take them out now—nurse."

He had tried to tell Anthony about the pretty ladies. But they had come back and were whirling about him on that band of light—and there was one with dark hair with a crescent moon above the parting—and there was one who came closer than the others, and who had hair that shone like gold, and a little white face.

"Betty——"

The nurse did not catch the name—but Anthony's

quick ear was at once attentive.

"She loves you, dear boy; and I'm going to make you well, so you may marry her."

CHAPTER XXII

THE ENCHANTED FOREST

Far up in the hills the Beautiful Lady went daily to the post-office for her mail.

It was a long walk, and the path skirted the edge of the forest. Leaving the path one entered upon a world of dim green light, a world of soft whispering sounds, a world of enchantment; and it was into this world that Diana's feet strayed as she came and went. It was here she spent most of her mornings; it was here she found the solitude she craved.

The guests at the mountain house called the Beautiful Lady exclusive; but it was an exclusiveness which matched her air of remoteness, and since such friendships as she encouraged were with those who were lonely and tired and sick, she made no enemies by her withdrawal from the conventional life of the place.

The lazy folk on the porch who were content to wait for the mail bag which came at noon by carrier always watched with curiosity the departure and return of the stately woman who was said to be

wealthy and of great social eminence. She went alone and came back just in time for lunch, having loitered on the way to read her letters.

The letters, however, were not always satisfying. They brought such meager news of that which lay so near her heart! Sophie kept persistently away from topics which might be disturbing; Bettina's girlish epistles really told nothing—and Anthony wrote not at all.

Yet such scraps as she could glean formed the excitement of Diana's day, and always she had a vague and formless hope—a hope for which she reproached herself. Always she hoped for a letter from Anthony.

She knew that he ought not to write. She knew that if he did write she would not answer—but the longing of her heart would not be stilled.

As far as possible she forced her mind to thoughts of the future, and it was thus she had evolved the plan which she had written to Sophie. It was the only way in which her life could be linked with Anthony's; they would thus share in a work which might continue in interest to the end of their days.

There were times, however, when all of her optimism, all of her philosophy failed, and when her whole nature cried out for reality—not for dreams.

It was on one of these days of depression that she left behind her the hotel piazza with its chattering crowd, and drifted somewhat languidly across the lawn, past the tennis courts, and out into the mountain path.

In her modish frock of gray linen, with a parasol of

leaf green, she seemed to merge gradually into the grayness and greenness of the forest beyond. She might have been a dryad returning to her tree, or as an artist in the group on the porch remarked, "a nymph in a Corot setting."

How still it was in the forest! Even the birds seemed to respect the silences, and slipped from branch to branch like shadows. The squirrels, flattened heads downward against gray tree trunks, whisked up and out of sight as the intruder advanced. A strayed butterfly went by in a wavering flight, seeking the sunshine and the flowers of the open fields.

Diana loved the forest, but more than all she loved the sea. She missed the wild music of the waves and wind. The hills seemed to shut her in; she wanted the wide spaces, the limitless expanse of blue—she wanted the harbor with its many lights.

Yet if Anthony married Betty it would be years before she would dare go back. His work was there, and he must stay; she would be exiled from the place she loved.

Her steps quickened as if she would fly from the thought. She passed again beyond the edge of the arching trees, and came upon a winding road. Its last curve brought her to a little settlement of which the store, which was also the post-office, was the most imposing building.

The postmistress knew her and had the package ready. "Lots of letters, two papers and a half dozen magazines," she said, cheerily. "I don't see how you find time to read so many."

"I have nothing to do but read. I am not a lucky busy

person like yourself." Diana was smiling as she turned up the corners of each letter to glance at the one beneath.

On top was Sophie's daily budget, black-edged and bulky. Bettina's showed a faddish slender monogram. Following was Justin's—she knew that boyish scrawl; a business letter or two, a bill, an advertisement, and then—her heart leaped. On the flap of a great square envelope blazed the seal which Anthony had chosen for his house of healing—a lighthouse flashing its beacon over stormy waters.

The little postmistress wondered at the radiance which illumined the face of the lovely lady. Diana, in saying a hurried farewell, sparkled like a girl.

"You've given me such wonderful letters this morning," she said, breathlessly. "I must run away and read them."

And she did run, literally, when she had passed beyond the limits of the village. Holding up her narrow skirt, her parasol under her arm, her precious burden of mail hugged tightly, she left the path, and again entered upon the enchanted forest.

She knew of a place where she would read Anthony's letter, a warm little hollow, with a still silver pool beyond, a pool which, with its upstanding reeds and rushes, was merged at its farthest edge into a blurred purple background.

Safe at last in her retreat she opened Anthony's letter, forgetting the others in her eagerness, seeing only the firm, simple script which crowded a dozen pages.

