Jarvis Stinson

Geoffrey Hampstead: A Novel

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Содержание

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CHAPTER I

I do not think
So fair an outward, and such stuff within,
Endows a man but he.
Cymbeline.

The Victoria Bank, Toronto, is on the corner of Bay and Front Streets, where it overlooks a part of the harbor large enough to gladden the eyes of the bank-clerks who are aquatic in their habits and have time to look out of the windows. Young gentlemen in tattered and ink-stained coats, but irreproachable in the matter of trousers and linen, had been known to gaze longingly and wearily down toward that strip of shining water when hard fate in the shape of bank duty apparently remained indifferent to the fact that an interesting race was being rowed or sailed. This, sometimes, was rather a bad thing for the race; for the Victoria Bank had, immured within its cut stone and plate glass, some good specimens of muscular gentility; and in contests of different kinds, the V. B. had a way (discomforting to other banks) of producing winners. The amount of muscle some of them could apply to a main-sheet was creditable, while, as to rowing, there were few who did not cultivate a back and thigh action which, if not productive of so much speed as Hanlan's, was certainly, to the uninitiated, quite as pleasant to look upon; so that, in sports generally, there was a decided call for the Vics.; not only among men on account of their skill, but also in the ranks of a gentler community whose interest in a contest seemed to be more personal than sporting. The Vics. had adopted as their own a particular color, of which they would wear at least a small spot on any "big day"; and, when they were contesting, this color would be prevalent in gatherings of those interested personally. And who would inquire the reasons for this favoritism? "Reasons! explanations! – why are men so curious? Is it not enough that those most competent to decide have decided? What will you? Go to!" Indeed, the sex is very divine. It is a large part of their divinity to be obscure.

Perhaps these young men danced with the ease and self-satisfaction of dervishes. Perhaps their prowess was unconsciously admired by those who formerly required defenders. But the most compelling reason, on this important point, was that "ours" of the Victoria Bank had established themselves socially as "quite the right sort" and "good form" – and thus desirable to the Toronto maiden, and, if not so much so to her more match-making mother, the fact that they were considered *chic* provided a feminine argument in their favor which had, as usual, the advantage of being, from its vagueness, difficult to answer; so that the more mercantile mother grew to consider that a "detrimental" who was *chic* was not, after all, as bad as a "det." without leaven.

It has been said that bank-clerks are all the same; but, while admitting that, in regard to their faultless trousers and immaculate linen, there does exist a pleasing general resemblance, rather military, it must be insisted that there are different sorts of them; that they are complete in their way, and need not be idealized. The old barbaric love for wonderful story-telling is still the harvest-ground of those who live by the propagation of ideas, but must we always demand the unreal?

There was nothing unreal about Jack Cresswell. As he stood poring over columns of figures in a great book, one glance at him was sufficient to dispel all hope of mystery. He was inclosed in the usual box or stall – quite large enough for him to stand up in, which was all he required (sitting ruins trousers) – and his office coat was all a bank-clerk could desire. The right armpit had

"carried away," and the left arm was merely attached to the body by a few ligaments – reminding one of railway accidents. The right side of the front and the left arm had been used for years as a pen-wiper. A metallic clasp for a patent pencil was clinched through the left breast. The holes for the pockets might be traced with care even at this epoch, but they had become so merged in surrounding tears as to almost lose identity with the original design.

The bank doors had been closed for some time, after three o'clock, on this particular day in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and blank, and Jack Cresswell had been puzzling his brains over figures with but poor success. Whether his head was dull, or whether it was occupied by other things, it is hard to say – probably both; so, on hearing Geoffrey Hampstead, the paying-teller, getting ready to go away, he leaned over the partition and said, in an aggrieved tone:

"Look here, Geoffrey, I'm three cents out in my balance."

A strong, well-toned voice answered carelessly, "That is becoming a pretty old story with you, Jack. You're always out. However, make yourself comfortable, dear boy, as you will doubtless be at it a good while." Then, as he put on his hat and sauntered away, Geoffrey added a little more comfort. "If you really intend to bring it out right, you had better arrange to guard the bank to-night. You can do both at once, you know, and get your pay as well, while you work on comfortably till morning."

"I'll tell you what I'll do. If you'll get these three cents right for me, I'll stand the dinners."

"Much obliged. Mr. Hampstead has the pleasure of regretting. Prior engagement. Has asked Mr. Maurice Rankin to dine with him at the club. But perhaps, even without your handsome reward, we might get these figures straightened out for you." Then, taking off his coat, "You had better take a bite with us if we can finish this in time."

Geoffrey came up to the books and "took hold," while Jack, now in re-established good humor, amused himself by keeping up a running fire of comments. "Aha! me noble lord condescends to dine the poor legal scribe. I wonder, now, what led you to ask Maurice Rankin to dine with you. You can't make anything out of Morry. He hasn't got a cent in the world, unless he got that police-court case. Not a red shekel has he, and me noble lord asks him to dinner – which is the humor of it! Now, I would like to know what you want with Rankin. You know you never do anything without some motive. You see I know you pretty well. Gad! I do."

Geoffrey was working away under this harangue, with one ear open, like a telegraph operator, for Jack's remarks. He said: "Can not a fellow do a decent thing once in a way without hearing from you?"

"Not you," cried Jack, "not you. I'll never believe you ever did a decent thing in your life without some underground motive."

Geoffrey smiled over the books, where he was adding three columns of figures at once, lost the addition, and had to begin at the bottom again; and Jack, who thought that never man breathed like Geoffrey, looked a little fondly and very admiringly at the way his friend's back towered up from the waist to the massive shoulders – and smiled too.

Jack's smile was expansive and contagious. It lighted up the whole man – some said the whole room – but never more brightly than when with Hampstead. Geoffrey had a fascination for him, and his admiration had reached such a climax after nearly two years' intercourse that he now thought there was but little within the reach of man that Geoffrey could not accomplish if he wished. It was not merely that he was good looking and had an easy way with him and was in a general way a favorite – not merely that he seemed to make more of Jack than of others. Hampstead had a power of some kind about him that harnessed others besides Jack to his chariot-wheels; and, much as Cresswell liked to exhibit Geoffrey's seamy side to him when he thought he discovered flaws, he nevertheless had admitted to an outsider that the reason he liked Hampstead was that he was "such an altogether solid man – solid in his sports, solid in his work, solid in his virtues, and, as to the other way – well, enough said." But the chief reason lay in the great mental and bodily vigor that

nearly always emanated from Geoffrey, casting its spell, more or less effectively, for good or evil. With most people it was impossible to ignore his presence; and his figure was prepossessing from the extraordinary power, grace, and capacity for speed which his every movement interpreted.

It was his face that bothered observant loungers in the clubs. For statuary, a sculptor could utilize it to represent the face of an angel or a devil with equal facility – but no second-class devil or angel. Its permanent expression was that which a man exhibits when exercising his will-power. The tenacious long jaw had a squareness underneath it that seemed to be in keeping with the length of the upper lip. The high, long nose made its usual suggestions, two furrows between the thick eyebrows could ordinarily be seen, and the protuberant bumps over the eyes gave additional strength. The eyes were light blue or steel gray, according to the lights or the humor he was in. An intellectual forehead, beveled off under the low-growing hair, might suggest that the higher moral aspirations would not so frequently call for the assistance of the determination depicted in the face as would the other qualities shown in the width and weight of head behind the ears.

But Jack did not believe what he said in his tirades, and his good-will makes him lax in condemnation of things which in others he would have denounced. What Geoffrey said or did, so far as Jack knew, met, at his hands, with an easy indifference if culpable, and a kindling admiration if apparently virtuous. The two had lived together for a long time, and no one knew better than Geoffrey how trustworthy Jack was. Consequently, he sometimes entered into little confidences concerning his experiences, which he glossed over with a certain amount of excuse, so that the moral laxity in them did not fully appear; and what with the intensity of his speech, his word painting, and enthusiastic face, a greater stoic than poor Jack might have caught the fire, and perhaps condoned the offense.

Jack thought he knew Hampstead pretty well.

On the other side, Hampstead, though keen at discerning character, confessed to himself that Jack was the only person he could say he knew.

CHAPTER II

> This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries. —*Hamlet.*

As Jack expected, it did not take long for his friend Hampstead to show where the mistake about the three cents lay; and then they sallied forth for a little stroll on King Street before dinner.

They lived in adjoining chambers in the Tremaine Buildings on King Street. The rooms had been intended for law offices, and were reached by a broad flight of stairs leading up from the street below. Here they were within five minutes' walk of their bank or the club at which they generally took their meals. Hampstead had first taken these rooms because they were in a manner so isolated in the throng of the city and afforded an uncontrolled liberty of ingress and egress to young men whose hours for retiring to rest were governed by no hard and fast rules.

A widow named Priest lived somewhere about the top of the building, with her son, who was known to the young gentlemen as Patsey. Mrs. Priest made the beds, did the washing, attended to the fires, and was generally useful. She also cleaned offices, even to the uttermost parts of the great building, and altogether made a good thing of it; for besides the remunerations derived in these ways she had her perquisites. For instance, in the ten years of her careful guardianship of chambers and offices in the building, she had never bought any coal or wood. She possessed duplicate keys for each room in her charge, and thus having a large number of places to pillage she levied on them all, according to the amount of fuel she could safely carry away from each place without its being missed. Young men who occupied chambers there never had to give away or sell old clothes, because they were never found to be in the way. She asked for them when she wanted to cut them down for Patsey, because it would not do to have the owners recognize the cloth on him. The clothes which she annexed as perquisites she sold.

Patsey was accustomed occasionally to go through the wardrobes of the gentlemen with his mother, while she made the beds in the morning, and he then chose the garments that most appealed to his artistic taste. This interesting heir to Mrs. Priest's personal estate also had his perquisites "unbeknownst to ma." He consumed a surprising amount of tobacco for one so young, and might frequently be seen parading King Street on a summer evening enjoying a cigar altogether beyond his years and income. His clothes bore the pattern of the fashion in vogue three or four years back; and, despite some changes brought about by the scissors of Mrs. Priest, the material, which had been the best Toronto could provide, still retained much of the glory that had captivated King Street not so very long ago. Having finally declared war against education in all its recognized branches, he generally took himself off early in the day, and lounged about the docks, or derived an indifferently good revenue from the sale of ferry-boat tickets to the island; and in various other ways did Patsey provide himself with the luxuries and enjoyments of a regular topsawyer.

In the immediate neighborhood of Mrs. Priest, at an altitude in the building which has never been exactly ascertained, dwelt Mr. Maurice Rankin, barrister-at-law and solicitor of the Supreme Court. He resided in Chambers, No. 173 Tremaine Buildings, King Street, West, Toronto, and certainly all this looked very legal and satisfactory on the professional card which he had had printed. But the interior appearance of the chambers was not calculated to inspire confidence in the profession of the law as a kind nurse for aspiring merit; and as for the approach to No. 173, it was so intricate and dark in its last few flights of stairs, that none but a practiced foot could venture up or down without a light, even in the day-time. The room occupied by Mr. Rankin could never have been intended to be used as an office, or perhaps anything else, and consequently the numbers of the rooms in the buildings had not been carried up to the extraordinary elevation in which No. 173 might now be found. Still, it seemed peculiar not to have the number of one's chambers on one's

card, if chambers should be mentioned thereon, so he found that the rooms numbered below ended at 172, and then conscientiously marked "No. 173" on his own door with a piece of white chalk. He also carefully printed his name, "Mr. Maurice Rankin," on the cross-panel and added the letters "Q.C." – just to see how the whole thing looked and assist ambition; but he hurriedly rubbed The Q.C. out on hearing Mrs. Priest approach for one of her interminable conversations from which there was seldom any escape. When Rankin first came to Tremaine Buildings he lived in one of the lower rooms, now occupied by Jack Cresswell, and not without some style and comfort – taking his meals at the club, as our friends now did. His father, who had been a well-known broker, – a widower – kept his horses, and brought up his son in luxury. He then failed, after Maurice had entered the Toronto University, and, unable to endure the break-up of the results of his life's hard work, he died, leaving Maurice a few hundred dollars that came to him out of the life-insurance.

It was with a view to economy that our legal friend came to live in the Tremaine Buildings after leaving the university and articling himself as a clerk in one of the leading law firms in the city, where he got paid nothing. The more his little capital dwindled, the harder he worked. Soon the first set of chambers were relinquished for a higher, cheaper room, and the meals were taken per contract, by the week, at a cheap hotel. Then he had to get some clothes, which further reduced the little fund. So he took "a day's march nearer home," as he called it, and removed his effects *au quatrième étage*, and from that *au cinquième*– and so on and up. Regular meals at hotels now belonged to the past. A second-hand coal-oil stove was purchased, together with a few cheap plates and articles of cutlery; and here Rankin retired, when hungry, with a bit of steak rolled up in rather unpleasant brown paper; and after producing part of a loaf and a slab of butter on a plate, he cooked a trifle of steak about the size of a flat-iron, and caroused. This he called the feast of independence and the reward of merit.

Among his possessions could be found a wooden bed and bedding – clean, but not springy – also a small deal table, and an old bureau with both hind-legs gone. But the bureau stood up bravely when propped against the wall. These were souvenirs of a transaction with a second-hand dealer. In winter he set up an old coal-stove which had been abandoned in an empty room in the building, and this proved of vast service, inasmuch as the beef-steak and tea could be heated in the stove, thereby saving the price of coal-oil. It will occur to the eagle-eyed reader that the price of coal would more than exceed the price of coal-oil. On this point Rankin did not converse. Although he started out with as high principles of honor as the son of a stock-broker is expected to have, it must be confessed that he did not at this time buy his coal. Therefore there was a palpable economy in the use of the derelict stove – to say nothing of its necessary warmth. No mention of coal was ever made between Rankin and Mrs. Priest; but as Maurice rose in the world, intellectually and residentially, Mrs. Priest saw that his monetary condition was depressed in an inverse ratio, and being in many ways a well-intentioned woman, she commenced bringing a pail of coal to his room every morning, which generally served to keep the fire alight for twenty-four hours in moderate weather. Maurice at first salved his conscience with the idea that she was returning the coal she had "borrowed" from him during his more palmy days. After the first winter, however, when he had suffered a good deal from cold, his conscience became more elastic and communistic; and ten o'clock P.M. generally saw him performing a solitary and gloomy journey to unknown regions with a coal-scuttle in one hand and a wooden pail in the other. Jack Cresswell had come across this coal-scuttle one night in a distant corridor. He filled it with somebody else's coal and came up with it to Rankin's room – his face beaming with enjoyment – and, entering on tip-toe, whispered mysteriously the word "pickings." Then, after walking around the room in the stealthy manner of the stage villain who inspects the premises before "removing" the infant heir, he dumped the scuttle on the floor and gasped, breathlessly, "A gift!"

Rankin put aside Byles on Bills and arose with dignity: "What say you, henchman? Pickings? A gift? Ay, truly, a goodly pickings! Filched, perchance, from the pursy coal-bins of monopoly?"

"Even so," was the reply, given with bated breath; and with his finger to his lips, to imply that he was on a criminal adventure, Jack again inspected the premises with much stealth and agility, and disappeared as mysteriously as he had come. If Jack or Geoffrey ever saw anything lying about the premises they thought would be of use to Rankin, there was a nocturnal steal, and up it went to Rankin's room. This was sport.

In this way Rankin lived. With one idea set before him, he grappled with the leather-covered books that came by ones and twos into his room, until, when the great struggle came at his final examinations, he was surprised to find he had come out so well, and quite charmed when he returned from Osgoode Hall to his dreary room, a solicitor of the Supreme Court and a barrister-at-law, with a light heart, and not a single solitary cent in the wide world.

