

THE CALL OF THE SOUTH

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"HAYWARD ... SENT PRINCE WILLIAM AFTER THE MARE UNDER PRESSURE OF THE SPUR." (See page 114)

**The Call of the
South**
By
Robert Lee Durham

Illustrated by
Henry Roth

*" When your Fear Cometh as Desolation and
Your Destruction Cometh as a Whirlwind "*

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TO THE
LION OF HIS TRIBE
Stonewall Jackson Durham

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The Call of the South

CHAPTER I

The President had called upon the Governors for troops; and the brilliantly lighted armory was crowded with the citizen-soldiers who followed the standards of the 71st Ohio, waiting for the bugle to call them to order for the simple and formal ceremony of declaring their desire to answer the President's call.

A formal and useless ceremony surely: for it was a foregone conclusion that this gallant old regiment, with its heroic record in two wars, would volunteer to a man. It was no less certain that, presenting unbroken ranks of willing soldiers, it would be the first selected by the Governor to assist Uncle Sam's regulars in impressing upon the Kaiser the length and breadth and thickness of the Monroe Doctrine.

For many bothersome years the claimant nations had abided by the Hague Tribunal's award, though with evidently decreasing patience because of Venezuela's lame compliance with it. Three changes of government and dwindling revenues had made the collection of the indebtedness by the agent of the claimants more and more difficult. Finally on the 6th of January, 191-, Señor Emilio Mañana executed his coup d'état, overthrew the existing government, declared himself Protector of Venezuela, and "for the people of Venezuela repudiated every act and agreement of the spurious governments of the last decade," seized the customs, and gave the agent of the creditor allies his passports in a manner more effective than ceremonious: all of this with his weather eye upon the Monroe Doctrine and a Washington administration in some need of a rallying cry and a diverting issue.

The Kaiser's patience was exhausted, and his army and navy were in the pink of condition. On the 10th of January his ministers informed the allies that their most august sovereign would deal henceforth with Venezuela as might seem to him best to protect Germany's interests and salve the Empire's honour.

In less than a week the President sent to Congress a crisp message, saying that the Kaiser and the great doctrine were in collision. The Senate resolution declaring war was adopted after being held up long enough to permit fifty-one Senators to embalm their patriotism in the *Congressional Record*, and, being sent to the House, was concurred in in ten minutes after the clerk began to read the preamble.

The country was a-tremble with the thrill and excitement of a man who is preparing to go against an antagonist worthy of his mettle, and in the 71st's armory a crowd of people jammed the balconies to the last inch. The richly varicoloured apparel of the women, in vivid contrast to the sombre walls of the armory, the kaleidoscopic jumble and whirl of soldiers in dress uniforms on the floor, the frequent outbursts of hand-clapping and applause as favourite officers of the regiment were recognized by the galleries, the surging and unceasing din and hubbub of the shouting and gesticulating mass of people on floor and balcony,

gave the scene a holiday air which really belied the feelings of the greater number both of soldiers and onlookers. There was a serious thought in almost every mind: but serious thoughts are not welcome at such times to a man who has already decided to tender his life to his country, nor to the woman who knows that she must say good-bye to him on the morrow. So they both try to overwhelm unwelcome reflections by excited chatter and patriotic enthusiasm. They will think of to-morrow when it comes: let the clamour go on.

On the very front seat and leaning over the balcony rail are seated three women who receive more than the ordinary number of salutes and greetings from the officers and men on the floor. Two young women and their mother they are, and any one of the three is worthy of a second glance by right of her looks. The mother, who, were it not for the becoming fulness of her matronly figure, might be mistaken for an elder sister of the older daughter, has a face in which strength and dignity and gentleness and kindness and a certain air of distinction proclaim her a gentlewoman of that fineness which is Nature's patent of nobility. The older daughter is a young woman of eighteen years perhaps, inheriting her mother's distinction of manner and dignity of carriage, and showing a trace of hauteur, attributable to her youth, which is continually striving with a spirit of mischief for possession of her gray eyes and her now solemn, now laughing mouth. The younger daughter, hardly more than a child, has an undeveloped but fast ripening beauty which her sister cannot be said to possess. They have gray eyes and erect figures in common; but there the likeness ceases. The younger girl's mass of hair, impatient of its braids, looks black in the artificial light; but three hours ago, with the setting sun upon it, a stranger had thought it was red. Her skin indeed, where it is not tinted with rose, is of that rare whiteness which sometimes goes with red hair, but never unaccompanied by perfect health. She has been straining her eyes in search of some one since the moment she entered the gallery, and finally asks impatiently, "Why doesn't papa come out where we can see him? The people would shout for him, I know."

"Don't be a fidget," answers her sister in a low voice, "he will come presently;" and continues, "I declare, mamma, I believe Helen thinks all these soldiers are just for papa's glorification, and that if papa failed to volunteer the country would be lost."

"Well, there isn't any one to take his place in the regiment, for I heard Captain Elkhart say so."

"Captain Elkhart would except himself, I suppose, even though he thought like you that papa is perfection."

"Yes, and I suppose that you would except Mr. Second Lieutenant Morgan, wouldn't you? Humph! he is too young sort, too much like a lady-killer to be a soldier. I don't care if I do think papa is perfection. He is most—isn't he, mamma?"

A roar of applause drowns the mother's amused assent; and they look up to see this father, the colonel of the 71st, uncover for a moment to the noisy greeting whose vigour seems to stamp with approval his younger daughter's good opinion of him. In a moment a trumpet-call breaks through and strikes down and overwhelms all this clamour of applause, and there is no sound save the hurrying into ranks of the men on the floor. Then comes the confused shouting of a dozen roll-calls at once, the cracking of the rifle-butts on the floor, the boisterous counting of fours, a succession of sharp commands and trumpet-calls,—and the noise and confusion grow rapidly less until only is heard the voice of the adjutant as he salutes and presents the regiment in line of masses to the colonel, saying, "Sir, the regiment is formed."

A short command brings the rifles to the floor, and there is absolute quiet as every one waits to catch each word that its commander will say in asking the regiment to volunteer. But Colonel Phillips knows the value of the psychological moment and the part that emotion plays in patriotism, and he does not intend to lose a feather-weight of force in his appeal to the loyal spirits of his men. So he brings the guns again quickly to salute as the colour-guard emerge from an office door behind him, bearing "Old Glory" and the 71st's regimental colours; and, turning, he presents his sword as the field music sounds *To the Colour* and the bullet-torn standards sweep proud and stately to their posts in the centre battalion. This sudden and unexpected adaptation of the ceremony for *The Escort of the Colour*, which for lack of space is never attempted in the armory, is not without effect. The men in the ranks, being restrained, are bursting to yell. The onlookers, free to cheer, cannot express by cheap hand-clapping what wells up in them at sight of the flags, and they, too, are silent. When the rifle-butts again rest on the floor the Colonel begins his soldierly brief address:

"The President has asked the Governor for six regiments. While under the terms of their enlistment he could name any he might choose, he prefers volunteer soldiers as far as may be. So you are here this evening to indicate the extent of your willingness and wishfulness to answer the President's call. I need make no appeal to you. The 71st is a representative regiment in its personnel. Its men are of all sections and classes and parties. My mother was a South Carolinian, my father from Massachusetts. Your colour-sergeant is a Texan, and your regimental colours are borne by a native of Ohio, grandson of him who placed those colours on the Confederate earthworks at Petersburg. You in the aggregate most fitly represent the sentiment of the whole people of this union of states. This sentiment is a loyalty that has never to this moment failed to answer a call to arms. It is not to be supposed that the present generation is degenerate either in courage or patriotism. When the trumpet sounds *forward* the ranks will stand fast, and such as for any reason may not volunteer will fall out to the rear and

retire.”

At the lilting call there was silence for ten seconds, in which not a breath was taken by man or woman in the house: then the galleries broke out to cheer. Not a man had moved; though not a few felt as did Corporal Billie Catling, who remarked to his chum when the ranks were dismissed, “It’s going to be devilish hard for my folks to get along without my salary; but to fall out to the rear when that bugle said ’forward’—damned if I could do it.”

One of the most deeply interested spectators of the scene in the armory had stood back against the wall in the gallery during the whole time, and had apparently not wished to be brought into notice of the crowd, mostly women, packed in the limited gallery space. His goodly length enabled him to see over the heads of the other spectators everything of interest happening on the floor. A long overcoat could not conceal his perfectly developed outlines; and many heads were turned to look a second time at him, attracted both by his appearance and by the fact that he seemed to be an utter stranger to every one around him, not having changed his position nor spoken to a soul since coming up into the gallery. He was broad of shoulder, full-chested, straight-backed, with a head magnificently set on; and had closely cropped black hair showing a decided tendency to curl, dark eyes, evenly set teeth as white as a fox-hound’s, a clean-shaved face neither full nor lean, and pleasing to look upon, a complexion of noticeable darkness, yet all but white and without a trace of colour. While nine-tenths of the people who saw him that evening had no impression at all as to his race or nationality, an observant eye would have noted that he was unobtrusively but unmistakably a negro.

He had been quite unconscious of anything around him in his absorbed interest in the ceremony below him. This manifest interest was evidenced by his nervous hands which he clinched and opened and shut as varying expressions of enthusiasm, resentment and disappointment, humiliation, disdain and determination came and went over his face. He, Hayward Graham, had applied to enlist in this regiment a month before, and had been refused admission because of the small portion of negro blood in his veins,—and that in a manner, too, that added unnecessary painfulness to the refusal. He rather despised himself for coming to witness the regiment’s response to the call for troops, but his patriotic interest and his love for his friend Hal Lodge, who had loyally assisted his effort to enlist in the 71st, overcame his pride, and he had come to see the decision of Hal’s enthusiastic wager that nine-tenths of the regiment would volunteer.

The first trumpet-call had stirred his enthusiasm, only to have it turned to chagrin and resentment when the roll-calls brought to him the realization that his name was not among the elect, and the black humiliation of the thought that he might not even offer to die for his country in this select company because he

was part—so small a part—negro; and he gnawed his lips in irritation. But when the flags had come in so suddenly—he involuntarily straightened up and took in his breath quickly to relieve the smothering sensation in his throat, and forgot his wrongs in an exaltation of patriotic fervour.

He stood abstracted for some time after the outflow from the galleries began, and came down just behind the three women of the Colonel's family. At the foot of the stairs Lieutenant Morgan met the party and said, "Mrs. Phillips, the Colonel told me to bring you ladies over to his office."

"So that's the Colonel's wife and daughters," thought Graham, as he passed out into the street. "Where have I seen that little one?"

CHAPTER II

After lingering at the entrance of the armory for a few minutes to see Hal Lodge, and failing to find him, Graham, still gloomily and resentfully meditating upon his rejection by the regiment, started briskly toward the temporary lodgings of his mother and himself as if he had some purpose in mind. Arrived there, he began catechizing her even while removing his overcoat.

"Look here, mother, put down that work for awhile, and tell me all about my people."

"What is it, Hayward? What do you want to know?" his mother asked.

"I want you to tell me all about my father and grandfathers and grandmothers, everything you know—who they were, and what they were, and what they did, and where they lived—the whole thing."

"And what is the matter that you want to know all that at once? Are you still worrying about not getting into that regiment?"

"Yes; I want to know why I am not good enough to go to war along with respectable people—if there is any reason."

"Honey, you are just as good as any of them, and better than most. I wouldn't think about it any more if I were you."

"Well, I'm not going to think about it any more—after to-night; but I want to know all about it right now. Where was father from? You have never told me that."

"Well, honey, I don't know myself; for he never told me nor any one else that. All I know is that something—he never would say what—made him leave

his father and mother when he was not twenty years old and he never saw them afterwards,—didn't let them know where he was or even that he was alive. Your pa was mighty high-spirited, and he never seemed to forget whatever it was that came between him and his father; though he would talk about him some too, and appeared to worship his mother's memory. They must have been very prominent people from what he said of them. His mother died very soon after he left home, he told me; and your grandfather was killed not long after that in a battle right at the beginning of the war, I've heard him say; but he didn't seem to like to talk of them."

"Didn't father say which side my grandfather was on?"

"On our side—the Union side."

"And father was in the war?"

"Yes, but I forget what he did. He had some sort of a badge or medal tied up with a red, white and blue ribbon that I found in his trunk after he died; but I gave it to you to play with when you were little and you lost it. That had something to do with the war, but I didn't understand exactly what. He didn't like to talk about the war. When we were first married he used to say that the war was the first battle and the easiest, and that he was enlisted for the second and intended to see it through. But before he died I often heard him say that the war was only clearing away the brush, and what the crop would be depended on what was planted and how it was tended, and that his great-grandchildren might see the harvest."

"Where did you first meet him?"

"Down in Alabama. He went down there soon after the war to teach school, just as I did. I had been to college and got my diploma and I wanted to teach; but it seemed I could not get a position in the whole State of New Hampshire. So when some of the people offered to send me down to Alabama to teach the negroes, I went. Your father had a school for negroes not very far from mine, and he had had a hard time from the very first. None of the respectable white people would have anything to do with him, and he could not get board from any one but negroes. But the worse the people treated him the harder he worked, and his school grew. Finally it became so large that he could not do the work alone. He tried every way to get another teacher, but could not. As a last resort he asked me to combine my school with his and see if we could not manage in that way to teach all the children who came. I never saw anybody with a heart so set as his was on giving every little negro a chance to learn.

"So we combined the schools and were getting along very well when one day as your father was coming out of the post-office in the little town near which we taught, a young man named Bush stepped up in front of him and cursed him and said something about me that your father never would tell me. Your

father knocked him down and he was nearly killed by striking his head against a hitching-post as he fell. The next morning a committee of some of the citizens came to the schoolhouse, and Colonel Allen, who was one of them, told your father that the community was greatly aroused by the condition of affairs, and that the injury done to young Bush, while they didn't approve of Bush's conduct, had brought the trouble to a head. He said that sober-minded citizens didn't want any outbreak, but that the peculiar relation existing between your father and me outraged the sentiments of every respectable man and woman in the county."

"Did father hit him?"

"No, honey; but he rose right up without waiting to hear any more and told Colonel Allen that as for the injury to young Bush he had done nothing more than defend the good name of a woman and had no apologies or explanations to offer. He talked quite a long time to them, and I could see that they didn't like some of the things he said. As he finished he told them that he could see that our condition, cut off as we were from association with respectable people by prejudice and from the lower classes because of their dense ignorance, and thrown into intimacy by our work, was somewhat unusual, but that was because of conditions we could not control and be true to our work. He would try to arrange, he told them, if they would give him a week, so that there would be no grounds for these criticisms. They asked him what he proposed to do, but he said he couldn't answer them then.

"They gave him the week he asked for, and left us. He dismissed the school when the committee was gone, and when all the children had scampered out of the schoolhouse he told me that while we could not be blamed for the way things had come about, it was true that our being so much together and cut off from everybody else gave our critics a chance to talk, and his solution of the difficulty was for us to be married—at once. He went on to say a whole lot of things, honey, that I never imagined he thought of, and wound up by declaring that I owed it to the work we had begun to make any sacrifices to carry it on. Now, honey, there was never a better, braver man than your father, nor a better looking one, I think, and there was no reason why I should not love him. I was younger then than I am now and I was not a bad-looking girl myself, and I did not think till long afterwards that when he spoke of my sacrifices he was thinking of his own.