He began quietly, but evidently, as he wrote,

Anthony had been swayed by emotions which had mastered him, and he had written with fire and intensity, and, as she read, her heart responded tremulously:

"DEAR DIANA:

"Sophie has told me of your plan—your wonderful plan which has to do with my work and with me, and which shall link our futures in an interest which shall be above reproach.

"It was like you to think of it, and I shall not try to thank you. Indeed you will not want my thanks. You and I are beyond conventional concealments, and you know, as I know, that the thing which you are doing is for your own happiness as well as for mine, and I am glad that it is so, because your happiness is the thing which I most desire.

"I have not wanted to think of you up there in the hills. You belong to the sea, dear girl, and I know you are missing it, as we are missing you. I know, too, that, as you read this, you will say: 'He is overstepping bounds. He must not write these things to me.' But I am going to write them, Diana, for the time has come when we must face the big truths, and let the half-truths go.

"The big truth is this—that you and I love each other. The half-truth is—that Bettina loves me, and that I must not break her

heart.

"I am troubled about Bettina. Certainly the child is not happy. All of her brightness has left her. She is pale and thin, and I am too wise a physician of bodies not to know something, too, of hearts. You may say that my attitude has affected her; that she had felt instinctively the difference in me. But it is not that. I am sure it is not that. When I asked her to-night if there was anything between us, she faltered that she had something to tell me that she would write.

"Perhaps I should wait until her letter comes, but I cannot wait. You are so vividly with me at this moment, Diana, that I can almost hear your voice calling above the noise of the wind and waves. I can see you as I like you best—all in white. I can feel your presence as I felt it that night in the empty house as you stood on the threshold of that moonlighted room.

"Oh, dear girl, come back to me. I must have you in my life. Otherwise it will be a thwarted life—and a lonely one. For whether you marry me or not, I will not marry Betty. I do not love her, and she shall not spend her days as the unloved wife of one whose thoughts are all with a wonder-woman up in the hills.

"Can't you see it as I do? We must not so profane marriage, Betty and I. There is no idea of honor so false as that which holds a man or a woman to a promise which has ceased to have a vital and a vivid meaning.

"No man has a right to plan for a home unless Love is to be the corner-stone. These things are sacred, and not to be spoken of except to those who understand. But my love for you and your love for me would form a barrier against all the sweet and tender meanings for Betty of wifehood and motherhood.

"That's the plain truth of it. I'm a blunt man, and I've said it as it has come to me after days of pondering.

"I am not saying these things that I may marry you. I am saying them because they are true. Surely we can find a way to make Bettina happy. Her youth and loveliness must always win love. The hearts of the boys at the club are all under her little feet, and Justin—oh, if I only dared hope that she could care for Justin——

"But marry her I will not, even if I go alone through life.

"For me you are the One Woman, Diana. In these days of separation from you I have thought of many things, but of none more than this: that we men, having loved one woman, deceive ourselves, when we lose her, with the thought that another like her may be found—but she is never found, and so we go through life half-men, unsatisfied, with hungry hearts.

"There's a big storm coming. I wish you might go down to the beach and walk with me in the wind. How often we have walked

> together in beating storms, Diana, and have gloried in them—so we would face the storms of life together; so I cannot face them with any other—or alone.
>
> "Oh, girl, come back to me. I need you. I must have you. I *will* have you. You are mine.
>
> ANTHONY.

The letter dropped from her fingers. She hid her face in her hands. His call echoed thunderingly in her ears. But she must not listen; she must not.

She yielded for the moment, however, to the sweetness of his insistent demand. Curled up in the warm little hollow she dreamed of the things which might be—putting off, as long as possible, the moment of decision.

The other letters lay unheeded at her feet. All friendship seemed futile at such a time. What could Sophie, or Bettina or Justin say which could match those burning words of her lover?



THE OTHER LETTERS LAY UNHEEDED

The sun, rising higher, filtered through the branches and fell like golden rain upon the surface of the pool

—the purple shadows gave way to emerald vistas; a trail of honey-bees traveled unerringly toward a hidden honey store. It was high noon in the forest!

Diana, waking to the fact that the hours had flown, gathered up her other letters, and opened the one on top of the pile. It was Justin's. What could he have to say to her, this boy who lived his life so lightly?

But when she had read the scrawled words she sat staring at them, hardly believing the things which had been written.

"DEAR LADY:

"Betty Dolce told me last night of her engagement to Anthony. But it was too late. You see it has come to this: that there isn't any one in the world for me but Betty—she's so little and young and sweet, and she has waked up the man in me, and that's what no other girl has ever done.

