BY THE WORLD FORGOT

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A Double Romance of the East and West

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By CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

With Frontispiece
By CLARENCE F. UNDERWOOD

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TO
MY GOOD FRIEND AND KINSMAN
JOHN F. BARRETT

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BOOK I

" Ship me somewheres east of Suez "

BY THE WORLD FORGOT

CHAPTER I

A CLASH OF WILLS AND HEARTS

"For the last time, will you marry me?"

"No."

"But you don't love him."

"No."

"And you do love me?"

"Yes."

"I don't believe it."

"Would I be here if I did not?"

Now that adverb was rather indefinite. "Here" might have meant the private office, which was bad enough, or his arms, which was worse or better, depending upon the view-point. She could think of nothing better to dispel the reasonable incredulity of the man than to nestle closer to him, if that were possible, and kiss him. It was not a perfunctory kiss, either. It meant something to the woman, and she made it mean something to the man. Indeed, there was fire and passion enough in it to have quickened a pulse in a stone image. It answered its purpose in one way. There could be no real doubt in the man's mind as to the genuineness of that love he had just called in question in his pique at her refusal. The kiss thrilled him with its fervor, but it left him more miserable than ever. It did not plunge him immediately into that condition, however, for he drew her

closer to his breast again, and as the struck flint flashes fire he gave her back all that she had given him, and more.

Ordinarily in moments like that it is the woman who first breaks away, but the solution of touch was brought about by the man. He set the girl down somewhat roughly in the chair behind the big desk before which they were standing and turned away. She suffered him thus to dispose of her without explanation. Indeed, she divined the reason which presently came to his lips as he walked up and down the big room, hands in pockets, his brows knitted, a dark frown on his face.

"I can't stand any more of that just now," he said, referring to her caress; "if ever in my life I wanted to think clearly it is now and with you in my arms–Say, for the very last time, will you marry me?"

"I cannot."

"You mean you will not."

"Put it that way if you must. It amounts to the same thing."

"Why can't you, or won't you, then?"

"I've told you a thousand times."

"Assume that I don't know and tell me again."

"What's the use?"

"Well, it gives me another chance to show you how foolish you are, to overrule every absurd argument that you can put forth–"

"Except two."

"What are they?"

"My father and myself."

"Exactly. You have inherited a full measure, excuse me, of his infernal obstinacy."

"Most people call it invincible determination."

"It doesn't make any difference what it's called, it amounts to the same thing."

"I suppose I have."

"Now look at the thing plainly from a practical point of view."

"Is there anything practical in romance, in love, in passions like ours?"

"There is something practical in everything I do and especially in this. I've gone over the thing a thousand times. I'll go over it again once more. You don't love the man you have promised to marry; you do love me. Furthermore, he doesn't love you and I do–Oh, he has a certain affection for you, I'll admit. Nobody could help that, and it's probably growing, too. I suppose in time he will–"

"Love me as you do?"

"Never; no one could do that, but as much as he could love any one. But that isn't the point. For a quixotic scruple, a mistaken idea of honor, an utterly

unwarranted conception of a daughter's duty, you are going to marry a man you don't and can't love and–"

"You are very positive. How do you know I can't?"

"I know you love me and I know that a girl like you can't change any more than I can."

"That's the truth," answered the girl with a finality which bespoke extreme youth, and shut off any further discussion of that phase.

"Well, then, you'll be unhappy, I'll be unhappy, and he'll be unhappy."

"I can make him happy."

"No, you can't. If he learns to love you he will miss what I would enjoy. He'll find out the truth and be miserable."

"Your solicitude for his happiness–"

"Nonsense. I tell you I can't bear to give you up, and I won't. I shouldn't be asked to. You made me love you; I didn't intend to."

"It wasn't a difficult task," said the girl smiling faintly for the first time.

"Task? It was no task at all. The first time I saw you I loved you, and now you have lifted me up to heaven only to dash me down to hell."

"Strong language."

"Not strong enough. Seriously, I can't, I won't let you do it."

"You must. I have to. You don't understand. His father gave my father his first start in life."

"Yes, and your father could buy his father twenty times over."

"Perhaps he could, but that doesn't count. Our two fathers have been friends ever since my father came here, a boy without money or friends or anything, to make his fortune, and he made it."

"I wish to God he hadn't and you were as poor as I was when I landed here six years ago. If I could just have you without your millions on any terms I should be happy. It's those millions that come between us."

"Yes, that's so," admitted the girl, recognizing that the man only spoke the truth. "If I were poor it would be quite different. You see father's got pretty much everything out of life that money could buy. He has no ancestry to speak of but he's as proud as a peacock. The friendship between the two families has been maintained. The two old men determined upon this alliance as soon as I was born. My father's heart is set upon it. He has never crossed me in anything. He has been the kindest and most indulgent of men. Next to you I worship him. It would break his heart if I should back out now. Indeed, he is so set upon it that I am sure he would never consent to my marrying you or anybody else. He would disinherit me."

"Let him, let him. I've the best prospects of any broker in New York, and I've already got enough money for us to live on comfortably."

"I gave my word openly, freely," answered the girl. "I wasn't in love with any one then and I liked him as well as any man I had ever met. Now that his father has died, my father is doubly set upon it. I simply must go through with it."

"And as your father sacrificed pretty much everything to build the family fortune, so you are going to sacrifice yourself to add position to it."

"Now that is unworthy of you," said the girl earnestly. "That motive may be my father's but it isn't mine."

"Forgive me," said the man, who knew that the girl spoke even less than the truth.

"I can understand how you feel because I feel desperate myself; but honor, devotion, obedience to a living man, promise to a dead man, his father, who was as fond of me as if I had already been his daughter, all constrain me."

"They don't constrain me," said the man desperately, coming to the opposite side of the big desk and smiting it heavily with his hand. "All that weighs nothing with me. I have a mind to pick you up now and carry you away bodily."

"I wish you could," responded the girl with so much honest simplicity that his heart leaped at the idea, "but you could never get further than the elevator, or, if you went down the stairs, than the street, because my honor would compel me to struggle and protest."

"You wouldn't do that."

"I would. I would have to. For if I didn't there would be no submitting to *force majeure*. No, my dear boy, it is quite hopeless."

"It isn't. For the last time, will you marry me?"

"As I have answered that appeal a hundred times in the last six months, I cannot."

"Are there any conditions under which you could?"

"Two."

"What are they?"

"What is the use of talking about them? They cannot occur."

"Nevertheless tell me what they are. I've got everything I've ever gone after heretofore. I've got some of your father's perseverance."

"You called it obstinacy a while ago."

"Well, it's perseverance in me. What are your conditions?"

"The consent of two people."

"And who are they?"

"My father and my fiancé."

"I have your own, of course."

"Yes, and you have my heartiest prayer that you may get both. Oh," she went on, throwing up her hands. "I don't think I can stand any more of this. I

know what I must do and you must not urge me. These scenes are too much for me."

"Why did you come here, then?" asked the man. "You know I can't be in your presence without appealing to you."

"To show you this," said the girl, drawing a yellow telegram slip from her bag which she had thrown on the desk.

"Is it from him? I had one, too," answered the man, picking it up.

"Of course," said the girl, "since you and he are partners in business. I never thought of that. I should not have come."

"Heaven bless you for having done so. Every moment that I see you makes me more determined. If I could see you all the time and–"

"He'll be here in a month," interrupted the girl. "He wants the wedding to take place immediately and so do I."

"Why this indecent haste?"

"It has been a year since the first postponement and–Oh, what must be must be! I want to get it over and be done with it. I can't stand these scenes any more than you can. Look at me."

The man did more than look. The sight of the piteous appealing figure was more than he could stand. He took her in his arms again.

"I wish to God he had drowned in the South Seas," he said savagely.

"Oh, don't say that. He's your best friend," interposed the girl, laying her hand upon his lips.

"But you are the woman I love, and no friendship shall come between us."

The girl shook her head and drew herself away.

"I must go now. I really can't endure this any longer."

"Very well," said the man, turning to get his hat.

"No," said the girl, "you mustn't come with me."

"As you will," said the other, "but hear me. That wedding is set for thirty days from today?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'll not give you up until you are actually married to him. I'll find some way to stop it, to gain time, to break it off. I swear you shan't marry him if I have to commit murder."

She thought he spoke with the pardonable exaggeration of a lover. She shook her head and bit her lip to keep back the tears.

"Good-bye," she said. "It is no use. We can't help it."

She was gone. But the man was not jesting. He was in a state to conceive anything and to attempt to carry out the wildest and most extravagant proposition. He sat down at his desk to think it over, having told his clerks in the outer

office that he was not to be disturbed by any one for any cause.

CHAPTER II
THE STUBBORNNESS OF STEPHANIE

At one point of the triangle stands the beautiful Stephanie Maynard; at another, George Harnash, able and energetic; at the third, Derrick Beekman, who was a dilettante in life. George Harnash is something of a villain, although he does not end as the wicked usually do. Derrick Beekman is the hero, although he does not begin as heroes are expected to do. Stephanie Maynard is just a woman, heroine or not, as shall be determined. Before long the triangle will be expanded into a square by the addition of another woman, also with some decided qualifications for a heroine; but she comes later, not too late, however, to play a deciding part in the double love story into which we are to be plunged.

Of that more anon, as the sixteenth century would put it; and indeed this story of today reaches back into that bygone period for one of its origins. Romance began–where? when? All romances began in the Garden of Eden, but it needs not to trace the development of this one through all the centuries intervening between that period and today. This story, if not its romance, began with an arrangement. The arrangement was entered into between Derrick Beekman senior, since deceased, and John Maynard, still very much alive.

Maynard was a new man in New York, a new man on the street. He was the head of the great Inter-Oceanic Trading Company. The Maynard House flag floated over every sea from the mast heads, or jack staffs, of the Maynard ships. Almost as widely known as the house flag was the Maynard daughter. The house flag was simple but beautiful; the daughter was beautiful but by no means simple. She was a highly specialized product of the nineteenth century. Being the only child of much money, she was everything outwardly and visibly that her father desired her to be, and to make her that he had planned carefully and spent lavishly. With her father's undeniable money and her own undisputed beauty she was a great figure in New York society from the beginning.

No one could have so much of both the desirable attributes mentioned–beauty and money–and go unspoiled in New York–certainly not until age had tempered youth. But Stephanie Maynard was rather an unusual girl. Many of her good qualities were latent but they were there. It was not so much those

hidden good qualities but the dazzling outward and visible characteristics that had attracted the attention of old Derrick Beekman.

Beekman had everything that Maynard had not and some few things that Maynard had–in a small measure, at least. For instance, he was a rich man, although his riches could only be spoken of modestly beside Maynard's vast wealth.

But Beekman added to a comfortable fortune an unquestioned social position; old, established, assured. Those who would fain make game of him behind his back–such a thing was scarcely possible to his face–used to say that he traced his descent to every Dutchman that ever rallied around one-legged, obstinate, Peter Stuyvesant and his predecessors. The social approval of the Beekmans–originally, of course, Van Beeckman–was like a *lettre de cachet*. It immediately imprisoned one in the tightest and most exclusive circle of New York, the social bastille from which the fortunate captive is rarely ever big enough to wish to break out.

Beekman's pride in his ancestry was only matched by his ambitions for his son, like Stephanie Maynard, an only child. If to the position and, as he fancied, the brains of the Beekmans could be allied the fortune and the business acumen of the Maynards, the world itself would be at the feet of the result of such a union. Now Maynard's money bought him most things he wanted but it had not bought and could not buy Beekman and that for which he stood. Maynard's beautiful daughter had to be thrown into the scales.

Maynard had no ancestry in particular. Self-made men usually laugh at the claims of long descent, but secretly they feel differently. Being the Rudolph of Hapsburg of the family is more of a pose or a boast than not. I doubt not that even the great Corsican felt that in his secret heart which he revealed to no one. Maynard's patent of nobility might date from his first battle on the stock exchange, his financial Montenotte, but in his heart of hearts he would rather it had its origin in some old and musty parchment of the past.

Beekman, who was much older than Maynard, had actually helped that young man when he first started out to encounter the world and the flesh and the devil in New York and to beat them down or bring them to heel. A friendship, purely business at first, largely patronizing in the beginning on the one hand, deferentially grateful on the other, had grown up between the somewhat ill-sorted pair. And it had not been broken with passing years.

Maynard, unfortunately for his social aspirations, had married before he had become great. Many men achieve greatness only to find a premature partner an encumbrance to a career. However, Maynard's wife, another social nobody with little but beauty to recommend her, had done her best for her husband by dying before she was either a drag or a help to his fortunes. The two men, each actuated by different motives, which, however, tended to the same end, had ar-

ranged the match between the last Beekman and the first Maynard; and that each secretly fancied himself condescending to the other did not stand in the way. The young people had agreeably fallen in with the proposals of the elders, neither of whom was accustomed to be balked or questioned–for old Beekman was as much of an autocrat as Maynard. Filial obedience was indeed a tradition in the Beekman family. There were no traditions at all in the Maynard family, but the same custom obtained with regard to Stephanie.

Young Beekman was good looking, athletic, prominent in society, a graduate of the best university, popular, and generally considered able, although he had accomplished little, having no stimulus thereto, by which to justify that public opinion. He went everywhere, belonged to the best clubs, and was a most eligible suitor. He danced divinely, conversed amusingly, made love gallantly if somewhat perfunctorily, having had abundant practice in all pursuits. For the rest, what little business he transacted was as a broker and business partner of George Harnash, who, for their common good, made the most of the connections to which Beekman could introduce him.

Beekman, who had taken life lightly, indeed, at once recognized the wisdom of his father's rather forcible suggestion that it was time for him to settle down. He saw how the Maynard millions would enhance his social prestige, and if he should be moved to undertake business affairs seriously, as Harnash often urged, would offer a substantial background for his operations.

Stephanie Maynard was beautiful enough to please any man. She was well enough educated and well enough trained for the most fastidious of the fastidious Beekmans. In any real respect she was a fit match for Derrick Beekman, indeed for anybody. There was no society into which she would be introduced that she would not grace.

From a feeling of condescension quite in keeping with his blood young Beekman was rapidly growing more interested in and more fond of his promised wife. Her feelings probably would have developed along the same lines had it not been for George Harnash. He was Beekman's best friend. They had been classmates and roommates at college. Harnash like Beekman was a broker. Indeed the firm of Beekman & Harnash was already well spoken of on the street, especially on account of the ability of the junior partner, who was everywhere regarded as a young man with a brilliant future.

Now Harnash hung, as it were, like Mohammed's coffin, 'twixt heaven and earth. He was not socially assured and unexceptionable as Beekman, but he was much more so than the Maynards. He did not begin with even the modest wealth of the former, but he was rapidly acquiring a fortune and, what is better, winning the respect and admiration of friends and enemies alike by his bold and successful operations. It was generally recognized that Harnash was the more active of the

two young partners. Beekman had put in most of the capital, having inherited a reasonable sum from his mother and much more from his father, but Harnash was the guiding spirit of the firm's transactions.

Harnash, who was the exact opposite of Beekman, as fair as the other man was dark, fell wildly in love with Stephanie Maynard. To do him justice, this plunge occurred before definite matrimonial arrangements between the houses of Beekman and Maynard had been entered into. Harnash had not contemplated such a possibility. The two friends were in exceedingly confidential relationship to each other, and Beekman had manifested only a most casual interest in Stephanie Maynard. Harnash, seeing the present hopelessness of his passion, had concealed it from Beekman. Therefore, the announcement casually made by his friend and confirmed the day after by the society papers overwhelmed him.

To do him justice further, while it could not be said that Harnash was oblivious to the fact that the woman he loved was her father's daughter, he would have loved her if she had been a nobody. While he could not be indifferent to the further fact that whoever won her would ultimately command the Maynard millions, George Harnash was so confident of his own ability to succeed that he would have preferred to make his own way and have his wife dependent upon him for everything. However, he was too level headed a New Yorker not to realize that even if he could achieve his ambition the Maynard millions would come in handy.

The thing that made it so hard for Harnash to bear the new situation was the carelessness with which Beekman entered into it. He felt that if the marriage could be prevented it would not materially interfere with the happiness of his friend. Harnash had deliberately set himself to the acquirement of everything he desired. Honorably, lawfully, if he could he would get what he wanted, but get it he would. He found that he had never wanted anything so much as he wanted Stephanie Maynard. Money and position had been his ambitions, but these gave place to a woman. He did not arrive at a determination to take Stephanie Maynard from Derrick Beekman, if he could, without great searchings of heart, but the more he thought about it, the longer he contemplated the possibility of the marriage of the woman he loved to the man he also loved, the more impossible grew the situation.

At first he had put all thought of self out of his mind, or had determined so to do, in order to accept the situation, but he made the mistake of continuing to see Stephanie during the process and when he discovered that she was not indifferent to him he hesitated, wavered, fell. By fair means or foul the engagement must be broken. It could only be accomplished by getting Derrick Beekman out of the way. After that he would wring a consent out of Maynard. To that decision the girl had unconsciously contributed by laying down conditions which,

by a curious mental twist, the man felt in honor bound to meet.

Both the elder Beekman and John Maynard were men of firmness and decision. Wedding preparations had gone on apace. The invitations were all but out when Beekman was gathered to his ancestors–there could be no heaven for him where they were not–after an apoplectic stroke. This postponed the wedding and gave George Harnash more time. Now Derrick Beekman had devotedly loved his stern, proud old father, the only near relative he had in the world. He decided to spend the time intervening between that father's sudden and shocking death and his marriage on a yachting cruise to the South Seas. It was characteristic of his feeling for Stephanie Maynard that he had not hesitated to leave her for that long period. The field was thus left entirely to Harnash.

The Maynard-Beekman engagement, of course, had been made public, and Stephanie's other suitors had accepted the situation, but not Harnash. He was a man of great power and persuasiveness and ability and he made love with the same desperate, concentrated energy that he played the business game. He was quite frank about it. He told Stephanie that if she or Beekman or both of them had shown any passion for the other, such as he felt for her, he would have considered himself in honor bound to eliminate himself, but since it would obviously be *un mariage de convenance*, since both the parties thereto would enter into it lightly and unadvisedly, he was determined to interpose. And there was even in the girl's eyes abundant justification for his action.

No woman wants to be taken as a matter of course. Stephanie Maynard had been widely wooed, more or less all over the world. Although she did not care especially for Derrick Beekman, she resented his somewhat cavalier attitude toward her, and his witty, amusing, but by no means passionately devoted letters, somewhat infrequent, too. Harnash made great progress, yet he came short of complete success.

The Maynards were nobodies socially, that is, their ancestors had been, and they had not yet broken into the most exclusive set, the famous hundred and fifty of New York's best, as they styled themselves to the great amusement of the remaining five million or so, but they came, after all, of a stock possessed of substantial virtues. Stephanie's father was accustomed to boast that his word was his bond, and, unlike many who say that, it really was. People got to know that when old John Maynard said a thing he could be depended upon. If he gave a promise he would keep it even if he ruined himself in the keeping, and his daughter, in that degree, was not unlike him.

Almost a year after his father's death Derrick Beekman sent cablegrams from Honolulu saying he was coming back, and George Harnash and Stephanie awoke from their dream.

"I love you," repeated Stephanie to Harnash in another of the many, not

to say continuous, discussions they held after that day at the office. "You can't have any doubt about that, but my word has been passed. I don't dislike Derrick, either. But I'd give anything on earth if I were free."

"And when you were free?"

"You know that I'd marry you in a minute."

"Even if your father forbade?"

"I don't believe he would."

"If he did we would win him over."

"You might as well try to win over a granite mountain. But there's no use talking, I'm not free."

"It's this foolish pride of yours."

"Foolish it may be. I've heard so much about the Beekman word of honor and the Beekman faith that I want to show that the Maynard honor and faith and determination are no less."

"And you are going to sacrifice yourself and me for that shibboleth, are you?"

"I see no other way. Believe me," said the girl, who had resolved to allow no more demonstrations of affection now that it was all settled and her prospective husband was on the way to her, "I seem cold and indifferent to you, but if I let myself go–"

"Oh, Stephanie, please let yourself go again, even if for the last time," pleaded George Harnash, and Stephanie did. When coherent speech was possible he continued: "Well, if Beekman himself releases you or if he withdrew or disappeared or–"

"I don't have to tell you what my answer would be."

"And I've got to be best man at the wedding! I've got to stand by and–"

"Why didn't you speak before?" asked the girl bitterly.

"I was no match for you then. I'm not a match for you now."

"You should have let me be the judge of that."

"But your father?"

"I tell you if I hadn't promised, all the fathers on earth wouldn't make any difference. Now we have lived in a fool's paradise for a year. You're Derrick's friend and you're mine."

"Only your friend?"

"Do I have to tell you again how much I love you? But that must stop now. It should have stopped long ago. You can't come here any more except as Derrick's friend."

"I can't come here at all, then."

"No, I suppose not. And that will be best. Let us put this behind us as a dream of happiness which we will never forget, but from which we awake to find

it only a dream."

"It's no dream to me. I will never give you up. I will never cease to try to make it a reality until you are bound to the other man."

They were standing close together as it was, but he took the step that brought him to her side and he swept her to his heart without resistance on her part. She would give her hand to Derrick Beekman, but her heart she could not give, for that was in George Harnash's possession, and when he clasped her in his arms and kissed her, she suffered him. She kissed him back. Her own arms drew him closer. It was a passionate farewell, a burial service for a love that could not go further. It was she who pushed him from her.

"I will never give you up, never," he repeated. "Great as is my regard for Beekman, sometimes I think that I'll kill him at the very foot of the altar to have you."

Stephanie's iron control gave way. She burst into tears, and George Harnash could say nothing to comfort her, but only gritted his teeth as he tore himself away, revolving all sorts of plans to accomplish his own desires.

To him came, with Mephistophelian appositeness, Mr. Bill Woywod.

CHAPTER III

BILL WOYWOD TO THE RESCUE

The three weeks that followed were more fraught with unpleasantness, not to say misery, than any Stephanie Maynard and George Harnash had ever passed. Of the two, Harnash was in the worse case. Stephanie had two things to distract her.

The approaching wedding meant the preparation of a trousseau. What had been got ready the year before would by no means serve for the second attempt at matrimony. Now no matter how deep and passionate a woman's feelings are she can never be indifferent to the preparation of a trousseau. Even death, which looms so horribly before the feminine mind, would be more tolerable if it were accompanied by a similar demand upon her activities. Yet a woman's grief in bereavement is never so deep as to make her careless as to the fit or becomingness of her mourning habiliments. Much more is this true of wedding garments.

Now if these somewhat cynical and slighting remarks be reprehended, nevertheless there is occupation even for the sacrificial victim in the preparation of

a trousseau which, were it not so pleasant a pursuit, might even be called labor. The fit of Stephanie's dresses on her beautiful figure was not accomplished without toil, albeit of the submissive sort, on the part of the young lady. That was her first diversion.

For the second relief the girl had a great deal more confidence in her lover's promise than he had himself in his own prowess. Try as he might, plan as he could, he found no way out of the *impasse* so long as the solution of it was left entirely to him, and the woman was determined to be but a passive instrument.

The obvious course was to go frankly to his friend and lay before him the whole state of affairs in the hope that Beekman himself would cut the Gordian knot by declining the lady's hand. Two considerations prevented that. In the first place, Beekman had confidingly placed his love affair, together with his business affairs, in the hands of his partner. Harnash had not meant to play the traitor but he had been unable to resist the temptation that Stephanie presented, and he simply could not bring himself to make such a bare-faced admission of a breach of trust. Besides, he reasoned shrewdly that even if he did make such a confession it was by no means certain that Derrick Beekman would give up the girl. His letters, since his cable from Hawaii, had rather indicated a strengthening of his affection, and Harnash suspected that the realization that his betrothed was violently desired by someone else would just about develop that affection into a passion which could hardly be withstood.

In the second place, even if Beekman's affection for Harnash would lead him to take the action desired by his friend, there would still be Mr. Maynard to be won over. Harnash had not been associated with Maynard as a broker in various transactions which the older man had engineered, without having formed a sufficiently correct judgment of his character to enable him to forecast absolutely what Maynard's position would be in that emergency. Maynard had a considerable liking and a growing respect for young Harnash. He had casually remarked to his daughter on more than one occasion that Harnash was a young man who would be heard from. Maynard had observed that Harnash strove for many things and generally got what he wanted.

Perhaps that remark, which the poor girl had treasured in her heart, had something to do with her confidence that somehow or other Harnash would work out the problem. But Harnash knew very well how terrible, not to say vindictive, an antagonist and enemy Maynard could be when he was crossed. If Beekman withdrew from the engagement, broke off the marriage, about which there had been sufficient notoriety on account of the first postponement after the older Beekman's death, Maynard's rage would know no bounds. He would assuredly wreak his vengeance upon Beekman, and if Harnash were implicated in any way the punishment would be extended to him.

Harnash knew that Beekman would not have cared a snap of his finger for the older Maynard's wrath. He was not that kind of a man. Nor would he himself have been deterred by the thought of it had he been a little more sure of his position financially. Whatever else he lacked, Harnash had courage to tackle anything or anybody, if there were the faintest prospect of success. But to fight Maynard at that stage in his career was an impossibility. These weighty reasons accordingly decided him that it was useless and indeed impossible to appeal to his friend.

Again, while Harnash was accustomed to stop at nothing to procure his ends, and while he had declared that he would murder Beekman, he knew that although he meant it more than Stephanie supposed, he did not mean it enough to be able to do anything like that. His mind was in a turmoil. He really was fond of Beekman, and if Stephanie and Derrick had been wildly in love with each other Harnash believed that he would have been man enough to have kept out of the way and have fought down his disappointment as best he could. As it was, there was reason and justice in what he urged. Since Stephanie loved him and did not love Beekman, and since Beekman's affection was of a placid nature, the approaching union was horrible.

The wildest schemes and plans ran through his head or were suggested to him after intense thought, only to be rejected. The problem finally narrowed itself down to a question of time. Harnash was a great believer in the function of time in determining events. If he could postpone the marriage again he would have greater opportunity to work and plan. He had enough confidence in himself, backed by Stephanie's undoubted affection, to make him believe that with time he could bring about anything. Therefore he must eliminate Derrick Beekman, temporarily, at least, and he must do it before the wedding. The longer he could keep him away from Stephanie, the better would be his own chance. If even on the eve of the wedding the groom could disappear, the fact would tend greatly to his ultimate advantage, provided Beekman were away long enough.

He concentrated his mind on this proposition. How could he cause Derrick Beekman to disappear the day before his wedding, and how, having spirited him away, could he keep him away long enough to make that disappearance worth while from the Harnash point of view? That was the final form of the problem in its last analysis. How was he to solve it?

He could have Beekman kidnapped, and hold him for ransom in some lonely place in the country. That was a solution which he dismissed almost as soon as he formulated it. The thing was impracticable. He would have to trust too many people. He could never keep him long in confinement. He himself would probably become the victim of continuous blackmail. In the face of rewards that would be offered, his employees would eventually betray him. Sooner or later,

unless something happened to Beekman, he would get out. Harnash had plenty of hardihood, but he shivered at the thought of what he would have to meet when Beekman came for an accounting, as sooner or later he would. He would have to find some other way. What way?

Now Harnash's misery was further increased by the fact that Beekman had cabled him to go ahead with the preparations for the wedding. The Beekman yacht had broken down in Honolulu Harbor after that long cruise, and instead of following his telegram straight home, there had been a week of delay. He had explained the situation by cables to Harnash, Stephanie, and her father.

After the yacht, her engines pretty well strained from the year's cruise, had been put in fair shape, ten days had been required for the return passage. Beekman had some business matters to attend to in San Francisco and he did not arrive in New York until a few days before the wedding, which was to take place at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the Bishop Suffragan and the Dean being the officiating clergymen designate.

It was fortunate in one sense that Beekman had been so delayed, for there was so much for him to do, so many people for him to see, that he had little opportunity for making love to his promised bride, and he had no chance to discern her real feelings any more than he had to find out Harnash's position. He had, indeed, remarked that Stephanie looked terribly worn and strained, and that George Harnash was haggard and spent to an extraordinary degree; but he attributed the one to the excitement of the marriage and the other to the fact that Harnash had been left so long alone to bear the burden of responsibility and decision in the rapidly increasing brokerage business.

When he had swept his unwilling bride-to-be to his heart and kissed her boisterously, he had told her that he would take care of her and see that the roses were brought back to her cheeks after they were married; and after he had shaken Harnash's hand vigorously he had slapped him on the back and declared to him that as soon as the honeymoon was over he would buckle down to work and give him a long vacation. Neither of the recipients of these promises was especially enthusiastic or delighted, but in his joyous breezy fashion Beekman neither saw nor thought anything was amiss.

Never a man essayed to tread the devious paths of matrimony with a more confident assurance or a lighter heart. Nothing could surpass his blindness.

"You see," said Stephanie in a last surreptitious interview with Harnash, "he hasn't the least suspicion. He hugged me like a bear and kissed me like a battering ram," she explained with a little movement of her shoulders singularly expressive of resentment, and even more.

"Damn him," muttered Harnash, under his breath. "He wrung my hand, too, as if I were his best friend."

"Well, you are, aren't you?"

"I was, I am, and I'm going to save him from–"

"From the misfortune of marrying me?"

"I don't see how you can jest under the circumstances."

"George," said the girl, "if I didn't jest I should die. I don't see how I can endure it as it is."

"Stephanie," he repeated, lifting his right hand as if making an oath–as, indeed, he was–"I'm going to take you from him if it is at the foot of the altar."

These were brave words with back of them, as yet, only an intensity of purpose and a determination, but no practical plan. It was Bill Woywod that gave the practical turn to that decision on the part of Harnash.

Now George Harnash came originally from a little down-east town on the Maine coast. That it was his birthplace was not its only claim to honor. It also boasted of the nativity of Bill Woywod. The two had been boyhood friends. Although their several pursuits had separated them widely, the queer friendship still obtained in spite of the wide and ever-widening difference in the characters and stations of the two men.

Running away from school, Bill Woywod had gone down to the sea as his ancestors for two hundred years had done before him. Left to himself, Harnash had completed his high school and college course and had gone down to New York as none of his people had ever done in all the family history. Both men had progressed. Harnash was already well-to-do and approaching brilliant success. He had thrust his feet at least within the portals of society and was holding open the door which he would force widely when he was a little stronger.

Woywod had earned a master's certificate and was now the first mate, technically the mate, of one of the ships of the Inter-Oceanic Trading fleet, in line for first promotion to a master. Woywod was a deep-water sailor. He cared little for steam, and although it was an age in which masts and sails were being withdrawn from the seven seas, he still affected the fast-disappearing wind-jamming branch of the ocean-carrying trade.

Indeed, the last full-rigged ship had been paid off and laid up in ordinary. Just because it was the last wooden sailing ship of the fleet, Maynard, whose fortune had been not a little contributed to by sailing vessels in the preceding century, had refrained from selling her. There was a sentimental streak in the hard old captain of industry, as there is in most men who achieve, and the *Susquehanna* had not been broken up or otherwise disposed of. On the contrary, every care had been taken of her.

The demands of the great war brought every ocean-carrying ship into service again. The *Susquehanna* was refitted and commissioned. A retired mariner who had been more or less a failure under steam but whose seamanship was

unquestioned was appointed to command. Captain Peleg Fish was one of those old-time sailors to whom moral suasion meant little or nothing. He was Gloucester born, and had served his apprenticeship in the fishing fleet. Thereafter he had been mate on the last of the old American clippers, had commanded a whaler out of New Bedford, and knew a sailing ship from truck to keelson.

He was a man of a hard heart and a heavy hand. His courage was as high as his heart was hard or his hand was heavy. He was also a driver. He drove his ship and he drove his men. He had been a success on the *Susquehanna* in her time, and because of that he had been able to get crews and keep officers. Quick passages in a well-found ship, and good pay, had offset his proverbial fierceness and brutality. He was now an old man, but sailing masters were scarce. Officers and men were scarce, too, on account of the war, and although the Inter-Oceanic Trading Company had dismissed Captain Fish because of the way he had mishandled the steamer to which they transferred him when they laid up the *Susquehanna*, yet they were glad to call him into service when they decided again to make use of that vessel.

Grim old Captain Fish made but one condition. He was glad enough to get back to the sea on which he had passed his life on any terms, and doubly rejoiced that he could once more command a wooden sailing ship instead of "an iron pot with a locomotive in her," as he designated his last vessel. That condition was that he should have Bill Woywod for mate. The two had sailed together before. They knew each other, liked each other, worked together hand and glove, for Bill Woywod was a man of the same type as the captain. The captain was getting old, too. He wanted a stouter arm and a quicker eye at his disposal than his own. Besides, Bill hated steam as much as Fish did. He was a natural-born sailor, not a mechanic and engine driver. Among the bucko mates of the past, Bill Woywod would not have yielded second place to anybody. They had to give Woywod a master's pay to get him to ship, but once having agreed to do that, he entered upon his new duties with alacrity.

The *Susquehanna* was a big full-rigged clipper ship of three thousand tons. Given a favorable wind, she could show her heels to many a tramp steamer or lumbering freighter, and even not a few of the older liners. She was carrying arms and munitions for the Russians and ran between New York and Vladivostok through the Panama Canal.

If there was one person rough, hard-bitten Bill Woywod had an abiding affection for, it was George Harnash. Whenever his ship dropped anchor in New York the first person–and about the only respectable person–he visited was his boyhood friend. To be sure, there was not much congeniality between them. The only tie that bound them was that boyhood friendship, but both of them were men without kith or kin, and they somehow clung to that association. Woywod

was proud of his friendship with the rising young broker, and there was a kind of refreshment in the person of the breezy sailor which Harnash greatly enjoyed, especially as the visits of the seaman were not frequent or long enough to pall upon the New Yorker.

Harnash usually took an afternoon and night off when Woywod arrived. They took in the baseball game at the Polo Grounds, dined thereafter at some table d'hote resort which Harnash would never have affected under ordinary circumstances, but which seemed to Woywod the very height of luxury. Then they repaired to some theatre, usually one of the high-kicking variety avowedly designed for the tired business man, which was extremely congenial to the care-free sailor; and not to go further into details it may be alleged that they had a good time together until far in the night or early in the morning, rather. Harnash was usually not a little ashamed next morning; Woywod, never! With sturdy independence Woywod would alternate being host on these occasions. On land and out of his element he was a fairly agreeable companion in his rough, coarse way. It was only on the ship that he became a brute. In the nature of things the devotion, if such it could be called, was all on Woywod's side. It was an aspiration on his part and a condescension on the part of Harnash, however much the latter strove to disguise it.

The *Susquehanna* had been loaded to her capacity and beyond with war equipment for the Russian Government and was about to take her departure from New York, when Woywod, who had been prevented before by the duties imposed by the necessity of getting the ship ready quickly for her next long voyage, paid his annual or semi-annual visit to his friend. Now these visits had become so thoroughly a matter of custom that Woywod had established the right of entrance. None of the clerks in the outer office would have thought of stopping him, and although Harnash was very strict in requiring respect for the sanctity of his private office Woywod made no hesitation about entering it unceremoniously.

Like all sailors, he moved with cat-like softness and quickness. He opened the door noiselessly and surprised his friend seated at his desk, his face buried in his hands in an attitude of the deepest dejection. Friendship has a discerning power as well as greater passions.

"Why, George, old boy," began Woywod, laying his hand on the other's shoulder, and that touch gave Harnash the first warning that he was not alone, "what's the matter?"

Harnash looked up quickly, rose to his feet as he recognized his visitor, and grasped him by the hand with a warmth he had not shown in years.

"Bill," he explained, "I'm in the deepest trouble that ever fell on a man, and you come like an angel in time to help me."

Harnash must have meant a dark angel, but Woywod knew nothing of that.

"What is it, old man?" he asked. "If it's money you're needin' I got a shot or two in the locker an'–"

"No, it's not money. I'm making more than ever."

"Been buckin' up agin the law an' want a free passage to safety? Well, me an' old man Fish is as thick as peas in a pod, an' the *Susquehanna's* at your service."

"It's not that, either."

"What in blazes is it, then?"

"A woman."

"Look here, George," said Woywod, "I'm about as rough as they make 'em an' there ain't no man as ever sailed with me that won't endorse that there statement, but I never done no harm to no woman an' if you've been–"

"You're on the wrong tack again, Bill," interposed Harnash, smiling. "It's a woman I love and who loves me."

"Well, I don't reckon I can help you there unless you want me to be best man at the weddin'."

That suggestion struck Harnash as intensely comical, as it well might, but he hastened to add diplomatically:

"I couldn't wish a better man if there were going to be any wedding, but–"

"Do you love a married woman?" asked Woywod, going directly to the point.

"Not exactly."

"What d'ye mean?"

"I'll explain if you'll only give me a chance," answered Harnash, and in as few words as possible he put the sailor in possession of the facts.

"So you want to get rid of the man, do you?" he asked, when the story had been told.

"Yes. I don't want him harmed. I just want him out of the way."

"And you think that I–"

"If you can't help me I don't know who can."

"Look here, George," said Woywod, earnestly. "Is this square an' above board? Are you givin' me the truth?"

"I am."

"An' the gal loves you an' you love her an' she don't love this other chap which she wants to git out of marryin' him?"

"Right."

"Then it's easy."

"I thought you'd find a way."

"It don't take much schemin' for that. Just p'int him out to me an' git him

down on the river front some dark night where I can git a hold of him, with a few drinks in him, an' that'll be all there is to it. You won't hear from him until the *Susquehanna* gits to Vladivostok, an' mebbe not then."

"I don't want any harm to come to him."

"In course not. I'll use him jest as gentle as I do any man on the ship."

"And he must never know that I–"

"He won't know nothin'. When a man gits drunk enough he can't tell what happens. You might tell yer lady friend that this is a little weddin' present I'm makin' to my oldest an' best friend, that is, if you git spliced afore I gits back from Vladivostok."

"I'll surely let her know your part of the transaction. When does the *Susquehanna* sail?"

"Thursday morning. Tide turns at two o'clock. We'll git out about four."

"You don't touch anywhere?"

"Not a place unless we're druv to it by bad weather or some accident. But if we do git hold of a cable I'll see that he stays safe aboard, in case, which ain't likely, we're obliged to drop anchor in any civilized port."

"Have you got a wireless aboard?"

"Nary wireless. When we take our departure from Fire Island it's up to Cap'n Fish an' me an' the rest of us to bring her in."

"There's no danger?"

"Well, there's always danger in sailin' the seas, but nobody never thinks nothin' about it with a good ship, well officered, well manned an' well found. It's a damn sight safer than the streets of New York with all them automobiles runnin' on the wind an' by the wind an' across the wind an' every other way at the same time. It's as much as a man's life is worth to try to navigate a street. Never mind the danger. We've got to settle a few little details an' then the thing bein' off your mind we can have a royal good time. You ain't got anything on tonight?"

"No engagement that I can't break. If it had been tomorrow, Wednesday, it would have been different because that is the night my friend–"

"Oh, he's a friend of yourn. Why don't you tell–"

"No use, Bill; this is the only way. But because he is a friend of mine I tell you I don't want him to come to any harm or to get any bad treatment."

"If he buckles down to work an' accepts the situation he won't get no bad treatment from me."

This was perfectly honest, for in the brutal school in which he had been trained what he meted out to his men was what he had been taught was right and what he believed they indeed expected, without which indeed discipline could not be maintained and the work of the ship properly done. Harnash had some

doubts as to Beekman's ability to buckle down or willingness, rather, but he had to risk something. The two friends put their heads together and the minor details were easily arranged.

"Better tell the gal it's goin' to be all right, hadn't you?" suggested Woywod.

"No," said Harnash, with a truer appreciation of the situation. "I think I'll surprise her."

"It'll be a surprise, all right," laughed the big sailor. "Well, you do your part an' I'll do mine an' if the man does his part he'll come back to find you married an' he can make the best of it. By the way, what's his name?"

"Is it necessary that I should tell you?"

"No, 'tain't necessary an' perhaps on the whole it wouldn't be best. If I don't know his name I can call him a damn liar whatever he says it is, with a clear conscience," went on the sailor blithely and guilelessly, as if conscience really mattered to him.

CHAPTER IV

A BACHELOR'S DINNER AND ITS ENDING

Bachelors' dinners, masculine pre-nuptial festivities, that is, like everything else with which poor humanity deals, may roughly be divided into two kinds, which fall under the generic names of good or bad. Of course, in practice, as in life, goodness often degenerates into badness and badness is sometimes lifted into goodness. Such is the perversity of human nature even at its best that when the declaration is made that Beekman's bachelor dinner was a good one all interest in it is immediately lost! Bad is so much more attractive in literature and in life. Perhaps it may be said that while the dinner had not descended to the unbridled license which sometimes characterized such affairs, and while there were no ladies present in various stages of–shall it be said dress or undress–nevertheless, the young fellows who were present had a delightful time which if not as innocent as the festivities of Stephanie's final entertainment to her lovely attendants, was nevertheless quite what might have been expected from clean, healthy, well-bred young Americans with a reasonable amount of restraint.

The dinner was chosen with fine discrimination and epicurean taste; it was cooked by the best chef, served at the most exclusive club and accompanied by wines with which even the most captious *bon vivant* could not take issue. Perhaps

some of the youngsters drank more than was good for them–which instantly raises the question, how much, or how little, if any, is good for a young man? They broke up at a decently early hour in the morning in much better condition than might have been expected.

Beekman was one of the most temperate of men. He took pride in his athletic prowess and he still kept himself in fine physical trim. A very occasional glass of wine usually limited his indulgence. In this instance, however, under conditions so unusual, he had partaken so much more freely than was his wont–his course being pardonable or otherwise in accordance with the viewpoint–that he was not altogether himself. This was not much more due to the plan of Harnash than to the solicitations of the other friends who found nothing so pleasant on that occasion as drinking to his health, and generally in bumpers. Indeed, not once but many times and oft around the board they pledged him and were pledged in return.

At the insistence of Harnash, Beekman had arranged to spend the night at the former's apartment in Washington Square. Harnash made the point that he was expected to look after him and produce him the next morning in the best trim, therefore he did not wish him to get out of his sight. Accordingly, Beekman had dismissed his own car and when the party broke up about two o'clock in the morning he went away with Harnash in the latter's limousine.

At somebody's suggestion–Beekman could never remember whose, whether it was his or his friend's–they stopped at several places on the way down town for further liquid refreshment of which Beekman partook liberally, Harnash sparingly or not at all. It was not difficult for an adroit man like Harnash, confronted by a rather befuddled man like Beekman, to introduce the infallible knock-out drops, with which he had been provided by Woywod, into the liquor.

As they crossed Twenty-third Street on their way down town Harnash stopped the car. His chauffeur lived on East Twenty-third Street, and Harnash dismissed him, saying he would drive the car down to his private garage back of his residence in Washington Mews himself. There was nothing unusual in this; the chauffeur subsequently testified that he had received the same thoughtful consideration from his employer on many previous occasions. When the chauffeur left the car, the drug had not yet got in its deadly work. Beekman was still all right apparently and the chauffeur subsequently testified that when Beekman bade him good-night he noticed nothing strikingly unusual. Beekman seemed to be himself, although the chauffeur could see that he was slightly under the influence of wine.

By the time the car, driven by Harnash with considerable ostentation and as much notice as possible, for he wanted to attract attention to his arrival, reached the garage, Beekman was absolutely unconscious on the floor of the tonneau, to

which he had fallen. Harnash ran the car into the garage, closed the doors with a bang, and ran across the intervening court rapidly and noisily and up to his own apartments. He was ordinarily a considerate young man, and coming in at that hour he would have made as little noise as possible, but on this occasion his conduct was different. He stumbled on the stairs, banged the door behind him, fell over a chair in his room, swore audibly. People subsequently testified that they had heard him coming in and one even saw him, quite alone.

Without pausing an unnecessary moment in the room he made his exit from his apartment by means of the fire escape, and this time not a cat could have moved more silently. Fortunately, the back of the house was in deep shadow and there were no lights adjacent. The shadow of the fence also served him. He reentered the garage, having taken precaution the day before secretly to oil the doors. He dragged his unfortunate friend and companion from the limousine, stripped him of his overcoat and automobile cap, which he put on himself. The coat he had previously worn had differed in every particular from that of Beekman. He removed Beekman's watch and other jewelry and his money, of which he carried a considerable sum. These articles he stowed away in his private locker to which his chauffeur did not have a key. He could remove them to his office safe at his leisure. In Beekman's vest pocket he put a large roll of his own money–he could not steal, though abduction was his intent–and then he lifted him to the floor of his runabout which stood in the garage by the side of the limousine.

He next removed the number plates from the car, replaced them with false ones, and ran the car out of the garage by hand. Every part of it had been oiled so that its movement was absolutely noiseless. Then he shoved the car down the street, which was now deserted, until he got some distance away from the garage. The only really risky part of the enterprise was at that moment. Fortune favored him–or not, as the case may be. At any rate, no one appeared. It was after three o'clock in the morning, the street was deserted, and there was not a policeman in sight. He climbed into the car, started it, and drove off.

He proceeded cautiously at first, seeking unfrequented and narrow streets until he got far enough from the garage to change his going to suit his purpose. After a time he sought the broader streets and passed several people, mostly police officers, but them he now took no care to avoid. He drove near them so that they would notice his general build, which was that of his friend, and the clothes he wore, which were those of his friend, and indeed they testified afterward that they had seen a man dressed as and looking like Beekman, exactly as he had anticipated. He drove past them rapidly so as not to give them time for too close a scrutiny. Also he doubled on his trail often.

When he reached a dark, lonely, and unfrequented block near South Water Street he drew up before the door of a dimly lighted, forbidding looking building,

the sign on which indicated that it was a sailors' boarding house. He got out of the car, taking precaution to slip on a false mustache and beard with which he had provided himself, and tapped on a door in a certain way which had been indicated to him. The door was at once opened by a burly, rough, villainous looking individual, the boarding house master, obviously a crimp of the worst class.

"What d'ye want?" he growled out, scrutinizing the newcomer by the aid of a gas jet burning inside the dirty, reeking hall, whose feeble light he supplemented by a flash from an electric torch which really revealed little, since Harnash carefully concealed his already disguised face.

"I have something for Mr. Woywod."

"The mate of the *Susquehanna*?"

"Yes."

"Well, he told me to receive an' deliver what you got."

"That was our agreement," said Harnash, the little dialogue convincing each man that no doubt was to be entertained of the other.

"Well, where's the goods?"

"In the car."

"Fetch him in."

"He's rather heavy. Perhaps you'll give me a hand."

"Oh, all right," answered the man, putting his electric torch in his pocket.

The two went to the car and the man easily picked up the unconscious Beekman and unaided carried him within the door. Harnash followed. He observed the man glanced at the numbers on the car and was glad that he had taken the precaution to change them. The crimp now dropped the unconscious Beekman in the hallway and turned to Harnash. He found the latter standing quietly, but with an automatic pistol in his hand.

"You needn't be afraid of me," said the man.

"I'm not," answered Harnash. He was ghastly pale and extremely nervous, but not from fear of the crimp. "This is just a matter of precaution."

"Well, what do I git out of this yere job?" asked the man.

"I understand Mr. Woywod will settle with you for that."

"Well, he does, but what I gits from him is the price of a foremast hand, an' 'tain't enough."

The crimp bent over Beekman, flashed the light on him, and pulled out the roll of bills, which he quickly counted.

"It's fair, but I'd ought to git more. This here's a swell job; look at them clo'es."

"They're yours also, if you wish."

"That's somethin', but–"

"It's all you'll get," said Harnash, laying his hand on the door.

The man lifted the torch. Harnash lifted the pistol.

"Just put that torch back in your pocket," he said.

"You're a cool one," laughed the man, but he obeyed the order.

"If it is learned tomorrow that this man has disappeared you'll receive through the United States mail in a plain envelope a hundred dollar bill. If not, you get nothing."

"Suppose I croak him, how'd you know anything about it?"

"Mr. Woywod has arranged to inform me, and he will also put your part of the transaction on record, so if you say a word you'll be laid by the heels and get nothing for your pains. There are a number of things against you, I'm told. The police would be most happy to get you, I know. Just bear that in mind."

The man nodded. He knew when the cards were stacked against him. After all, this did not greatly differ from an ordinary job and he was getting, for him, very well paid for his part of it.

"I got relations with Woywod an' lots of other seafarin' men. My business would be ruined if I played tricks on 'em. You can trust me to keep quiet."

"I thought so," answered Harnash. "Good-night."

He opened the door, stepped outside, closed the door behind him, and waited a moment, but the crimp made no effort to follow him. After all, it was only an every day matter with him. Harnash next drove the car down the street near one of the wharves, where he met Woywod.

"Is it all right, George?" asked the latter.

"All right, Bill. He's at the place you told me to leave him. Can you keep the crimp's mouth shut?"

"Trust me for that," said Woywod confidently. "He's mixed up in too many shady transactions to give anybody any information."

"I'll never forget what you've done for me," said Harnash. "Remember, use him well."

"No fear," laughed his friend as the two shook hands and parted.

Then Harnash drove up the street, waited until he came to a dark alley, turned into it, unobserved, got out of the car, put Beekman's coat and hat into it, donned his own overcoat and cap, which he had brought with him, and still wearing the false mustache and beard changed the numbers on the car, started it, and let it wreck itself against the nearest water hydrant.

It was a long walk up town, even to Washington Square, and he had to go very circumspectly because he did not now wish to be seen by anyone. Again fortune favored him. He gained the garage, crossed the court, mounted the fire escape to his rooms, and sank down, utterly exhausted but triumphant.

His defense was absolutely impregnable. No one could controvert his story.