CHAPTER III

Frien'ship maks us a' mair happy,
Frien'ship gies us a' delight;
Frien'ship consecrates the drappie,
Frien'ship brings us here to-night.

Robert Burns.

At the opening of this story, about six months had elapsed since Rankin had been licensed to prey upon the public, and as yet he had not despoiled it to any great extent. If he had kept body and soul together, it was done in ways that are not enticing to young gentlemen who dream of attacking the law single-handed.

An old lawyer named Bean had an office in the lower part of Tremaine Buildings, and Maurice arranged with him to occupy one of the ancient desks in his office, and, in consideration of answering all questions as to the whereabouts of Mr. Bean, the privilege of office-room was given to him rent-free. As Mr. Bean had no clients, and as Rankin never knew where he was, this duty was a light one. He also had from Mr. Bean the privilege of putting his name up on the door, and, of course, as frequently and as alluringly along the passage and on the stairs as he might think desirable. But it was set out very clearly in the agreement, which Rankin carefully drew up and Bean pretended to revise, that Mr. Rankin should not in any way interfere with the clients of Mr. Bean, and that Mr. Bean should not in any way interfere with the clients of the aforesaid Rankin.

Bean had a little money, which he seemed to spend exclusively in the consumption of mixed drinks; and whatever else he did during the day, besides expending his income in this way, certainly engrossed his attention to a very large extent. When he looked into the office daily, or, say, bi-weekly, it was only for a few moments – except when he fell asleep in his chair.

It was after he had been five or six months with Mr. Bean that Geoffrey Hampstead had asked Rankin to dinner. He locked up the office about five o'clock, having closed the dampers in the stove (Bean supplied the coal – a great relief) and putting the key in his pocket, he ascended to No. 173 for a while, and then he came down to Hampstead's chambers, where he found our two bank friends taking a glass of sherry and bitters to give their appetites a tone, which was a very unnecessary proceeding.

"Hello, old man! How are you?" cried Hampstead in a hearty voice, handing him a wine glass.

"Ah! How am I? Just so!" quoth Rankin, helping himself. "How should a man be, who is on the high road to fortune?"

"He ought to be pretty chirpy, I should think," said Jack.

"Chirpy! That's the word. 'Chirpy' describes me. So does 'fit.' The money is rolling in, gentlemen. Business is on the full upward boom, and I feel particularly 'fit' to-day – also chirpy."

"Got a partnership?" inquired Geoffrey, with interest.

"I suppose you mean a partnership with Mr. Bean, and I answer emphatically 'No.' I refer to *my own* business, sir, and I have no intention of taking Mr. Bean into partnership. Bean is dying for a partnership with me. Sha'n't take Bean in. A client of mine came in to-day – "

"Great Scott! you haven't got a client, have you?" cried Geoffrey, starting from his chair.

"Don't interrupt me," said Mr. Rankin. "As I was saying," he added with composure, "a client of mine – "

"No, no, Morry! This is too much. If you want us to believe you, give us some particulars about this client – just as an evidence of good faith, you know."

"The client you are so inquisitive about," said Rankin, with dignity, "is a lady who has been, in a sense, prematurely widowed – "

"It's Mrs. Priest," said Jack, turning to Geoffrey. "He has been defending her for stealing coal, sure as you're born!"

"The lady came to me," said Maurice, taking no notice of the interruption, "about a month ago, apparently with a view to taking proceedings for alimony – at least her statement suggested this – "

"By Jove, this is getting interesting!" said Jack.

"But on questioning the unfortunate woman as to her means, I found that her funds were in a painfully low condition – in fact, at a disgustingly low ebb, viewed from a professional standpoint. And I also found that her husband had offered her four dollars a week, to be paid weekly, on condition that he should never see her and that somebody else should collect the money. The husband was evidently a bold, bad man to have given rise to the outbursts of jealously which it pained me to listen to, and the poor lady, forgetful of my presence, and with all the ability of an ancient prophet, denounced two or three women both jointly and severally. She then roused herself, and asked what I would charge to collect her four dollars per week. This seemed to decide the alimony suit in the negative, and from the fact that she was, not to put too fine a point upon it, three parts drunk at the time, I thought it better to say what I would do. So now I collect four dollars a week from her husband and pay it over to her every Saturday, for which I deduct, each time, the sum of twenty-five cents. There is a good deal of money to be made in the practice of the law."

"What about the husband?" asked Jack, laughing.

"I believe that I was invited to-day to dine – at least I came with that intention. Instead of talking any more, I would be better satisfied if somebody produced so much as the photograph of a chicken – and after that I will further to you unfold my tale."

Mr. Rankin slapped a waistcoat that appeared to be unduly slack about the lower buttons.

They then repaired to the club, where, having but a small appetite himself, and the representatives of bank distinguishing themselves more than he could as trenchermen, Rankin kept the ball rolling by relating his experiences as a barrister, which seemed to amuse his two friends. These experiences, leading to police-court items and police-court savages, brought up the question of "What is a savage?" – which introduced the Fuegians, the wild natives of Queensland, the Mayalans, and others, with whom Hampstead compared the lowest-class Irish. He had profited by much travel and reading, and anthropology was a subject on which he could be rather brilliant. To show how our civilization is a mere veneer, he drew a comparison between savage and civilized fashions, and brought out facts culled from many different peoples – not omitting Schweinfurth's Monbuttoo women – as to the primitive nature of the dress-improver. Then, somehow, the conversation got back to the police court, and the question, "What is a criminal?" and they agreed that if the harm done to others was one criterion of guilt, it seemed a pity that some things – woman's gossip, for instance – went so frequently unpunished.

"And I think," broke in Cresswell, after the subject had been well thrashed, "that you two fellows are talking a good deal of what you know very little about. After all your chatter, I think the point is right here (and I put it in the old-fashioned way). If one does wrong he violates his own appreciation of right, and his guilt can only be measured by the way he tramples on his conscience, and as conscience varies in almost every person, I think we had better give up wading into abstractions and come down to the concrete – to the solid enjoyment of a pipe." And Jack pushed back his chair.

"Then, according to you, Jack, a fellow with no conscience would in human judgment have no guilt," laughed Hampstead.

"I don't believe there exists a sane man in the world without a conscience," replied Jack, with his own optimism.

"I don't think I agree with you," said Rankin. "I feel sure there are men who, if they ever had a conscience, have trained it into such elasticity that they may be said to have none. Do you not think so, Hampstead?"

"Really, I hardly know. I haven't thought much upon the subject, but I think we ought, if we do possess any conscience ourselves, to give Jack a chance to light his pipe."

They soon sauntered back to the Tremaine Buildings, where Jack sat down at the piano and played to them. While Jack played on, Geoffrey seemed interested in police-court items, but Rankin preferred listening to Beethoven and Mozart to "talking shop." After they had sung some sea-songs together and chatted over a glass of "something short," Rankin said good-night and mounted to No. 173 on the invisible stairs with as much activity as if daylight were assisting him.

Having lit his lamp, he soliloquized, as he attended to some faults in his complexion before a small looking-glass, "So I have got another client, I perceive. That dinner to-day was a fee – nothing else in the world. I don't know now that I altogether like my new client. He evidently didn't get what he wanted. Perhaps Jack was in the way. Now, I wonder what the beggar *does* want. Chances are I'll have another dinner soon. Happy thought! make him keep on dining me *ad infinitum*! Ornamental dinner! Pleasant change!"

Maurice undressed and walked up and down the room. "Perhaps I am all wrong, though," said he. "I can't help liking him in many ways, and he's chock-full of interesting information. How odd that he didn't know anything about a fellow having no conscience. Hadn't thought over that idea. Very likely! Gad! I could imagine him just such a one, now that I have got suspicious. He has a bad eye when he doesn't look after it. It doesn't always smile along with his mouth. I may be wrong, but I believe there's something there that's not the clean wheat," and Maurice ascended to the woolsack and disappeared for the night.

CHAPTER IV

> How can I tell the feelings in a young lady's mind; the thoughts in a young gentleman's bosom? As Professor Owen takes a fragment of bone and builds a forgotten monster out of it, so the novelist puts this and that together: from the foot-prints finds the foot; from the foot, the brute who trod on it; … traces this slimy reptile through the mud; … prods down this butterfly with a pin. – Thackeray (*The Newcomes*).

Hampstead did not get to sleep, after Rankin had retired, as early as he expected. Jack Cresswell followed him into his bedroom and sat down, lit another pipe, and then walked about, and seemed preoccupied, as he had all the evening. Geoffrey did not speak to him at first, as this was an unusual proceeding between the two, but, having got into bed and made himself comfortable by bullying the pillows into the proper shape and position, addressed his friend:

"Now, old man, unburden your mind. I know you want to tell me something, but do not be surprised if you find me asleep before you get your second wind. If you care for me, cut it short."

"Got a letter to-day," said Jack, "from her."

"Well, Jack, as you seem, with some eccentricity, to have only one "her," of course I am interested. Your feelings in that quarter never fail in their attraction. Pour into my devoted ear for the next five minutes (not longer) a synopsis of your woes or joys. What is it you want to-night? Congratulation or balm for wounds?"

"Oh, I don't wish to keep you awake," said Jack testily, rising, as if to depart.

"Go on, sir. Go on, sir. Your story interests me."

Geoffrey assumed an attitude of attention. Jack smiled and sat down again. He had no intention of going away. He had thought over his letter all day, till at last a confidential friend seemed almost necessary.

"My letter comes from London. They've' returned from the Continent, and, as they are now most likely on the sea, she'll be at home in about a week." And Jack seemed in a high state of satisfaction.

"Well, well! I never saw a real goddess in my life," said Geoffrey. "And there is no doubt about Miss Lindon being one, because I have listened to you for two years, and now I know that she is what I have long wished to see."

"It will give me the greatest pleasure to have you know her. I have looked forward tremendously to that. Next to meeting her myself comes the idea of we three being jolly good friends, and going around together on little jamborees to concerts and that sort of thing. I haven't a doubt but what we three will 'get on' amazingly."

"Playing gooseberry with success requires a clever person," said Geoffrey. "I don't think I'm quite equal to the call for the tact and loss of individuality which the position demands. However, dear boy, I am quite aware that to introduce me to the lady of your heart as your particular friend is the greatest compliment one fellow can pay another – all things considered. Don't you think so? Oh, yes, I dare say we will be a trio quite out of the common. But, if she is as pretty as you say she is, I'll have to look at her, you know. Can't help looking at a handsome woman, even if she were hedged in with as many prohibitions as the royal family. You'll have to get accustomed to *that*, of course."

"But that's the very reason why I want you to know her," said Jack, in his whole-souled way. "I really often feel as if her beauty and brightness and her power of pleasing many should not be altogether monopolized by any one man. It would redouble my satisfaction if I thought you admired her also." Jack stopped for a moment as he considered that her power of "pleasing many"

had been rather larger at times than he had cared about. "It seems to me that she has enough of these attractions for me, and some to spare for others."

Geoffrey smiled as he wondered if the girl herself thought she had enough to spare for others besides Jack.

"Young man, your sentiments do you credit! It must make things much more satisfactory to an engaged girl to understand that she is expected not to neglect the outside world whenever she is able 'to tear herself away,' as it were."

"I see you grinning to yourself under the bed-clothes," said Jack, who rather winced at this. "I don't know that I ever asked her to distribute herself more than she did. On the contrary, if you must have the unvarnished truth, quite the reverse." Jack reddened as he ventilated some of the truths which are generally suppressed. "The fact is, it was rather the other way. I frequently have acted like a donkey when I didn't get her undivided attention. You know girls often get accused of flirting, and when one hears their own explanation, nothing seems clearer, you know, than that there was no occasion for the row at all."

Geoffrey thought he did know, but said nothing.

"Two years, though, make changes, and having seen nothing of her for such a long time, I feel as if one glimpse of her would repay me for all the waiting. I should never have thought of our differences again if you had not raked them up."

"Which I am sorry to have done," said Geoffrey. "No doubt, two years do sometimes make a difference. I am sure you treat the *affaire* sublimely, and, if she is equally generous in her thoughts of you, it will be a unique thing to gaze upon both of you at once."

Jack took Geoffrey's remarks in good part, for he had got accustomed to the cynical way the latter treated most things. It was *his way*, he thought, and Geoffrey was "such an all-round good fellow, and all that sort of thing, you know," that it was to be expected that he should have "ways." Besides this, Jack had seen from time to time that, though very ready to recognize sterling merit, Geoffrey had ability in detecting humbug, and that he considered the optimist had too many chances against him to make him valuable as a prophet. Thus, when he spoke in this way of Nina Lindon, Jack supposed that his friend had his doubts, and, much as he loved her, he stopped, like many another, and asked himself whether she had such a generosity and nobility in her character as he had supposed. This, he felt, was rather beneath him in one way, and rather beyond him in another. When he looked for admirable traits, he remembered several instances of good-natured impulse, and while the graceful manner in which she had done these things rose before him, he grew enthusiastic. Then he sought to call up for inspection the qualities he took exception to. That she had seemed inconsiderate of his feelings at times seemed true. There was, he thought, a frivolity about her. He thought life had for him some few well-defined realities, and that she had never seemed to quite grasp the true inwardness of his best moments. But all was explained by her youth and the adulation paid to her. And then the memory of her soft dark eyes and flute-like voice, the various allurements of her vivacious manner and graceful figure, produced an enthusiasm quite overwhelming. So he laughed at the defeat of his impartiality, looked over at Geoffrey, who was peacefully snoring by this time, and went away to his own room. But deep down in his heart lay the shadow of a doubt which, with his instinctive courtesy, he never approached even in an examination supposed to be a searching one. The inspection of it seemed a sacrilege, and he put it from him. Nevertheless, there had been times when Jack felt doubtful as to whether Nina could be relied upon for absolute truth.

Joseph Lindon, the father of Nina, came from – no person seemed to know where. He, or his family, might have come from the north of Ireland or south of Scotland, or middle of England, or anywhere else, as far as any one could judge by his face; and, as likely as not, his lineage was a mixture of Scotch, Irish, English, or Dutch, which implanted in his physiognomy that conglomeration of nationalities which now defies classification, but seems to be evolving a type to

be known as distinctively Canadian. His accent was not Irish, Scotch, English, nor Yankee. It was a collection of all four, which appeared separately at odd times, and it was, in this way, Canadian.

His family records had not been kept, or Joseph would certainly have produced them, if creditable. He had the appearance of a self-made man. If want of a good education somewhat interfered with the completeness of his social success, it certainly had not retarded him in business circles. If he had swept out the store of his first employers, those employers were now in their graves, and of those who knew his beginnings in Toronto there were none with the temerity to remind him of them. Mr. Lindon was not a man to be "sat upon." He had a bold front, a hard, incisive voice, and a temper that, since he began to feel his monetary oats, brooked no opposition. He might have been taken for a farmer, except for the keenness of his eye and the fact that his clothes were city made. These two differences, however, are of a comprehensive kind.

Mr. Lindon, early in life, had opened a small shop, and then enlarged it. Having been successful, he sold out, and took to a kind of broker, money-lending, and land business, and being one who devoted his whole existence to the development of the main chance, with a deal of native ability to assist him, the result was inevitable.

His entertainments gave satisfaction to those who thought they knew what a good glass of wine was. Mr. Lindon himself did *not*. Few do. When exhausted he took a little whisky. When he entertained, he sipped the wine that an impecunious gentleman was paid to purchase for him, regardless of cost. So, although there were those who turned up their noses at Joseph Lindon while they swallowed him, there did not seem to be any reluctance in going through the same motions with his wine.