"But she won't break her promise, and last night I left her crying, and I can't stand the thought of it. I just can't stand it. When it was only I who suffered, I could get along, but now—why, it's Betty's happiness against all the rest.

"Am I doing a dishonorable thing, Diana, when I ask her to tell Anthony the truth?

"You shall decide for us. I cannot think clearly; I love her too much.

JUSTIN.

What had inspired Justin to write to her like that? Did Betty know? Did Sophie? She went to the reading of the other letters eagerly, and when at last they lay before her, and the whole pitiful little story was revealed, the tears were running down her cheeks. Oh, the unhappiness of the dear young hearts —and the happiness which was to come!

Those who had assembled on the porch of the hotel in the before-luncheon hour were struck by something unusual in the bearing of the Beautiful Lady as she came toward them. All the listlessness of the morning had gone. Her head was up and she walked swiftly, lightly.

"She makes me think of the 'Winged Victory,'" was the comment of the observant artist. "She gives the same impression of triumphant motion."

At other times Diana had rather resented the inspection of the people on the porch. But to-day all of the faces looked friendly—she felt that she would like to say to them all, "I am going home to be happy." But what she really did was to bow somewhat shyly, and to go on with flaming cheeks.

The artist looked after her. "I wonder if she knows that she belongs to the goddess type of the Golden Age," he said, and sighed.

It was just at dusk that Diana stepped once more within the borders of the enchanted forest, and sought the warm little hollow beside the pool. In her filmy gown of midnight blue she moved like a shadow among deeper shadows—her neck and shoulders gleaming white.

About her were all the eerie noises of the dark, the little, little sounds of little, little things.

"Good-bye," Diana whispered, "good-bye—dear forest."

The sounds seemed to swell triumphantly into a love song—the weird and wonderful song of the night. From bush and branch call answered call, mate invited mate; all the wild things of the wood were voicing their need, each of the other.

So the Beautiful Lady left behind her the sheltered hollow in the wood, and turned her face toward the sea with its beating storms, and she turned with gladness.

It was late the next afternoon when she came at last to her home on the harbor.

Sophie, warned by a telegram, was waiting for her.

"Oh, dearest dear," she said, as they embraced each other in the garden, "you beauty! Why, Diana, you don't look a day over twenty."

"I'm so happy, Sophie. Happy women are always young. Oh, I've so much to tell you. Your letter came with all the other letters. How silly we have been! That's the way with half the troubles in life. How easy it would be to be happy if only we could look into the minds of other people."

Peter Pan, hearing Diana's voice, came to them, tumultuously, leaping above the nasturtium borders and the brilliant flower beds.

Diana picked him up. "Think of it, Peter," she said, in her thrilling voice; "you're going to live up the road with me for all the rest of your life—in Anthony's

house, and I am going to live there, too."

Sophie gasped. "Oh, has it come to that?"

"It has come to everything that means happiness," Diana answered. "Let's go up-stairs, Sophie, where we can talk."

As they entered the house Delia came to meet them. Her face lacked its usual beaming welcome. "Oh, my dear," she said, "I'm glad to see you so much better, but it is a sad errand which has brought you."

"Sad—what do you mean, Delia?"

The two women exchanged glances, and Sophie faltered, "Didn't you get my telegram, Diana?"

"Telegram—no, I've heard nothing."

"It's Justin. He's dreadfully hurt. His air-ship fell, and Anthony has him at Harbor Light."

She sketched the details. "Betty is there. Anthony won't let any one see him. But he thinks Betty should be within call."

"Oh, Sophie, is it as bad as that——?"

"It is about as bad as it can be, Diana."

When they had talked it over, it was decided that Diana should call up Anthony and ask to see Betty at Harbor Light; when she had given the telephone number she found herself shivering with expectation. In a moment she would hear his voice!

She was told, however, that Dr. Blake was out on an important case; that he would not be back until late.

"Perhaps I'd better wait until he returns before I

make any plans," Diana told Sophie, and then Sara came in—a subdued Sara, with much of her sharpness modified, and they had dinner together, and were served by the adoring Delia.

After dinner Diana grew restless, and, wandering alone in the garden, found her feet straying in the direction of Anthony's house on the rocks.

Peter Pan followed her, and waited for her when she went in, having learned caution from his last imprisonment.

Diana knew where the key was kept, and felt for it behind a cornice. She let herself in and shut the door behind her. The lights from the street lamps showed that some pieces of furniture had been placed since her last visit. There were rugs beneath her feet. On the table in the hall was the end of a candle in a quaint silver holder, and a cup contained matches.

She lighted the candle, and made a tour of the lower floor. In the living-room she set two big chairs side by side on the hearth and laughed a little, fancying her head and Anthony's close together. In the dining-room were treasures of china—the White Canton in unchipped dozens. She set two places on the polished table, and drank Anthony's health in a mystical cup of tea.