"Well, he made what arrangements were necessary that evening, and we were married by a Bureau officer of some kind or other next morning before time for school. When school assembled he sent a note by one of the boys to Colonel Allen, saying that we had arranged the matter so that there could be no further objection to our running the school in together, and informed him that we were married."

"And what reply did Colonel Allen send to that note?" Hayward asked his mother with great interest.

"He didn't send any," she replied; "but came along with some others of the committee in about half an hour to bring his answer himself."

"What did he say?"

"Well, he started off by saying to your father that there could be no doubt that what we had done would make the people forget their former objections, but he thought it would be because the former offence against their notions of propriety would be lost sight of in their unspeakable indignation at this method we had adopted, which, he said, struck at the very foundation of their civilization. He talked very high and mighty, I thought, and though he pretended to try to hold himself down and not get mad, he ripped and charged a long time right there before the whole school, and finally told us he would do all he could to keep the people from doing us harm, but he advised us to leave the community just as soon as we could, as he wouldn't be responsible for the result of our act."

"What did father say to that?" Hayward asked eagerly.

"Well, he waited until Colonel Allen got through and then said very quietly that he had done what he had because he had appreciated the force of the objections that had been raised to our intimate association and was always willing to be governed by the proprieties, but that he did not agree with Colonel Allen about uprooting any principle of civilization, that times and conditions had changed, and, while he knew the sentiment of the people would be against our marriage, he thought that sentiment was wrong and would have to give way before the pressure of the new order of things, that the law had married us and we would look to the law to protect us. He said that the work we were doing was worthy of any man's effort, that he had consecrated himself to it and was not going to be driven from it by any predictions of danger, that I was his wife and he would protect me."

"What did the honourable committee think of that?"

"I don't know. Colonel Allen and the other men just turned around without saying another word and left the schoolhouse."

"Did you run the school on after that?"

"Yes, honey, but not for long. One night when those awful people came to destroy things at the schoolhouse as they had done several times before, your father was there to meet them and identify them. Instead of running away as he thought they would, they crowded around him, and after a struggle in the dark they left him lying just outside the door with a broken arm, a pistol-ball through his side, and unconscious from a lick on the head. Some of the coloured people who lived near there heard the row, and after it was all over and all those folks were gone, they slipped up there and found your father and brought him home.

"It was hard for us to get a doctor at first. A young one who lived nearest to us wouldn't come, though we sent for him, and we were all frightened nearly to death. We could hear those awful people yell every once and awhile away off on all sides of the house, then they would fire off guns and pistols—it was an awful night, Hayward. At last old Doctor Wright came about three o'clock in the morning. He lived ten miles or more from us, and we thought that your father, who was raving and moaning, would surely die before he got there. But the old doctor told us as soon as he examined him that he would pull through all right. He said that he had been a surgeon in Stonewall Jackson's corps and that he had seen men forty times worse hurt back in the army in two months. That made us feel a great deal better, I tell you. Your father came to his senses before the old man quit working with him, and when he heard that the young doctor had refused to come to see him (because he was scared, the negro who went for him said), and that the old man had ridden so far through a very cold and wet night to help him, I never heard any one say more to express his thanks than your father did. The old doctor listened to it all without making any answer except an occasional grunt. When he got ready to go home I asked him if he would not prefer to wait till daylight, for fear those awful men would hurt him."

"And did he wait?" interrupted Graham.

"No. He stiffened up as straight as his rheumatism would let him and stumped indignantly out of the house with his pill-bags in one hand and in the other an old pair of home-knit woollen gloves he wouldn't stop to put on—I can see him now."

"Did he ever come back?" asked Graham.

"Oh, yes. The sight of him on his tall pacing bay mare made us glad every two or three days till your father got well."

"The old doctor evidently didn't agree with his neighbours about you and father, then."

"I don't know about that. He never would discuss our troubles or speak any words of sympathy; and on the last day he came, when your father was thanking him as he had done so often for his kindness to him, the old man asked him in his rather curt manner, 'Don't they need school-teachers up north?'"

"Did you and father leave that place as soon as he got well?"

"No. Your father said that we would stick to it to the end; and as soon as he was able to teach we opened the school again, but in less than a week the schoolhouse was burned down. We rented another after some trouble, but that was burned promptly also. Then it became impossible to get one.

"We decided it would be best for us to go away to some place where the people were not prejudiced against us. We moved more than a dozen times, but were never able to stay longer than a few months at most, and often had to pack

up almost before we finished unpacking. Finally we lost all hope of being able to teach the negroes in the South, and decided to go home. Your father did go so far as to suggest that if I would go back North and leave him down there alone the people might not molest him. He certainly did have his heart in the work. As I did not like the idea, however, he dropped it."

"And that's when father got the professorship at Oberlin?"

"Yes; and kept it till his death."

"I can hardly recollect father at all," said the son, "though it seems sometimes I remember how he looked. I wish I could have been older before he died."

"Well, you were not two years old at your father's death, Hayward, and really saw very little of him. He never seemed to care for children. Your two sisters that died before you were born—it seemed that sometimes a week would pass without his being conscious that they were in the house. He was so absorbed in his work that he didn't have time for anything else. His hard work and disappointment over the failure that he had made down South was what killed him, I have always thought. Though he lingered for many years, he was so broken-spirited after we went to Ohio that his health gave way, and he was not more than a shadow when he died. I am not sorry that you do not remember how he looked at the last.

"But, honey," the mother continued after some moments of silence, "you ought to be proud of your father. I wish you could have heard the funeral sermon Doctor Johnson preached. He did not say anything about your father's being in the war of the rebellion, but he told about his trials and struggles to teach the negroes in the South, and said that in that work John Graham was as much a soldier and was as brave and faithful as any man who ever fought for the flag. If these folks here could have heard that sermon they never would have voted to keep you from joining the regiment."

"Oh, it's not because of what my father did or did not do," said Graham impatiently; "nor is it because of what I've done or left undone, nor of what they think I would do or would not do if they kindly permitted me to enlist. No, no. It's because I'm part negro—though I'm quite as white as a number I saw there to-night. Now, mother, exactly how much negro am I? You've told me your father was a white man; but who was your mother, and what do you know about her?"

"Yes, my father was a white man. He was a German just come over to this country. He had a beer saloon in a New Hampshire town—at least he bought it afterwards. He worked in the saloon when my mother, who had run away from Kentucky, was hired to work in his employer's house. He boarded there and she was treated something like a member of the family, although she was a servant, and they were married after awhile. Some few of the people didn't like it, I've heard mammy say, but they got along without any trouble; and when my father

saved up some money he bought the little saloon from his employer and made some little money before he died. We had a hard enough time getting it, though, goodness knows. I moved back to New Hampshire from Ohio after your father's death in order to push the case through the—"

"Yes, yes, I've heard that before," said Hayward; "but tell me about your mother's running away from her master. You have never told me anything about her, except that her name was Cindy or Lucinda, and that she belonged to General Young."

"Well, honey, she was just a slave girl that belonged to General Young over in Kentucky. She ran away and got across the river without being caught, and some of the white people helped her to get on as far as New Hampshire and got her that place to work where my father boarded. She and my father were—"

"Yes, yes, I know," the son interrupted again, "but what made her run away and leave her father and mother—did she know her father and mother?"

"I don't know that I remember it all," said the mother evasively, "and it doesn't make any difference anyway."

"Oh, well, go on and tell what you know or have heard. Let's get at the bottom of it. I declare I believe you don't like my being a negro any better than those dudes in the 71st."

The mother laughed at his statement; and seemed pleased at the interruption, for she made no move to proceed with the narrative. Graham looked at her quietly a few moments, and, ascribing her reticence to unwillingness to descant upon the negro element in her ancestry, which was indeed a part but a very small part of her motive, repeated his demand for information sharply.

"Oh, honey," cried his mother, "don't ask me any more about it. I just made mammy tell me all about her father and mother and her running away from Kentucky, and I wish to the Lord I never had! It was just awful."

"So! Well, now I must know. Go on and tell it. The quicker you do the sooner it will be over. Go on, I say. What was your mother's father named?"

"Gumbo—Guinea Gumbo."

"Poetic name that! And her mother's name, what was it?"

"Big Lize."

"Not so poetic, though it sounds like some poetry I've read, too. And now what did this pair do or suffer that was so terrible? It's no use dodging any longer."

"Well, child, if I must, I suppose I must. My mother's mother didn't do anything that was awful; but Guinea Gumbo—I wish I knew I was no kin to him. Mammy said he was brought right from Africa and was as wild as a wolf. Nobody could understand much that he said, and General Young had a time keeping him from tearing things up. He used to run away and stay in the swamp for weeks

at a time. The children on the place, black and white, were as scared of him as death, and none of the slave women would ever go about him if they could help it. Not long after General Young bought him, Gumbo and his first wife, who was brought over from Africa with him, had the plans all fixed to steal one of the General's little boys, five or six years old, and carry him off to the river-swamp and have a regular cannibal feast of him. General Young found it out in time; and mammy said the old negroes on the plantation said that was what killed the woman, the whipping she and Gumbo got for it. It laid Gumbo up for a long time, but he got over it. It seemed that nothing but shooting could kill him."

"Did they shoot him to kill him? What was that for?" asked Graham.

"Honey, that is the awful part of it. Mammy said that one day her young mistis, the General's oldest daughter, didn't come home from a ride she had taken, and the whole plantation was turned out to find her. But some one came along and told the General that she had eloped across the river with a young man he had forbidden to come on the place, and all the people on the plantation went back to their quarters. As the young man could not be found, everybody thought that he and Miss Lily had run away and married and were too much afraid of her father to come back home. The next day, however, the young man turned up, and swore he had not seen Miss Lily in a week. Then the plantation was in terror.—Honey, I can't tell you the rest.—They found her.—When they were calling out all the people from the quarters, the General learned that Gumbo had not been seen since Miss Lily was lost. He had run away so often that no attention was paid to it, for he always came back after a time.—They got the bloodhounds, mammy said, and went to the swamp. After a long time the dogs struck Gumbo's trail, and—yes, they found her,—tied hands and feet and her clothing torn to strings, in a kind of hut made of bark and brush way back in the swamp. She was dead, but she had not been dead an hour, from a gash in her head made by an axe. The dogs followed a hot scent from the hut for another hour, and led the men to where they had run Gumbo down. That was where they shot him—and left him. He still had the axe, and had killed one of the dogs, and nobody could get to him. They didn't want to, I suppose."

Graham had listened to his mother's last words without breathing, and when she stopped he dropped his face in his hands with a groan.... She began again in a few moments:

"Mammy said that when they brought her young mistis back home the General went off in a fit, and raved and cursed till the doctors and the rest of 'em had to hold him to keep him from killing somebody. Mammy was one of her old mistis's house-girls, and she heard all the General's ravings and screams that he would kill every nigger on the place; and he kept it up so long and kept breaking out again so after they thought they had him pacified that mammy said she was

scared so bad she just couldn't stay there any longer: and that's what made her run away the very next night. She had a hard time getting across the river, but after she got over safe she didn't have much trouble, for some of the white people took charge of her and helped her to get further on north. Pappy always said—

"Oh, Lord, that's enough!" the son broke in, raising his head out of his hands, and interrupting his mother's flow of words, of which he had noted little since hearing the tragic story of his savage great-grandfather. He rose from his chair impatiently.

"So I am Hayward Graham, son of Patricia Schmidt, daughter of Cindy—nothing, daughter of Gumbo—nothing."

"Guinea Gumbo," corrected his mother.

"Oh, I beg my distinguished ancestor's pardon for presuming to credit him with only one name. A gentleman with his record ought to have as many as Kaiser Bill," drawled Graham sarcastically. Then with better humour he said to his mother, "And will you please to inform me from which of your ancestors you inherited that name of Patricia?"

"Mammy named me that for her old mistis."

* * * * *

Graham stood for awhile looking at the blank wall. Then he spoke as if he had settled his problem.

"Yes I'm a negro—no doubt about that; and a negro I'll be from to-morrow morning."

"Why, honey, you are not going to lower yourself to—"

"No, no. I'm not going to lower myself to anything; but I'm going to go with my own crowd, where I'll not be insulted by people who are no better than I am. I got along very well at college, but these people here are different. I'll show 'em. I'll go to the war, and I'll get as much glory out of it as any of 'em. My father was a soldier, and his father died in battle: I rather guess I can't stay out of it. Good night, mummer."

And he took himself off to bed.

CHAPTER III

Hayward Graham was twenty-three years old. He had half finished his senior year at Harvard—with credit, it must be said—when the imminence of war drove all desire for study from his mind. He wrote to Harry Lodge a former college chum who had graduated in the class ahead of him and gone to Ohio to make a name for himself—fortune he had already—and asked that his name be proposed for membership in Lodge’s company of the 71st, as a regiment most likely to get in the scrimmage when it came. Lodge had done this and had written to Graham that doubtless he would be received on the next meeting night as war was at that time a certainty. Whereupon Graham had bundled up his traps and come without delay.

Graham’s mother also had travelled to Ohio, for the double purpose of telling her soldier good-bye and making a passing, and what promised to be a last visit to some, of her old Oberlin friends, drawing for expenses upon limited funds she had religiously hoarded and applied to her son’s tuition.

Her husband had always impressed upon her, and in his last moment enjoined, that the boy should be educated; and she had obeyed his wishes to the limit of her power and as a command from heaven. She had husbanded her small patrimony, recovered after a costly suit at law, slow-dragging through the New Hampshire courts, and had allowed it to accumulate while her son was in the graded schools against the time when it would be needed to send him to college. When that time had come it required no little faith to see how the small bank account would be sufficient to meet the expenses of four years at Harvard. She would better have sent the boy to a less expensive school, but no: John Graham had gone to Harvard, and nothing less than Harvard for his son would satisfy her idea of loyalty to his father’s memory and admonitions. So to Harvard she sent him, while she planned and worked to stretch and patch out the limited purse; and—miracle of financiering—she had fetched him to the half of his last year, and could have carried him to his graduation and still had enough dollars left to attend that momentous ceremony in a new frock.

Hayward Graham had repaid his mother’s sacrifices by diligence in his studies. He had been a close second to the leader of his class at the graded school, an exemplary and hard-working pupil in the grammar school, and at college his literary labours were diminished only by his efforts in athletics, which, indeed, did his work as a student little serious damage. He was quick to learn everything that his college career offered, not only the lore of books, but good-fellowship, easy manners and how to get on. His naturally friendly disposition did him little service at first in finding or making friends at Harvard, where there seemed to him to be so many desirable circles that he would be glad to enter, and he had thought for awhile his colour would bar him from any close friendships there. However, near the end of his freshman year he had occasion by personal combat

to demonstrate his willingness to fight for the honour of his class and to show that his pugilistic powers were of no mean calibre, by thoroughly dressing down a couple of sophomores who had held him up to tell him what they thought of the whole tribe of freshmen, and who, upon his being so bold as to take issue with them, had attempted to "regulate" him. Kind-hearted Harry Lodge, himself a sophomore, had witnessed the trial of Graham's courage, class loyalty and fistic abilities, and being struck with admiration had shaken hands with him and congratulated him on his prowess. From that moment Graham was by every token a member of the small coterie known as "Lodge's Gang," to whom Lodge had introduced him as "the only freshman I know that's worth a damn."