He rehearsed it. He had come home with Beekman after the dinner had terminated. They had had one or two drinks on the way. They had dismissed the chauffeur at Twenty-third Street. When they reached the garage Beekman, moved by some sudden whim, had insisted upon going back to his own apartment up town in Harnash's little roadster. He had been drinking, of course. He was not altogether in possession of his normal faculties, but Harnash was in the same condition and therefore he had not been too insistent. Beekman was as capable of driving the car as Harnash had just showed himself to be. There was nothing he could do to prevent Beekman from going away. He could not even remember, when he was questioned, whether he had tried it or not. At any rate, Beekman had gone away in the roadster and Harnash had gone to bed. So dwellers in the building who heard him come in testified. One who happened to go to the window even had seen him come in. No one had seen or heard him go out. Harnash swore that he had not left the apartment until the next morning.

Beekman, or a man dressed as he was known to be dressed, had been seen by the police officers and others between three or four in the morning, driving through the lower part of the city in a small car the number of which no one had seen. What he was doing in that section of the city no one could imagine. During the course of the morning Harnash's car was found, badly smashed from a collision, lying on its side in a wretched alley off South Water Street. Beekman's overcoat and cap were in the car and that was all there was to it.

No matter what suspicions the crimp might have entertained, he kept his mouth shut and received the day after the one hundred dollar bill in an unmarked envelope which had been mailed at the general postoffice in the afternoon. Even if he had spoken, he could not have thrown much light on the situation. Not even the reward which was offered could tempt him. His business demanded secrecy, absolutely and inviolable, and too many men knew too much about him, which rendered it unsafe for him to open his head. He would not kill the goose that laid the golden egg for him by making further business on the same lines impossible. He really knew nothing, anyway.

The secret was shared between two men, Woywod on the sea and out of communication with New York, and Harnash himself. So long as they kept quiet no one would ever know. Even Beekman himself could not solve the mystery when he returned to New York. It was most ingeniously planned and most brilliantly carried out. Harnash congratulated himself. Stephanie Maynard would certainly be his long before Beekman could prevent it. Still, George Harnash was by no means so happy in the present state of affairs as he had planned and hoped to be. And his trials were not over. He had to meet Stephanie, the wedding party, old John Maynard, the public press, and the public–what would the day

bring forth?

CHAPTER V
THE WEDDING THAT WAS NOT

Stephanie Maynard had passed a sleepless night. Her love for George Harnash grew stronger and her abhorrence of the marriage increased in the same degree as the hour drew nearer. Too late she repented of her determination. She wondered why she had not allowed Harnash to take her away and end it all. What, after all, were her father's wishes, or her own promises, or the worldly advantages they would gain, or anything else, compared to love?

Harnash had sent word to her the day before that she was not to give up hope, that something would happen surely, but now the last minute was at hand and nothing had happened. A dozen times she started to call her lover on the telephone and a dozen times she refrained. Finally the hour arrived when the victim must be garlanded for the sacrifice. At least, that is the way she regarded it.

She had not heard a word from her husband-to-be during the morning. Under other circumstances that would have alarmed her, but as it was she was only relieved. The wedding party was assembled at the brand new Maynard mansion on upper Fifth Avenue. Two of the attendants were school friends from other cities and they were guests at the house. The wedding was to be followed by a breakfast and a great reception which the Maynard money and the Beekman position was to make the most wonderful affair of the kind that had ever been given in New York.

With the publicity which modern society courts and welcomes, while it pretends to deprecate it, the papers had published reams about the most private details of the engagement, even to descriptions and pictures of the most intimate under-linen of the bride. Presents of fabulous value, which lost nothing in their description by perfervid pens, were under constant guard in the mansion. Details of police kept back swarms of unaccredited reporters and adventurous sightseers. On the morning of the wedding day the street before the Cathedral was packed with the vulgarly curious long before eleven o'clock. The wedding was to be solemnized at high noon, and was to be the greatest social event which had excited easily aroused and intensely curious New York for a year or more.

The newer members of the exclusive social circle frankly enjoyed it. And such is the contagion of degeneration that the older members, while they affected disdain and annoyance, enjoyed it too. The newspapers had played it up tremendously, and the affair had even achieved the signal triumph of a veiled but well understood cartoon by F. Foster Lincoln, the scourge and satirist of high society, in a recent number of *Life*.

Everything was ready. The most famous caterer in New York had prepared the most sumptuous wedding breakfast. The most exclusive florist had decorated the church and residence. Society had put on its best clothes, slightly deploring the fact that as it was to be a noon wedding its blooming would be somewhat limited thereby. More tickets had been issued to the Cathedral than even that magnificent edifice could hold and it was filled to its capacity so soon as the doors were opened. The famous choir was in attendance to render a musical program of extraordinary beauty and appropriateness.

As it approached the hour of mid-day the excitement was intense. Women in the crowd were crushed, many fainted. Riot calls had to be sent out and the already strong detachment of police supplemented by reserves. Thus is the holy state of matrimony entered into among the busy rich. With the idle poor it is, fortunately, a simpler affair.

It had been arranged that Derrick Beekman and George Harnash should present themselves at the Maynard mansion not later than eleven o'clock. From there they would drive to the Cathedral in plenty of time to receive the wedding party at the chancel steps. At eleven o'clock a big motor forced its way through the crowd and drew up before the door. From it descended George Harnash alone.

That young man showed the effect of the night he had passed. He was excessively nervous and as gray as the gloves he carried in his hands. He was admitted at once and ushered into the drawing room, which was filled with a dozen young ladies in raiment which even Solomon in all his glory might have envied, who were to make up the wedding party. There also had just arrived the young gentlemen who were to accompany them, who had all been at the bachelor dinner. None of them exhibited any evidence of unusual dissipation. They had slept late and were in excellent condition.

"George, alone!" cried young Van Brunt, who was next in importance to the best man, as Harnash entered the room.

"Where's Beekman?" asked Harnash apparently in great surprise, as he glanced at the little group.

"Not here. You were to bring him. It's time for us to get up to the Cathedral anyway. I'll bet the people are clamoring at the doors now."

"They weren't to be opened till eleven-fifteen," said Grant, one of the fittest members of the party. "It's only eleven now. We've plenty of time."

"Well, you better beat it up now, then. Beekman will be here in a minute, I'm sure," said Harnash. "We'll follow you in half an hour."

As the young men who were to usher left the room the girls fell upon Harnash.

"Mr. Harnash," said Josephine Treadway, who was the maid-of-honor, "will you please tell us where Derrick Beekman is, and why you didn't bring him along?"

"I can't," said Harnash. "As a matter of fact I–"

"You'll tell me, certainly," interposed the voice that he loved.

He turned and found that Stephanie, having completed her toilet, had descended the stair and entered the room. She was whiter than Harnash himself, but her lack of color was infinitely becoming to her in her sumptuous bridal robes, and the adoring young man decided then and there that whatever happened she was worth it.

"Mr. Beekman," continued the girl, "was to be here at eleven o'clock with you. It's after that now and you're here alone. Where is he? Why didn't you bring him?"

"Miss Maynard," said Harnash formally, and in spite of himself he could not prevent his lip from trembling, "I don't know where he is."

"What!" exclaimed the girl, really astonished, as the whole assembly broke into exclamations. Had Harnash accomplished the impossible, as he had threatened?

"I can't find him," went on Harnash. He could scarcely sustain Stephanie's direct and piercing gaze. He forced himself to look at her, however. "I don't know where he is," he repeated.

"But have you searched?"

"Everywhere. I called up his apartment on Park Avenue at ten o'clock. They said he wasn't there and hadn't been there all night. I started my man out at once in a taxicab, jumped into my own car, and I've been everywhere–the office, his clubs–I've even had my secretary and clerks telephone all the hotels on the long chance that he might be at one of them."

"And you haven't found a trace of him? George Harnash–" began Stephanie, but Harnash was too quick for her; he did not allow her to finish.

"You will forgive me," he went on; "I did even more than that in my alarm. I finally notified the police on the chance that he might have been er–er–brought in."

He shot a warning look at Stephanie that checked further inquiries from her.

"Why should he be brought in?" asked Josephine Treadway, who had no reason for not asking the question.

"Why, you see," went on Harnash, "it's desperately hard to tell, and I'd rather die than mention it, but under the circumstances I suppose–"

"Out with it at once," cried Stephanie.

"Well, we had a little dinner last night at–well, never mind where."

"We had a dinner, too," said Josephine.

"Yes, but I imagine ours was–er–different. At any rate, it didn't break up until quite late, or, I should say, early in the morning, and we were not–quite ourselves."

"But Derrick is the most abstemious of men."

"Exactly; so am I, and when that kind go under it's worse than–you understand," he added helplessly.

Stephanie nodded.

"When did you see him last?"

"Why–er–I'll make a clean breast of it."

"Do so, I beg you."

"Well, then, we were right enough when the dinner broke up. Derrick and I left the others to their own devices. He had arranged to spend the night with me. We stopped at one or two places down town, but reached my quarters in Washington Square about two or three o'clock."

Harnash paused and swallowed hard. It was an immensely difficult task to which he had compelled himself, although so far he had told nothing but the truth.

"Go on," said Josephine Treadway impatiently as the pause lengthened.

"He changed his mind after we put the limousine in the garage and insisted on going back to his own rooms."

"Did you let him go?"

"I did."

"Why?"

"Well, Miss Treadway, I couldn't help it, and, to be frank, I didn't try. You see we were neither of us very sure of ourselves and–and–"

"I see."

"He took my runabout, drove off and–that's all."

"Have you found the runabout?"

"Yes, the police found it in an alley near South Water Street, badly smashed. Beekman's overcoat and cap were in the car."

"Do you think he has been hurt?" questioned Stephanie, who had listened breathlessly to the conversation between her lover and her maid-of-honor.

"I'm sure that he can't have been," returned Harnash with definiteness which carried conviction to his questioner, and no one else caught the meaning look he shot at her.

"And that's all?" asked Josephine.

"Absolutely all I can tell you," he replied truthfully, none noticing the equivoke but Stephanie, who of course could not call attention to it.

"You poor girl," said Josephine, gathering Stephanie in her arms.

"It's outrageous. It's horrible," cried the girl, biting her lip to keep back her tears.

She really could scarcely tell whether she was glad or sorry, now that it had come; not that her feelings had changed, but there was the public scandal, the affront, the–but she had not time to speculate.

"What is outrageous, what is horrible?" asked John Maynard, coming into the room and catching her words. "What can be outrageous or horrible in such a wedding as we have arranged? Why, Stephanie, what's the matter? You're as white as a sheet, and Harnash, are you ill? You're a pretty looking spectacle for a best man."

"Father," said his daughter, "they can't find Derrick."

"Can't find him!" exclaimed Maynard. "Does he have to be sought for on his wedding day? If I were going to marry a stunning girl like you, for all you're as pale as a ghost, I–"

"There's not going to be any wedding," said Stephanie, mechanically.

"No wedding!" roared Maynard, surprised intensely. "What do you mean? Are you backing out at the last minute?"

"No, it's not I."

"Look here, will some one explain this mystery to me?" asked the man, turning to the rather frightened bevy of girls. "It's eleven-thirty; we ought to be starting. What's the meaning of this infernal foolishness? You, Harnash, what are you standing there looking like a ghost for? One would think you were going to be married yourself."

"Mr. Maynard," said Josephine, taking upon herself the task, "Stephanie has told you the truth. Mr. Harnash has just come and he doesn't know where Mr. Beekman is."

"Doesn't know where he is?"

"He can't be found, sir," said Harnash.

"Do you mean to tell me that he has run away and left my girl in the lurch? By God, he'll–"

"I'm sure it isn't that," said Harnash earnestly, "but the fact is we had a bachelor dinner last night."

"Of course you did, but what has that to do with it?"

"Everything. I guess we indulged a little too much."

"Well, bachelors have done that fool thing since time and the world began."

"Yes, but Beekman hasn't been seen since early this morning, two or three

o'clock."

"Who saw him last?"

"I did," said Harnash, briefly repeating his explanation.

"What did you do?"

"I 'phoned to his house and they said he hadn't been there all night. I dressed, sent my man out in a taxi, took my own car, summoned the office force to my assistance, and Dougherty's detectives, and I've scoured the city for him."

"The police?"

"I have notified them, of course, as soon as they reported the finding of my runabout. They're on the hunt, too. We have even called up every hotel in the city. He's not to be found."

"It must be foul play," said Maynard, taking Harnash's account of it at its face value.

"I suppose so," said Harnash, wincing a little, although he would fain not, and again shooting a quick glance at Stephanie, and then daringly following it with a quick gesture of negation to reassure her.

"Where that car was found it wouldn't take much to interest a thief."

"No. He had a watch, jewelry, money. Indeed, I have a dim remembrance of his flashing a roll in some place or other."

"That will be it."

"Meanwhile what is to be done, sir?"

"It's a quarter to twelve now," said Josephine Treadway.

"God, how I hate this," said old Maynard. "Here," he stepped to the door and called his private secretary, "Bentley, drive up to the Cathedral like mad, tell the Bishop that the wedding is called off. Yes, don't stand there like a fish; get out."

"But we'll have to give some reason to the people, explain to the guests in the church," expostulated the secretary.

"Reason be damned," said Maynard, roughly.

"Excuse me," said Harnash, "it would be better for all concerned, and especially Miss Maynard, if the matter were explained at once, and fully. You wouldn't like to have anyone think for a moment that she had been left in the lurch."

"Mr. Harnash is right, sir. It must be explained as well as it can."

"Very well, Bentley," said his employer. "Tell the Bishop that Mr. Beekman has disappeared, that we are of the opinion that he has met with foul play, that under the circumstances there is nothing to do but call off the wedding and have the explanation announced in the Cathedral in any way he likes, and then get back here as quickly as possible. Stephanie, I'd rather have lost half my fortune than have this happen, but keep up your courage. I feel that nothing but some dastardly work would have kept Beekman away. He is the soul of honor and he

was passionately devoted to you. Don't faint, my dear girl."

"I'm not going to faint," said Stephanie, resolutely. "Girls, I'm awfully sorry for your disappointment," she faltered.

"Don't mind us," said Josephine.

"I'm afraid that perhaps you–you–"

"We're going at once," explained one of the bridesmaids, "if you will have our motors called up."

"Of course," said Maynard. "Harnash, you attend to that and then come to me in the library. William," he added to the footman who came in obedience to his summons, "get me the chief of police on the telephone and when the reporters come, and they will be here just as soon as the announcement is made at the church, show them into the library in a body. I've got to see them and I'll see them all at once. Harnash, you come, too. You can tell the story better than anyone."

CHAPTER VI

STEPHANIE IS GLAD AFTER ALL

The sudden disappearance of one of the principals in the Maynard-Beekman wedding was the sensation of the hour. John Maynard was deeply hurt and terribly concerned because he was very fond of Beekman, and because in spite of his bold front the young man's failure to appear had reflected upon his daughter. The lewd papers of the baser sort, playing up the bachelor dinner, did not hesitate to point this out, and insinuations, so thinly disguised that every one who read understood, appeared daily. That there was not a word of truth in them was of little consequence either to the writers who knew they were lying or to the public, which did not. The clientele of such papers was ready to believe anything or everything bad; especially of the idle rich.

Reportorial and even editorial–which is worse–imagination was unrestrained. As the newspapers had devoted so much space to the preparations, they did not stint themselves in discussing the aftermath of the affair. The police bent every energy to solve the mystery. Maynard was a big power in public affairs and they were stimulated by a reward of one hundred thousand dollars which Maynard offered for tidings of the missing man, a reward which made the wiseacres put their tongues in their cheeks as they read of it.

The gorgeous wedding presents were returned. The lovely lingerie of the bride, which had been so talked about, was laid away and the bride herself was denied to every caller. Even George Harnash sought access to her person in vain. The scandal, the humiliation, had made her seriously ill, and by her physician's orders she was allowed to see no one.

However, the first person she did admit was George Harnash. Indeed, so soon as she was able to be about she called him up and demanded his immediate presence. He had been waiting for such a summons. He knew it was unavoidable. It had to come. He dropped everything to go to her. He was horrified when he saw her. He had got back some of his nerve and equipoise to the casual observation, although he still showed what he had gone through to a close scrutiny. He had been catechized and cross-questioned, even put through a mild form of the third degree by the police, but little to their satisfaction. He could tell them nothing definite. They got no more out of him than he had volunteered at first. They were completely and entirely mystified.

Several steamers had sailed for various ports that day and night, but it was easily established, when they reached port, that they had not carried the missing man. They completely overlooked the *Susquehanna* for reasons which will appear. Beekman's disappearance remained one of those unexplained mysteries for which New York was notorious. The reward still stood and the authorities were still very much on the alert, but they were absolutely without any clue whatsoever. Derrick Beekman had disappeared from the face of the earth. Besides Harnash, there was only one person in the city who had any definite idea as to the cause of his departure, and that was Stephanie Maynard. A proud, high-spirited girl, she had suffered untold anguish in the publicity and scandal and innuendo.

"My God, Stephanie!" cried Harnash, as she received him in a lovely negligée in her boudoir. "You look like death itself."

"And I have passed through it," said the girl, "in the last week. Now, I want you to tell me where Derrick is."

"Stephanie," answered Harnash, "it would be foolish for me to pretend that I don't know."

"It certainly would."

"I told you that I meant to have you and that I would stop the wedding if I had to take you from the altar steps."

"But we didn't get that far."

"It amounts to the same thing. I–er–took him. It was easier."

"Where and how did you take him?"

"Don't ask. I can't tell."

"And you have covered me with shame inexpressible. I shall never get over

it as long as I live. How could you do it? How could you?"

"Are you reproaching me?"

"Reproaching you!" cried Stephanie. "Do you think I could tamely endure this public scandal, this abandonment, without a word?"

"But I did it for you."

"Yes, I suppose so, but that doesn't make it any less humiliating."

"Stephanie, tell me, do you love Derrick Beekman?"

"No, I hate him."

"And me?"

"I hate you, too."

"Oh, don't say that."

"I wish I were dead," cried the girl. "I can never go out on the street again. I can never hold up my head anywhere any more, and it's your fault. What have you done with him?"

"Do you want him back? Do you want to go through with the marriage? Look here," said Harnash, "desperate diseases require desperate remedies. I'll tell you this, and that is all I will tell you. I am sure Derrick is all right. He will come to no harm."

"Are you holding him a prisoner somewhere?"

"I am not."

"I don't understand."

"It is better not. It isn't necessary," answered Harnash stubbornly.

"And you actually made away with him?"

"I got him out of the way, if that's what you mean. But he's alive, well, and in no danger. I caused it to be done–"

"Are you sure of that?"

"Absolutely."

"Don't you know that you've done a criminal act?"

"Of course I know it. Do you think I'm a fool because I'm crazy in love with you?"

"And don't you know you will have gained his eternal enmity and the enmity of my father when they find this out?"

"I don't care about anybody's enmity unless it's yours."

"Well, you've almost gained mine."

"Almost, but not quite. You feel horribly now. I understand. Do you think it has been joyful to me to have put my best friend out of the way and to have brought all this scandal and shame upon you? But there was no other way. You're mine in the sight of God and I'm going to make you mine in the sight of men."

"But my father will never forgive you when he knows."

"I don't think he will ever find out my part, or Beekman either."

"Why not?"

"I can't explain, but if your father does find out what can he do? In six months I'll be independent of anything and anybody and when we are married we can laugh at him and at the rest of the world."

"At Beekman, too?"

"Yes, even at him. Stephanie, you don't know what it is to love as I do. For you I'd stop at nothing short of murder. You didn't believe me when I said that, but I meant it. I've made myself a criminal, I admit, but for your sake. Now am I going to fail of my reward? Do you want me to produce Derrick Beekman? Do you want him to come back and throw me in jail and marry you? Well, I didn't expect it; I didn't count upon it–" this was only a bluff, of course, since by no means could Harnash have got back Beekman from the *Susquehanna* then–"but if that is what you really want say the word. Can you turn down a love like mine, that will stop at nothing for your happiness? I swear to you that I believe it is as much for your happiness as my own. I won't say it is all for you, because I want you, but I am thinking of you all the time. I couldn't bear to see you in his arms. What is the little bit of scandal? It will be forgotten. When you are my wife I'll take care of you. If you don't want to live here we'll live anywhere. If I pull off two or three big deals that are in the air I'll be able to do anything. Oh, Stephanie, you aren't going back on me now?"

"You know that I couldn't do that," answered the girl, greatly moved by his passionate pleading. After all, she did love this man and not the other.

"You're the kind of woman that a man will do anything for. I'm sorry for Beekman, I'm sorry for everything, but I'm going to have you." He came close to her as he spoke. "Do you understand that?" he asked, raising his voice. "I did it for you, you, and no man shall balk me of my reward. If you won't come willingly, you shall come unwillingly."

"Oh," said the girl, "how horribly determined and wicked you are, and yet–"

As she looked up at him the passion with which he spoke, rough, brutal as it was, quickened again her heart that she thought was dead. For the first time in weeks the color rushed into her face.

"That's right," said Harnash, watching her narrowly. "I can still bring the blood to your cheeks."

He bent over her, he dragged her almost rudely from her seat and crushed her against him. He kissed her as roughly as he had spoken.

"This," he said, "pays for everything. If I'm found out, if I have to go to jail, I don't care. I'm glad. You love me. You can't deny it and in your heart of hearts you're glad and you'll be gladder every hour of your life."

The girl gave up. After all, what possibility of happiness did she have except with Harnash? More and more she appeared before the world as a thing cast off

and scorned. Harnash's position in society and business was improving every day, but it was not that which influenced her. She really loved him. She responded to his pleading. Mistaken though he was, vicious as had been his design, that effort, wrong as was his method, showed her how much he loved her.

"You're not going to fail me now, are you? You need not answer. I can feel it in the beat of your heart against mine."

"No," said the girl. "I'm yours, I suppose."

"Don't you know?"

"Yes, I know. No one else would want me, discarded."

"I want you. I'd want you if the whole world rejected you."

"And you won't tell me where Derrick is?"

"No, it's a heavy secret to carry in one's breast. I feared that they would worm it out of me. You can't know what I've gone through," he went on. "I've been suspected and questioned and cross-questioned, but I never gave it away. It was you who kept me up. The thought of you always, you, you, you! Meanwhile I'm slaving my life out, almost wrecking my brain, to carry out these big deals, and when it is over and I have you they can do their worst. Your father, Beekman when he comes back–"

"Oh, then he will come back?"

"Of course he will. And I'll face them all. I don't know whether I have damned myself for you or not, but if I have, I don't care," he went on recklessly.

"It was my fault, anyway," said the girl. "I should have been stronger. I should not have agreed to such a marriage, and I should not have kept the agreement when I loved you."

"You need not say that," said Harnash–there was good stuff in him—"It is all my own plan and scheme. You were bound, and there was only one way to break the bond. Now I give myself six months. By that time the talk will have died out and we will be married."

"I'll marry you," said the girl, "or I'll marry no one else on earth, but before I marry you you must bring Derrick Beekman into my presence and he must release me."

"That is a harder thing than what I have done, but I'll do it. Provided you will help me."

"I will, but how?"

"When you see him you must tell him that you don't love him and that you wish to marry me."

"Very well. I'll do that part."

"And I'll do the other."

"Promise me, on your word of honor."

"Honor!" exclaimed Harnash bitterly. "Do you think, after what I have

done, that I've got any honor, that you could trust to?"

"I'll be trusting myself to you," said the girl, "and you know what that implies."

"Say that you are glad that it has happened as it has, despite the scandal."

Stephanie looked at him a long time.

"You poor boy," she said, drawing his head down and kissing his forehead in that motherly way which all women have toward the men they love until the maternal affection has a chance to vent itself in the right direction. "How you must have suffered for me."

"It was nothing."

"Yes, I am glad," she said at last.

CHAPTER VII
UP AGAINST IT HARD

When he went to bed, what time it was when he awakened, or where he was at that moment were facts about which Derrick Beekman had no ideas whatsoever. At first he was conscious of but one thing–that he was; and that consciousness was painful, not to say harrowing, to the last degree. For one thing, he was horribly sick. The place where he lay appeared to be as unsteady as his mental condition was uncertain. He was heaved up and down, tossed back and forth, and rolled from side to side in an utterly inexplicable way to his bewildered mind. And every mad motion threw him against some bruised and painful portion of his anatomy.

As he struggled to open his eyes it seemed to him that he was lying in pitch darkness. His ears were assailed by a concatenation of discordant noises, creaks, groans, thunderous blows of which he could make nothing. No one has ever pictured hell as a place of reeking odors and hideous sounds. Why that opportunity has been neglected is not known. Certainly the popular brimstone idea of it is highly suggestive. At any rate, the bad air and other indescribable odors, to say nothing of the noises that came to him, added to his physical perturbation and wretchedness. Under the circumstances, the wonder was not so much that he did not think clearly, but that he could think at all. It was only after some moments of sickening return to consciousness that he became convinced that he was alive and somewhere.

He lay for a little while desperately trying to solve the problems presented to him by his environment, with but little immediate success. Finally, as a help toward clearing up the mystery, he decided upon exploration. Though the undertaking was painful to him, he made an effort to sit up. His head came in violent contact with something which he had not noticed in the obscurity above him and nearly knocked him senseless again. After another violent fit of sickness, he decided upon a more circumspect investigation.

He felt about with his hands and discovered that he was in some box-like enclosure one side of which seemed to be open save for a containing strip against which he had been violently hurled several times and which had prevented him from being thrown out. This enclosure was in violently agitated motion. At first, in his confusion, he decided vaguely upon a railroad train, a sleeping-car berth, but he realized that not even the roughest freight car would produce such an effect as that unless the train were running on the cross ties, in which case its stoppage would be immediate. This pitching and tossing kept on. If he had been in his clear senses, he would have known in an instant where he was, but it was only after violent effort at concentration that his aching head told him that he must be aboard a ship!

He was familiar with steamers of the more magnificent class, and with his own yacht, and the pleasure craft of his friends, and he knew enough from reading to decide that this was the forecastle of a ship. He decided that it was a wooden ship. The outer planking against which he lay was of wood. He listened next for the beat or throb of a screw, and heard none. Thinking more and more clearly, it came to him that it was a sailing ship. As his eyes became used to the obscurity, he saw abaft his feet and to his left hand, for he lay head to the bows, well forward on the port side, a square of light which betokened an open hatchway. He strained his eyes up through the hatchway. He could make out nothing. It was still daylight on deck, and that was all he could decide.

As he lay staring stupidly, above the roar of the wind, and the creaking and groaning of the straining ship and the thunder of great waves against the bow as she plunged into the head seas, he heard harsh voices. The tramping of many feet, hurried, irregular, came to him; then a sudden silence; a command followed, and again the massed and steady trampling of the same feet. A shrill, harsh-creaking sound followed, as of taut rope straining through the dry sheaves of a heavy block. Rude rhythmical sounds, sailors' chanties, penetrated the wooden cave in one of the recesses of which he lay. It was a sailing ship, obviously. They were mast-heading yards; apparently setting or taking in sail.

What ship, and how came he aboard? By this time he was sufficiently himself to come to a decision. He would get out of that berth. He would mount the ladder, the top of which he could see dimly nearest the hatch-combing, and

get out on deck.

He thrust one leg over the side of the berth, and as the dim light fell upon it, he discovered that he was barefoot. It had not yet occurred to him to examine his clothes. Being asleep, he would naturally be wearing the luxurious night gear he affected. Not so in this instance. Where the white of his leg stopped he discerned a fringe of ragged trousers. He felt them. They were tattered and torn, and indescribably foul and dirty. Mystery on mystery! Cautiously, so as not to hit his head a second time, he sat up and lowered himself to the deck. Continuing his inspection, he was horrified at the shirt which covered the upper half of his body, and which fully matched the trousers. Where were the clothes he had worn the night before?

It came upon him like the proverbial flash of lightning from a clear sky–that bachelor supper, the gay revelry, the wine he had drunk, his sallying forth with George Harnash. He vaguely remembered their first stop; after that–nothing. Where were his watch, his studs, his money? He looked around carefully, with a faint hope that he might see them. A dress suit was, of course, an absurdity at that hour and in that place, but anything was better than those filthy rags. There was nothing to be seen of them, of course.

The horror and unpleasantness of the place grew upon him. Lest he should give way to another tearing fit of sickness, he must get up on deck. Clothes would come later, and explanations. He staggered aft toward the foot of the ladder, the violent motion of the ship–and in his place, in the very eyes of her, the motion was worst–making progress difficult. It was not that he lacked sea legs, nor was he merely seasick. His unsteadiness and nausea came from other causes.

As he put his foot on the ladder, like another flash came the recollection that this was his wedding day. He was, indeed, a day out in his reckoning, but that was to develop later. He stopped, petrified at the appalling thought. His wedding day, and he in this guise on a ship! He groaned with horror, clapping his hands to his face, and the next roll threw him violently against the ladder, opening a cut in his head so that the blood began to trickle down the side of his cheek.

This seemed to have a good effect upon him. The blow, as it were, dissipated some of his imaginings. It was an assault that quickened the working of his mind. He rose to the provocative stimulus of it. He got to his feet, brushed the blood out of his eyes, mounted the ladder, and stepped over the hatch-combing.

He found himself on the deck of a large, old-fashioned, full-rigged sailing ship. A lookout paced across the deck from side to side forward. Way aft he saw a flying bridge just forward of the mizzenmast, on which two officers stood. A number of men had tailed on to what he realized were the foretops'l halliards, upon which they were swaying violently, constantly urged to greater exertions

by a big, rough-looking man who stood over them. From time to time they broke into a rude chant, in order to apply their efforts unitedly and rhythmically to the task of raising the foretops'l yard, the sail of which had just been double reefed. The men who had performed that task were tumbling down from aloft on the shrouds on either side. Although he was an amateur sailor, Beekman was familiar enough with ships to realize much of what was going on.

It was a raw, rough day. There was a bite in the wind which struck cold upon his unaccustomed body through his rags. It was already blowing a half gale, with a fine promise of coming harder, apparently, and they were reducing the canvas. As the ship was by the wind, sheets of cold spray swept across the already wet decks.

While he stared, the men stopped jigging on the foretops'l halliards. They were belayed, and at the mate's command the crew lined up on the main tops'l halliards, ready to sway away at command, while those topmen, whose business it was to handle the canvas on the mainmast, sprang up on the sheer poles and rapidly ascended the ratlines.

In all these movements, which appeared confused, but which were not, Beekman had stood unnoticed, but he was not to escape attention much longer. The man who had been directing the men on the halliards caught sight of him as they were belayed. He turned and walked forward.

"Here, you sojer," he began roughly, "what in hell do you mean by standin' aroun' here doin' nothin'?"

"Are you talking to me?"

"Who else would I be talkin' to? D'ye think I'm addressin' a congregation?"

"I'm not accustomed to this sort of speech, and I'll thank you to modify it," answered Beekman, outraged by the other's brutal rudeness, and quite forgetful of his appearance and condition.

He was a quick-tempered young man, and all his life he had received deference and respect. He did not propose to let anybody talk to him that way.

"Why, you infernal sea lawyer, you back-talkin' slob, you dirty malingerer, what do you think you are; one of the officers on this ship; a passenger?"

"Whatever I am, I'm not under your orders."

"You ain't, ain't ye! I'll learn you what you are. Git aft an' tail on to them halliards, an' be quick about it."

"I'll see you damned first."

"What!" roared Bill Woywod. He balled his enormous fist and struck viciously at Beekman. In a rough-and-tumble fight the latter would have had no chance with the mate, for what the officer lacked in science he made up in brute force. Beekman was in a horrible physical condition from his excesses and the result of the knockout drops which had been administered to him, but his spirit

was as strong as ever, and his skill as great. He parried the blow easily with his left, and sent a swift right to Woywod's iron jaw.

The main tops'l halliards had not yet been cast off, and the men surged forward. Captain Peleg Fish, with an amazing agility for one of his years, disdaining the accommodation ladders, leaped over the rail of the bridge, dropped to the deck, and ran forward, leaving the conning of the ship to the second mate.

"Rank mutiny, by heck," shouted the captain, drawing a revolver. "Stand clear, git back to them halliards, every mother's son of ye, or I'll let daylight through ye. What's the matter here, Mr. Woywod?"

Now, if Beekman had been in good condition, that blow to the jaw might have put Woywod out for a few moments, although that is questionable, but as it was, it had merely staggered him. It lacked steam. But it was hard enough to rouse all the devilry in the mate's heart.

"Do you need any help, sir?" continued Captain Peleg Fish, handling his pistol.

"None. Stand back, men," he answered to the captain, and shouted to the crew in one breath.

Woywod had taken one blow. He took another, for, as he leaped at Beekman, who was not so thoroughly angry that he did not stop to reason, the latter hit him with all his force. Woywod partly parried the blow, and the next moment he had the young man in his arms. He crushed him against his breast; he shook him to and fro. He finally shifted his hands to the other's throat and choked him until he was insensible. Then he threw him in the lee scuppers and turned aft, the crew falling back before him and running to the halliards with almost ludicrous haste.

"What was the trouble?" asked Captain Fish.

"The lazy swab refused to obey my orders to tail on the halliards with the rest of the men, an' then he struck me."

"Rank mutiny," shouted the captain. "Shall we put him in irons?"

"No, sir. We're not any too full handed as it is. He evidently doesn't know the law of the sea. Perhaps he's not quite himself. It's the first time he's been on deck since we took our departure yesterday mornin'. Leave him to me, sir; I'll turn him into a good, willin', obedient sailorman afore I gits through with him."

"Very good. Bear a hand with the maintops'l," said the captain, turning and walking aft. "It blows harder every minute. I don't want to rip the sticks off her just yet, although I can carry on as long as any master that sails the sea," he added for the benefit of Salver, the second mate.

The sea was rising, and although the *Susquehanna* was a dry ship, yet the wind had nipped the tops of the waves and from time to time the spray came aboard. There was water in the lee scuppers, and this presently brought back

consciousness to Beekman. He sat up finally, and, no one paying him any attention, watched the proceedings until the reefs had been taken in the tops'ls and the ship prepared for the growing storm. He watched them with no degree of interest but with black rage and murder in his heart. If he had a weapon, or the strength, he thought he would have killed the mate as the latter came toward him.

With a desire, natural under the circumstances, to be in position for whatever might betide, he rose to his feet and clung desperately to the pinrail, confronting the mate. The men of the crew had scattered to their various stations and duties. All hands had been called, but the ship having been made snug alow and aloft, the watch below had been dismissed, and some of them were already tripping down the ladder into the forepeak. Beekman was left entirely to his own devices. No one presumed to interfere between the mate and this newest member of the ship's people.

"Well, you," began Woywod with an oath. "Have you had your lesson? Do you know who's who aboard this ship? Are you ready to turn to?"

"I'm ready for nothing," said Beekman hotly, "except to kill you if I get a chance."

"Look here," said Woywod, "you're evidently a green hand. Probably you've never been on a ship afore, an' you don't know the law of the sea. 'T ain't to be expected that you would. We gits many aboard that makes their first v'yage with us. But there's one thing you do know, an' that's that I'm your master." His great hand shot out and shook itself beneath Beekman's face. "An' I'm your master not only because I'm first officer of this ship, but because I'm a better man than you are. I flung you into the lee scuppers an' I can do it again. I'm willin' an' wishful to do it, too. If you gimme any more mutinous back talk; if you refuse to turn to an' do your duty accordin' to the articles you signed when you come aboard, you'll git it again. If you act like a man instead of a fool, you'll have no more trouble with me 's long as you obey orders. D'ye git that?"

"I get it, yes. It's plain enough, but it makes no difference to me."

"It don't, don't it?"

"No; and I'm not a member of this crew. I signed no articles, and I don't propose to do a thing unless I please. I want to see the captain."

"You gimme the lie, do you?" said Woywod, approaching nearer.

"Now, look here," said Beekman; "I want you to understand one thing."

"What's that?"

"I'm not afraid of you. You can kill me. You've got the physical strength to do it, although if I were not so sick, there might be an argument as to that; so you might as well quit bullying me. Oh, yes, I have no doubt but what you could knock me over again, but I'll die fighting."

His hand clenched a belaying pin. He drew it out and lifted it up.

"Mr. Woywod," the captain's voice came from aft, "is that man givin' you any trouble again?"

"I can deal with him, sir."

"Send him aft to me."

Of course, Woywod could not disobey so direct an order. He had no relish for it, but there was no help for it. Beekman himself took action. He shoved past the mate, who, under the circumstances, did not dare to hit him, and made his way staggering along the deck to the bridge, where the mate followed him. Two or three of the crew came aft, but the mate drove them forward with curses and oaths.

"Young man," said the captain, an old man of short stature, but immensely broad shouldered and powerful, "do you know what mutiny is?"

"I certainly do."

"Oh, you've been to sea before, have you?"

"Many times."

"On what ships?"

"Trans-Atlantic liners and my own yacht."

"Your own yacht!" The captain burst into a roar of laughter.

"That's what I said."

"Do you know I'm the master of this ship?"

"I presume so."

"Well, then, say 'sir' to me, an' be quick about it."

"It is your due," said Beekman; "I should have done it before. I beg your pardon, sir."

"That's better. Now, what's this cock-an'-bull story you're try in' to tell me? Look here, Smith–"

"That's not my name, sir."

"Well, that's the name you made your mark to on the ship's articles when you were brought aboard, the drunkest sailor I ever seen."

"That's exactly it," said Beekman. "I'm no sailor, and my name is not Smith."

"What's your name?"

"Beekman; Derrick Beekman."

"How came you aboard my ship?"

"I suppose I've been shanghaied. I don't know any more than you do; perhaps not as much."

"You mean," roared the captain, "that I had any hand in bringing you here?"

"I don't know anything about that. I only know that I was to be married today, Thursday."

"'Tain't Thursday; it's Friday. You've been in a drunken stupor since Thurs-

day morning."

"Friday!"

Beekman looked about him with something like despair in his heart. There was not even a ship to be seen in the whole expanse of leaden sea.

"Captain–What's your name, sir?"

"Well, the impudence of that," ejaculated Woywod.

"What difference does it make to you what the cap'n's name is," sneered Salver.

"It's Peleg Fish, Smith-Beekman, or Beekman-Smith; Captain Peleg Fish."

"Well, Captain Fish, I'm a member of an old New York family and–"

"Families don't count for nothin' here," said the captain. "If that's all you've got to say, I've seen a many of them last scions brought down to the fok's'l."

"I was engaged to be married to the daughter of John Maynard. I presume you've heard of him."

"Do you mean the president of the Inter-Oceanic Trading Company?"

"I do."

"Well, I've heard of him all right," laughed the captain. "This is the *Susquehanna*. She belongs to his company. We fly his house flag. Do you mean to tell me that you claim to have been engaged to his daughter; a drunken ragamuffin like you, the off-scourin's of Water Street, which the crimps unload on us poor, helpless, seafarin' men as able seamen?"

"I was. I am. The wedding was set for yesterday. We had a bachelor dinner on Wednesday night, and I guess we all drank too much. At any rate, I don't know anything further except that I woke up here."

"It's a likely story."

"That chap's got a rich imagination," sneered the second mate.

"He'd orter be writin' romances," ejaculated Woywod.

"Enough," said Captain Fish. "Your story may be true or it may not. I don't think it is, but whether it is or not, it don't matter. You were brought aboard at two o'clock Thursday morning. We tripped and sailed at four. His name's on the articles, Mr. Woywod?"

"It is; John Smith. I witnessed his signature. He couldn't write at the time, so someone held his hand an' he made his mark."

"This is an outrage," roared Beekman. "What became of my watch and clothes?"

"You had nothin' but what you've got on now when you came aboard. Am I right, cap'n?"

"You are, sir."

"So you see there's nothin' for you to do but turn to an' behave yourself an' obey orders. When the ship reaches Vladivostok, an' we pays off, you can take

your discharge an' go where you please."

"I'll give you a thousand dollars to go back to New York and land me."

The captain grinned. Taking their cue from him, Mr. Woywod and Mr. Salver exploded with laughter.

"You might as well make it ten thousand, while you're about it."

"I will make it ten thousand," said Beekman, desperately.

"Nonsense!"

"Well, then, will you trans-ship me to some vessel bound for New York?"

"We're short handed, sir," put in Woywod.

"Couldn't think of it," said the captain, who, of course, disbelieved *in toto* Beekman's highly improbable story.

This was the richest and most extravagant tale he had ever listened to. To do him justice, every voyage he had ever sailed had produced someone who strove to get out of the ship by urging some wildly improbable excuse for his being there.

"Well, sir, if you won't do that, I suppose Colon will be your first port of call, and you are going through the Panama Canal. Let me get on the end of the cable there and I'll get you orders from Mr. Maynard himself."

"I might be inclined to do that," said the captain facetiously, "but the canal is blocked by another slide in the Culebra cut, an' we're goin' around the Horn."

"Don't you touch anywhere?"

"Some South Sea island for vegetables an' water, mebbe, but no place where there's a cable, if I can help it. When I takes my departure I don't want nobody interferin' with me an' sendin' orders after me."

"Is there a wireless on the ship?"

"No. Now, if you've finished your questionin', perhaps you'll allow me to say a word or two."

"An' you may be very thankful to the cap'n for his kind treatment, for I never seed him so agreeable to a man tryin' to sojer out of work an' shirk his job afore," said Woywod.

"Jestice, Mr. Woywod, an' fair treatment, even to the common sailor, is my motto. As long as they obey orders, they've got nothin' to fear from me, an' that goes for you, Smith."

"Beekman," insisted the young man.

"Smith it was, Smith it is, Smith it will be. That's the first order. Now, I'll give you a little advice. Mr. Woywod and Mr. Salver is among the gentlest officers I ever sailed with, so long as they ain't crossed. You turn to an' do what you're told or you'll git it constantly; fist, rope's end, belay'n pin, sea boots, or whatever comes handiest, an' if you're obstinate enough, an' if it's serious enough, a charge of mutiny, an' double irons. Understand?"

Beekman nodded; the captain's meaning was clear.

"Go for'ard, now, an' remember, mutiny means a term in prison at the end of the voyage, an' mebbe worse. However you come aboard, you're here, an' bein' here, you got to obey orders or take the consequences."

"I protest against this outrage. I'll have the law. I'll bring you to justice."

"Belay that," said the captain, more or less indifferently. "It don't git you nowhere. If you are well advised, you'll heed my suggestions, that's all."

Beekman was absolutely helpless. There was nothing that he could do. Although more angry and more resentful than ever, he fully realized his impotency. He turned to go forward. Bill Woywod stopped him. The passion that the mate saw in Beekman's face, as he fairly gritted his teeth at him, startled him a little. Most liars and malingerers did not take it that way. They accepted the inevitable with more or less grace.

"You're in my watch," said Woywod.

"More's the pity."

"An' it happens to be the watch below. One bell has jest struck; four-thirty. The watch below takes the deck at four bells; six o'clock for the second dogwatch. I'll give you till then to think about it. If you don't turn to then with the rest an' do a man's duty, by God, you'll suffer for it."

CHAPTER VIII

THE ANVIL MUST TAKE THE POUNDING

Beekman had never thought so hard in his life as he did in the next hour and a half. Try as he would, he could see no way out of the hideous *impasse* into which fate had thrust him. He had not the faintest idea that his situation was caused by the treachery of his friend. No suspicion of betrayal entered his mind. He was certain it was simply the result of accident, and no one was to blame except himself.

He had got beastly drunk after that dinner. He had driven down town with Harnash. They had stopped on the way. They had finally separated. He had been assaulted, robbed, and probably left senseless from drink and the beating he had received. He hoped fervently that he had put up a good fight before being beaten into insensibility. Some crimp had picked him up, stripped him of his clothes, put him into these filthy rags, and sent him aboard the ship. By a legal

mockery which would yet suffice, he had signed the articles. There was no way he could convince the captain of the truth of his story. Unless stress of weather or accident drove the ship to make port somewhere, he could communicate with nobody for six months, or until they dropped anchor at Vladivostok. He was a prisoner. Neither by physical force nor by mental alertness and ability could he alter that fact or change conditions.

Fantastic schemes came into his mind, of course; among them the organization of the crew, a mutiny, the seizure of the ship. But that would not be possible unless conditions on the ship became absolutely unbearable; and even if it were practicable, in all probability he might be leading the whole body to death and disaster. Beekman knew something about the organization and administration of the Inter-Oceanic Trading Company. He knew their ships were always well found and well provisioned. Given a well-found ship and plenty of good food to eat, and a sailor will stand almost anything.

Besides, most of these men knew fully the character of Captain Fish, Mr. Woywod, and Mr. Salver. They were as hard as iron, and as quick as lightning, and as ruthless as the devil himself, but if the men did what they were told, and did it quickly, and did it well, they got off with abuse only, and a comparative freedom from manhandling.

All three officers were fine seamen. They could handle a ship in any wind or sea as a skilled chauffeur handles a well-known car in heavy traffic, and it is a great deal harder to handle a ship than a car, especially a sailing ship. Blow high, blow low, come what would, these men were equal to any demand, and all that could be got out of timber and cordage and canvas, to say nothing of steel wire, these men could get. Also they were drivers. They would carry to'gall'n'ts'l's when other ships dared show no more than a close-reefed tops'l. Speed was a prime requisite with the owners. The *Susquehanna*, in particular, had to justify her use, and Captain Fish took a natural and pardonable pride in striving for the steamer record. All this pleased the men. Sailors will put up with much from a skillful, energetic, alert, daring, and successful officer. They made quick runs and drew high pay. Many of them had been attached to the *Susquehanna* since she had been commissioned. They had learned so to comport themselves as to avoid as much trouble as possible.

Beekman was in the receipt of not a little rough, but common-sense, advice from the watch below in the forecastle. His own better judgment told him that the unpalatable advice must be followed. Fish, Woywod, and Salver had it in their power to harry him to death. His spirit, nevertheless, rebelled against any such knuckling down as would be required. At three bells in the first dogwatch one of the ship's boys came to him with a message.

"Are you John Smith?" he said, stopping before him.

Beekman took his first lesson then and there. His inclination was, as it had been, to shout his own name to the trucks whenever he was questioned, but what was the use? He bit his lips and nodded.

"That's what they call me."

"Well, Mr. Gersey wants to see you."

"Who is he?"

"He's the ship's Bo's'n."

"Am I at the beck and call of everybody on the ship?"

"Look here, young feller," said an old, down-east sailor named Templin, who, on account of his age and experience, had been made the Bo's'n's mate of the port watch. "You've had a lot of advice throwed into you, which you may or may not foller. This last is worth 'bout as much as all the rest. The Bo's'n ain't no certificated officer. He don't live aft. He's got a position sort o' 'twixt fo'c's'l an' quarter-deck, but there's no man aboard who can do more for you or agin you than him. You seems to be a sort of a friendless damn fool. We don't none of us believe your yarn, but we sympathize with you because we've been in the same sitooation, all of us. Jim Gersey is a square man. You ain't had no chance to run athwart his hawse, an' like enough he wants to do you a good turn. You'd better go, an' go a-runnin'."

"Thank you," answered Beekman, rising and following the boy to the boatswain's cabin, right abaft the forecastle.

"Look here, Smith–" began that grizzled and veteran mariner, who had followed the sea all his life, and looked it.

"Smith is not my name."

"In course, it ain't, but it's the name you'll go by on this ship. I don't know why it is, but every man I ever seed articled on a ship without his consent got named Smith or Jones. I've knowed some mighty respectable people o' them names, an' I don't see why they've got to be saddled with all the offscourin's o' creation, meanin' no offense," said the rough, but somehow kindly, old man. "Smith it is, an'–"

"Smith goes," said Beekman briefly. "What's my first name, if I may ask?"

"Reads 'John' on the articles."

"John's as good as any."

"Now, you're takin' things in the right spirit. I heerd what you said to the officers, an' I seen how you got involved with Mr. Woywod. I sized you up good and plenty. Whether your yarn is true or not, an' I ain't passin' no judgment on that, it's evident that you ain't used to the sea, that you ain't used to rough work, I means, an' this yere is new experience for you. I'm old enough to be your father, an' it jest occurred to me that it would be a thing I'd like to remember when I quits the sea an' settles down on a farm I got my eyes on, that I took a young

feller an' give him a friendly hand an' a word o' warnin', an' that's why I sent for you."

"I appreciate it more than I can tell. As man to man, I assure you that my story is absolutely true. If I ever get out of this alive, I'll remember your conduct."

"'T ain't for that I'm tryin' to steer you a straight course."

"I believe it."

"You've got to knuckle down, take your medicine, turn to an' do your dooty like a man. There ain't three harder men on the ocean to sail with than the old man an' them two mates. I've been on many ships, an' under many officers, but there couldn't be a worse hell ship than this one'd be if the men didn't knuckle down. You can't talk back; you can't even look sideways. You got to be on the jump all the time. You got to do what you're told, an' you got to do it right. Tryin' won't git you nowhere. It's doin' it. They're hell on every natural mistake."

"Why do men submit to it? How can they get a crew?" asked Beekman fiercely. "I would almost rather die than stand it."

"No, you wouldn't, sonny," said the loquacious old boatswain quickly. "If what you say is true, an' I ain't sayin' it ain't, you've got somethin' to live for, an' even if it ain't true, you've probably got something to live for ashore. If you're a fugitive from jestice, or anything o' that kind, which we gits 'em of'en, there's plenty of other lands where a man can disappear an' make a new start. An' men," he went on, reverting to the other's question, "are willin' to ship on the *Susquehanna*, an' do it over an' over agin, because she's well found, the grub's A-1, she's a lucky ship, an' makes quick passages. The pay is high, an' the officers are prime seamen, every inch o' them. If you do your dooty, if you do it right, if you don't make no mistakes, you'll git plenty o' hard language an' black looks, but that's all. If you don't they'll haze you until your spirit's broke, aye, until your life's gone. I'll do it myself," he added frankly. "I ain't talkin' to you now as the Bo's'n of the ship, but jest as man to man; as an old man advisin' a young one. If I find you shirkin', or sojerin', or puttin' on any airs, or playin' any tricks, I won't be far behind Woywod and Salver an' the old man. That's all."