She ascended the stairs. There were massive beds and massive highboys and lowboys and tables and chairs everywhere, but in the room to which she had brought the lilacs there was nothing but a little old-fashioned piano, and the gray pottery bowl which had held her flowers. Evidently Anthony had changed his plans, and this place which he had dedicated to her was to be used simply as a sitting-
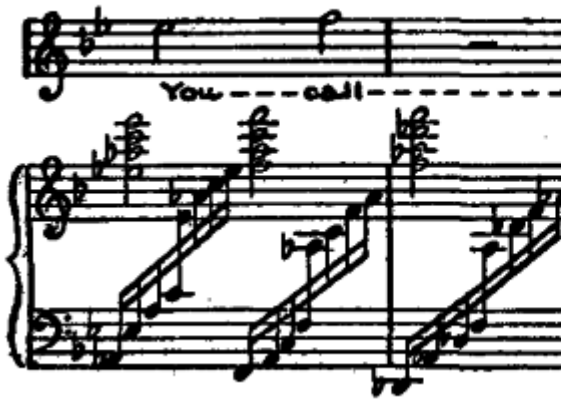
room or music room for Bettina.

The candle flared and went out. Diana sat down on the old-fashioned round stool in front of the little piano. Anthony's mother had played on that little piano. It had been his father's gift to his bride.

With her hands resting on the keys she sat and looked out over her beloved harbor.

There was a little silver moon—Diana's moon, the crescent of the huntress.

Well, it was Diana's night! Her fingers struck softly the chords of the music she had created.



On the other side of the street, a tired man, coming out of a house where a sick woman had needed his services, halted and held up his head.

He crossed the road and entered the house.

The rugs deadened the sound of his steps. He stopped on the threshold of that upper room. He could see

the faint outlines of the tall white figure; he knew the voice, the song.

"Diana, my dear girl!"

She turned and stood up.

"Anthony—oh, Anthony, I have come back—to you."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE PROCESSION OF PRETTY LADIES

For days the procession of pretty ladies kept Justin company. Then they floated away on the rolling mists, and he found real faces bending over him,—the nurse's with its fresh comeliness, and Anthony's with a light on it which transfigured it.

One morning when he waked a white rose lay on his pillow.

"Did you put it there, nurse?"

"No. Miss Dolce came."

On Anthony's next visit Justin asked: "Why didn't you let me see her?"

"She sees you every day. Just a peep in at your door. But always when you are asleep."

"But why not when I am awake?"

"It would tire you too much, dear boy."

"Only let me look at her."

So at last Bettina stood beside him, very pale, but with her eyes shining.

Justin could not lift his hurt hands to touch her, so she bent down and laid her cheek against his, and whispered, "When you are well, we are going to be—married."

"I know—sweetheart."

"And—may I have the little silver ring for my wedding ring, Justin?"

"Yes, sweetheart."

She was not white now, but all rosy with blushes. As she again bent over him he felt the thrilling power of her youth and beauty. Her presence was like wine, reviving him. Her words were a loving cup held to his lips.

"Oh, my Betty, help me to live," he whispered, weakly.

"Hush; oh, my poor, poor boy."

In the weeks that followed it seemed as if only love were holding Justin back from death. There were days when Bettina was not allowed to see him; there were other days when Anthony dared not tell her the fears which assailed him, when he avoided all of her questions, confiding only in Diana.

"There's an awful chance that he will never walk."

Diana, very pale, asked, "Is it his spine?"

"Yes."

"And he was so strong and beautiful."

"He will never fly again, Diana."

"Oh, poor Justin!"

"And poor Betty. I wonder if, when all the first glamour is gone, she will be able to stand the test."

"I am sure she will. She has been so brave."

"If I know Justin, he won't let her marry him when he learns the truth."

"Oh, Anthony!"

"I haven't given up hope, however. His wonderful vitality and perfect health may bring about that which now seems impossible."

Bettina, since she could not minister to Justin, spent the days in ministering to others. In the great workshop where men and women of wealth wove rugs and made pottery as if their bread and butter depended upon it, she became a familiar figure. The patients loved to have her there, and she went from one to the other, a charming little helper in her white frock, with her air of girlish grace.

In those days her beauty assumed a new aspect. All the petulance was gone from her expression—the restlessness from her manner.

"How lovely she is!" said nurses and patients and doctors, and they spoke not of her physical beauty, but of her loveliness of mind and of soul.

Whenever she was allowed to see Justin she came to him with hope in her shining glance. And one day Anthony let her take the nurse's place, so that for the

first time they were alone.