The fact that he was able to, and did entertain to a large extent was of itself sufficient in certain quarters to provoke a smile suggesting that *the* society in that city did not entertain. Some members had been among the exclusives for a comparatively short time, and the early occupation of their parents was still painfully within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. A good many based their right on the fact that they came "straight from England" – without further recommendation; while others pawed the air like the heraldic lion because they had, or used to have, a second cousin with a title in England.

But these good people were partly correct when they hinted that some old families did not entertain much. Either there had been some scalawag in the family who had wasted its substance, or else the respected family had had a faculty for mortgaging and indorsing notes for friends in those good old times which happily are not likely to return.

The consequence was that there was a good deal of satisfaction on both sides. Joseph Lindon could pat his breeches pocket, figuratively, and, not without reason, consider he had the best of it. Many a huge mortgage at ruinous interest made by the first families, who never lived within their means, had found its way to Lindon's office, and many an acre, subsequently worth thousands of dollars, had been acquired by him in satisfaction of the note he held against the family scalawag. During all the times that these people had been "keeping up the name," as they called it, Lindon had been salting down the hard cash, and if some of his transactions were of the "shady" sort, he had, in dealing with some of the patrician families, some pretty shady customers to look after.

But these transactions were in the old times, when Lindon was rolling up his scores of thousands. All he had to do now was to attend the board meetings of companies of which he was president, and to arrange his large financial ventures in cold blood over his chop at the club with those who waited for his consent with eager ears. If there were few transactions in business circles that he was not conversant with, there were still fewer affairs in his own domestic circle that he knew anything about. It was his wife that had brought him into his social position, such as it was; that is, his wife's wishes and his money.

Mrs. Lindon had been a pretty woman in her day, which, of course, had lost its first freshness, and she was approaching that period when the retrospect of a well-spent life is expected to be

gratifying. Her married life with Mr. Lindon had not been the gradual conquest of that complete union which makes later years a climax and old age the harvest of sweet memories in common, as marriage has been defined for us. On the contrary, their married life had been a gradual acquisition of that disunion which law and public opinion prevent from becoming complete. The two had now established the semblance of a union – the system in which the various pretenses of deep regard become so well defined by long years of mutual make-believe, as to often encourage the married to hope that it will be publicly supposed to be the glad culmination of their courtship dreams.

Mrs. Lindon said of herself that she had been of a Lower Canadian family, with some French name, prior to her marriage, and her story seemed to suggest, in the absence of further particulars, that Mr. Lindon had married her more for her family than her good looks. The "looks" were pretty nearly gone, but the "family" was still within the reach of a sufficiently fertile imagination, and so often had the suggestion been made that of late years the idea had assumed a definiteness in her mind which materially assisted her in holding her own in the society in which she now floated. A natural untidiness in the way she put on her expensive garments, which in a poorer woman would have been called slatternly, and the dark, French prettiness which she still showed traces of (and which was rather of the nurse-girl type) combined to suggest that in reality she was the offspring of Irish and French emigrants, "and steerage at that" – some of the first families said – "decidedly steerage."

Mrs. Lindon was supremely her own mistress. This was not, perhaps, an ultimate benefit to her, but, as she had nothing on earth to trouble about, long years of idleness and indulgence in every whim had led her to conjure up a grievance, which she nursed in her bosom, and on account of it she excused herself for all shortcomings. This was that she was left so much without the society of Mr. Lindon. Often, in the pauses between the excitements she created for herself, tears of self-pity would arise at the thought of her abandoned condition. The truth was that she did not care anymore for Lindon than he did for her; but from the fact that she really did desire to have a husband who would see better the advantages of shining in society, the poor lady contrived to convince herself that he had been greatly wanting in his duties to her as a husband, that the affection was all on her side, and that that affection was from year to year quietly repulsed. Their domestic bearing toward each other was now that of a quiet neutrality. They always addressed each other in public as "my dear," and, if either of them had died, no doubt the bereaved one would have mourned in the usual way, on the principle of "Nil de mortuis nisi *bunkum*."

It had not occurred to Mrs. Lindon that, if more time had been spent with her daughter in fulfilling a mother's duties toward a young girl, there would have been less need for extraneous assistance to aid her in her passage through the world. Nina was fond of her mother, and it was strange that the two did not see more of each other. Nina could be a credit to her in any social gathering, and this made it all the more strange. But Mrs. Lindon was forever gadding about to different institutions, Bible-readings, and other little excitements of her own (for which Nina had no marked liking), and she seemed rather more easy in her mind when Nina was not with her. Perhaps Mr. Lindon was not solely at fault concerning the coolness pervading the domestic atmosphere.

The charitable institutions had been the salvation of Mrs. Lindon – that is, in a mundane sense. When Joseph Lindon, with characteristic method, came home one day and said, "My dear, I have bought the Ramsay mansion, and now I am going to spend my money," Mrs. Lindon enjoyed a pleasure exceeding anything she had known. That was a happy day for her! The dream of her life was to be consummated! She immediately left the small church which she had attended for years and changed her creed slightly to take a good pew in a certain fashionable church. After this it was merely a question of time and money, both of which were available to any extent. She showed great interest in charities. She contributed humbly but lavishly. The ladies of good position who go around with subscription-books smiled in their hearts at seeing the old game going on. They smiled and bled her profusely. They discussed Mrs. Lindon among themselves – with care, of course,

because they did not wish to appear to have known her before. But as time wore on they thought she could be bled to a much greater extent if she were induced to become "a worker in the flock," which the good lady was quite willing to do. On being approached by some of the leading spirits, she went first to a weekly Bible-class, which she had previously been afraid to attend because the audience was so select, and after this she showed such an interest in various charities that she was soon placed upon committees. By ladies with heads for real management on their shoulders she was led to believe that they really could not do without her mental assistance, so that at first when she was gravely consulted on a financial question and asked for her advice she generally eased the tension on her mind by writing a substantial check. This led her to believe that she had something of the financier about her, and she even told her husband that she was beginning to quite understand all about money matters, at which Joseph smiled an ineffable smile.

She could have been used more advantageously if she had been kept out of the desired circle for a couple of years longer, because she was ready to pay any price for her admission. The good ladies made a slight mistake in being too hasty to control the bottomless purse, because, after she had got fairly installed, the purse was worked in several other ways, and the ecclesiastical drain on it became reduced to an ordinary amount. She gave a fair sum to each of the charities and accepted the attentions of those whom the odor of money attracted, without troubling herself in the slightest degree about the periodical financial difficulties of the institutions.

Yet she never altogether relaxed her efforts in "working for the Lord," as she called it, in such good company. She acquired a taste for it that never left her. She would take a couple of the "poor but honest" ladies of good family with her, in her sumptuous barouche, to the "Incurables" and other places. After a capital luncheon at her house they would visit the "Home," and sometimes kiss the poor women there; and if the strengthening sympathy and religious value of Mrs. Lindon's kiss did not bind them to a life of virtue ever afterward they must indeed have been lost – in every sense of the word.

Nina was not born for some time after Mr. and Mrs. Lindon had been married. Her mother had kept her, when a child, very much in the dark as to their antecedents, and, as the social position of the family had been well established by Mrs. Lindon when Nina was very young, the girl always had grown up with the idea that she was a lady; and in spite of a few wants in her father and some doubts as to her mother's origin, she came out into society with a fixed idea that she was "quite good enough for the colonies," as she laughingly told her friends.

No pains or expense had been spared in her education. She had first gone to the best Toronto school, and had "finished" at a boarding-school in England. Jack Cresswell knew her when she was at school, where she shared his heart with several others. When she emerged from the educational chrysalis and floated for the first time down a society ball-room Jack was after the butterfly hat-in-hand, as it were, and never as yet had he given up the chase. Mr. Lindon knew nothing of domestic affairs, but he had found Jack so frequently at his house that he had begun to see that his ambitious plans for his daughter were perhaps in danger of being frustrated, and so, having at that time to send a man to England to float the shares of some company on the London market, he decided to go himself, and one day, when Jack was dining there, he rather paralyzed all, especially Jack, by instructing his wife and daughter to be ready in a week for the journey.

The parting on Jack's part would have been tender if Nina had not been in such exasperatingly high spirits – hilarity he found it quite impossible to participate in or appreciate. He made her excuses to himself, like the decent soul he was, although he really suffered a good deal. He was an ardent youth, and for the week prior to departure he received very little of the sympathy he hungered for, but he tried to speak cheerfully as he held her hand in saying good-by.

"Well, now, you won't forget your promise, old lady, will you?" he said, while he tried to photograph her in his mind as she stood bewitchingly before him.

"What! and throw over the French count that proposed to me in London?" she said archly. Jack muttered something under his breath that sounded like hostility toward the French count.

She heard him, however, and said: "Certainly. So we will. It will kill him, but you will rejoice. And I will come back and marry Jack. There! isn't it nice of me to say that? Now, kiss me and say good-by!"

She withdrew, and held the porch door so that only her face appeared, which Jack lightly touched with his lips, and then he went away speechless. As he went he heard her singing:

"And I'll come back to my own true love,
Ten thousand miles away."

This sentiment, from one of his yachting songs, smoothed the ragged edge of his feelings. He loved in an old-fashioned way, and in his ideas as to carrying out the due formalities of a lover's leave-taking he was conservative even to red-tapeism, and disappointment, tenderness, anger, and hopelessness surged through his brain as they only can in that of a young man.

There was further tragedy in that Jack, unable to sleep at night and despondent in the morning, must needs go down to the boat to see her "just once more" before she left. The gangways had been hauled in and the paddle-wheels were beginning to move. Nina was standing inside the lower-deck bulwarks and leaned across the water to shake hands, but the distance was too great She was in aggressively high spirits, and said to him, as he moved along the end of the wharf, keeping pace with the boat:

"Don't you remember what your pet authoress says?"

"No," said Jack, hoping that she would say something nice to him.

"She says that a first farewell may have pathos in it, but to come back for a second lends an opening to comedy."

Her rippling laugh smote Jack cruelly. Then she tried to soften this by smiling and waving her hand to him as the boat swept away. Jack raised his hat stiffly in return, and wandered back to the bank with a head that felt as if it would split.

And this was their parting two years ago.

CHAPTER V

Fair goes the dancing when the sitar's tuned;
Tune us the sitar neither low nor high,
And we will dance away the hearts of men.

The string o'erstretched breaks, and music flies;
The string o'erslack is dumb, and music dies;
Tune us the sitar neither low nor high.

Nautch girls' song. – The Light of Asia. Arnold.

Mr. Lindon did not remain long with his family on the trip which Mrs. Lindon thought was only to last a month or two. On arriving in England, he transacted his business in a short time, and then proposed a run on the Continent. By degrees he took the family on to Rome, where they made friends at the hotel and seemed contented to remain for a while. He then pretended to have received a cablegram, and came home by the quickest route, having got them fairly installed in a foreign country without letting them suspect any coercion in the matter. Afterward he wrote to say he wished Nina to see something of England and Scotland, and, the proposal being agreeable to Mrs. Lindon, they accepted invitations from people they had met to pay visits in different places, so that, together with an art course in Paris and a musical course at Leipsic, they wandered about until nearly two years had elapsed, when they suddenly suspected that Mr. Lindon preferred that they should be away, upon which they returned at once.

Whether Nina came back "in love" with Jack was a question as to which he made many endeavors to satisfy himself. The ability to live up to the verb "to love" in all its moods and tenses is so varied, and the outward results of the inward grace are often so ephemeral that it would be hazardous to say what particular person is sufficiently unselfish to experience more than a gleam of a phase that calls for all the most beautiful possibilities. It is not merely a jingle of words to say that one who is not minded to be single should be single-minded.

Let us pass over the difficult point and take the young lady's statement for what it was worth. She said, of herself, that she *was* in love with Jack. He had extracted this from her with much insistence, while she aggravatingly asserted at the same time, that she only made the admission "for a quiet life," leaving Jack far from any certainty of possession that could lead to either indifference or comfort.

Two or three proposals of marriage which she had while away had evidently not captured her, even if they had turned her head a little. She had seen no person she liked better than Jack or else she would not, perhaps, have come back in the way she did. The proposals, however, if they ever had been made, served to turn Jack's daily existence into alternations of hot and cold shower-baths. One day she would talk about a Russian she had met in Paris. Then she solemnly gave the history of her walks and talks with a naval officer in Rome, till Jack's brow was damp with a cold exudation. But when it came to the delightful appearance of Colonel Vere, and the devotion he showed when he took her hand and asked her to share his estates, Jack said, with his teeth clinched, that he had had enough of the whole business – and departed. He then spent two days of very complete misery, barometer at 28°, until she met him and laid her hand on his arm and said she was sorry; would he stop being a cross boy? that she had only been teasing him, and all the rest of it; while she looked out of her soft dark eyes in a way that left no doubt in Jack's mind that he had behaved like a brute.

In this way the first week of her return had been consumed, and as yet he had not felt that he could afford to divide her society with anybody. What with the rich Russian, the naval officer, and

Colonel Vere – what with getting into agonies and getting out of them – it took him pretty nearly all his time to try to straighten matters out. So Geoffrey's introduction had not been mentioned further by him, except to Nina, who was becoming curious to see Jack's particular friend and Admirable Crichton. The opportunity for this meeting seemed about to offer itself in the shape of an entertainment where all those who remained in Toronto during the summer would collect – one of those warm gatherings where the oft-tried case of *pleasure vs. perspiration* results so frequently in an undoubted verdict for the defendant.

The Dusenalls were among those wise enough to know that in summer they could be cooler in Toronto, at their own residence, with every comfort about them, than they could possibly be while stewing in an American hotel or broiling on the sands of an American seaport. They objected to spending large sums yearly in beautifying their grounds, merely to leave the shady walks, cool arbors, and tinkling fountains for the enjoyment of the gardeners' wives and children. In the thickness of their mansion walls there was a power to resist the sun which no thin wooden hotel can possess; therefore, in spite of a fashion which is somewhat dying out, they remained in Toronto during the hot months, and amused themselves a good deal on young Dusenall's yacht.

Their residence was well adapted for such a party as they were now giving, and the guests were made to understand that in the afternoon there would be a sort of garden-party, with lawn-tennis chiefly in view, and at dark a substantial high tea – to wind up with dancing as long as human nature could stand the strain; and if any had got too old or too corpulent or too dignified to play tennis, they could hardly get too much so to look on; or, if this lacked interest, they could walk about the lawns and gardens and converse, or, if possible, make love; or listen to a good military band while enjoying a harmless cigarette; and if they liked none of these things they could never have been known by the people of whom this account is given, and thus, perhaps, might as well never have been born.

The men, of course, played in their flannels, which a few of them afterward changed in Charley Dusenall's rooms when there was a suspension of hostilities for toilets. Most of them went home to dinner and appeared later on for the dancing. People came in afternoon-dress and remained for tea and through the evening in that attire, or else they dropped in at the usual time in evening-dress. It did not matter. It was all a sort of "go-as-you-please." Some girls danced in their light tennis dresses, and others had their maids come with ball dresses. Of course the majority came late – especially the chaperons, the heavy fathers, starchy bank-managers, and such learned counsel as scorned not to view the giddy whirl nor to sample the cellars of the Dusenalls.

Mrs. Lindon arrived with her daughter late in the evening, when everything was whirling. Jack had his name down for a couple of dances, and a few more were bestowed upon eager aspirants, and then she had no more to give away – so sorry! – card quite filled! She told dancing fibs in a charming manner that seemed to take away half the pang of disappointment. This was a field-day, and the discarded ones could receive more notice on some other, smaller occasion.

To see Jack and Nina dancing together was to see two people completely satisfied with themselves. As a dancer, Jack "fancied himself." He had an eye for calculating distances and he had the courage of his opinions when he proposed to dance through a small space. As for Nina, she was the incarnation of a waltz. Her small feet seemed as quick as the pat of a cat's paw. In watching her the idea of exertion never seemed to present itself. There is a pleasure in the rhythmic pulsations of the feet and in yielding to the sensuous strains of the music (which alone seems to be the propelling power) that is more distinctly animal than a good many of our other pleasures; and Nina was born to dance.