From the time of his admission into this set of good fellows Graham's social side was provided with all it desired. Lodge and his friends seemed to think nothing at all of Graham's colour; or, if they did, made the more of him in their enthusiastic support of the idea that "a man's a man for a' that." They had enough rollicking fun to keep their spare hours filled to the brim and sought the society of women very seldom; but when they did go to pay their vows at the shrine of the feminine, Graham was as often of the party as any other of "the gang."

The young women they visited seemed to find no fault with his coming; for he could do his share of stunts, had a good voice and a musical ear, and was never at a loss for something to say, while his colour meant no more to them than that of a Chinaman or a Jap. He was promptly and effectually smitten with each new pretty face that he saw on these occasional forays, just as were Hal and Jim Aldrich; but his ever-changing devotions showed plainly that it was as yet to no one woman, but to women, that his soul paid homage. As for the young women, any of them as soon would have thought of marrying one of the Chinese students in the University as him. In fact they did not associate him with the matrimonial idea, but were interested in him as in an unusual species of that ever-interesting genus, man. They made quite a lion of him for a time after his performance in the Harvard-Yale football game of 19—; so much so that he had become just a mite vain, which condition of mind precluded his falling in love with anybody for several weeks.

It was right at the height of his popularity that he had left Harvard to join the ranks of the 71st. But Corporal Lodge had written with too much assurance. Lieutenant Morgan of Lodge's company caught the sound of that name, Hayward Graham, and remarked casually, "He has the same name as that Harvard nigger who was smashed up in the Yale game."

Some of the men thought the lieutenant said the applicant was a negro, and began to question Lodge. When that gentleman stood up to speak for his friend he quite captured them with his description of Graham's courage and other excellences, but when he answered "yes" to a direct question whether his candidate

was a negro, the enthusiasm and Graham's chance of enlistment in the 71st died together, and suddenly. Lieutenant Morgan, who was presiding at the company meeting, sneered, "This is not a negro regiment," and the ballot was overwhelmingly adverse.

Lodge was offended deeply at Graham's rejection, and said hotly that if the regiment was too good for Graham it was too good for him, and he would apply for his discharge at once. Lieutenant Morgan replied drily that "one pretext is as good as another if a man really doesn't want to get into the fighting." This angered Harry to the point of profanity, but he thought no more of a discharge.

This blackballing of his name was Graham's first rebuff, and it bore hard upon his spirits. He had never had an occasion to take an inventory of the elements in his blood, and this sudden jolt to his pride and eager patriotic impulses made him first angry, then heart-sick, then cynically scornful.

The morning after his mother had gone into the history of his ancestry, as far as she knew it, he sought an army recruiting station without delay. The gray-headed captain in charge did not betray the surprise he felt when Graham told him he desired to enlist,—his recruits, especially negroes, did not often come from the class to which Graham evidently belonged.

"May I join any branch of the service I prefer?" Hayward asked.

"Yes," said the officer; and added, as a fleeting suspicion entered his mind that this negro might intend passing himself off for a white man if possible, "that is, of course, infantry or cavalry. There are no negroes in the artillery."

Graham winced in spite of himself at this blunt reminder of his compromising blood, and mentally resented the statement as an unnecessary taunt. But he had determined to fight for the flag if he had to swallow his pride, and he was quickly put through all the necessary formalities of enlistment. His physical qualifications aroused the unbounded admiration of the examining surgeon, who called the old captain back into the room where Graham stood stripped for the examination, to look upon his perfect physique.

"I don't know about that broken leg, though," the surgeon said. "How long has it been well?"

"I've had the full use of it for more than a month now," Graham answered. "It's as good as the other, I think. It wasn't such a bad break anyway."

"How did you break it?"

"In the Yale game at Cambridge last November."

"Say," the surgeon broke out, "were you the Harvard man that was laid out in that last rush?"

"Yes."

"Well, I saw that game," the surgeon went on; "and I say, Captain, be sure to assign this young fellow to a regiment that will get into the scrimmage. Nothing

but the firing-line will suit his style.”

”Which do you prefer, infantry or cavalry?” questioned the Captain briefly.

”As I’ve walked all my life, I think that I’ll ride now that I have the chance,” Graham answered.

”Very well. You are over regulation weight and length for a trooper, but special orders will let you in for the war only.”

”The fighting is all I want,” said Graham

”All right,” replied the officer. ”I’ll send you to the 10th. They have always gotten into it so far, and likely nobody will miss seeing service in this affair.”

Graham was given a suit of uniform and ordered to report morning and afternoon each day till his squad would be sent to join the regiment. He carried the uniform to a tailor to have it fitted to his figure, in which he took some little pride; and lost no time in getting into it when the tailor had finished with it, and hurrying to parade himself before his mother’s admiring eyes. That worthy woman was as proud of him as only a combination of mother love, womanly admiration for a soldier, and a negro’s surpassing delight in brass buttons, could make her.

Graham busied himself with the study of a book on cavalry tactics borrowed from the old sergeant at the recruiting station, and with that experienced soldier’s help he picked up in the ten days that elapsed before he was sent away no little knowledge of the business before him. He was an enthusiastic student, took great pains to perfect himself in the ceremonious side of soldiering, and delighted in the punctilios which the regulations prescribed. He went at every opportunity to witness the drills of the national guard troops who were preparing to leave for the front; and began to acquire the feeling of superiority which the regular has for the volunteer, and to sniff at the little laxities of the guardsmen, and with the air of a veteran comment sarcastically upon them to the old sergeant: till he finally persuaded himself that his good angel had saved him from these amateurs to make a real soldier of him.

Two days before Graham was sent away the 71st gave its farewell parade. Graham was there, of course. It was near sunset. The wide street was lined with spectators. The ranks were standing at rest, and the soldiers and their friends were saying all manner of good-byes. The band was blowing itself breathless in patriotic selections, and as it crashed into one after another soldiers and people cheered and shouted with gathering enthusiasm. Colonel Phillips, sitting on his horse by his wife’s carriage, said, ”Orderly, tell Brandt to play ’Dixie,’” and, addressing the crowd of friends about him, ”My mother was a South Carolinian,” he added jocularly. When the band burst in on that unaccountably inspiring air the assemblage stood on its toes to yell and scream, and the tall Texas colour-sergeant came near letting ”Old Glory” fall in the dust in his conscientious effort

to split his lungs.

Graham stood quite near the Colonel and his party, and was much interested in watching both this man of whom he had heard Harry Lodge speak so enthusiastically, and his daughters, Miss Elise and Miss Helen, who were abundantly attractive on their own account without the added distinction of being children of their father. It was interesting to him to note the differing expressions of patriotic enthusiasm as it forced itself through the well-bred restraint of the elder sister or bubbled up unrestrainedly in the unaffected girlish spirits of Helen. Her spontaneous outbursts were irresistibly fascinating to him, and he could hardly avoid staring at her.

When the parade was formed, however, he was true to his new learning; and after the bugle had sounded *retreat*, and while the band was swinging slow and stately through that grandest and most uplifting of military airs, "The Star-Spangled Banner," he for the first time had uncovered and stood at *attention*, erect and steady as a young ash, his heart thumping like that of a young devotee at his first orison.

As he looked up when the band had ceased, he met the full gaze of Helen Phillips. She was looking straight at him, with a rapt smile upon her fresh young face. Then he remembered where he had seen that face before.

It was at that Yale game at Cambridge. Harvard was due to win; but Yale had scored once in the first half, and all but scored again before the Harvard men pulled themselves together. During the intermission Captain "Monk" Eliot had corralled his crimson warriors in the dressing-room and addressed to them a few disjointed remarks that made history.

He began moderately; but as he talked his choler rose, and he took off the limit: "You lobsters are the blankety-blankedest crowd of wooden Indians that ever advertised a dope-house. You seem to think you are out here for your health. What in the blank is the matter with you? Do you think Soldiers Field is a Chinese opium joint where you can go to sleep and forget your troubles? Maybe you don't want to get your clothes dirty, or you are afraid some big, bad, blue Yale man will eat you up without salt. Now look here! I want you to understand that we've got to win this game if it breaks every damn one of our infernal necks, and if any of you overgrown babies doesn't like what I say or hasn't the nerve to go into the second half on that basis, just say so right now, damn you, and I'll give you the job of holding some *man's* sweater for the rest of this game—and we'll settle it when it's over."

It was a desperate crowd of men in crimson who went into that second half; and their collision with the Yale line was terrific. But Eli didn't seem to change his mind about winning the game—for he hadn't heard the crimson captain's crimson speech.

For twenty minutes the giants reeled and staggered in an equal struggle. Yale then saw that she must win by holding the score as it was, and began all manner of dilatory tactics. This drove Captain Eliot frantic. He must score in five minutes—or lose. Fifty-five yards in five minutes against that wall of blue fiends!—nothing but desperation could accomplish it. He glanced at his squad of reserves on the side-lines; and with spendthrift recklessness that counted not the cost he began to burn men up. He sent his best and strongest in merciless repetition against the weakest—no, not that—against the least strong man in the Yale line.

Harvard began to creep forward slowly, so slowly; and the five minutes were no longer five, but four—three—two and a half—hurry! Still forward the crimson surged with every hammering shock. But flesh and blood could not stand it! Out went Field, the pick of the Harvard flock, carried off mumbling like a crazy man, with a bleeding cut across his forehead. Next went Lee, then Carmichael, then Eliot himself, after a desperately reckless dash, with a turned ankle.

Can Harvard score? Perhaps,—if the time and the men last long enough.... Graham was a substitute. Eliot, supported between two of his men and breathing threatenings and slaughter against those who would carry him off, called Graham's name; and with a nervous shiver the negro was out of his sweater in a jiffy. Eliot whispered to the crimson quarter, "Graham's fresh; send him against that tackle till he faints."

Bang—Smash. Bang—Smash. Yes, he's making it every time, but hurry! hurry!

"Kill that nigger," growls Chreitsberg, the Kentucky Captain of the Blue, between his set teeth: and now "that nigger" comes up with his nose dripping blood, next with his ear ground half off. But he will score this time! No, the Yale eleven are on him like a herd of buffaloes. He stands up and draws his sleeve across his nose with a determined swipe. Eliot screams from the side-lines, "You *must* make it this trip—time's up,"—but he can't hear his own voice in the pandemonium.

A last crunching, grinding crash,—and the twenty-two maniacs heave, and reel, and topple, and stagger, and slowly wring and twist themselves into a writhing mass of bone and muscle which becomes motionless and quiet at the bottom while still struggling and tearing without let-up on the outside. They refuse to desist even when the referee's whistle sounds the end of the game, for no man knows just where under that mass of players which is lying above the goal-line is the man with the ball. The referee and the umpire begin to pull them off one by one in the midst of an indescribable tumult: and at the bottom, with a broken leg, but with the ball hugged tight against his breast and a saving foot

and a half beyond the line, they find Graham.

He is picked up by the roughly tender hands of his steaming, breathless fellows, who are ready to cry with exultation, and hurried to a carriage. It was while they were carrying him off the field he had redeemed that he first saw Helen Phillips. She was standing on the rear seat of a big red touring-car, waving a crimson pennant and excited beyond measure. As she looked down on him as they carried him past, there came into her face a look of childish admiration and pity commingled; and she hesitated a moment, then impulsively pitched out the pennant she held, and it fell across his chest like a decoration and was carried with him thus to his room across the Charles.

When he had surprised her gaze at him as he turned from the parade of the 71st, and saw her smile upon him, he thought she had recognized him as the line-smashing half-back,—and he very properly drew in his middle and shoved out his chest another notch. But not so! She did not recognize him nor remember him. In her overflowing patriotism she saw only a soldier of the Republic; and her smiling face had but unconsciously paid tribute to an ideal.

CHAPTER IV

On the first day of April, 191-, Hayward Graham, wearing the single-barred yellow chevrons of a lance-corporal in Troop M of the 10th Cavalry, was sitting flat on the ground, perspiring and inwardly grumbling as he rubbed away at his sawed-off rifle, and mentally moralizing on his inglorious condition. There was he, almost a graduate of Harvard, a gentleman, accustomed to a bath-tub and a toothbrush, bound up hard and fast for three years' association with a crowd of illiterate, roistering, unwashed, and in the present situation unwashable, negroes of every shade from pale yellow to ebony. Why, thought he, should negroes always be dumped all into one heap as if they were all of one grade? Didn't the government know there were negroes and negroes? Whimsically he wondered why the officers didn't sort them out among the troops like they did the horses, according to colour,—blacks, browns, yellows, ash-coloured, snuff-coloured. Then what possibilities in matching or contrasting the shades of the troopers with those of their mounts: black horse, yellow rider,—bay horse, black rider,—sorrel horse, gingersnap rider—no, that wouldn't do, inartistic combination! And what colour of steed would tastily trim off that freckled abomination of a sergeant yonder?

Can't be done,—scheme's a failure!—damn that sergeant anyhow, he had confiscated Graham's only toothbrush to clean his gun with. Graham again records his oath to thrash him when his three years is up.

But three years is an age. It will never roll round. Only two months has he been a soldier, and yet everything that happened before that is becoming vague—even the smile on Helen Phillips' face. He cannot close his eyes and conjure up the picture as he did at first.

Graham was out of temper. Cavalry wasn't what it is cracked up to be, and a horse was of more trouble than convenience anyway, he was convinced. In the battle-drills the men had been put through so repeatedly day after day the horse played no part, and what riding Graham had done so far had served only to make him so sore and stiff that he could neither ride nor walk in comfort. He heartily repented his choice and wished he had taken the infantry, where a man has to look out only for himself and his gun. Oh, the troubles, the numberless troubles, of a green soldier!

All of Corporal Graham's military notions were affronted, and his right-dress, upstanding ideas of soldiering were shattered. The reality is a matter of pushing a curry-comb, getting your nose and mouth and eyes filled with horse-hairs, which get down your neck and up your sleeves, and stick in the sweat and won't come off and there's no water to wash them off. Then the drills—save the mark!—not as much precision in them as in a football manoeuvre,—just a spreading out into a thin line and running forward for five seconds perhaps, falling on your belly and pretending to fire three rounds at an imaginary foe, then jumping up and doing it all over again till you feel faint and foolish,—every man for himself, no order, no alignment, one man crouching behind a shrub, another falling prone on the ground, another hiding behind a tree,—surely no pomp or circumstance or glory in that business. Graham's study of punctilios did him no service there. Not a parade had the regiment had. Mobilized at a Southern port only three days before the sailing of the transport, it had taken every hour of the time to load the horses and equipment and supplies. Graham had found that fighting is a very small part of soldiering, which is mostly drudgery, and he had revised his idea of war several times since his enlistment.