It was then that Justin told her of the Procession of Pretty Ladies. "Anthony says it was the morphine," he said, "but whatever it was, they kept me company for days."

Betty laughed. "You'll soon have a real procession of pretty ladies. Diana wants to come, and Sophie and Sara and Doris. But Anthony insists that they must wait until you can sit up."

"When will that be?"

"Soon."

"How soon?"

"Don't ask so many questions. As soon as it is good for you, you impatient boy."

"I *am* impatient. I want to be up and out. I want to fly again over the harbor. Betty, all the lovely days are going, and I am lying here like a log."

Her heart seemed to stand still. She knew that he would never fly again. Anthony had told her that he might prepare her in part for the truth. But Justin must not know.

She spoke hurriedly. "I should hate to have you fly again—I should always be thinking of the time I saw you fall."

"It's the only thing I can do well, Betty."

"There are so many things that you can do—with me."

He smiled. "What could I do—with you?"

"You could build a little workroom in the top of our house—*our* house, dear boy; and you could sit there and invent wonderful things to make other men safe who go up in the air, and I could watch you do it."

"But why should I be shut up, dearest? I'm not made for that sort of thing. I'd rather be out—in the open."

There was a note of alarm in his voice. Bettina tried to laugh naturally. "Because I'd rather have you with me, you venturesome youth—then I should know you were safe."

"If anything could hold me down it would be you,—Betty."

She was silent for a moment, then she said, with hesitation, "Justin, dear——"

"Yes?"

"I don't want to wait until you are well—to be married——"

As he turned on her his puzzled glance the color flooded her face. "Perhaps it isn't usual for a woman to say—such a thing. Perhaps I shouldn't say it. But—I want to feel that I belong to you—I want to know that I have the right to be always at your side. I want to know that—where you go—I can go—Justin——"

The bandages were still on his hands and arms, those hands which yearned to take her hands, those arms which ached to enfold her.

But his eyes held a look which was a caress. "But it would not be fair to you, sweetheart,—to spend your honeymoon in nursing me."

"It would be fair to me. Oh, Justin, Justin, it isn't just

sweetheart love that I am giving you; it is wife love and mother love—I feel sometimes as if you were my hurt little boy, and that I'd give my life to help you ——"

She was not crying, but her voice held an emotion which was deeper than tears; her steadfast eyes met his; her little hands were laid lightly on the covers above his heart.

And suddenly he saw her enthroned—a woman, not a child—a wife, not a playmate. Her youth and beauty were still there to charm him, but back of them was a quality which would hold him until the end—a divine quality of tenderness, of compassion, of eternal constancy.

And, in response, he brought the best that manhood can bring to woman—reverence and that high regard which makes of marriage a spiritual bond.

He tried to speak, but his voice failed. Then, as she bent above him, she heard his whisper:

"Kiss me—my wife!"

In the days which followed the pretty ladies came in a charming procession—Diana and Sophie, little Sara, bravely wistful, Doris escorted by Bobbie. And last, but not least in importance, came Letty Matthews, in a new white dress and rose-wreathed hat, and with happiness glorifying her plain features.

But though they came and went, all these good friends of his, and he smiled and greeted them, his eyes went always beyond them to the little white and

gold creature with the woman-eyes. And his voice would call for her, and until she came he would not be content.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE AFTERGLOW

Anthony vetoed absolutely the idea of a marriage before Justin's fate should be finally decided.

"But if he knows," Bettina urged with trembling lips, "if he knows that he may be—crippled—he will say that I shall not marry him. You know that he would say that, Anthony."

"And he would be right. A chronic invalid should not marry, Betty. I have great hope of his recovery. You and he must live on that hope a little longer."

Bettina begged Diana to intercede, and that lovely lady, having claimed Anthony for a twilight walk on the beach, began her plea.

But after the first words she found that she must deal not with the man who loved her, but with the great Dr. Anthony.

"I shall certainly not allow it. I am not, of course, her legal guardian, and so I cannot prevent it in that way. But I can tell Justin."

"But she will not be happy without him, Anthony. If

it were you, I should marry you."

"I should not let you."

"You could not help it."

They faced each other—this strong man and this strong woman. With their wills opposed, each seemed immovable. It was evident that only a great depth of affection could bring harmony between their dominant natures.

Anthony, smiling at the earnestness of his beloved, did not yield an inch. "These things are not to be decided by sentiment, dear. There are meanings in marriage far beyond mere romance, far beyond the fate of the two individuals who make the contract. We doctors must uphold the ideal of physical perfection lest the race suffer. Moreover Bettina does not know, she cannot know, what life would mean under such conditions. She does not know her own strength, her own weakness. She must learn something of life before she takes its heaviest burdens upon her. If in the years to come she can sustain Justin by her friendship, let it be that. She must not marry him."