"Mr. Gersey–"

"Cut out 'Mister.' I ain't no quarter-deck officer."

"Well, then, Bo's'n. I've thought it over. I'll accept your advice."

"It's the only thing you can do."

"That's true, and the only reason I do it. But, by heaven, if I ever get ashore, and if I ever get Woywod ashore, I'll pay him for it."

"There's many would like to help you at that job," answered Gersey; "but the trouble is to git him ashore. After ship's crews is paid off, they generally scatters an' disappears, an' sailormen's memories is short. They count on gittin' it hard from everybody, anyway. They've been trained that way from the beginnin'.

They grow so forgetful that after they get on another ship there's nothin' too good to say of the last one in comparison. Do you know anything about sailorin'?"

"I don't know any knot-and-splice seamanship, if that's what you mean; but I'm a navigator, and I can sail my own yacht. I can do a trick at the wheel. I've never been on a full-rigged ship."

"What was your yacht?"

"A steamer, of course."

"Show any canvas?"

"Not to speak of."

"Ever been aloft?"

"No."

"Well, I'll do my best to train you. You've got an awful hard course to steer. You began bad by gittin' the mate down on you, an' I've no doubt but what he'll be layin' for you all the time, anyway."

"So long as he keeps his hands off me, I'll give him no further chance for trouble."

"An' if he don't?" asked the boatswain impressively.

"If he goes to that length–"

"You'll have to stand it jest the same. Mutiny on the high seas is the worst crime a sailor can be found guilty of. Everybody ashore is on the side of the officers–courts, an' jestices, an' juries."

"I'd like to get that brute in a court," said Beekman savagely. "I'd almost be willing to mutiny to do it."

"Take my advice on this p'int, too," said Gersey earnestly. "The less a sailor man has to do with law sharks an' courts ashore, the better off he finds hisself."

Thus it happened that when four bells were struck, and all the port watch were called, Beekman presented himself with the rest.

"So you've decided to turn to, have you, you dirty ragamuffin?" roared Woywod as the watch came tumbling aft.

"I have."

"Say, 'sir,'" cried the mate.

He had a piece of rattan in his hand, and he struck Beekman a blow on the arm. The hardest word he ever ejaculated in his life was that "sir" which he threw out between his teeth.

"That's well," said Woywod. "Now, you assaulted me; you've been technically guilty of mutiny, but I'll forgit that. You turn to an' do your work like a man, an' you'll have nothin' to fear from me, but if I catch you sojerin', I'll cut your heart out."

Beekman couldn't trust himself to speak. He stood rooted to his place on the deck until Woywod turned away. It was singular how the environment of a

ship turned a fairly decent man ashore into a wolf, a pitiless brute, at sea. Woywod knew no other way to command men. The men with whom he had been thrown knew no other way to be commanded. The mate had completely forgotten his friend's instructions to treat Beekman with unusual consideration. As a matter of fact, Woywod was harder on Beekman in his own heart and in his intentions than on any other man for several reasons.

Beekman had faced him. He had refused to be cowed. He was not even cowed now. Beekman had struck him and almost knocked him down. Beekman was a gentleman. In every look, in every movement, he showed his superiority over, and his contempt for, Woywod. Harnash had arrived at the same social degree as Beekman, but he was careful, because of his old affection, to treat Woywod exactly as he had treated him in days gone by. Woywod knew–he was not without shrewdness–that he was not on Harnash's social level, or even upon an intellectual parity with him, but Harnash never allowed the slightest suggestion of inequality to appear in their intercourse, because he really liked the man. When a man of inferior temper, quality, and character is placed in irresponsible charge of a man who surpasses him in everything, the tendency to tyrannize is almost irresistible. In Woywod's mind, he himself was, somehow, identified with justice and right. He was engaged in serving a woman who, to his perverted apprehension, was to be forced into a marriage with a man she hated, and that man was before him, in his power.

Woywod was not all bad. He was the last exponent of a certain kind of officer; a very bad kind, it must be admitted, but an efficient kind, as well. There were certain rudimentary principles of justice and fair dealing in him, and some of those whom he abused worst realized that, and stood for more from him than they would otherwise; but in the case of Beekman, both justice and fair play were in abeyance for the reasons mentioned. Woywod was determined to break his spirit, and to ride him down, and Beekman sensed that. It was to be a fight between him and the mate from New York to Vladivostok, with every advantage on earth on the side of the mate.

Beekman had as quick a temper as any man living. He had never been forced to control it much. The world had given free passage everywhere to him, backed as he had been by those things before which men bow down. Whether he could control himself, whether he could submit to the end, he did not dare to say. He did not hope that he could, but at least he would give it a fair trial. In his secret heart he prayed that he might control himself, for, if he did not, he was sure he would kill the mate by fair means or foul. He wanted very much to live, if for no other thing than to justify himself in the eyes of Stephanie Maynard, whose present opinion of him he could well imagine.

He had not been the most ardent of lovers. He was not the most ardent of

lovers now. It was pride rather than passion that made him crave that opportunity for justifying himself, although he deluded himself with the idea that his heart was fairly breaking on account of her. Indeed, a simple reflection might have convinced him of the falsity of that proposition, because the predominant emotions that mastered him were hatred of Woywod and longing for revenge.

What would have been those emotions if he had known that Woywod was but an instrument in the hands of another, and that other a rival for the affections of his promised wife, and one who had passed as his best friend?

CHAPTER IX
THE GAME AND THE END

Having chosen his line of conduct, Beekman, with a strength of will and purpose of which no one would have suspected him, adhered to it rigidly, and the very fact that he was unable to goad him into revolt inflamed the passion and developed the animosity and hatred of Woywod. The mate was perfectly willing and, indeed, anxious to manhandle Beekman, but that little fundamental streak of fair play made him keep his hands off when he had no cause. To be sure, he sought diligently for cause and occasion, and that he did not find it, angered him the more.

Beekman had never been face to face with a very difficult situation of any kind. Life had been too easy for him. There had been no special demands upon his character by any very pressing emergency, and perhaps that made him study the position in which he found himself more carefully. Among other things, he decided to make himself popular with the crew, and to do it by gaining their respect. Unlike Ancient Pistol, he would be by no means "base, common, and popular," if popularity was to be procured in that way only. He had always been acclaimed a leader, in athletics at any rate, both in the prep school, in the university, and afterward among his friends and acquaintances.

Without stooping to their level, without truckling to their prejudices by promises or bribery that is, he achieved that object. He was easily the most popular man on the ship. And it was no small tribute to his adaptability that one of his quality and station could gain the universal approval of so many men so radically different. In little ways that fact presently became apparent to the quarter deck, and Woywod resented that especially. It irked him exceedingly that a

man against whom he imagined he had a just cause for grievance, and who had, from his point of view, entirely merited his displeasure, should be upheld and acclaimed by the rest of the men over whom he ruled with iron severity. This was an affront to him, and an additional cause for resentment, not to say hatred.

In all this, Beekman had not changed his opinion of Woywod in the least degree. In return, he hated him with a good, healthy, genuine hatred that grew with every passing hour. It became increasingly hard for him to control himself and to follow out his course in the face of Woywod's constant endeavors to arouse his temper. Indeed, quick and passionate by inheritance, and by lack of restraint since childhood, Beekman found himself marvelling at his own self-control.

If it had not been that his course so thoroughly angered the mate as in a certain sense to enable Beekman to get even with him, he would have lost that control again and again. As it was, his soul writhed under the sneers, the insults, the brutal blackguarding, the foul language of Woywod, to say nothing of the exactions, the unfair and almost impossible tasks that were heaped upon him. And Salver, taking his cue from his superior, did his little best to make life a burden to Beekman. Grim, stern, ruthless Peleg Fish rather enjoyed it, too. With natural keenness, the master of the ship realized that it was a battle and a game between the two men, and he delighted in it as a sporting proposition.

Perhaps the popularity Beekman had gained among the crew helped him to bear these things. A few of them were quick enough mentally to look beneath the surface. Jim Gersey was of that small number. The young man had completely gained that old man's confidence. Beekman had seen the uselessness of persisting in his story, and he had made no further references to it among the crew after that first day, but with Gersey he made an exception. The old boatswain was shrewd and worldly wise in a guileless sort of way. The two had many long talks together, and the younger had at last succeeded in convincing the older of the truth of his tale. Without seeming to do it, the boatswain helped the newcomer through many a difficult situation, and by ostentatiously joining in the bullying he got from the quarter deck, and by keeping secret his friendship, it was not suspected aft.

Beekman had no suspicion as to how he got on the ship. He supposed his presence was due to blind fate. He knew that once he could get on the end of a telegraphic cable he could free himself from his detestable position, but he shrewdly suspected that if there were any way to prevent that, Woywod, who acted with the consent and approval of Fish, could be depended upon to stop it. Beekman had talked that matter over with Gersey, and he had given the boatswain an address and a message which the old man had laboriously committed to memory. If Beekman were kept on the ship, Gersey would send the cable from Vladivostok, or from whatever civilized port they made. For the rest,

with a reckless disregard of expenditure, Beekman discarded his filthy rags, and comfortably outfitted himself from the ship's well-equipped slop-chest, his extravagant outlay being deducted from his able seaman's pay, for which, of course, he cared nothing.

In spite of the fact that she was well found, and the men were well fed, and the passage was a quick one, and the ship fairly comfortable, by the time the cruise drew on to its end, the ship was usually a smouldering hell, and this voyage was no exception.

The men had been driven hard. A succession of westerly gales off Cape Horn had kept them beating about that dreadful point for nearly two weeks, and even after they had rounded it, for once the Pacific belied its name. The wind shifted after they passed the fiftieth parallel, so they had to face a long beat up to the line. Gale succeeded gale. Such weather was unprecedented. It had never been heard of by the oldest and most experienced seamen on board. The men were worn out; their nerves on ragged edge. The severe straining the ship had got had made her take in water, not seriously, but at a sufficiently rapid rate to require a good deal of pumping. The steam pump broke down for a time and the crew had to man the hand pumps. Their nerves were on edge and raw, and the officers ground them down worse than ever.

If Beekman had not improved in his physical condition, he could not have stood his share of the work. He had been an athlete at college, not heavy enough to buck the center on a football team, but a marvelously speedy end, and a champion at the lighter forms of athletics demanding agility, alertness, and skill. In his after-college life, athletics had continued to interest him if desultorily. He was still an A-1 tennis player and a dashing horseman, but not much else.

With the hard work, the coarse but substantial food, and at first the regular hours, he developed amazingly. He got to be as hard as nails. He had always been a fair boxer. It was a science about which Woywod knew nothing, and although the mate was twenty pounds heavier and several inches taller, to say nothing of broader shouldered, than Beekman, the latter began to feel that in a twenty-foot ring with foul fighting barred, he could master the officer. There was no possibility of a meeting of that kind, however, so the two, under the varying positions of an unusually trying cruise, fought the battle of will and wit down one ocean and half-way up the other, until the break came, the marvel being not that it came when it did, but that it had been postponed so long.

One of the members of the crew was a young Dutchman named Jacob Wramm. He was not exactly half-witted. He could hardly be called defective, even, but he was a dull, slow-thinking, very stupid lad who had been shipped by the crimp as an A.B., but who would never be rated higher than a landsman. Beekman, who rapidly learned knot-and-splice seamanship, and all the ordinary

and extraordinary duties of a sailor; who could get to the main royal yard or the flying jibboom end as quickly as any man on the ship; who could pass a weather earring in a howling gale as securely as the most accomplished seaman; who could do his trick at the wheel and hold her up to her course against a bucking, jumping head sea with the best quartermaster afloat, endeavored to teach and train Wramm in the niceties of the sailor's art. He made some progress with him until Salver caught him instructing the stupid Dutchman, who was in the second mate's watch. He mentioned it casually in the cabin to Woywod, and the latter at once found a new object upon which to vent his spleen and to provoke Beekman.

It was fortunate for Wramm that he was in the starboard watch. It was only when all hands were called and Salver went forward, Woywod taking charge amidships, where Wramm was stationed at the main mast, that he got a chance at him. The slightest blunder on the part of the Dutchman was treated as a crime. He was rope's ended, rattaned, kicked, beaten like a dog. Only a certain slow, stubborn obstinacy and determination in his disposition kept the unfortunate man from jumping overboard. Probably if Beekman had been in the same watch with Wramm and both had been under Woywod's command, something would have happened sooner, but except when all hands were called, Beekman was never near Wramm, and even then Beekman's station was aloft in taking in sail.

Wramm was not trusted on the yards. His duties were at the fife-rails around the masts where the various ropes which led from above were belayed. It was a responsible position, but Beekman had gone over and over every bit of every rope belayed to the iron pins in the fife-rails with him. When Wramm once got a thing in his head after a slow process, it was apt to stay there, and the Dutchman finally became letter perfect. He could put his hands on the various sheets, halliards, clewlines, buntlines, and others unerringly even in the dark. That is, he could if he were let alone and not hurried unduly.

One night, the starboard watch being on deck in the midwatch, at four bells, or two in the morning, the port watch was called, all hands being necessary for the taking in of sail. As usual, Captain Fish, annoyed beyond measure at his bad luck and the head winds, had been holding on to take advantage of a favorable slant in a whole-sail breeze, which was developing into a hard gale. He had time and distance to make up and he was going to lose no opportunity with either.

As the wind was rising, and the sea, too, he had remained on deck during Salver's watch, and at one o'clock in the morning the watch had taken in the royals and the flying jib. At two o'clock the captain, staring up through the darkness at the jumping, quivering to'gall'nt masts, decided that the time had come to furl the light canvas and take a double reef in the tops'ls, in preparation for the blow obviously at hand. He waited so long, however, before coming to this decision, that he realized that he had perilously little time left in which to get the canvas

off her without losing a sail or perhaps a spar or two.

Like every man of his temperament, he held on till the last minute and then summoned the port watch, which came tumbling up from below at the call of the boatswain's mate, to find Captain Fish storming on the bridge at their slowness. Salver went forward to the forecastle to attend to the foremast. Mr. Woywod, in the natural bad humor that comes to any one who is awakened from a sound sleep in the only four hours of that particular night appointed for rest, took charge of the main, while the captain himself looked out for things aft. The helm was shifted. The ship forced up into the wind to spill the canvas. The braces were tended. The sheets were manned. The order was given to round in and settle away.

Wramm was the last man to get to his station. The men not stationed at some place of observation during the watch on deck had snugged down in such places as they could find for sleep until called. Wramm was a heavy sleeper. He had not been feeling well and had been awake even during his watches in the night before. He slept like a log. Woywod saw that he was not at his place at the main fife-rail. Just before the order was given for the light yard and topmen to lay aloft and furl and reef, Woywod, raging like a lion, discovered Wramm sleeping in the lee scuppers under the main pin-rail. He savagely kicked him awake, dragged him to his feet, got his hand on his throat, shook him like a rat, and finally flung him, choked and half-dazed, against the fife-rail, with orders for him to look alive and stand by or he would get the life beaten out of him.

When the order was given to slack away the main to'gall'nt halliards, the slow-thinking, confused Dutchman made a grievous mistake. He cast off and eased away the main top'sl halliards, the descent of the yard began just as the ship fell away a bit under the pressure of a heavy sea. The main to'gall'nts'l filled again, the men at the lee and weather braces, supposing everything was right, easing off and rounding in, respectively, until the yard whirled about, pointing nearly fore and aft. The starboard to'gall'nt sheet gave way first under the drag of the main tops'l yard, but not before the tremendous pressure of the wind had snapped the to'gall'nt mast off at the hounds. There was a crash above in the darkness. They caught a glimpse of white cloud toppling overhead and streaming out in the darkness, and then the mast came crashing down on the lee side of the main top and hung there threshing wildly about in the fierce wind.

When the main topmen were sent aloft to clear away the wreck, the tops'l halliards were belayed and then led along the deck and the tops'l hoisted again. For once on the cruise Beekman was not at his station, for the mate, instantly divining what had occurred, as every experienced man on the ship had done, had leaped to the fife-rail, with a roar of rage, and had struck the bewildered Dutchman, almost unaware of what had happened, with a belaying pin, which he

drew from the rail, and had knocked him senseless to the deck. Even as Woywod rapidly belayed the tops'l halliards, which Wramm had been easing off, he took occasion to kick the prostrate man violently several times, and one of the kicks struck him on the jaw and broke it.

Beekman, stopping with one foot on the sheer pole of the weather main shrouds, had seen it all. The reason why he had not gone aloft with the rest was because he had instantly stepped back to the rail, leaped to the deck, and had run to the prostrate form of poor Wramm, which he had dragged out of the way of the men, who had seized the halliards at the mate's call. As it happened, the angry mate had struck harder than he had intended. Wramm's skull was fractured, his jaw broken, and his body was covered with bruises from Woywod's brutal assault.

When the wreck was cleared away, the canvas reduced, the ship made snug, and the watch below dismissed for the hour of rest that still remained to them, Woywod came forward. The watch had taken Wramm into the forecastle and laid him out on his bunk.

"Where is that"–he qualified Wramm's name with a string of oaths and expletives, the vileness of which also characterized him typically–"who caused a perfectly good mainto'gall'nt mast to carry away?" said Woywod, stopping halfway down the ladder leading into the forepeak.

There was a low murmur from the watch below, a murmur which was not articulate, but which nevertheless expressed hate as well as the growl of a baited animal does. Woywod was no coward. He was afraid of nothing on earth. Bullies are sometimes that way, in spite of the proverb. It was Beekman who spoke.

"He's here, sir," he began, in that smooth, even, cultivated voice which Woywod hated to hear. "I think his skull is fractured. His jaw is broken."

"An' a good thing, too. Perhaps the crack in his thick skull will let some sense in him."

"It will probably let life out–sir," answered Beekman, with just an appreciable pause before the sir.

"Mutinous, inefficient, stupid hound," said Woywod, but there was a note of alarm in his voice, which Beekman detected instantly, and which some of the others suspected. "Show a light here," he continued, coming down to the deck and bending over the man. "One of you wash the blood off his face," he said, after careful inspection. "I'll go aft an' git at the medicine chest. He's too thick headed to suffer any serious hurt. This'll be a lesson to him, an' to all of you. I'll be back in a few minutes."

The mate was really alarmed, although he did his best not to show it.

"Beg your pardon, sir," said Beekman, "but I want to speak to the captain."

"What you got to say to him?"

"I want to speak to him, sir."

"You can't do it now. Come to the mast tomorrow."

"I want to speak to him tonight."

"Let him speak to the cap'n," shouted Templin, one of the most reliable men on the ship.

Instantly, as if given a cue, the whole watch broke into exclamations.

"We'll all go aft with him to speak to the cap'n."

"That won't be necessary," said Beekman, quietly, although every nerve was throbbing with indignation and resentment. "Mr. Woywod will grant my request. There's no need for the rest of you mixing up in this. Won't you, Mr. Woywod?"

Now, Beekman was in his rights in appealing to the captain at any time. Woywod cast a glance back at the still, unconscious figure of Wramm and decided that perhaps it would be best for him to temporize. He wanted to strike Beekman down, and if it had not been for Wramm's condition and the mutinous outbreak of the men, he would have done so. He realized instantly what Beekman's popularity meant.

"If Cap'n Fish ain't turned in," he said, surlily, "and is willin' to see you, you can speak to him; if not, you'll have to wait till mornin'."

"I think it's probable that he's still awake, sir," said Beekman. "He'll undoubtedly want to know what the condition of Wramm is."

"I'll tell him."

"No, I'll tell him myself."

"You will," shouted Woywod, raising his fist.

Beekman never moved. The men came crowding around.

"By sea law," said Templin, "he's got a right to see the master of the ship, an' we proposes to see that he gits that right."

"You mutinous dogs," cried Woywod, confronting them.

But they were not overawed, and they did not give back.

"Come along," he said to Beekman, "an' you'll be sorry you ever done it."

Without looking behind him, he sprang up the ladder and, followed closely by Beekman, he went aft, descended the companionway, and found Captain Fish seated at the cabin table, on which a huge joint of cold meat and bread were spread out, with some bottles and glasses to bear them company. The captain was not alone. The steward, a Spanish half-caste, named Manuel, had just brought in a steaming pot of coffee from the galley.

"Well, Mr. Woywod," began Fish, "what about that infernal lubber that caused the loss of the mainto'gall'nt mast?"

"Smith, here, has come aft demandin' to see you an' p'r'aps he'll tell you. Will you see him?"

"What is it, Smith?" said the captain, sharply.

"Seaman Wramm," began Beekman, "is probably dying. I'm not a doctor, but so near as I can make out he has a fractured skull; his jaw is certainly broken and he is covered with bruises."

"How came he in that condition?" asked the captain.

"That murdering blackguard yonder struck him over the head with a belaying pin, kicked him when he was down and–"

"By God!" cried Woywod, springing forward, "you dare refer to me in that way?"

"Steady, Mr. Woywod," said Fish, his eyes gleaming. "I know how to deal with this man. Are you aware–you pretend to be a gentleman of education–that your language is in the highest degree mutinous, that I can have you put in double irons, and–"

"Am I to stand by and see a poor, helpless, dull-witted man, who has been hazed to death every day of this cruise by your blackguardly assessors, beaten to death, killed without a word?"

"You'd better look out for yourself rather than for him."

"I don't care what becomes of me. I've had just about enough of it. If that man dies, I'm going to bring a charge of murder against this bullying scoundrel, and if you don't put him in irons I'll bring it against you, too."

Beekman was beside himself with wrath. His temper was gone. His control had vanished in thin air. The cumulative repression of three months had been lost. He stepped forward, shaking his fist in the captain's face.

"Manuel," said the captain, "tell Mr. Salver to send a couple of men down here. Tell him to have the bo's'n fetch me some double irons." Fish was white with wrath. "Do you think I'll allow any wharf rat like you to talk like that to me on my own ship? I've no doubt but that thick-headed Dutchman will recover, but whether he does or not I'll deal with him. You'll prefer charges against me, will you? By God, you can count yourself lucky if you're not swinging at a yardarm tomorrow. For two cents I'd run you up now."

"With your permission, cap'n," began Woywod. "Keep fast, Manuel, I can handle him alone. I've been itchin' fer this chance ever since he came aboard. Now, Smith," he laughed, evilly, "I've got you. I knew you couldn't keep your temper."

Woywod stepped toward him. Beekman did not give back an inch.

"If you lay a hand on me," he shouted, "if I have to die for it the next minute, I'll–"

But Woywod, who did not give him a chance to finish the sentence, with fist upraised leaped forward. Beekman hit him. It was a much more powerful blow than the first he had delivered to the mate on the day that he waked up and

found himself shanghaied. Three months of hard work and clean living and plain food had made a different man of him. Woywod was lucky. He partly parried the blow, but it struck him full on the chest and drove him smashing back against the bulkhead by the side of Manuel. The frightened steward hauled him to his feet.

The captain had arisen and was bawling for the officer of the watch. He was oblivious to the fact that one of the men was peering down into the cabin over the combing of the skylight. There was a trample of feet on the deck above. Salver himself appeared on the companion ladder, but Woywod had got to his feet. He was black with rage, mad with passion. He reached into the side pocket of his short peajacket and drew forth a heavy revolver.

"You're witnesses that he struck me," he cried, as he raised the weapon, but again Beekman was too quick for him.

A big, broad-bladed carving knife was lying by the side of a piece of salt beef on the table. Beekman clutched it, and as Woywod pulled the trigger, he leaped forward and buried it to the hilt in the mate's breast.

CHAPTER X
THE MYSTERY OF THE LAST WORDS

So powerful was the stroke, so deep and inveterate the hate that nerved the arm, that the sharp knife was driven clear to the handle into Woywod's breast. The big mate threw up his arms. He staggered back. The pistol went off harmlessly and dropped on the table. Then the huge hulk of the stricken man collapsed on the deck. Quick as a flash Captain Fish leaned over and seized the weapon.

"Make a move an' you're a dead man," he roared, covering Beekman. "Mr. Salver, I'll keep Smith covered with this pistol until you get the double irons on him. Log a charge of mutiny an' murder against him. If he resists, you can go to any length to subdue him. I wouldn't like him killed aboard ship, however. I'd rather see him hanged ashore."

Salver grabbed Beekman by the shoulder.

"You, Manuel, go to his assistance," said Fish, still keeping him covered. "You infernal coward," he added to the steward, who was as white as death and trembling like a weather brace in a heavy wind; "he can't do you no harm. If he moves I'll put a bullet through him."

But Beekman had no desire to do any one any harm. The blow that had

let life out of Woywod had let the passion out of Beekman. He stood staring and bending over, he caught the man's last broken words.

"Done–for–Tell Harnash–I–" and then silence.

Captain Fish came around the table as soon as Mr. Salver had got a firm grip on one of Beekman's arms and the steward had gingerly taken the other. Shoving the pistol close into Beekman's ribs, he ordered the three men on deck. A passing glance at Woywod told the captain that his mate was dead. He could attend to him later. Beekman must be secured first.

The boatswain had been awakened, and, according to orders, he now came aft with the irons. Beekman was handcuffed and irons were put on his ankles. He was searched rapidly. His sailor's sheath knife was taken from him and then–

"Where'll we stow him, sir?" asked Mr. Salver.

There was no "brig," as a prison is called on a man-o'-war, on the *Susquehanna*. Forward a little room had been partitioned off on one side of the ship abaft the forecastle for the boatswain. On the opposite side there was another similar cabin occupied by the carpenter and sailmaker. The captain thought a moment.

"Mr. Gersey," he said, at last, "you'll come aft to take the second mate's watch. Mr. Salver will act as the mate. Clear your belongings out of your cabin. We'll stow him there for the present. Take a couple of men to help you shift aft, an' be quick about it. When he's safely locked in bring me the key. There's been mutiny an' murder aboard my ship," he continued, loudly, for the benefit of the watch. "This dog has put a knife in Mr. Woywod's heart. Not a thing was bein' done to him. We were jest reasonin' with him, treatin' him kind, as we do every man on this ship. Manuel, here, can swear to that, can't you?"

"Yes, sir, of course, sir," cringed the steward, who was completely under the domination of the brutal ship-master.

"I'll prepare a proper statement and enter it in the log, to be signed by the steward and myself, in case anything should happen to us," he continued.

"What'll I do with this man, sir, while we're waitin' for Mr. Gersey to git his cabin cleaned out?" asked Salver.

"Lash him to the bridge yonder. I'll keep my eyes on him until you git him safe in the bo's'n's cabin. See that the door is locked yourself personally, and bring me the key. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"We don't dare to take no chances with such a desperate murderer."

"No, sir; of course not."

"Men," shouted the captain, "you heard what's been said?"

"We did, sir; an' we seen it all from the beginnin'," answered a voice out of the darkness, a voice full of ugly threat and menace, which the captain did not

recognize and thought best to pass unnoticed.

"Poor Mr. Woywod's been killed, you understand. Mr. Salver will take his place as mate of the ship. Mr. Gersey will come aft as second mate, to be obeyed and respected accordin'."

"Damn good riddance," yelled another voice out of the darkness, carefully disguised.

This was too much. He could not overlook a remark of this kind, and yet in the black night there was little he could do, since the speaker was unrecognizable.

"Who said that?" blustered the captain, handling his pistol and peering forward.

There was no answer, of course.

"If the man who made that remark dares to repeat it in daylight, I'll cut his heart out. An' if I hear any more such talk, I'll let fly at the bunch of you as it is. Get for'ard an' to your stations."

The unknown commentator had obviously expressed the prevalent opinion aboard the ship on the death of Mr. Woywod. There was nothing else to be said or done then. The captain's orders were carried out as a matter of course. The excited men dispersed without comment, but with a feeling that all the honors were with them. The boatswain came aft, having stripped his cabin. The prisoner was finally locked therein and left to himself. Bread and water were handed to him sufficient to keep life in him and not much else. The ship was hove to and Woywod was buried the next morning with due ceremony, the captain himself reading the service, the whole crew being mustered in due form, but never a man was shot down into the vasty deep with less of the spirit of prayer and forgiveness following him than the mate who had met his just deserts, if the looks of the crew, to which the captain was perforce oblivious, gave any indication of their feelings.

Beekman's reflections could easily be imagined. To his dying day he would never forget the surprised, puzzled look on the mate's face, the change of his countenance from mad passion to astonishment, from that amazement to pain, to horror, to deadly fear! He would never forget the convulsive struggle of the man on the deck at his feet, the white bone handle of the knife sticking out of his breast and shining in the light of the big hanging lamp against his blue shirt. There was a human life on his hands, calloused and hardened as they were. There was blood upon them. Had the blood been shed righteously? Had he been well advised to give way to his passion? Had the fact that he had gone there in behalf of another, a helpless weakling, dying himself from the ruthless treatment meted out to him, entitled him to take the mate's life? Would the mate have shot him with that pistol? Was it self-defense? Had that only been back of his blow and his thrust?

Beekman had to admit that he hated the mate; that he had lusted to kill

him. He realized in the flash of time that had intervened between the blow and the thrust that he had been glad of the excuse. Was he a murderer in the eyes of the law, in his own consciousness, in his heart? He had killed the mate, but the mate had beaten him in the long struggle between them. He had sworn that the latter should not provoke him, but he had done so and now he was in peril of his life, grave peril. The presumption of guilt is always against the sailor in charges of mutiny. It would require the strongest evidence to establish his innocence. He knew of no witnesses, save the captain and the steward. The steward was one man on the ship whom he had not won. Indeed, having most of his relations aft and living there in a bunk off his pantry, the steward was hated by the men. He was a tale-bearer and a sneak. He had to live aft for his own protection. He was purely a creature of the captain's. He would swear to anything the captain dictated. Beekman knew that, of course.

Before he had been bound to the ladder of the bridge Beekman had heard what the captain had said. The crew, of course, could testify as to Woywod's character, but he knew enough of sailors to realize they would scatter as soon as they could get away from the ship. He could scarcely depend upon them. There was old Gersey, but what could he do? What could he hope from the Russian authorities at Vladisvostok? The captain would be hand and glove with them, naturally. Things looked black for Beekman.

After a time, reviewing again all the scenes of the dreadful drama his mind reverted to those final words of Woywod's. He remembered them perfectly. They were etched upon his brain.

"Done for. Tell Harnash I–"

He repeated those words. The first two were clear. But the last three–

"Tell Harnash I–"

Tell Harnash what? Why tell Harnash anything? What did he have to do with the present situation? Harnash was his friend. Harnash had arranged his bachelor dinner. Harnash had jokingly plied him with wine, but so had the others. Beekman was an abstemious, temperate chap. He drank occasionally, in a moderate way, but never to excess. It was Harnash who had taken the lead in urging him. He had gone out from that dinner in the small hours of the morning with Harnash, and the last person he remembered was Harnash. Could Harnash have–

Good God, no! It was impossible. It could not be. Such treachery, such criminality was unthinkable by a loyal man like Beekman. There was no motive for it. The business affairs of the firm were prosperous. At his partner's insistence an expert had gone over the books on his return from Hawaii. There was not a thing wrong. He would have trusted Harnash with everything he owned, and with right. He could not have wanted to get him out of the way, unless–

Why had Harnash looked so haggard and miserable? Why had Stephanie presented the same countenance? Could those two– He would not think it. Yet what could Woywod have meant?

Suddenly Beekman remembered that he had heard Harnash had a sailor friend, who at infrequent intervals was accustomed to visit him. There had been some reference to it. Beekman had never heard the man's name, and he never chanced to have met him. Woywod had never referred to Harnash in Beekman's hearing on that cruise until those faltered words as he died. Could it be Woywod? It must. Was it merely chance that Beekman had fallen into the hands of Harnash's friend on the very night before his wedding, when his last companion had been Harnash himself? Now, Beekman was an intensely loyal man and he resolutely put these suspicions out of his mind, but they would not stay out. Why should Woywod stare up at him with fast closing eyes as he spoke? Did Woywod know who Beekman was? Were those muttered words an admission? By heaven, could it be that Harnash was in love with Stephanie and she with him?

When Beekman asked himself that question he began to go over the times in which he had seen the two together. Little things, unnoticed and unmarked before now, grew strangely significant. Beekman loathed himself for entertaining the suspicions. It was not possible, yet– Could Stephanie herself be a party to it? That, too, was unthinkable. So it was that Harnash– Yet those words! Well, if he could get out of this horrible situation now, so much worse than it had been, he certainly would tell Harnash and Harnash should tell him. Meanwhile, there was added to his horror and regret the fact that Woywod was dead and that he had killed him.

A strange and terrible reality, that, to this sometime dilettante in life.

CHAPTER XI

THE TRIANGLE BECOMES A QUADRILATERAL

Perhaps no one ever realizes so completely the immensity of the world and the littleness of man as he who is alone on the face of the waters. The deep becomes indeed vasty when seen from a small boat in the center of an unbroken horizon. It is a question whether the loneliness of the desert is greater than the loneliness of the sea. Perhaps it depends upon the thinker and his temperament. There is, of course, life in the sea in that it is usually quick, in motion, and there is sound

that accompanies it.

The desert is still, but in the desert you can get somewhere. You know that beyond the horizon is some place. Not even the flattest land but suggests change as it is traversed. Somewhere within reaching distance hills rise, mountains lift themselves in the air, oases beckon attractively. In the sea you may go for days and days and days, each day like the other, and still find only the waste of waters and the unbroken horizon.

Beekman had sailed every one of the seven seas, but in some luxurious yacht or some mighty ocean liner. This was the first time in his life he had ever been alone in a small boat. Even the *Susquehanna* had long since faded out of his view. The lights from her stern windows had been lost during the night, and when day broke, although he eagerly searched the northwest, there was no sign of her. Not even when he rose high on some uptossed wave could he catch a glimpse of a to'gall'nts'l or a royal against the blue line of the horizon.

He was glad and he was sorry to be alone. The gladness manifested itself presently, but at first he was overwhelmed by the sense of loneliness. The crew of the *Susquehanna* had not mutinied openly, but they had taken matters in their own hands and had done the best they could for the man who had relieved them, whether righteously or unrighteously they did not stop to speculate, from a tyranny that had become unsupportable; because, in his animosity to Beekman, Woywod had been harder than ever before on the rest.

They had deliberately, if surreptitiously, provisioned the whaleboat which hung from the davits astern. They had filled her water breakers, had added a compass, had overhauled her mast and sail, had thrown in a couple of blankets, a tarpaulin, an axe and some tools and whatever else they could come at, including a little bag of silver dollars from their own scanty store, which might prove valuable in the end. They had done this very quietly in the darkness, under the leadership of Templin on the night following the death of the mate.

They had chosen Mr. Gersey's watch for their operations and he had been conveniently blind. Possessing themselves of the carpenter's tools, they had bored holes around the lock of the boatswain's room and had freed Beekman. With cold chisels and hammers they had struck the fetters from his wrists and ankles, grievously cutting him and bruising him in the process.

"Mr. Gersey told us," said Templin to the astonished prisoner, "that he heard the old man an' Salver plottin' the ship's position at noon today. There are islands with white people on 'em about a hundred leagues to the west'ard. The course'll be about sou'west-by-west. We've pervisioned the whaleboat. She's unsinkable, with her airtight tanks for'ard an' aft an' a good sailer. I follered you aft, pertendin' to overhaul the gear on the mizzen mast last night. Through the skylight I seen the mate threatenin' you with a pistol in the cabin. We all believes

you done perfectly right. Wramm's dead. Died tonight, without never regainin' consciousness. Woywod was a murderer, if ever there was one, an' he got his jest desarts. We don't want to mutiny an' git hung for it. Some of us has families. But we don't mean you to suffer. The only way to save you is to git you out of the ship afore we lands at Vladivostok. It seemed to us that a good sailor like you could easily make them islands, an' then you can shift for yourself. It's a big world. They'll never find you again. Here," he added, "is a little bag o' dollars." He passed a bulging little bag into the hands of the astonished Beekman. "'Tain't much, but it's all we got. I guess that's all."

"But I don't want to leave the ship."

"You'll be hung at the end of the v'yage if you don't," said Templin, inexorably. "Them Russians ain't more'n half civilized, anyway, an' they'll do pretty much as the cap'n says. This is your only chance."

"Does Gersey know?"

"Of course. He's the one that made the whole plan, only the officers ain't to know that."

"You don't expect to be able to lower that boat and cast it adrift without attracting attention, do you?"

"In course not, but it's a dark night an' we're goin' to git you down an' afloat, whatever happens."

"But the captain will immediately come after me."

"He can't brace the yards hisself an' work the ship alone with only Salver an' the bo's'n, can he?"

"I see, but I don't want to get you in trouble."

"Every man on the ship 'ceptin' the steward is with you, an' we're simply not goin' to let him hang you."

"Templin, I want you to remember two names and an address."

"What are they?"

"Harnash and Beekman, 33 Broadway, New York."

"That's easy," said Templin, repeating the words. "Why?"

"That's my address when I'm home. If I ever get home and any of you men want a friend, come there. I want you to pass that around among the crew, every one of them. You fellows didn't believe me, but now that I'm going I want to tell you for the last time my story is true, and if you want to be fixed for life, just come and see me there."

"Well, I hopes you gits there, Smith, or–"

"Beekman."

"Beekman, then."

"And I, and I, and I," was heard from the various members of the watch gathered about and speaking in low tones.

"Now, come aft," said Templin, "an' tread soft. There's no use arousin' the old man if we can help it. Only needs four of us to overhaul the gear an' lower away," continued the ringleader, picking out three associates. "The rest of you git down in the shadder of the rail on the lee side of the waist near the bridge. Mr. Gersey is keepin' a bright lookout to windward. If you hear any noise, come aft on the run."

Without making a sound, Beekman and his four devoted friends passed under the bridge, crouching down in the shadow of the lee rail until they were well aft and sheltered from observation by the broad canvas of the spanker. Mr. Gersey was on the other side of the bridge, staring hard forward and up to windward in the most approved fashion.

"You'll find everything ready for steppin' the mast an' spreadin' sail," whispered Templin. "The sea's fairly smooth, the wind's blowin' from the east'ard. You'd better git the canvas on her soon's you can. You hadn't ought to be in sight of us at daybreak."

"What time is it now?"

Three bells were struck forward at the moment, a couplet and then a single bell.

"Three bells, you hears," answered Templin. "You'll have three hours, and with you goin' one way an' us another, we'll be out of sight before daybreak. Remember, your course is sou'west-by-west."

"I shan't forget that or anything. When you have a chance bid Gersey goodbye for me and tell him not to forget the cable. God only knows where I'll turn up or when I'll get back, but when I do–well, remember what I said, Harnash and Beekman, 33 Broadway, New York."

He shook Templin's hand and nodded to the other three and stepped into the boat.

"Lower away," whispered Templin.

Now the night was quiet. The breeze was not strong. The creaking of the falls, since the sailors had taken precaution to grease them, was reduced to a minimum; still, some sound was made. Gersey had kept his eyes steadily forward, although he knew, of course, everything that was happening. He glanced around just as the whaleboat disappeared below the rail.

As luck would have it, Captain Fish, who slept, of course, in the stern cabin, happened to be wakeful. With an ear trained and accustomed to all the ordinary noises of the ship, anything out of common raised his suspicions. He heard the slight creaking. He sat up in his berth and listened. The noise came from aft, overhead. He ran to the stern window and peered through the open transom just at the moment that the keel of the descending whaleboat came on a level with the window. Fish slept with a revolver under his pillow. He leaped back, grabbed

the pistol, jumped to the transom again to find himself staring into the face of Beekman.

"Keep fast those falls," he roared, presenting his pistol.

Beekman was standing up in the boat, fending her off from the stern with a boathook. Fish had turned on the electric light–the *Susquehanna* was provided with a dynamo–and he was clearly visible. Beekman struck his arm with the boathook, knocking the pistol into the sea. The next instant there was a sudden roar on the deck above from Gersey, who judged that it was now safe to give the alarm. This outcry was followed by the trampling of many feet and a swift rush of the falls through the blocks. There was no necessity for concealment now. Templin and his men lowered the boat with a run.

Beekman worked smartly. As soon as the boat was water-borne he cast off the tackles and began tugging frantically at the mast. With seamanlike care, it had been so arranged that what had been almost an impossible task for one man in a hurry he could easily accomplish. The *Susquehanna* was sailing at a smart rate and she had drawn some distance ahead before Captain Fish reached the deck. He was in a towering rage.

"Mr. Gersey," he roared, "what does this mean, sir? The prisoner has escaped, an' in your watch?"

"I know it, sir," answered Gersey. "The men have got out of hand, sir."

"They have," exclaimed Fish. He had mounted half-way up the accommodation ladder of the bridge. Although he was unarmed and clad only in his pajamas, he did not hesitate on that account.

"I'll see about that," he roared. "I'll have no mutiny on my ship." He ran toward the group seen blackly against the white rail aft, shouting, "The man that did this will swing for it."

"Scatter," cried a voice.

The group instantly dissolved in the darkness of the deck. Fish made a grab at the nearest one, but a man behind him ran violently into him. He lost his hold. In a moment the quarter deck was deserted. The *Susquehanna* on her present course had the wind broad abeam.

"Mr. Gersey," roared the captain, "call all hands and stand by to wear ship. We must pick up that boat with that murdering mutineer aboard."

"Aye, aye, sir. For'ard there. Call the other watch."

Now the other watch was awake and waiting. Some of them, indeed, had participated in the affair of the night. Scarcely had the boatswain's mate sounded the call, when the watch below came tumbling up from the forecastle. Mr. Salver also joined the group on the bridge, rubbing his eyes sleepily. The captain took charge himself.

"Hands to the weather braces," he cried, "ease off the spanker sheet. Flatten

in the head sails for'ard. Hard up with the helm."

Not a man on the deck stirred. No one ran to the weather braces. No one cast off the lee braces. The helmsman remained immobile. The spanker sheet was not eased off. The sheets of the head sails were not hauled aft. The captain stared a moment in astonishment.

"Wear ship," he cried, "don't you hear me?"

"We heerd you," answered a voice out of the darkness, "but we're not goin' to wear the ship."

"You refuse to obey orders?"

"We'll obey all other orders, same as we have allus done, but we don't propose to pick up that there whaleboat."

"Who spoke?" roared the captain.

There was a movement in the groups of men in the darkness. Templin's voice, well disguised, came first from one side of the deck to the other, as he moved about while he spoke.

"You might as well make up your mind to it, Cap'n Fish. We're determined that no harm is to come to Smith. He's gone. For the rest, we'll work the ship to Vladisvostok, which we signed on for. You'll find us obeyin' orders same as ever in the mornin'."

Captain Fish was black with rage.

"Mr. Gersey," he roared, "do you know anything about this?"

"Not a thing, sir."

"We done it ourselves," came up from the waist.

"Keep fast the braces," said the captain at last; "keep her on her course."

Inasmuch as she had never been off her course and the braces had not been touched, the commands were useless. They were simply given to save the captain's face a little.

"Mr. Salver," he continued, "it's your watch below. I want to speak to you in the cabin. Pipe down the watch off, Mr. Gersey. We'll settle this matter in the morning."

But the captain knew and the men knew that the matter was already settled. If the men hung together there was no way by which the captain could discover the ringleader. And he could not imprison the whole ship's company. They had beaten him. The flight had been carefully planned and carried out in a bold and seamanlike way.

"You've beat me," said the captain the next morning to the crew as the watches were changed, "but there's a standin' offer of five hundred dollars for any one who'll gimme the details an' the names of the ringleaders. Meanwhile, if any one of you gives me the least cause I'll shoot him like a dog. Mr. Salver an' Mr. Gersey are both armed like me," he tapped the heavy revolver hanging

at his waist, "so look out for yourselves. I've no doubt some of you'll squeal. I'll find out yet. God help the men that did it when I do."

The captain's bribe was a large one. There were men in the forecastle who would have jumped at it, but a very clear realization of what would be meted out to them by their fellows if they turned traitor, kept them quiet. The loyal men among the mutineers knew pretty well who were to be suspected and kept close watch on them.

Beekman knew nothing of all that, of course, the next morning as he made his meager breakfast. He did not know how long it would take him to reach those islands, the very name of which he was ignorant, and it behooved him to husband his resources. After his breakfast he laid his course by the compass. The breeze held steady. All he had to do was to steer the boat. At nightfall he decided to furl sail and drift. For one thing he needed the sleep.

The next day, however, the breeze came stronger. It gradually shifted from the southeast toward the north. He reefed the sail down until it barely showed a scrap of canvas and drove ahead of it. There was no sleep for him through the night. He did not dare to leave the boat to her own devices in that wind and sea. The wind rose with every hour. The next morning it was blowing a howling gale from the northeast. He could no longer keep sail on the boat. He could not row against it. Fortunately, he had foreseen the situation. He unstepped the mast and unshipped the yard with which he pried up some of the seats and with these and spare oars he made himself a serviceable sea anchor, which he attached to the boat's painter forward, cast overboard, and by this means drifted with the storm being at the same time wet, cold, lonely, and very miserable. He knew the boat was a lifeboat; its air tanks would keep it from sinking, but if it ever fell into the trough of the sea it would be rolled over and over like a cork. It would fill with water and refill in spite of his constant bailing. He could only trust to his sea anchor to keep the boat's head to the huge seas by which it was alternately uplifted and cast down in vast, prodigious motion. Had it not been provided with those air tanks the boat would have been swamped inevitably.

His provisions got thoroughly wetted. One of the water breakers was torn from its lashing and the same wave that worked that damage dashed it against the other, staving it in. His boat compass and tools were swept away. Only what was in the lockers forward and aft remained. The boat was swept clean. He had bailed as long as he had strength, but even the bailing tin finally disappeared. At last he sank down exhausted. The waves beat over him. The seas rolled him from side to side. He had strength enough to lash himself to the aftermost thwart before he fell into a state of complete collapse.

So he drifted on through the night. Toward morning the gale blew itself out. The next day the sun rose in a cloudless sky. The breeze subsided. The seas

still rose mightily, but he knew that if no more wind came they would presently subside. He swallowed some of the sodden, hard bread in the forward locker for breakfast and then with the top of an empty biscuit tin from the same place he made shift to free the boat of water, at least sufficiently so for her to rise on the waves of the still rough and tumbling seas. He was too exhausted to get in his sea anchor. Indeed, so many things had carried away that he could not have stepped the mast or spread the sail. The canvas itself was gone with his blankets and tarpaulin. He could not use the oars. He could only drift.

How many days he sat in that boat under that burning sun he could not tell. Where he drifted as it fell dead calm he did not know. If he had been less crazed by the awful heat of the unshaded sun and the more awful thirst which made him forget his hunger–he simply could not swallow the hard, dry bread and the salt meat after a time–he might have kept a sort of dead reckoning. He was too weak even to take bearings by sun or stars. Not a sail, not the smoke of a steamer, met his burning stare–his eyes were hot, blazing in their sockets like the sun overhead, he fancied–around him as day after day he surveyed that ever unbroken horizon, himself a dot in the center of a vast periphery of emptiness.

He lost track of the days, of course. As he thought of it afterward it seemed to him that he went mad. The only concrete fact that finally came to him was at the darkest hour of a certain night that closed what he had felt must be his last day. He was conscious of a violent shock. It seemed to him that the boat had struck something. There was a swift motion of rebound, a splashing of water over him, another heavy forward surge, another shock, a crash as of splintering timber, and then all the motion ceased. All around him was a strange roaring. He was too feeble to speculate as to what had happened. He could only wait for the dawn.

The first gray of morning brought him a faint hope of life. The light of day showed him the whaleboat, her bottom hopelessly shattered, caught firmly on a rocky reef. Around him, once in a while over him, great waves were breaking; the whole mighty Pacific sweeping down from the line falling in crashing assault upon this barrier of jagged stones. Back of him was the sea–unbroken to the horizon–over which he had come. In front of him stretched a space of still water. On the other side of this lagoon rose huge, precipitous rocks, bare, gaunt, forbidding. As he stood up tremblingly and peered beneath his hand he thought he could detect at the foot of these mighty cliffs a stretch of golden sand.

Even with the inspiration of land at last and probable food and drink it was difficult in his lack of strength to wrench loose a shattered plank. Still, by desperate effort he accomplished that at last. With that to buoy him up he stumbled across the reef and launched into the smooth waters of the lagoon. The swim would have been nothing under ordinary circumstances, but in his terrible

prostration, even with the aid of the plank, it was a long, difficult passage. Half a dozen times he was on the point of throwing up his hands and going under, but something–love of life, hope indestructible, eternal, remains of determination, instinctive unwillingness to acknowledge himself beaten–kept him up. He pressed on through the smooth waters of the lagoon. Finally his feet touched the strand. Standing trembling but triumphant a few moments to recover himself, he staggered across it.

He discovered as he did so an opening in the rock concealed previously from him by an overlap of the cliff. The rift in the cliff wall was perhaps thirty yards wide. It could only be seen from one direction. The waters of the lagoon ran inward through it. The sand narrowed and stopped at the opening. From, that beach he could not see within. Climbing a little distance up the edge of the cliff and peering around it, he saw at the end of the inlet a deep bay, a harbor roughly circular, perhaps half a mile in diameter. He surveyed it long and carefully in the half light which made it impossible to see clearly.

As nearly as he could guess the height of the cliffs ranged from three hundred to five hundred feet. In niches and shelves here and there a few bits of green appeared. The tops of the cliffs seemed as bare as the sides. No way to surmount them appeared. Sometimes they ran straight down into the deep, dark water. At the base of the walls here and there were little stretches of sand. The place was still dark and gloomy, and somehow terrible. The sunlight had not penetrated into it yet; would not, he judged, for some time, or until the sun got into exactly the right position to shine through that narrow opening.