He thought as he sat cleaning his rifle that surely the preliminaries were about over, and, if camp rumour counted for anything, that the day of battle could not be more than one or two suns away. He would have his gun in fine working order, for good luck might bring some shooting on the morrow. At any rate his carbine must glisten when he becomes part of to-morrow's guard, and he hoped that he would be put right on the point of the advance picket. He hadn't had a shave in three weeks, and his uniform was sweat-stained and dusty, and he could not hope to look spick and span; but his gun could be shiny, and he knew

Lieutenant Wagner well enough by that time to have learned that a clean gun counted for more with him than a clean shirt. So he hoped and prayed that he would be selected for some duty that was worth while.

The brigades under General Bell, which had been landed at Alta Gracia with difficulty, were pressing forward with all haste to cut off a garrison of Germans that had been thrown into Puerto Cabello from the German cruisers, and to prevent the arrival of reinforcements which were being rushed to their aid from Caracas. Reports from native scouts and communications from General Mañana himself placed the number of these reinforcements at from five to seven thousand. General Bell doubted that this force was so large, but was anxious to meet it, whatever its size.

Despite the vigilance of the all too meagre patrol of warships for Venezuelan waters which the United States had been able to spare from the necessary guard for her Atlantic and Gulf ports, the forehanded and ever-ready Kaiser had landed seven or eight thousand troops from a fleet of transports at Cumana, and with characteristic German promptness had occupied Caracas and Barcelona before Uncle Sam had been able to put any troops on Venezuelan soil. It seemed nonsense for either Germany or the United States to care to fight any battles down in that little out-of-the-way place. They could find other more accessible and far more important battle-grounds: but no, as the Monroe Doctrine forbade Germany to make a foothold in Venezuela and her doing so was the *casus belli*, the ethics of the affair demanded that there should be a bona fide forcible ejection of the Kaiser's troops from Venezuelan territory by the United States. The battles there might be only a side issue, and the real test of strength might come at any or all of a dozen places on land and sea, but there must be some fighting done in Venezuela just to prove that the cause of war was not fanciful.

General Bell's brigades were one under General Earnhardt, consisting of the 5th, 7th, 10th and 15th Cavalry, and a second, including the 4th and 11th regular infantry, the 71st Ohio, and the 1st X—, under General Cowles, with a battalion of engineers and four batteries of field artillery. General Earnhardt's cavalry brigade was striving to reach the Valencia road, the only passable route from Caracas to Puerto Cabello, before the German force should pass. General Mañana had sent a courier to say that he would hold the Germans in check till Earnhardt's arrival.

On the morning of April 2d Graham was among the advance pickets and almost forgot his saddle pains and creaking joints in the excitement of expected battle. For half a day Earnhardt pushed forward as fast as the trail would permit. He had halted his troops for five minutes' rest about noon, when a native on a wiry pony, riding like one possessed, dashed into the picket and came near getting his head punched off before he could make Graham understand that he

was a friend with a message for the *Americano capitan*. Graham carried him before General Earnhardt, who at the head of his column was reclining on a bank beside the trail, perspiring and dusty and brushing viciously at the flies and mosquitoes that swarmed around him. The general did not change his position when the native, who was clad in a nondescript but much-beribboned uniform, slid from his horse and with a ceremonious bow and salute informed him that he was Captain Miguel of General Mañana's staff, and had the honour to report that he was despatched by General Mañana to say that, despite that gentleman's earnest and desperate resistance, a large and outnumbering force of German cavalry had forced a passage of the road to Puerto Cabello about eleven o'clock that morning. While Captain Miguel was delivering his elaborate message to the disgusted cavalryman, the picket passed in an old soldier of the 10th who had been detailed as a scout at the beginning of the campaign; and this scout rode up to report just as the native captain finished speaking. Earnhardt turned impatiently from Mañana's aide to his own trusted man and said:

"Well, Morris, what is it?"

"Small force of German cavalry, sir, had a scrimmage with General Mañana's troops this morning on the Valencia road, and rode on in the direction of Puerto Cabello."

"How many Germans got through?" asked the general.

"All of them, sir; about two troops, as near as I could count."

"And how many men did Mañana have?" the question came sharply.

"Something like fifteen hundred I should judge, sir, from the sound of the firing and what I could see," answered the scout.

General Earnhardt, without rising, turned with unconcealed contempt to Captain Miguel and said:

"My compliments to General Mañana, and he's a — old fraud and I don't want to have anything more to do with him;" and while the red-splashed aide was trying to solve the curt message which he but half understood, the trumpeter at a word from the angry cavalryman sounded *mount* and *forward* and the brigade was again off at top speed, hoping still to cut off the main relief force sent out from Caracas. General Earnhardt considered himself a lucky soldier to find that this force had not passed when at last he reached the road (which was hardly worthy of the name highway, though one of the thoroughfares of Venezuela); and he hastily disposed his forces to meet the German advance.

It was not long in coming. The crack of a rifle was the first notice Corporal Graham had that he was about to be under fire. He felt a cold breeze blow upon his back for a moment, and then as the popping began to approach a rattle the joy of contest entered his soul and sent his blood bounding.

But the joy was short-lived. When the Germans came near enough to see

that they were opposed by men in Uncle Sam's uniform, and not by the nagging natives who had been popping harmlessly away at them from the roadside, they decided it was best not to be too precipitate. They stopped and began to feel for the American line. After some desultory sharpshooting they finally located it, and quieted down to wait till the German commander could get his little army up and into line of battle.

Then Hayward Graham had to sit still and hold his gun while the exhilaration and enthusiasm died down in him like the fiz in a glass of soda-water. He had worked his nerves up to such a tension that the reaction was nothing less than painful, and he was full of impatience and profanity. He could hardly wait for to-morrow, when Germany and Uncle Sam would get up after a good night's rest and lay on like men.

Again what was his unspeakable disgust and almost unbearable disappointment when the next morning came and he was detailed as stable guard, and given charge of the 10th's corral, quite a distance in rear of the line of battle and absolutely out of all danger. Profanity was a lame and feeble remedy for that situation. He sat down and growled.

"Oh, for an assorted supply of languages in which to separately and collectively and properly consign this whole bloody system of details to the cellar of Hades!"

A veteran sergeant of Graham's troop, who on occasions wore a medal of honour on his blouse, and at all times bore an unsightly scar on his cheek as a souvenir of Wounded Knee, sought to soothe the young man's feelings.

"It all comes along in the run of the business, corporal," he said. "Soldiering is not all fighting. A man earns his money by doing whatever duty is assigned to him."

Graham answered with heat: "I didn't come into this nasty, sweaty, horse-smelly business for any such consideration as fifteen dollars a month and feed, and if I am to miss the scrapping and the glory I prefer to cut the whole affair."

His temper improved, however, as the day began to drag itself away with no sound of conflict from the battle-line save the occasional pop of a pot-shot by the pickets, and as the rumour began to leak back to the corral that both sides must be waiting for their guns to come up. This was doubtless true: for the four batteries of American artillery arrived late in the afternoon, and the infantry

brigade was all up by nightfall.

CHAPTER V

The two small armies were separated by the valley of a small stream which ran in a broad circle around the low wooded hills or range of hills upon which the Germans were entrenched. This valley was from a mile to a mile and a half wide, and the water-course was much nearer the outer or American side. The bed of this stream would furnish an excellent breastwork or entrenchment for the American troops if they should see fit to use it, but it was not tenable by the Germans because it was at most all points subject to an enfilading fire from the American position. The surface of the valley was slightly broken and undulating on the German side, but clear of timber and covered only with grass, while on the American side the rise was more precipitous and covered with a scattering growth of trees and bush.

On arriving and looking over the ground General Bell ordered that during the night his artillery should be placed and concealed on the commanding heights which his position afforded; and that his fighting-line, composed of the 5th and 15th Cavalry as his left wing, the 1st X— as his centre, and the 4th and 11th Infantry as his right wing, be moved forward down the slope and into the bed of the stream, leaving as a reserve the 71st Ohio and the 10th Cavalry located approximately in rear of the centre of his line of battle. The 7th Cavalry he had sent out toward Puerto Cabello to hold in check any possible German troops that might appear from that quarter.

Corporal Hayward Graham, back at the 10th's corral, had recovered his spirits as the day dragged along without any sound of battle, and he began to congratulate himself that he would finish up in good time all details that would keep him out of the fighting. When he walked over to the line late in the afternoon, however, and learned that the whole regiment was to be held out of the fight as a reserve, he immediately surmised that the 10th was kept out of it because they were negroes, and that the others from the general down wanted to scoop all the glory for the white soldiery,—and again he sat down and cursed the negro blood in his veins. The only salve to his outraged spirit was the information that those high and mighty prigs of the 71st were also to miss the glory. He even chuckled when he thought of the chagrin of Lieutenant Morgan and pic-

tured to himself the scene of the lieutenant's meeting with Miss Elise Phillips if he should have to go back and explain to her how he came not to be under fire. Then he remembered Helen Phillips and the crimson pennant locked up in his trunk, and he felt that the whole war would count for naught if he had no chance to do something worthy of that pennant and of her. He wandered listlessly along the lines and tried to forget his troubles in listening to the talk of the fortunates who were going in.

He came to where a crowd of 1st X— men were chaffing a squad of the 71st for "taking a gallery-seat at the show." Corporal Billie Catling of the 71st replied that they took the "gallery-seat" under orders and were put behind the 1st X— to see that they didn't dodge a fight again like they did in Cuba.

"That's a damn lie!" came the 1st X—'s rejoinder in chorus; to which one of them added, "The 1st X— never ran out of any fight in Cuba, and you gallery-gods can go to sleep or go to the devil, for we'll stay here till hell freezes over so thick you can skate on the ice."

"Well, you may not have run *out* of any fight in Cuba, but it's blamed certain you didn't *run into* one," retorted the 71st's spokesman.

"Now, sonny," yelled the X— man, "don't get sassy because you're not permitted to sit down along with your betters. Run along and wait for the second table with the niggers!"

The 71st's contingent could not find a suitable retort to this sally, and, as fighting was out of the question, they walked away muttering imprecations amid the jeers of the men from X—.

Graham enjoyed the discomfiture of the 71st; but he was more than ever convinced that the colour of the 10th accounted for its being robbed of a chance for fame in this campaign: and he went back to his duty in a mutinous mood. He could not know that General Bell had held this veteran negro regiment in reserve because of its proved steadiness and valour; nor that he had placed the untried 1st X— in his centre because it would thus be in the easiest supporting distance of his reserves.

The battle opened on April 3d the moment it became light enough for the gunners to locate the half-hidden German lines and artillery. For awhile the cannoneers had it all between themselves; and in this duel the advantage was with the Americans, for their position gave them better protection—the fighting-line being sheltered by the stream-bed and the guns and reserves by the hill. The Germans were entrenched on a hill as high as the Americans, but it was much flatter and afforded less natural cover.

After two or three hours of pounding the Germans with his artillery, which was evidently inflicting great damage, General Bell ordered his line forward to carry the German position by assault. Then the battle began in earnest. The Ger-

man machine-guns opened on the American line as it rose out of the stream-bed and began its slow and terrible journey across the open valley by short rushes. The first breath of lead and iron that dashed in the faces of the American troops as they stood up began the work of death; and it came so promptly and so viciously that it overwhelmed the raw discipline and untempered metal of the 1st X—; for before advancing thirty paces the line wavered and broke and retreated ignobly to the sheltering bank of the stream. Not all the regiment broke at once; but the break and stampede of one company quickly spread along the entire regimental front, and back into the ditch they dived. Some of the officers cursed and commanded and entreated; but to no purpose. The wings of the American line were advancing steadily but slowly, standing up for a few moments to dash forward a dozen yards, and then lying as close to the ground as possible while returning the terrible fire from the hills in front of them.

General Bell from his position of vantage saw the failure of the 1st X— to advance, and waited a few moments in hope that a half-dozen officers who were recklessly exposing themselves in their attempts to urge the men forward might succeed in their efforts. As it became evident that the regiment would not face the deadly fire of the Germans, however, and as the wings of the battle-line were diverging as they advanced because of the formation of the ground in their front, General Bell waited no longer, but ordered forward both the 10th Cavalry and the 71st Ohio. These came over the hill on the run and dropped down the slope into the water-course, where the heroic handful of officers were still making frantic efforts to have the 1st X— go forward. A captain was violently berating his men for their cowardice and imploring them to advance, while his first lieutenant squeezed down behind the bank was yelling at them not to move. A major of one battalion was standing up straight and fully exposed, waving his sword and appealing to his men by every token of courage, while another major was lying as close to the bottom of the ditch as a spreading-adder. At places the men seemed to want to move, while the officers crouched in fear; while at others officers by no amount of commands or entreaties could get a man out of the ditch. A panic of terror seemed to be upon the regiment which the few untouched spirits were not able to overcome by any power of sharp commands, or violent pleading, or reckless examples of courage.

The boys of the 71st and the negro troopers of the 10th did not treat the X— men tenderly as they passed over them. They jumped down upon them as they lay in the ditch and tramped upon them or kicked them out of the way contemptuously, while the fear-smitten creatures were as unresentful as hounds. Corporal Graham, near the left flank of the 10th, heard an officer of the 71st yell as they passed over the ditch, "Why don't you go forward? What the devil are you waiting for?" to which Billie Catling, as he knocked a cowering X— man

from his path, cried out in answer, "It's too hot for 'em, captain. They are going to stay here till this hell freezes over!"

As many perhaps as a fourth of the 1st X—, officers and men, fell in with the 71st and the 10th and bravely charged with them up the long slope. The remainder waited till the battle was so far ahead of them that their belated advance could not wipe out the black shame of cowardice.

In the hurry of their rush into the breach the adjoining flanks of the 10th and the 71st overlapped and were confused; but it was well that the two regiments were sent to replace the one, for the loss was appalling as they surged forward toward the German lines, and they were not long in being thinned out to an uncrowded basis.

The first sight of a man struck and falling to the ground shook Corporal Graham's nerves, and he had to pull himself together sharply to save himself from the weakening horror death always had for him. He turned his eyes resolutely away from the first half-dozen, that were knocked down, and applied himself religiously and consciously to the prescribed method of advancing by rushes; but all his faculties were alert to the dangers of the situation, and he could not shake off his keen sense of peril and of the tragedies around him. Not for long did he suffer thus, however, for as he rose up from the grass for one rush forward a bullet grazed his shin—and changed his whole nature in a twinkling. It did him no real damage and little blood came from the wound, but the pain was intense. He dropped on the earth and grabbed his leg to see what the harm was, and was surprised to find himself uninjured save for the burning, stinging sensation. Then he forgot everything but his pain, and became as pettishly angry in a moment as if he had collided with a rocking-chair in the dark. In that moment he conceived a personal enmity and grudge against the whole German army, and proceeded to avenge his injury on a personal basis. He became as cool and collected as if he were playing a game of checkers, and went in a business-like way about reducing the distance between himself and the gentlemen who had hurt his shin. His anger had dissolved his confusion and neutralized the horrors that were at first upon him. He was more than ever conscious of the falling men about him; but he had his debt to pay,—let them look after their own scores. He saw Lieutenant Wagner stagger and fall and raise up and drag himself into a protecting depression in the ground; he saw the colonel of the 1st X—, fighting with a carbine in his hand right alongside the black troopers of the 10th, drop in a heap and lie so still he knew he was dead; he saw Corporal Billie Catling straighten up and pitch his gun from him as a bullet hit him in the face and carried away the whole back of his head;—yet Graham stopped not to help or to think. He had only one purpose—to reach the man who hit his shin. He saw man after man, many of his own troop, drop in death or blood or agony—and his purpose did not change. Then,

a little distance to his left and somewhat to his rear, he saw Colonel Phillips of the 71st go down in the grass; he saw him try to gain his feet, and fail; and then try to drag himself from his very exposed position, and fail. Then Corporal Graham forgot his personal grievance, and thought of the girl and the pennant. He ran across to Colonel Phillips and, finding him shot through both legs, picked him up and carried him for forty yards or more through the hurricane of lead to where the Valencia road made a cut in the long slope; and in this cut, down behind a sheltering curve, he placed him. Not a moment too promptly had the trooper acted, for of all the unfortunates who had fallen anywhere near Colonel Phillips not one but was found riddled with the bullets of the machine-guns when the battle was ended. Graham's own hat was shot away from his head and the officer in his arms received another wound as he bore him out of harm's way.... At the Colonel's request the negro tried to remove the boot from the bleeding right leg, which was broken below the knee. As this was so painful Colonel Phillips handed him a pearl-handled pocket-knife and asked him to cut the boot-top away. Graham did so, and bound a handkerchief around the leg to stop the flow of blood. Having made every other disposition for the officer's comfort which his situation permitted, he looked out in the direction of the battle so wistfully that the Colonel told him he might return to the fight. He did so with a rush, absent-mindedly pocketing the pearl-handled knife as he ran.