"You—with your friendships, Anthony! Love cannot go back to friendship."

She had seated herself on a stone bench which backed by a clump of pines, commanded a wide view of the sea. He hesitated, wondering how he might chase away the shadow which lay on her lovely face.

"Dear heart, we must not disagree about a thing which may right itself. Tell Betty that, if she will be patient for a few weeks, I shall hope to withdraw my opposition."

Her eyes did not meet his.

"Are you thinking that I am cruel, Diana?"

"No, oh, no. But your wisdom won't cure Betty's heartache."

"It may save her future heartaches."

"I wonder if a woman's point of view is ever a man's point of view, Anthony?"

"Only when two people love each other very much, dear. Then each tries to look at life through the other's eyes. We men would grow brutal without you to curb us. But, on the other hand, you need, now and then, the masculine common-sense view-point."

"I don't want the common-sense point of view in this, Anthony."

He laid his hands on her shoulders and stood looking down at her.

"Diana."

"Yes."

"What is it, dear?"

"I don't quite like—being curbed, Anthony."

She was laughing a little for, in spite of her rebellion, there was something stimulating in the thought of his masterfulness. "You see, I've always ruled," she said.

"You shall still rule, everywhere, except in one little corner of my kingdom which has to do with things medical—over that I must still reign."

"Of course if you think that you are right in this——"

"I know that I am right. Look at me, Diana."

Thrilled by his tone of command, she did look at him with eyes like stars.

Then, knowing that he had conquered, he drew her up to him and said, gently, "We doctors have to seem cruel to be kind—but you must never believe me cruel, Diana."

So July passed and August, and the little town took on all the beauty of its September coloring. The dahlias blazed from every fence corner. Against the gray rocks their masses of brilliance tempted the brushes of the artists who came to paint.

The yachts began to leave the harbor, some of them going South, some of them making their exit to the clanking chorus of the marine railway. The yacht clubs sounded their last guns, packed away their pennants and hauled up their floating docks. The hotels were closed, and most of the mansions on the Neck were deserted. The summer folk were turning toward the city, and the little seaport town was settling down to its winter routine.

It was on one of those quiet September days that Anthony said to Bettina, "Set your wedding day, my dear."

"Oh, Anthony, may I, really?"

"Yes. The specialists who came yesterday gave a final decision. Justin is going to get—well."

The invalid, propped up in a big chair, was approached thus:

"Would you mind if it were a big affair, Justin?"

"Not if you want it that way, sweetheart"

"I don't, if you don't. But Diana and the rest are planning——"

He laughed. "I want the whole world to see you, and I want all the bells to ring, and I want to run away afterward with you, and to have our honeymoon last forever."

So they were married from Diana's, at high noon, and as the bride descended the stairway, a sigh of admiration went up from the waiting guests. Her costume had been copied from an old painting, and emphasized her likeness to those medieval Venetian beauties whose blood ran in her veins. Her veil was caught back, cap-fashion, from her face, then fell to her feet. The silken thinness of her gown was weighted with silver embroideries.

Slightly to the left of the officiating clergyman was a screen of white roses. As Bettina advanced, the screen was set aside, and showed Justin, in a big chair, pale and smiling, and seeing only his bride as she came toward him.

Standing by her lover's side, Bettina gave the responses clearly. And when he placed on her finger the little silver ring, it was she who bent and kissed him.

As soon as the ceremony was over, the bridegroom was whisked away, to be followed by the bride when she had cut the wedding cake.

In the library at the head of the stairs she found him. He was on his feet, unsupported, and looking

expectantly toward the door.

She gave a little cry. "Justin, you must not——!"

He laughed and held out his arms to her. "Anthony said I might. Just to show you. He didn't quite dare for the wedding. But I want you to know that you are not marrying—a broken reed—dearest."

She looked up at him. "How good it seemed," she whispered, "to see your face above mine. I—I am just as high as your heart—Justin."

Snow over the harbor. Snow, too, at Harbor Light.

Anthony's patients, warmly housed, were busy with Christmas work. Women who had always bought perfunctory Christmas presents, and to whom the holiday season had meant merely a weary round of shopping, bent eagerly over the bit of pottery or of weaving which was to carry a message of peace and good will. Men, whose gift-giving had lost all of its precious meanings, were carving quaint weather-vanes and toys with infinite pains, and reveling in their skill.

Diana, moving from one to the other, encouraged and suggested.

"I am so glad we worked out that mistletoe design for the pottery and the holly for the little white rugs," she said; "it makes the work so much more interesting."

"It is you who makes the work interesting," said her adoring husband who was at her elbow. "Don't you

ever wish for anything else? Wouldn't you like to be down South with Justin and Betty—with purple seas and cocoanut palms and tennis and golf and good times?"