An unusual mental alertness had taken the place of his lethargy. Hope had made the change. He must, first of all, find water, then food, and then he must reach the top of the cliffs. On the other side of the shoulder of wall where he stood ran one of the stretches of sand. How could he get around that shoulder and pass through that opening? He did not dare to attempt to swim around it yet. He must climb over it. Painfully, with ebbing strength but with growing hope, he managed at the imminent risk of his life to climb around the point and finally set foot upon that narrow strip of sand. He looked back only to find the wall behind him rising sheer above his head, just as the walls opposite had. It was like being imprisoned in a vast tower, one side of which had been riven from top to bottom. And the dark, forbidding gloom oppressed him still more. The morning was still, there was no breeze in that enclosed place, but he shivered nevertheless and would have given anything for human companionship. He even tried to cry aloud to break the appalling stillness, but no sound came from cracked lips and parched, constricted throat. Was he to fail, having come so far?

In frantic terror he broke into a feeble run aimlessly forward. Rounding another jut of the wall, he saw that which meant life–a slender stream of water

falling in long, broken leaps from the top to the bottom of the wall. It had cut a channel through the sand and was lost in the bay. At the sight, strange to say, his strength left him. Fear had drawn him on and now fear and everything else were forgot. He fell to his knees, but still had strength and determination to crawl on. At last he reached it, fell on his face, and drank. It needed all his resolution, all his courage, all his mental and physical power not to drink and die. He knew he must drink sparingly and he did so.

When he had satisfied his thirst by slow degrees, he sat down on the sand to consider his situation. The cool, sweet water put new life into him. He was suddenly conscious of a terrible, gripping hunger, but the first and greatest of his needs had been satisfied. There must be some way to the top of those cliffs. Where there was fresh water there must be life. No island in the south seas could be so lonely, so sequestered, so unvisited as not to have a life and vegetation of its own. Wherever there was water and earth, especially in those latitudes, were to be found the kindly fruits thereof.

He decided that he would go back to the whaleboat, that he would get what crumbs that were left of the hard bread that he had been unable to eat and the remaining scraps of the salt meat that had choked him. He could swallow them now. Then he would come back and after he had been strengthened by his meal he would examine every foot of the cliffs to find a way upward. Meanwhile, he would rest a little. He threw himself down on the sand on his back and stared upward. As he did so he noticed the sun had reached such a position that it shone full through the entrance, suddenly illuminating the whole gloomy tower with light and changing the entire aspect of it.

He put his hand behind him to raise himself, intending to take advantage of the flood of light, which he saw would be there but for a short time, for a further inspection of the place. But his eyes were still cast upward. In the center of his vision the top of the cliff cut the brightening sky. Suddenly, as if formed instantly out of thin air, over the edge appeared a human figure. This figure was poised upon the very highest point of the towerlike wall, and was staring seaward through the great rift.

In the clear air and the bright sunlight he had not the slightest difficulty in discerning details. Perhaps his sight was sharpened by his anxiety and desire.

The figure was that of a woman and her skin was whiter than his own!

BOOK II

"An' they talks a lot o' lovin',
But wot do they understand?"

CHAPTER XII
THE HARDEST OF CONFESSIONS

Six months after the departure of the *Susquehanna* with its unwilling member of the crew, Harnash found himself in a position of advantage far beyond his wildest dream. The active search for Beekman had of necessity been abandoned long since, although the authorities still kept the matter in view. No one had yet connected his disappearance with the *Susquehanna* because her clearance papers had been taken out the day before, although her actual sailing had been delayed. She had slipped away unmarked in the early dawn, under her own canvas, the wind being favorable, and as Captain Fish knew the channel well she had even dispensed with the pilot.

In the search and the negotiations connected with it George Harnash had been thrown rather intimately and closely with John Maynard. There had been no business associations between them at first, but Maynard's growing appreciation of the ability of Harnash, which was very considerable, was heightened by a rather brilliant coup which the young man pulled off and from which Maynard suffered; not seriously, of course, from Maynard's point of view, although the results were of a very considerable financial gain to Harnash.

Now there was none of the mean spirit of revenge in Maynard. It was his policy to convert a brilliant enemy into a friend, if possible. Of course, some enemies were too big for that purpose, and those Maynard fought to a finish. Harnash was not in that category. Maynard was getting along in years. The excitement of battle had begun somewhat to pall upon him. He loved fighting for its own sake, but he had fought so long and so hard and so successfully that he was willing to withdraw gradually from the more active conflict, leaving warfare to youth, to which indeed it appertains.

Among the young men he gathered around him there was none who stood quite as high in his good graces as Harnash. No suspicion of the love affair between Harnash and Stephanie had arisen in the old man's mind, but he was not unaware that Stephanie greatly liked the young man. At first he had thought that the liking had developed from the other man's affection for Beekman.

Against that young man his resentment grew hotter and hotter. The police

scouted the conclusion that Beekman was dead. His case, they alleged, was just one of the many mysterious disappearances from New York, most of which were eventually explained. There was not a scrap of evidence anywhere to account for Beekman's disappearance. Probably the labels had been torn from his clothing before it had been disposed of, if it had been sold. His watch case might have been melted down for old gold, obviously, if it had not accompanied him. At any rate, the works had not been traced. And no pawn shop or fence yielded the slightest clew to any other jewelry. The great reward still standing brought no information whatever.

Maynard was finally convinced that Beekman had deliberately run away from his daughter, and the world also accepted that solution. Only Harnash and Stephanie knew the contrary. Seeing them so much together, it had often occurred to Maynard that possibly Harnash might succeed in consoling his daughter. It was not on that account, however, that he took him into business after three months of association and finally made him his personal representative and confidential man.

Now Harnash had been unremitting in his attentions to Stephanie. She did not hesitate to avow her affection to him and to continue in that avowal, but she had not receded an inch from her position that before Harnash could even speak to her father, and certainly before he could claim her, Beekman must be found and his consent gained.

Harnash had concealed nothing from the woman he loved except what he had done with Beekman. He met her refusal to marry him with a refusal to reveal that. In keeping that secret he was as obstinate in his way as she was in hers. Of course, Harnash would ultimately be compelled to tell the whole story, and as the months slipped by and the time of the arrival of the *Susquehanna* at Vladivostok, where she would be in cable communication with the rest of the world, approached he naturally grew more and more apprehensive and showed it to Stephanie's keen and searching eyes, at least.

When Maynard trusted a man he trusted him all in all. It was a part of his policy. If a man were not worth trusting he did not want him around and he did not have him around, as a matter of fact. Therefore among other duties devolved upon the new confidential assistant was the opening of the great financier's mail. Harnash had never made up his mind just what he should do when the necessity for confession and explanation was presented. He had tried to plan his course, but so much depended upon circumstances that he had always put the decision by. Stephanie loved him–and it was easy to see that her passion for him was growing and that it almost matched his own–but she was a high spirited girl with certain unspoiled notions of right and wrong, and with a certain amount of her father's unyielding firmness which made her conduct in the threatening

emergency something of a problem.

The problem changed from the abstract to the concrete one morning about a half year after that bachelor dinner. The *Susquehanna* was overdue at Vladivostok. From the shipping experts in the Inter-Oceanic Trading Company Harnash had found that out and it had greatly increased his anxiety by giving it a new turn–suppose something had befallen the ship? Every day of delay added to his mental distress. And although the shipping people manifested no special apprehension–ships were often longer overdue, especially sailing ships–Harnash grew more and more uneasy.

One morning while he was going over the mail at the office prior to Maynard's arrival a messenger boy brought in a cable from Honolulu. He signed for it, dismissed the boy, and without the slightest apprehension tore open the envelope. This is the message that stared at him:

Regret to report *Susquehanna* burned at sea, sunk by explosion of cargo. Third officer and six survivors landed here yesterday in small boat. Captain refused to abandon ship. One other boat got away, probably lost. Cable instructions.

It was signed by Smithfield, the agent of the Inter-Oceanic Trading Company in the Hawaiian Islands. One glance, one horrified inspection stamped the facts on Harnash's brain and consciousness. The *Susquehanna* was lost with all her people except the third officer and six men; that meant Woywod too. Was Beekman among those six, or had Harnash sent him to his death? Could he have been in the other boat? Was there a chance that it would turn up? Somehow Harnash jumped at a conviction, of which he could not disabuse his mind, that Beekman was among the missing. This he had not planned. That it could happen he had never dreamed, even remotely.

Now Harnash faced the greatest temptation of his life. He was quick enough to see that if Woywod and Beekman had been lost, in all probability the secret would never be known and all he had to do was to say nothing to be safe. But Harnash had never liked Beekman so much as at that very moment. Forgetful for the time being even of Stephanie, his mind reverted to their college associations, their subsequent business career, the unfailing courtesy and kindness and trust which Beekman, high-placed and rich, had extended to him, relatively humble and poor, his cordial cooperation and confidence, his help. While Harnash was the business and brains of the firm, he could have accomplished little without Beekman.

He recalled the genial, pleasant humor of his friend, the good times they

had enjoyed together, and as he did so he put his head in his hands and groaned aloud. Harnash felt like a murderer. He believed indeed that he was one. It was the turning point in his career. If he spoke he would brand himself in the eyes of all to whom the story might become known–John Maynard, of course, and Stephanie, the woman he loved truly and whole heartedly, even though his love had made him do an unworthy and ignoble thing. If he kept silent, with the start he had gained in John Maynard's graces and with Stephanie's affection, he would eventually marry her. If he did not tell her, if he put her off with some carefully manufactured story, he could probably persuade her after a time to marry him. In that event he saw himself doomed to a long life with the woman he loved so passionately and whom he would fain trust with everything, with a hideous secret between them. To win her under such conditions was to lose her. Which was the better course?

Many a man gives way to an evil impulse under the strain of a great temptation, but it does not necessarily follow that he cannot recover from that impulse, that his moral nature is broken down completely by the one lapse, even though it be a great one. As a matter of fact, a woman like Stephanie Maynard could scarcely have loved George Harnash as she did if he had not been on the whole much better than his worst.

Then and there Harnash came to a decision. Not without much inward wrestling and many groanings of spirit did he reach the conclusion that it was better not to try to cover up what he had done. To him entered Maynard. The cheery good morning of the elder man died on his lips as he noted the strain and anxiety in his young friend's face.

"What's the matter?" he began abruptly.

"Mr. Maynard," said Harnash, summoning his courage up to the self-accusing point, "I've something very important to say."

"What is it?" asked the financier, sitting down at the big desk, disregarding his mail, and staring at Harnash.

"It begins somewhat far back."

"Get to the point quickly."

"I will. I love your daughter. I have loved her ever since I met her, long before she became engaged to Beekman."

"Damn him."

"Wait a minute before you condemn him."

"What's he got to do with your trouble?"

"Much."

"I think Stephanie has about forgotten him, and, frankly, if you want to marry her–well, I had other views for her, but I don't see why you shouldn't," was the old man's surprising answer.

”There may be reasons to the contrary of which you know nothing, Mr. Maynard.”

”What are they? Why all this beating around the bush?”

”You’ve thought hardly of Beekman because he disappeared on his wedding day.”

”Yes.”

”I was the cause of it.”

”Good God! Did you murder him?”

”I’m afraid so.”

”Do you know what you’re saying?”

”Perfectly.”

”You must be crazy.”

”I think I am. This came this morning.”

The unhappy Harnash held out the telegram.

”Well,” said Maynard, reading it over quickly. ”That’s a bad job, of course, but the *Susquehanna* is fully insured. It’s unfortunate about the men, and the Russians have been cabling us for that shipment of munitions and war material, but what’s this got to do with Beekman?”

”He was on the burned ship.”

”What!”

”Her mate, Woywod, was a boyhood friend of mine. I told him I loved your daughter and she loved me–”

”Oh, it’s got that far, has it?”

”Yes, sir.”

”And you had him shanghaied by this Woywod,” said Maynard, frowning, as the whole situation became instantly clear to him.

”I did.”

”Does Stephanie know?”

”Not a thing.”

”Was she a party to this transaction?”

”In no way. I always knew I loved her, but we only found out she loved me while Beekman was away during the year after his father’s death. I begged her to confess the truth, to appeal to you and to Beekman, and to break the engagement. She refused to do any of these things. She said it was the most cherished desire of your heart, that you and old Beekman, who were bound together by affection of long standing, had agreed upon it, that she had given her word with her eyes open.”

”And you did this thing with what in view, pray?”

”To delay the marriage in the hope that something might turn up and I might win her.”

"Something has turned up."

"I'm afraid so."

"But isn't it just possible that Beekman may be one of those six men who survived?"

"We should have heard from him in that event."

"Right, but isn't it just possible that the other boat may turn up or its men may have landed on some Pacific island?"

"It's possible," said Harnash, "but not likely."

"It's generally the unlikely thing that happens in life," said Maynard, coolly, staring hard at the unfortunate young man to whom confession was obviously difficult. "For instance, the most unlikely thing that I could think of is that I should be sitting here quietly listening to you confess this treacherous and dastardly crime without being able to determine whether I shall hand you over to the authorities or give you my daughter as a wife."

"I don't think the disposition of your daughter's hand rests with you now."

"Does it rest with you?"

"No. She has told me that she would never even allow me to speak to you or consent to marry me until she had been released by you and Beekman."

Maynard thought deeply. He was, as he had said, in a state of indecision most unusual and extraordinary with him. To be unable to settle upon his course was most annoying to him.

"You haven't told her what you did?"

"Not a word."

"You'll have to tell her now," he said at last, thinking that perhaps she might throw some light on the problem.

"I intend to."

Maynard reached for the telephone. He called up the house, got his daughter on the wire, and asked her to take her car and come to the office immediately. He brushed away questions and objections by assuring her that it was a matter of life and death. Having thus aroused her curiosity and greatly alarmed her, he disconnected.

"Now," he said, turning to Harnash, who had waited, "what have you to suggest?"

"Cable our agent at Honolulu to send the survivors to San Francisco by the first steamer."

"Good so far."

"I'll go out there in time to meet them and ascertain the facts. If Beekman is there I'll tell him the truth and bring him home, if he doesn't kill me."

"If he is not?"

"I'll turn everything I have into money and on the chance that he may be

somewhere in the South Seas I'll charter a ship and go and hunt for him."

"I wouldn't like to be in your shoes when you meet him, if you do."

"I don't much fancy the situation myself," admitted Harnash, "but that's neither here nor there. I've got to do it."

"You must have been desperately in love with Stephanie to have done this thing."

"I was. I am. I don't want to plead anything in justification," answered the other, "but if Stephanie had loved Beekman I don't think I should have interfered, although she probably would have found out that I loved her because I couldn't help letting her see it. You have seen it yourself, haven't you?"

"Now that you say it, I recall things that looked that way and, yes, I had begun to suspect it."

"But when I found out that she didn't love him and that she did love me and that she was only going through with it to please you and the elder Beekman–well, it seemed horrible. I swore to her that I would prevent it if I had to snatch her away from him at the foot of the altar."

"Instead of which you snatched him from her the day before."

"It was the same day."

"I wonder why none of us ever thought of the *Susquehanna*."

"She is on record as having sailed the evening before. Her clearance papers were so made out and as she probably got away without tug or pilot in the early dawn nobody connected him with her."

"You didn't have this end of the voyage in mind, of course?"

"As God is my judge I did not," answered Harnash, earnestly.

"The *Susquehanna* was overdue at Vladivostok by about three weeks, I believe," continued the old man. "That's why you've been so distrait and worried and generally knocked up during the last month?"

"Yes. I expected to get word from Beekman."

"How?"

"He would naturally cable me, his business partner."

"Oh, then he doesn't know anything about your part, if he is alive."

"Certainly not, unless Woywod told him, which would be most unlikely."

"I see. Well, go and cable Smithfield and find out when the next steamer sails for the United States from Hawaii, and arrange to leave here four days before her scheduled arrival so you can get this third officer and his men before they scatter. You know what sailors are. By the way, who is the third officer?"

"I don't know."

"Well, find that out in the shipping department. And keep within call. When Stephanie gets here I shall want you to tell her," said the old man, still painfully undecided as to his course.

"Very good, sir," said Harnash, turning away, glad for the relief of the temporary duties devolved upon him.

By the time he had completed them Stephanie had reached the office building and had gone to her father's private room, where Harnash presently followed her.

"I hurried down here, of course," she began, "on receipt of your surprising message. What has happened since you left this morning? Oh, good morning, Mr. Harnash," she continued, her face brightening as she held out her hand to that unhappy man as he entered the office.

"This," said her father in answer to her question, meanwhile keenly observing the other two.

He handed her the cable. She read it over and looked up with a little bewilderment.

"The *Susquehanna*!" she said. "I remember it was the last sailing ship. It's too bad that she is lost, but you were insured. Of course, it's terrible about the brave captain and the poor men."

Old Maynard nodded. He looked at Harnash. That young man's hour had come.

"Beekman was on the *Susquehanna*," he said quietly.

CHAPTER XIII
THE SEARCH DETERMINED UPON

For a moment Stephanie Maynard did not take in the tremendous import of the declaration that had just fallen from her lover's lips. For one thing, he had spoken so quietly that she had not at first sensed the meaning. She stared from Harnash to her father in no little bewilderment. Both men watched her keenly; the older curious to know what she would do and say, the younger as one might wait the death sentence of a court.

"I don't understand," she faltered at last. "Did you say that Derrick Beekman– It's impossible. How could that be?"

"I had him shanghaied by a friend of mine."

"Shanghaied?"

"Yes. After the dinner broke up we stopped at an uptown place and"– Harnash hesitated. It was bad enough to compass the main fact, but the nec-

essary admission of the sordid, unlovely details seemed to make his turpitude much greater.

"Yes, go on. What then?"

"Yes. I'm curious to know how you did it, too," put in Maynard.

"I persuaded him to take a drink. He was utterly unsuspicious. It was easy–"

"Oh, you doctored it," said Maynard.

"Yes–but– Good God, this is the hardest thing I ever did," cried poor Harnash, looking at the girl. "Knock-out drops, you know, and then he was shanghaied."

"I don't understand," she said again.

"He was delivered to a friend of mine down on Water Street who was waiting for him with a gang. I had arranged it all beforehand and they put him on the ship."

"But his watch, his money, jewelry?"

"I have those," admitted Harnash. "They're in my safe deposit box. I put them there, you understand, for safe keeping."

"Of course," said Maynard. "I don't think you're a thief as well as an abductor."

"Thank you," said Harnash.

"Well, even if he were on that ship," began Stephanie, at last comprehending, "it doesn't follow that he was lost."

"No. It doesn't follow. He may have been one of those picked up in the third mate's boat."

"By the way, who is the third mate?" interposed Maynard.

"She didn't carry one, sir. Her officers were Captain Peleg Fish, Woywod, and Salver. She had a boatswain, carpenter, sail-maker, and a crew of forty."

"Strange. Who could that officer be? But go on."

"Yes, and the other boat," said Stephanie, looking at the telegram again. "She may be found. He may be in her."

"It is possible," said Harnash hopelessly, "but I am convinced that he has been lost and I alone am responsible for his death."

The girl stared at the man, a strange look in her eyes. Harnash met her gaze bravely, although it took superhuman courage to do so. He loved her. There was no doubt about that. He had proved it in his perverted way. And she had loved him. There was no doubt of that, or there had not been. He even dared to hope that she would still love him, even in the face of his present confession; but whether she loved him or not he would rather have faced any judge on earth than Stephanie Maynard. The situation forced him to speak.

"It is no excuse that I did it for you," he began. "I said I'd be willing to

kill him rather than he should have you; but while I want you just as much as ever, more, if possible, that doesn't prevent me from feeling like a murderer now. And it is all so useless, too. Your father never could give his consent now and you–with this hideous possibility before us, I've lost you, too."

He turned away. He could not control himself. He clenched his jaws together and walked toward the window, out of which he looked without seeing anything whatsoever. For a few moments nobody broke the silence. Old Maynard sat down quietly at his desk, leaned his face in his hands, and scrutinized his daughter. The air was surcharged with dramatic possibilities. He was too keen an observer not to recognize them. He had made up his own mind at last, but he wanted to see what his daughter would do before he disclosed his wishes or intentions. It seemed to Harnash, in whose breast a faint hope was still struggling as he also waited for the girl's decision, that Stephanie's silence lasted a long time. Really it was a very few moments. Singularly enough, her first word was not to her lover.

"Father," she began, facing the old man, "do you think it is likely that Derrick is lost?"

"Highly probable."

"Why?"

"If he were one of the survivors he would have cabled at once."

"He might be ill or–"

Maynard shook his head.

"I think we can discount that suggestion."

"Then his only chance would be the other boat?"

"Yes."

"And you think that chance–"

"A faint one. It was probably the bigger and better boat. It should have turned up before the other. It has not."

Every word carried conviction to the girl. The flicker of hope in Harnash's heart died away. It revived again when Stephanie, after pondering her father's words–and he allowed her to reflect upon them at her pleasure, volunteering nothing, suggesting nothing–began with another question.

"No one knew of Derrick's presence on the ship except those who were aboard her?"

"Obviously not, since all the detectives in New York, for the past six months, have been endeavoring to find out where he went, stimulated by a reward big enough to arouse them all to the most frantic endeavors."

"But the people on the ship would know?"

"I haven't any doubt that Beekman disclosed his name to the officers so soon as he came to his senses, but I imagine it wouldn't make much of an im-

pression upon them. They wouldn't believe him. Sailors are proverbially happy-go-lucky people. Our agents at San Francisco will pay off these survivors, they will scatter, and that will be the end of them."

"And if he is lost the mystery of his disappearance would never have been solved," whispered the young woman, "unless Mr. Harnash himself had told."

The old man nodded. George Harnash, his back turned to them, listened as if his life hung upon the word.

"But if he had kept the secret," said the girl, illogically but with obvious meaning, "I could never have forgiven him, much as I loved him and still do love him. That doesn't seem to be news to you, father."

"It isn't. Go on."

"In that case I never could have married him, even though he did it for me, but now–"

She walked over toward Harnash and laid her hand on his shoulder. No knight ever received an accolade, no petitioner a benison, no penitent an absolution so precious as that. Harnash turned, coincident with the touch, transfigured.

"Stephanie," he burst out, "you don't mean–"

"A part of the blame is mine," said the girl, facing her father, her hand still on her lover's shoulder. "I was weak where I should have been strong. It was my duty to break with Derrick absolutely since I did not, could not, love him; but because I love you, Father, and because my word had been given, I proposed to go through with the marriage, knowing that I loved this man, letting him see that I did, and allowing myself to hope that he would effect what I refused to attempt; so that for this awful situation I am in a large part to blame."

"I cannot let that statement go unchallenged, Mr. Maynard," protested Harnash, passionately. "She is no more to blame than a baby. She couldn't help being beautiful. She couldn't help my loving her. As God is my judge, she has never done a thing to encourage me. She told me all along that she was going to marry Beekman, that she was in honor bound to do so, that duty and everything made it necessary. It was my own mad passion, for which she is not to blame, that made me do it. Not a vestige of reproach attaches to her. God knows, I wouldn't have had real harm come to him for anything on earth. I never dreamed of this. I never suspected it. I never anticipated it. It's an awful shock to me, but a man must fight for the woman he loves. Beekman didn't care. With him it was a matter of agreement, convenience, and I–" He turned and looked at the girl. "I think I'd do it again. I'll be honest. Now I'd cheerfully give my own life for Beekman's. If I am not to have you life isn't worth very much to me, and I'm terribly sorry for him; yet when I look at you, Stephanie, and think that in spite of everything I have lost you–"

"You haven't lost me," said the girl, quietly.

"What! You mean?"

"Where do I come in?" asked the elder Maynard with a calmness that matched his daughter's.

"Father," said the girl, "I'm not your daughter for nothing. I suppose I couldn't help loving George Harnash. I have the same fixity of purpose that you have. I showed it when I intended to carry out my agreement to marry Derrick, although it broke my heart. I know I will go on loving him to the end, no matter what he did, or what he is, but I wouldn't have married him if he hadn't of his own free will spoken out and told what he might as easily have concealed without anyone ever finding it out, if Derrick is really dead. And I feel here, somehow," said the girl, laying her hand on her heart, "that you hold the same views exactly."

"His prompt and open acknowledgment, his frank confession, makes all the difference," admitted Maynard. "It does seem to give the affair a different complexion."

"Seem, father?"

"Well, it does, then. Go on."

"It was horribly wrong of George to do what he did, but he did it for me. It was my fault as much as his, and I take part of the blame."

"I swear I will not allow you."

"Let her finish," interposed Maynard. "She has more sense than you have, and I'll be hanged if I don't think she has more than I have."

Stephanie smiled faintly.

"If Derrick is dead none of us here is ever going to forget it. Neither Mr. Harnash, nor I, not even you."

"I fail to see any responsibility attaching to me."

"No, but there will be some."

"Oh, will there?"

"So far as intent goes we can absolve ourselves, but so far as consequences are concerned we shall have to expiate our wickedness."

"Oh, Stephanie, for God's sake don't say that of yourself," Harnash burst forth.

"I must. And we can expiate it together. We can help each other."

"Do you mean that you will actually marry me?"

"Of course," said the girl. "How could you for a moment think otherwise? I mean what I say when I assume part of the blame."

"And so you have settled it without me, have you?" asked her father.

"No. We are going to settle it this way with your approval and consent."

"And I am to give my daughter to a man who would administer knock-out drops to a friend and shanghai him on the eve of his wedding and appropriate

that friend's promised wife?"

"It is just, sir," said Harnash bitterly. "Think what you do," he continued, turning to the girl with a gesture of renunciation.

"No," answered Stephanie to her father. "You are giving your daughter to a man who, however he sinned, and your daughter doesn't presume to pass condemnation upon him as she might were she not a party to it, has frankly and openly acknowledged his transgression and expressed himself willing to take the consequences."

"Humph," said the old man, a flicker of a smile appearing on his iron face.

"Remember, he might have kept silent."

"Well," said Maynard, "I believe you are right. There is good stuff in you, Harnash, and your unforced, voluntary confession shows it. I don't think you'll administer knock-out drops to anybody again, and eventually I suppose you'll get Stephanie, but there are conditions."

"You couldn't impose any conditions that I would not gladly meet."

"I was coming to those myself," said the girl.

"Oh, you had thought of this, too, had you?"

"Certainly."

"What are they?"

"First of all there must be no public mention by any of us of the possible fate of Derrick until we are satisfied that he is dead."

"Certainly not," said old Maynard.

The assent of Harnash was obviously not necessary to that.

"That's where you come in, father–what is the legal term?–as an accessory after the fact to what we have done."

The old man laughed a little.

"Clever, clever," he murmured, "my own daughter."

"The next condition is that we must satisfy ourselves beyond peradventure that Derrick is dead before any marriage."

"That is a harder proposition," said the old man.

"Because," went on the girl, "I told George when I supposed Mr. Beekman was alive and would turn up some time that I would never marry him until I had got a release from Derrick's own lips, and as long as there is a chance that he is alive that condition holds."

"I'm so glad that I can look forward to getting you at any time under any circumstances," said Harnash fervently, "that I accede gladly to any conditions that you may lay down."

"And how will you settle the affair if by any good fortune we succeed in finding Beekman and he refuses to consent and wishes to hold you to your terms?" asked Maynard thoughtfully. "You don't seem to have counted on that."

Harnash and Stephanie looked at each other with dismay.

"And how if he wants to kill Harnash, as he would have a perfect right to do, for his part in the–er–deplorable transaction?" continued the old man relentlessly.

"I'll take whatever he wishes to give me," said Harnash. "I'll tell him myself, if we are fortunate enough to see him, and I don't believe when he learns everything that he will want to claim as his wife a woman who loves some one else."

"I am sure he will not," said Stephanie.

The girl's father nodded.

"I guess you have it right, but we needn't worry about that now. The first thing is to find out whether he is really dead."

"We must set about that at once," said Stephanie.

"We have already taken steps to that end," said Harnash. "I have cabled Smithfield to ship the men from Honolulu to 'Frisco at our expense, and to say to them that I will meet them on the arrival of the steamer. I find that a steamer sails from Honolulu on Thursday of next week. She is due to arrive on Friday of the week after. My personal affairs are in such a state that I can safely leave them. I have a substantial balance available in the bank. I am going to California to interview the men and then I shall charter a vessel and hunt for the other boat or prosecute whatever search is necessary."

"That's fine," said Stephanie. Then she turned to her father, stretching out her hand. "Father–"

The old man understood perfectly well what she wanted.

"I can amplify that plan a little," he said. "I have been wanting to get away from active business for a long time and my affairs are fortunately in such a shape that I can trust them to others. I should have trusted them to you, Harnash, if you weren't obliged to go along."

"Do you mean–?" cried the girl.

"Yes, I'll send the *Stephanie* around through the Panama canal immediately"–the *Stephanie* was a magnificent steam yacht, the greatest, most splendid, and most seaworthy of any of the floating palaces of the millionaires of the seaboard–"and we'll go on that hunt together."

"You mean that I–"

"Of course you can go along. Who has more interest in establishing the

fact than you?"

CHAPTER XIV
THE BOATSWAIN'S STORY

A seafaring man is less at home in a parlor than anywhere else. He can sit comfortably on anything except a chair. The big boatswain balanced himself gingerly on the edge of the biggest and strongest chair in the private parlor of the Maynard apartment in the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco. In his hands, fortunately, for otherwise he would not have known what to do with them, he clasped a large package wrapped in oil silk and carefully tied up. He looked and felt supremely ill at ease and miserable. Back of him, equally uncomfortable, were the other survivors of the *Susquehanna.* It was proper for the boatswain, who acted as third officer, to be seated. This much was conceded to his rank, but Templin and the other five, deaf to all suggestions looking toward their comfort, remained standing. They did not even lean against anything. They took position in true seamanlike fashion, arms folded or akimbo, feet wide apart, ready for any unexpected roll on the part of the St. Francis Hotel.

George Harnash had met the steamer. Indeed, he had boarded her before she tied up at her berth at the docks. He knew that Beekman would not be with the survivors because their names had been cabled to New York by Smithfield in answer to inquiries. The strangest circumstance was this. A list of the other members of the crew taken from the ship's papers which were in possession of the third officer, for so the boatswain was designated, had also been cabled and the name of Beekman did not appear in that list either. This puzzled Harnash beyond measure. He had delivered Beekman to the crimp and the gang designated by Woywod, certainly. Had anything happened? Were those knock-out drops too strong? Harnash was a miserable man, indeed, a prey to all sorts of fears and anxieties and each worse than the other.

The men, who had landed at Honolulu in a dilapidated condition, two weeks' cruising in an open boat being not conducive to the preservation of wearing apparel, had been thoroughly outfitted by the agent of the Inter-Oceanic Trading Company, and consequently as Stephanie Maynard looked upon them she thought them as fine an appearing body of sailors as she had seen in her various voyagings upon the seas. Old John Maynard, keenly appraising them as they

were led in the room, arrived at the same conclusion by a somewhat different process.

"This is the bo's'n of the *Susquehanna*," began Harnash after he had mustered and marshaled the uneasy sailors. "That is, he was originally shipped as bo's'n, but he has been promoted to third officer. How or why I do not yet know. I thought it best not to question the men until I had brought them here. Mr. Gersey–"

"Jim Gersey, at your service, sirs an' ma'am," said the old seaman, rising and making a sort of sea-scrape with his feet while he knuckled his brow with his hand in true if now somewhat obsolete sailor fashion.

"Mr. Gersey," said Harnash, "this is Mr. John Maynard, president of the company which owned the *Susquehanna*, and this is his daughter."

"Pleased to meet ye both," said the boatswain.

"In addition to our natural anxiety about the ship and her people we have reason to be deeply interested in one member of her crew," continued Harnash, and his personal suspense was obvious to the dullest person in the room, much more to the girl who loved him in spite of all.

"I didn't ketch your name, sir," said the boatswain.

"Harnash, George Harnash."

The old man furrowed his brow and thought a moment.

"Of Harnash an' Beekman, 33 Broadway, New York?"

"Yes."

"Well, sir, I got a message for you."

"A message?"

"Aye. It was give to me by a man that shipped aboard the *Susquehanna* as John Smith."

"That's why Beekman's name didn't appear among those sent us," observed Mr. Maynard suddenly.

"I suppose so," answered Harnash, glad to be relieved of one anxiety.

"Which he said it wan't his name, but I ain't never been aboard a ship without a John Smith on her," continued the boatswain, "an' sometimes we gits two or three of 'em. It's a kind-a easy name, an' when nobody knows a man we jest nachurly calls him that. Now this chap's name was Beekman. Leastways, that's what he said it was, an' when we put him overboard–"

"Put him overboard?" cried Stephanie.

"Yes, ma'am. In the ship's whaleboat, for his own safety."

"At the time of the fire?" interposed Harnash.

"Now, gents an' lady, if you'll excuse me, I can't quite steer my course amid so many variable winds, so to speak. I can't shift my helm quick enough to meet all them changes. If you'll lemme heave ahead in my own way I'll git the yarn

off'n my chest the quicker an' the plainer."

"Of course," said Maynard; "don't interrupt, young people, let him tell us in his own way."

"Thankee, sir," said the boatswain. "You've got a seaman's instinck an' arter I've told the yarn I'll answer any question I may be axed, pervided they comes at me one at a time."

"Heave ahead," said Maynard, adopting nautical language for the occasion.

"Well, sir, it was this way. Arter Smith or Beekman put a knife into the mate–"

This was too much for Harnash.

"What mate?"

The boatswain shot a look at him.

"I was comin' to that," he answered. "Mr. Woywod, as you know, he was the mate of the ship. He was a prime seaman, an' pleasant enough if you done what you was told an' done it quick an' kept out of his way, but when he was roused an' riled–God help us, says I."

"We all says that," put in Templin grimly.

"Well, him an' Smith or Beekman got in an argyment the second day out when Smith come to in the fo'c's'l an' didn't know where he was at or why he was at it, an' Smith knocked the mate down. The mate seed he was green an' raw, an' he passed over that, only he told him if he ever done it agin he'd kill him. The mate battered him up considerably at the time. I sent for him that day an' told him as an old man that had follered the sea all his life that there wan't no use of tryin' to fight the mate; that the officers had everything on their side. They was like God hisself on the ship; that he'd git double irons clapped on him for mutiny, an' mebbe hanged if he didn't knuckle down an' turn to. He told me a long story about him bein' shanghaied. I didn't believe it at first."

"It was true," said Harnash. "Absolutely true."

"An' leavin' a girl on his weddin' day."

"I was the girl," said Stephanie.

"Dash me," said the old boatswain, staring at the girl with quite open admiration, "his was a harder lot than we fancied. Well, he concluded to take my advice. He turned to an' done his work like a man, an' I never seen a feller pick up so. Afore he left us he was as hard as nails, an' by way of bein' a prime seaman, too. The mate didn't manhandle him none, but there was bad blood 'twixt them two men. The mate was allus a pickin' on him an' a bullyin' of him. It was a kind of battle between 'em. The mate anxious to provoke an outbreak on Smith's part, which I means Beekman, an' Beekman determined not to give the mate no handle agin him. We had a hell of a–I beg your pardon, Miss, but that word jest describes the ship an' the v'yage. I never did see such a succession of gales. We

was weeks gittin' round the Horn, an' there was a dead beat agin the wind nigh all the way up to the line. One night, I disremember the date, but I got it here"–he tapped the oilskin package to which he clung so tightly–"all hands was called on suddenly to reef tops'ls. The old man was for carryin' on, you know; he'd taken in the r'yals, but the to'gall'nts'ls was still set, an' the sticks was bendin' like whips when he decided to git 'em off her. Now there was a mast-man, a half-witted Dutchman, aboard named Wramm."

"Jacob Wramm," said Templin. "God rest his soul."

"He done a lubberly thing. He cast off the wrong halliards, an' we lost the main to'gall'nt mast. It was in the mid watch, an' Wramm had been takin' a snooze under the lee rail or he wouldn't have done it. The mate was very vi'lent with him. He had kicked him awake, au' when the mast carried away he hit him over the head with a belayin' pin, thinking, doubtless, to let some sense into his thick skull, but instead he let the life out of him."

"Do you mean that he killed him?" asked Maynard in amazement, while the others held their breath at this matter-of-fact description of tyranny and murder.

"Aye, sir, I means jest that. There's a lot o' things that goes on aboard your ships, that neither you nor nobody else in New York knows nothin' about."

"Evidently. Proceed."

"Wramm died the next day, but meanwhile, arter we'd cleared away the wreck an' got the ship snug, we took Wramm, who was still breathin' but unconscious, to his berth in the fo'c's'l. Arter we'd examined him, Beekman said he was goin' aft to see the old man."

"Did Captain Fish permit such brutality?"

"I ain't wishful to say nothin' agin a man that's dead an' that can't defend hisself, but him an' Salver, which he was in charge of the other boat, was much the same kind of men as Woywod, only not quite so vi'lent. The cap'n was an old man an' he wan't so free with his fists, but he allus backed up the mates in whatever they done. Well, Beekman insisted on seein' the cap'n, an' arter the mate had inspected Wramm an' seen he was pretty bad off, he thought best to let him go aft. Templin here was busy about the mizzenmast, an' he can tell what happened, though we've got it all down in writin'."

"If you please, ma'am an' gents," said old Templin, stepping forward and taking up the tale, "I heard v'ices raised high in the cabin, which I could see into it through the skylight which covers it an' lets in light an', when it's open, air. You understand?"

Maynard nodded.

"Wot words passed I couldn't make out, but I seen the mate leap toward Smith, an' Smith hit him. The mate was a big man, an' although it must have been a powerful blow, it didn't phase him; it jest throwed him back agin the

cabin bulkhead. Then he gathered hisself up, drew a gun, p'inted it at Smith, an' made for him agin. The cap'n was havin' something to eat afore turnin' in, it bein' about four bells in the mid watch, an' there was a big, sharp carvin' knife layin' on the table. The mate was cursin' like mad, an' Smith was standin' there quiet an' as white as the paint on the cabin bulkheads. Jest as the mate pulled the trigger, Smith grabbed the knife an' buried it to its handle in the mate's breast, the bullet from the pistol passin' harmless like jest over Smith's head an' tearin' a big hole in the bulkhead."

"I seen the hole myself later on," said the boatswain as Templin stopped for breath.

"Mr. Salver, who had the watch," resumed the sailor, "came into the cabin, an' he grabbed Smith, who was standin' kind o' dazed like, lookin' at the mate wrigglin' round the deck; an' Manuel, the steward, did the same. The old man got the mate's pistol an' covered Smith, an' they put him in the bo's'n's cabin an' moved the bo's'n aft to take the watch, ratin' him as third mate, an' givin' Mr. Salver, the second mate, Mr. Woywod's watch."

"Good God, how horrible!" said Harnash, shooting a quick look at Stephanie, who sat staring and as white as Templin's description indicated Beekman had been, as this grim, sordid tragedy of the sea was revealed to them in the picturesque simplicity of this rude sailor's tale.

"What happened then?" asked Maynard.

"Well, sir," answered the boatswain, "Templin can finish the yarn better nor I can."

"Every man jack on the ship," said Templin, "had a mighty likin' for Smith. Ain't that so, mates?"

Deep-toned approvals, with much nodding of heads, came from the other seamen.

"He was the pleasantest man on the ship," said one.

"Free an' easy, always willin' to help a shipmate," said another.

"Full of good stories, an' doin' his best to be agreeable," added a third.

"An' we wasn't goin' to see him hanged for that, which it was clearly self-defense, an' a good riddance, anyway," continued Templin. "You see, the mate was hated as much as Smith was liked. So we puts our heads together, an' to make a long story short, we pervisions the whaleboat, which was hangin' at the after davits. We struck the irons off of Smith's wrists an' ankles, put him into the boat, an' lowered her the night arter."

"I had heerd the old man an' Salver plottin' the ship's position," said the boatswain. "They said there was land about seventy leagues to the sou'west'ard, an we all thought he could reach it. It seemed as if the rough weather had blowed itself out at last in the Pacific. There was some white people on them islands.

There'd be some means for him to git back to the United States, eventually, or wherever he belonged."

"When did the captain learn of his escape?"

"Right then an' there. He done his best to prevent it, but it was dark an' the men refused to handle the braces to wear the ship, an' that's all there was to it."

"So Beekman wasn't on the ship when she burned," cried Harnash.

"No."

"Thank God for that," said Stephanie. "Don't you see," she continued as the bewildered seaman stared at her, "if he had been on the ship, he might have been lost in the other boat; Mr. Salver's boat, you said."

"Yes, ma'am."

"But, as it is now, there is a chance he may have got to those islands. What were they? Where are they? We may find him yet."

"It's possible. There's always a chance on the sea," admitted the boatswain. "But that ain't all the story."

"No?"

"No, ma'am; the gales hadn't quite blowed theirselves out yet, an' the next day come the worst of 'em all. What become of that boat in that storm, Cod only knows. We had to scud afore it under bare poles."

"It might not have blowed so hard where the whaleboat was," said Templin sagely.

"In course; but no man can know nothin' about that."

"We got a slant of a favorin' wind arter a few days, an' ran down our northin' at a great rate. I think it was two weeks arter we sent the whaleboat away with Beekman in it, when a fire broke out in the forehold. I suppose the strainin' an' pitchin' and buckin' of the ship was the cause of it. I don't rightly know jest what we had aboard."

"About three thousand tons of the most inflammable and explosive stuff on earth," said Mr. Maynard.

"Well, it ketched afire. We knowed it was some kind of dangerous stuff without bein' aware of the partik'lers, an' we tried to git at the fire, but we couldn't. We knowed the old ship was doomed just about as soon as something that would explode got reached by the fire. There wan't no panic."

"The officers treated us like dogs, all of us," interposed Templin; "but they knowed their business, an' so did we."

"Two boats was got over an' pervisioned; a cutter an' a la'nch that was on chocks amidships. The cap'n ordered me with nine of the men to the cutter, an' Mr. Salver with the rest on 'em to the la'nch. The sea was calm enough, an' we had no difficulty in gittin' the boats overboard, although we had to bear a hand,

an' it was well we done so. Nachurly, the cap'n was to be the last man to 'bandon the ship, which he didn't leave at all, as a matter of fact. He was to go in my boat, which was one reason why the steward was in her. Salver's boat shoved off, an' while we lay alongside at the battens waitin' for him, the old man ordered us to shove off, too. 'Mr. Gersey,' he sez–me bein' called 'Mister' habitual after I come aft–'if you git to shore, report me as havin' stayed with the ship.' 'Cap'n Fish,' sez I, 'savin' your presence, it's a kind of damn fool thing for you to do, for the ship's goin' down.' 'I ain't never yet desarted no ship under my charge,' sez the cap'n, an' when I started to argue, he told me to go to hell an' git away from there lest the boat should be lost. There wan't nothin' else for me to do, ma'am, but obey orders. I've been all my life obeyin' orders at sea, but that was about the hardest one ever put up to me. We didn't like the old man much. As a matter of fact, we hated him, an' we might have killed him in a fair fight, if it had been possible, but we didn't none of us want to see him die that way."

"No, we didn't," said one.

"But there wan't no help for it. We pulled away from the blazin' ship till we got within hail of Salver's boat. When he seed the cap'n wasn't aboard, he was for rowin' back to the ship to rescue him. We could see the old man calmly walkin' up an' down the bridge, for'ard of the mizzenmast, perfectly plain. The fire was for'ard, and the ship was hove to so the smoke druv away to lee'ard. He never left that bridge except to go aft to h'ist the American flag at the gaffend. Salver would have gone back, anyway, only the men refused. We was willin' enough, only we know'd it wan't no use. An' the ship was liable to blow up any minute."

"Well?" said Maynard in the silence that ensued.

"She did blow up, an' the cap'n an' the flag an' the ship all went down together," said the old boatswain with deep solemnity.

"He was a hard man," said Templin frowning, "but he went down with his ship."

That last act covered a multitude of sins in the eyes of the men.

"There ain't much more to tell," continued the boatswain after the tribute of respect and admiration had been conveyed by a solemn little silence which no other cared to break. "We had a hard v'yage in that open cutter, which we separated from the la'nch in the night. Food an' water give out by the end of a week, an' afore we reached Honolulu, or was picked up by a steamer headin' that way a day's sail from the port, three of the men died. Among 'em was Manuel, ship's steward. As we'd thought the old man was goin' in my boat, I had the log an' the ship's papers. We knowed, because I had seed it, that the cap'n had logged the yarn of the killing of Woywod, which he had got signed by Salver an' Manuel, the steward. Manuel was a witness to the whole thing, an' Salver to

the latter part. Manuel was pretty poor stuff; afeerd of his life when Cap'n Fish was around. So he signed a lie. When he knowed he was goin' to die, he said he wanted to undo what he had done, as far as he could, so I got out the logbook an' wrote in it what he said. He made his mark after it, an' then Templin an' all the rest that could write signed it as witnesses, an' them as couldn't, made their marks. We thought if Beekman ever did git back home, an' this charge ever come up, which it wouldn't be likely, since the *Susquehanna* was lost, it might help him to git people to believe he was innercent."

As the old man spoke he unfolded the oil silk wrapping, disclosed the logbook, and extended it to his fascinated audience. Harnash took it.

"You'll find it there, sir," said the boatswain, opening the book at a place marked by a slip of paper.

"Read it, George," said Maynard.

"I, Manuel Silva," Harnash read from the water-stained page, with difficulty deciphering the blurred, soft pencil writing.

"We didn't have no pen an' ink," interrupted the boatswain in explanation.

"Being about to die, do hereby declare before God and Mr. Gersey and the crew of this cutter, that what I signed in the logbook about the death of the mate is a damn lie, which I hope God and the Holy Virgin and the Saints will pardon me. The mate struck at Smith, although he was twice warned, and finally drew a pistol. He would have shot him if he hadn't been killed. It was self defense. In fear of the captain and my life, I signed that false Happy David. This is the truth, so help me God."

"There's his mark," said Gersey, getting up and pointing. "An' this is my signature, an' there's Templin's an' Dumellow's, and there's Spear's and Lawton's marks, which they are here to testify. Also, there's Walling's and Allen's, which are dead."

"I see," said Harnash, handing the book to Stephanie.

"Mr. Gersey, you have done exceedingly well. I want to compliment you and every one of the men," said Maynard. "You shall not suffer in the loss of the *Susquehanna.* The Inter-Oceanic will pension you or give you steady work. A sum of money will be deposited to your credit, which will enable you to be independent of the sea, if you choose."

"That's handsome of you, Mr. Maynard," said Templin. "I don't know how the other men feels, but as for me, I'm too young to retire. I'd just blow in the money, wot ever it is, if it was give to me, an' I'd rather have work."

"That goes for me."

"An' for me," cried one after the other.

"So, if you'll jest keep the money for us, so's when we're too old to go to sea we'll have somethin' laid up, it'll be all right."

”Your decision is a wise one,” said Maynard. ”As it happens, I’ll be able to offer you work. These men look to me to be all right. Can you vouch for them, Mr. Gersey?”

”They’re prime seamen, every one of ’em, an’ orderly an’ decent men. Not but what they sometimes gits laid by the heels ashore, but afloat there ain’t no more properer men to be found.”

”I thought so. Well, I own a three-thousand-ton steam yacht, barkentine rigged–the *Stephanie*–named after my daughter here. She will be due in San Francisco in two weeks. We are contemplating an extended cruise to the south seas. Have you ever been in steam, Mr. Gersey?”

”Most of my life, sir.”

”There’s a berth aboard her as bo’s’n, or fourth officer, for you, and I’ll ship every man here at double pay before the mast. You can pick one of them for bo’s’n’s mate. We’ve never had a bo’s’n on the yacht, but I’ve no doubt we can use one handily.”

”Are you goin’ to hunt for Beekman, sir, I makes bold to ask,” questioned the boatswain, his face shining.

”I’m going to search the seas until I find him, or what became of him, if possible; and, incidentally, Salver and the launch.”

”We’re with you, howsomever long that cruise,” said the boatswain. ”Am I right, mates?”

”Right you are,” came in deep-toned approval from the little group of sailors.

BOOK III

” Where there aren’t no Ten Commandments ”

CHAPTER XV

THE SPIRIT OF THE ISLAND

Derrick Beekman was astonished beyond measure at the apparition which flashed in view so suddenly far above his head and had almost immediately disappeared. So far as he had been able to view the island, he had not before discovered the slightest evidence of humanity. Indeed, the whole deep cup of the bay was so

desolate and forbidding that it had not prepared him for human beings, scarcely for life, even. If he had not yet thought about it at all, he had, nevertheless, a subconsciousness that this was probably a bare and arid rock, volcanic in origin, which the busy little toilers of the sea had surrounded with a coral reef.

He came to believe afterward that this idea was correct, and that the deep bay represented one of the craters of the volcano, one side of which had been riven, by what cause he could not determine, giving access to the ocean. In his terribly weak condition, for when he had slaked his thirst, he was more acutely conscious of his hunger, not to say his starvation, than before, he could only reflect vaguely upon these matters. But one thing was really impressed upon his consciousness; namely, that he had seen a human being; that being was a woman, and that she was white!

He fell back on the sands supine, and lay staring upward. How long he lay there, he could not tell. He had been too amazed even to cry out, if he had possessed the power. And before he could decide upon anything, she was gone. He hoped, of course, that the woman or some of her companions, if she had any, would come again; but the dark, rugged, desolate rock cut the skyline with iron precision, unbroken by anything that had any suggestion of life, as before, when he had first looked upon it. He soon awoke to the realization that there was nothing to be gained by waiting. He must get something to eat to get back some of his strength before he explored the harbor to find a way to the top of the encircling cliffs.