At the end of Jack's first dance with her, Geoffrey came idling through the conservatory, and entered the ball-room close beside the place where Mrs. Lindon was seated with several other mothers. As the last bars of the waltz were expiring, Jack brought up at what he called "the moorings" with all the easy swing and grace of a dancer who loves his dance. The act of stopping

seemed to divide the unity in trinity existing between his partner, himself and the music, and it was therefore to be regretted, and not to be done harshly, but lingeringly, if it *must* be done, while Nina, as he released her, came forward toward her mother with her sleeveless arms still partly hanging in the air, and with a pretty little trip and slide on the floor, as if she could not get the "time" out of her feet. Her head was slightly thrown back, the eyelids were drooped, and the lips were parted with a smile of recognition for Mrs. Lindon, while her attitude showed the curves of her small waist to advantage; so that the first glimpse of Nina that Geoffrey received was not an unpleasant one. She seemed to be moving naturally and carelessly. She was only endeavoring to make the other mothers envious, when they compared her with their own daughters. Such wiles were part of her nature. When feeling particularly vigorous, almost every attitude of some people is a challenge – males with their bravery, females with their graces – and, whatever changes the future may develop in the predilections of woman, there may for a long time be some left to acknowledge that for them a likable man is one who is able to assert, in a refined way, sufficient primitive force to make submission seem like conquest rather than choice.

Jack at once introduced Geoffrey – his face beaming while he did so. He was so proud of Nina. He was so proud of Geoffrey. Nina was blushing at having Hampstead witness her little by-play with her mother at the conclusion of the dance – but not displeased withal. Jack thought he had never seen her look so beautiful. And Geoffrey was such a strapper. Jack surveyed them both with unbounded satisfaction. He slapped Hampstead on the arm, and tightened the sleeve of his coat over his biceps, patting the hard limb, and saying warmly: "Here's where the secret lies, Nina! This is what takes the prizes."

"So you are Jonathan's David, are you?" said Nina, smiling, as they talked together.

"Well, he patronizes me a good deal," said Geoffrey. "But don't you think he looks as if he wished to find his next partner? Suppose we give him a chance to do so; let us go off and discuss his moral character."

He went away with Nina on his arm, leaving Jack quite radiant to see them both so friendly.

When they arrived in the long conservatory adjoining, Geoffrey held out his hand for her card. He did not ask for it, except perhaps by a look. Having possessed himself of it, he found five successive dances vacant – evidently kept for some one, and he was bold enough suddenly to conclude they had been kept for him. He looked at the card amused, and as he scratched a long mark across all five, he drawled, "May I have the pleasure of – some dances?" And then he mused aloud as he examined the card, "Don't seem to be more than five. Humph! Too bad! But perhaps we can manage a few more, Miss Lindon?"

Nina was accustomed to distribute her favors with a reluctant hand and with a condescension peculiarly her own, and to hear suppliant voices around her. She would be capricious, and loved her power. Even Jack did not count upon continued sunshine, and took what he could get with some thanksgivings. She was a presumptive heiress, and had not escaped the inflation of the purse-proud. But, on the other hand, since her return she had heard a good deal about the various perfections of his friend, and how well he did everything; and from what her girl friends said, she had gleaned that Geoffrey was more in demand than would be confessed. He was not very desirable financially, perhaps, but hugely so because he was sought after. This much would have been sufficient to have made her amused rather than annoyed at his cool way of assuming that she would devote herself to him for an unlimited time, but there was something more about Geoffrey than mere fashion to account for his popularity, and that was the peculiar influence of his presence upon those with whom he conversed.

Thus Nina, if she came to the Dusenalls with the intention of having a flirtation with Geoffrey, which the condition of her card and her acquiescence to his demands confessed, had hit upon a person who was far more than her match, for Hampstead's acquaintanceships were not much governed by rule. As long as a girl diverted him and wished to amuse herself he had no particular

creed as to consequences, but merely made it understood – verbally, at least – that there was nothing lasting about the matter, and that it was merely for "the temporary mutual benefit and improvement of both parties." This was a remnant of a code of justification by which he endeavored to patch up his self-respect; but nobody knew better than he that such phrases mean nothing to women who are falling in love and intend to continue in love.

Underneath the careless tones with which he spoke to Nina there was an earnestness and concentration that influenced her. As he gravely handed back her card and caught and held her glance with an intensity in his gray eyes and will-power in his face, she felt, for the first time with any man, that she was not completely at her ease. When obeying the warning impulses that formerly fulfilled the offices of thought women do not often make a mistake. By these intuitions, sufficient at first for self-protection, she knew there was willfulness and mastery in him, and that if she would be true to Jack she should return to him. If change of masters be hurtful to women, this was the time for her to remember about the woman who hesitates. Geoffrey said, "Let us go in and have a dance, Miss Lindon," and she rose with a nervous smile and glanced across to the place where her mother was sitting. But Mrs. Lindon had never been a tower of strength to her, or she might have gone to her. She had a distinct feeling that this new acquaintance was more powerful in some way than she had anticipated, and that everything was not all right with Jack's interests, and she was at one of those moments when a woman's ability to decide is so peculiarly the essence of her character, circumstances, and teaching as fairly to indicate her general moral level. Goethe tells us "to first understand"; but if we can not know the extent of Geoffrey's influence, or how far her unknown French lineage assisted temptation, we would better leave judgment alone. Geoffrey said something in her ear about the music being delicious. She listened for a moment and longed for a dance with him. Rubbish! only a dance, after all! And the next moment she was circling through the ball-room with his arm around her.

The band that played at the Dusenalls' was one that could be listened to with pleasure. It was composed of bottle-nosed Germans who worked at trades during the day and who played together generally for their own amusement. In all they played they brought out the soul of the movement. It was to one of the dreamiest of waltzes that Nina danced with Geoffrey – one of those pieces where from softer cadences the air swells into rapturous triumph, or sinks into despair, and wooes the dancer into the most unintellectual and pleasant frame of mind – if the weather be not too warm.

A cool night breeze was passing through the room, bringing with it the fragrance of the dewey flowers outside, and carrying off the odor of those nauseating tube-roses (which people *will* wear), and replacing it with a perfume more acceptable to gods and men – especially men.

If Jack "fancied himself" as a dancer, Geoffrey had a better right to do so. His stature aided him also, and men with retreating chins were rather inclined to give him the road. He had a set look about the lower part of his face which in crowds was an advantage to him. It suggested some *vis major*– perhaps a locomotive, which no one cares to encounter.

In two minutes after they had embarked on this hazardous voyage Nina had but one idea, or rather she was conscious of a pervading sense of pleasure, that ran away with her calmer self. No thought of anything definite was with her, only a vague consciousness of turning and floating, of being admired, of being impelled by music and by Geoffrey. As the dance went on it seemed like some master power that led through the mazes delightfully and resistlessly.

When the music ended, for they had never stopped, she sighed with sorrow. It had been too short. She had yielded herself so completely to its fascination that she seemed like one awakening from a dream. And then her conscience smote her when she thought of Jack, and how in some way she had enjoyed herself too much, and did not seem to be quite the same girl that she had been half an hour before; but these thoughts left her as they walked about and spoke a few words together. While circling the long room she noticed Geoffrey bowing to a tall young lady whose long white

silk train swept behind her majestically. There was a respect and gravity in his bow which Nina, with her quick observation, noticed.

"Who is that you are bowing to?" she asked.

"That is Miss Margaret Mackintosh."

"Oh, I think she is perfectly lovely," said Nina, as she looked back admiringly.

"So do I," said Geoffrey.

Nina turned about now with curiosity, in order to meet her again. Miss Mackintosh came down the room once more with a partner who was one of the very young persons who now are the dancing men in Toronto – called the "infants" by a lady (still unwon) who remembers when there were marriageable men to be found dancing at parties. This detrimental with Miss Mackintosh was having an enjoyable time of it. What with the beauty of his partner, her stately figure, gracious manner, and the rapidity with which she talked to him, the little man did not quite know where he was, and he could do little else than turn occasionally and murmur complete acquiescence in what she was saying, while he sometimes glanced at her active face for a moment. In doing this, though, he would lose the thread of her discourse, in consequence of his unfeigned admiration, and, as he was straining every nerve to follow her quick ideas, this was a risky thing to do. Once or twice, seeing him turn toward her so attentively, she turned also and said, "Don't you think so?" and then the little man would endeavor to mentally pull himself together, and with some appearance of deep thought would again acquiesce with unction. Certainly he thought he did think so – every time.

The close scrutiny of Hampstead and Nina did not seem to affect her as she passed them with her face unlifted and earnest. She did not seem to have any side eyes open to see who were regarding her. When the handsome dress that had made such a cavern in her allowance money was trodden on, she gathered it up with an active movement – not seeming to notice the unpleasantness, nor for a moment abating the earnestness of her conversation. Her idea seemed to be to prevent the dress from interrupting her rather than to save it. One could see that, once on, the dress was perhaps not thought of again, that it was not the main part of her pleasure, but was lost in her endeavor to make herself agreeable, and in this way to enjoy herself.

"I am sure she must have a very kind heart," said Nina, smiling.

"Why?" asked Geoffrey.

"Because she takes so much trouble over such a poor specimen of a man."

"Perhaps, as Douglas Jerrold said, she belongs to the Royal Humane Society," added Geoffrey.

As Nina could not remember being acquainted with any Mr. Jerrold, the remark lost some of its weight. The true inwardness of the old wit that comes down to us in books is our knowledge of the reputation of the joker.

"And does she dance well?" asked Nina.

"No," said Geoffrey, as he still looked after Miss Mackintosh with grave and thoughtful eyes. "I don't think she has in her enough of what Gœthe calls the 'dæmonic element' of our nature to dance well."

"Not very complimentary, to those who can dance well," said Nina, archly pointing to herself.

Geoffrey shrugged his shoulders, as he looked at his partner. "Some people prefer the dæmonic element," said he. But he turned again from the rose to the tall, white lily, who was once more approaching them, with something of a melancholy idea in his mind that men like him ought to confine themselves entirely to the rose, and not aspire above their moral level. Margaret Mackintosh was the one person he revered. She was the symbol to him of all that was good and pure. He had almost forgotten what these words meant, but the presence of Margaret always re-interpreted the lost language.

"And do you admire her very much?" Nina inquired.

"I admire her more than any person I ever saw."

Sooner or later, it would have gone hard with Geoffrey for making this speech, if he had been any one else. But it occurred to Nina that he did not care whether she took offense or not. He was leaning against the wall, apparently oblivious, for the moment, to any of her ideas, charms, or graces, but looking, withal, exceedingly handsome, and a thought came to her which should not come to an engaged young lady. She made up her mind that she would make him care for her a great deal and then would snub him and marry Jack.

The music commenced again.

"Come now," said Nina, gayly, "and try a little more of the dæmonic element."

Geoffrey turned to her quickly, and his face flushed as, to quote Shakespeare's sonnet, "his bad angel fired his good one out." He saw in her face her intention to subjugate him, and knew that he had accidentally paved the way for this new foolish notion of hers by his candid admiration of Miss Mackintosh.

"Have you any of it to spare?" said he, as his arm encircled her for the dance.

No verbal answer was given, but they floated away among the dancers. Here she forgot her slight feelings of resentment and retained only the desire to attract him, without further wish to punish him afterward. A few turns around the room, and she was in as much of a whirl as she had been before. They danced throughout the music – almost without ceasing; and when it ended she unconsciously leaned, upon his arm, as they strolled off together, almost as if she were tired. The thought of how she was acting came to her, only it came now as an intruder. A usurper reigned with sovereign sway, and Right was quickly ousted on his approach. A little while ago, and the power to decide, for Jack or against him, was more evenly balanced; but now, how different! She was wandering on with no other impulse than the indefinite wish to please Geoffrey. If she had been a man, sophisms and excuses might have occurred to her. But it was not her habit to analyze self much, and even sophisms require *some* thought.

They passed through the conservatory and out to the broad walk of pressed gravel, where several couples were promenading. Here they walked up and down once or twice in the cool breeze that seemed delicious after the invisible dust of the ball-room. Nina was saying nothing, but leaning on his arm, and it seemed to her that his low, deep tones vibrated through her – as a sympathetic note sometimes makes glass ring – as if in echo.

Geoffrey was pondering where all the pride and self-assertion had gone to in this girl who now seemed so trustful and docile. Even her answers seemed mechanical and vague, as if she were in some way bewildered.

Jack, in the mean time, was elbowing his way through a crowd, trying to get one of his partners something to eat. He was the only person likely to notice her absence, and this he did not do, and, as Geoffrey was down for five dances, he knew no others would be looking for her. So he walked on past the end of the terrace, and, descending some steps, proceeded farther till they came to more steps leading down into a path dark with overhanging trees. Nina hesitated, and said she was always afraid to go among dark trees, but Geoffrey said, "Oh, I'll take care of you." Then she thought it was pleasant to have an athlete for a protector, and she glanced at his strong face and frame with confidence. She no longer went with him as she had danced, with her mind in a whirl, but peacefully and calmly, with no other thought than to be with him. He took her hand as they descended the stairs, and, though she shrank a little from a proceeding new to her, it seemed natural enough, and gave her a sense of protection in the dark paths. It did not occur to her that she could have done without it. She did not notice their silence. Geoffrey, too, thought it pleasant enough in the balmy air without conversation. He was interested by her beauty and her sudden partiality for him.

At length he stopped in one of the distant paths as they came to a seat between the trunks of two large trees. Here they sat down at opposite sides of the seat, and Geoffrey leaned back against the tree beside him. The leaves on the overhanging boughs quivered in the light of the moon, and

the delicate perfume in the air spoke of flower-beds near by. He thought it extremely pleasant here, and he laid his head back against the tree beside him to listen to the tinkling of the fountain and to enjoy the scent-laden night air. An idea was still with him that this was the girl Jack was engaged to, and he thought it would be as well to keep that idea before him. He said to himself that he liked Jack, and thought he was very considerate, under the circumstances, for his friend when he took out a little silver case and suggested that he would like a cigarette.

Nina did not answer him. She was in some phase of thought in which cigarettes had no place, and only looked toward him slowly, as if she had merely heard the sound of his voice and not the words. He selected from the case one of those innocuous tubes of rice-paper and prairie-grass, and, as he did so, the absent look on her face seemed peculiar. With a fuse in one hand and the cigarette in the other, he paused before striking a light, and they looked at each other for a moment as he thought of stories he had read of one person's influence over another. Like many, he had a general curiosity about strange phases of mankind, and it occurred to him that Nina would make an interesting subject for experiment. Presently he said, in resonant tones, deep and musical:

"Do you like to be here, Nina?"

She did not seem to notice that he called her by this familiar name, but she stood up and remained silently gazing at the moon through a break in the foliage. Her beauty was sublimated by the white light, and, as Geoffrey took a step towards her, he forgot about his cigarette, and, taking both her hands in his, he repeated his question two or three times before she answered. Then she turned impetuously.

"Oh, why do you make me do everything that is wrong? I should not be here. I should never have spoken to you. I was afraid of you from the first moment I saw you."

Geoffrey led her by one hand back to the seat.

"Now answer me. Do you like to be here – with me, Nina?"

She looked at the moon and at the ground and all about, but remained mute and apparently pondering.

He had forgotten Jack now as well as the cigarette, and was rapidly losing the remembrance that this was to be merely a scientific experiment.

"Your silence makes me all the more impatient. I will know now. Do you like to be here, Nina?"