[image]

"CARRIED HIM FOR FORTY YARDS OR MORE THROUGH THE HURRICANE OF LEAD."

The firing-line had advanced quite a distance while Graham was rescuing Colonel Phillips and ministering to him; and in his overweening desire to be right at the front of the battle he ran forward without the customary stops for lying down and firing. That they should carry him safe through that driving rain of bullets, despite his indifference to the ordinary rules of the desperate game, was more than reasonably could have been expected of the Fates which had protected him up to that moment from serious harm; and—down he crashed in the grass and lay still without design, while the battle passed farther and farther up the long slope, away from him. In dim half-consciousness he realized what had befallen him; and the only two ideas which found place in his mind were the uncomfortable thought that he would be buried without a bath, and a feeling of satisfaction that the god of battle at least had dignified him with a more respectable wound

than a bruised shin-bone.

CHAPTER VI

When two strong, alert men, disputing, come to the final appeal to battle, the decision is usually made quickly. It is only the weak or the unprepared who prolong a fight.

So was it that late summer in 191- saw an end of war between Germany and the United States—thanks partially to the intervention of the Powers. And with what result? The result does appear so inadequate! The Monroe Doctrine was still unshaken—and that was worth much perhaps; but ten thousand sailors and the flower of two navies were under the tide, and half as many soldiers dead of fever or fighting in Venezuela; small armies of newly made orphans and widows in Germany and America; mourning and despair in the houses of the desolate,—some hope in the heart of the pension attorney; a new set of heroes on land and sea,—at the top. Long, who at the battle of the Bermudas, finding his own small craft and a wounded German cruiser left afloat of twenty-odd vessels that had begun the fight, in answer to her demand for his surrender, had torpedoed and sunk the German promptly, and to his own everlasting astonishment had managed to save his neck and prevent the battle's becoming a Kilkenny affair by beaching his riddled boat and keeping her flag above water: from Long an endless list of real and fictitious heroes, dwindling by nice gradations in importance as they increased in numbers, till they touched bottom in the raw volunteer infantryman whose wildest tale of adventure was of his exemplary courage in a great storm that swept the God-forsaken sand-bar on which his company had been stationed,—to prevent the German navy's purloining the new-laid foundations of a fort to guard Catfish River.

In the long list of heroes Colonel Hayne Phillips was not without prominence. The sailormen were first for their deeds were more numerous and spectacular; but among the soldiers who were in the popular eye he was easily the most lauded. He was a volunteer; and that was everything in his favour, for it put him on a par with members of the regular establishment of ten times his merit. He was nothing more than a brave and patriotic man with a taste for the military and with but little of a professional soldier's knowledge or training; and yet his demonstrated possession of those two qualities alone, patriotism and personal

courage (which most men indeed possess, and which are so inseparably associated with one's thought of a regular army officer as to add nothing to his fame or popularity),—the possession of these two simple American virtues had brought to Colonel Phillips the enthusiastic admiration of a hero-loving people, and—what was of more personal advantage to him—the consequent consideration and favour of party-managers in need of a popular idol.

These political prestidigitators, mindful of the political successes of the soldiers, Taylor, Grant and Roosevelt, took him and his war record in hand and proceeded to work a few easy miracles. The love and plaudits of a great State and a great nation for a favourite regiment coming home with honour and with the glory of hard-won battle upon its standards were skilfully turned to account for partisan political uses. The deeds and virtues of a thousand men were deftly placed to the credit of one, and before the very eyes of the people was the legend wrought by which one political party and one Colonel Phillips drew all the dividends from the investment of treasure and of blood and of patriotic energy and devotion which that thousand men had made without a thought of politics or pay.

The partisan press, as always advertent to the peculiar penchant hero-worship has for ignoring patent absurdities, overdrew the picture—but no harm was done: for while truth of fact was disregarded and abused, essential truth suffered no hurt. Although enterprising newspapers did furnish for the political campaign one photogravure of Colonel Phillips leading the 71st regiment over the German earthworks at the battle of Valencia, and another of him in the act of receiving the German commander's sword on that occasion—these things did the gallant Colonel no injustice. He gladly would have attended to those little matters of the surrender in place of the veteran officer of regulars who officiated. It was through no fault of the 71st's commander that shortness of breath made it impossible for him to keep pace with his men up that long slope; nor in the least to his discredit that he was shot down in the rear of the regiment and his life saved through the bravery of a negro trooper.

The Colonel's courage was indeed of the genuine metal and he willingly would have met all the dangers and performed all the mighty deeds accredited to him if opportunity had come to him. Being conscious of this willingness in his own soul, he took no measures to correct impressions of his prowess made upon the minds of misinformed thousands of voters. The error was not in a mistaken public opinion as to his valour, for that was all that was claimed for it, but in the people's belief in certain spectacular exhibitions of that valour which were really totally imaginary. He knew that he was as brave a man as the people thought: why then quibble over facts that were entirely incidental? The hero-idolaters swallowed in faith and ecstasy all the details which an inventive and

energetic press bureau could turn out, and cried for more: and the nomination for the presidency practically had been tendered to him by acclamation almost a year before the convention assembled which officially commissioned him its standard-bearer.

Colonel Phillips' campaign was attended by one wild hurrah from start to finish. It was pyrotechnic. Other candidates for this office of all dignity have awaited calmly at home the authoritative call of the people; but the materia medica of politics teaches that to quicken a sluggish pulse in the electorate a hero must be administered directly and vigorously into the system. So the Colonel was sent upon his mighty "swing around the circle."

In that sweeping vote-drive many weapons were displayed, but only one saw any real service. That was the Colonel's gray and battered campaign hat. He wore it for the sake of comfort, to be sure; but, like the log cabin and grandfather's hat of the Harrisons, the rails of Lincoln, and the Rough Riders uniform of Roosevelt, it was the tumult-raising and final answer to every argument and appeal of the opposition. It uprooted party loyalties, silenced partisan prejudices, overrode eloquence and oratory, beat back and battered down the shrewd attacks and defences of political manipulation, and contemptuously kicked aside anything savouring of serious political reasoning. The convention which nominated him had indeed formulated and declared an admirable platform upon which he should go before the people, and he placed himself squarely on that platform; but the gaze of the people never got far enough below that campaign hat to notice what its wearer was standing on.

Colonel Phillips was a sincere, honest, candid, plain-spoken politician—for politician he was if he was anything, while yet so fearless of party whips and mandates that his name was synonymous with honesty and lofty civic purpose. So, feeling his own purposes ringing true to the declarations of his party's platform he did not deem it necessary to direct the distracted attention of the people to these prosy matters of statecraft when they were taking such a friendly interest in his headgear. If they were willing to blindly follow the hat, he knew in his honest heart that the man under it would carry that hat along paths of political righteousness.

He was indeed playing upon every chord of popular feeling and seeking the favour of every man with a ballot. He had always fought to win in every contest he had entered, from single-stick to war, and he made no exception of this race for the chieftaincy of the Republic. It was to be expected, therefore, that the large negro vote in pivotal States, as well as his natural love of justice and his admiration for a brave soldiery, would lead him to pay enthusiastic and deserved tribute to the negro troops who had served in the Venezuelan campaign. He paid these tributes religiously and brilliantly in every speech he made, but always in

general and impersonal terms and without a hint of his own debt to a corporal of the 10th Cavalry. There was no need for such minutiae of course, for that was a purely personal affair between him and an unknown negro who might be dead and buried for all he knew; while, besides, a recital of these unimportant details would necessitate a fruitless revision of other incidental ideas now pleasantly fixed in the public mind. He sometimes entertained his wife and daughters with the story of how a trooper of the 10th had saved his life, but never did he sound the personal note in public.

Colonel Phillips made votes with every speech and it looked as if he would win. He deserved to win, for he was honest, capable, clean. As election day drew near the opposing candidate received a confidential letter from his campaign manager in which that veteran politician said:

"I have lost and won many hats in my political career, but this is the first time I have ever been called upon to fight a hat—just a hat—to settle a Presidency. This is a hat campaign; and you have evidently made the mistake of going bare-headed all your life. You seem, too, to have limited yourself to a home-grown ancestry. The Colonel is simply wearing a hat and claiming kin with everything from a Plymouth Rock rooster to a palmetto-tree. The newspapers are getting on my nerves with their unending references to that campaign-hat and Phillips' ding-dong about the unity and virility of American blood and his mother's being a South Carolinian."

* * * * *

"The cards are running against us."

CHAPTER VII

Colonel Phillips' daughters were enjoying life to the full in their long summer outing on the St. Lawrence. The older, Elise, had just finished with the schools and was free from many of the restraints which the strict and old-fashioned ideas of her mother had put upon her during her girlhood, and was filled with a lively enjoyment of her first untrammelled association with the males of her kind. Helen was still a girl, and her mother yet threw about her all the guards and fences that properly hedge about the days of maidenhood. But this did not in the slight-

est check the flow of Helen's joy in life, for the matter of sex in her associates was not an element in her happiness. Boy or girl, it mattered not to her, if her fellow in the hour's sport was quick-witted, quick-moving and mischief-loving. The extent of her thoughts of love was that it and its victims were most excellent objects of banter and ridicule; and she found the incipient affair between Elise and Evans Rutledge a source of much fun.

"Are you a hero?" she once asked Mr. Rutledge solemnly.

"Not to my own knowledge," Rutledge answered. "Why?"

"Because if you are you may be my brother sometime. Elise likes you a little, I think, and she thinks your hair would curl beautifully if you didn't crop it so close—but you will have to be a hero. You needn't fear Mr. Morgan. He failed to be a hero when he had the chance, and now his chance is gone. Nobody but a hero can interest Elise for keeps."

"When did Morgan have his chance?" asked Rutledge, amused at the mischief-maker's plain speaking.

"He went to Venezuela in papa's regiment, but never had a shot fired at him the whole time he was gone. That's what he did. Elise cannot love a man like that."

"Perhaps it was not his fault. He may have been detailed to such duties as kept him away from the shots."

"Yes, I think he says he was; but what of that? He wasn't in the fighting, and that's what it takes to make a hero. Oh, I wish I were a man. I would ride a horse and hunt lions and tigers, and I would have gone to the war in Venezuela and nobody's orders would have kept me from the firing-line—I believe that's what papa calls it—the place where all the fun and danger is. When papa talks about it I can hear my heart beat. Elise says she wouldn't be a man for anything; but I've heard her say that she could love a man if he was a *man*—brave and strong—you know—a man who did things. I would prefer to do the things myself. I wouldn't love any man I ever saw—unless he was just like papa. What regiment were you in, Mr. Rutledge?"

"I wasn't in any regiment," said Rutledge meekly.

"What! Didn't you volunteer?" asked Helen in surprise.

"I did not volunteer"—a trifle defiantly.

"Why?" Helen demanded scornfully. "If I had a brother and he had failed to volunteer I would never have spoken to him again! I thought all South Carolinians were fighters."

"I had other things to attend to," said Rutledge shortly. "Where is Miss Phillips this afternoon?"

"She's out on the river with Mr. Morgan. They will not be back till dinner, so you would just as well sit down here and talk to me.... But I'm sorry you didn't

volunteer—you will never be my brother now.... And I was beginning to like you so much.”

”I thank you, little girl, for your attempt to think well of me. I see that I have sinned past your forgiveness in not being a hero. Remember that it is only because ninety and nine men are commonplace that the hundredth may be a hero. I am one of the ninety and nine that make the hero possible—a modest king-maker, in a way. A hero must have some one else to fight for, or die for, or live for. He cannot do these things for himself, for that would make him anything but a hero. So you see that the second person is as necessary to the process of hero-making as the hero himself. It’s all in the process and not in the product, anyway. It’s the hero in act and not in fact, in the making and not in the taking, that enjoys his own heroism and is worth our interest. While he is making himself he thrills with the effort and with the uncertainty as to whether he will get a commission, a lathe-and-plaster arch, or a court of inquiry; and we the ninety and nine, we thrill with the gambling fever and make wagers that his trolley will get off the wire. But when he gets himself done—clean done, so to speak, wrapped in tinfoil and ready for use—then there is nothing left for the hero to do but to pose and await our applause—which is most unheroic; and we, after one whoop, forget him in the excitement of watching the next candidate risk his neck. Besides, the hero’s work in hero-making is temporary and limited, for he stops with making one; but we, when we have finished with one, turn to the making of another, and our work is never done. While I am not even one hero, I have helped to make a hundred. Come now—you are generous and unselfish—which would you most admire, one finished hero listening for applause, or a hero-maker, who, without reward or the hope of reward, modestly and continuously assists in thus bringing glory to an endless procession of his fellows?”

”You think you are brilliant, Mr. Rutledge,” answered Helen with an impatient toss of her head, ”but you can’t confuse me by any such talk as that. You needn’t think you will be able to persuade Elise by any long jumble of words that you are greater than a hero. A king-maker!” She laughed mockingly at him.

”Don’t fear that I will use any sophistry or doubtful method to become your brother,” Rutledge rejoined amusedly. ”I have only one thing to tell Miss Phillips.”

”And what is that?” asked Helen with interest.

”I am inexpressibly pained to refuse your lightest wish,” said Rutledge grandiloquently, ”but to grant your request would be—telling; and I may—not tell,—perhaps,—even Miss Phillips.”

”Do not suffer so,” said Helen with an assumption of great indifference. ”I don’t care to hear it.”

”Yes, I predict that you will be delighted to listen to it when it is told to you,” said Rutledge confidently. ”And it will be beyond doubt. But you are too young

to hear such things yet. Be patient. You'll get older if you live long enough."

It fretted Helen to be told that she was young, as she was told a dozen times a day—not that she disliked her youth, but because of the suggestion that she was not free to do as she pleased; and her eyes began to flash at Rutledge's taunt and her mind to form a suitable expression of resentment—when that gentleman walked away from her smiling at her petulant anger.