"I'd rather be here with you. Every time you come back from an important case or operation I feel as if you were a knight returning from battle—no woman can have that feeling when her husband isn't doing vital things—but I'll wait until I get home, Anthony, to tell you the rest of it—the whole of Harbor Light has its eyes on us."

It was not curiosity which drew the eyes toward them. To these weary creatures, many of whom had lost their illusions, the romance of their beloved doctor had given new hope. Their belief in the happiness of another made their own chances of happiness seem less remote.

It was late that night, however, before Diana could tell Anthony "the rest of it." He was delayed by a call to an outside case, and she sat up to wait for him.

The snow had stopped, and as she stood at the window in her room looking out, Minot's flashed above the horizon, and the big light on the Point flamed against the darkness like a sun. The little twinkling fair weather lights of the summer were gone. Only these remained through the beating storms to send out their warnings to the ships.

It was the great lights of the harbor which served humanity; it was great men like Anthony who served!

Smiling a little, in the fulness of her content, she turned back into the fire-lighted room, and went to

her piano.

Anthony, coming up the stairs, spent and chilled, heard her singing:

"The stormy evening closes now in vain,
Loud wails the wind and beats the
driving rain,
While here in sheltered
house
With fiery-painted walls,
I hear the wind abroad,
I hark the calling squalls—
'Blow, blow,' I cry, 'you burst your cheeks
in vain!
Blow, blow,' I cry, 'my love is home
again!'"

On the threshold of this blessed sanctuary all of his weariness seemed to vanish; here he found rest and refreshment—here, at last, he had found fulfillment of all his dreams.

The End

"***The Books You Like to Read at the Price You Like to Pay***"

There Are Two Sides to Everything

—

—including the wrapper which covers every Grosset & Dunlap book. When you feel in the mood for a good romance, refer to the carefully selected list of modern fiction comprising most of the successes by

prominent writers of the day which is printed on the back of every Grosset & Dunlap book wrapper.

You will find more than five hundred titles to choose from—books for every mood and every taste and every pocket-book.

Don't forget the other side, but in case the wrapper is lost, write to the publishers for a complete catalog.

There is a Grosset & Dunlap Book for every mood and for every taste

---

MARGARET PEDLER'S NOVELS

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list.

THE GUARDED HALO

The story of a girl and a man who threw away honor and reputation to protect untarnished the memory of a friend.

BITTER HERITAGE

She learned that her father, the man she had idolized, was a thief and a swindler—a bitter heritage not to be escaped.

YESTERDAY'S HARVEST

The harvest of an early love brings a strange

situation and triumph of sacrifice.

TOMORROW'S TANGLE

The game of love is fraught with danger. To win in the finest sense it must be played fairly.

RED ASHES

A gripping story of a doctor who failed in a crucial operation and had only himself to blame. Could the woman he loved forgive him.

THE BARBARIAN LOVER

A love story based upon the creed that the only important things between birth and death are the courage to face life and the love to sweeten it.

THE MOON OUT OF REACH

Nan Davenport's problem is one that many a girl has faced—her own happiness or her father's bond.

THE HOUSE OF DREAMS COME TRUE

How a man and a woman fulfilled a gypsy's prophecy.

THE HERMIT OF FAR END

How love made its way into a walled-in house and a walled-in heart.

THE LAMP OF FATE

The story of a woman who tried to take all and give nothing.

THE SPLENDID FOLLY

Do you believe that husbands and wives should have no secrets from each other?

THE VISION OF DESIRE

It is easy to destroy illusions, difficult to restore them. Anne restored love from the ashes of disillusion.

WAVES OF DESTINY

Each of these stories has the sharp impact of an emotional crisis—the compressed quality of one of Margaret Pedlar's widely read novels.

NOVELS BY TEMPLE BAILEY

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list.

BURNING BEAUTY

Beautiful Virginia Oliphant is loved by two men; one tempts her with millions, and the other tempts her with nothing more than his devotion.

SILVER SLIPPERS

Days of delight and disillusionment until Joan Dudley's knight actually came.

WALLFLOWERS

They were twins, they were "Wallflowers" perhaps—but they were beautiful, and young and real.

THE BLUE WINDOW

Hildegarde finds herself transplanted from the middle western farm to the gay social whirl of the East.

PEACOCK FEATHERS

Jerry, the idealist, loves Mimi, a beautiful spoiled society girl. A conflict of wealth and love.

THE DIM LANTERN

The romance of little Jane Barnes

who is loved by two men.

THE GAY COCKADE

Unusual short stories in which Miss Bailey shows her knowledge of character and her skill in romance tales.