He moved back to the spring and, thanking God for its sweetness, this time drank deeper than before. He took off his salt-encrusted clothes, held them under the falling water until they were clean of the sea marks, and then he plunged his own body in the waterfall. As he intended to swim back to the whaleboat, he laid his clothes out upon some rocks which faced the rift-like opening and through which the morning sun streamed with tropic intensity.

As he walked barefoot through the sand along the bank of the little shallow brook by which the waters that fell from the crest made their way to the sea, his foot struck something sharp that pricked him. He bent over it at once, instantly curious. In the situation in which he found himself, the slightest thing was of moment, or might be. He laughed as he recognized it. He eagerly tore from its bed in the sand–a pineapple!

Templin had replaced the sheath knife that had been taken from him by the captain, and it hung in his belt on the rocks behind him where he had left his clothes. To get it, to open it with nervous fingers, to cut into the heart of the pineapple, to bury his face greedily in the fragrant deliciousness of it, to eat it with almost animal-like ferocity, was inevitable in so ravenous a man. When he had devoured it to the last edible scrap, he searched the banks of the creek for

other fruit, possible flotsam and jetsam from the upland; but the search produced nothing that met his fancy, for what he did find was decayed and useless.

He was abundantly thankful, however, for the pineapple. Leaving his clothing, except his shoes, which he put on again to protect his feet from the sharp rock, he climbed over the broken stone at the base of the rift and found himself once more on the stretch of sand opposite the wrecked whaleboat. The tide was evidently on the ebb, for much that had been covered before was now exposed. He gathered shellfish from the rocks, broke them open, and, restraining his hunger, which was still ravenous, partook sparingly of them.

Again making use of his boards, although he felt so much stronger that he might have dispensed with them, he swam out to the barrier reef and examined the whaleboat again. The lockers forward and aft were practically empty. He did come upon a few scraps of salt meat, which he had been unable to eat before in his consuming thirst; not enough for a meal for an ordinary man, but still very welcome, and these he devoured. There was not a crumb of hard bread left. That he had managed to eat, in spite of his thirst. There was not another thing in the boat except a boat hook, a stout pole with a brass hook on the end, and above the hook a sharp pointed spike. This point had got wedged in the bulkhead of the forward compartment, and the pole, lying under the thwarts, it had not been swept out by the seas which had broken over him. The boat itself was a hopeless wreck. The bottom had been torn out on the reef. Everything that had been in her was gone. If he could break her up, she would make good firewood if he should be able to compass a fire, and the copper air tanks forward and aft, which were still intact, might be of some service if he could ever get them off, which was improbable on account of the lack of tools. Nor would the boat hook be of much use to him. It would make a dangerous weapon in a hand-to-hand encounter, if he should be so unfortunate as to require it, but that was all.

The heat of the sun beating upon him warned him that he would best get back to the shelter of the cliffs and to his clothes. Taking the boat hook, after a last search of the lockers which revealed nothing, he once more swam the lagoon, by force of habit taking the planks which had assisted him before, although now he felt no need of them.

If it had not been for the presence of that woman on the upland indicating that the island was inhabited, he might have husbanded the scraps of salt meat which he had devoured so voraciously, but he reasoned as he ate them that there must be some way to the top, and that once there he would find plenty to eat. That woman could not have dropped from the clouds to the island. She or her forbears must have come up from the sea. If there were a way, he would find it. Retracing his steps, he presently regained the beach at the foot of the waterfall, and finding his clothes dry and free from salt, he put them on again with great

comfort and gladness of heart.

Having taken his full meal of fruit, shellfish, and salt meat on the installment plan, as it were, and having prudently refrained from drinking his fill, contenting himself with frequent sips of water, he felt immensely refreshed. He had moved slowly in his weakness and exhaustion, and these various undertakings had used up most of the morning. He could tell from the sun that it was about noon. Selecting a spot on the warm, white sand which the sun had just left, which made a warm and even a luxurious bed for a man who had lain for how many days he could not tell on the hard planks and ribs of a boat in the tossing sea, he threw himself down on his back to rest, intending to begin his explorations in the afternoon. He instantly fell fast asleep.

When he awakened, the sun had set and, looking above and beyond the rocks that circled above him, he could see the stars shining in tropic brilliance in the quiet night sky. He was greatly refreshed by that long, undisturbed sleep on the warm, yielding sand. He was also ravenously hungry again, not famished, but just healthily hungry and thirsty. It was cool in the great cylinder at the bottom of which he lay. He concluded that it would be warmer on the ocean side where the sun had beaten with full power against the rock cliffs all day long. He would pass the night there. Drinking his fill, and drawing his belt a notch or two tighter, he found a sheltered spot protected by an overhang of rock and floored with clean, beautiful sand. He recalled whimsically enough Sancho Panza's sage reflection that "he who sleeps dines." Promising himself a day of exploration in the morning, he was soon asleep again.

Before dawn he made his way back to the waterfall. He was about to explore the harbor or cup when it occurred to him to wait until sunrise. Perhaps she would come again–that spirit of the island. With the first break of day as the splendor of the tropic morning streamed through the rift, he saw again the same radiant, beautiful, golden figure. This time he called. He shouted for help as loudly as he could, not because he had any idea that his words would be understood, but he felt that perhaps the appeal in his voice might be appreciated. He forgot that in his blue clothes he was practically invisible to anyone looking down into the gloom of the deep cup, especially as he stood against the foot of the darkest wall. The distance was great, but the sound of his voice–and it was the first time he had raised it or even spoken since he had landed–sent wild echoes flying which were thrown from wall to wall in almost maniacal ejaculations. Doubtless, they sounded much louder to him than to the woman above, but she was conscious of something unusual, for she started, and as he watched her closely he saw her peer down into the depths. Her vision swept the enclosure, but evidently she had not seen him, and although he called again and again, he finally desisted as she stopped her search, perhaps concluding that some wan-

dering seabird with harsh cry might have sent those echoes flying, for presently she disappeared as before.

Well, he would solve the mystery of her presence when he got to the top of the rock, if he ever did. The first consideration was breakfast. The problem remained unsolved. No kindly brook rolled to his feet another pineapple. True, there were the mussels, but of these he ate sparingly. Then he took his board and launched out into the waters of the harbor. Here and there stretches of beach and piles of rock had collected at the foot of the cliffs which, for a large part of their extent, ran sheer down into the water, the blueness of which showed its depth. The sea water was warmer than the air in the hollow, at least until the sun had tempered it, and the bay was very still. He swam easily through it, landing at each stretch of sand or rock, also inspecting, as he progressed slowly, each fall of cliff that dropped into the water without breaking. Here and there practical ways of ascent seemed to open, but, when surveyed carefully or tried, they ended at greater or less distance upward.

After a careful survey of the entire enclosure, which brought him back finally to the beach of the waterfall where he had started on his little voyage of discovery, he decided that the only possible way to get to the top was by following the line of the waterfall. There was not a great deal of promise in that; still, as it was the only way, it had to be tried. Although he was in much better shape than when he landed, he was not in good condition for violent efforts or exercise had it not been for the impelling physical necessities behind him, to say nothing of the stimulating appeals to his mind of what must be above him.

The boat hook, which he used as he might have an alpenstock, proved of the greatest service. Indeed, he could scarcely have made the difficult ascent without it. It was fortunate for him that he had some experience in mountain climbing in various parts of the world, and that he rejoiced in the possession of a cool head, a steady nerve, and a sure foot. Part of the time he had to climb right through the waterfall. Fortunately, its volume was not great enough to render that impossible, although in the narrow places where the water was concentrated, its beat upon him was tremendous. Sometimes he would stop on a jutting rock with the swift waters roaring down on either side of him, again–in utter despair wondering how it would be humanly possible to go any further. Nevertheless, he persevered, his hope rising higher as he gradually mounted the cliff and surmounted the difficulties. Finally, he lost sense of time and almost everything else. His whole soul was centered upon a desperate determination to get upward.

At last he reached the little rift in the rim through which the water poured. Wet, bruised, cut, ineffably weary, he fell rather than lay down upon a smooth rock in the narrow ravine through which the stream flowed. He lay there a long time seeking to recover his breath, his strength, his nerve. Finally, he got to his

feet again and surveyed the place. He was not yet at the top of the cliffs, but he was in a little ravine which led to the top through which the brook ran and which presented no difficulties compared to those he had surmounted.

The ravine twisted and turned as it ran upward, and he could yet see nothing but rocks ahead of him. With the aid of the boat hook, he followed the twisting, turning rift, or gorge, mounting on easy grades until, at last, he saw the open entrance before him. To his great joy and relief, he discovered that it was framed in the rich and vivid green of the lush growths of the tropics. Trees, bushes, blossoms were there; and, somewhere beyond, a woman! Light, life, humanity, Eden!

He was so overcome that he sank down again, but, with the certain goal before him, he presently rose to his feet and broke into a staggering run. He dashed through the undergrowth, which parted easily before him. He burst his way through more tangled vegetation and finally stopped breathless at the base of a noble palm tree. Ripe cocoanuts had fallen. He had cruised in tropic waters, and the knowledge he had gained was of service. He broke one open. Not even the pineapple he had found the day before tasted so delicious. When he had consumed it, he looked about him.

Yes, this was a paradise. All about him, the farther side being several miles straight away, in a rough, circular shape rose huge walls of stone enclosing the loveliest tropic landscape his eyes had ever looked upon. The one rift in these encircling walls was that through which the brook reached the sea. He could mark its line of silver winding about through the open land before him. The country was not level. It was rolling. Clumps of tall, graceful palms rose here and there.

Upon a tree-crowned little hillock, almost in the center of the vast enclosure, around the foot of which the brook ran, he saw a little cluster of houses, such buildings as he had never seen or heard of in the south seas. Smoke curled out of a real chimney. The place had a familiar look to him. It did not present the appearance of a Polynesian settlement, yet it was not absolutely unlike such, after all. Here and there he marked little stretches of cleared land at the foot of the hillock that looked strangely like cultivated fields. Similar gardens bordered the brook. He rubbed his eyes as he stared, because he seemed to recognize grain and plants with which he was familiar.

As his vision, obscured by his emotions for the moment, cleared, he saw in the distance men and women, brown-skinned people, but a little lighter than the handsome Polynesians with which he was familiar. He heard the bark of a dog.

If this were not the Garden of Eden, it was yet a paradise to that shipwrecked sailor. Yes, a paradise, and lo, before him, even as Eve might have stood before Adam, was the woman whom he had twice seen bathed in the rays of the

morning, staring seaward from the high cliff where she had poised herself before his view as a vision–the Spirit of the Island!

CHAPTER XVI
THE SPEECH OF HIS FOREFATHERS

The woman appeared suddenly before him from behind a clump of bushes. She was more surprised than he, for, having seen her before, he had hoped and expected to meet her. Nothing whatever had occurred to suggest to her his presence on the island. Besides, he had seen many women like her, and in the familiar dress of the south seas. She had never seen a man like him; never a white man; never a clothed man. She stopped and stared at him; not in any alarm, apparently, but in great surprise and astonishment. She made no movement to approach nearer, and he remained rooted to his place, as well. Each one had time to take in every detail of the other, and this is what he saw:

A young woman obviously just passing out of girlhood. Her abundant hair was beautifully golden, throwing back in daring brilliance the bright light of the morning sun. It was not dressed after the manner of the savage Polynesian, but was neatly plaited in thick braids which were twisted around her head like an aureate crown. He was near enough for the details, and he observed that her eyes were as blue as the tropic sea, and filled with light. Her slender figure, practically entirely revealed, for she wore nothing but a wide spreading petticoat of pandanus leaves which came just short of her knees, was the very perfection of native grace and beauty, albeit a trifle immature and, as yet, somewhat undeveloped. There flashed into his mind a remembrance of a day at the museum of the Capitol in Rome, and his first sight of the marble girl, which has a high place there and which is supposed to represent the very perfection of girlhood budding into womanhood. No marble had the rich softness of texture underneath firmness and strength that the skin of this wonderful girl-woman exhibited. Even the tropic sun had only slightly mellowed the clear translucence of her complexion. A great scarlet flower was placed behind her ear in her golden hair. Otherwise, she was absolutely unadorned. She was entirely unconscious of her inadequate attire, and he was unconscious of it, too. As an ancient nymph of Greece of old, she fitted into the soft beauty of the landscape so perfectly that in his eyes, as in her own, she lacked nothing. No apparel could have made more obvious the

sweetness, the innocence, the youthful charm of this graceful, enchanting figure. That is what he saw on the heaven-kissing hill on that island.

In her turn, she saw a man who was dark where she was fair, whose thin and haggard face was covered with a short growth of new and thick beard and mustache which, nevertheless, did not hide its fineness; whose sodden, torn, blue denim clothing could not disguise the strong, vigorous lines of his well-knit figure; one who was whiter where his complexion showed, and taller and stronger than any man she had ever looked upon; whose clothes were as unfamiliar to her as her lack was unfamiliar to him; who stood erect, perhaps a head taller than she, and she was counted as a tall woman on that island, and stared at her with great interest and delight. She noticed that he carried a singular looking staff, the bright brass top of which shone in the light. He was like nothing she had ever seen. He had no advantage of her in that, except in so far as that charming girl of the Capitol was concerned. Obviously she found him distinctly pleasing.

Controlling his nerves as best he could, he stepped toward this radiant wood nymph, amicably extending his hands. Then he brought his palm up to his mouth, intending thus to convey to her that he was hungry. In return, she broke the silence by addressing him. There was something extraordinarily familiar in the language she used. He had been enough in the South Seas to have picked up a smattering of dialect, enough to pass; but her speech, while it was suggestive, was, nevertheless, unlike any native tongue he had ever heard before. He could not account for its familiarity, though he could not understand it. He only shook his head, put his hand to his mouth again, and moved his jaws. Obviously, she understood this simple sign language, for she at once nodded to him as she walked toward him.

She stretched out her hand to him, as she drew near, in a gesture that was somehow singularly European, and when his greater palm met her own daintier hand, to his great astonishment she shook it vigorously in a way totally different from that of any Polynesian of whom he had ever heard. Indeed, although the Polynesians are among the handsomest and best proportioned people on earth, there was nothing whatever that suggested a denizen of the South Sea about the girl, except her costume, or lack of it.

She said something more to him that sounded as familiar as her first address, but which was as puzzling and unintelligible as her other speech. Then she withdrew her hand, turned, and walked across the grass toward the clump of trees. She beckoned him to follow. Walk, of course, is the word that must be used to describe her progress; that monosyllable in this instance covers a multitude of graceful movements. To his fancy she seemed to dance across the sward; to float across it; her small, white feet skimming the grass; her slender, exquisitely proportioned limbs flashing in the very poetry of free and unhampered motion. He

found her back view equally beautiful in its symmetry and slender grace as the face-to-face impression.

Forgetful of his needs for the moment in his surprise and pleasure, in the sheer joy of contemplating a thing so beautiful–a purely esthetic pleasure, without thought of anything but the sweet innocence and purity of the girl, which made it impossible to entertain any profaning thoughts, at least for a clean, decent, young man like Beekman–he followed her gladly. Behind the clump of palm trees ran a path through thick growths of tropic fern and cane and blooming leafage. She turned into it, and he had some difficulty in keeping up with her rapid progress. She looked back from time to time to see that he was following, but otherwise pursued her way without stopping.

After a walk of perhaps a mile, which led through groves of palm or thickets of undergrowth, or across opens in which he noticed plants under cultivation that had a singularly familiar look, although he could not stop to examine them in that rapid progress, they reached the settlement which he had observed when he came out of the cleft where the brook pierced the wall. Their approach had been marked for some time, and the whole population apparently had assembled to welcome them.

There were perhaps forty souls gathered under the palm trees in front of the curious houses. As near as he could estimate, one-third of them were men, mainly old; one-third of them were women, the most of them past their youth; and the rest were small, quiet, anæmic looking children. The women were clad like his guide. The men wore breech clouts or loin cloths. They ranged in color from a whiteness that nearly but not quite matched that of the girl to the rich, golden brown of the Polynesian. Most of them were distinctly undersized, not to say stunted. Old men and women predominated. The children were weak looking, decadent. There was a listlessness about them; a languor greater than that ordinarily to be found in the tropics. Even to his first superficial investigation they presented the appearance of a degenerate race of people that was dying out. There was no look of vigor even about the young, but in nearly every face a physical and a mental indifference. Surely here was an arrival to have raised the wildest excitement in normal people, but these islanders were almost passive in their scrutiny, albeit they were deeply interested.

Two figures detached themselves from the group as they approached, and stood forth prominently. The first was a man of great age, venerable, white bearded, white haired, hoary, wrinkled, bent with many years and the infirmities consequent thereon. He walked with difficulty, leaning upon a staff. His fellow was the tallest and most vigorous of the rest of the men. He appeared to be the most intelligent of them all. This is not saying that his intelligence would have been marked to a European, or that his vigor would have been noticed elsewhere

in the world, but in that assemblage there was enough difference between him and the rest to awaken instant attention. The others were quite hopeless. The old man would have aroused interest and curiosity anywhere. The young man would have passed in a crowd of Europeans without notice one way or the other.

As they approached, Beekman's glance went from the girl who led him to the young man. The two, he observed, looked at each other with a certain familiarity which bespoke some sort of relationship. They exchanged eloquent glances. He noted that the young man was as much ahead of the rest of the islanders as he was below the girl. The old man who had stepped to the front and stood leaning upon a twisted sort of staff was the first to speak.

Again Beekman had that strange sense of familiarity with the words in spite of the fact that he could make nothing of them. The girl answered briefly. The young man joined in the conversation. The rest, slowly drawing nearer, spoke in brief ejaculations from time to time. Finally, the gentle tumult subsided, and the old man turned to Beekman and addressed him directly. The American shook his head. The old man, whose eyes were wonderfully bright and piercing, stared at him, evidently nonplussed by the situation. Beekman made the same sign as before, putting his hand to his mouth and moving his jaws, stretching out his arms, and then, as an after-thought, he patted his lean and empty stomach. It was obvious to the most backward that he was hungry. The old man nodded his head vigorously. He turned and spoke a few words. Some of the younger women walked off in the direction of the huts. Meanwhile, with a gesture singularly graceful, the old man beckoned to Beekman to sit down upon a rude rock bench under a giant palm.

Beekman was a man of great intrepidity, but even if he had been an arrant coward, there was nothing to cause him the least alarm. For one thing, not a single one of the group had a weapon of any sort, so far as he could see. He divined that they had gone to get him something to eat, and he took his seat readily. The old man squatted on the grass at his feet, and the others disposed themselves comfortably farther away. Only the young girl and the young man remained standing near him, and side by side.

Evidently something had seriously displeased the young man, for he spoke sharply and shortly to the amazed girl, who waved him away with a look of haughty disdain. When the women appeared bearing wooden platters upon which food was piled, the young woman, who seemed a person in authority among them, took the first platter and, approaching Beekman, dropped on one knee with a singularly graceful movement and extended it to him. He took it without hesitation, examined it quickly, discovered it to be some kind of roast meat, tasted it, striving to remember that he was a gentleman and must eat as such in the presence of these people who, whatever their origin, were obviously

so gentle themselves.

The first bite told him what it was. A piece of roast pig on an island in the South Seas! And the next platter was heaped with such vegetables of Europe as would grow in tropic lands. How could these things be there? The oasis cup in which he was, like the enclosed bay whence he had climbed, was more convincingly than ever of volcanic origin. Shut off for how many years God only knew from all connection with the rest of the world, peopled by a nondescript race whose course was almost run–the girl and the young man evidently throwbacks or freaks of nature which had reproduced types of the past, much more perfect in the girl than in the man–what was the explanation of these mysteries? Pork–how came it there? And whence these vegetables of Europe? those cakes of wheat? This white girl, these half- and quarter-breeds–how came they to be? It was amazing. In spite of his hunger, he could hardly eat at first confronted by such a problem.

A little clicking sound suddenly attracted his attention from the food as the last bearer presented herself, her hands full of fruits. He looked down and discovered that the noise was made by a pair of wooden shoes which she was wearing, which had struck against a stone. A white woman, wooden shoes, the food of Europe! He almost stopped eating, and might have done so had he not been so desperately hungry. Well, the mystery would add zest to the monotonous life of the tropics. He would solve it somehow; the key must be somewhere on the island; meanwhile there was breakfast. The food was delicious. It was somewhat embarrassing to eat with his fingers; he could cut the meat with his sheath knife, but he made unpleasant weather of it, as a sailor would say.

When he had finished, and he played the dual part of Jack Sprat and his wife, so far as the meat was concerned, for he cleaned the platter, the old man produced a rudely fashioned pipe made from some wood unfamiliar to him. With the pipe came a wooden box filled with tobacco, and one of the children, at a word, brought him a stick, the end of which was a glowing ember, from a fire in some kind of a stone and clay furnace or oven before the circle of houses. He could not believe his eyes at first, and not until he had lighted the pipe and inhaled the fragrant contents did he know that it was very good tobacco–the last miracle of that morning, he thought, but no. As he leaned back against the palm tree, smoking in perfect content, the girl herself handed him a cocoanut shell filled with, very tolerable native wine. All he needed for absolute happiness was a book of verses, her presence, and the withdrawal of the rest of the crowd, he reflected whimsically, remembering Omar Khayyam. And in all this he had not once thought of Stephanie Maynard.

His material wants having been thus attended to, the old man spoke to the rest, and they slowly withdrew, going about their several vocations. It was yet

early in the morning, and he noticed that some of the men and women proceeded in various directions, carrying what seemed to him to be rude primitive agricultural implements. It flashed upon Beekman that they were going to till the fields, which were, after all, only garden patches. No great area under cultivation was required to support that little handful. The dogs, whose bark he had heard, were as friendly as the rest. Such a thing as passion or anger or hatred seemed out of place and as foreign to the spot as they might have seemed in Eden before Eve ate the apple.

The old man, the young girl, and the young man alone remained with him. They spoke to one another now and then, but conversation with him was impossible. They could only express their interest by eager and intense staring. The old man finally came close to him and examined him. He felt of the cloth of his shirt and trousers, looked critically at his stout leather shoes, expressed great interest in the sheath knife, broad-bladed and sharp, which he handed to the young man, who also examined it and who was also much taken with the bright, brass-headed boat hook. Beekman wished that he had some trinket or jewel, something which he could have given to the girl, but, alas, he had nothing; not even a finger ring.

While they were examining him, his eyes were roving about the settlement. In the first place, he noticed that instead of being houses of wood, the dwellings were built of stone, obviously the volcanic rock of the island. There were more houses than such a number of people would require. He counted a score of huts placed in an irregular way under the trees. They were different from any South Sea island houses he had ever seen or heard of, their only point of resemblance being the roofs thatched with palm leaves. One house in the center of the settlement was much larger than any of the rest. Its gable of stone was surmounted by what appeared to him to be the remains of a tower. It was a perfect parallelogram. He recalled, as he looked at it lazily, that it was like the Noah's Ark toys of his childhood. In the front was a doorway, closed by a worm-eaten wooden door. This building, like many of the others, was overgrown with vines, creepers of which he did not know the name, some of them brilliant with gorgeous blossoms. The doorways of all the other buildings held no doors. Woven-grass curtains depended from some of them, but even they were generally drawn back. Each house was provided with a small, roofless, stone porch, a stoop, he called it, in default of a better name, and there was a singular European look about them, but a European look of the past.

Refreshed by his meal and his smoke, and tired of sitting, he rose to his feet and, followed by the trio, he strolled off in the direction of the nearest house. When he would have entered it, the old man interposed, shook his head gently, took him by the hand and led him through the village to a house exactly like the others, but on the outskirts of the settlement. He pointed inward, and Beekman

divined that here was the place allotted to him. He entered. Plenty of light came through the windows on either side, although, they were screened with creepers. The place was stone floored, the flooring covered with sand. It was absolutely bare of furniture and spotlessly clean. There was nothing to be seen, and so he tarried not at all therein.

He turned and, no one opposing, retraced his steps, the others still following until he reached the little platform in front of the largest house with the wooden door. They were all watching him keenly, and when he stepped up on the platform and laid his hand on the door, the old man, with astonishing agility, climbed up beside him, thrust himself between Beekman and the door, and with rapid speech and almost fierce gesticulation barred the way. The young man joined him also, and, frowning angrily, in spite of a cry of protest from the girl, who watched them with alarm, he thrust Beekman back rather violently. The American could have handled them both without difficulty; indeed, given back his strength and vigor, he almost felt he could handle the whole village, but he had no desire to incur the animosity of his kindly hosts, and so he stepped back at once, smiling and bowing as if to apologize for the mistake.

The little outbreak or struggle was over almost as soon as it had begun. The only person who seemed very much annoyed by it was the girl. Obviously, to the surprise of the young man, she appeared to be scolding him vehemently, and in her reprehension the old man was also included. Of course, Beekman decided that he would get into that building as soon as possible. He was growing more intensely curious as to the whole situation with every moment, and it flashed upon him that perhaps the solution of the mystery was to be found therein.

In the course of the day, during which he was left entirely to his own devices by the rest of the people, although vigilantly accompanied everywhere by the three, he tried his smattering of South Sea *lingua franca*, but without making himself understood at all. At noon he was fed again, and in the afternoon he was glad to go to his own house to take a siesta, where he now found grass and leaves piled in the corner with native cloth robes thrown over them. He slept until he was awakened by a touch.

The girl bending over him in the faint light of the evening seemed like an angel or vision. He rose and followed her without, discovering that the sun had set and that the community was about to partake of its evening meal, which apparently they had in common. They were standing around platters of food when he came, and what was his surprise to see the old man straighten up, stretch out his hands, and say something which sounded like an appeal to God, or the gods, while the rest stood with bowed heads.

In the old man's words there was something more familiar than in any others which had been employed, and as he stared at the strange scene, the clue to

the speech of the people flashed into his mind. Among other things in which old Derrick Beekman had caused his son to be well instructed had been the language of his forebears. He had been thoroughly taught to read and speak Dutch, and, although it was an accomplishment of which he had made little use, he had been too well grounded to have lost much of his acquired facility in the years since he had left college.

The old man was certainly saying some sort of grace-before-meat in a language which sounded like Dutch, or as Dutch might have sounded two hundred years ago, and which bore the same relation to the modern language that English of that period might have borne to current speech. No, it bore less relation, because it was debased by an admixture of some other language which he did not know, but he was certain that Dutch was at the basis of the speech. Never imagining such a thing, he had not made the discovery until that prayer. He at once sought to avail himself of his new discovery. Carefully choosing his words, he turned to the girl, who hovered very near him, to the growing disquiet of the young man, and thus addressed her:

"I know your speech. It is that my fathers spoke long ago."

He spoke slowly and with the utmost precision. At the first word the girl clapped her hands, broke into a smile that was as beautiful as the features that formed it. He saw the flash of her white teeth behind her red lips in the twilight and her eyes shone brighter than ever. She clasped his hand and drew it to her breast in her rapture.

"It is wonderful," she cried. "You speak as I."

As his hand touched her, as he felt the quickened beat of her heart, he was thrilled as he had never been thrilled before. It needed but the rough gesture of the jealous young man who tore his hand from hers to complete a thralldom and an enchantment which had begun, although he knew it not, when he had seen her poised upon the cliff above him in the light of the morning.

CHAPTER XVII
THE HOUSE THAT WAS TABOO

Conversation between the islanders and their visitor was practicable and possible, but at first neither easy nor fluent. It would not have been such, even to a Hollander, but when on the one side there was a certain unfamiliarity with a lan-

guage not native to the user, unfamiliarity added to by the time that had elapsed since he had made use of it, and on the other side a language which had been largely forgotten in its nicer usages, and which had been materially changed by a large admixture of Polynesian, the interchange of ideas was at first hard. Still, communication was possible and not too difficult; indeed, it became increasingly easy with practice.

The islanders, the monotony of whose sequestered lives could scarcely be imagined, welcomed the new arrival with the greatest satisfaction. However they came there and whatever the length of their stay, and to neither of these questions could they give him the slightest answer, Beekman soon discovered that they had completely forgotten even such civilization as the world had attained to when they had left it. The only traditions they possessed were first of all a vague and indefinite knowledge of God, whom they regarded as a species of Great Spirit or Deity, who looked after them and to whom they must render a certain amount of respect. They had no idea of the meaning of the jargon into which their prayers had degenerated. Only the idea of some Spirit as a power to be prayed to and propitiated remained. This spirit they called Tangaroa–a purely Polynesian name.

The only religious observance he noted was that strange performance before the evening meal. The sunrise visits of the girl to the cliff opposite the rift in the harbor whence she had a view of the sea through the opening for miles, and in which she never failed, perhaps had some religious significance, although the girl could not tell him why she did it or what was meant by it. Nevertheless, so strangely had the necessity for the routine been impressed upon the consciousness of these people that she, being appointed to the task, followed it without rhyme or reason. Beekman suspected that originally it had been a fruitless watch for some rescuing ship, the meaning of which, like the hope, had faded out of recollection with the passing years.

The second tradition that remained was that many, many years ago–how many they could not express—their forebears had landed on that island. Where they had come from, why they had elected that place, why they had never departed from it, they knew not.

The island and everything on it, with one exception, was free to Beekman, who wandered whither he would without let or hindrance. There was but one spot that was tabooed to him. Indeed, they used the Polynesian word ”taboo” when he sought to enter it, and that was the largest building with the wormeaten door.

Several times Beekman had left his hut in the night, intending to gain an entrance to that building surreptitiously, in the hope of solving the mystery, but at first, to his great surprise, he had found that his own hut was under observation

of one of the older men or women, who, indeed, could not have prevented him from doing what he pleased, but who served as a bar to action, nevertheless, because Beekman did not want to involve himself in difficulties or to wound the sensibilities of those who had received him so hospitably and entreated him so kindly. Thereupon after the exchange of a few words, he had invariably returned to his house, deferring the attempt to some more convenient season.

The mystery of the dwelling houses was, of course, explained just as soon as he got the clue to the language of the people. They were Dutch houses. He could reconstruct some of the story with reasonable certainty. A party of Hollanders, accompanied by the natives, had landed on that island in some long distant period. The time of their landing had to be removed far back to account for the present degeneration through continuous intermarriage.

So far as he could tell, there was no evidence of Polynesian blood in two of the inhabitants of the island; old Kobo, the patriarch, and Truda, the young girl. These were the names they bore, and Beekman made no difficulty about identifying them with Jacobus and Gertrude. As far as he could tell, they were pure-blooded Dutch. Kobo, the chief, was the grandfather of Truda. There was less Polynesian blood in Hano, the young man who was destined to be the husband of Truda, than in any of the rest, but that there was some was obvious.

There was character, personality, individuality about these three in varying degrees. The rest of the islanders simply filled in and made, as it were, a fading human background. They counted for little or nothing. They were industrious people in the fashion of the tropics. They had evidently brought with them the products of Holland, even including tulips; and such of them as would grow in the tropics they had cultivated and continued to cultivate. They had not failed to perpetuate all that had ministered to their human daily needs, even as they had not altogether forgotten God and things spiritual and mental.

They would not allow Beekman to do any work. He more than paid for his board by the wonderful stories he told them, gathered after the evening meal, when men and women alike smoked their curious pipes. There were no books on the island. They had completely forgotten how to read. They had lost all memory of the outside world. They were circumscribed, shut in, by the towering walls of the crater, and their lives had grown correspondingly narrow and monotonous. Beekman had to adapt his remarks as if he were talking to children, and backward children, at that; yet two at least of his auditors manifested a quick comprehension and one far surpassed the rest. The old man and the young man easily understood, the girl even anticipated.

Kobo was too old to move about much. Hano had his work to do with the rest, but by a sort of universal consent Truda was a free agent. She and Derrick, at the latter's suggestion, thoroughly explored the island. It was due to him

that certain things were rediscovered that had been forgotten, or, if remembered, considered of no moment.

With the girl as his guide and attendant he made a careful survey of the vast cup in which they lived. He was not much of a geologist, but it was easy to decide that here was the crest of a volcano, with a double cone, one being the great cylinder that formed the harbor; this, the smaller, the narrower, possibly the deeper entrance to the subterranean fires of long ago, had been filled with water from the sea through the rift. Into the other, the greater and shallower orifice, the earth had come, birds had dropped seeds, vegetation had sprung up and the oasis resulted.

There was but one source of fresh water on the island, the great spring that bubbled from a low cone in front of the palm-covered hillock where the houses were placed. The water was fresh, slightly mineral, slightly effervescent at its exit. It ran through tortuous channels until it pierced the encircling wall of rock through a rift, finally falling over the high cliff to the gulf beneath. So near as he could determine, that spring had never failed them.

The surrounding rock walls of the oasis were unsurmountable, both outside and in, in most places, like the walls of the harbor. There were two or three exceptions, however. There was an easy and practicable path to the place where he had first seen the girl performing that strange and mysterious ceremony of greeting, as it were, to the rising sun. There had been some objection to his going there. It seemed to be the custom that she and she alone should make that trip, but he had insisted and had soon acquired the habit of going with her every morning.

Through the rift a vast expanse of sea could be seen to the south and eastward. They could peer down into the gulf and mark the white water breaking on the barriers and the stretch of tossing sea beyond.

"Have you ever seen anything there?" he asked Truda.

"A few times, yes."

"What was it?"

"Smoke as from afar."

"And did you never think what it might mean?"

"How should I?"

"Have you never wanted to get away from this island?"

"What is there beyond?"

"The world."

"What is the world?"

"Love and hate, victory and defeat, failure and success–life is there!"

"I know not what you mean."

"Yet you are going to marry Hano?"

The girl looked at him curiously.

"When I am ready I must go to his house. Grandfather will join our hands. I shall be his woman."

"Do you like the idea?"

"He was the best before you came. What else was there for me?"

"But now that I have come?"

"It is different here," said the girl, laying her hand upon her heart.

"That is love," said the man.

"And do you feel it?"

This was a question indeed, which, had she been a modern woman, he might have answered lightly. There was something different about this girl. He hesitated. He was not quite sure. They had retraced their steps and were returning to the settlement. In the path suddenly appeared Hano, his face was black with jealous rage. He did not lack courage, for he stopped the two and faced the man.

"I will not have you go with her," he cried.

"I am not yours yet," said the girl, pushing forward and waving him aside. "You shall not speak so to my friend."

Beekman had said and done nothing. With a low, passionate cry Hano turned and fled. His time was not yet.

"That is hate," said the man; "jealousy."

"I understand. He likes you not because I like you and you like me."

"Yes."

The maiden walked along silent and thoughtful.

"It is a pity that you came," she said at last.

"Why?"

"I was content before."

"And now!"

"It is trouble here," she answered, laying her hand on her heart again.

"That is life," said the man, but this time she could not quite comprehend.

She appealed to him as a wild bird might have appealed to its destined mate in the forest glade ere the nest was builded. Indeed, she appealed to him as no woman on earth ever had appealed to him. Stephanie Maynard was not a girl to be disdained by any one, but there, in that idyllic oasis of the sea, his remembrance of her was as of an artificial creature, subject to conventions, hampered with clothes, fettered by circumstances. And her dark beauty faded into insignificance compared to the radiant gold of this child of nature, of innocence, of freedom.

Beekman had no idea where that island lay. That it had been unvisited, indeed avoided, by ships was obvious, and the reason was easy to discover. From

the decks of a ship, if one by chance passed near it, nothing but arid rock, surrounded by dangerous reefs, could be seen. He had climbed, attended by the faithful Truda, the few other points whereby one could reach the top of the wall. There was no gulf or harbor on any other side. The walls ran down sharply to the sea, sloping here and there, but never practicable, and about all was flung the great encircling barrier reef upon which assaulting waves ever surrounded the desolate looking peak of rock with a ring of white foam and spray, as marked and as beautiful in the cobalt sea as it was dangerous to a ship. He doubted if even a great beacon fire upon the wall would attract a ship. If it were seen it might be deemed only a recrudescence of volcanic fires. It seemed to him that he might perhaps pass the rest of his life there. Certainly he would, unless he could devise some way to get off unaided. He did not reflect that perhaps he might eventually be sought if the boatswain ever got word to New York. Even if a ship were sent to find him, the chances of success would be so faint as to be negligible. The prospect was appalling, would have been insupportable but for Truda.

Why should he not take her for his own, willing or unwilling though the islanders might be, pleased or displeased though Hano might show himself? Although she could not describe it, the girl had grown passionately devoted to him in that brief but most familiar intercourse and intimacy, that was as close as could obtain. He felt sorry for Hano in a way, the only man on the island who might have aspired to this beautiful maiden, when he found himself suddenly thrust back, his place taken by this stranger; for Hano life, which had been so fair, became horrible.

With fiery energy Hano paid more direct court to Truda. He protested vehemently to Kobo. He sought to enlist the sympathies of the other men and women on the island and perhaps succeeded to some extent, but not to the point of open resistance. The islanders looked up to Hano, but they looked up much more to Truda herself, whose beauty and purity of blood particularly appealed to them, and they were mightily afraid of stern old Kobo, who seemed to have the determination of matters in hand, and who was much attracted to this new inhabitant cast up by the sea upon their shores.

As the days slipped by, as his association with the maiden revealed more and more a simplicity of mind, a tractability of soul, a brightness of spirit, a quickness of intellect, that accorded with her absolute physical perfection, Beekman became more and more in love with her. He set himself to teach her to speak English, and she learned with the facility of a child. He could not teach her to read or write. He had no material for either, but he opened to her his well-stored mind. There was little else to do, in fact, and the two sat together for hours, the woman receiving, the man giving. The fact that she soon learned to speak in English added to the awe in which most of the islanders held the girl, increased

the hatred of Hano, and at last aroused the suspicion of the patriarch.

Beekman was careful of the feelings of his new friends, but when it came to a question between their feelings and the woman he loved it was not difficult to see that everything else must give way. In all these idyllic days the American had held fast to his purpose of getting into that building, which was the only spot from which he was barred, in order that he might solve the mystery of the presence of this people on the island, the key to which he was sure would be found there.

One circumstance whetted his curiosity more than any other thing. On the night of the full moon every month old Kobo disappeared. Questioning Truda, he discovered that always at that period in the month old Kobo spent the day alone in the tabooed building. Truda did not know why. She could not tell what he did there, but it was the custom, and when Kobo died the next oldest man would do the same. The rest of the people were not allowed in the building during the day, but before nightfall the door was thrown open. Kobo stood in the doorway and beckoned. The people had been waiting and they all, down to the smallest child, walked in. Truda came last, but when Beekman would have followed, Hano shut the door in his face. Whatever the rite that was being observed, it was evidently not meet that he, a stranger, should see it, much less participate in it.

They stayed in the building a long time, long after nightfall, and their supper that night was something in the nature of a feast. It was late when they retired. It seemed to Beekman that they would be heavy with sleep and that perhaps such a night would afford him an opportunity to get into that building. He bided his time. He was careful to say nothing whatever which would arouse any suspicions. He did not even ask the meaning of the strange ceremony when he bade Truda good night and went into his own house some months after his arrival at the island.

CHAPTER XVIII
MOONLIGHT MIDNIGHT MADNESS

In order effectively to lull suspicion, after the first few weeks on the island, Beekman had made no attempt at all to approach the forbidden building, not even by day. He rightly judged that the listless people of the island would presently tire of their unwonted night duty and the watch would be abandoned eventually.

Nevertheless, he neglected no precaution on that particular night as he stole out of his house. The tropic moon filled the sky with splendor and the island with light. It was easy for him, however, to keep in the dark shadow of the palm trees.

Walking with the utmost circumspection and care and looking about him constantly for any possible watcher, he at last reached the platform whence he had been so violently thrust on the day of his arrival. The building was placed in such a way that the platform was in deep shadow. He stepped up on it and tried the door. It did not give to his pressure, and although he finally thrust against it with all his strength, which was considerable now that he was completely restored to health and bodily vigor, it remained immovable.

He had examined the door carefully as he had passed it many times, and he now decided that it must be secured inside by bars of wood in slots. There was no latch or lock outside of it. Only old Kobo knew its secret.

Balked there, he stole around the building, taking care to keep on the side away from the moon. He hoped that there might be another entrance at the back. If he could find one it would be better for him to get in that way, rather than by climbing through one of the windows, which were much higher from the ground than those of the ordinary houses of the settlement. That method of entrance indeed presented no difficulty to an active man, especially as he would be aided by the creepers, but to attempt it was apt to attract attention and, therefore, it must only be resorted to in default of any better plan.

He followed the wall carefully, turned the rear corner of the building and discovered, what he had half suspected, beneath a screen of vines and leafage an opening set low down near the ground. He parted the vines and peered into the thick darkness within. There was, of course, absolutely nothing to be seen. He had no means of making a light. For a moment he had an idea of going back to the oven, a Dutch oven, he called it now, where a fire was constantly kept burning, to kindle a torch. He decided that would be too risky and had just made up his mind to venture into the black pit that yawned before him, not a single detail of which was visible, when a hand fell lightly on his shoulder.

He turned, clenched his fist and then let his hands fall as he saw in the shadow the familiar face and figure of Truda. She laid her finger upon her lips, turned, took a few steps away from him, looked back and beckoned to him. He followed her instantly. There was something so emphatic and suggestive in her gesture and bearing that he could do nothing else. Besides, he was never so happy as when in her presence, and she had never looked so beautiful to him as then in the shadow, seen wraithlike, against the bright moonlight beyond. The exploration of the building could wait.

One remarkable thing he had noticed about Truda was the soundlessness with which she moved. She never seemed to break a twig or rustle a leaf as she

passed. There was something fairylike in her motions. It gave him an eery feeling to see her wavering in the moonlight before him like the shadows of wind-blown leaves. He followed after, using the same caution as before. He wondered whither she would lead him and what would be the end of this adventure. He had become measurably familiar with the island paths during his sojourn of several months upon it and he soon realized that she was leading him to that point of vantage whence every morning it was her duty to watch the sea. It seemed to him an appropriate and beautiful place for a midnight tryst, and he followed her with a beating heart, gladder for every step he took. He did not attempt to overtake her. Indeed, he had tested her before, and for short distances she was fleeter than he; besides, although they were now far from the settlement, the spell of the night was upon them with all its mystery. They must make no noise on any account. He did not possess her power of silent motion. She put her feet down by instinct, he by calculation. This handicapped him. Besides, he was quite content to follow.

Meanwhile, he redoubled his care. One never knew, he thought, when Hano might appear, and old Kobo had a habit of presenting himself suddenly at unexpected moments. So they went on and on. He felt like the fabled knight of old, who pursued fleeting Fortune.

They came at last out from the shadow of the trees, left the embrace of the jungle, and mounted the rocky, narrow path, which led to the crest of wall, and it was not until that crest was reached that he joined her. The wall was broad, smooth, and level where they stood. It was a sort of little amphitheater, and there were blocks of stone, which made convenient resting places. When he had seen them before he almost come to the conclusion that it had been artificially arranged. At any rate, it was admirably adapted, both as a place from which to watch the sea and as a place for lovers' meeting in a midnight-moonlight hour.

She did not offer to sit down and the two stood side by side gazing seaward. Beneath them the cliffs fell sheer into the cuplike bay, its bottom stygian in its blackness. The descending walls of the great cylinder were lost in that darkness. Their upper edges cut a sharp silhouette against the light sky. He had tried several times to get to the points of the walls on one side or the other of the rift, but there was no passing. The place where they stood was not only the best, but the only place from which to survey the cup itself and through the rift the great sea beyond. The moonlight streamed in a broad bar through the upper part of the opening and threw the upper wall on one side into high relief. He noticed that, were the moon in a certain position, which it was now rapidly approaching, it would flood the whole cup with light as the morning sun did, but it had not yet reached that place in the heavens, and save for that one portion of the opposite wall the Egyptian darkness still prevailed.

The effect of the light beyond the rift was tremendous. They could see

clearly a stretch of the barrier reef through the opening. Mighty waves broke over it. Huge rollers fell upon it. They could hear faintly in the silence of the tropic night the crash of the tumultuous silver seas rushing through the jagged needles of the barrier. That was the only sound that came to them, unless they could hear the beat of their own hearts.

They stood and stared at the enchanting picture in silence. The communion of equal appreciation, of sympathy, of love, was the tie that bound. The same throb of passion filled the breasts of the man and the woman. It was she who spoke.

"I cannot remember," she whispered, attuning her voice to the soft silence of the night, "a morning on which I have not stood here, but this is the first time that I have ever come at night."

"The first time," whispered the man, passionately, "and with me!"

He had made little secret, none at all, indeed, of his admiration for her, but this time there was a new note of rapturous admiration in his low whisper, to which her soul vibrated. She looked at him quickly, shrinking away a little. His arm went swiftly toward her and caught her slender wrist. He drew her to his breast. In his arms she felt the heart throb, which she had before inferred. She struggled a moment and then yielded to the quick passion with which he drew her to him. She upturned her face and for the first time he kissed her. They had lost the habit of kissing, these forgotten people, and no one had ever pressed her lips before.

"What is that? What is it that you do?" she whispered when she could command speech.

"I kiss you," he answered.

"I know not that word. What does it mean?"

"It means that I love you, that I am yours and you are mine."

"It is very sweet," said the girl, artlessly. "Once more."

She lifted her lips to his in innocent invitation, which indeed he did not need.

"It was not for this," she murmured at last, "that I brought you here, although it makes me very happy, and I am glad we came."

"I, too, am glad," said the man, a little unsteadily; "but why did you bring me here?"

"It was death for you to go in that house."

"Death? Whence would it come?"

"The spirits. None goes there but the oldest man, except on the day of the full moon, when we all come in, but we stay near the door, while only Kobo goes to the further end."

"What does he there?"

"I know not. The spirits speak to him. Our faces are hidden. No one goes into the building except then. It is taboo, death. I do not know what they would do to you if they caught you there," she went on, switching from the spirits to the living with wondrous facility.

"Truda," said the man, "I have no desire to anger your gods, but I must go there. You do not know how you came here."

"Kobo says that many, many, many moons ago, so great in number that no one can count them, our ancestors came from across the sea. That is all."

"I want to find out why they came and all about them and I feel that I can find out there. The great God I worship, who has preserved me from all the perils of the deep, will watch over me. I must go there."

"But not tonight. It is the one night when Kobo sleeps within. The spirits obey him. I know not what they might do."

"Tonight," answered Beekman, "I have better occupation."

"And what is that?"

"To be here with you, to love you with none by to look or listen." He pointed to a low, broad shelf of rock. "Sit there," he said, "and I will sit here at your feet." Throwing himself down, he leaned his elbow on her knee and looked up at her. "Do you know," he continued, "there is a land far across the sea, a land of brave men and beautiful women? They speak your language. Your fathers must have come from there as mine did. I want to find out. Some day we shall get back to the world and that land, you and I. I want to know all about you."

"That you are here, that I love you, is enough for me to know," whispered the woman, caressing his head with her hand.

He kissed the pretty palm and smiled up at her as he answered.

"But that is not enough for me."

"You say there are other women in that land?"

"Many."

"How is it called?"

"Holland. It is a low country that borders the sea."

"And those women, they are beautiful?"

"Many of them."

"Would you love me if you should see others here?"

The man laughed.

"You are the most beautiful woman on this island."

"Yes," said the girl, simply.

"And in the world," he whispered. "But no matter how others might look, they would be nothing to me."

And again he gave no thought to Stephanie Maynard nor to any other woman in the lands far away beyond the seas. She smiled down at him.

"It is good to hear you say that."

"It is my turn now," he went on. "There are other men there, bigger, stronger, wiser, handsomer men than I. When you shall see them–"

"I shall never see any one but you anywhere all my life," answered the girl, simply.

"But Hano?"

"I was to marry him only because he was the best."

"And if you found one better than I?"

"There could be none."

"I shall do my best to keep you in that belief," answered Beekman. "Oh, Truda, beautiful, innocent little Truda, when I lay starving, dying on that barrier yonder, my hands red with the blood of men, parted apparently forever from all that made life worth while to me, I cursed my fortune and would fain have died, but now–"

"But now?" whispered the girl.

"Now I have passed from death unto life, for you are worth it all. I am glad to tell you so on this very spot. Here where I saw you first. Look," he said, rising and drawing her up close to him. They stepped to the very brink of the cliff.

The whole great cup was now brilliantly illuminated by the moonlight, which streamed straight through the rift and turned the black water far beneath them into a still mirror of polished silver.

"I see."

"I lay there on the sand, half-fainting, half-dead, staring upward at these grim, forbidding walls, when, as the sunlight broke through the rift, I saw you for the first time. I never had seen anything so beautiful, so dazzling to the eye. I was doubtful whether you were a human being even. I thought you might be some vision, some spirit of the air, some messenger from the sun."

"Do the men in that world whence you came all talk like you, Beek–man?" queried Truda, using the only name she knew him by.

"None," answered the man, "because none of them have ever seen you."

In such sweet and passionate converse the night hours drew on unmarked until the gray light on the horizon bespoke the coming of dawn.

"We must go back," said the girl, withdrawing herself for the last time from the sweet embrace. "I would not have any one find us here. In the morning I shall tell Kobo that I will have no other man but you."

"Let us wait," said the man, "until I have visited that building and wrested from it the secrets that must be there, then we shall tell him and you shall be my wife."

"I know not that English word yet, but you will be my man, and I will be your woman when Kobo, without whom these things cannot rightly be, shall

have worshipped the spirits and said the words."

"It is well. You say Kobo only sleeps in the building this one night?"

"That is all."

"Tomorrow we shall try it again."

"I will come with you," said the girl, "although I am very fearful."

"And those spirits?" smiled the man.

"If they hurt you they must hurt me, too; for without you," she went on frankly, "I cannot live upon this island."

CHAPTER XIX
THE KISS THAT WAS DIFFERENT

Now, Truda was terribly afraid to visit the mysterious house–one doesn't get rid of a taboo inherited through two hundred years in a night–but her timidity had been somewhat modified by the indifference with which the man she loved and whom, she revered as a god, viewed the whole situation, at least from a supernatural standpoint, and, as of old, knowledge was power.