Evans Rutledge had more interest in Helen's words about her sister than he showed in his manner or conversation. He had not told Elise what his heart had told him for many days past, though she did not need spoken words to know. He, manlike, thought that he was keeping this knowledge of his supreme affection for her a secret in his own soul, to be delivered as a startling and effective surprise when an impressive and strategic opportunity should come to tell her of it. She, womanlike, read him as easily as a college professor is supposed to read Greek, and concerned herself chiefly with feigning ignorance of his interest in her.

Elise's true attitude toward Rutledge was a sort of neutrality. She was neither for him nor against him. She was attracted by everything she saw or knew of him, and looked upon him with that more than passing interest which every woman has for a man who has asked or will ask her to be his wife.

On the other hand she was decided she could not accept Rutledge. She had but crossed the threshold of her unfettered young womanhood, and her natural and healthy zest in its pleasures overcame any natural impulse to choose a mate. Added to this were the possibilities held out in her romantic imagination as the increasing newspaper prophecies concerning her father induced day-dreams of court-like scenes and princely suitors when she should be the young lady of the White House, the most exalted maiden in great America, with the prerogative of a crown princess. A temporary prerogative surely, but well-nigh irresistible when combined with the compelling charm of American womanhood, that by right of genius assumes the high positions for which nature has endowed the gentlewomen of this republic, and by right of fine adaptability and inborn queenliness establishes and fortifies them, as if born to the purple, in the social high places of older civilizations.

Elise Phillips, with all her democratic training, with her admirable good common sense, with her adorable kindness of heart and friendliness of spirit for every man and woman of high or low degree, with her sincere admiration for true manliness and pure womanliness unadorned by any tinsel of arbitrary rank, with all her contempt for the shams and pretences of decayed nobilities parading dishonoured titles, was yet too much a woman and too full of the romantic optimism of life's spring-time not to dream of princely youths wearing the white flower of blameless lives who would come in long procession to attend her temporary court.

And in that procession as it even now passed before her imagination, she kept watch for *him*,—the ideal of her maiden soul, the master of her virgin heart;—*him*, with the blue eyes and flaxen hair and the commanding figure that looked down upon all other men;—*him*, with the look and gesture of power that men obeyed and women adored, and that became tender and adoring only for her;—*him*, with a rank that made him to stand before kings with confidence, and a clean life that might stand before her white soul and feel no shame;—*him*, with a strength and courage that failed not nor faltered along the rocky paths by which the laurel and Victoria Crosses grow, and that yet would falter and tremble with love in her presence. Oh, the wonderful dreams of Youth! How real they are, and how powerful in changing the issues of life and of death.

Had Rutledge taken counsel of his mother or heeded her disapprobation of Miss Elise Phillips, he would have saved himself at least from the pain of a flouted love; and if he could have made his heart obey his mother's wish he would have avoided the stress of many heartaches and jealousies, and of slow-dying hope.

Mrs. Rutledge had her young womanhood in the heart-burning days of the Great War, and the partisan impress then seared into her young soul was ineradicable. She had a youth that knew fully the passions and the sorrows of that awful four years of blood and strife: for every man of her house, father and five brothers, had she seen dead and cold in their uniforms of gray; and her antipathy for "those people" who had sent anguish and never-ending desolation into her life might lie dormant if memory was unprovoked, but it could never change nor lose its sharp vehemence.

She had objected to Elise from the moment her son showed a fancy for her, and began quietly to sow in his mind the seeds she hoped would grow into dislike and aversion. She told him that "those people," as she invariably called persons who came from that indefinite stretch of country which her mind comprehended in the term "the North," were "not of our sort,"—that they were intelligent and interesting in a way;—that Elise Phillips was unquestionably fascinating to a young man, that her money had given her a polish of mind and manner that was admittedly attractive; but that she was not fitted to be the life companion of a man whose culture and gentlemanliness was not a product of schools and of dollars but a heritage from long generations of gentle ancestors who had bequeathed to him converging legacies of fine and gentle breeding.

Evans Rutledge, however, was of a new day; and his mother's theory that good blood was a Southern and sectional product found no place in his thought. He was tender, however, and considerate of his mother's prejudices, and was never so rude as to brush them aside contemptuously. He always treated them with deference and tried always to meet them with some show of reason. In the case of Elise Phillips he sought to placate his mother's whim and capture

her prejudice by tacitly agreeing to the general proposition while excepting Elise from it by the use of Colonel Phillips' well-worn statement that his mother was a South Carolinian.

"That makes Miss Phillips a granddaughter of South Carolina," said Rutledge to his mother; "and surely there cannot be much degeneracy in two generations,—especially when the Southern blood was of the finest strain."

Mrs. Rutledge admitted that the argument was not without force, but solemnly warned her son there was no telling when the common strain might crop out.

"What's bred in the bone will come out in the blood," she said, "and bad blood is more assertive than good."

Evans loved his mother better than any other soul except Elise, and he would go far and deny himself much to obey even her most unreasonable whim, but his love for Elise was too fervid a passion to be stifled for the sake of a war-born prejudice. He would win her; yes, he must win her; and he waited only the winning moment to plead openly for his happiness.

CHAPTER VIII

It was a morning in late September that Elise and Rutledge went for their last canoe ride on the mighty river. Mrs. Phillips and her daughters were to leave for home on an early afternoon train, and Mrs. Rutledge and Evans for Montreal an hour later.

It was a day to live. By an occasional splash of yellow or red among the green that lined the riverside and clothed the diminutive island in the stream, Summer gave notice that in thirty days Nature must find another tenant; and a taste of chill in the air was Winter's advance agent looking over the premises and arranging to decorate them in the soberer grays and browns for the coming of his serious and mighty master.

The lassitude of the hot days was gone, and life and impulse were in the autumn breeze. There was not a suggestion of melancholy or decay or death in earth, air or sky. It was more as if a strong man was risen from drowsy sleep and stretching his muscles and breathing a fresh air into his lungs for a day of vigorous doing. Not exhaustion but strength, not languor but briskness, not the end but the beginning, was indicated in every breath and aspect of Nature.

It was a morning not to doubt but to believe: and Rutledge felt the tightening spring in mind and body and heart, and the bracing influence made his love and his hopes to vibrate and thrill. As with easy strokes he sent the canoe through the water he drank in the fresh beauty of Elise as an invigorating draught. She was so *en rapport* with the morning and the sunlight and the life as she sat facing and smiling upon him, her cheeks aglow with health and her face alight with the exquisite keenness of joy in living, that she seemed to him the incarnate spirit of the day.

The crisp tingle in the air was not without its spell upon Elise. No blood could respond more quickly than hers to Nature's quickening heart-beats, and it sang in her pulses with unaccustomed sensations that morning. She looked upon Rutledge as he smartly swung the paddle, and was struck with the strength he seemed to possess without the coarse obtrusion of muscle. She accredited the easiness of his movements to the smooth water, in which he had kept the canoe because of his desire to be as little distracted as possible from contemplation of Elise's charms and graces. The swing of his body and arms was as graceful as if he had learned it from a dancing-master, and there was a touch of daintiness about it which was his only personal trait that Elise had positively designated in her mind as not belonging to her ideal man. She did not object to it on its own account, but surmised it might have its origin in some vague unmanly weakness—and weakness in a man she despised.

She had talked to him of a score of things since they had embarked, passing rapidly from one to another in order to keep him away from the one subject he seemed attracted to from any point of the conversational compass. At the moment she had been so clearly impressed with his almost feminine gracefulness the conversation was taking a dangerous swerve, she thought; and for a minute she was at a loss how to divert the course of language from the matter nearest his heart. In a blind effort to do so she unthinkingly challenged him to prove his sterner strength which she had never seen put to the test.

"It's easy going here, isn't it?" she said. "What a pity we couldn't have one visit to the island before we go away."

"Do you wish to go there?" asked Rutledge.

"I would like to," she replied, "but of course we cannot attempt it without an experienced canoe-man. It is about time for us to return; don't you think so?"

"That depends on whether you really want to go to the island," returned Rutledge, who was quick to see and resent the intimation that he was not equal to the business of putting her across the racing water between them and the small cluster of trees and shrubs growing among a misshapen pile of rocks nearly across the river.

"I am told no one but these half-breed guides have ever tried the passage,"

he continued. "Not because it is so very dangerous, I suppose, but because it is too small to attract visitors to try the rough water."

"They can get to it easily from the other side, can't they? It seems so near to that," said Elise.

"No. Jacques tells me that the narrow water on the other side runs like a race-horse, and has many rocks to smash the canoe. Even going from this side I would prefer to leave you here, Miss Phillips, and of course that would make the visit without inducement to me."

"You allow your carefulness of me and your politeness to me to reason you out of the danger," said Elise, without any sinister purpose; but Rutledge recalled Helen Phillips' words about Elise and heroes, and became uncomfortable.

"I used them to reason you out of the danger," he replied. "If the argument does not appeal to you I am ready for your orders."

"Then let's go over," said Elise, prompted half by the challenge in his eyes and half by her subconscious desire to see him vindicate his feminine grace.

"I admit I am a coward," Rutledge remarked as he turned the canoe toward the island.

"Oh, if you confess to being afraid!" said Elise in mingled surprise and pity. "I certainly cannot insist. Let's return to the hotel."

"You mistake me," Rutledge replied as he sent the light craft on toward the rapids. "My cowardice is in permitting you to bully me into carrying you into some danger. I should have the courage to refuse."

"You would have me believe in your courage, then, whether you choose danger or avoid it. That is artful," Elise rejoined.

The word "artful" nettled Rutledge, and he put his resentment into the strokes which sent the canoe forward. If Elise Phillips could believe of him that he would attempt to establish a reputation for courage by a trick of words, words would be inadequate, of course, to defend him from the imputation. There was no chance now to convince her, he thought, save to try the passage. So, despising the weakness which would not let him point the canoe homeward, he set his strength against the increasing current, and soon lost thought of the argument in the zest of sparring with the river.

Elise became absorbedly interested in the contest and in his handling of the boat. The interest of both became more and more intense as the water began to slap the canoe viciously and toss them with careless strength. A wave rolling over a sunken rock rushed upon them with a gurgle and swash and passed under the canoe with a heave and splash that tilted them uncomfortably and threw a hatful of water over the side. Another came with a more impatient toss, and Elise crouched upon the seat to preserve her equilibrium. Rutledge looked round at her face, which was unsmiling but without fear, and asked:

"Shall we go back?"

"No," the girl answered.

They soon found that the water was swifter than they had judged it from the shore, and that they had not put across far enough up-stream to make the island easily. They were nearing it, but the current was becoming boisterous and they were drifting faster and faster down-stream. Swifter water and rougher met the canoe at every paddle-stroke. Rutledge with his back to Elise dropped on one knee in the water in the canoe bottom and gave every energy to his work. If Elise had not been with him he would have liked nothing better.

As for the girl, she would not insist on this wild ride again, but, being in, she was having many thrills of pleasure. Rutledge's manner gave her confidence that they would reach the island, but with how much discomfiture she was as yet uncertain. She was drenched with water from the slapping waves and the swiftly flying paddle, which was Rutledge's only weapon against the wrath of the river. She saw in his resolute efforts that their situation was at least serious if not dangerous, and she hardly took her eyes from him; but with her closest scrutiny she did not detect the slightest indecision or apprehension.

Only once did fear come to her, and that but for a moment. The struggle was now quick and furious. They were in the mad whirl of crushing water that tore alongside the island and was ripped and ground among the bullying rocks. She heard Rutledge stifle a cry as he sent the canoe out with a back-stroke that almost threw her overboard, and the rioting current slammed them past a jagged vicious-looking rock just under the river's surface which would have smashed their cockle-shell to splinters. When she looked down upon it as they were shot past she thought for an instant of death and dead men's bones. Then—

"Out! Quick—now!" yelled Rutledge, as with a strength that seemed as much of will as of muscle, he shoved the canoe's nose up against the island and held it for a moment against the fury of the water.

Elise rose at his sharp command and leaped lightly out upon a bare rock, giving the canoe a back kick which sent it swinging around broad across the current. As it swung off Rutledge, seeing no favourable place below him to make another landing, quickly gave his end of the boat a cant toward the island, dropped the paddle in the canoe, grabbed the mooring chain and jumped for the land. He jumped and alighted unsteadily but without further mishap than so far capsizing the canoe that it shipped enough water to more than half submerge it and threaten to sink it. With his effort to draw it up on the rock and save it from sinking entirely, the water in the canoe rushed to the outer end, sending that completely under and floating the paddle out and away. He yanked the canoe up on the island and, turning, looked straight into Elise's eyes for ten seconds without speaking.

"Why don't you say it?" the young woman asked with amused defiance.

"Say what?" inquired Rutledge.

"What you are dying to tell me."

"I love you," answered Rutledge simply.

"Oh! You—you—impudent—you horrible!" cried Elise with a gasp. "To presume I would invite you to tell me—that! How dare you!"

"I dare anything for you," said Rutledge. "I love you and—"

"Stop! Not another word on that subject—lest your presumption become unbearable! You know very well, Mr. Stupidity, that I expected you to say 'I told you so.'"

"I have told you—so—your—exp—"

"Stop, I say! I will not listen to another word. Your persistence is almost—insulting!"

"Insulting!" said Rutledge in amazement. "Then pardon me and I'll not offend again," and he turned to take a look at the fast-riding paddle as it turned and flashed far down the river.

Elise was glad of the chance to gather her wits together and prepare a defence against this abrupt method of wooing. Indeed she was on the defensive against her own heart. One fact alone, however, would justify her deliberation: that she was not certain of her own mind. Friendship may halt and consider, admiration may sit in judgment; but love that questions, or is of two minds, or hesitates, is not love.

She turned away from him and the river to give attention to this new problem which was of more immediate interest to her than the question of how they were to get away from the island. Rutledge came to her after awhile.

"Miss Phillips," he said, "I have the honour to report that, while we are prisoners on this island now, our imprisonment will not be lengthy. Fortunately I saw Jacques on the other side of the river and made him understand, I think, that we have lost our paddle. At any rate he put off toward the hotel at great speed, and will be down with another canoe I hope before you become tired of your island." And he added, as if to relieve the tense situation: "While we wait I shall be glad to show you over the premises and to talk about anything that you may prefer to discuss."

Elise could not tell from the formal manner of Rutledge's words whether he was really offended or humourously stilted in his speech. She could be as coldly polite as any occasion demanded; but, believing that she had effectually put an end to his love-making for the day, she met his formality of manner in her naturally charming and friendly spirit.

"Sit down here then, and tell me where you learned to handle a canoe. I did not know canoeing was a Southern sport."

"It is not," Rutledge said, taking the place she gave him at her feet. "I was never in a canoe till I came here this summer."

"Now, Mr. Rutledge, don't ask too much of credulity. One surely cannot become skilful without practice."

"I did not mean that I have never been on the water before," said Rutledge; "but in my country we do not have these curved and graceful canoes. We navigate our rivers with the primitive dugout or pirogue. I have used one of those on my father's Pacolet plantation since I was a boy. The dugout is made by hollowing out a section of a tree. That makes the strongest and best boat, for it never leaks or gets smashed up. It is very narrow and shallow, however, and it takes some skill to handle it in a flood."