A new earnestness in his tone thrilled her and made her tremble. She turned with a sudden impulse, as if something had made her reckless:

"You are forcing me to answer you," she said vehemently, as she looked at him with a constrained, though affectionate expression in her eyes. "But I will tell you if I die for it. Oh, I am so wicked to say so, but I must. You make me. Oh, now let us go into the house."

Geoffrey's generous intention to act rightly by Jack departed from him, and for a moment he drew her toward him, saying that she must not care too much for being there, "because, you know," he said, "this is only a little flirtation, and is quite too good to last."

She seemed not to be listening to him, but to be thinking; and after a moment she said, in long drawn out, sorrowful accents:

"Oh – poor – Jack!"

Something in the slow, melancholy way she said this, and the thought of the poor place that Jack certainly held at the present time in her affections, struck Geoffrey as irresistibly amusing, and he laughed aloud in an unsympathetic way, which presented him to her in a new light, and she sprang from him at once. Her emotion turned to anger as she thought that the laugh had been derisive, and her blood boiled to think he could bring her here to laugh at her after he had succeeded in winning her so completely.

"Come into the house at once," she cried. "I can't go in alone even if I knew the way."

Geoffrey rose and begged her pardon, assuring her that nothing but the peculiarity of her remark had caused his laugh.

"I will not stay here another instant. If you don't come at once I'll find my way alone." And she stamped her foot upon the ground.

Hampstead did not like to be stamped at, and his face altered. As long as she had been facile and pleasing, a sense of duty toward her and Jack had made him considerate. It had seemed to him while sitting there that this girl was his; and the sense of possession had made him kind, but now that she seemed to vex him unnecessarily it appeared to him like a denial of his influence. The idea of the experiment suddenly returned, together with a sense of power and a desire to compel submission which displaced his wish to be considerate. He sat down on the seat again facing her and said:

"I want you to come here." He motioned to the seat beside him.

"I won't go near you. I hate you! I'll run in by myself."

"You can not run away – because I wish you to come here."

Hampstead said this in a measured way, and his brow seemed to knot into cords as he concentrated his will-power. His face bore an unpleasant expression. A quarter of a minute passed and she stood trembling and fascinated; and before another half-minute had elapsed she came very slowly forward, and approached him with the expression of her face changed into one of enervation. Her eyes were dilated, and her hands hung loosely at her sides. Hampstead saw, with some consternation, that she had become like something else, that she looked very like a mad-woman. A shock went through him as he looked at her – not knowing how the matter might terminate. He saw that she was mesmerized – an automaton moved by his will only. The combined flirtation and experiment had gone further than he had intended, and the result was startling – especially as the possibility that she might not recover flashed through his mind. The power he had been wielding (which receives much cheap ridicule from very learned men who would fain deny what they can not explain) suddenly seemed to him to be a devilish one, and he felt that he had done something wrong. He had not intended it. An idea had seized him, and he was merely concentrating a power which he unconsciously used almost every hour of his life. He considered what ought to be done to bring her back to a normal state. Not knowing anything better to do, he walked her about quickly, speaking to her, a little sharply, so as to rouse her.

Then, by telling her to wake up, and by asking her simple questions and requiring an answer, he succeeded in bringing her back to something like her usual condition. When she quite knew where she was, she thought she must have fainted. All her anger was gone, and Geoffrey, to give the devil his due, felt sorry for her. It had been an interesting episode – something quite new to him in a scientific way – but uncanny. She still looked to him as if for protection, and she would have wept had he not warned her how she would appear in the ball-room. "Oh, Mr. Hampstead, you have treated me cruelly," she said. Geoffrey felt that this was true enough.

"It was all my own fault, though. I do not blame you. You have taught me a great deal to-night. I seem to know, somehow, your best and your worst, and what a man can be."

She leaned upon his arm, partly from weakness and partly because she felt that, good or bad, he was master, and that she liked to lean upon him. The movement touched Geoffrey with compassion. Having nothing to offer in return, it distressed him to notice her affection, which he knew would only bring her unhappiness. He tried, therefore, to say something to remove the impressions that had come to her.

"You speak of good and bad in me," he said quickly. "Now I think you are so much in my confidence that I can trust you in what I am going to say. Don't believe that there is any good in me. I tell you the truth now because I am sorry that we have been so foolish to-night. There is no good in me. It is all – the other thing."

Nina shuddered – feeling as if he had spoken the truth but that it was already too late for her to listen to it.

He took her back into the house, smiling and pleasant to those about him, as if nothing had occurred, and left her with Mrs. Lindon.

But he did not go to find Margaret Mackintosh again. He went home somewhat excited, and smoked four or five pipes of tobacco. At first he was regretful, for he knew he had been doing harm. He said he was a whimsical fool. But after a couple of "night-caps" he began to think how picturesque she had looked in the moonlight, and he afterward dropped off into as dreamless and undisturbed a sleep as the most virtuous may enjoy.

CHAPTER VI

For in her youth
There is a prone and speechless dialect,
Such as moves men; besides, she hath prosperous art,
When she will play with reason and discourse,
And well she can persuade.

Measure for Measure.

If anybody had stated that Geoffrey Hampstead was a scoundrel, he would have had grounds for his opinion. As he did not attempt to palliate his own misdeeds, nobody will do so for him. He repudiated the idea of being led into wrong-doing, or driven into it by outside circumstances. Whatever he did, he liked to do thoroughly, and of his own accord. When Nature lavishes her gifts, much ability for both good and evil is usually part of the general endowment; and, although, perhaps, if we knew more, all wrong-doing would receive pity, Geoffrey possessed a knowledge of results that tends to withdraw compassion. But he had overstepped the mark when he had told Nina there was no good in him. Even his own statement reminded him how few things there are about which a sweeping assertion can be made with truth. He grew impatient to find that so many people do not hold opinions – that their opinions hold them; and when the good equalities of a person under discussion met with no consideration he invariably spoke of them. He had a good word to say for most people, and no lack of courage to say it, and thus he gave impression of being fair-minded, which made men like him. He had the compassion for the faulty which seems to appear more frequently in those whose lives have been by no means without reproach than among the strictest followers of religions which claim charity as their own. He thought he realized that consciousness of virtue does not breed so much true compassion as consciousness of sin; and a young clergyman of his acquaintance found that his arguments as to the utility of sin in the world were very shocking and difficult to answer.

Thus he alternated between good and evil, very much in the ordinary way, with only these differences, that his good seemed more disinterested and his evil more pronounced than with most people. The good which he did was done without the bargaining hope of future compensation, and therefore seemed more commendable. On the other hand, as he had almost forgotten what the idea of hell was, he was not forced to brave those consequences which, if some believe as they profess, must render their deliberate wrong-doing almost heroic.

What should a man be called who had in him these combinations? Too good to be either a Quilp or a Jonas Chuzzlewit, and much too bad to resemble any of the spotless heroes of fiction. It will settle the matter with those who are intolerant of distinctions and who do not examine into mixtures of good and evil outside their own range of life to have it understood and agreed that he was a thoroughpaced scoundrel. This will place us all on a comfortable footing.

Some days after the Dusenalls' entertainment Geoffrey was strolling along King Street when he caught sight of Margaret Mackintosh coming along the street with quiet eyes observant. She walked with a long, elastic step, which seemed to speak of the buoyancy of her heart.

Geoffrey walked slower, so that he might enjoy the beauty of her carriage, and the charm of her presence as she recognized him. It seemed to him that no one else could convey so much in a bow as she could. With the graceful inclination of the head came the pleasure of recognition and a quick intelligence that lighted up her face. It was the bow of a princess, as we imagine it; not, it will be remembered, as Canada has experienced it. A nobility and graciousness in her face and figure made men feel that she had a right to condescend to them. Innocence was not the

chief characteristic of her face. However attractive, innocence is a poetic name for ignorance – the ignorance which has been canonized by the Romish faith, and has thus produced all the insipid virgins and heroines of the old masters and writers. She did not show that pliable, ductile, often pretty ignorance, supposedly sanctified by the name of innocence, which has been the priestly ideal of beauty for at least nineteen hundred years – perhaps always.

Hers was a good face, with a sweet, firm, generous mouth, possibly passionate, and already marked by sympathetic suffering from such human ills as she understood. She seemed to have nothing to hide, and she was as free and open as the day, and as fresh as the dawn; and a large part of the charm she had for all men lay in the fact that her self-respect was so assured to her that she had forgotten all about it. She had none of that primness which, is the outcome of an attempt to conceal the fact, that knowledge of which one is ashamed is continually uppermost in the mind.

As soon as her eye rested on Geoffrey, it lighted up with that marvelous quickness which is the attribute of rapidly-thinking people. In a flash her mind apparently possessed itself of all she had ever known of him. Five or six little things to say came tumbling over each other to her lips, as she held out her long gloved hand in greeting. Even Hampstead felt that her quick approach, earnest manner, and the way she looked straight at him almost disconcerted him; but he had thought to wait till she spoke to him to see what she would say. And she thought he would speak first, so a little pause occurred for an instant that would have been slightly awkward had they not both been young and very good-looking and much interested in each other.

"And how are you?" said she heartily, as they shook hands. The pause might have continued as far as either of them cared. They were self-possessed persons – these two.

"Oh, I am pretty well, thank you," said Geoffrey, without hastening to continue the conversation.

"And particularly well you look. Never saw you look better," said Margaret.

Geoffrey made a deep bow, extending the palms of his hands toward her and downward in reverent Oriental pantomime, as one who should say: "Your slave is humbly glad to please, and dusts your path with his miserable body."

"And what brought you into town to-day?" said he, as he turned and walked with her. "Not the giddy delight of walking on King Street, I hope?"

"That was my only idea, I will confess. Home was dull, and I was tired of reading. Mother was busy and father was away somewhere; so I came out for a walk. Yes, King Street was my only hope. No, by the way – I had an excuse. I have been looking for a house-maid. None to be had though."

"Don't find one," said Geoffrey. "Just come out every day to look for one. I know several fellows who would hunt house-maids with you forever if they got the chance."

"Ah! they never dare to say that to me. They might get snapped up. Yet it is hard to only receive compliments by deputy, like this. Do they intend that, after all, I shall die an old maid? And your banks friends are such excellent *partis*! are they not?"

"They are," said Geoffrey. "At least, they would be if they had a house to put a wife into – to say nothing of the maid."

"Talking of house-maids," said Margaret, "I just met Mrs. whats-her-name – you know, the little American with the German name; and she had just discharged one of her maids. She said to me, 'You know I have just one breakfast – ice-cold water and a hot roll; sometimes a pickle. Sarah said I'd kill myself, and in spite of everything I could say she *would* load the table with tea or coffee and stuff I don't want. 'Last I got mad and I walked in with her wages up to date. I said, 'Sarah I guess we had better part. You don't fill the bill.' I told her I would try and get Sarah myself, as I didn't object to her ideas in the matter of breakfasts. I have been looking for her and wanting some nice person to help me to find her. What are you doing this afternoon? Won't you come and help me to find Sarah?" This, with a little pretense of *implorando*.

"If you think I 'fill the bill' as 'a nice person' nothing would give me greater pleasure. Sarah will be found. No, I have nothing in particular on hand to-day. I was going to the gymnasium to have a fellow pummel me with the gloves. I am certain I have received more headaches and nose-bleedings in learning how to defend myself with my hands than one would receive in being attacked a dozen times in earnest."

"Well, now would be a good time to stop taking further lessons," said Margaret. "Why do you give yourself so much trouble?"

"Oh, for the exercise, I suppose, or the prestige of being a boxer. Keeps one's person sacred, in a manner; and among young men serves to give more weight to the expression of one's opinions. I think it is a mistake, though, as far as I am concerned. Nature made me speedy on my feet, and when the time comes I'll use her gift instead of the artificial one."

"I have heard it said that it is much wiser for a gentleman to run from a street fight than to stay in it – that the fact of his not using his feet as a means of attack in a fight always places him at a disadvantage. Could you not learn the manly art of kicking, as well?"

"What a murderous notion!" exclaimed Geoffrey. "I don't think that branch of self-defense is taught in the schools. It reminds one of a duel with axes. For my part, I think that hunting Sarah is much more improving. That is, if one did not have blood-thirsty ideas put into his head on the way."

And Margaret looked so gentle and pacific.

"I always think a very interesting subject like this should be thought out carefully," said she, smiling.

If she could not talk well on all subjects, she was a boon to those who could only talk on *one*– to those who resemble a ship with only one sail to keep them going – slow to travel on, but capable of teaching something, and not to be despised.

With her tall figure, classic face, and blonde hair, Margaret Mackintosh was a vision; but when she came, with large-pupiled eyes, in quest of knowledge, even grave and reverend seigniors were apt to forget the information she asked for. University-degree young men, the most superior of living creatures, soon understood that she sought for what they had learned, and not for themselves; and this demeanor on her part, while it tended to disturb the nice balance in which the weight of their mental talents was accurately poised against that of their physical fascinations, went to make friends and not lovers.

There was one person, however, to whose appearance she was not indifferent; who always suggested to her the Apollo Belvedere, and gave her an increased interest in the Homer of arts, whereas the vigorous life, heroic resolve, and shapely perfection of the ancient hero meet with but little response in women who exist with difficulty. She was perhaps entitled, by a sort of natural right, to expect that a masculine appearance should approach that grade of excellence of which she was herself an example.

"Do you know," she continued, as they proceeded up Yonge Street, "just before I met you I passed such a horrible young man, with long arms reaching almost to his knees and a little face. He made me quite uncomfortable. It's all very well to believe in our evolution as an abstract idea; but an experience like this brings the conviction home to one's mind altogether too vividly. It was quite a relief to meet you. You always look so – in fact, so different from that sort of person, don't you know?"

She nearly said he looked so like her Apollo, but did not.

Geoffrey smiled. "There are times when the idea seems against common sense," said he, with a short glance at her.

"Ah! you intend that for me. But you are almost repeating father's remark. You know he is a confirmed follower of the theory. A few days ago he said that the only thing he had against you was that you upset his studies. He says you ought to hire out to the special-creationists to be used as their clinching argument. So you see what it is to be an Ap – "

She stopped.

"Ah! you were going to say something severe, then," said Geoffrey. "Just as well, though, to snub me sometimes. I don't mind it if nobody knows of it. But, about your father? Do you assist him in his studies?"

"I don't know that I assist him much. He does the hardest part of the work, and then has to explain it all to me. But I read to him a good deal when his eyes trouble him. After procuring a new book on the subject he never rests till he has exhausted it. We often worry through it together, taking turns at the reading. We have just finished Haeckel's last. We are wild about Haeckel."

"Yes, there is something very spiritual and orthodox about him," said Geoffrey. "And now that you must have got about as far as you can at present, how does the theory affect you?"

"Not at all, except to make me long to know more. If one could live to be two hundred years old, would it not be delightful?" said Margaret, looking far away up the street in front of her.

"But as to your religion?" asked Geoffrey. "Do you find that it makes any difference?"

"I don't think I was ever a very religious person," she replied, mistaking the word religious for 'churchy.' "I never was christened, nor confirmed, nor taught my catechism, nor anything of that sort. Nobody ever promised that I should renounce the devil and all his works, and so – and so I suppose I never have."

She looked at Geoffrey with the round eyes of guilelessness, slightly mirthful, as if, while deprecating this wretched state, she could still enjoy life.

Her companion could scarcely look away from her. There was such a combination of knowledge and purity and all-round goodness in her face that it fascinated him and induced him to say gravely:

"Indeed, one might have almost supposed that you had enjoyed these benefits from your earliest youth."