Her intercourse with Beekman had been immensely enlightening. Latent reserves of quality, inherited capacities long dormant, had been summoned to the surface and quickened into action by his converse, and by their association so intimate and so sweet. Although the period of their intimacy had not been long, yet it was not alone in matters of the heart that Beekman had devoted himself to her enlightenment. At first he had tried to teach her everything, but, realizing the bewilderment that must follow such a process, he had striven to systematize his instruction in order that she might grow in wisdom if not in stature, and that he might introduce her gradually to the heritage of the present. The results of the process had been wonderful.

The progressive degeneration, resultant of close inbreeding, which had brought most of the islanders to so low a point physically and mentally, seemed to have been reversed in her by some curiously interesting and delightful freak of nature. It was easy to see that she possessed an unusual mind, and that, given a chance, she could take her place in the front rank of intelligence and capacity. Rarely had so fascinating a task of writing what one would upon an unmarred slate been presented to any one, and Beekman entered upon it eagerly and pursued it with zest. He was very human; he was a man, this woman was clearly

his in any way he wished her to be. There was temptation in the knowledge. He realized it, fought it down, wondering if he could or would strive against it always. He could foresee that it would grow stronger as the intimacy deepened. He feared that in the end–

To create is the supremest joy of humanity, in that effort he comes nearest to realizing the measure of the divinity that is in him. There are no people so happy as those who achieve things in art, science, literature, government, business, what you will. The loveliest of playthings, the most promising subject for experiment had been put in Beekman's hands. She was his to make what he would. Naturally, he fell in love with her, and not alone with her beauty of face and figure, her transparent purity and the sweetness of her childlike innocence, although these were enough to have bewitched any man, but with the other qualities that he saw budding and blossoming under his touch.

So while Truda could not shake off the inherited fears of so many decades in a moment, yet two things materially modified them; her growing consciousness of a self in her other than the mere animal, and her great trust and devotion to the man for whom she had conceived and entertained an instant passion even greater than that he lavished upon her. These made her the more willing to brave the mysterious terrors of the tabooed hut. She had been in the building a number of times on ceremonial occasions, and her curiosity had been sufficient to enable her by furtive glances to master many details, which she told him frankly, and which he declared would be of great help to them in their investigations.

By agreement the two met early in the evening, for the people of the island were accustomed to go to sleep with the dark, and, as a rule, an hour after sunset the place was as quiet as at midnight. The moon had not yet risen, which contributed to their desire for concealment. Warned by his experience of the night before, Beekman made no effort at the door, but, followed by his timid yet confiding companion, he boldly entered the opening at the rear. Light, of course, was out of the question. A torch from the fire was possible, but the risk of getting that was too great for the attempt to be made. He had provided himself with a long, slender staff and with this he felt about until he satisfied himself that he was in a small, unpaved enclosure, or room. Having assured himself that no pitfall or gulf was in the floor by means of his staff, he laid his hand upon the wall and walked cautiously along it.

Truda, of course, had never entered this end of the building. She had never even peeped in as she passed by, and she could aid him not at all. Indeed, she clung to him with terror, which, in spite of her efforts, grew with every silent, slow-passing moment. Beekman had an idea there must be some connection between this chamber and the main floor of the building. He could tell that he had descended below the level of the floor in entering and on lifting his staff he

discovered that the ceiling was just above his head.

His anticipations were realized, for at the far end he found an opening just wide enough to admit a man. He felt the walls on either side of the opening, and with his staff discovered steps beneath his feet, leading upward. He stepped into the opening, cast his eyes upward and discovered a faint light above his head. Assured, he mounted boldly, Truda still following, and, after a short ascent, he stood on the floor of the building at the end opposite the main door.

The moon had just risen. Indeed, he had timed his entrance with that in mind, and although the unglazed window openings were covered with a thick overgrowth of vines, enough light filtered through to enable him to see sufficiently clearly.

He found himself in a stone-paved room, about twenty by forty feet. About ten feet from where he stood a low wall, or balustrade, of the soft, easily cut stone, with which the island abounded, ran across the narrower axis. There was an opening in the middle of this wall. The floor on his side of the balustrade was raised several steps above the main floor. In the center of the end to his right, as he looked toward the entrance door, was a pile of stones, roughly squared with a flat top. On this pile of stones lay two dark objects, one on either end. Between the two dark objects on the central pile something rose above the stone table. On the further side of it blocks of stone were piled against the wall in rude semblance of a seat.

Now, there was apparently nothing in the building to alarm any one, yet Beekman found his heart beating rapidly as he stood there, the shrinking girl by his side, clasping his arm with a fierce and passionate grasp that bespoke her trepidation. It was absolutely silent within. The gentle night wind outside slightly stirred the long palm leaves, but no breeze penetrated within and no sound of their rustling was heard. It was slightly cold in the building, although the night was warm, with all the languorous, drowsy heat of tropic midsummer.

Truda was obviously in a state of panic and Beekman might have been infected therewith, but he shook himself together, deciding that action was the best remedy for the situation. He made a step toward the pile of stones. Truda clutched him more tenaciously than ever. She even threw her arms about him.

"Oh, don't go," she whispered. "It is taboo."

"Nonsense," answered Beekman, sinking his voice to meet hers, "there's nothing here to hurt us. Have I not told you of the power of my God?"

"Yes, yes, but He is far away in the sky; our God is here."

"Wherever He is He can protect me and you," he said as one may humor a child. He unclasped her arms and slipped his own arm about her waist, whereat she took some comfort. "Come, we shall see," he added.

He half led, half carried the girl toward the pile of stone until he stopped

before it. The light from the moon came stronger. He saw the tall object, the top of which had been in the shadow now fully revealed.

"Why, it is a cross!" he exclaimed, under his breath, greatly surprised at this sacred emblem of religion.

"What is a cross?"

"The sign of my God. This is His house."

"Then your God and my God are the same," whispered the girl.

"I believe so. You see," he continued, "nothing has happened to us." He laid his hand on the altar, "this must have been a place where your people who came from beyond the sea worshipped God."

It was, indeed, obvious that this was the primitive church of those first settlers upon the island where they had performed their simple rites, the simulacrum of which in uncomprehended words of prayer had alone survived the centuries of isolation and separation from their kind.

Beekman marveled that he had not thought of it before; but who could have expected to find a Christian church on an unvisited island in the South Seas, even though it was obvious that some, at least, of the present denizens thereof were white people, or had white blood in their veins? That ruined tower-like structure topping the front gable, at which he had wondered, had evidently been a belfry, and perhaps it too had carried a cross. Well, that cross-like tower had fallen away, but here, on what was surely a rude altar, in a fair state of preservation, stood the rudely fashioned symbol of the faith, even though it was made of frailer, more perishable wood.

Beekman was not a religious man, but even an atheist might have succumbed to the influences of such a place. He felt the cross reverently with a tender touch, confirming his eyesight; and then, where old Kobo knelt uncomprehendingly, following the customs of the past, he reverently knelt down. He rested his hands on that altar and bowed his head to it. After a moment, awestruck Truda followed his example and knelt by his side.

What did he pray knowingly? What did the woman pray ignorantly? The man, that he might have strength to be a clean man, still to cherish and be faithful to high ideals in a land of no ideals; to observe the laws of God in this place where there were no laws of man, to act honorably toward this sweet and trusting child by his side; to take no advantage of her ignorance, her innocence, her devotion. Yes, he prayed for strength, and he prayed for deliverance from the island, that he might take her back to her own kind, that he might add to the graces she naturally enjoyed the refinements and good things of a civilization which he alone, ragged, tattered castaway that he was, had enjoyed and knew the meaning of. And he did not forget to pray that his hands might be cleansed of the blood of man that was upon them.

The woman had not been taught to pray, that is, not meaningly. She knew of few material things for which to ask in that island so bountifully provided by nature, and the spiritual was still vague and voiceless in her heart; but for one thing she could petition whatever power there was above her, who somehow to her untutored mind seemed present and about her. She prayed that the man she loved might love her and use her well–the natural prayer of woman!

After a little time Beekman rose in better heart than he had been since he had been cast upon the island. He drew Truda to her feet, and there before the altar, confronting the cross, he kissed her, not with the passion and fire of the night before, or of the warm, languorous afternoons when they wandered amid flowers and blossoms 'neath groves of palm. There was something sacramental in the touch of his lips. There, that night, at that hour, in that temple so sacred to her, the girl became a woman. With quick apprehension she felt the difference which she could not explain.

"Your God is a very great God,", she whispered, breaking the seal of that kiss. "He shall be my God." She laid his hand upon her heart under the soft, sweet round of her immature, innocent breast. "I feel here that He has spoken."

"May His blessing be upon you, and may He deal with me as I with you," said Beekman, deeply moved.

"We must go," said the girl at last, her heart voicing the "amen" she knew not how to speak.

"Wait, I must examine these," returned the man, releasing her.

He bent toward the dark objects on the altar. The first touch of his hand told him what they were–books! The light was too dim for him to make out what books, yet as he lifted the cover and turned the leaves of the one on the right he decided that it was a printed volume. He examined the one on the left in the same way and decided that it was a manuscript volume. One would be the Bible, of course; the other, longer and thinner, less bulky, the manuscript volume that would tell the story.

He picked them both up and tucked them under his arm. Truda had told him that the church would not be entered until another month had passed and the full moon came again. He could replace them in good time. He must examine them at his leisure.

"Do you think it well to take those things from your God?" whispered the girl.

"One," said the man, "is His story. In it He tells us of Himself."

"And do those things speak?" she asked, wonderingly.

"To him who understands, yes."

"And do you understand?"

"Yes."

"But I cannot."

"I shall teach you. Come."

Quietly as they had come, they descended to the chamber of entrance and made their way without. They separated in the shadow of the church, and this time Beekman did not offer to kiss her; but the maiden took no discomfort or grief from that. She understood. He pressed her hand in farewell, and the warm splendid vigor of his clasp she carried away with her. Indeed, she lifted the hand that he had grasped to her cheek. She laid her head upon that hand when she gained her hut, where she soon fell asleep to dream of him.

He had got the precious books. He was consumed with curiosity and interest, but there was no light by which he could read them. He would not dare to stand out in the moonlight, which was bright enough at least to enable him to identify the books. Someone might see him. He must wait until the morning. He hid the books in a heap of dry fern and rushes that made his bed, and lay awake for a long time longing for the day.

CHAPTER XX

THE MESSAGE OF THE PAST

The next morning so soon as day broke he turned to his treasure trove. He could do this without fear, since one of the customs of the island, which had never been broken save the first time that he had been summoned from slumber, was an inviolable respect for the dwelling places of the islanders. None entered another's hut unbidden. The curtain dropped before the door was a sign that the dweller would be alone, and it was as strong a barrier to alien entrance as the taboo about the temple. Was the instinctive protection of privacy a heritage of the past, too?

The larger, more bulky book was, as he had suspected. an ancient Bible printed in old Dutch which he could make shift to read largely because what he was reading was more or less familiar to him. It was leather-bound, brass-clasped, and, though it was mildewed and decayed, the stout paper and the honest ink and the clear type had resisted the ravages of time in a way that would not be possible even in the best bound and printed of modern books.

He laid the Bible reverently aside after quick examination and turned to the other volume. This also was leather-bound, its pages written over in the same

old-fashioned Dutch. It was much harder to read, but a glance told him what it was. It was a ship's log book. There were weather records, observations, nautical comments, and remarks; he glanced at these and then fell to the story. In it he knew would be found the solution of the mystery of the presence of Truda and all the rest on the island.

It was with beating heart that he pored over the first page. In after years Derrick Beekman made a fair translation of that wonderful volume which he had printed upon the finest parchment paper at the most exclusive printery in the land in a limited edition for his friends and his descendants, and he presented some of the copies to the great libraries of the world, where the curious can inspect them and read the story in full. It is sufficient now to say that this was the log of the ship *Good Intent*, which Beekman decided to be the English equivalent of the quaint Dutch name. The *Good Intent* had belonged to the Dutch East India Company, and early in the seventeenth century had set sail from Holland with a good crew commanded by Captain Adrian Harpertzoon Van Rooy. With him, according to the enumeration, came his brother, Jacobus Van Rooy, and a number of other sailors, with a few soldiers and a supercargo, Hendrick Handen. The soldiers were to garrison a factory in the East Indies, and they were accompanied by their wives; and it further appeared that Captain Van Rooy had brought with him his wife, Gertrude.

The long voyage to the Indian Ocean had been made without untoward events until a storm had dismasted the ship and she had sprung a leak, after tremendous and uncontrolled rolling. They had patched up the leak, rigged a jury mast, and had driven before the wind–their only way of sailing. They had picked up, near one of the islands, a native canoe containing nearly a score of Polynesian men and women. The canoe was in bad shape and about to founder. Captain Van Rooy had charitably received the natives aboard his own almost wrecked ship. It was impossible for him to land them in that storm, and they had wit enough to see that their only chance lay in going with him or sinking.

After sailing many days, the *Good Intent* was run into the vast cuplike harbor. Evidently there had been an opening through the barrier reef at that time. They had beached her and made their way to the top of the island, which they found uninhabited, but fertile and teeming with plant life. They had stripped the ship of her cargo and equipment, and it had been Captain Van Rooy's intention to build a boat out of her when his heterogeneous company had recovered from the hardships of the terrible voyage, during the latter part of which they had suffered greatly from the dreadful scourge of scurvy; but some catastrophe had swept the hulk out of the harbor and had blocked up the opening in the reef. Beekman could not gather what it was, an earthquake or a tidal wave. Whatever it was, Captain Van Rooy had been marooned with a dozen surviving Dutch

soldiers and sailors and his brother and mate Jacobus; Handen, the supercargo; with eight women, the wives of as many soldiers, and the captain's own wife, together with half a dozen Polynesian men and twice as many women.[#]

[#] There is historic parallel to this incident in a similar settlement of Dutch and natives on the little Island of Kissa, where they were left unvisited and forgotten for over two hundred years.–C.T.B.

The book described in detail the building of the settlement. The stone was easily quarried. They were solid and substantial people, these Dutchmen. They had built their houses in that way. They had built a church, too; had endeavored to act as civilized, God-fearing Christians should. The counting of time had soon been lost. Entries in the log book, at first very full, grew more and more infrequent. There was, indeed, little to note. Nothing happened. Life was as monotonously pleasant then as now. They had saved seeds and plants, and some European animals such as dogs and pigs–the animals multiplied; the seeds, being planted, grew and offered a welcome supplement to the fruits of the tropic island.

By and by the entries were confined to records of marriages, births, deaths. The Polynesian men appeared to have died first. Captain Van Rooy, while he lived, had acted as the schoolmaster and the spiritual leader of the inhabitants. He had married them in due and proper form. Their marriages were recorded in the log book. The births of their children were entered. He had allotted to these records a section of the book which was even yet not full. It was possible to trace the lines of descent of different families for as many as six generations.

When he had died, others, obviously less skillful with the pen, less well informed, but with good intent, took up the task of keeping the records. Beekman afterwards made calculations based upon the probable duration of lives, and found that they had managed to keep the record, although more and more imperfectly, until the birth of old Kobo, the present patriarch of the island, who was Truda's grandfather–descendant of the first Jacobus, certainly. Of course all of these things did not come to Beekman at once, but gradually. As the summary of his investigations is alone necessary for this history, they are set down.

He discovered that old Captain Van Rooy had alone among the Dutchmen apparently been proud of his line, and had kept his children and grandchildren from any intermarriage with those who had Polynesian blood in them. Evidently the custom, or his habit, had become a fetish for his descendants; for in so far as it was possible, and Beekman noted this with delight, in one family at least the pure Dutch blood had been maintained. It was not possible to avoid all admixture, but there was less of it in Jacobus and Truda than in any other dwellers upon the

island, and next to her and old Jacobus in the purity of blood was Hano of the supercargo's line, although his strain did not compare with that of the woman.

The records of the first fifty years on the island were fairly complete, but after that there was only the register of marriages, births, and deaths among these people whom the world forgot, and by whom it was soon apparent the world itself was forgotten.

The joy which filled Beekman's heart as he disentangled the story from the confusions of the blurred, faded, time-worn records of the past which he had discovered, indicated to the man the depth of his feeling for Truda. He had to the full the white man's pride in and sense of superiority to any other race, and the unpleasant thought that the woman who was so impregnably entrenching herself in his heart had any large admixture of Polynesian blood had been one against which he had struggled, with not a great deal of success. To be sure, that objection did not bulk very large upon an unknown island in the South Seas; it would be no bar whatever to any irregular connection, which would have been natural enough with most men under the strange circumstances in which he found himself. But Beekman was of a different breed. He honestly loved the girl with a passion which was sufficiently great to consider her future before his own gratification. Inevitably, while pondering any real and lasting future relationship with her, he realized that her purity of blood–white blood, that is–would be a much more important consideration when they got back to civilization, if they ever did. And in the case of children, if any ever came, a preponderance of Polynesian blood might create an almost unbearable situation.

Beekman had not a particle of the spirit of the beachcomber. The good blood of decent, God-fearing America at its best pulsed in his veins. Nothing would have induced him to settle down in some lotus-eating, non-moral life of *dolce far niente* on some golden South Sea strand with his wild, primitive goddess for a moment longer than he could help. He wanted her for a wife, and a wife of whom he could be proud even before the men and women of his kind.

The sudden realization that the woman he loved was a meet and fitting mate for him, not only in beauty and intellect, but in blood as well, was wonderfully stimulating. Naturally, he had often thought of escape from the island, but he had never considered it before as he would consider it hereafter. He did not see any way as yet, but he was persuaded that a way would be opened eventually. He had confidence enough in his own ability to devise it, he thought, as soon as it was necessary. Meanwhile he had another task, and that was to complete, or to continue–for the completion would be long deferred–the finely progressing education of Truda–Gertrude Van Rooy, as she undoubtedly was.

And he could hardly wait for the moment when he could tell her of his discovery. It would not mean much to her then, of course. She was not troubled

with scruples as to relationships or any future complications. In that matter she was neither moral nor immoral. That question did not enter her mind at all. It was simply non-existent. But two facts counted. He loved her and she loved him. Nothing else mattered. In his own good time he would take her, and she would be glad to be possessed. Of course, that ceremony, so meaningless to them all, but to which as a sacred tradition from their mysterious past they all adhered, would take place, and then they would go and live together after the simple primitive way of the island, where the human beings mated almost like the animals. Artlessly she longed for the day that was to be, but she was content to await his pleasure.

He knew all this. He realized, being neither blind nor a fool, that he need only will to have, take to enjoy. And it made his restraint the harder. If he had resigned himself to life indefinitely on the island, it might, it would have been different. He might not have been able to find the strength to resist temptation so freely, so innocently, yet so passionately presented to him. But he was always seeing her in a different environment. He was always dreaming of another life in another land. He wanted her for a wife and nothing else. Some day she would thank him for this. Now she only wondered, sometimes with a touch of disappointment.

CHAPTER XXI
THE WATCHER ON THE ROCKS

The day after their visit to the church, or temple, he had imparted the story to her, explaining carefully, so she could grasp at least the salient points of the narrative, how she and those who survived came to that island. It was difficult to make her understand. She had few abstract notions as yet. The concrete alone appealed to the primitive. But she had developed amazingly, and by repetition and explanation over and over again she began to appreciate the truth. When he told her that she differed from the rest of the inhabitants of the island, she could understand that better, for she too possessed, albeit it had been latent, a full measure of the pride of the white race. She had gloried that her skin was fairer, her hair brighter, her eyes bluer even than those of Hano and Kobo, much more than those of any of the others. Now she began to catch a glimpse of the reason why, not only for her personal difference, but for her instinctive joy in it

as well.

"Then I am like you," she said at last, "of your people."

"Yes; of my race, of my blood," answered the man, and the joy and satisfaction she felt in his voice thrilled her, and satisfied her, too; for what pleased him pleased her even more.

"What is to be done now?" asked the woman as they retraced their steps from some island haunt where they loved to linger in the cool of the evening of that day of revelations.

She spoke English. Her mind, like her body, was virgin. She was excessively quick to respond to the stimulus of his teaching, and she possessed a rare faculty for language, he discovered. Conversation was easy and unrestrained; she could use Dutch words if necessary to supplement her English, and even on occasion revert to the island dialect, and he could easily understand both.

"I am going to teach you to understand the message of the books."

"The words of your God and mine?"

"Exactly."

"And where, and when, and how?"

"Listen; I have thought of a plan. I don't know what they would do to us or to me if they caught me with the books."

The girl shook her head with grave foreboding.

"They might kill you," she said, "but I don't know. The things of the God–what do you call them?–books, have never been taken from the taboo house."

"Church," he corrected.

"The church," she repeated, endeavoring with considerable success to form the unaccustomed sound. "I can't tell what they would do, but old Kobo would be terribly angry and afraid. They are all afraid of that house, as I was until you showed me a better way. And Hano hates you, anyway."

"Of course. Personally, I don't fear the lot of them," said the man, smiling and quite confident in his splendid vigor, "but I don't want to have any trouble. I don't want to be the means of introducing bloodshed and hatred into this little paradise."

He spoke unwittingly, not realizing for the moment that wherever human passions enter, even the highest and holiest, they usually make a way through which others that come not in the same category follow. His arrival upon the island, the unconscious supremacy he assumed as related to the rest, the love that had sprung up between him and this fair child of Europe, and of the nurture of the tropic seas, had brought jealousy and hate and envy in their train. There had been no crime committed on that island perhaps since it had been discovered, certainly not for generations, but now–well, he would see. He went on in natural unconsciousness of all that while the obsessed woman hung upon his words–

"That place overlooking the deep bay, where first I saw you, where you go to meet the sunrising–I know now why you do it," he broke off.

"Why?"

"That is where they used to watch and hope for the ships."

"Sometimes I have seen a black cloud far away."

"The smoke of a steamer."

She nodded, not comprehending fully, but acquiescing naturally in anything he put forth.

"But it never came near," she added as he went on.

"From there we can see not only the sea but the whole island. No trees grow near. No one can approach without being seen for a long distance. We will take the books and hide them there in the rocks and cover them up carefully. There I will teach you to read the speaking leaves."

"But when old Kobo discovers they are gone?"

"We will put them back in good time. It will be as easy to put them back as it was to take them. No one goes into the church except at that monthly visit. Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Well, the rest is simple."

Using one of the cocoa-fiber baskets with which the islanders were accustomed to carry their produce from field to house, the two books were carried to the hiding place without suspicion the next morning. Beekman found a suitable recess, rounded it out with loose stones, and made a dry hiding place for the volumes when they were not in use. The natives generally avoided that spot, but once or twice Hano or Kobo or one of the elders had visited it when the two were there. And, as they had done before, they came again in the days that followed, but the lovers were always found apparently idly scanning the sea and talking about indifferent things.

Of course, some suspicion was at first aroused by their unusually long visits to that semi-sacred spot, but it was soon dissipated in the indifferent and inert minds of every one of them except Hano. As he was whiter, so he was abler than the rest. He made up his mind that he would overhear what those two, one of whom he hated as much as he loved the other, had to say to each other in those long hours. He came in the night, searching for a place of concealment where he could lie hidden and whence he could overhear, but at first he found none. To hide on the slope that went upward to form the walls of the little amphitheater which opened upon the bay or gulf and sea at the top of the cliff was an impossibility. In the first place, he never could get there without traversing the only practicable path and being observed the whole way. In the second place, if he had found a spot where he could lie hidden, he would be so far from the lip of the wall that

he could neither hear nor see. There were no caves or crannies big enough to conceal him.

In despair, he stepped to the extreme edge and glanced down, and instantly the solution of his problem presented itself. About six feet below the level of the little amphitheater was a shelf of rock. Access to it would be difficult, dangerous, but not impossible. He tried, and, although he was not used to great heights, he made it. Such was the stimulus of his hate. He examined the shelf of rock, discovered that it ran inward a little, so that if necessary he could conceal himself even from direct observation from above.

The next day he would try it. He would get up before daybreak, and when Truda visited the place for her unfailing survey of the sea at dawn, he would be concealed. After that visit the two invariably went back to the village for breakfast. Then they returned and the lessons began. She had proved an amazingly apt scholar. She could spell out many of the words of the Dutch Bible and express most of the thought in simple English. The written word of the log book was still a mystery to her. He had read it to her, but had not tried to teach her from it then; but she had made great headway with the printed word. After she had learned enough of that, Beekman intended to devise some means to teach her to write, but for the present printing was enough. He began with the Gospel according to St. Luke, which he had preferred to the others for its clear, simple, and beautiful style. Truda not only learned the letters and the simpler words, but she also began to apprehend the great truths of religion which Beekman had held perfunctorily and sometimes lightly, but which on that heaven-kissed hill, on that forgotten island, in the midst of that great sea, he too began to appreciate and realize as he had never done before.

Sweet indeed were those hours when he sat with that old Dutch Bible open on his knee, while she sat upon a lower rock by his side, leaning innocently upon him, her head bent close to the pages of Holy Writ, following eagerly his pointing finger with her glance and imbibing the teaching that he gave her. Imbibing other things, too, for sometimes he broke off and closed the book and laid his hand upon the girl's head or shoulder, or turned her face up to his while she nestled closer to him. They spoke together, without reserve, of the deeper things of love and life. There were no conventions save such as the instinctive sweetness and purity of the woman and the stern repression of the man imposed.

Truda had become so proficient in her English now that they no longer used Polynesian at all; they spoke English or Dutch habitually. Consequently, the listening Hano, his ears attuned by jealousy and hatred and love and tumult of passion to catch the slightest meaning, could make out but little of what was said, especially as they sometimes whispered with the soft yet passionate cadences of lovers alone.

There was no wind that day. The long, slow silting of the waves through the crevices in the barrier far below only came up to the top of the island in faint murmurs. The listener could hear voices but not understand. Indeed, the clearest sound that came to him was the rustling caused by the turning of the stiff, thick, parchment-like leaves of the book. He could not understand what it was. He was greatly puzzled by it.

So the hours wore away. As it approached noontime the cooling shadow cast upon the lovers by the rock wall of the little cup in which they lingered, was withdrawn from them by the upward movement of the sun. The lesson for the morning was over. Hano heard them rise, preparatory to going back to the camp for the noon meal and the afternoon siesta. He heard them put something away in the rocks and pile other rocks around it. That at least was clear to him, his wits sharpened by his desire. He waited until they had gone, calculated the time it would take them to disappear in the clump of trees, and then climbed back to the little amphitheater.

His first business was to search for what had been concealed. Without a clew it never would have occurred to him to do so, nor had he wit or experience enough, as a higher intelligence would have shown, to go directly to the spot where the loose stones were piled artificially; but he had the patience to leave no stone unturned, and his persistent search under that burning sun was at last rewarded. After moving some of the larger stones, the books were at last revealed to him. He was struck dumb with terror. He knew very well what they were. He recognized them instantly. He had seen them at a distance upon the altar of the taboo house.

In his half-savage way he wondered that the blasphemers who had broken the taboo had not been struck dead by the angry, mysterious god whom they worshiped. He could only attribute Truda's immunity to some powerful spell, or charm, cast over her by this mysterious visitor whom he regarded as a devil. He did not know what to do in the emergency. He realized that it was a matter for a wiser head than his, if such could be found on the island. Under other circumstances, unconsciously acknowledging Truda's superiority, he would have gone straight to her, but that was not to be thought of now. His only recourse was Kobo.

Putting back the stones which covered the sacred volumes, he turned and ran with all speed to the settlement. The noon meal was over. The islanders were resting in their houses. All was quiet, still. Without a moment's hesitation, breaking what was almost a taboo itself, Hano dashed into Kobo's house, knelt down by him, shaking the old man violently.

"Awake," he whispered. "The taboo has been broken."

CHAPTER XXII
TWICE SAVED BY TRUDA

Not being tropic-born, Beekman did not take naturally to the siesta. Nor had he been long enough in the tropics to have acquired the habit. It was his pleasant custom to lie awake during the rest period, day-dreaming of the princess of this enchanted island. Sometimes he never even dozed, the occupation was so entrancing. It happened on that afternoon, however, that he had fallen asleep.

He was not left to his own devices. He was awakened to find himself covered with something thick and heavy, and his first movement was greeted with savage cries which came to him through a grass mat which had apparently been thrown over his face. At his first movement he was conscious that men had thrown themselves upon him from every side. Half choked and weighed down by a number of heavy bodies, he yet struck out blindly with arms and legs. He was a powerful man, but he was taken at a disadvantage, and, although he upheaved himself mightily and strained like a Titan, he did not succeed in getting free.

On the contrary, a rope made of cocoanut fiber was passed around his legs. The slip-noose was tightly drawn and, almost before it could be told, his feet were bound tightly together. He perceived that it was useless to struggle longer. As he ceased his wild efforts the cloth was dragged from his face and he instantly sat up. Before he had time to do more than recognize the angry faces of the men on the island, another rope was slipped over his shoulders. As before, the noose was drawn tight, and before he could prevent it his arms were bound and the rope wrapped around his body again and again.

He was as helpless as a trussed fowl. His first thought as he stared at the passion-convulsed faces of the men was of shame that he had allowed himself to be so easily caught; his second emotion was surprise. What had transformed these peaceful, listless, indifferent, gentle, decadent islanders into truculent savages? For the moment he did not connect the violation of their sanctuary with his present plight. The whole male population of the island had fallen on him; even the larger boys had joined their elders. If he had been on his feet and ready and possessed of a weapon, even his sheath knife or his boat hook, perhaps he

could have beaten them off, for there were fewer than a score of them, and the only one who had any real vigor in him was Hano. Obviously, he had taken the lead in the capture. Hano's determination and old Kobo's cunning had brought about Beekman's undoing.

The American could not yet regard the situation as particularly serious. Passion and anger and bloodshed were so far removed from any possible association with those islanders that Beekman could only consider his present plight as a temporary inconvenience. To be sure, Hano hated him, but the others not only liked but almost revered him. He would not have been human if he had not been glad to see Hano limping from a particularly vicious kick he had received. Indeed, he laughed as he saw him rubbing his leg, and that only infuriated the young man the more, which was not wise on the part of the prisoner. He had yet to learn that even perverted religion, especially when it serves as a cloak for other passions, as in the case of Hano, could change the natures of men and bring about the most malefic consequences to those who stood in its way. It is always the abuse of the useful that is most dangerous.

About the only thing really strong in the lives of these islanders was their curious mixture of Polynesian idolatry with degenerate recollections of Christianity. Like a half-truth, their religion in theory seemed to combine the worst elements of the savage inheritance with debased Christianity. They did not indulge in the savage rites of the South Seas, those hideous practices had been abandoned under the influence of civilization, but in theory at least the worst features of that religion persisted.

The only laws upon the island were, first, the law of ceremonial religious observances, which was as easy as it was uncomprehended, and which no one had any interest in violating; and, second, the law which made a taboo of the temple, which was infinitely more important. The more unfamiliar they were with the temple, the more dread with which they regarded it. The mysterious taboo was the most powerful thing in their lives. The temple was, as it should be, the house of their god, but there was a mixture of the stern severity of the Christian–for Christianity was held very strenuously in the days in which that Dutch ship blew to the island–and the tremendous diabolism of the Polynesian Tangaroa. The rule of that compounded god was fear-begotten, a rule of consuming fire. They had by no means learned the perfect love which would cast it out.

When Hano whispered into the ear of Kobo that the taboo had been broken, the shrine had been violated, the sacred–he did not call them books–objects, the property of the god, had been taken from the temple and made a plaything of by the stranger and Truda, the old man's soul fainted within him. So soon as he had realized the purport of Hano's excited words, he had almost collapsed. It had

needed the young man's fiery urgency to awaken him to the obligation of doing something.

Just what should be done did not come to old Kobo. It would have to be debated by all the worshipers of the god–the men, that is. But one need was obvious. The blasphemer, the violator of the sanctuary, the breaker of the taboo, must be secured before he could work further mischief. Doubtless into these dark and degenerate minds had lodged the idea–among the very oldest of all religious ideas–of propitiation. They could perhaps placate the angry god and avert from themselves the consequences of his anger by punishing the man who had dared to raise his hand against divinity.

It is on record that One Who His enemies said sought to make Himself equal with God was punished by man, and perhaps for the same reason.

That idea, so agreeable to the natural man, had been strengthened by the struggle which had resulted in the binding of the criminal. Conflict always calls for punishment of the vanquished. Without shedding of blood is no remission. Battles are measured by butchers' bills, and the fact that men fight makes the butcher a welcome assistant.

The women and children of the settlement, not having been summoned to the conference of men which Hano had brought to Kobe's hut, were not fully aware of the reason for the commotion. They clustered about the door of Beekman's hut, peering within, but not daring to enter. Indeed, Hano, at Kobe's direction, drove them back with the curt statement that the men would explain to them later what was the cause of their action and what was toward.

Beekman's glances had eagerly searched the little huddle of women at the door, but he had not found Truda among them, for a very good reason. At Hano's suggestion, Kobo had bade two of the sturdier women keep Truda a close prisoner in her own hut until he should decide what was to be done with her for her participation in the dread crime.

Speaking in Dutch-Polynesian, of which he had easily learned enough for ordinary purposes, Beekman now demanded to know the meaning of the extraordinary assault upon him. The men had been consulting in low tones in the far corner of the hut. Old Kobo detached himself from the group and came forward, Hano following and standing next to him.

"You have broken the taboo. You have taken the treasures of our god. He will be angry with us. We have decided to kill you in order that he may not hurt us."

The conclusion was strictly in accord with the ancient law of self-preservation.

"If he is angry with me," said Beekman at once, perceiving the seriousness of the situation, "he will hurt me, not you. Therefore you have no reason to be

afraid. Let the god himself kill me."

It was shrewdly suggested, but there was not wit enough, except perhaps in Hano, to follow the reasoning. Kobo shook his head.

"You have broken the taboo. Who breaks the taboo must die. It is the only way."

There was a simple finality about the statement of the old semi-savage which at last struck terror to Beekman's heart. His blood ran cold. He knew what atrocities were sometimes perpetrated under the name of religion in the South Seas. The situation suddenly seemed to him to be absolutely hopeless. Arguments and appeals flashed through his brain, came to his lips, yet something withheld utterance. In the first place, he was a white man and he would not beg his life of these mongrels. In the second place, the only argument he could think of had been used without effect. Then his mind flashed to Truda. Was she involved? How did these islanders learn of the theft of the books? for of course he knew instantly that was what Kobo meant. And did they know of her part in the adventure? Her absence was convincing proof that she too was suspected and in mortal peril. He must find out for sure, if possible, before anything else.

"You say that I have taken things belonging to the god?" he began.

"Yes, and broken the taboo."

"What things?"

"Things from the taboo house, that lay on the stone at the other end. I have seen them there every time I have gone in."

"And I also," said Hano.

"And we," chimed in the men.

"Where are they now?"

"Hidden in the rocks," answered Hano, "where Truda watches the rising sun."

"How do you know that?"

"I saw them there. I heard you and Truda this morning."

"Impossible!" cried Beekman. "Where were you? I looked everywhere."

"I was hidden below on the face of the rocks. There is a place there."

"I see," said Beekman. "And Truda, what of her?"

"Did she go into the temple?"

"No," said Beekman, quickly and unhesitatingly, lying like a gentleman to save her if he could. "I went alone. She was afraid. She tried to stop me. She begged me not to."

"She should have told me," said Kobo, "but because she did not go, she shall not die."

"Give her to me," cried Hano. "This stranger has cast a spell upon her."

"I shall know how to free her," said Kobo.

"Meanwhile, may I ask what death is designed for me?" asked Beekman.

"You have said it," answered Kobo gravely; "the god will determine that."

He nodded his head to the men. Six of them stepped over and picked Beekman up. They bore him out into the open enclosure. At Kobo's direction Hano summoned the women. Truda did not come, and neither were her guardians present. As those women who had been detailed to watch her were among the most prominent in the settlement, Beekman, lying on the ground with his head and shoulders against a tree, noted their absence. As the islanders assembled Kobo waved his hand for silence.

"This man," he said, not without a certain dignity, "was cast up by the sea upon our shores. We received him kindly. We gave him a house to live in. We supplied him with things to eat. He was free to come and go. In return for our welcome he has broken the taboo." A wail of horror came from one old woman. It was caught up by the others, and even the men and children joined in. It was quite evident that the crime was a real one in the eyes of the people and there would be no hesitation in the most extreme methods. "The god will be angry with us," continued Kobo when he could be heard again. "Perhaps we can please him by giving him this breaker of the taboo."

"What would you do, O Kobo?" asked one of the older women.

"Lay him as he is, bound hand and foot, in the taboo house for the god to dispose of. It wants ten days before we worship in the temple. We will leave him there during that time, bound, alone. If he is alive then we will know the god has pardoned him."

"But if he should get away?" asked one of the men.

"We will be the arms and eyes of the god. We will watch every moment the taboo house."

"And food?" asked one.

"And drink?" asked another.

"If the god wishes him to live, he will provide," said the old man simply. He signed to the bearers. "The taboo is broken, so all may come in this time."

They picked up the absolutely helpless Beekman and bore him to the temple. Kobo unbarred the door. He stood hesitating a moment on the threshold. The taboo was broken indeed, or had been, yet it was a great thing he was about to do. He could only trust to the god that he would understand. With a muttered jargon of prayer, at which the people sank shuddering to their knees, and which to Beekman was grotesquely and horribly Christian, he finally entered the building, beckoning the bearers, who followed, stepping hesitantly and fearsomely with their heavy burden. After them crowded all the rest.

"We will lay him there," said Kobo, pointing to the opening in the railing or balustrade.

He stepped forward to give direction, and as his eyes became accustomed to the dim light he discovered on the altar or table the two books that Hano had declared he had seen in the rocks. He stopped, petrified. Hano had lied. There had been no profanation of the temple. He had broken the taboo himself, and without cause. His veins turned to water within him. He staggered and would have fallen but for the strong arm of the younger man.

"There," he whispered, pointing, "the things of the gods are there. You have lied."

It was Hano's turn to be stricken with terror. Had his eyes deceived him? Could those objects have been duplicated? What mystery, what magic was here? He was younger, stronger, and the sooner realized the necessity for action.

"Out!" he cried, waving his hand.

"Shall we leave him?" asked the first bearer.

"No; bring him, and out, everybody, lest the god strike and spare not."

He suited action to word. Half carrying old Kobo, he drove the rest out of the temple. Kobo dropped on the threshold. Hano had nerve and courage to swing the door, and then he backed up against it, ashy with terror. Old Kobo rose to his feet.

"People of the island," he cried shrilly, "we have broken the taboo. Hano has spoken falsely. The things of the god are there. O Tangaroa, pardon." He bowed his head in his hands. "Woe, woe, woe!" he cried.

For a moment the islanders stood silent, and then they joined his lamentations.

"Perhaps you will release me now," said Beekman at last.

Old Kobo's hand went out to the lashing.

"Forgive me. This liar will take your place."

"Wait," said Hano, his courage coming back. "I saw the things of the god in the rocks. I heard them moving in the hands of this man and Truda. She can testify."

"Where is she?" asked Beekman.

"Let someone go for Truda. Let her be brought here," said Kobo.

One of the younger women started in the direction of Truda's hut, when, from a clump of trees to the right of the temple, around which the path ran, appeared the two women who had been appointed to watch Truda. The girl herself was between them. Each one clasped an arm. She came along the path without reluctance, her head held high. She shot a glance at her lover which reassured him. He instantly realized the explanation of the happy chance which had saved him, temporarily at least.

Truda had somehow escaped, had got the books, entered the church through the rear doorway as before, and had replaced the books on the altar.

What it had cost her he could well understand. Old Kobo stared at the three in amazement.

"How did you come here?" he cried to the two women. "I told you to keep Truda in her house."

"While we watched the door, O Kobo, she escaped through the window. When we found out we searched for her."

"And then?"

"We saw her–" the woman hesitated.

"Where was she?"

"At the back of the taboo house," Answered the younger woman in awe-struck voice, "with the things of the god in her arms."

"You see," cried Hano, triumphantly, "I told you the truth. She went to the rock to fetch them. She put them back."

"How did she get in?" asked one old man.

"There is an entrance at the other end, vine-covered and forgotten," answered Kobo, his eyes sparkling. It had been shown him as a boy, and had never been used.

"What then?"

"We were afraid to follow. When she came out we seized her and brought her here."

"What have you to say, Truda?"

"It is true," answered the girl.

"What is the use of questioning Truda?" interposed Beekman, stopping the confession which trembled on her lips. "I took the books; I hid them in the rocks. Through them your God, which is my God, speaks to me. I tried to teach Truda His speech. I will teach you all if you will free me."

"Let us put him back in the taboo house," cried one of the oldest.

"Yes, that will be best," cried a second.

"Leave him with the god," urged a third.

"I, too," cried Truda; "I also–"

"Be silent!" appealed Beekman in the language they two alone understood. "If you love me, say nothing. Alive, you can help me. Dead, and we die together."

"What do you say?" asked Kobo of the men.

"I have a suggestion to make," said Hano.

"What is that?"

"You thought that my tongue was doubled, that I did not speak the truth–"

"We were wrong," said Kobo.

"Let me speak now," said Hano.

"Let us hear him," cried one after another.

"Out of the deep this man came to us. Doubtless his God brought him to

our shores. Let us commit him to the deep again. Doubtless his God can take him away."

"What do you mean?"

"Let us cast him down from the cliff into the gulf below."

"That is well," said Kobo.

"It is," shouted one after another.

They loosened the lashings around Beekman's feet, lifted him up, and forced him, surrounded by the men, along the path that led to the little amphitheatre. Everybody followed. This was business of the highest importance, and until it was settled, nothing mattered. When they got to the little amphitheatre, in which all crowded who could possibly enter, the lashings around Beekman's feet were drawn tight again.

"What do you mean to do?" he asked.

"Thrust you over the cliff."

It was a fall of perhaps over five hundred feet sheer down. If he were thrown far enough he might fall into the water, but even that would kill him. In all probability he would drop to the rocks. There was that shelf of which Hano had spoken where he had concealed himself. By bending forward from his place on the brink, Beekman could see it. So could Hano.

"Not here," said the latter, "but there."

They dragged Beekman over to a spot where nothing broke the descent.

"Bring staves for all," said Kobo with obvious meaning.

All the men must join in the thrust, it seemed. It would be the only way to avert the anger of Tangaroa-God from them all. Meanwhile they laid Beekman carefully back against the rocks while some of the men ran back for long pieces of stout bamboo or cane. Their intent was evident. When the time came they would each one seize a staff and together they would thrust him over. So all would participate, and from all the vengeance of the gods would be turned away.

"Truda," began Beekman in that language which they alone understood, "there is no help for it. I must die. It is not the end I expected. I hoped to get away from the island, to take you with me, to teach you of the things that lay beyond, to make you my wife. I love you, facing death as I am I say it with all my heart. You can do nothing for me. But no matter what happens to me or what happens to you, there is another life. I have tried to tell you about it and I shall wait for you there."

"And I love you, Beek-man," answered Truda in return just as simply as he had spoken. "You know that. I would gladly give my life for yours, and I shall follow very soon. You will wait for me?"

"Stop them," said Hano at last.

"Let him talk with his God, if he will, in these last moments," answered

Kobo.

"But not with Truda," persisted Hano.

"When Truda is yours you can make her forget what she had learned."

"But I will never belong to Hano," cried Truda.

With a quick movement she broke loose from the women who held her on the outskirts of the crowd. She leaped up the wall of the amphitheatre that wound around a little distance away from the rest, and there she stood poised.

"Truda," cried Beekman, who was placed where he could see her every movement, "what would you do?"

"Stop," cried the girl in the language of the island, as Hano started for her, followed by the others coming up with the staves. "Let no one come near me. Hano and Kobo, stand forth."

Such was her imperious emphasis that her command was at once obeyed. The two addressed separated themselves from the crowd, which halted, but Hano again started for the girl.

"If you come nearer, I shall leap over," she said quickly. "Stand where you are, Hano."

He stopped in the face of this threat and stood as if rooted to the spot.

"Beek-man has broken the taboo," said the girl in the deep silence. "Perhaps you do right to punish him–"

"O Truda," groaned Beekman under his breath, but if the girl heard, she made no sign.

"He came from the deep. You may return him there, but he came alive, and you must return him alive."

"What do you mean?"

"You must send him down through the place where the water falls. You must unbind him. You must give him what he brought, the sharp thing that cuts and the bright thing that strikes. You must give him food."

"But he will come back," said one.

"You can watch the place."

"We can wall it up with stones," said Kobo.

"Will you give this man life?" cried Hano.

"If you do not," continued Truda, "if you do not swear by the god to do as I say–"

"What then?"

"I will throw myself over the cliff before your eyes."

"O Truda!" exclaimed Beekman again, but in a different way, for now he understood.

Now the most determined character of them all was Hano. There was an assurance in the girl's words that carried conviction to his mind, at least. If she

threw herself over the cliff, she would be hopelessly lost to him, and the fact that he could wreak vengeance on Beekman would not bring her back.

"Let it be as she says, O Kobo."

The old man was naturally inclined to mercy. The fierce passion of the morning had spent itself. The taboo had been broken, but nothing had happened. The things of the god were back in their places. Truda's suggestion might have persuaded him without the threat. But the threat had persuaded Hano.

"It shall be as you say," answered Kobo.

"Swear it," cried Truda.

"By the broken taboo, by the god whose things you have put back, by the great Tangaroa himself, I swear it," cried Kobo, turning to the others.

"We all swear."

Truda instantly stepped back from the verge.

"And you will marry me, Truda; you will be my woman?"

"We shall see as to that when you have disposed of Beekman," said the girl. "You will wait for me," she said to Beekman; "not in another life, but there." She glanced downward.

Beekman nodded. He understood.

"What do you say?" asked Hano jealously.

"I only gave him a message for his God," answered Truda.

CHAPTER XXIII

TRUDA COMES TO HIS PRISON

And thus it came about that Beekman once more found himself lying on the strand near the waterfall at the foot of the cliff in the great cup-like harbor where he had landed on the island not many months before. Although the lashings had not been cast off by those who had lowered him to the strand, yet they had been loosened in the descent, and he realized that by patient application he could presently free himself from his bonds. That, of course, was the first thing to be done.

When he had finally cast off the loose piece of coir rope, he rose to his feet and looked about him. The place was entirely familiar. It had been etched upon his consciousness in those agonized days when he had dreamed of getting to the top. There had been no change whatever. Indeed, since the blocking up of the

original opening through which the *Good Intent* had been hurled so many years before, there had been no change, unless the slow disintegration of the rock had slightly altered the face of nature.

He had been dropped by the lowering ropes to the very spot where he had found the pineapple bedded in the sand. He had no immediate need of any such providential happening now, for behind him lay one of the cocoanut-fiber sacks or bags which had been packed full of food enough to last him for a week. Truda had insisted upon that, and they had grudgingly consented, all the women in the settlement being more or less openly on her side. But they had failed to give him either boat-hook or sheath-knife.

Beekman had no shelter, but he could get along very well without that. Here were food, water, liberty, life, within the circumscribed limits of the great cylinder. He had stepped back to the extreme edge of the stretch of sand, the tide being low, and scanned the bed of the creek up which he had once before climbed to the top. In the narrowest part he could see the natives piling up huge stones, making an impassable barricade. Of course, any considerable increase in the quantity of water flowing down would eventually roll them away. The island must have a rainy season, but unless or until it came, that wall of rock, especially if it should be guarded, as he fancied it would at first, would render ascent to the upland impossible.

There was absolutely nothing he could do. Unless help came to him from above, or from the sea, he would die of starvation eventually. He did not fear that, however, because he believed that Truda would find some means to get food to him. Indeed, going over the incidents of the afternoon, he marvelled at the resourcefulness and courage she had displayed. If it had not been for her escape from her guardians, and her replacement of the books in the temple, he would be now lying there bound hand and foot, slowly starving to death.

He knew how hard it must have been for Truda to have broken the taboo a second time, and alone. That was the first bold action which had saved him, and the second was when she had stood on the brink of the cliff and threatened to cast herself down unless he were lowered to the beach rather than thrown bodily over. And she would have done it, too, as he very well knew. That was the second time that day she had saved his life. True, she had been compelled to make some kind of a promise to marry Hano, but he knew her well enough to realize that she would never keep it. Love, such as had not been known upon that island for two hundred years of quiet mating, had entered her heart, and she was made of the stuff that would willingly die rather than profane it.

She said that she would join him on the strand, and he was confident that somehow she would, and that her presence would bring him fortune; yet, what would happen if she came? His own condition would be changed for the worse

immediately, since he would have no friend above to look after his interests. It was to her influence alone that he could look for food. If she were with him, her open defiance of Kobo, Hano, and the others might, and probably would, result in the abandonment of them both. Yet, illogically, but naturally, he longed for her presence as never before. He was proud of her wit and courage, and he longed to tell her that–and other things. He did not think any of the islanders, unless it were Hano, would dare descend into the harbor, which he shrewdly suspected was as taboo as the temple. If any did come, they would have to come one by one, and he could deal with them, if necessary.

The day was almost gone. Before nightfall he was minded to do one thing. He clambered around the rocks to the outer edge of the island and stared eagerly at the barrier. Yes, there on the reef, where it had been hurled or lifted by an unusually great wave or tide coming at the same time, lay the wreck of the whaleboat. It had been firmly fixed on the jagged rocks of the barrier, and as it was just above the assault of any but the highest seas coming at the full flood of the tide, it was still in much the same condition as when he had left it some months before.