"Were you ever in a flood?—a worse flood than this?" asked Elise.

"Yes. When our little rivers get up they are as bad as this or worse. I have seen them worse. During the great flood on the Pacolet some years ago, when railroad bridges, mill dams, saw-mills, cotton mills, houses, barns, cotton bales, lumber, cattle, men, women and children were all engulfed in one watery burial, the little river was for six hours a monster—a demon."

"Tell me about that," Elise said; and to entertain her Rutledge told her at length the story of that cataclysm of piedmont South Carolina. He went into the details without which such description is only awful, not interesting. Many were the incidents of heroism and hairbreadth escapes and unspeakable calamity which he related; and he told the stories with such vividness of portraiture, dramatic fire and touches of pathos that, with the roar of many waters actually pounding upon her ear-drums, Elise could close her eyes and see the scenes he depicted.

In looking upon the pictures he drew with such living interest she found herself straining her tight-shut eyes in search of his figure among the throng that lined the river-bank or fought the awful flood. Time after time as he described an act of heroic courage in words that burned and glowed and crackled with the fire that could stir only an eye-witness or an actor in the unstudied drama he was reproducing, she would clothe the hero with Rutledge's form, identify his distinctive gestures and movement and catch even the tones of his voice as it shouted against the booming of the waters: but with studied regularity and distinctness Rutledge at some point in every story, incidentally and apparently unconsciously, would make it plain that the hero of that incident was a person other than himself.

He might have told her, indeed, many things to his own credit: especially of a desperate ride and struggle in one of those dugouts which he had volunteered to make in order to prevent an old negro man adrift on a cabin-top from going over Pacolet Dam Number 3, where so many unfortunates went down and came

not up again; but at no time could Elise infer from his speech that he was the hero of his own story. Her word "artful" still rankled in his memory, and he swore to his own soul that she should never, never hear him utter a word that might show he possessed or claimed to possess courage.

The only method by which Elise could deduce from his words the conclusion that Rutledge was of courageous heart was that courage seemed such a commonplace virtue among the people of his section that he probably possessed his share of it. Her curiosity was finally aroused to know whether by any artifice she might induce him to tell of his own exploits, which his very reticence persuaded her must be many and interesting, and she brought all her powers into play to draw him out: but to no purpose. She refrained from any direct appeal to him in fear that a personal touch might turn the conversation along dangerous lines; and Rutledge, having been properly rebuked, waited for some intimation of permission before presuming to discuss other than impersonal themes.

While indeed it only confirmed her woman's intuition, Elise was unconsciously happier because of Rutledge's blunt statement of his love, for it made certain a fact that was not displeasing to her. Yet she would hold him at arm's length, for she could with sincerity bid him neither hope nor despair. The glamour of her day-dreams made the reading of her heart's message uncertain. Rutledge had not the glittering accessories that attended the wooer of her visions; and yet as he talked to her she was mentally placing him in every picture her mind drew of the future, and was impressed that whether in the soft scenes where knightly gallantry and grace wait upon fair women, or in the stern dramas where bitter strength of mind and heart and body is poured out in libation to the god of grinding conflict, he, in every scene, looked all that became a man.

Rutledge's flow of narrative and Elise's absent-minded reverie were broken in upon by the hail of Jacques, who was approaching them from almost directly up-stream. His canoe was doing a grapevine dance as he pushed it yet farther across the river and dropped rapidly down to a landing on the far side of the island.

"Sacre! Wrong side!" he exclaimed when he came across and saw where Rutledge had pulled his canoe out of the water. "Here I lose two canoe sometime. How you mek him land?"

Rutledge did not answer the question but set about getting his canoe across the island to the point designated by Jacques as the place for leaving it. He had no desire to stay longer since all hope of further *tête-à-tête* with Elise was gone; and in a few minutes they were ready to embark.

"No hard pull, but kvick paddle lak feesh-tail," said Jacques in explaining the course by which they were to return, the which was plainly beset with numberless rocks and shoals.

"Sweem out seex times befor I lairn road," he added as a comforting proof of the thoroughness of his knowledge. The return was a simple matter of dropping off from the far side of the island, floating down a few rods, and then picking along through the rocks across the river as the canoe gathered speed down-stream.

"Miss Phillips," Rutledge said when they were ready, "perhaps you had better take ship with Jacques. He knows the road."

Their rescuer looked pleased at the honour, and turned to pull his canoe within easier reach.

"No, thank you," she said to Rutledge. "I prefer to go with you."

Rutledge caught his breath at the loyalty and the caress in her voice, and ungratefully wished Jacques at the bottom of the river. He handed her into his canoe with a tenderness that was eloquent; and Jacques, seeing through the game which robbed him of the graceful young woman for a passenger, put off just ahead of them, saying:

"I go fairst. Follow me shairp."

It was no easy task to follow that canoe; and Elise, as she watched the precision with which Rutledge used the "kvick paddle lak feesh-tail," was convinced that such skill had not gone to waste at the Pacolet flood. As she looked at him when the rough water was past and he was sending the canoe up the river with even swing again, graceful as before, her eyes had a light in them that would have gladdened his heart to see.

They landed near the hotel and hurried straight to it upon Elise's plea that she was late and must hurry to dress for her train. Rutledge walked beside her down the long hall of the hotel, and at the foot of the stairway, feeling that opportunity was slipping past him, he stopped her short with—

"Your answer, Elise! In heaven's name, your answer!"

Elise was again startled by his abruptness, and her unrestrained heart's impulse sent a look of tenderness to her eyes that would have crowned Rutledge's life with all happiness, had not that glamour of her daydreams, fateful, insistent, overclouded and banished it in a moment. She looked at him confusedly a moment more, then took a quick step away from him, hesitated, and, turning quickly, said:

"There is no answer,"—and fled up the stairs.

Rutledge turned away dazed by the reply to his heart's question. "There is no answer!"—as if he were a "Buttons" who had carried to her ladyship an inconsequential message which deserved no reply. He could not get his mind to comprehend the import of it; and he was walking back down the hallway with a vexed frown upon his face trying to untangle his thoughts, when Helen Phillips passed him and, seeing him in such a mood after his parting ride with Elise, prodded him with—

"None but heroes need apply, Mr. Rutledge. I warned you."

Rutledge passed on with an irritated shrug of the shoulders; and Helen, laughing, ran to tease Elise for a history of the morning's ride and the reason "why Mr. Rutledge is so grumpy." Little satisfaction did she get from Elise, however, for that young woman evinced as much of reticence as Rutledge had shown of irritation.

"I told him none but heroes need apply," laughed Helen.

"What do you know of heroes?" asked Elise with a snap.

CHAPTER IX

Within a week after Evans Rutledge and Elise Phillips parted at the St. Lawrence resort, the newspapers told the people that at a Saratoga restaurant Colonel Phillips and his wife and daughter, and Doctor Martin, a negro of national reputation, had sat down to dine together. It was soon after this that one evening, at his home in Cleveland, Ohio, Colonel Phillips happened upon a mixed quartette (all negroes) who had been brought over from New York to sing at a sacred concert in one of the fashionable churches, but who could not obtain what they considered a respectable lodging-place. With characteristic impulsiveness the Colonel, who heard of it, invited the two men and two women up to his house and entertained them overnight.

On those occasions Mrs. Phillips had shown unmistakable opposition to the acts of her liege lord. Elise had more than seconded her mother in haughty indignation; though with her superb training in obedience she could not be openly rebellious. When he had brought the quartette into his home Mr. Phillips could not fail to see the pain in his wife's eyes as she asked:

"Was that necessary?"

"Why, can you not see," he replied with some hot feeling in his tones, "that it was the only thing to be done? They are very respectable people, all of them. They are intelligent and well-bred, as you can see. Why should the simple matter of colour alone keep me from doing what I just as quickly might have done for a white man?"

The unconscious humour of this way of putting it did not reach Mrs. Phillips, and the Colonel's tone and manner, not his words, kept her silent when he had finished. She could not quarrel with him; and he thought he had answered

her reason, though he admitted inwardly that her prejudices were unconverted. Nevertheless he did not open the discussion again.

Helen, however, naturally siding with her father, did not hesitate to bring it up repeatedly, and youthfully to descant at length and with some elaboration of ideas on the propriety and admirableness of her father's act. Mrs. Phillips, with the sole purpose of preserving parental discipline and not wishing even slightly to encourage insubordination, had very little to say to Helen about it; while Elise answered all the younger girl's effusions with sniffs of disdain.

* * * * *

These incidents and Elise's womanly perversity and curiosity really gave Evans Rutledge a great opportunity if he only could have read the portents of circumstance and calculated to a nicety the eccentricity of a woman's heart. The entertainment of negro guests at the mansion of an aspirant for the presidency was given wide publicity by the press and was the subject of universal though temporary notice by newspapers and editorial writers of every class. Rutledge, in his capacity as Washington representative of a half-dozen newspapers over the country, contributed his share to the general chorus of comment.

When Elise read in a Cleveland paper a clipping accredited to "Evans Rutledge in Chicago American," she suddenly became desirous of seeing that young man again. The sentiments, stripped of the tartness in their expression and a seeming lack of appreciation of her distinguished father's dignity, were so in accord with hers that she was startled at the exact coincidence of thought—while still resentful of the free and fierce criticism.

Resentment and thoughts of coincidences were pushed out of her mind, however, by the question, "Would he tell me again he loves me?" This was both a personal and a sentimental question and was therefore of chief interest to her woman's mind. Not that she had a whit more of love for him than upon that last day upon the St. Lawrence—oh, no; but his love for her? his willingness to avow it? was it still hers? was it ever hers really?—for not a word or a line had he addressed to her since the day they fought the river. She would confess to a slight curiosity and desire to meet him when she should go to Washington on that promised visit to Lola DeVale.

Rutledge assuredly had escaped none of the untoward influences which the Phillips-negro incidents might have had upon his love for Elise. His good mother religiously attended to the duty of impressing upon him the disgraceful horrors of those affairs. She found no words forceful enough properly to characterize them, though she applied herself with each new day to the task. What might have been the result if her son's heart had been inclined to fight for the love of

Elise of course cannot be known. His mother's philippics effected nothing, for the good reason that he had lost hope of winning Elise before the negro incidents occurred, and the personal turn his mother gave them was only tiresome to him. Elise's last words to him, "There is no answer," had put their affair beyond the effect of anything of that sort. She had not only refused him, but had flouted him, treated him with contempt: yes, had said to him in effect that his proffer of love was not worth even a negative answer. He had gone over every incident of their association, and, with a lover's carefulness of detail, had considered and weighed her every word and look and gesture; and, with a lover's proverbial blundering, had found as a fact the only thing that was not true.

* * * * *

When Elise came to Washington on her visit Rutledge knew of course that she was in town, and he kept his eyes open for her. His pride would not let him call upon her, for he had meditated upon her treatment of him till his grievance had been magnified many fold and his view had become so distorted that in all her acts he saw only a purpose to play with his heart. Yet, he wished to see her, wished very much to see her—doubtless for the same reason that a bankrupt will look in upon "the pit" that has gulfed his fortune.

They met unexpectedly at Senator Ruffin's, where only time was given them to shake hands in a non-committal manner before Mrs. Ruffin sent them in to dinner together. If each had spoken the thoughts in the heart a perfect understanding would have brought peace and friendship at least, but no words were spoken from the heart. All of their conversational sparring was of the brain purely. They fenced with commonplaces for some little time, each on guard. Rutledge, without a thought of Doctor Martin or the negro quartette, formed all of his speeches for the ear of a woman who had mocked his love; while Elise talked only for the man who had written the article in the *Chicago American*. She saw the change in his manner, in his polite aloofness, his insincere, careless pleasantries.

"It is delightfully kind of you, Miss Phillips, to come over and give Washington some of those thrills with which you have favoured Cleveland."

"What is the answer?" asked Elise blankly.

"My meaning is no riddle surely," said Rutledge. "The Cleveland newspaper reporters have taught us to believe that you are the centre of interest in that city and that, as one signing himself 'Q' wrote in yesterday's *Journal*,—something to the effect that you radiate a sort of three-syllable waves which make the younger men to thrill and the old beaux to take a new lease on life. When I read that, I could see a lot of small boys crowding around an electric machine, all wanting

to get a touch of the current but fearful of being knocked endways.”

”Now diagnose the form of your dementia,” said the girl. ”You not only read but you *believe* the statements of the penny-a-liners. Your case is hopeless.”

”I must read somewhat of such things—to know my craft. I must believe somewhat of them—to respect my craft.”

”Is either knowledge or respect necessary, Mr. Rutledge? The craft is admitted; but I had thought the purpose of all this craft was the penny-a-line,—not knowledge or truth—which are not only incidental but often unwelcome. Why read or believe the line after the cent has been paid?”

”You are unmerciful to us, Miss Phillips. It is true every news item of interest has its money value for a newspaper man, but you must understand that we try to use them honestly and say no more than we feel—often far less than we feel.”

Rutledge’s manner was serious when he had finished; and Elise, feeling sure that the same incident was in his mind as in hers, had it on her tongue’s end to reply with spirit and point, when he continued lightly:

”But that is shop. It is good of you to come over now and gradually accustom us to those Q-waves instead of giving us the sudden full current when Colonel Phillips rents the White House. You will not care if some few become immune before that time, for there will be no end of rash youths to get tangled up with the wires.”

Elise had not been a woman if Rutledge’s impersonal ”we” and ”us” and suggestion of persons immune to her charms had not piqued her. He need not put his change of heart so bluntly, she thought. Yet what incensed her was not the loss of his love, but that that love had been so poor and frail a thing.

”I am glad you guarantee a full supply of the raw material, Mr. Rutledge. It is a very interesting study, I think, to watch the effect of the—current—on youths of different temperaments: on the black-haired, black-eyed one who raves and swears his love—to two women in the same month; or the light-haired, blue-eyed one who laughs both while the current is on and when it is off; or the red-headed lover who will not take ’no’ for an answer; or the gray-eyed, brown-haired man who would appear indifferent while his heart is consuming with a passion that changes not even when hope is gone. I will depend on you to see that they all come along, Mr. Rutledge—even to that young Congressman over there who is so devoted to Lola,” she added in an undertone, ”if he can be persuaded to change his court.”

”Oh, he will come. His present devotion does not signify. There is nothing true but Heaven,” Rutledge replied, not to be outdone in cynicism by this young woman who had quite taken his breath away with her impromptu classification of lovers. His own hair was black and his eyes, like hers, were gray; and he saw

she was making sport of him under both categories and yet betraying not her real thought in the slightest degree.

"Beware, Mr. Rutledge. Only woman may change her mind. Men must not usurp our prerogative."

"True," said Rutledge; "but a man does not know his mind or his heart either till he's forty. He is not responsible for the guesses he makes before that time. After that, he knows only what he does *not* want which is much; and, if undisturbed, can enjoy a negative consistency and content."

"I may not defend the sex against such an able and typical representative," said Elise as the diners arose.