"No," she answered, "I have been neglected in church matters. Who knows? Perhaps, if I had been different, father and I would never have been such companions. I never remember his going to church, although he pays his pew-rent for mother and me to go. He is afraid people would call him an atheist, you know, and no man cares about being despised or looked upon as peculiar in that way. He says that as long as he pays his pew-rent the good people will let him alone. As for mother, I hardly know what her belief is now. She is mildly contemptuous of evolution; chiefly, I think, because she does not know, or care anything about it. She says the creed she was brought up in is quite enough for her, and if she can keep the dust *out* of the house and contentment *in* it she will do more than most people and fullfil the whole duty of woman. I don't think she likes to be cross-questioned about her particular tenets, which really seem to be sufficient for her, except when she is worried over a new phase of the old family lawsuit, and then she oscillates between pugnacity and resignation. So you see I was left pretty much to myself as to assuming any belief that I might care about."

"And what belief did you come to care about?" he asked, feeling interested.

"Well, father seems to think that the most dignified attitude of our ignorance is a respectful silence; but, as you have asked which belief I *care about*, I can answer frankly that I like best going to church and saying my prayers. It is so much more pleasant and comfortable to try to think our prayers are heard, for, as mother says, reason and logic are poor outlets for emotion when the lawsuit goes wrong. With our information as it is, our conclusions seem to depend on whether we have or have not in us the spirit of research. They tell me in the churches that, being unregenerate, my heart is desperately wicked, and, as I have nothing but a little bad temper now and then to reproach myself with, I do not agree with them. On the contrary, I always feel that my life rather tends to lead me toward believing – or, at any rate, does not make me prejudiced. I like to believe that God watches over and cares for us. There being no proof or disproof of the matter, I would find it as difficult, by way of reasoning, to altogether disbelieve as to altogether believe."

"Then you make evolution a part of your religion?" asked Geoffrey.

Margaret had been brought up in an advanced latter-day school. All the unrecognized passion within her had gone out in quest of knowledge, which her father had taught her to regard as a source of quiet happiness, or at least as comforting to the soul during the maturer years as an intricate knowledge of crochet and quilt work. When she took to her bosom the so-called dry-as-dust facts of science she clothed them in a sort of spirituality. Even slipper-working for a married curate has been known to stir the pulses, and, though she knew that when the objects of our enthusiasm seem to glow it is unsafe to say whether the glow is not merely the reflection of our own fervor, she regarded the lately dug-up facts of science somewhat as if they were mines of long-hidden coal, capable of use and possessed of intrinsic warmth. Her face brightened with all the enthusiasm of a devotee as she answered Geoffrey's question.

"Indeed, yes. The new knowledge seems like the backbone of my religion. I often sit in church and think what a blessed privilege it is to be permitted to know even as little as we do about God's plan of creation."

She joined her hands before her quickly as she walked along, forgetful of all but the idea that enchained her. Her face showed the devotion seen in some old pictures of early saints, but it was too capable and animated to be the production of any of the old masters.

"Oh, it is grand to know even a little!" she exclaimed; "to think that this is God's plan, and that bit by bit we are allowed to unravel it! Is it not true that we acquire knowledge as we are able to receive it? Did not the ruder people receive the simple laws which Moses learned in Egypt? and did not Christianity expand those laws by teaching the religion of sympathy? These are historical facts. Why, then, should we not regard evolution as an advanced gospel, the gospel of the knowledge of God's works, to bind us more closely to him from our admiration of the excellence of his handiwork – as a father might show his growing son how his business is carried on, and how beautiful things are made? Of course, one may reply that all the discoveries do not show that there is a God. Perhaps they don't; but I try to think they do. I never have been able to find that verbal creeds do much toward making us what we are. The gloomy distort Christ's life to prove the necessity for sorrow; the joyous do just the opposite. The naturally cruel practice their cruelty in the name of religion. Though all start with perhaps the same words on their lips, each individual in reality makes his religion for himself according to his nature. Look at the difference between Guiteau and Florence Nightingale. They both had the same creeds."

Hampstead was silent.

"I know that my religion might not suffice for others, because it has no terrors, but to me it is compelling. When I turn it all over more minutely, the beauty of the thoughts seems to carry me away. Let those whose brittle creeds are broken grope about in their gloom, if they will. To me it is glorious first to try to understand things, and then to praise God for his marvelous works."

Margaret grew more intense in her utterance as her subject grew upon her. They had turned off on a quiet street some time before, so there was nothing to interrupt her. As her earnestness gave weight to her voice, the words came out more fervently and more melodiously. Both her hands were raised, in an unconscious gesture, while the words welled forth with a depth and force impossible to describe.

Geoffrey walked on in silence.

He thought of the passage, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," and he wondered whether Christ would have thought that such as Margaret stood in need of any further faith. The shrine of Understanding was the only one she worshiped at, arguing, as she did, that from a proper understanding and true wisdom followed all the goodness of the Christ-life. He became conscious of a vague regret within him that he had, as he thought, passed those impressionable periods when a man's beliefs may be molded again. There was a distinct longing to participate in the assurance and joy which any kind of fixed faith is capable of producing. The Byronic temperament

was not absent from him. He was keenly susceptible to anything – either moral or immoral – which called upon his ideality; and these ideas of Margaret's, although he had thought of them before, seemed new to him.

"It seems strange," he said musingly, "to hear of some of the most learned men of the day erecting an altar similar to that which Paul found at Athens 'to the unknown God,' and to find them impelled to worship something which they speak of as unknown and unknowable."

"And yet," she answered, "it is the work of some of these very men, and their predecessors, that gives the light and life to the religion which I, for one, find productive of comfort and enthusiasm. One can understand the practicability of a heaven where a gradual acquisition of the fullness of knowledge could be a joyful and everlasting occupation; and I think a religion to fit us for such a heaven should, like the Buddhist's, strive to increase our knowledge instead of endeavoring to stifle it. What is there definitely held out as reward by religions to make men improve? As far as I can see, there is nothing definite promised, except in Buddhism perhaps, which men with active minds would care to accept. But knowledge! knowledge! This is what may bring an eternity of active happiness. Here is a vista as delightful as it is boundless. Surely in this century, we have less cause to call God altogether 'unknown' than had the men of Athens. In the light of omniscience the difference may be slight indeed, but to us it is great. I do hope," she added, "that what I have said does not offend any of your own religious convictions."

"I have none," said Geoffrey simply; "and it is very good of you to tell me so much about yourself. I have been wanting something of the kind. You know Bulwer says, 'No moral can be more impressive than that which shows how a man may become entangled in his own sophisms.' He says it is better than a volume of homilies; and it is difficult sometimes, after a course of reading mixed up with one's own vagaries, to judge as to one's self or others from a sufficiently stable standpoint. You always seem to give me an intuitive knowledge of what good really is, and to tell me where I am in any moral fog."

They walked on together for some little distance further when Margaret stopped and began to look up and down the street.

"Why, where are we?" she said. "What street is this?"

"I can not help you with the name of the street. I supposed we were approaching the domicile of Sarah. We are now in St. John's Ward, I think, and unless Sarah happens to be a colored person you are not likely to find her in this neighborhood."

"Dear me," said Margaret, as she descended from considering the possible occupations of the heavenly host to those usual in St. John's Ward, "I have not an idea where we are. We must have come a long distance out of our way. It is your fault for doing all the talking."

"On the contrary, Miss Margaret, I have been unable to get a word in edgewise."

The search for Sarah was abandoned, and they wended their way toward Margaret's home, the conversation passing to other subjects and to Nina Lindon, whom they discussed in connection with the ball at the Dusenalls'.

"They certainly seem very devoted, do they not?" said Margaret, referring to Jack Cresswell also.

"Yes, their attachment for each other is quite idyllic," said Geoffrey, lapsing into his cynical speech, "which is as it should be. I did not see them much together, as I left early."

"I noticed your absence, at least I remembered afterward not having seen you late in the evening, but, as you take such an interest in your friend, you should have stayed longer, if only to see the very happy expression on his face. You know she is spoken of as being the *belle*, and certainly he ought to be proud of her, as the attention she attracted was so very marked. I thought her appearance was charming. They seemed to make an exception to the rule among lovers that one loves and the other submits to be loved."

"I am glad to hear you say this," said Geoffrey, as he silently reflected as to the cause of Nina's return to do her duty in a way that would tend to ease her conscience. "Jack is worthy of the best of girls. Have you ever called upon the Lindons?"

"No, not yet. But Mr. Cresswell spoke to me about Miss Lindon and said he would like me to know her. So I said we would call. I am afraid, however, that mother will complain at the length of her visiting list being increased. She will have to be coaxed into this call to please me."

"Jack cherishes an idea that Miss Lindon, he, and I will become a trio of good friends," said Geoffrey. "Now, if anything could be done to make it a quartette, if you would consent to make a fourth, Miss Margaret, I am certain the new arrangement would be more satisfactory to all parties, especially so to me considered as one of the trio. A gooseberry's part is fraught with difficulties."

"The more the merrier, no doubt, in this case. Numbers will release you from your responsibilities. I have myself two or three friends that would make excellent additions to the quartette. There's Mr. Le Fevre, of your bank, and also Mr. – "

"Ah, well!" said Geoffrey, interrupting. "Let us consider. I don't think that it was contemplated to make a universal brotherhood of this arrangement. If there are to be any more elected I should propose that the male candidates should be balloted for by the male electors only, and that additional lady members should be disposed of by their own sex only. Let me see. In the event of a tie in voting, the matter might be left to a general meeting to be convened for consultation and ice-cream, and, if the candidate be thrown out by a majority, the proposer should be obliged to pay the expenses incurred by the conclave."

"That seems a feasible method," said Margaret. "Although I tell you, if we girls do not have the right men, there will be trouble. And now we ought to name the new society. What do you say to calling it 'An Association for the Propagation of Friendly Feeling among Themselves'?"

"Limited," added Geoffrey, thinking that the membership ought to be restricted.

"Oh, limited, by all means," cried Margaret. "I should rather think so. Limited in finances, brains, and everything else. And then the rules! Politics and religion excluded, of course, as in any other club?"

"Well, I don't mind those so much as discussions of millinery and dress-making. These should be vetoed at any general meeting."

"Excuse me. These are subjects that come under the head of art, and ought to be permissible to any extent; but I do make strong objection to the use of yachting terms and sporting language generally."

"Possibly you are right," said Geoffrey. "But Jack – poor Jack! he must refer to starboard bulkheads and that sort of thing from time to time. However, we will agree to each other's objections, but we must certainly place an embargo upon saying ill-natured things about our neighbors – "

"Good heavens, man! Do you expect us to be dumb?" cried Margaret. "Very well. It shall be so. We will call it the 'Dumb Improvement Company for Learned Pantomime.'"

And thus they rattled on in their fanciful talk merrily enough – interrupting each other and laughing over their own absurdities, and sharpening their wits on each other, as only good friends can, until Margaret's home was reached.

To Geoffrey it seemed to emphasize Margaret's youth and companionability when, in following his changing moods, she could so readily make the transition from the sublime to the ridiculous.

CHAPTER VII

Rosalind. Sir, you have wrestled well, and overthrown more than your enemies. —*As You Like It.*

In the few weeks following the entertainment of the Dusenalls, Hampstead had not seen Nina. He felt he had been doing harm. The memory of that which had occurred and a twinge or two at his unfaithfulness to his friend Jack had made him avoid seeing her. But afterward, as fancy for seeing her again came to him more persistently, he gradually reverted to the old method of self-persuasion, that if she preferred Jack she might have him. He said he did not intend to show "any just cause or impediment" when Jack's marriage bans were published, and what the girl might now take it into her head to do was no subject of anxiety to him.

She, in the mean time, had lost no time in improving her acquaintance with Margaret after the calls had been exchanged. Margaret was not peculiar in finding within her an argument in favor of one who evidently sought her out, and the small amount of effusion on Nina's part was not without some of its desired effect. Nina wished to be her particular friend. She had perceived that a difference existed between them – a something that Geoffrey seemed to admire; and she had the vague impulse to form herself upon her.

Huxley explained table-turning by a simple experiment. He placed cards underneath the hands of the people forming the charmed circle round the table, and when they all "willed" that the table should move in a particular direction the cards and hands moved in that direction, while the table resisted the spirits and remained firm on its feet. In a similar way, Nina's impulse to know Margaret and frame herself upon her were all a process of unconscious self-deception which resembled the illusions of unrecognized muscular movements. She had no fixed ideas regarding Hampstead. Her actions were simply the result of his presence in her thoughts. She moved toward him, distantly and vaguely, but surely – somewhat as the card of a ship-compass, when it is spinning, seems to have no fixed destination, though its ultimate direction is certain.

She found it easy to bring the Dusenall girls to regard Margaret as somebody worth cultivating. The family tree of the Dusenall's commenced with the grandfather of the Misses Dusenall, who had got rich "out West." On inquiry they found that Margaret's family tree dwarfed that of any purely Canadian family into a mere shrub by comparison; and on knowing her better they found her brightness and vivacity a great addition to little dinners and lunches where conversational powers are at a premium.

With plenty of money, no work, an army of servants, a large house and grounds, a stable full of horses, and a good yacht, three or four young people can with the assistance of their friends support life fairly well. Lawn-tennis was their chief resource. Nina, being rather of the Dudu type, was not wiry enough to play well, and Margaret had not learned. She was strong and could run well, but this was not of much use to her. When the ball came toward her through the air she seemed to become more or less paralyzed. Between nervous anxiety to hit the ball and inability to judge its distance, she usually ended in doing nothing, and felt as if incurring contempt when involuntarily turning her back upon it. If she did manage to make a hit, the ball generally had to be found in the flower-beds far away on either side of the courts. In cricketing parlance, she played to "cover point" or "square leg" with much impartiality.

So these two generally looked on and made up for their want of skill in dignity and in conversation among themselves and with the men too languid to play. The wonder was that the marriageable young women liked Margaret so well. With her long, symmetrical dress rustling over the lawn and her lace-covered parasol occasionally hiding her dainty bonnet and well-poised head, Margaret might have been regarded as an enemy and labeled "dangerous," but the girls trusted

her with their particular young men, with a sort of knowledge that she did not want any of them, even if the men themselves should prove volatile and recreant. After all, what young girls chiefly seek "when all the world is young, lad, and all the trees are green," is to have a good time and not be interrupted in their whims. So Margaret, who was launching out into a gayer life than she had led before, got on well enough, and the wonder as to what girls who did nothing found to talk about was wearing off. If she was not much improved in circles where general advantages seemed to promise originality, it was no bad recreation sometimes to study the exact minimum of intelligence that general advantages produced, and the drives in the carriages and Nina's village-cart were agreeable. She was partial to "hen-parties." Nina had one of these exclusive feasts where perhaps the success of many a persistent climber of the social ladder has been annihilated. It was a luncheon party. Of course the Dusenall girls were there, and a number of others. Mrs. Lindon did not appear. Nina was asked where she was, but she said she did not know. As she never did seem to know, this was not considered peculiar.

On this day Margaret was evidently the particular guest, and she was made much of by several girls whom she had not met before. It was worth their while, for she was Nina's friend and Nina had such delicious things – such a "perfect love" of a boudoir, all dadoes, and that sort of thing, with high-art furniture for ornament and low-art furniture in high-art colors for comfort, articles picked up in her traveling, miniature bronzes of well-known statues, a carved tower of Pisa of course, coral from Naples, mosaics from Florence, fancy glassware from Venice – in fact a tourist could trace her whole journey on examining the articles on exhibition. A French cook supplied the table with delectable morsels which it were an insult to speak of as food. Altogether her home was a pleasant resort for her acquaintances, and there were those present who thought it not unwise to pay attention to any person whom Nina made much of.

There were some who could have been lackadaisical and admiring nothing, if the tone of the feast had been different, but Margaret was for admiring everything and enjoying everything, and having a generally noisy time and lots of fun. She was a wild thing when she got off in this way, as she said, "on a little bend," and carried the others off with her.