There was no way by which he could repair the boat and make it seaworthy. It was of no earthly use to him, yet the sight of it gave him strange comfort. It was something which somehow tied him to his own land and people. He waded and swam out to it and looked it over carefully, observing before he did so that the copper tanks which he had taken from the boat and put in the niche where he had slept the first night on the island, were still there and apparently in good condition. With some vague idea that it might be well if he replaced them in the boat, he swam back across the lagoon, launched the tanks, which floated, proving that they were air-tight; paddled across the lagoon a third time and set them back in their compartments. In one instance, the after end, he found this difficult as he had been compelled to break the catches aft to get it out, but at the other end, the bow compartment, he experienced no trouble. The boards had warped, but by exerting all his strength he got the clamps caught and the tanks replaced. Exactly why he did it, or what he expected from it, he could not tell, but, at any rate, it was occupation. The boat could not take anyone anywhere, but, unless the clamps broke, the tanks would keep it afloat, even if awash, if it were ever washed off that reef.

He got back to the ledge when night fell with the startling suddenness of the tropics. He had made up his mind to sleep where he had slept before: beneath the ledge; but thought better of it. He decided that he ought to be where he had been seen last in case Truda should make any effort to communicate with him. He reasoned, naturally enough, that such an effort would have to be made in the dark to avoid observation. The air at the bottom of the great cylinder, its sides rising

about him like the walls of a tower, was cooler than he had been accustomed to. He emptied the mat-like sack, or basket, piling its precious contents high up on the rocks, above any possible tide, and, after he had made a very frugal meal, although he was ravenously hungry after all he had gone through, he ripped the mat apart, hollowed a place for himself in the sand, drew the mat over him and lay there thinking; and, for the first time in days, Stephanie Maynard came into his mind!

Now, there was no disloyalty to Truda in his thoughts of the other woman. He realized that he never had loved her, and he was pretty confident that she had never loved him. The marriage which had been arranged had been one of convenience, purely. He was glad that he had escaped; glad for every experience except that terrible one in the cabin of the *Susquehanna.* He wondered if, in her heart, Stephanie would not be glad also, and George Harnash. Little things which he had not noticed at the time bulked larger in his imagination now, and he wondered if his friend had not been more interested in his former betrothed than any one had suspected. He thought whimsically that it would be a strange thing if Stephanie and George married eventually, and then his thoughts went further.

Suppose they could prevail upon old Maynard to consent, they might come to search for him as a wedding trip on the great Maynard yacht, the *Stephanie.* It would be strange, he thought, lifting his head and peering seaward, to wake up some morning and find the yacht in the offing. He knew that was absurd. If he were to get off that island, it would have to be by some other means, and the possibility of escape had grown much fainter since his present misfortune. Well, whatever had been back of that shanghaiing process, and he was as bitterly resentful over it as if it had not brought him happiness, it had resulted in his meeting with the sweetest and most innocent woman on earth, whose love for him had led her to the most amazing sacrifices and exhibitions of courage.

It was a singular commentary on the man's mind that he was as bitter against the men who had shanghaied him as if only misery and sorrow had come to him. He had promised himself many a time if he ever did get free and could find out who was responsible, it would go hard with that man. He would not let the law take charge of his vengeance. He would make it a personal matter. One does not live in the forecastle of a hell-ship like the *Susquehanna*, where there is no law but that of force, and no right but that of the strong, without getting a new view of individual relation to individual and to the mass. Nor does one live in a tropic island with no law at all, except the taboos of vague superstition, without intensifying that personal element.

Presently, Beekman's thoughts turned to Truda. Lightly, he forgot Stephanie. All his hardships, the horrors of that forecastle, the tragedy of that

cabin, even the events of the day, faded from his mind. He saw her white-skinned, golden-haired, blue-eyed and passing fair. He recalled her passionate devotion, her wit, her courage. He stared upward to the top of the cliff, cutting a black line across the stars at the place where he had seen her for the first time. He could shut his eyes and see her still. He tried it again and again, and by and by his eyes did not open. He fell sound asleep.

He was not aware that in the still watches of the night a figure bent over him. Someone knelt beside him. A listening ear was held close to him as if seeking for reassurance that he breathed, and then there was a stealthy withdrawal and the figure slipped down upon the sand and sat watching him. It was not until the sun struck through the entrance upon his face that he opened his eyes. The first object that met his vision was Truda. She was half seated, half reclining on the sand just out of touch, looking at him as she had watched throughout the night.

"Truda," he cried, raising himself at once and throwing aside the mat, "how did you come here?"

She pointed to the cliff, through which the brook plunged. He noticed a long rope hanging down, buffeted by the leaping waters into which it swayed back from time to time.

"Amazing," he cried, rising to his feet and stepping toward her.

"Do you think anything could keep me there when you were here?" said the girl, stretching out her hands to him, and then he noticed, for the first time, that her palms were cut and scratched and had been bleeding. Her knees, her feet, were in the same sorry condition. He sank down on his knees before her. He took the hands which she yielded to him without question and pressed them tenderly against his cheek.

"You have hurt yourself," he said, that petty little fact bulking larger at the moment than any other; "and for me, my poor child."

"The joy in my heart," said the girl, laying one bruised palm beneath her tender breast, "when I saw you asleep and safe here, made me forget this."

"Why didn't you wake me?" asked the man, looking up at her.

"You were so tired," said the girl, laying her other maimed hand on his head.

He could feel her wince as she did so. He had opened a cocoanut the night before. The broken shell lay at hand. He lifted her up, carried her to the bank of the brook, set her poor, torn feet in the cool water, and, with the shell, laved her hands and knees. It was all he could do. He had nothing else. Then he bent and kissed her lips, her hands, her feet. He strained her to his breast.

"You shall not walk a step or carry a thing until those precious hands and feet are well."

"They are well now since you kissed them. See, I feel no pain."

She took him in her arms, in turn. What mattered that the white hands left little blood marks on his shoulder?

"First, you must eat," said the man, "and then you must tell me how you came."

He pressed upon her the cooked food and fruit which she herself had forced the islanders to provide.

"We may not get any more when this is gone," she said.

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," he quoted recklessly; "eat now."

She did not understand, but the command was simple, and she obeyed. Whatever her lover said was right, of course.

"Now, tell me," he said, when they had stayed their hunger, "how did you come here?"

"They put me in the house with the two women to guard me after they had lowered you down here. I was to be married to Hano today. I would have died rather than that. I had told you I would join you here. I persuaded the women. They like you, Beek-man. They don't like Hano. They let me escape. I went to your house, and brought the bright-tipped staff and the thing that cuts. I crept down the brook where you had come up."

"There was no watcher?"

"Yes."

"Did he let you pass?"

"He could not help it."

"What do you mean?"

"I struck him with the staff, and–" She shuddered and hid her face in her hands.

"Don't cry over that," said the man; "in all probability you only stunned him. He will be all right by now."

"I hope so. He had done nothing to me, but if the whole island had stood in my way, I was determined to come to you."

"What then?"

"I climbed over the rock wall. At first I thought I would push it down, but it was too much for me. Besides, the stones might have fallen upon you. I had a rope with a piece of wood at the end. I fastened the wood in the rock and came down. The rope cut my hands."

"And the staff and the knife?"

"I threw them over. You will find them there."

"Wait." He ran and brought them back. "Arms," he said, shaking them exultingly before her. "With these we can defy everything."

Indeed, the boat-hook and the sheath knife would be invaluable should it come to a fight in the end.

"Yes," said Truda. "In all the days of my life there has been no anger, no bloodshed on this island; but since you came–"

"Are you sorry I came?"

"Glad. You have taught me life, love. They are worth the price we have paid."

"Always a price has to be paid for these things. Whether they are worth it or not is another matter."

The sun was well above the horizon now. Truda glanced upward, stopped, and pointed. In the ravine whence the brook fell, clustered against the wall, stood the islanders. Their cries came faintly into the vast gulf in which the two lovers stood. Their gestures of hatred and scorn were unmistakable, but they made no effort to come down. The rope was still fast. Presently, they observed it, for it was quickly drawn up, and, after a time, the islanders went away, leaving a watcher at the wall.

"This place is like the temple," said Truda; "it is taboo. I think none will come here."

"But you came."

"I would go anywhere for you," said the girl, simply.

CHAPTER XXIV

"SO FARRE, SO FAST THE EYGRE DRAVE"

There was nothing they could do to better their condition, but if there had been, it was not in Beekman's mind to attempt it then. Their near touch with death, Truda's sleepless night, the condition of her hands and feet, the nervous reaction in him, warned Beekman that no demands upon her must be made yet. He decided that they should have one day of complete and utter happiness, whatever the future held for them; so he devoted himself to her.

Again and again he bathed her hands. He tore up the tattered remains of his shirt sleeves to make bandages for her feet. He compassed her with such sweet observances as he could achieve under such conditions. He told her how he loved her. He pictured what their life beyond the seas would be when they got away. He told her that they should escape, although he had no idea how. His determination was contagious. She thought nothing could he impossible, ultimately, to this god-like creature who had come from across the seas to enlighten her as to what love

really was, and she believed him.

He carried her around the broken point of rock where she had never been; he showed her the wreck of the whaleboat which had brought him there. He made her a bed for the night in the niche of rocks, facing seaward. He covered her over with the mat he had made for himself. He sat down by her side, holding tenderly the bruised palm, which really appeared to be very much better; clean flesh, such as she had, healed quickly. She went to sleep with the trustfulness of a child, yet not with the emotions of one. Indeed, her strange feelings matched his own as he sat there on the sand by the woman who was his, body and soul.

Was he minded to take her? He prayed God, as he watched through the long hours, that whether he were minded or not, he might be given strength to treat this little child of nature as he would have treated the proudest woman of his own world. Let no man think that he had an easy task, or that he passed pleasant hours. When she was sound asleep he laid her hand gently, palm upward, on the sand, and walked away, pacing up and down the strip of beach the long night through.

It was well that he remained awake, for, just before sunrise, when the short dawn had already come, happening to pass the jutting rocks around which he must go to get into the harbor, he saw the outlines of a dark figure in the gloom; seen faintly against the brighter sand, the figure of a crouching man! Something bright and slender quivered in his hand. He was peering forward eagerly. Beekman snatched the boat-hook and the knife from the sand where he had laid them and ran toward the figure. It was Hano. He rose to his feet as the American approached. He lifted his arm. Something flew through the air and cut a gash along the side of Beekman's face and then struck the rock behind him with a metallic clang, later he found it was an old Dutch knife.

The next moment the American closed with him. Hano, mad with passion, struggled desperately, but he was as a child in the hands of the white man. Beekman broke his hold and dragged the man's arms from about him, lifted him in the air, threw him headlong on the beach. He lay sprawled in a heap, motionless, stunned, apparently, his head bleeding where he had struck an outlying stone on the sand. Beekman was sorry that it had happened. He could enter so fully into the feelings of the man that he could not blame him.

He turned back and awakened Truda. He gave her the knife and boat-hook and told her to watch the prostrate man until he went around the rocks and got the ropes with which he had been bound. He did not think that Hano was likely to recover consciousness, but, nevertheless, he had never gone so fast as he did then. Lightly binding the feet and hands of the man so that he could make no further mischief, he set himself to restore him to consciousness, which he presently accomplished.

Hano would say nothing, nor would he answer questions, not even to Truda. He turned his head away, and suddenly his eyes filled with tears. Otherwise, he was as silent as a stoic on the beach before them. After the two made their breakfast on the rapidly diminishing store of food, they brought a share for Hano. Beekman unbound his hands and stood over him while he ate and drank, then he lashed him again and drew him up into the niche where Truda had passed the night. Then he examined the wounded feet and hands of Truda, and found them in much better condition, but he did not allow the girl to walk over the rough and broken rocks. He picked her up in his arms and carried her into the bay, that they might have the benefit of the fresh water of the brook. Then, and not until then, did he take time to look at the sky and observe the weather, which, if he had been a more experienced sailor, he would not have deferred for so long a period.

He was alarmed beyond measure by what he saw. There was no sun visible, yet the sky did not seem heavily overcast. A strange, coppery light seemed to filter through an unusually thin but very absorbing mist that spread over the whole heavens. The sea had been very still throughout the night. Apparently, a calm had extended far and wide over the waters. There was always some slight motion on the shore, and the silken slithering of the waves on the barrier came to him very faintly. The absence of any wind at all had aroused no attention. There was no wind now, yet the surface of the deep was troubled.

After he had washed the girl's feet and hands and had set her down on the sand, his attention was attracted by a sudden resounding crash on that stretch of barrier that he could see through the entrance. It was as if some mighty heave had raised and lowered the surface of the ocean. As he stared seaward, he thought that the mist was thickening on the horizon. It was growing darker there. Indeed, on the line where the sky and sea would have met on the horizon, if he had been able to see, it was suddenly black dark. The sun was more than an hour high, he judged, although he could see nothing but the coppery light through the mist, and the mist was in rapid wraith-like motion far above his head and far beyond the reef. He could see that clearly enough, although even yet no wind came to him.

Presently, there was another of those long, swinging undulations, which broke with tremendous force on the barrier, sending a cloud of water and spray twenty feet into the air. It was uncanny. There was no cause for it. It was as if some subterranean monster had turned over in the depths and upheaved the surface. Truda joined him.

"I never saw anything like that before, and I have seen the sea ever since I was a child," she said. "The waves broke on the rocks, but not like this. It is so still. Oh, look."

Another of the great undulations struck the reef, and a gust of wind from nowhere, apparently, and gone almost as quickly as it had come, carried the spray across the lagoon and into the still harbor. They saw it patter upon the smooth surface. They marked the wide circles spread, interlace, break. It was a warning to the man, at least.

"Some terrible storm is brewing," he said. "If it equals the promise of these waves, it will flood this gulf. We must seek shelter."

Now he had marked before–indeed, in his first exploration he had essayed to get to the top by it–a broad shelf of rock fifty or more feet above the level of the sea. It was inconceivable that any tide or storm could ever reach that shelf.

"We must go there and wait," he said.

The ascent was not particularly difficult for a man alone, but burdened as he was with the girl, it was almost impossible. He carried her up in his arms as far as he could that way and then set her down.

"You can leave me here," she urged.

"Nonsense; I'll have to take you the rest of the way on my back."

So, in the old-fashioned way by which children were carried pick-a-back, her arms and legs tight around him to leave his hands free to help him climb, he scrambled up to the shelf with his burden. It took some time to get her there, and the labor was tremendous. Although there was a strange chill in the air, sweat bedewed his brow.

"It was wonderful," said the girl. "I didn't know you were so strong. No man on the island could have done that."

"Well, we shall be safe here," said Beekman. "Look yonder."

They were directly opposite the entrance. As he pointed seaward the black clouds on the horizon were torn by flashes of lightning. There was a deep sigh of wind in the air, and the next moment, with a terrific roar, the strange and terrible storm broke. Truda shrank closer to the man. She was still sufficiently a child of nature to be awed by this display of its terrible force.

"It's worse than I thought it would be," said Beekman.

They were still more or less sheltered from the wind, and conversation was not yet difficult.

"I must go down again."

"Why?"

"I forgot Hano."

"He tried to kill you."

"Yes; but he is lying there, bound hand and foot. He would have no chance at all if the water came flooding in."

"Is that the white man's way?" asked the girl.

"It is the way of the white man's God."

"Has He told you to do this?"

"I think so."

"Go, then."

He kissed her and climbed down the declivity until he reached the sand. It was already covered. The tide was at full flood and the wind was now driving into the gulf with increasing force. The barrier was a mass of white mist and spray shining eerie and ghost-like against the black horizon, torn with lightning, fast merging into the copper-misted sky above.

He must hurry. He scrambled over the rocky promontory with reckless haste. Hano was lying where he had left him. The waves were sliding over the little mound of sand into the hollow. His face was grey with terror. As Beekman bent over him with the sheath-knife, he shrieked, but what he feared did not occur. His lashings were cut. Beekman dragged him to his feet. He pointed to the sea and upward to the rocks. He took him by the hand and started to lead him, but Hano broke away and ran in the other direction. There were ledges of rock there, and, dumbly and dimly alive to the danger, he chose to go that way. Beekman followed, but he could not prevail upon the islander to go with him.

His own position was becoming precarious. The wind was beating upon him with amazing power. The waves were sweeping over the barrier as if it were not there. He must think of Truda. She would be mad with anxiety. He even feared she might attempt to descend if he did not return. He waved his hand at Hano, whom he saw climbing up the rocks, and turned back to the harbor. As he had suspected, Truda had started to come down. She stopped when he appeared, and waited until he joined her. He brought up what he could carry in his hands of the provisions which he had stored in the rock.

"I was coming for you. Where is Hano?" asked the girl as he drew himself up by her side.

"He climbed the cliff and went the other way. I tried to bring him here, for this is the better place."

"He is in the hands of his god," said the girl.

"As we are in the hands of ours," answered Beekman.

He turned toward her, and for a moment his back was to the sea.

"Look," she cried, peering over his shoulder.

He turned his head. What had happened before was child's play to what met them now.

"My God!" cried Beekman, staring into the white mist, appalled by what he saw.

A wall of water thirty feet high, although, to the man, it looked to be a hundred, was rolling in from seaward with the speed of an express train. Its top was curling, the spray whipping from it, but it was yet an unbroken mass. The

thoughts of men take strange turns in such emergencies. It reminded him, for a second, of the pictures in his mother's Bible of the passage of the Red Sea, the waters a curling wall, concave over the heads of the pursuing Egyptians, about to break.

"What is it?" screamed the girl.

"A tidal wave."

The words meant nothing to her, but the voice of the man told her that there was death in the moving water.

"Whatever happens, don't let go of me," he shouted.

He stooped and kicked off his heavy shoes, clasped an arm around the girl's waist. Her arms met around his neck. He was staring seaward, ready for a plunge. Woman-like, she kissed him, and then the wave struck the island–wall of water meeting wall of rock. For a second, Beekman thought he could feel the massive cliff on which he stood quivering. The next moment the great bore tore its way into the harbor. It leaped and surged through the narrow entrance in a madly foaming, green avalanche. Constricted by the walls, it rose and rose. He had one glimpse of the mighty wave towering above his head where he stood fifty feet above the sea level, and the next moment it broke, and, with a crash like a thousand thunderbolts, fell upon them.

CHAPTER XXV
THE INDOMITABLE EGO

The crest of the wave was traveling faster than its middle section, which had been retarded by the land. That fact, and that alone, saved the lives of the two poor mites upon whom it fell, for, instead of being dashed back against the rock wall by the terrific surge of the inward sweeping sea, the wave curling above their heads struck the wall a second in advance of the great body of water. It broke, fell upon them, swept them from the shelf, plunged them into the depths with such force and violence that it was the return thrust of the water which finally caught them–the backward undertow, rather than the inward rush.

Beckman had never heard so deafening a roar in all his life. He had, on one occasion, felt a great superdreadnaught roll and quiver under the simultaneous discharge of her own principal batteries under actual service conditions. It was child's play to this. Not that he had any thought about it now. He was only

conscious of the roaring in his ears, the awful pressure upon his body, as he was driven down, down, down, until it seemed as if the bowels of the earth had opened before him and swallowed him up; as if he would never be lifted again out of the great deep which had sucked him under.

He held his breath instinctively, of course, but it seemed as if his lungs and heart would burst. His whole being was merged in two frantic desires: to keep on holding his breath, and not to let go of the woman who clung to him. Mercifully, although his body had shielded hers, she had almost lost consciousness. There remained to her only the desperate instinct to cling. She twined her arms and legs about him. He drew her closer and closer, although the tremendous thrust of the sea seemed to be striving to tear them apart as well as draw them under. Thus linked into a human warp and woof, they were hurled down and down, out and out.

Just when he had come to the conclusion that further resistance was impossible, that he must breathe or die, or breathe and die, the two interwoven figures, caught in a mad whirl of the torrent, were thrown upward. Their movements were arrow-like in their swiftness; or, better, they were driven as a stone from a mighty catapult. Swimming was impossible. There was no effort that could be made. There was nothing that he or the woman could do but to cling tighter and tighter. To hold on, that was all!

Truda's grass petticoats were torn to pieces in an instant. The water, in its awful churning, stripped Beekman to his bare skin. It would have torn his shoes off if he had been wearing them. Nothing that he had ever imagined equalled the force, the pressure, the stripping, ripping suction; the driving, beating, thrusting of the sea, unless it was a full-fledged western tornado. He had met such on the plains. Of course, these comparisons did not occur to him then. All he thought of when they were thrown out of the water and into the spray-laden air, which made seeing difficult, but not impossible, was to breathe, to breathe quickly and deep so as to be prepared for the next buffet of fortune.

As soon as he struck the air he opened his eyes. They were still in the very midst of the deep, cylindrical harbor, its dark walls seen vaguely through the spray uptossed by the broken bore. His brain registered impressions almost faster than the afferent and efferent nerves could carry them. The swiftness with which the two bodies, still clinging together, were whirled about in the maelstrom caused by the introduction of these titanic forces within the narrow confines of this gulf alone kept them from sinking. Beekman could not have made a stroke for any reason. He was incapable even of movement of his own.

In the first place, he was so bruised and beaten and exhausted by the tremendous pressure of the water that every muscle was almost useless. In the second place, he could not let go of the girl, even with one arm. He had held her

only by a superhuman effort of will and strength which must have been met and equalled by a similar determination on her part. Even to free one hand, meant parting. It flashed into his mind that death was at hand; that no human beings could live in such a sea; that the next second would find them cast beyond the whirling periphery of the vortex and hurled against the rocks. At least, they could, and would, die together.

Yet, Beekman suddenly became aware that the harbor entrance was wider than before. He noticed, too, that the waters appeared to be receding, although the tumult, for instance, of the rapids of the Niagara River, was as nothing to it. The next instant, as if nature had not yet exhausted her malefic powers, a second earthquake, traveling more slowly than the wave which the first shock engendered, reached the island. By chance–or was it God?–the whirling revolution of the two human beings carried them farthest from the nearer shore when this last appalling cataclysm of nature took place. The solid wall before them seemed to melt away before Beekman's eyes and dissolve into the vague mist and foam. The sight terrified him perhaps more than anything else. It benumbed his very soul. Not only had the foundations of the great deep been broken up, but the immutable hills themselves were shaking like the sea. Was it the end of the world, or only the end of Beekman and Truda?

The quivering transmitted even through the boiling water seemed to still the wave for a moment. As Beekman hung poised, almost as a soul might, 'twixt heaven and earth, the moment the mad action of the water stopped they began to sink. Then he did strike out feebly, but desperately. The girl clung to him, half senseless, a perfectly dead weight in his arms. The great wall of rock before him wavered, bent forward. It seemed to rise in the air. It slipped downward with the sound of a mighty rending. Screams as of an earth in labor pains seemed to fill his ear. He caught a glimpse of a great rift, beyond which he could see, as no mortal had ever seen before from where he floated, the palms of the upland. And then the falling rock smote the water.

Being luckily farthest away, and just opposite the entrance, the great wave which was engendered drove the two far out to sea. He had time to note, as he swept through the now strangely widened entrance, that he could not see a trace of the barrier. The water, which barely reached its highest point at the highest tide, had completely buried it. Outside the narrow, enclosed harbor, while the waves still rolled terribly, the sea was smoother. They did not break. The force of the surge which had hurled them seaward being spent, they began to sink again. The instinct of life was still present, and although every motion was anguish, Beekman thought it safe to free one hand with which he continued to strike out boldly.

His painful swimming was aimless. Indeed, it was only the result of a now

unconscious determination to keep afloat as long as strength remained. He must go whither the waves carried him. By this time Truda had fainted dead away. Her grasp on his neck relaxed. She straightened out in the water. He turned her on her back, caught her long hair, which had been blown out like a flag, in his teeth and swam on.

While it would only be for a few moments, still the spirit of the race, the indomitable persistence of humanity–that quality by which at least it has some claim to be considered begot of Divinity–made him swim on, driven by wind and sea and tossed helplessly about. He set his teeth more tightly, shut his eyes, and struck out and out and out. He would not give up his own life. He would not desist from the efforts to preserve, even for a few swiftly passing instants, that life, dearer than his own, which trailed behind him as he swam.

But he reached the end of his strength. Some instinct made him open his eyes and lift his head: the old instinct to die with head up, facing the enemy; not to pass with averted countenance and in shrinking posture. Before him he saw something white. He did not know what it was, but the next moment, in the grinding sway of the sea, it struck him hard on the shoulder. He had strength enough to clutch at it ere he went down. It had struck him on the right arm, and the force of the blow had deprived him of the use of that vital member. Ordinarily, he could have swam with one arm, but not now.

As he clutched the object before him, it occurred to him that this was the end. He wished that he could have had another word with Truda; another kiss; but, to his surprise, he found that he was not sinking. To his brain came the consciousness that he was touching something familiar. He looked again. It was dancing and bobbing in the seas, but he was near enough now to recognize what brief stay Providence had thrown to his hand. It was wood, painted white. He saw the boards lap-streaked together. It presented a strangely familiar look.

Through water-filled eye gate, through numbed arm and bruised body gate, it told its story to the man's brain. That he could read the message, was an evidence of his vital force and infinite determination. A ship's boat, the forward part half under water, yet riding singularly light. He could not yet reason as to what boat it was, or how it came to be there, but the fact was indelibly impressed upon his consciousness. It meant a further respite from death; another temporary stay on their dread journey. They were not beaten yet.

His right arm was useless. He tried desperately to lift it, but could not. He thought it might have been paralyzed, but the pain, when he attempted to move it, suggested to him that it might be broken. He did not dare to let go with his left arm, and yet if he did not draw his fainting companion up on that boat, she would die. They were now surging far to sea, the reflex of the great tidal wave rolling them on.

He could turn his head and see Truda's body half buried in the water. Still holding the boat, which lay across him–he had struck it broadside–with his left hand he worked himself around till the sides running aft embraced him. He felt about with his foot and discovered at once that the after part of the boat was gone. He did not yet have wit enough to determine why the forward part of the boat floated so far out of water. At any rate, he was in a much better position for action.

Pulling and swimming, he got himself well between the two sides, with the bow directly in front of him. Then he drew himself to the right, and, although the pressure by which he held himself by hand and shoulder from washing out of the boat induced the most excruciating pain in his arm, he dared to release his grasp on the gunwale with his left hand. Still holding Truck's golden hair in his teeth, he reached out and drew her forward with his left arm. By an effort–he never knew how to account for the feat of strength–he got her to the boat; then, seizing her under the arms with his left arm, he forced her upon the bow of the boat until her head lay back upon a little flat platform, which he soon discovered was a locker, or compartment in the very eyes of the boat. Thus, himself lying across the boat, holding himself steady by the pressure of his knee and back, and the girl lying along the boat lengthwise, her head on the forward compartment, his left arm holding her, he knew he had done all that was possible. The pain in his right arm and shoulder had passed away, leaving a sort of deadness.

There was a broken thwart just back of him, and he found that he could relax his pressure a little and sink back against this jagged piece of wood without slipping into the sea. It was a good thing, he realized, for the tremendous thrust of his legs against the unsupported side of the boat might have torn apart even the frail support that was left.

In all this, Truda had, as yet, made no sign of life. He was sure that she had not been drowned. He thought the shock, and the battering, and the terror had rendered her unconscious. Whatever it was, there was nothing more that he could do except to hold on in his constricted condition and wait. He told himself a thousand times that it was useless; that it would be, perhaps, best in the end to let go, but the indomitable ego did not sanction that.

Rising and falling on the seas, he could catch glimpses of the island. It was so changed by tidal wave and earthquake that he never could have recognized it. The harbor was gone. Here and there, when they rose on the crest of a wave, he could see the barrier reef. A part of it had been torn away. Where had been a wall was a great concavity that led upward and inward. The earthquake had done that. What had it done to the people of the island? He was too far away by this time to distinguish much except the general transformation.

As they floated on, his eye, ceaselessly roving the waters, caught sight of a

brown object rising and falling, tumbling and turning with the helpless look of a once living thing driven and tossed. A freak of the sea brought it nearer. Another freak of the sea turned the brown object over. He saw that it was Hano, dead. He wondered if all the other denizens of the island had met a like fate. Of course, the water could not reach them as it had reached Hano, and Beekman, and Truda, but the earthquake–then, as he speculated hazily, the sun suddenly appeared. The black bank of cloud was riven and torn. Its greater moiety drifted to leeward, driven by some strange and powerful wind of the upper air. Fortunately, where they floated there was but a gentle breeze.

The warmth, the rest, it may be, he knew not what, revived the woman. She opened her eyes, lifted her head, his left arm tightened about her. She bent to him.

"Is this another world?" she gasped brokenly.

"Not yet," answered the man.

"How did we come here?" Before he could answer, she cried, "I remember. The wave. What is this?" she asked after a time.

"A boat," he answered, and then he knew that it was the forward half of the wrecked whaleboat which had brought him to the island, had landed on the barrier, had been torn from the pinnacles of rock by the same sea that had overwhelmed them, and which had been thrust into his hand for their salvation.

"We shall die here in the water," said the girl, "but we shall die together."

The man shook his head.

"I think not. God, our God, has preserved us so far. He has given us this poor support. It can not be that this is the end."

It was almost the end of Beekman, in spite of his brave words; for, now that Truda was safe and alive, now that he had achieved the impossible, now that, by God's will and her lover's help, she had been brought through the maelstrom, he fainted dead away. His head fell back. His knees relaxed. His hand unclasped. His arm released her. But for that broken thwart, he would have slid away and out of sight. It was Truda's turn. She caught him by the shoulder. She crouched down on the forward compartment and held him until consciousness returned. When he could think coherently, he remembered how he had put the air-tight tanks back, and he blessed God for having inspired him to that, at the time, useless action. It was that air-tight compartment which held them. Truda dragged his head free of the water and held him there until he recovered his strength a little. The sharp pain in his arm, which had been numbed, helped to keep him from fainting again.

And so they drifted side by side, a naked man and woman, as they might have come from a Garden of Eden, on the poor shattered remains of a small boat, their weight keeping it awash in the long, still rolling, but gradually subsiding

waves, thanking God for life, for that poor support, and for love. And by and by the night fell, and still they clung to each other, floating on calming seas, until presently the boat came to a rest beneath the tropic stars staring down upon these jettisoned inhabitants of that island paradise, these bits of human flotsam kept above the waters by love and God.

BOOK IV

" I've a neater, sweeter maiden,
In a cleaner, greener land "

CHAPTER XXVI
IN DANGER ALL

It was, indeed, a solemn little group that was seated around the table in the great cabin of the *Stephanie.* The dominant spirit of the occasion was not the masterful financier, the brilliant young executive, or the beautiful and charming maiden. It was a grizzled veteran sailor who had called the conference in that section of the *Stephanie* which he rarely entered save for business purposes. The grave anxiety of Captain Weatherby's face was reflected in the faces of John Maynard, George Harnash, and Stephanie Maynard.

"And you think the yacht's condition is serious, do you?" asked Maynard.

"Just about as serious as it could be, Mr. Maynard," answered the captain.

"Yet there's not a better built ship on the seas than this," observed Harnash.

"Granted," said Captain Weatherby; "she's all that money and skill and steel and science could make her, but she's only a manufactured article, after all, and she has just bucked the biggest thing in nature. That she has come off as well as she has is a tribute to her builders."

"And to her sailing master," put in Stephanie deftly.

"If you hadn't handled her just as you did, none of us would be here now," added Harnash heartily.

"That's as may be," answered the captain modestly.

"It's the blessing of God and your own skill," commented Maynard.

But the captain went on.

"We are here, but the yacht is in bad condition. She is making water faster than the pumps can keep it down."

"Is there any immediate danger of our foundering?" asked Maynard.

"Every danger. In fact, it is certain, unless–"

The captain paused.

"Unless what?" asked the owner.

"I've sailed with you a long time, now, Mr. Maynard. I know your temper on land and sea, and that of these young people, as well. What you want is the plain, blunt truth, and you're going to get it. Unless I can beach this yacht somewhere within the next twenty-four hours, send a diver down, and, if necessary, careen her, and come at the leaks, she–"

He paused again. It was not necessary for him to go on. His meaning was obvious to all of them.

"In that case, there are always the boats," observed Harnash.

"Have you been on deck this morning, Mr. Harnash?" asked the captain.

"Yes, I have."

"How many boats did you see?"

"By Jove!" exclaimed Harnash, "I forgot that."

"Of course," said the captain, smiling grimly at his own sarcasm; "and a landlubber like you, meaning no offense, sir, wouldn't be apt to notice it, but the deck has been swept clean. The bridge is still there, and the smoke stacks, but pretty much everything else is gone. There's not a boat left at the davits, and even the launch amidships is badly stove up."

"A raft?" said old Maynard.

"There's not much woodwork in this boat fit to make a raft out of, sir," answered the captain, "but I've got the men at work on the wooden fittings and doors trying to patch up something."

"Of course, we're not in any immediate danger," said Stephanie.

"Depends upon what you mean by 'immediate,' Miss Maynard. The yacht will float for twenty-four hours; perhaps thirty-six."

"Then, after that, we shall be in God's hands," said the girl quietly.

It was a platitude, of course; but, in great emergencies, humanity always resorts to platitudes. They are familiar; made to order, as it were; and resorted to as the line of least resistance. There are certain conventional expressions to which man instinctively reverts. Men exclaim, "My God!" in the crisis, even though He be none of theirs and they have not hitherto known Him.

"In His hands, Miss, and mine," said the captain steadily with the assurance of the capable and efficient.

"What else have you done or planned?" asked Maynard.

"I've searched for the leak but we cannot locate it. The hours after the tidal

wave were so full that it got a start on us, but we are keeping the pumps going while working away at the raft."

"Of course; but that is a last resort."

"I'm driving the ship as hard as I can, too, sir."

"In the hope of what?"

"There's an uninhabited island to the nor'west of us; hasn't even a name that anyone recognizes. I'm heading for it."

"Can you careen the ship there?"

The captain shook his head.

"The charts say that it is completely surrounded by a barrier reef. It appears to be a volcanic rock about which the coral builders have been busy. But it is the nearest land; the only land we can possibly make in our present condition; and, at least, we won't drown on it. We can save enough from the *Stephanie* to support life, and I have no doubt we can find some means of getting away or communicating with other ships," continued the veteran sailor confidently, although he knew, and everyone else realized, more or less, that the chance of either was very slim.

"Well, whatever happens to us, Captain Weatherby," said Harnash, "I'll never forget my last glimpses of you on the bridge, jumping the boat at full speed into that tidal wave."

"It was our only chance, Mr. Harnash," said the captain. "If that wave had caught us broadside, or even on the quarter or astern, we would have gone down like a stone."

Indeed, no one aboard the ship would ever forget the approach of that great, roaring, thunderous tidal wave. No one would ever fail to remember how Captain Weatherby, as cool as he was at that moment in the cabin, standing on the bridge, had shifted his helm, had pointed the bows of the yacht at the rushing, whirling water, had signaled for every pound of steam, and had driven the great white ship at full speed fairly and squarely into the midst of it.

Before it broke and fell the three passengers had been ordered–yes, that is the word, ordered–below. Captain Weatherby had been prepared to detail seamen, who would have obeyed him unquestionably, to carry the great magnate who owned the ship and the other two below if they had hesitated a moment in complying with his command. He did not even stop in the emergency to put it in the form of a request or suggestion. John Maynard knew a man when he saw him, and without a moment's hesitation, he went aft and plunged below with the others, just in time, too, for the hatches to be battened down and every opening through which the water could penetrate the ship from above as tightly closed as the wit of man could devise. They would never forget, either, how they stood close together in the cabin, waiting the meeting of ship and sea.

They could not see, but they could feel the appalling shock of the bows of steel encountering the hurtling water wall. They could feel the gigantic wave break over the deck and fall crashing upon the steel ceiling over their heads. So great was the tumult, so loud the smashing falling of the water, that they did not hear the rending and tearing of the upper works of the ship, the boats carrying away, the deckhouse going adrift, and everything movable swept astern; and even the screams of some of the men, washed helplessly away, in spite of the life lines, at which they clutched frantically, were not noticed in the wild tumult of the storm.

Following the great wave came the short but terrible cyclonic disturbance, which almost completed their undoing. It was not until calmer weather supervened and the night fell that Captain Weatherby could take account of his ship and of his crew. He deemed it best to say nothing of his terrifying discoveries until the morning, but at dawn he had awakened his passengers to the melancholy conference in the cabin.

It was rare, indeed, that John Maynard found himself helpless. There were few situations to which his readiness, his resources, his inventiveness were unequal; but this was one. It was Captain Weatherby's field of action. There was nothing that Maynard could contribute, except an example of cheerful willingness to do what he was told without hesitation and without argument. It was a good lesson for the master financier, albeit the price he bade fair to pay for the learning of it might render it of little avail.

"Well, Captain Weatherby," he said, rising, "as my daughter says, we are in God's hands, and, as you justly added, in yours, too. We have every confidence in you that you will do the best for us that humanity can do under God. If it should prove of no avail, it will not be your fault. Meanwhile, this is the first chance I've had to express my admiration and gratitude. My friendship and respect you have had for a long time, but never as today." Maynard extended his hand to him.

"Mine, too," said Harnash, following the older man's example.

Stephanie, more moved than the other two, less restrained, perhaps, slipped her arm about the captain's neck and kissed him on his weather-beaten check.

"As from your daughter at home," she said.

"Here are brave hearts," said the captain, deeply touched. "Good stuff in all of you. We'll all fight harder because of this," he added.

The next moment the hatchway was darkened by one of the junior officers.

"Captain Weatherby," he began.

"What is it, Mr. Lefner?"

"We've made out the wreck of a boat adrift off the starboard bow with two people on her; one of them at least is alive, for through the glass we can see hands waved."

"Have a boat cleared away at–" He stopped. He had forgotten for the moment that there were no boats. He glanced up at the telltale compass above his head and noticed the shifting of the needle. The first officer was changing the course of the yacht to run down the wreck; that would be the only way. "We are still capable of saving life, Mr. Maynard, even though it be for a little space. Perhaps you would like to come on deck. It is safe enough now. I've rigged up a railing of life lines to take the place of those carried away."

He put his foot on the ladder and mounted to the deck, followed by the others. Harnash snatched a glass from the transom as he passed. They knew exactly where to look for the wreck. It was quite visible to the naked eyes. There were no glasses on the bridge. It had been stripped clean of everything by the wave and only stood by a miracle. The whole party moved up toward the bow of the ship and mounted the bridge. Harnash handed the glass to Captain Weatherby. He focused it and fixed his eyes on the rapidly nearing object, now directly over the bows, since the yacht's course had been changed.

"I make out two naked figures on what appears to be the fore part of a whaleboat. One of them is a woman, sir," he observed, handing the glass to Mr. Maynard, who stared and then passed it to the others standing by.

"Ropes to the starboard gangway," said Mr. Gardner, the first officer, after a word with the captain. "Mr. Gersey," he spoke to a veteran seaman, who stood forward, easily balancing himself to the roll of the ship, his arms folded. Instantly the boatswain turned and saluted. "Stand by the starboard gangway. Have some hands ready at the battens with a rope. One of those castaways doesn't look able to help himself, and we'll have to draw him aboard."

"Aye, aye, sir," he answered, turning aft to the gangway, followed by the seamen he summoned to his assistance.

Although she was already deep in the water and sluggish, the *Stephanie* was under complete command. Nicely steered, she passed the bit of wreck to windward and rounded to. Her engines had been stopped previously, and just as the wreck surged to the gangway she came to a rest in the gently moving sea. Gersey had sent Templin, who had proved himself one of the smartest seamen on the yacht, down the battens of the starboard gangway with a rope's end, in which a bowline had been cast. Standing on the lower batten with the water halfway up to his waist on account of the ever-deepening draught of the leaking yacht, Templin caught the surging boat by the stem and held it firmly.

The woman was sitting crouched down on the forward lockers, or what remained of them. Templin motioned her to try the battens. She shook her head and pointed to the figure of the man, who lay at her feet, his head in the very bows of the boat, his legs dragging in the water. He was alive, but apparently helpless. His face was flushed and his eyes bright with fever. Templin sensed the

situation at once.

"The lady wants the man passed aboard first," he called out.

Gersey nodded. He sent another seaman down to help Templin, and although the situation was difficult, the two men worked together intelligently. They passed the bowline around the body of the man, drew it tight, and the next moment willing hands aboard ship hauled away, and while Templin bore the body out so it would not scrape along the sides of the yacht, the man was soon drawn aboard. The girl watched without a word, but in great anxiety, until this rescue had been effected. Then she strove to rise, but she had been so cramped by sitting so long in that position that she could not make it. The seamen helped her to her feet and, half carrying, half urging, they finally got her on the deck. She had no sooner set foot thereon than she collapsed and fell in a dead faint. The officers and men were crowded about the two figures near the gangway, when Maynard, Harnash, and Stephanie approached.

"Take the woman to my cabin," said Stephanie. She turned to her maid, who had also come on deck, as two of the seamen picked up the fainting castaway and bore her aft. "Celeste, you and I will look after her, with Dr. Welch's help."

"At your service, Miss Maynard," said the ship's surgeon, following her.

"Take the man aft to the spare cabin," said Maynard, as the others moved away. "Dr. Welch, you'd better examine him as soon as you can. Harnash–"

But Harnash did not hear. He was bending over the prostrate man. The man's face was covered with a thick, short, dark beard and mustache, but there was no mistaking him. Harnash had been struck by something familiar in his appearance as the wreck lay alongside, and when he bent over him on the deck he knew at once who it was, in spite of his beard.

"This is the man we have been seeking," he said to Mr. Maynard.

"Good God!" exclaimed Maynard, looking hard in turn. "Yes," he added, "it's Beekman!"

CHAPTER XXVII
THE SPEECHLESS CASTAWAYS

It was broad daylight by this time, and the high peak of the island was already visible, although low on the horizon. Ordinarily, the arrival of the castaways would have been a matter of deepest interest to Captain Weatherby, his offi-

cers and the men on the ship, but under the circumstances their presence simply meant two more persons to feed and care for. His owner could look after them. Indeed, Captain Weatherby had not left the bridge as the two had been passed aboard, and he had not heard that one of the persons he had picked up was the man for whom they had been combing the seas in an exhaustive search of every island in Polynesia.

He was engaged in the desperate task of getting the sluggish ship to the island, if possible, before she sank. The existence of that island was charted, but it was marked as uninhabited, desolate, completely encircled by a formidable reef and very dangerous. Ships avoided it, giving it a wide berth. It promised them little. Still, in their condition, perhaps a very little meant the wide difference–or is it narrow?–between life and death. A good sailor, like a good doctor, never gives up entirely until the very end. While the ship floats she has life, and while she has life there is hope; but Captain Weatherby was forced to admit to himself that the amount of hope was very small, indeed; that is, for the ship, and not much more, he feared, for her people.

Ordinarily, he could have made the run to the island in half a day. It seemed to him under present conditions he would be fortunate if he reached it by evening, and yet he must reach it before dark if he were to save the lives committed to his care and skill. To make a landing through the breakers on a reef-encircled island by means of an improvised raft would be an almost impossible task in daylight, and under the most favorable circumstances, and quite an impossible task at night in any sort of sea. Consequently, he drove the waterlogged *Stephanie* as fast as she could be driven in her condition, his chief engineer ably seconding him, employing every expedient to keep up steam and to increase the speed.

Weatherby was a resourceful man. He had spent some years in Cramp's shipyard in Philadelphia, after retiring from the command of great liners. The love of the sea was strong upon him, however, and he had been tempted to the easy and pleasant work of commanding the *Stephanie* by the munificent offers of Maynard, who, since he owned the biggest yacht afloat, was not satisfied with any but the best captain. Therefore, if Captain Weatherby could find a suitable strip of sand on which to beach the ship, if necessary to careen her, he believed that with his carefully selected force of engineers and mechanics and seamen he could stop the leak and put her in seaworthy condition again. However, that was not to be thought of. That desolate, reef-guarded island toward which they were heading was the only one they could by any possibility hope to reach, and if the charts were true, as they undoubtedly were, it would not afford any facilities whatsoever for such work as would be necessary. It never occurred to him that the earthquake which had raised the tidal wave which had wrought their undoing might have broken the barrier and have changed conditions at the island, so as

to provide him with the beach he craved. He was simply going to the island, because, when the ship sank, it would at least enable them to keep alive, for a little while longer, at any rate. Consequently, he paid no attention whatever to the pair he had rescued as he put the ship on her course again.

There were plenty of people capable of looking after them better than he. Indeed, to his casual inspection they seemed to be two islanders, rather fairer of skin than those whom he knew. He wondered how they came to be where they were. He had seen that the wreck which had kept them up was part of a ship's boat and not the remains of a native vessel. It did, indeed, occur to him that possibly they might have come from that island for which he was heading, which might not be uninhabited, after all, but time would soon settle those problems. In the meantime his duty was clear.

Beekman was incapable of recognizing any one. He had been silent enough in the water, but when they got him on deck he had begun to mutter incoherently things they could not understand. Harnash, after his discovery of his identity, seemed incapable of action. The sight of his friend brought back vividly his own perfidy, and the desperate condition in which he saw Beekman to be intensified the swift and sudden recollection of his own baseness. Mr. Maynard had nothing with which to reproach himself, of course, and it was he who first recovered himself and repeated his order that Beekman should be taken to the cabin.

For a moment Harnash found himself wishing they had not found Beekman, and for a moment Maynard, in whose good graces Harnash had become more and more solidly entrenched, had the same thought; on his young subordinate's account only, of course. As the days of the cruise had passed without any tidings of the missing man, and as the possibilities of their search grew smaller and smaller, they both became resigned to and in a measure satisfied with the situation, even if Stephanie had not shared in their feelings.

Harnash had made a grievous error; he had done an unworthy thing. The consequences had been such as no one had dreamed of, but Harnash had manfully confessed and he had done his best to atone. Mr. Maynard could not be in the presence of Harnash and his daughter without realizing the depth and permanence of their devotion. It was deplorable, of course, that Beekman had been sacrificed to their happiness, but there was no use blinking the facts. Here was Beekman alive and on the ship. Maynard never dreamed but that he would at once claim Stephanie for his wife, and by putting himself in Beekman's position, Maynard could easily imagine what his feelings toward Harnash would be when he knew. Whatever happened, Beekman had to be told if he lived. It was all terribly awkward and embarrassing and quite an impossible situation.

Nor was Maynard unmindful of the fact that the naked man before him, over whom a coat had been hastily thrown, had been found adrift with a woman.

He had no doubt that some irregular connection had been entered into, or some sort of relationship had grown up between the castaways. This woman was presumably a native, but that would be no ultimate barrier toward Beekman's claim to marriage with Stephanie. At any rate, the situation, which had gradually been clearing because they had not found him, became suddenly more complex than ever when they did. Both Harnash and Maynard were ashamed of their feelings, and that very shame, the personal humiliation a man experiences who has given way momentarily to unworthy thoughts or impulses, made them more resolutely determined to do everything in their power for him.

The yacht carried a surgeon, of course, who messed with the officers, and was scarcely admitted to any more social intimacy with the owner and his party than the others. Dr. Welch had met the party in the gangway, and in obedience to the suggestion from Stephanie, he had followed her into the cabin. The maid's cabin was abaft the bathroom and dressing room, which separated it from Stephanie's luxurious cabin. There was a spare berth in Celeste's cabin and there the unconscious Truda was bestowed. The doctor made a swift personal examination.

"There's nothing very much the matter with her," he said at last; "exposure, cold, lack of food or drink, prolonged nervous strain, and surprise probably account for her collapse."

He administered proper restoratives, directed that she be well rubbed down and wrapped in blankets and given suitable food and drink, and predicted that in a day or two she would be all right, which, indeed, proved to be the case.

"Remarkably light colored for a Polynesian," he observed professionally to Stephanie as he turned away to leave his patient in the care of the two women.

"Yes, and with a distinctly European cast of countenance," answered the girl.

She bent over her as the doctor left the room in obedience to a summons from Harnash that he come to the other cabin to look at the other castaway immediately.

Stephanie was the exact antithesis of Truda; dark where the other was fair, brown eyed where the other was blue eyed. To be sure, Truda's dazzling fairness had been modified by the sun under which she lived, and Stephanie's complexion was clearer, if darker, owing to her more sheltered habit of life, but Stephanie recognized to the full the extraordinary beauty of the sea nymph before her.

Truda, who had never seen so splendid a brunette, made the same unconscious acknowledgment as her civilized sister. The yacht, its sumptuous fittings, the wonderful things about her, this extraordinary being bending over her in her unusual clothes, all added to the poor little islander's dismay. Even Celeste, by no means unpleasing in her trim maid's dress, was a thing for Truda to wonder

over. These were the women of that other faraway world of which Beekman had told her. It could not be that in their presence he could continue to love her, and so Truda, agonizingly jealous, was afraid. Everything was new and strange; the yacht itself, the deep throbbing of the hard-pushed engines, the very bed on which she lay, the expensive furnishings of the cabins, added to her trepidation and alarm. Save so far as mental habit and life had been altered by intercourse with Beekman and what he had taught her, she was still, in many of her instincts and habits, a savage, and a savage suddenly and with no warning introduced to the highest civilization.

Fear tied her tongue. She had not said a word. She would not speak. It seemed to her that she had forgotten how to use any language but the native speech of the island. She could only stare in dismay, appalled, silent. Stephanie had an exquisite voice; low, trained, cultivated. Beekman had often admired it and her use of it. She was a singer, and her speaking voice, unlike that of many singers, was as musical as the other. She bent over the girl and addressed her in English.

"What is your name?"

Truda understood well enough, but she was utterly incapable of answering. Her lips could scarcely frame a Polynesian word, much less an English one. She could only stare wildly. On a venture Stephanie repeated the question in French, then in Italian, then Celeste shook her head.

"She is not of the south, not Latin, mademoiselle," she said; whereupon Stephanie, summoning the remains of a brief schooling in the harsh tongue, repeated the question in very indifferent German.