TRUMPETER SWAN

Randy Paine came back from France to the monotony of everyday affairs. But a girl showed him the beauty in the commonplace.

THE TIN SOLDIER

Derry wishes to serve his country but is bound by a tie he cannot in honor break. Jean loves him and shares his humiliation to help him win.

MISTRESS ANNE

Into the life of Anne came two men: one is weak and the other strong and they both need Anne.

CONTRARY MARY

An old fashioned love story that has a very modern application.

GLORY OF YOUTH

An old question yet ever new—how far should an engagement of marriage bind two persons who find they no longer love?

RUBY M. AYRES' NOVELS

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list.

- LOVERS
- ONE SUMMER
- LOVE CHANGES
- LIFE STEPS IN
- BROKEN
- CHARITY'S CHOSEN
- THE PLANTER OF THE TREE
- SPOILT MUSIC
- THE MAN WITHOUT A HEART
- A BACHELOR HUSBAND
- THE SECOND HONEYMOON

ROMANCES OF THE MODERN GIRL

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset and Dunlap's List.

Here is a list of books by well known writers of romance stories for the modern girl. They are writers whose names have become famous with the publication of their stories as newspaper serials. These books are available in the Grosset & Dunlap Edition.

MAY CHRISTIE

- The High Speed Girl
- Flirting Wives
- The Jazz Widow
- Love's Miracle
- A Kiss For Corinna
- Eager Love
- Man Madness
- Love's Ecstasy

ALMA SIOUX SCARBERRY

- Make-Up
- The Dimpled Racketeer
- The Flat Tire
- High Hat

BEATRICE BURTON

- The Little Yellow House
- Easy
- Money Love
- The Hollywood Girl
- Honey Lou
- The Flapper Wife
- Her Man

ROBERT D. ANDREWS

- The Stolen Husband
- Three Girls Lost
- One Girl Found

ROB EDEN

- The Lovely Liar
- Step-Child
- Love Blind
- The Girl with Red Hair
- Short Skirts

ELENORE MEHERIN

- Miss Pat
- Jerry
- Chickie
- Chickie, A Sequel
- Nora Lee
- Sandy

LAURA LOU BROOKMAN

- Tarnished
- Mad Marriage
- Heart Hungry
- As No Woman Hath Loved
- Her Love Problem
- Playmate
- The Heart Bandit

JANE DIXON

- Miss Hard Boiled

ANNE GARDNER

- Working Wives

THE NOVELS OF SINCLAIR LEWIS

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset and Dunlap's List.

Within the space of a few years Sinclair Lewis has become one of the most Distinguished of American Novelists.

ELMER GANTRY

Elmer Gantry, hypocrite and voluptuary, is painted against a background of church members and professing Christians scarcely less hypocritical than he. In this book Sinclair Lewis adds a violent stroke to his growing picture of materialistic America.

MANTRAP

A clever satire on the adventures of a New York lawyer seeking rest and diversion in the northwoods. Instead of rest he finds trouble in the person of his host's wife—young, pretty and flirtatious.

ARROWSMITH

The story of a country doctor whose search for truth led him to the heights of the medical profession, to the heights and depths of love and marriage and to final peace as a quietly heroic laboratory worker in the backwoods of Vermont.

BABBITT

Every man will recognize in the character of George Babbitt, something of himself. He was a booster and a joiner, but behind all of his activities was a wistful wonder as to what life holds.

MAIN STREET

Carol Kennicott's attempt to bring life and culture to Gopher Prairie and Gopher Prairie's reaction toward her teachings have made this book one of the most famous of the last decade.

THE NOVELS OF GRACE LIVINGSTON HILL

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset and Dunlap's List.

- THE PRODIGAL GIRL

- DUSKIN
- CRIMSON ROSES
- OUT OF THE STORM
- THE HONOR GIRL
- JOB'S NIECE
- COMING THROUGH THE RYE
- A NEW NAME
- ARIEL CUSTER
- THE BEST MAN
- THE CITY OF FIRE
- CLOUDY JEWEL
- DAWN OF THE MORNING
- THE ENCHANTED BARN
- EXIT BETTY
- THE FINDING OF JASPER HOLT
- THE GIRL FROM MONTANA
- LO, MICHAEL
- THE MAN OF THE DESERT
- MARCIA SCHUYLER
- MIRANDA
- THE MYSTERY OF MARY
- PHOEBE DEANE
- THE RED SIGNAL
- THE SEARCH
- TOMORROW ABOUT THIS TIME
- THE TRYST
- THE WITNESS
- NOT UNDER THE LAW
- RE-CREATIONS
- THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers*, NEW YORK

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK GLORY OF YOUTH ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without

charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project

Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work,

or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project

Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability

to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR

IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free

distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41

Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the

solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.