What concerns us was the talk about the bank games. Some difference of opinion arose as to whether or not these were enjoyable. Not having been satisfied with attention from the right quarter at previous bank games, several showed aversion to them. Nina was looking forward with interest to the coming events, and Margaret, when she heard that Geoffrey and Jack and other friends were to compete in the contests, was keen to be a spectator. Emily Dusenall remarked that Geoffrey Hampstead was said to be a splendid runner, and that these games were the first he had taken any part in at Toronto, as he had been away during last year's. It was arranged that Nina and Margaret should go with the Dusenalls to the games after some discussion as to whose carriage should be used. Nina asserted that their carriage was brand new from England and entitled to consideration, but the Dusenalls insisted that theirs was brand new, too, and, more than that, the men had just been put into a new livery. It was left to Margaret, who decided that she could not possibly go in any carriage unless the men were in livery absolutely faultless.

Some days after this the carriage with the men of spotless livery rolled vice-regally and softly into the great lacrosse grounds where the Bank Athletic Sports were taking place. The large English carriage horses pranced gently and discreetly as they heard the patter of their feet on the springy turf, and they champed their shining bits and shook their chains and threw flakes of foam about their harness as if they also, if permitted, would willingly join in the sports. There was Margaret, sitting erect, her eyes luminous with excitement. Inwardly she was shrinking from the gaze of the spectators who were on every side, and as usual she talked "against time," which was her outlet for nervousness in public places. Mrs. Mackintosh had made her get a new dress for the occasion, which fitted her to perfection, and Nina declared she looked just like the Princess of Wales bowing from the carriage in the Row. The two Dusenalls were sitting in the front seat. Nina sat beside

Margaret. Nina was looking particularly well. So beautiful they both were! And such different types! Surely, if one did not disable a critical stranger, the other would finish him.

The whole turn-out gave one a general impression of laces, French gloves, essence of flowers, flower bonnets, lace-smothered parasols, and beautiful women. There was also an air of wealth about it, which tended to keep away the more reticent of Margaret's admirers. She knew men of whose existence Society was not aware – men who were beginning – who lived as they best could, and, as yet, were better provided with brains than dress-coats. Moreover, the Dusenalls had a way of lolling back in their carriage which they took to be an attitude capable of interpreting that they were "to the manor born." There was a supercilious expression about them, totally different from their appearance at Nina's luncheon, and they had brought to perfection the art of seeing no person but the right person. Consequently, it required more than a usual amount of confidence in one's social position to approach their majesties. The wrong man would get snubbed to a dead certainty.

After passing the long grand stand the carriage drew up in an advantageous spot where they could see the termination of the mile walking match. The volunteer band had brokenly ceased to play God save the Queen on discovering that theirs was *not* the vice-regal carriage, and, in the field, Jack Cresswell was coming round the ring, with several others apparently abreast of him, heeling and toeing it in fine style. As they watched the contest, sympathy with Jack soon became aroused. Margaret heard somebody say that this was the home-stretch. Several young bank-clerks were standing about within earshot, and she listened to what they were saying as if all they said was oracular.

"Gad! Jack's forging ahead," said one.

"Yes, but Brownlee of Molson's is after him. Bet you the cigars Brownlee wins!"

This was too much for Margaret. She stood up in the carriage and, without knowing it, slightly waved her parasol at Jack, not because he would see her encouragement, but on general principles, because she felt like doing so, regardless of what the finer feelings of the Dusenalls might be. The walkers crossed the winning line, and it was difficult to see who won. Margaret sat down again, her face lighted with excitement, and said all in a breath:

"Was not that splendid? How they did get over the ground! What a pace they went at! Poor Jack, how tired he must be! I do hope he won, Nina," and she laid her hand on Nina's tight-sleeved soft arm with emphasis.

The Dusenalls did not think there was much interest in a stupid walking-match, and they thought standing up and waving one's parasol rather bad form, so they were not enthusiastic.

Nina said softly: "Indeed, if you take so much interest in Jack I'll get jealous."

While she said this her face began to color, and Margaret's reply was interrupted by Geoffrey Hampstead's voice which announced welcome news. He gave them all a sort of collective half-bow and shook hands with Nina in a careless, friendly way.

"I come with glad tidings – as a sort of harbinger of spring, or Noah's dove with an olive-branch – or something of the kind."

"Is your cigar the olive-branch? To represent the dove you should have it in your mouth," said Nina. "Stop, I will give you an olive-branch, so that you may look your part better."

She wished Geoffrey to know that she felt no anger for what had occurred at the ball. Geoffrey saw the idea, and answered it understandingly as she held out a sprig of mignonette.

"I suppose this token of peace can only be carried in my mouth," said Geoffrey, throwing away his cigar.

"Certainly," said Nina, and her gloved fingers trembled slightly as she put the olive-branch between his lips, saying "There! now you look wonderfully like a dove."

Margaret was smiling at this small trifling, but her anxiety about the walking-match was quite unabated. She said: "I do not see why you call yourself a harbinger of spring or anything else unless you have something to tell us. What is your good news? Has Mr. Cresswell won the prize?"

"By about two inches," said Geoffrey. "I thought I might create an indirect interest in myself, with Miss Lindon at least, by coming to tell you of it." He wore a grave smile as he said this, which made Nina blush.

"And so you did create an indirect interest in yourself," said Margaret. "Now you can interest us on your own account. What are you going to compete for to-day?"

Hampstead was clad in cricketing flannels – his coat buttoned up to the neck.

"I entered for a good many things," said he, "in order that I might go in for what I fancied when the time came. They are contesting now for the high-pole jump. Perhaps we had better watch them, as they have already begun to compete. I am anxious to see how they do it."

High leaping with the pole is worth watching if it be well done. Margaret's interest increased with every trial of the men who were competing, and she almost suffered when a "poler" did his best and failed. One man incased in "tights" was doing well, and also a small young fellow who had thrown off his coat, apparently in an impromptu way, and was jumping in a pair of black trousers, which looked peculiar and placed him at a disadvantage from their looseness. The others soon dropped out of the contest, being unable to clear the long lath that was always being put higher. These two had now to fight it out together. They had both cleared the same height, and the next elevation of the lath had caused them both to fail. Margaret was on her feet again in the carriage, her face glowing as she watched every movement of the "polers." Her sympathies were entirely with the funny little man in black trousers. The other at length cleared the lath, amid applause. But the little hero in black still held on and made his attempts gracefully.

"Oh," said Margaret, gazing straight before her, "I would give anything in the world to see that circus-man beaten!"

"How much would you give, Miss Mackintosh?" said Geoffrey.

Margaret did not hear him.

"Oh, I want my little flying black angel to win. Is it impossible for anybody to beat the enemy?" Then, turning excitedly to the girls, she said hurriedly, "I could just love anybody who could beat the enemy."

"Does 'anybody' include me?" asked Geoffrey, laughing.

"Yes, yes," cried Margaret, catching at the idea. "Can you really defeat him? Yes, indeed, I will devote myself forever to anybody who can beat him. Have you a pole? Borrow one. Hurry away now, while you have a chance." In her eagerness her words seemed to chase each other.

"Well – will you all love me?" inquired Geoffrey, with an aggravating delay.

There was a shrill chorus of "Until death us do part" from the girls, and Geoffrey skipped over a couple of benches and ran over to the "polers," where he claimed the right to compete, as he had been entered previously in due time for this contest. Strong objection was immediately raised by the man in tights. The judges, after some discussion, allowed Geoffrey to take part amid much protestation from the members of the circus-man's bank.

Geoffrey took his pole from Jack Cresswell, who had competed on it without success. It was a stout pole of some South American wood, and very long. He threw off his coat, displaying a magnificent body in a jersey of azure silk. After walking up to look at the lath he grasped his pole and, making a long run, struck it into the ground and mounted into the air. He had not risen very high when he saw that he had miscalculated the distance; so he slid down his pole to the earth. Derisive coughs were heard from different parts of the field, and "Tights" looked at Geoffrey maliciously and laughed.

At the next rush that Geoffrey made, he sailed up into the air on his pole like a great bird, and as he became almost poised in mid-air, he went hand over hand up the stout pole. Then, by a trick that can not be easily described, his legs and body launched out horizontally over the lath, and throwing away his pole he dropped lightly on his feet without disturbing anything.

"Tights" was furious, and he said something hot to Geoffrey, who, however, did not reply.

A difficulty arose here because there were no more holes in the uprights to place the pegs in to hold up the lath. Geoffrey was now even with the enemy, but not ahead of him. So he asked the judges to place the lath across the top of the uprights. This raised the lath a good fifteen inches, and nobody supposed that it could be cleared.

There was something stormy about Hampstead when a man provoked him, and "Tights" had been very unpleasant. He pointed to the almost absurd elevation of the lath; his tones were short and exasperating as he addressed his very savage rival:

"Now, my man, there's your chance to exhibit your form."

"Tights" refused to make any useless trial, but relieved the tension of his feelings by forcing a bet of fifty dollars on Geoffrey that he could not clear it himself.

The excitement was now considerable. Geoffrey took the offered bet, pleased to be able to punish his antagonist further. But really the whole thing was like child's-play to him. It seemed as if he could clear anything his pole would reach. His hand-over-hand climbing was like lightning, and he went over the lath, cricket trousers and all, with quite as much ease as when it was in the lower position, and this amid a wild burst of applause.

He then grabbed his coat and made for the dressing-room, to prepare for the hurdle race, for which the bell was ringing.

When he ran out into the field again, after about a moment, he was clad in tights of azure silk with long trunks of azure satin, and his feet wore running shoes that fitted like a glove. No wonder girls raved about him. So did the men. He was a grand picture, as beautiful as a god in his celestial colors.

But there was work for him to do in the hurdle race. The best amateur runners in Canada were to be with him in this race, and there is a field for choice among Canadian bank athletes. They were to start from a distant part of the grounds, run around the great oval, and finish close to our carriage, where eager faces were hopeful for his success. Geoffrey made a bad start – not having recovered after being once called back. The first hurdle saw him over last, but between the jumps his speed soon put him in the ruck. There is no race like the hurdle race for excitement. At the fourth hurdle some one in front struck the bar, which flew up just as Geoffrey rose to it. His legs hit it in the air and he was launched forward, turned around, and sent head downward to the ground. The thought that he might be killed went through many minds. But those who thought so did not know that he could gallop over these hurdles like a horse, lighting on his hands. No doubt it was a great wrench for him, but he lit on his hands and was off again like the wind.

The fall had lost him his chance, he thought, but he went on with desperation and pain, his head thrown back and his face set to win. It was a long race, and five more hurdles had yet to be passed. The first of these was knocked down so that in merely running through he gained time by not having to jump, and he rapidly closed on those before him. His speed between jumps was marvelous. His hair blew back in blonde confusion, and he might well have been taken to represent some god of whirlwinds, or an azure archangel on some flying mission. He hardly seemed to touch the earth, and Margaret, who delighted in seeing men manly and strong and fleet, felt her heart go out to him in a burst of enthusiasm that became almost oppressive as the last hurdle was approached.

There were now only two men ahead of him, and Geoffrey was so set on winning that it seemed with him to be more a matter of mind than body. A yell suddenly arose from all sides. One of the two first men struck the last hurdle and went down, and Geoffrey, shooting far into the air in a tremendous leap to clear the flying timber, passed the other man in the last arrow-like rush, and dashed in an undoubted winner.

The enthusiasm for him was now unmingled. The sensation of horror that many had felt on seeing him fall head downward during the race had given way to a keen admiration for his plucky attempt to catch up with such hopeless odds against him. There were old business men present whose hearts had not moved so briskly since the last financial panic as when the handicapped hero

in azure leaped the last hurdle into glory. There were men looking on whose figures would never be redeemed who, at the moment, felt convinced that with a little training they could once more run a good race – men whose livers were in a sad state and who certainly forgot the holy inspiration before rising that night from their late dinners. Surely if these old stagers could be thus moved, feminine hearts might be excused. It was not necessary to know Geoffrey personally to feel the contagious thrill that ran through the multitude at the vision of his prowess. The impulse and the verdict of the large crowd were so unanimous that no one could resist them.

As for Margaret, she was, alas, *standing on the seat* by the time he raced past the carriage – a fair, earnest vision, lost in the excitement of the moment. With her gloved hands tightly closed and her arms braced as if for running, she appeared from her attitude as if she, too, would join in the race where her interest lay. The true woman in her was wild for her friend to win. Geoffrey's appearance appealed to all her sense of the beautiful. Knowledge of art led her to admire him – art of the ancient and vigorous type. All the plaudits that moved the multitude were caught up and echoed even more loudly within her. It was a dangerous moment for a virgin heart. As Geoffrey managed to land himself a winner against such desperate odds, she saw in his face, even before he had won, a half supercilious look of triumph and mastery that she had never seen there before. In a brief moment she caught a glimpse of the indomitable will that with him knew no obstacles – a will shown in a face of the ancient type, with gleaming eyes and dilated nostrils, heroic, god-like, possibly cruel, but instinct with victory and resolve.

To her the triumph was undiluted. At the close of the race her lungs had refused to work until he passed the winning line, and then her breath came in a gasp, as she became conscious that her eyes were filled with tears of sympathy.

With Nina it was different. That she was intensely interested is true. Everybody was. But, instead of that whirl of sympathetic admiration which Margaret felt, the strongest feeling she had was a desire that Geoffrey would come to her first, would lay, as it were, his honors at her feet – a wish suggesting the complacency with which the tigress receives the victor after viewing with interest the combat.

When Geoffrey rejoined them half an hour afterward he was endeavoring to conceal an unmistakable lameness resulting from striking the hurdle in the race. He had had his leg bathed, which he afterward found had been bleeding freely during the run, and had got into his flannels again. In the mean time a small circle of admirers had grouped themselves about the Dusenalls' carriage.

Jack had been in to see them for a moment with a hymn of praise for Geoffrey on his lips, but Nina made him uncomfortable by treating him distantly, and, although Margaret beamed on him, he departed soon after Geoffrey's arrival, making an excuse of his committee-man's duties.

Geoffrey noticed that, on his reappearing among them, Margaret did not address him, but left congratulations to Nina and the Dusenalls. In the interval after the race she had suddenly begun to consider how great her interest in Geoffrey was. She had known him for over a year. During that time he had ever appeared at his best before her. It was so natural to be civilized and gentle in her presence. And Margaret was not devoid of romance, in spite of her prosaic studies. Her ideality was not checked by them, but rather diverted into less ordinary channels, and she was as likely as anybody else to be captivated by somebody who, besides other qualities, could form a subject for her imaginative powers. Nevertheless, in spite of this sometimes dangerous and always charming ideality, she had acquired the habit of introspection which Mr. Mackintosh had endeavored to cultivate in her. He told her that when she fell in love she "would certainly know it." And it was the remembrance of this sage remark that now caused her to be silent and thoughtful. She was wondering whether she was going to fall in love with Geoffrey, and what it would be like if she did do so, and if she could know any more interest in him if it so turned out that she eventually became engaged to him. Then she looked at Geoffrey, intending to be impartial and judicial, and

thought that his looks were not unpleasing, and that his banter with Miss Dusenall was not at all slow to listen to. She was pleased that he did not address her first. She felt that she might have been in some way embarrassed. Sometimes he glanced at her, as if carelessly, and yet she seemed to know that all his remarks were to amuse her, and that he watched her without looking at her. She had never thought of his doing this before.

Bad Margaret! Full of guilt!