There was no answer. That exhausted the linguistic possibilities of the cabin. Presently the steward appeared with broth, which the doctor had ordered. The two women, social differences more or less laid aside with this new and interesting plaything, had meanwhile covered the nakedness of the poor girl, who was entirely submissive and unresisting. in their hands, with one of Stephanie's daintiest and most beautiful night robes. Save for the grass or fiber petticoat of the Polynesian, with an occasional grass mat about her shoulders, Truda had never been so completely dressed before. She was scarcely dressed in that filmy, diaphanous adornment; but by comparison it seemed to her that she was strangely and fully clothed. The lace and linen and silk had a strange feeling to her, yet she was woman enough to delight in the beauty of the garment, to marvel childishly at its color, its softness. She lifted her lovely arm and stared at the short sleeves.

A thought struck Stephanie. At a word from her Celeste brought from her toilet case a silver mirror. Without explaining, she suddenly held it before Truda's eyes. The girl stared, screamed, threw up her hands. There had not been a still pool on the whole island. She had never seen herself before. She was frightened,

but Stephanie, a little repentant, reassured her. She held the glass before her own face, so that Truda could look and see the reflection. She took the girl's hand and put it upon the glassy surface and then she put the mirror back in Truda's hand.

Mindful at last of the doctor's orders that the castaway should have sleep and rest, Stephanie and Celeste left her, carefully closing the door of the cabin behind them, and, worn out, Truda fell asleep, the mirror lying by her side, reflecting a very pretty picture indeed.

Now, Beekman was in a very much worse condition than Truda. He had done the fighting. Truda had been a more or less passive instrument in his arms during that horrible struggle with the tidal wave. Not only had his been the physical strain, but the mental as well. It is true that Truda had not been without her share of that mental strain after Beekman lapsed into unconsciousness a second time and presently grew delirious. It was Truda who had held him on the wreck of the boat during the night, who had kept him from sinking, and who had repaid him in this way for her life, which she owed entirely to him. It was Truda who had seen the ship in the growing dawn, who had made the signals which Beekman could never have made. Had it not been for Truda's erect position on her knees, the watchers on the ship might never have seen the wrecked boat with its human freightage.

In addition to all that he had gone through, when Beekman had been slammed against the boat by a wave his right arm had been severely injured. It was obvious to Dr. Welch and the others that Beekman was in bad condition. The physician made a very thorough examination of him. His eyes were open, his lips muttered unintelligible things from time to time, but he was obviously not in possession of his reason. He knew none of them and could tell no coherent story. That right arm, especially, attracted the doctor's attention. The skin was scraped and torn from its upper half. There was one long bruise. But for the antiseptic effects of the salt water it probably would have been in worse condition than it was. Fortunately, the numbness and pain were caused from muscle strain and muscle bruise, for it was found that no bones were broken. Physically, so far as his bones were concerned, Beekman, like Truda, was intact.

"I don't know what happened to them," said Dr. Welch. "They must have been caught in that wave somehow. They have both had a terrible battering."

"This is Mr. Beekman," said Maynard.

"What, the man we have been seeking?"

"The same."

"Well, by Heaven!" exclaimed the physician. He recovered himself in a moment. "I think we'll have him all right in a day or two. That's a nasty scrape he got on the right arm. The flesh is torn nearly to the bone, but the salt water has helped it, and as soon as it heals he will be all right. He is suffering now from

fever brought on by the exposure. I have no doubt he saved that woman, and for a man to bring himself, let alone another human being, through a tidal wave like that–well, what he wants now is food, sleep, and complete rest. If you gentlemen will turn him over to me, I'll look after him, and when he wakes up, I'll guarantee he will be able to tell you all about it."

The doctor's advice was good. There was confidence in his bearing and in his words, which carried conviction to the two men. They withdrew and sat down together in the cabin, while the doctor, summoning his mate and a steward, busied himself with his patient.

"Well," said Maynard, in anything but a joyful manner, "our cruise has been a success."

"In so far as finding Beekman," was the equally melancholy answer, "but if the yacht sinks we won't have bettered his condition appreciably."

"No, of course, not," returned Maynard, thoughtfully. "Yet, I have great confidence in Captain Weatherby. I shan't give up hope until I feel her sinking under us."

Harnash nodded.

"The only thing to be decided now is, shall we tell Stephanie?" he went on.

"Tell me what?" asked the girl, coming into the room and overhearing the last words.

"I–er–" Harnash hesitated. "About our castaways, the man we picked up–"

"Is he alive yet? Will he live?"

"Dr. Welch guarantees it," answered her father. "He has been badly buffeted, his arm is cut and bruised, and he is prostrated from physical and nervous strain."

"Is he conscious yet?"

"No, but Welch thinks he will be when he wakes up. How about your patient?"

"She's all right. She's conscious and Dr. Welch says that she only needs nourishment and rest. She's asleep now, I imagine."

"Who is she? What is she?" asked her father.

"She didn't say a word. She must be a Polynesian, although she looks strangely like a European, especially since we clothed her for the night."

"Didn't she say anything at all?"

"Not a word. She seemed frightened. On a wild venture I tried her in English, Italian, French, and even German. She made no response, yet she seemed to understand. Incidentally, she's one of the most beautiful girls I ever looked at."

The two men stared at each other.

"Didn't your man say anything at all?" asked Stephanie, no suspicion at all in her mind.

"Not a thing. He muttered continuously and more or less unintelligibly, but he is not sane yet," answered her father.

"Does he look like a South Sea islander?"

"He isn't one."

"What is he, then?"

The two men looked at each other again. Neither answered the question. Stephanie stared, greatly surprised, and not in the least understanding.

"Why don't you answer? What is the mystery?" she asked, obviously somewhat annoyed by their inexplicable hesitancy.

"He is an American," observed Maynard, slowly.

"It's Beekman," said Harnash.

CHAPTER XVIII
THEY COMFORT EACH OTHER

The three seekers after Beekman were spared the necessity for immediate decision as to the telling of the story they had come so far to relate, for Dr. Welch came from the cabin on the heels of Harnash's startling revelation and reported that the patient was already quite composed and that he would soon be asleep. He guaranteed that he would awaken refreshed, in his right mind, and, save for the wound in his right arm, as well as ever. More careful examination disclosed that the wound was more superficial than otherwise. It would yield rapidly to treatment, the surgeon declared. Then having looked at his other patient, and finding her also fast asleep, Dr. Welch discreetly left the trio to their own devices.

"Of course," said Stephanie, relentlessly, "as soon as possible he will have to be told that our engagement is broken, and why."

"Yes," added Harnash, mournfully, "and as soon as he wakes up I shall tell him that I alone am responsible for his whole sorry plight."

"On the contrary," put in Maynard, sagely, "while I have no doubt that Welch is right, that Beekman will be much better when he does come to, yet he won't be completely himself. It takes more than a few hours of sleep to recover from such an experience as he must have passed through, and that torn arm is going to give him some trouble, at any rate. How he is going to receive both announcements no one can tell."

"He has a just right to be angry with me," said Stephanie.

"And much more with me," confessed Harnash.

There was a community of responsibility and blame, which, if anything were necessary, bound the two lovers more closely together than before, and, in answer to a common impulse, a human craving for sympathy, they approached each other to supplement invisible commiseration with something more tangible. Mr. Maynard looked away while George kissed Stephanie softly. When Maynard turned his head back they were standing side by side, while George was supporting Stephanie, who really needed no physical assistance whatever, by clasping her firmly about her waist.

"I never appreciated before as I do now what an infernal scoundrel I was and what a dastardly thing I did," said Harnash, in bitter self-scorn.

Stephanie was too honest and too clear eyed not to realize the truth of his words. She was too acutely conscious, however, of a certain share in his guilt, at least constructively, and too much in love to let him affect her in the least degree, except, perhaps, to fill her heart with compassion and tenderness for her lover at the terrible task imposed upon him. She patted the hand upon her waist and nestled a little closer to him, if that were possible.

"We won't go into that any more," she began, gently. "It was awful, as I have always said, but it was as much my fault as yours, and you have done everything you could to atone."

Harnash sighed deeply.

"He may not forgive me for all that," he said, doubtfully; "I don't see how he can."

"He must when he knows how you have repented and what you have done since then," continued Stephanie, firmly. "Why, if it hadn't been for you and the sailors, father and I never would have been here, would we, father?"

Mr. Maynard had his own views as to that, but he saw no reason for obtruding then upon these two lovers. With wise discretion and ready tact he nodded acquiescently.

"And there is one thing," went on Harnash, repeating himself, "that he cannot possibly condone."

"And what is that?" asked Stephanie, swiftly.

"The loss of you."

"Well, he can't blame you for that, at least. That's my fault entirely. I never should have promised to marry him in the first place. I never should have continued to let him think I would marry him in the second place. As soon as I found out I loved you I should have told him. If I had, what trouble and sorrow might have been avoided."

This time it was Harnash who attempted to comfort her, tritely enough,

too.

"You acted for the best, of course," he said. "You were the soul of honor."

"Yes, I suppose so. But unless one acts in the right way, the fact that one's desires are for the best is of little moment; besides," she went on, after a little pause, which no one broke, so weighty and grave were the responsibilities and possibilities of the situation, "I don't believe he ever really cared very much for me, after all."

"It's impossible," protested Harnash, with a conviction which was a delight to her soul, "that anybody could come in close and intimate association with you without–caring."

"You say that because you love me, but lots of other men have known me very well, and–"

"It strikes me that the conversation is becoming rather purposeless," interrupted Mr. Maynard, a little impatiently. He had quite forgotten that the airy nothings of lovers true are much the most purposeful things which can engage their attention, when they are in the mood. "It is settled that we shall not tell him until he is better able to sustain the shock. For one thing, if what Captain Weatherby fears comes to pass, we shall all be so busy saving our lives that these love affairs will be of little moment." Again Mr. Maynard blinked the fact that love affairs are of infinitely greater moment to lovers even than the saving of life. "Of course," he went on, "whether he is still in love with Stephanie or not, Beekman is going to be frightfully indignant and resentful over the outrage, of which he was the victim. But we knew that when we started. We knew the engagement was broken. We knew that you and George had to face the music, Stephanie, and now that the time has come, face it, that's all. As for me, I'm going on deck." He paused at the foot of the companion ladder and looked back at the other two. "I wonder what sort of a relationship subsists between Beekman and that woman we picked up with him," he added as he ascended.

"I wonder, too," said Stephanie, turning to Harnash, a gleam of surprise in her eyes.

"It would solve everything beautifully if he had fallen in love with her," returned Harnash, optimistically.

"What, Derrick Beekman in love with a savage!"

"Well–er–not exactly in the way in which I love you."

"Do you mean to tell me he would fall in love any other way with any respectable woman?" flashed out the girl, changing her tactics to the great bewilderment of the more conventional man.

"Well, I don't wish to say anything about this island person, of course, but–"

"George," said the girl, "she's as beautiful as a dream, much more beautiful than I am."

This was a statement which Harnash could not allow to pass uncontradicted, and he denied it in the most effective way, which interrupted further speech, if only for a moment.

"Nonsense, impossible!" exclaimed he, when the kiss was finished.

"Did you get a glimpse of her?"

"I only saw a limp, drenched figure being hoisted aboard. I noticed she was whiter than the people of the islands we have visited."

"Why, her skin, save for the touch of the sun, is whiter and finer than mine. Her figure, which has obviously never known the restraints of–of–civilization is absolutely perfect. Her hair is like spun gold, and there's enough of it to cover half her beautiful little body."

"What you say is very interesting," observed Harnash, indifferently, "but it doesn't particularly concern me. The only type of woman that appeals to me is your type."

He emphasized this statement in truly appropriate, if somewhat conventional, fashion, and Stephanie received statement and emphasis alike with obvious satisfaction.

"There's another thing," she went on, when this second kiss had also run its course, "she doesn't look in any way–form or color or feature–like a South Sea islander. In these weary months of cruising and visiting island after island we have seen a great many, and not one of them has been as she."

"What does she look like?"

"A European. Our kind of people. She has white race somehow stamped all over her."

"Do you think she can be European?"

"Who knows? She didn't answer to any European language at my command. There wasn't a thing on her save the remains of a belt that seemed to have held some kind of a native skirt."

"After coming through that tidal wave the surprise is not that she had nothing on, but that they were alive at all. Beekman was in about the same case. Indeed, I don't think he had anything on, either. Probably the suit he wore when he went adrift was pretty old and could not stand much weathering. It was a happy thought of yours to have me bring some of Beekman's clothes with us in case we did find him. He couldn't have worn your father's or even mine now. He seems to have grown broader somehow. He looked as though he were a head taller than I am and he seemed in splendid bodily condition."

"The girl is shorter than I," said Stephanie, "but on a pinch she can wear my clothes."

"If she's an islander you'll find it difficult to get her into–er–many of the things civilized people wear."

"I shan't try," said Stephanie, smiling at her lover's sudden hesitancy. "I've got all sorts of negligées and kimonos that she can wear without–"

"So you can break her into the harness of civilization gradually," laughed George.

"Yes, including shoes."

"I'm sure she'd never get your dainty slippers on," went on the fatuous lover, and Stephanie, looking down with him at her small, exquisitely shod feet, agreed with him.

"Her feet, while they are not large, are larger than mine, but beautifully shaped, and I dare say they have never been bound up in a shoe."

"I feel that this is to be our last happy day," said Harnash, irrelevantly.

"We'll hope not," said Stephanie. "Indeed, I'm sure it won't be."

And so they babbled on, forgetful for the moment of all the facts of the case and the demands of the situation, not the least of which was Captain Weatherby's firm conviction that unless he got the ship ashore in a very short time, they would be adrift on whatever makeshift support they could compass.

It came into Harnash's mind, as he thought of what was laid upon him, that such a catastrophe might not be the worst thing to which to look forward. At least, he and Stephanie would die together, and if contrition, sincere repentance, and an earnest purpose of confession and amendment availed, they would be together in some future, where there might be no giving in marriage, but where there would be love and joy and the communion of soul with soul in ways scarcely to be apprehended by poor humanity.

CHAPTER XXIX
THE ISLAND HAVEN

The two patients, aided thereto by the doctor's wise regimen and skillful prescription, slept quietly on through the long day. Celeste watched the maiden most of the time, but she was relieved on occasion by Stephanie, who did not tire of studying the innocent, charming, and beautiful face and figure of the girl, so quietly sleeping; the mirror which had so frightened and fascinated her lying near to the cheek that it so beautifully reflected.

Harnash and Maynard visited Beekman's cabin from time to time, but his slumber was even more profound. The doctor found that the nascent fever

had been broken, and that nature, good health, splendid constitution, and the medicine were doing exactly what he had prophesied they would.

It was late in the afternoon when the yacht drew near the island. The very best charts of the South Seas were in the chart room, and Captain Weatherby had mastered all they told about this unknown, unvisited island. He was greatly surprised, when the sluggish ship drew near enough for those on deck to make things out, to find that the formidable barrier, which was reported on every chart to be continuous, was obviously broken. They could see the white water above the encircling reef on either side, but right in front, opposite what appeared to be a deep circular harbor, embayed and surrounded by enormous and towering cliffs, the sea ran smooth!

Of course, the encircling reef might continue below the surface without showing above, but after carefully studying the smooth water through the glass, Captain Weatherby did not think so. Furthermore, an inspection of the cliffs that surrounded the harbor showed wide differences of color. A part of the cliff wall was dark and weather-stained, as if it had mellowed for ages under the assaults of sun and wind and sea. Other parts were lighter and the wall sharper. Points of rock freshly jagged and serrated, as if the erosions of time had not softened them, rose on one side where a brook now tumbled down a rather gentle incline from the upland to the harbor.

"What do you make of that, sir?" asked the captain of Mr. Maynard, who was also examining the island with his own powerful glass.

"If I know anything about it," was the answer, "it is freshly broken rock. See how much lighter and sharper it is to starboard than that black towering mass to port."

"Exactly."

"What would have broken it?"

"Perhaps it was the earthquake."

"It is more than likely."

"There is still argument about these tidal waves, sir, but the consensus of the best opinion is that they are caused by subsea earthquake shocks. Such a shock may have struck the island, broken the barrier, torn down the cliff wall."

"Is this the island that has sheltered Beekman?"

"Must have been. There is no other hereabouts."

"It will be uninhabited, then."

"That's as may be," answered the old sailor, lifting his glance to take in the upland, which was now clearly visible through the enormous rift, which looked as if it might have been made by an avalanche or landslide, and down which the tumbling, dashing stream of water sparkled like silver in the light of the declining sun.

"I don't see any smoke or any evidence of life," observed Maynard, following his example.

"If the charts are true, this island hasn't been visited in the memory of man, and a ship as near as this one is would be a sight to arouse the curiosity of any native. They ought to be on the cliffs watching for us if there are any," said the captain.

"On the other hand, they might think it is some kind of god or devil and be in hiding."

"Well, we will soon know," said the captain.

"What do you mean to do?"

"I'm going straight through that dark space where the barrier is broken, and, if the way is clear, right into that harbor. Off to starboard there's a stretch of sand. I'll beach the ship there. It is high tide. We will go on easily. Then I will send a diver down and see what is to be done. Have you anything to suggest, Mr. Maynard?" he continued, turning to the owner.

"Nothing. The job is yours," answered Maynard.

"If I had a boat I'd send her in ahead to take soundings, but as it is we must depend upon ourselves. For'ard there," he shouted, "Mr. Gersey?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Let two of the best men take soundings with the hand leads."

By this time everybody on the yacht was on deck, except the castaways and their watchers. Two leadsmen on either side leaned far out from the ship and as she swept slowly through the somewhat narrow opening between the jagged jaws of the barrier on either hand, they began to heave their leads. The water shoaled rapidly, but not alarmingly. Indeed, bottom was the thing that Captain Weatherby wanted most of all to feel under his water-laden ship. The engines were stopped. The ship under its own momentum moved slowly across the lagoon into the smooth, still waters of the great cylindrical harbor. The deep silence was broken only by the rippling splash of the bow wave and by the long-drawn musical calls of the leadsmen in the chains. So she drifted through the entrance beyond the wall over which Beekman had so often clambered, and the whole wonderful harbor burst into view.

Beekman would not have known one side of it, for one side of it was gone. The rocks still rose as of old upon the other side. The heaven-kissing cliff where he had first seen Truda in the glory of the morning, still stood, and the unbroken rocks ran around the left hand, but the other side was changed. Where the brook had plunged over precipitous cliffs it now rolled down a long, easy slope, terribly broken, to be sure, but quite different from the mighty rampart of old.

The narrow beach whereon he had lain had somehow been lifted up and extended out at a very gentle angle far into the harbor. The eye of the captain

took it all in. There was his resting place. His hand sought the Chadburn signal. The throb of the engines broke the silence. The man at the wheel put the helm to port. The sluggish yacht gathered additional way, swung heavily to starboard, and finally slipped through the shallow seas, glided up on the sloping sand, and came to a dead stop.

Providence had favored the sailor, as it often does and has done. The *Stephanie* was safe, exactly in the position in which her captain desired her to be. He turned to Mr. Maynard.

"The tide is at full flood. We are fast aground. If we can't make her seaworthy now, I'll forfeit my head."

His eyes sparkled. He gave orders for carrying out anchors to moor the ship, for rigging tackle, for getting the diver's uniform ready for an under-water inspection of the hull; at the same time he directed the capable engineers, now that there was no more steam needed for the engine, to turn every ounce of power into the pumps, and, if possible, to rig others temporarily to clear the ship of water and keep it down, hoping that perhaps they could come at the leak from within as well as from without.

It was so late in the evening before the ship was safely moored that it was not practicable for any of her people to go ashore that night. Captain Weatherby thought that at low tide the next day the sandy beach would be largely uncovered and with a very little ferriage they could make most of the journey on foot.

There was not the slightest evidence below in the sumptuous cabin that night at dinner of the sorry condition of the yacht. Her fittings and appointments had not been damaged. The napery and silver and glass were shining as usual under the electric light. The service was as perfect, the food as delectable, as if the ship was not lying on a sand bank embayed in a cavernous harbor in front of a deserted island, leaking; a ship which they might or might not be able to render seaworthy.

It was characteristic of the two men and of the young woman that they all dressed for dinner as was their custom. And although Beekman and his story and theirs were uppermost in everybody's mind, because there was nothing new that could be said about either under the circumstances, they talked at dinner of other things entirely–the ship, the probabilities of Captain Weatherby's getting control of the leak and making the necessary repairs, the island they would inspect tomorrow, the wonderful adventure they had gone through. In the middle of the dinner they heard voices raised in the cabin in which Beekman had been sleeping. They recognized his own deep tones expostulating with the steward; they even caught the sound of a little struggle. In her agitation, Stephanie arose from the table as the door opened and Beekman, clad in a set of his own pajamas, stood staring at the party.

"Stephanie!" he exclaimed. "Thank God!" He made a step forward. "Just as soon as the steward told me the name of the yacht and her owner, I couldn't remain in the cabin. What happy fortune brought you here?"

"We've been searching for you. Thank God, we've found you!"

"And Truda?" asked Beekman, his eye taking in the cabin and overlooking Harnash, who sat on the opposite side, his face as white as linen, fingering the tablecloth nervously. "Truda?" he raised his voice.

Truda was awake. At the sound of the voice of the man she loved she brushed by the scandalized Celeste, and, clad only in Stephanie's nightgown of diaphanous linen, she appeared in the doorway with extended arms. Beekman, who seemed strangely oblivious to the fact that he too was not arrayed in clothes appropriate to a dinner party, instantly crossed the cabin and took her hand.

"This," he said, "is Miss Truda Van Rooy, two hundred years ago of Amsterdam, Holland, and–"

"And today?" asked Stephanie, bewildered beyond measure and scarce knowing what she asked.

"Of the island at which your yacht has sought harbor."

CHAPTER XXX
REVELATIONS AND WITHHOLDINGS

The only acknowledgment Miss Truda Van Rooy vouchsafed to this amazing introduction was to sink to her knees by the side of Beekman and press her pretty lips to his hand. The introduction and the action startled Stephanie almost beyond the power of expression, but her surprise was instantly lost in another consideration.

Miss Truda Van Rooy on her native heath, clad only in a Polynesian petticoat and her native modesty, was entirely unexceptionably clothed, and no one would give a second thought to any possible deficiency in her raiment; but Miss Truda Van Rooy in the luxurious and very up-to-date cabin of the yacht, her delicate figure clearly discernible through French lingerie, was an entirely different proposition. Everyone, even Beekman, was acutely conscious of the situation except the girl herself. If she thought about it at all, it would be with a sense of discomfort begot by unusual draperies. For the rest, she made a lovely picture.

She had rebraided her hair, and Celeste's deft fingers had given a civilized

touch to the twisted locks so gloriously crowning her lovely head. Celeste, herself, more scandalized or at least less restrained in her horror, stood in the doorway of the cabin, a picture of nervous dismay. Stephanie, realizing the situation at last, was quicker to act. She drew Truda to her feet, interposed her own person between the girl and the others, and sought gently to force her back to the room whence she had come; but Truda opposed this urging with a sudden fierce vigor, despite her smaller stature and slighter build, against which the American girl was more or less helpless. An unseemly struggle was only prevented by a word from Beekman.

"Go with her; I am in no danger," he said.

"And who, may I ask, is she?" asked Mr. Maynard as the three women disappeared in the cabin.

"She is the last descendant of a shipload of Dutch soldiers, sailors, and traders who were cast away on this island two hundred and fifty years ago, together with some Polynesians they had picked up and who had lived here ever since; 'the world forgetting–by the world forgot,'" he added, the quotation being so exquisitely apt, although he was not in a poetic mood.

"And her relation to you, if I may ask?"

"I have held her in as much respect as I have held your daughter, Mr. Maynard," returned Beekman haughtily, for the question irked him exceedingly, although he could not fail to recognize that it was natural and indeed inevitable. "Until the earthquake and the tidal wave yesterday," continued Beekman, "the barrier reef completely surrounded the island. The people on it lived in a sort of cup, crater of an old volcano, I think; very fertile and beautiful, but quite hidden from the sea, access to it from the beach being extremely difficult, almost impossible. The earthquake changed all that." Beekman had noted through his cabin ports the situation of the yacht and the havoc wrought by the awful catastrophe. "Tomorrow I will show you the island and we will seek for survivors of the catastrophe. Have any been seen?"

"None," answered Maynard.

"Perhaps they have all perished," said Harnash, forcing himself to speak.

"A fitting end for an isolation of two centuries and a half," said Beekman mournfully.

"And how did you come to the island?"

"It's a long story," answered Beekman. "I'll tell it to you when we are all assembled. Meanwhile, if I could get some clothes–"

"You have only to choose from your own, Derrick," said Harnash. "At Stephanie's suggestion, when we started this search for you, we brought along some of your clothes."

"Good. And this beard–"

"My man will fix you up," said Maynard. "I'll send him to you. Are you hungry?"

"The steward has been feeding me what he thinks is proper."

"And your arm?"

"Sore and stiff, but it will be all right in a day or two. I suppose I should have stayed in the berth, but when I heard the name of the yacht and caught the sound of your voices–well, you know. I'll be back just as quickly as I can dress."

When Beekman returned to the cabin half an hour later he was completely metamorphosed. He laughed at his own fancy, but from the very complete wardrobe they had brought him he had chosen to attire himself in the same sort of a conventional dinner suit as Maynard and Harnash were wearing. The thick beard and mustache which had so worried him had disappeared under the deft manipulations of Mr. Maynard's man. Clean shaven, clothed, in his right mind, one might have thought that the adventures of the last year had passed over his head without a trace.

For a moment poor Truda was hard put to recognize in this new man the one she had loved and who had won her heart. On her part the change was even more striking, albeit in a different direction. She was now completely covered up. With exquisite taste, Stephanie and Celeste had arrayed her in a soft, rich silken garment of mandarin blue fantastically embroidered in delicate gold thread, a product of one of the most famous looms of ancient China. It was confined about her waist by a sash of cloth of gold, and fell in loose folds to her feet. The two women had got stockings on her feet, but the ordinary slipper was impossible. Soft footwear of Turkish leather met the situation. The broad mandarin sleeves of the coat, or kimono, fell back when she lifted her hands, revealing her exquisitely proportioned rounded arm. The garment was cut low at the throat and held by a brooch of pearls, and, to please her fancy, as one adorns a doll or child, Stephanie's famous pearl necklace was clasped about Truda's warm, brown neck. From this mass of blue and gold and white her lovely head with its golden crown rose magnificently. Poor Truda had been as clay in the hands of the potter. She had suffered everything silently without resistance. It had been his will and she was his property. She had possessed all the beauty of wild and lovely nature before. Without losing much of that appeal, she now exhibited it in conjunction with an ancient oriental civilization, albeit to occidental eyes half barbaric.

Looking not unlike a lamb dressed for the slaughter, Truda sat by the side of Stephanie, who seemed to the untutored eyes of the semi-savage not unlike a goddess. The table had been cleared of all save the after-dinner coffee and the decanters. Later, Beekman found himself amazed at the ease with which he took up the customs of civilization and its refinements after so long and so violent a break therewith. For the moment he could only stare at Truda, and she returned

the stare with interest. Who was this radiant creature to whom the delights of color had been added? he asked himself. Who was this godlike figure of man in the awesome and yet enhancing raiment? she questioned. It was not until Beekman smiled and spoke to her, using instinctively the familiar Polynesian dialect, that she could catch her breath and feel her heart resume its beat. He used the Polynesian because somehow it was more intimate, because he could say in it what he liked to her without the others being privy to his communication; and, finally, because he instinctively divined that in her agitation, which was obvious, her birth-language, which she had used from childhood, would be more soothing and agreeable to her. Naturally, his first question was as to her condition.

"How do you feel after all we have been through?"

"Well; and you?" said the girl, and all who listened so closely never suspected that Truda knew any other language than that Beekman used, and they were amazed at the music in her voice, the soft syllables falling through her lips entrancingly.

"I'm all right, save for this bruised arm, and that be well in a day or so."

Then Truda herself struck at him with a question.

"This beautiful woman. You know her?"

"Yes."

That seemed perfectly natural to Truda. She had no idea of the size of the world. All of these godlike beings must know one another as a matter of course.

"And you love her?"

Beekman smiled.

"I did once, but not now."

"Is she the woman you told me of on the island?"

Beekman nodded.

"If you don't take me and keep me," said Truda, suddenly passionate, her face flaming, "I shall die. You might better have let me go in the waves yesterday."

Beekman crossed the cabin and stopped by her side. He laid his hand on her head and turned her face up to him.

"You're the one woman for me, Truda," he said simply. Then realizing his obligations to the rest, he turned to them. "You will be anxious to know what we were talking about. I asked her how she was, and she told me she was well and asked in her turn for my welfare."

It was obvious to Stephanie at least that his translation by no means represented the sum total of the conversation that had passed between the two, but having her own ends to serve, like a wise woman, she gave no voice to her suspicions.

"Now, if you feel like it, we should like to hear the whole story," said Maynard.

"To begin with," said Beekman, "as George has probably told you, I guess we had a glass too many on that last night in New York, although we really drank so little that I have been inclined to the belief that there must have been foul play somewhere. At any rate, all I really know is that I woke up twenty-four hours or so later in the forecastle of an old-fashioned sailing ship called the *Susquehanna*."

"We learned that much ourselves," said Mr. Maynard. He pressed an electric button on the bulkhead by his side, and to the steward who answered he directed the boatswain to be summoned. "Just a moment, Beekman," he said; "we have an old friend of yours aboard, and here he is," he added as the weather-beaten, grizzled head of James Gersey was cautiously projected around the door-jamb. "Come in, Bo's'n," he exclaimed heartily.

The next instant Beekman caught him by the hand.

"How did you come here, Gersey?" he cried, "and how are Templin and the rest of the men?"

"Templin an' some others of us shipped aboard this yacht, Mr. Maynard makin' the proposition an' Captain Weatherby bein' agreeable. We wanted to hunt you up, an' bein' as we'd seed the last of you when we set you adrift, 'twas thought we know'd more about you than anybody else an' could be the best help."

"Wonder of wonders!" exclaimed Beekman. "I guess your story comes before mine, Mr. Maynard."

"Well, to make it short," said Harnash, after a glance from Maynard, "the *Susquehanna* caught fire and was burned at sea. Captain Fish went down with her, refusing to leave the bridge. The mate's boat was lost. Gersey's boat was picked up and brought into Honolulu, and from him we learned the whole story of your adventures on the ship. As soon as we heard them we decided to search for you, in the hope that you might have landed on some of these islands, or have been cast away, which has proved to be the case, and here we are."

"You know the unfortunate cause of my leaving the ship?" asked Beekman, his brow darkening.

"Of course; we have the log book of the *Susquehanna*."

"And I must face a charge of murder when I get back?"

"You needn't worry about that," said Maynard quickly. "Manuel made a deposition saying it was in self-defense. The testimony of the men was added. You'll never hear from it again."

"Thank God for that!" said Beekman fervently.

"Go on with your story."

Rapidly and graphically Beekman put them in possession of the wondrous romance of which he had been a part. Without reserve he told them everything that had happened, except one thing–his love for Truda. He suppressed that most carefully, and Truda, who sat silently listening, her wits sharpened by love and

jealousy, understanding much more than he or anyone dreamed, noted that fact with a horrible sinking of the heart. In her simplicity she could not believe that anyone could love her after seeing Stephanie.

Now, Beekman purposely left out of the conversation that feature of his life. His relations with Stephanie were still, to all intents and purposes, what they had been. As he reflected upon it while dressing, it seemed to him that she had offered him the greatest evidence of devotion to him by coming on the cruise to search for him. That any other motive was back of her action naturally did not occur to him. He inferred that she was more in love with him than he had dreamed. He recognized that her presence added to her claim upon him. It was a situation fraught with difficulty.

It was evidence to his own heart of the depth and sincerity of his feeling for Truda that the presence of Stephanie only disquieted him, and that even her lovely perfection did not move him one bit. He could not, however, as he was a gentleman, blurt out the fact that he no longer loved her, did not want to marry her, and would not marry her. Hence the constraint and restraint with which he told the story. It was a tale sufficiently thrilling in itself, such as Sindbad the Sailor might have told to some auditory in the *Arabian Nights*, and their arrival at that very island after that tremendous, titanic convulsion of nature which had brought them together, was not the least wonderful feature of the whole situation.

When he was finished they questioned him. Especially were they interested in the history of the people of the *Good Intent*, whom they had followed into the harbor after a lapse of two hundred and fifty years.

"I have no doubt that the earthquake shock, which was sufficient to tear away one side of the island wall and this harbor, as you have seen–for, before, every side was as sheer as the side off to port yonder–has wrought terrible damage to the settlement; but we shall find that out tomorrow."

"Meanwhile," observed Maynard, "I think we have had quite enough excitement for the day."

"And our interest in your story has caused us to forget the awful strain you have sustained, to say nothing of this dear girl here," said Stephanie.

She patted Truda's hand as she spoke, and smiled at her kindly. She had hoped that in Truda lay the solution of the tangled relations between Beekman and herself, and her natural kindliness of heart was thereby intensified. And, besides, with a thought for her lover, she was glad for a postponement of the inevitable disclosure.

"We must all turn in," chimed in the wretched Harnash, thankful for a further respite of a few hours. "Captain Weatherby will want us out of the ship in the morning, anyway."

"Exactly," said Maynard, with the same thought as the others. "After an-

other night's rest you will be in better condition to show us everything we are so anxious to see."

"Before we separate," continued Harnash, "I want to tell you, Derrick, that our business affairs are in the best condition. On your behalf and my own, I have entered into a business relation with Mr. Maynard. We have been unusually successful, and our own investments have about doubled, I think."

"That's good," said Beekman.

"I'll take you in with me and Harnash, who has already proved invaluable," said Mr. Maynard, "on the same terms, Derrick, so your future will be assured."

This was good news to Beekman, but it was bad news, too, for it added to the obligations of the engagement. He put a good face upon the matter, however, and thanked Maynard cordially.

"Now we'll bid you good-night," said Stephanie, rising, Truda following her example.

She had extended her hand to Beekman. He had made no previous effort to kiss or embrace her, of course, although their engagement would have abundantly warranted him in such affectionate greetings. Now he took her hand, however, and kissed it tenderly. Poor little Truda lifted her face up toward him in turn, but the necessities of the situation made Beekman turn away, which added to the girl's heart-break, for she could not know of the pang his refusal gave him. She could not understand why the parting that night was so different from other partings which had taken place on the island. He had always kissed her before, why not now? It must be because of this new and glorious woman. She had felt, after the terrible hazards they had survived, that nothing could possibly come between them; but that something had was obvious. She stifled her feelings with the stoicism of a savage, which is exactly paralleled by the repression of civilization, and turned and followed Stephanie to her cabin.

She refused the bed in the cabin. She even shook her head at the luxurious sofa opposite, which was offered her. She piled some cushions on the floor, divested herself of her clothing, as was her primitive habit, drew a rug over her as a concession to the civilization she was dimly beginning to comprehend, and at once feigned sleep. So also did Stephanie, and the two women lay awake a long time, waiting with anxious hearts for the day.

Of the two, Truda was the sadder, because she thought she was losing her lover; while Stephanie, in spite of her anxiety, was confident that things would

work out right in the end for all of them.

CHAPTER XXXI
VI ET ARMIS

The next morning Captain Weatherby was glad indeed to be rid of his passengers. His divers had already found the leak. It was now his opinion that the broken plate could be replaced and the leak made tight, or controlled, until they could get to a dry dock in some civilized port, without careening the ship. If all went well, in two days the *Stephanie* would be ready to leave the island. Of course they would have to get her off the sand, but she had been so beached that with the numerous crew she carried the captain could improvise a cofferdam and dig her out, if necessary, although that would naturally be the last resort. It was probable that ground tackle and her own extra-powerful engines would do the trick. Meantime there was much work for all hands, and the idlers were better away.

After breakfast, which was a trying meal for Truda, since she had no knowledge whatever of the utensils and equipment of civilization, the two women and the three men, accompanied by Dr. Welch, who had pronounced both patients well on the way to recovery, but who thought best to keep them under observation while he visited and examined the island from a scientist's point of view, were ferried over on an improvised raft to the strand, whence they found it not a difficult climb to the upland.

Horrible indeed had been the destruction by the storm that had followed the earthquake. What had been a paradise was now devastated. A few of the animals were still alive, but not a single human being was seen. The little settlement was in ruins. Every house had been leveled to the ground. A deep crevice had opened in the basic rock. It ran underneath the ruin of the church. Beneath the great heaps of stone on either side of this gulf they could see the crushed bodies of the islanders. It was easy to reconstruct the scene and to realize what had happened. The storm had given them plenty of warning. It was of so unusual a character that they had had an abundance of time to choose their places of shelter. Moved by such a mental stimulus, as can easily be imagined, they had chosen to assemble in the taboo house. The taboo had been broken, anyway. The god was angry with them. This was the form of his punishment. What was more natural than that

they should turn to him? Perhaps they had some idea of prayer; it may be some lingering remains of Christian faith, which would have led them to assemble in the church in time of peril, had been added to the consciousness that the taboo was broken. At any rate, the men, women, and children all of them had crowded into the church. It was the largest and most substantial of all the buildings, and the earthquake had thrown it down upon them.

The huge rift that had been opened in the island had engulfed many of them, evidently. Whatever the case, not one of them was alive. The rift had divided the ruin into two parts. Most of the people evidently had remained near the door. Old Kobe's body was found in the opening in the rail, his hand stretched out to the broken altar upon which the mouldering cross still stood. They found the two precious books without much difficulty, and that was all.

Truda had disappeared. She presently rejoined them, clad in her usual way in one of the grass or fiber petticoats which she had resurrected from one of the houses of the women which had not been completely demolished. She had laid aside the light garments which Stephanie had put on her, and she seemed a different woman. They noticed it, of course, but made no comment. And now Dr. Welch, easily realizing that the friends would rather be alone, made his excuses and wandered away, out of hearing, at any rate, while he busied himself in observation and interesting studies.

"I'll have Captain Weatherby send a party of men to clear this away and give the bodies decent burial," said Maynard, breaking the solemn pause.

"That's good," observed Beekman; "I was about to suggest it."

"Well, there's nothing further to do here," said Stephanie. "Let's go back to the yacht."

"Before we go," broke in Harnash, "I've got something to tell you, Derrick, and the best place and time is here and now."

The moment had come!

"And I also have something to tell all of you," answered Beekman, realizing that he must settle his affairs sooner or later, and his natural temperament inclining him to sooner rather than later. Stephanie knew perfectly well what Beekman had to tell. She had not seen him and Truda together without becoming entirely aware of the state of affairs, but Beekman had no idea of the communication Harnash intended to make. He looked at him as he spoke. "Good God, old man, what's the matter?" he burst out. "You're as white as the spray yonder."

"I've a confession to make, and I want to tell you before I make it that I do it of my own free will. After you know what I've done, you will hardly believe that, but Mr. Maynard and Stephanie can both testify to that."

"We can," said Maynard.

"And we do," added Stephanie.

"George, I don't know how to take this tone from you. I've always found you strictly honorable. Your word has always been your bond. And your friendship has been beyond price. You can't have anything very dreadful to confess, I imagine. It can't be money, because you just told me about the investments."

"I wish to God it were," said Harnash bitterly. "I'd rather be branded as a thief than–"

A dawning suspicion flashed into Beekman's mind. Why had he never thought of it before? His face changed.

"What is it?" he demanded. "Speak out."

"You wondered how you were shanghaied and I was not. Well, I–I did it."

"What?"

"I had it done, that is."

"Ah, and Woywod?"

"He was a boyhood friend. He would do anything for me. It was through him."

"By God!" cried Beekman passionately, forgetting everything else as his life on that hell ship came back to him, as he recalled the brutal bullying and the miseries that he and all the other men had endured, and that last terrible scene in the cabin, which had stained his hands with the blood of man; and that it was in self-defense did not make the stain any less vivid. "You–my friend–the best man–at my wedding!"

Harnash, by a magnificent display of courage, kept his head erect and forced himself to look squarely into Beckman's eyes. Maynard watched the two men with a curious interest as he might have watched a great dramatic climax in a play. Stephanie was fearfully concerned, yet she was proud of her lover, for in an utterly impossible position no man could bear himself with more courage and more dignity than Harnash exhibited then.

"Yes," he said, "you can't say anything to me that I haven't said to myself. You can't characterize my conduct more bitterly than I have done."

"Damn you," cried Beekman, his quick temper entirely uppermost, and before anyone could say a word or interpose he leaped upon Harnash. He had only the use of his left hand, but with that he struck him a fearful blow on the side of his face. "When I think of all you made me suffer," he continued, "I could kill you."

"I call heaven to witness, and you all," cried Harnash, the blood flaming in his cheek beneath Beekman's hand, "that I sustain this blow not because I fear but because I merit it. You see that Beekman's right arm is helpless; I could kill him if I would, but I deserve it." He turned his face toward his friend. "Strike again," he said, with sublime, almost heroic, purpose; but Beekman's hand fell.

What Harnash said was true. The two were not equally matched. Under

ordinary circumstances Beekman was the stronger, but now the advantage was with the other man. "I couldn't strike a second time a man who won't strike back. If you would fight me I'd kill you with one hand. Why did you do it?"

Now it was Stephanie's turn. She interposed.

"Because I loved him."

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"And our engagement?"

"I would have carried it through. I refused to tell you the truth."

"What truth?"

"That I loved George and that he loved me."

"So you made love to my promised wife behind my back, did you?" cried Beekman, the scorn and contempt he infused into his words fairly scorching Harnash.

"I loved her before you did," protested the other, "but I never said a word to her. I never sought anything from her until–until–I–"

"Until I let him see that I didn't care for you, except as a friend, and that I did care for him," put in Stephanie deftly again.

"What then?"

"I begged that I might tell you the true facts of the case," said Harnash.

"And again I refused," said Stephanie. "I knew that marriage was my father's wish. It had been arranged with your father. I believed that you loved me. There was no other way."

"And did you know that he intended to do this?" asked Beekman in his rage.

"Now, by God, that's too much," cried Harnash. "That's an infernal shame. You can insult me, but you can't insult her, Beekman!" He stepped forward with clenched fist.

"Strike one blow. I beg you to do it," taunted Beekman.

But Mr. Maynard interposed between the two men and held them apart, for now Harnash, as angry as the other, would have struck him. Beekman had lost some of the advantage of his position by his implied charge against the woman.

"I didn't know it," answered Stephanie quickly, "but if I had I might have–the temptation–you didn't love me, did you?"

"I did then, but not now," answered Beekman scornfully.

"Ah," said Stephanie, quickly and greatly relieved, "I thought so."

"If you had only come frankly and told me the state of affairs, how much trouble would have been avoided," continued Beekman.

"Yes," said Stephanie, "we see that now; but, on the other hand, you wouldn't have won the heart of the woman you do love," she continued boldly, staking everything on her guess.

It was the first moment in the interview that Beekman had given a thought to Truda. Instinctively he turned to look for her. She had been standing near by, listening. She had made out, with her imperfect knowledge of English, only that these two men were quarreling over this woman. It intensified her conviction that Beekman must love this glorious woman. There was no place in his heart for her. Outside his heart there was no life possible for her. Her people were all gone. The island was a ruin. There was but one course left her. She stole softly away and presently began to run.

Now, the earthquake and storm had overthrown the clump of trees which hid the little amphitheater on the top of the cliff, still intact, whence Truda and her forebears for so many years watched the open sea, and the long path was clearly visible from where they stood. They could see her bright figure, outlined against the gray rocks, running toward the brink. Of what she would do there, no one, of course, could be sure, but in Beekman's mind flashed a suspicion which grew to a certainty. He forgot Stephanie; he forgot Harnash; he forgot his wrongs–he forgot everything but that far-off flying figure!

"My God!" he cried, "she thinks I don't care. She'll throw herself over the cliff."

Without a word, he tore over the debris-encumbered path, and without a second's hesitation the others followed. Even Stephanie gathered up her skirts and ran like Camilla over the ground. Dr. Welch, happening to turn at the moment, saw them and followed also. As he ran, with deadly fear in his heart, Beekman shouted after her.

"Truda," he cried. "Stop! for God's sake, wait!"

It was the first intimation the others had received that she understood English. But Truda ran on. She heard his voice, indeed. She partly comprehended his appeal, but it seemed to her that it was only in pity that he called. She was possessed by a certain panic terror, a certain wild jealousy, a certain horrible despair. She could never be like that glorious creature over whom the men quarreled as men have quarreled since time and the world began. Even if he did love her, he could never love her long. There was a passionate abasement in the swift comparisons she had been making since she had been brought on board the yacht. It was no use. She must go on. And not only did her own misery impel her flying feet, but some vivid considerations for his happiness. She was not of his kind. She was only a savage islander. She only realized it since she had been picked up by the yacht, because she had never before had any standards of comparison. Thus, in spite of the second that her heart gave to his appeal for the moment, she ran on.

Beekman stumbled and fell. He fell on his wounded arm, opening the wound again. He lay half-stunned for a moment, and by the time he had strug-

gled to his feet the others had joined him. The race was lost. Truda had won. The little group around Beekman could see clearly into the amphitheater which Truda had entered. She stepped to the edge and glanced down. The sheer fall of perhaps five hundred feet would kill her instantly. It had been her purpose to fling herself from the brink without a moment's hesitation, but, like Lot's wife, she was fain to take one look backward, one glance of farewell.

"Oh, God!" cried Beekman, stretching out his left hand, the only one he could move, to the little figure posed against the sky in all its golden brilliance as he had seen it when he had lain upon the sand, a castaway, the first morning on that island. He thought and they all thought she would go over without hesitating, but she looked back. That backward look was her salvation.

Quicker witted than any, and realizing from her own womanly intuition what was in her sister woman's mind, Stephanie saved the day. As Truda's head came around, Stephanie took the boldest and most astonishing action of her whole life. There, in plain view of Truda, she struck Beekman full in the face with her clenched fist, and before anyone could stop her she struck again and again. She rained blow after blow upon him. She was a vigorous young woman, and in her excitement she had no idea of the power which her frantic excitement gave to her blows. Beekman, half-dazed from the other fall, and weakened from loss of blood from the reopened wound in his arm, was too astonished for resistance. Indeed, the first blow was enough. Instinctively, as one blow succeeded another, he threw up his arm vainly and then went down fairly under a mighty thrust into which she put all the force of her body. Indeed, she almost leaped upon him as he staggered backward. She recovered her balance with difficulty as Beekman fell a second time. He cut his head on a rock as he went down, and lay there with his arms outsprawled, senseless. As he did so Stephanie stepped forward with uplifted foot as if to stamp upon him. The next moment, Harnash, thinking her mad, clasped her in his arms.

"Stop, stop," he cried. "What has he done to you?"

"It was the only way," screamed Stephanie, hysterically. "Look!"

Then, and not until then, did they appreciate the meaning of her action. It was plain to the jealous heart of Truda. She had seen the first blow and the second. She had seen her lover go down. She saw him lying there. What was this woman doing? How dared she lift a hand against Beekman? Had he been killed? Rage–hot, savage, passionate–filled Truda's heart. There would be time enough to die later. Meanwhile she must teach this woman a lesson.

More swiftly than she had fled, she turned from the cliff brink and came bounding down the path, and yet there was some joy in her heart. Whatever Beekman might feel for this woman, it was obvious that she regarded him with scorn. But it was mainly murderous resentment that filled Truda's soul. Her face

was transformed. It was convulsed with passion, with anger, with savage rage. There might have been some infiltration, some slight strain of Polynesian blood in this woman. She was aflame to defend her lover, with the spirit of the lioness sacrificing her life for her cub. In fact, the passion in her face was appalling.

"Father," cried Stephanie as she approached, "don't you see?"

It was Maynard who caught the island girl in his arms. It was he who held her firmly, despite her frantic struggles, while Stephanie approached, with Harnash holding her tightly, but to protect her from assault, because now he knew why she had done it.

"I only did it to stop you," she cried. "He loves you, not me. This is the man I love. Don't you understand?"

The passion faded out of Truda's face. She did indeed understand. She had been blind, mad to have doubted her lover. A great anxiety came into her face. She stared down at Beekman in agonized contrition and alarm. Her heart almost stopped at what she saw. Mr. Maynard released her, gave her freedom. She knelt down by her lover's side. She lifted his head in her arms and laid it against her breast. She called to him passionately in every language with which she was familiar. She pressed her lips to his lips, to his face, to his bleeding forehead.

Dr. Welch now came up with the party. Fortunately, he had brought a flask with him. A few drops restored Beekman to consciousness. He opened his eyes and gazed into Truda's face.

"Truda!" he said, struggling to a sitting position. "Thank God, you came back to me!"

"And this woman?" asked Truda, looking up at Stephanie. "Do you love her?"

She would have the truth from him, not from Stephanie or any other.

He shook his head.

"Forgive me, Stephanie. I love only you, Truda."

"But when you go back to that other world of which you told me, and I am there, alone?"

"I will love only you," he answered in a voice which carried conviction even to Truda.

She bent over him and laid her face in his hands.

"It strikes me," said Mr. Maynard, "that you haven't come out so badly, after all, Beekman."

"No," said Beekman. "Harnash, it was a–it wasn't a–pleasant–thing you did, but now that I love Truda, I can understand. We'll say no more. Let's forget it and be friends again."

"And you forgive me?" asked Stephanie, kneeling by his side, while Truda jealously raised her arm as a barrier. Stephanie laughed. "I won't touch him," she

said.

"What shall I forgive?"

"That violent assault of a moment since," she said as a deep flush spread over her face. "It was the only way to let her see we were nothing to each other."

"It was a very effective way," said Beekman, his native humor coming to the rescue. "George," he said, extending his hand to his friend, "let me give you a piece of advice. Take a few boxing lessons before you take this lady for your wife."

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