Geoffrey was endeavoring to make the plainest Miss Dusenall fix the day for their wedding, declaring that it was she who had promised to marry him if he won at jumping with the pole, and that she alone had nerved him for the struggle, and he went on arranging the matter with a volubility and assurance which she would have resented in anybody else. She had affected to belittle Geoffrey somewhat, not having been much troubled with his attentions, and she was conscious now that this banter on his part was detracting from her dignity. But what was she to do? The man was the hero of the hour, and cared but little for her dignity and mincing ways. She would have snubbed him, only that he carried all the company on his side, and a would-be snub, when one's audience does not appreciate it, returns upon one's self with boomerang violence. After all, it was something to monopolize the most admired man in six thousand people, even if he did make game of her and treat her, like a child.

As for Nina, she answered feebly the desultory remarks of several young men who hung about the carriage, and she listened, while she looked at the contests, to one sound only – to the sound of Geoffrey's voice. From time to time she put in a word to the other girls which showed that she heard everything he said. This sort of thing proved unsatisfactory to the young men who sought to engage her attention. They soon moved off, and then she gave herself up to the luxury of hearing Geoffrey speak. It might have been, she thought, that all his gayety was merely to attract Margaret, but none the less was his voice music to her. Poor Nina! She would not look at him, for fear of betraying herself. She lay back in the carriage and vainly tried to think of her duty to Jack. Then she thought herself overtempted, not remembering the words:

> The devil tempts us not – 'tis we tempt him,
> Beckoning his skill with opportunity.

This meeting, which to her was all bitter-sweet, to Geoffrey was piquant. To make an impression on the woman he really respected by addressing another he cared nothing about was somewhat amusing to him, but to know that every word he said was being drunk in by a third woman who was as attractive as love itself and who was engaged to be married to another man added a flavor to the entertainment which, if not altogether new, seemed, in the present case, to be mildly pungent.

After this Nina deceived herself less.

CHAPTER VIII

Come o'er the sea,
Maiden with me,
Mine through sunshine, storm, and snows.
Seasons may roll,
But the true soul
Burns the same wherever it goes.

Is not the sea
Made for the free,
Land for courts and chains alone?
Here we are slaves;
But on the waves
Love and liberty's all our own.

Moore's Melodies.

Mr. Maurice Rankin was enjoying his summer vacation. Although the courts were closed he still could be seen carrying his blue bag through the street on his way to and from the police court and other places. It is true that, for ordinary professional use, the bag might have been abandoned, but how was he to know when a sprat might catch a whale? – to say nothing of the bag's being so convenient for the secret and non-committal transportation of those various and delectable viands that found their way to his aerial abode at No. 173 Tremaine Buildings. He was now provided by the law printers with pamphlet copies of the decisions in different courts, and a few of these might always be found in his bag. They served to fill out to the proper dimensions this badge of a rank entitling him to the affix of esquire, and they had been well oiled by parcels of butter or chops which, on warm days, tried to lubricate this dry brain food as if for greater rapidity in the bolting of it.

In this way he was passing his summer vacation. Many a time he thought of his father's wealth before his failure and death. Where had those thousands melted away to? Oh, for just one of the thousands to set him on his feet! This perpetual grind, this endless seeking for work, with no more hope in it than to be able to get even with his butcher's bill at the end of the month! To see every person else go away for an outing somewhere while he remained behind began to make him dispirited. The buoyancy of his nature, which at first could take all his trials as a joke, was beginning to wear off. After yielding himself to their peculiar piquancy for six months, these jokes seemed to have lost their first freshness, and he longed to get away somewhere for a little change. The return, then, he thought, would be with renewed spirit.

While thinking over these matters his step homeward was tired and slow. He was by no means robust, and his narrow face had grown more hatchety than ever in the last few hot days. Hope deferred was beginning to tell upon him, but a surprise awaited him.

Jack Cresswell and Charley Dusenall were walking at this time on the other side of the street. They sighted Rankin going along gloomily, with his nose on the ground, well dressed and neat as usual, but weighted down, apparently with business, really with loneliness, law reports, and lamb-chops.

They both pointed to him at once. Jack said, "The very man!" and Charlie said, nodding assent, "Just as good as the next." Jack clapped Charley on the back – "By Jove, I hope he will come! Do him all the good in the world."

Charley was one of those happy-go-lucky, loose-living young men who have companions as long as their money lasts, and who seem made of some transmutable material which, when all things are favorable, shows some suggestion of solidity, but, when acted upon by the acid of poverty, degenerates into something like that parasitic substance remarkable for its receptibility of liquids, called a sponge. He liked Rankin, although he thought him a queer fish, and he would laugh with the others when Rankin's quiet satire was pointed at himself, not knowing but that there might be a joke somewhere, and not wishing to be out of it.

The two young men crossed the road and walked up to Rankin who was just about to enter Tremaine Buildings. Charlie asked him to come on a yachting cruise around Lake Ontario – to be ready in two days – that Jack would tell him all about it, as he was in a hurry. He then made off, without waiting for Maurice to reply.

Jack explained to Rankin that the yacht was to take out a party, with the young ladies under the chaperonage of Mrs. Dusenall, that the two Misses Dusenall, and Nina and Margaret were going, that he and Geoffrey Hampstead and two or three of the yacht-club men would lend a hand to work the craft, and that Rankin would be required to take the helm during the dead calms. As Rankin listened he brightened up and looked along the street in meditation.

"The business," he said thoughtfully, "will perish. Bean can't run my business."

His large mouth spread over his face as he yielded himself to the warmth of the sunny vista before him. Already he felt himself dancing over the waves. Suddenly, as they stood at the entrance to Tremaine Buildings, he caught Jack by the arm and whispered – so that clients, thronging the streets might not overhear:

"The business," he whispered. "What about it?" He drew off at arm's length and transfixed Jack with his eagle eye. Then, as if to typify his sudden and reckless abandonment of all the great trusts reposed in him, he slung the blue bag as far as he could up the stairs while he cried that the business might "go to the devil."

"Correct," said Jack. "It will be all safe with him. You know he is the father of lawyers. But I say, old chap, I am awfully glad you are coming with us. You see, the old lady has to get those girls married off somehow, and several fellows will go with us who are especially picked out for the business. Then, of course, the Dusenall girls want 'backing,' and they thought Nina and I could certainly give them a lead. And Nina would not go without Margaret. I rather think, too, that Geoffrey would not go without Margaret. Wheels within wheels, you see. Have you not got a lady-love, Morry, to bring along? No? Well, I tell you, old man, I expect to enjoy myself. I've been round that lake a good many times, but never with Nina."

Jack blushed as he admitted so much to his old friend, and after a pause he went on, with a young man's facile change of thought, to talk about the yacht.

"And we will just make her dance, and don't you forget it."

"But, my dear fellow, won't she object?"

"Object? No – likes it. She is coming out in a brand-new suit. Wait till you see her. She'll be a dandy."

"I can quite believe that she will appear more beautiful than ever," said Maurice, rather mystified.

"She is as clean as a knife, clean as a knife. I tell you, Morry, her shape just fills the eye. She – "

"Oh, yes, I understand. You are speaking of the yacht. I thought when you said you would make her dance that you referred to Miss Lindon. Excuse my ignorance of yachting terms. I know absolutely nothing about them."

"Never mind, old man, you might easily make the mistake. Talking of dancing now, I had a turn with her the other day and I will say this much – that she can waltz and no mistake. You could steer her with one finger."

"And shall we rig this spinnaker boom on her?" asked Rankin, with interest. "What is a spinnaker boom? I have always wanted to know."

"Spinnaker on who? or what?" cried Jack, looking vexed. "Don't be an ass, Rankin."

"My dear fellow – a thousand pardons – I certainly presumed you still spoke of the yacht. It is perfectly impossible to understand which you refer to."

"Well, perhaps it is," replied Jack; "I mix the two up in my speech just as they are mixed up in my heart, and I love them both. So let us have a glass of sherry to them in my room."

"I think," said Rankin, smiling, with his head on one side, "that to prevent further confusion we ought to drink a glass to each love separately, in order to discriminate sufficiently between the different interests."

"Happy thought," said Jack. "And just like you robbers. Every interest must be represented. Fees out of the estate, every time."

After gulping down the first glass of sherry in the American fashion, they sat sipping the second as the Scotch and English do. It struck Rankin as peculiar that Mr. Lindon allowed Nina to go off on this yachting cruise when he must know that Jack would be on board. He asked him how he accounted for his luck in this respect.

Jack said: "I can not explain it altogether to myself. The old boy sent her off to Europe to get her away from me, and that little manœuvre was not successful in making her forget me. I think that now he has washed his hands of the matter, and lets her do entirely as she pleases – except as to matrimony. They don't converse together on the subject of your humble servant. He is fond of Nina in his own way – when his ambition is not at stake. One thing I feel sure of, that we might wait till crack of doom before his consent to our marriage would be obtained. I never knew such a man for sticking to his own opinion."

"But you could marry now and keep a house, in a small way," said Rankin.

"Too small a way for Nina. She knows no more of economy than a babe. No; I may have been unwise, from a practical view, to fall in love with her, but the affair must go on now; we will get married some way or other. Perhaps the old boy will die. At any rate, although I have no doubt she would go in for 'love in a cottage,' I don't think it would be right of me to subject her to the loss of her carriage, servants, entertainments, and gay existence generally. Of course she would be brave over it, but the effort would be very hard upon the dear little woman."

When Jack thought of Nina his heart was apt to lose some of its chronometer movement. He turned and began fumbling for his pipe.

Maurice wished to pull him together, as it were, and said, as he grasped the decanter and filled the wine glasses again:

"Thank you; I don't mind if I do. Now I come to think of it, your first proposed toast was the right one. For the next three weeks at least we do not intend to separate the lady from the yacht. Why should we drink them separately? Ho, ho! we will drink to them collectively!" He waved his glass in the air. "Here's to The Lady and the Yacht considered as one indivisible duo. May they be forever as entwined in our hearts as they are incomprehensibly mixed up in our language!"

"Hear, hear!" cried Jack, with renewed spirit. "Drink hearty!" And then he energetically poured out another, and said "Tiger!" – after which they lit cigars and went out, feeling happy and much refreshed, while Rankin quite forgot the blue bag and the contents thereof yielding rich juices to the law-reports in the usual way.

About ten o'clock on the following Saturday morning valises were being stowed away on board the yacht Ideal, and maidens fair and sailors free were aglow with the excitement of departure. The yacht was swinging at her anchor while the new cruising mainsail caused her to careen gently as the wind alternately caught each side of the snowy canvas. A large blue ensign at the peak was flapping in the breeze, impatient for the start, while the main-sheet bound down and fettered the plunging and restless sail. Lounging about the bows of the vessel were a number of professional

sailors with Ideal worked across the breasts of their stout blue jerseys. The headsails were loosed and ready to go up, and the patent windlass was cleared to wind up the anchor chain. Away aloft at the topmast head the blue peter was promising more adventures and a new enterprise, while grouped about the cockpit were our friends in varied garb, some of whom nervously regarded the plunging mainsail which refused to be quieted. Rankin was the last to come over the side, clad in a dark-blue serge suit, provided at short notice by the long-suffering Score. His leather portmanteau, lent by Jack, had scarcely reached the deck before the blocks were hooked on and the gig was hoisted in to the davits. Margaret, sitting on the bulwarks, with an arm thrown round a backstay to steady her, was taking in all the preparations with quiet ecstasy, her eyes following every movement aloft and her lips softly parted with sense of invading pleasure.

Mrs. Dusenall was down in the after-cabin making herself more busy than useful. Instead of leaving everything to the steward, the good woman was unpacking several baskets which had found their way aft by mistake. In a very clean locker devoted solely to charts she stowed away five or six pies, wedging them, thoughtfully, with a sweet melon to keep them quiet. Then she found that the seats at the side could be raised, and here she placed a number of articles where they stood a good chance of slipping under the floor and never being seen again. Fortunately for the party, her pride in her work led her to point out what she had done to the steward, who, speechless with dismay, hastily removed everything eatable from her reach.

As the anchor left its weedy bed, the brass carronade split the air in salute to the club and the blue ensign dipped also, while the headsail clanked and rattled up the stay. There was nobody at the club house, but the ladies thought that the ceremony of departure was effective.

Jack was at the wheel as she paid off on the starboard tack toward the eastern channel, and Geoffrey and others were slacking off the main-sheet when Rankin heard himself called by Jack, who said hurriedly:

"Morry, will you let go that lee-backstay?"

Maurice and Margaret left it immediately and stood aside. Jack forgot, in the hurry of starting, that Rankin knew nothing of sailing, and called louder to him again, pointing to the particular rope: "Let go that lee-backstay."

"Who's touching your lee-backstay?" cried Morry indignantly.

The boom was now pressing strongly on the stay, while Jack, seeing his mistake, leaned over and showed Rankin what to do. He at once cast off the rope from the cleat, and, there being a great strain on it, the end of it when loosed flew through his fingers so fast that it felt as if red hot.

"Holy Moses!" cried he, blowing on his fingers, "that rope must have been lying on the stove." He examined the rope again, and remarked that it was quite cool now. The pretended innocence of the little man was deceiving. The Honorable Marcus Travers Head, one of the rich intended victims of the Dusenalls, leaned over to Jack and asked who and what Rankin was.

"He's an original – that's what he is," said Jack, with some pride in his friend, although Rankin's by-play was really very old.

"What! ain't he soft?" inquired the Hon. M. T., with surprise.

"About as soft as that brass cleat," said Jack shortly. "I say, old Emptyhead, you just keep your eye open when he's around and you'll learn something."

There was a murmur of "Ba-a Jeuve!" and the honorable gentleman regarded Rankin in a new light.

The Ideal was a sloop of more than ordinary size, drawing about eight feet of water without the small center-board, which she hardly required for ordinary sailing. Her accommodations were excellent, and her internal fittings were elegant, without being so wildly expensive as in some of the American yachts. Her comparatively small draught of water enabled her to enter the shallow ports on the lakes, and yet she was modeled somewhat like a deep-draught boat, having some of her ballast bolted to her keel, like the English yachts. Her cruising canvas was bent on short spars,

which relieved the crew in working her, but, even with this reduction, her spread of canvas was very large, so that her passage across the bay toward the lake was one of short duration.

To Margaret and Maurice the spirited start which they made was one of unalloyed delight. For two such fresh souls "delight" is quite the proper word. They crossed over to the weather side and sat on the bulwarks, where they could command a view of the whole boat. It was a treat for all hands to see their bright faces watching the man aloft cast loose the working gaff-topsail. When they heard his voice in the sky calling out "Hoist away," Morry waved his hand with *abandon* and called out also "Hoist away," as if he would hoist away and overboard every care he knew of, and when the booming voice aloft cried "Sheet home," it was as good as five dollars to see Margaret echo the word with commanding gesture – only she called it "Sea foam," which made the sailors turn their quids and snicker quietly among themselves. But when the huge cream-colored jib-topsail went creaking musically up from the bowsprit-end, filling and bellying and thundering away to leeward, and growing larger and larger as it climbed to the topmast head, their admiration knew no bounds. As the sail was trimmed down, they felt the good ship get her "second wind," as it were, for the rush out of the bay. It was as if sixteen galloping horses had been suddenly harnessed to the boat, and Margaret fairly clapped her hands. Maurice called to Jack approvingly:

"You said you would make her dance."

"She's going like a scalded pup," cried Jack poetically in reply, and he held her down to it with the wheel, tenderly but firmly, as he thereby felt the boat's pulse. When they came to the eastern channel Jack eased her up so close to the end of the pier that Maurice involuntarily retreated from the bulwarks for fear she would hit the corner. The jib-topsail commenced to thunder as the yacht came nearer the wind, but this was soon silenced, and half a dozen men on the main-sheet flattened in the after-canvas as she passed between the crib-work at the sides of the channel in a way that gave one a fair opportunity for judging her speed.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.