Neither of these wholesome-minded young people had any taste for such a fictitious basis of conversation; but each was on the defensive against the supposed attitude of the other, and the moment their thoughts went outside conventional platitudes they were given an unnatural and cynical twist. Both felt a sense of relief when the evening was past. But despite this condition, which prevailed during Elise's visit, Rutledge could not put away the desire to see as much of her as an assumption of indifference would permit, if only with the unformulated hope that he might catch unawares if but for a moment the unstudied good camaraderie and congenial spirit which had won his heart on the St. Lawrence. But the sensitive consciousness of one or the other ever had been present to exorcise the natural spirit from their conversations.

Rutledge lived bravely up to his ideas of what a proper pride demanded of him, but his assumption of indifference was sorely tried from their first meeting at Senator Ruffin's. The mischief began with Elise's offhand little discourse on the colour of eyes and hair as indicia of the traits and fates of lovers—particularly with her statement that a red-headed man will not take a woman's "no" for an answer. The point in that which irritated the cuticle of Mr. Rutledge's indifference was that Mr. Second Lieutenant Morgan had a head of flame.

Now man—natural man—usually has the intelligence to know when a thing is beyond his reach, and the philosophy to content himself without it. He rejoices also in his neighbour's successes. But natural man, with all his intelligence and all his philosophy and all his brotherly love, cannot look with patience or self-deceit upon another's success or probable success where he himself, striving, has failed. In the whole realm of human experience there are exceptions to this rule perhaps; but in the tropical province of Love there is none. There a man may conclude that the woman he wants would not be good for him, even perforce may decide he loves her not: but the merest suggestion of another man as a probable winner will surely bring his decision up for review—and always to overrule it. So with Rutledge: from the moment of Elise's unstudied remark he conceded to his own heart that his indifference was the veriest sham and pretence—while still a

pretence necessary to his self-respect.

CHAPTER X

Hayward Graham, with an honourable discharge from the service of the United States buttoned up in his blouse, was taking a look at Washington before going back to re-enlist. He liked the army life, with all its restrictions; and having by his intelligence and aptitude attained the highest non-commissioned rank, he was optimistic enough to believe he could win a commission before another term of enlistment expired. In this hope he was not without a fair idea of the obstacle which his colour placed in the path of his ambition; but in weighing his chances he counted much on the friendliness of the newly inaugurated executive for the negro race generally, and most of all on the President's according his deserts to a man who had saved his life. He would keep his identity in that respect a secret till the time was ripe, so that the President's sense of obligation, if it existed, might not be dulled by the granting of any premature favours—and then he would see whether gratitude would make a man do justice.

He had more than a month yet in which to re-enlist without loss of rank or pay, and his visit to Washington was intended to be short, as he had several other little picnics planned with which to fill out his vacation. He had been there ten days or more and he had walked and looked and lounged till he was thoroughly tired of the city and was decided to leave on the morrow.

But that last afternoon he saw Helen Phillips. Her carriage was driven slowly across the sidewalk in front of him to enter the White House grounds. The sudden quickening of his pulses at sight of her was unaccountable to him. His gaze followed her as she went away from him, and for the first time in months he remembered in dumb pain he was a negro. He tried to separate the thought of his blood from his thought of the young woman, and to put the first and its unpleasantness out of his mind while he enjoyed the latter and its association with his college victory and his patriotic enthusiasms: but he could not think of her without that indefinable and subconscious heartache.

When he came to his lodgings and opened up the afternoon paper, the only item among all the notes of interest that had the power to catch or hold his thought for a moment was a brief statement to the effect that the veteran White House coachman was dead. Hayward sat and turned this over in his mind

a few minutes and then asked himself "Why not?"

Next morning he applied for the vacant position of coachman to the President. With the purpose to conceal his identity during his little adventure, as he thought of it, he gave only his Christian names: John Hayward. With similar purpose he had dressed himself in civilian clothes; but these could not conceal his magnificent lines, and, though another employee had been given the dead coachman's place, Hayward's fine appearance was so much in his favour that he was engaged as footman on trial. This was really better suited to his wishes than the other. He had not foregone his army ambition in a night, but neither had he been able to resist the temptation to spend a short time—the remainder of his furlough at least—where he could see something of the young woman who was so closely associated in his mind with the events in his life that were worth while.

Hayward was not in love with Helen Phillips in any sense—at least not in the ordinary sense; for that undefined pain, a dumb monitor of the impossible, kept him hedged away from that. On the other hand, to his mite of natural feeling of inferiority was added the respect for rank and dignity which his army life had hammered into him; and his attitude toward her was the devotion which a loyalist peasant soldier might have for the daughter of his king. He wished to be near her, to serve her; and he counted himself fortunate that this opportunity had come to him.

—And a superb footman he made, having every aptitude and manner both of mind and body for form and show; and being relieved of any humiliation of spirit by his secret feeling that he had set himself to guard and serve a crown princess.

A superb footman he made—and a new-rich Pittsburger offered him double wages to enter his service. The sneer with which Hayward told him that he was not working for money ever will be a riddle to that Pittsburg brain.

A superb footman he made; and with the added distinction of the President's livery he always drew attention and comment. The veteran Senator Ruffin was entertaining a few friends with reminiscences once when Hayward passed. One of the party said: "Look at that footman. Phillips has a fine eye for form, hasn't he?"

"Yes," Senator Ruffin answered, "if he saw him before he employed him, which he very likely did not.

"But do you know," he went on, "I never see that nigger but I think of John Hayward of whose last speech in Congress I was telling some of you yesterday. The nigger has his figure and carriage, even the set and toss of his head, about everything save his colour. The first time I saw him get down from the Phillips' carriage I thought of John Hayward, who is dead these fifty years.

"There was a man for you, gentlemen. No more knightly spirit was ever

carried in a kinglier figure of a man. He was just out of college when I was a boy, but I can remember that even then John Hayward was a toast and a young man of mark down in Carolina. Our fathers' plantations adjoined, and he was the first man that ever stirred in my boyish heart the sentiment of hero-worship. The Haywards were men of note in my State in that day as in this, and young John Hayward's future was as brilliant and well-assured as wealth, fine family, abounding talent, high purpose and personal force of character could make it."

"—But we lost him. A former half-Spanish, half-devil overseer on his father's plantation, who had been discharged because of his cruelty and general wickedness, had bought a small farm near the elder Hayward's place, and was trying to establish himself as a land and slave holder. This overseer came back from one of his periodical trips bringing with him one of the likeliest mulatto girls, as I remember it now, that I ever saw. All the neighbours knew he could have no good purpose in buying her, for he needed no house-girl to keep dressed up in calico as he began to keep her. It was but a few days before reports of his terrible cruelty to her began to be circulated by both negroes and white people, who heard her screams as he whipped her day and night.

"Late one afternoon, a week perhaps after he had brought her home, John Hayward and Dick Whitaker were riding through the overseer's farm and heard the girl scream. John, who was acquainted with the situation, said, 'Come on, Dick, let's go up and stop that;' and put his horse at the little gate and was pounding on the overseer's door before Dick could reply.

"The sound of blows ceased and the overseer came and opened the door, revealing the girl crouched down on the floor moaning and sobbing. When the slave-driver saw it was John his eyes snapped in wrath.

"'What do you want?' he demanded.

"'I want you to quit whipping that nigger,' said John.

"'You go to hell,' retorted the overseer. 'I'll whip my slaves whenever they won't work like I—'

"'Oh, master, I work, I work,' protested the girl to John.

"'Shut up! you—' began the overseer.

"'Yes, I know you work,' said John to the girl; and he turned to the man, 'and I know—everybody knows—what your purpose is, you fiend! My God, it is crime enough for such as you to own the bodies of women without your tearing their souls!'

"'Get off my land, damn you!' ordered the overseer; and then, as if to show his contempt for Hayward and Whitaker, he turned again to begin flogging the cowering girl, saying: 'She's my property, and the law gives me the right to make her obey!'

"'Stop!' thundered John, laying his hand on his pistol as the slave-driver

raised his arm to strike. 'You son of hell! The man who puts the weight of his hand on a woman, even his wife, to make her obey his passions, deserves to die!'

"Whitaker said it was all over before he could slide from his horse. The overseer struck the girl a vicious cut as John was speaking, and his whip was descending again when John's pistol flashed and the brute dropped to the floor with a ball through his brain...."

[image]

*"HIS WHIP WAS DESCENDING AGAIN WHEN JOHN'S PISTOL
FLASHED."*

"That was why my State lost John Hayward," the Senator continued after a pause. "It was seen at once that he must not come to trial. While the plea of self-defence can always be set up, the fact that John had killed the overseer in his own house and after being ordered out, would have made the law quite too risky. But beyond that it would have been necessary, in order that the jury's sympathy might override the law, to make such a presentation of the proper limitations, and the abuses and horrors, of slave management as would be clearly inimical, if not actually dangerous, to public order and safety.

"So the State lost John Hayward," the Senator rambled on. "He exiled himself less for his own safety than for the sake of a system for which he had no sympathy, but in which seemed to be bound up the peace and happiness, the very existence, of his people.... He went away, but the shadow of the Black Peril was upon his life to the end.... He went to Massachusetts, located in Boston, and began to practise law. He was successful from the beginning, though he always spent everything he made. He married a most lovable and beautiful woman of the finest family, and life again promised all he had once seemingly lost.... He had been in Congress two terms when I was first elected to the House. Mrs. Hayward was the most gracious lady I ever knew, and they made my first years here at Washington altogether enjoyable, for they knew everybody that was worth knowing and were great entertainers. I remember that as a young bachelor Congressman I used to think that if I only had John Hayward's constituency and a wife the equal of his in beauty, intelligence and diplomacy, I could be President without trouble.... We served together in Congress till the beginning of the Great War. It was just before the outbreak that that fateful shadow fell again upon him. His son—named for him: John Graham Hayward—a boy that I had watched grow up from a lad and loved as my own, was a student at Harvard and had acquired many ideas of which his father had no knowledge, and which would have startled

him—with all his well-known anti-slavery sentiments. The boy's mother looked on the negro race purely from a missionary standpoint, and had never given a serious thought, I am sure, to the negro's social status.

"You perhaps may imagine the shock that came to John Hayward on going home late one afternoon to dinner to find already seated at his table his wife, his son, and a young negro about his son's age whom the boy had brought in to dine with him.... John told me about it a few months afterward, and even then, with all his heart-break, his eyes would blaze with an insane anger as he thought of that nigger at his table.... He looked at the three for a moment; and then he said things that blasted his home. He kicked the nigger incontinently out of his house, and was beside himself in the furious wrath he hurled upon his wife and son. The boy resented his outburst, especially because of its cruel effect upon the mother. The father in uncontrollable anger at his son's resentful opposition ordered him to leave his roof, and told him that he was unworthy of the name of Hayward and had disgraced it beyond repair. The boy replied with spirit that he would not carry the name of Hayward away from the house, but would renounce both the house and it then, there and for ever, and walked out of the door.... On his knees did John implore his wife's forgiveness, and receive it; but neither father nor mother ever saw the boy again.... John tried, I think, to learn his whereabouts, and was driven to desperation as he met failure at every point. The moment the call came for troops, he resigned his seat in Congress, volunteered in a Massachusetts regiment and was killed at Bull Run....

"As he was lost to his native State, so he was lost to the nation—because the baleful shadow of the Black Peril seemed to be upon his life.... Heaven save my people—nine-tenths of whom, like him, would deal with the negro in justice and righteousness and helpfulness—from the stress and the blood of an open conflict against social equality with the negro race, and from the further unspeakable, unthinkable horror of defeat in such a conflict if it shall come upon them."

CHAPTER XI

There can be no doubt Hayward found scant recompense for his first month's service as part of the White House *ménage*. The money consideration of that service, as he told the gentleman from Pittsburg, he valued as nothing; and yet it was the money that held him over beyond the time limit he had set for his little

adventure and his return to the army. He put his eyes on Helen but twice during the month, and that only for a moment, and he had taken his leave of Washington in less than a fortnight if his training in the service had not accustomed him to bear monotony with patience.

Before his time was up, however, a letter from his mother told him that she was hardly able longer to bear the burden of her own support or even to supplement his contributions by any appreciable efforts of her own. Too long and too closely indeed had she striven in his behalf, and the overwork was demanding its pound of flesh in severe and relentless compensation. Hayward thought he saw the hand of a kindly Providence in having already provided him with a wage sufficient to keep both his mother and himself from want—which his soldier's pay would not have accomplished; and he postponed his military ambition and brought her to Washington, where he might look after her comfort more carefully and less expensively. Very grateful was he for an opportunity to care and provide for her whose devotion he had always known, but the heroism and stress of whose struggles and the wonders of whose money-working he was beginning to appreciate only since leaving the all-providing care with which she and the quartermaster had hedged him about from the morning of his birth till ninety days ago.

While his intelligence, his spirit, his cultivated ideals would not let him rest in entire content as a menial—a footman to however high a personage—Hayward yet found his first real basis of self-respect in the consciousness of his responsibility for his mother's support and happiness, and in the feeling that he was equal to the duty so plainly laid upon him. However he had no thought but that his present work was temporary; and, to satisfy his taste for mental recreation and improvement as well as to have a definite purpose in his mental pursuits, he began in his spare hours to study the books that pertained to his proposed life-work as an officer of the army.

His first summer in Washington added no little to his stock of that knowledge which men acquire not out of books but at first hand. He had seen as an onlooker something of life on both sides of the earth, and had acquired more of the spirit of a cosmopolite than nine-tenths of the statesmen who foregathered in the nation's capital to formulate world-policies: and yet of the actual conditions of life, of living, which affected him as a bread-winner, as a social unit, as one having a part in the Kingdom of the Spirit, he was at the very beginning of knowledge when he donned the White House livery. His effervescence of interest in Helen Phillips in great measure subsided, naturally, among the many new problems that came to meet him, and with his frequent commonplace beholding of her.

He soon was brought to realize that rigid limitations were upon him not

only by the colour-line which was drawn straight as a knife's edge from top to bottom of Washington, but by fences and barriers inside the confines of his own race against which he stumbled repeatedly and blindly before he dreamed they existed. On several occasions he had met with slight rebuffs in his friendly advances to persons of his own colour, and ascribed them to ill-temper or uncouth manners; but he finally received a jolt which waked him up—in this fashion:

He dropped in at the most imposing negro church in the city one Sunday evening, and heard a young woman of comely face and person, dressed in perfect taste, sing a solo which, in the sentiment and the purity and pathos of the singer's voice, met his idea of all that is exquisite in song. When the service was finished he spoke to a well-groomed man past middle age who had sat beside him.

"The young lady who sang did it with marvellous taste and beauty. She knows both how to sing and what to sing; and since I'm at it I may as well say that she's no-end good-looking."

The older man could not conceal his satisfaction and interest, for he had expended many dollars on the singer.

"I'm delighted you think so," he returned. "My daughter has had great advantages and she ought to sing well."

"Your daughter?" said Hayward. "You should be very proud of her. Will you not introduce me to her? I'd like to thank her for my share. I am John Hayward"—and feeling some identification was necessary—"footman at the White House."

"Excuse me, suh," said the other, with but a very slightly overdone manner; "we don't introduce strangers to our families—specially footmen."

The father's manner was not intended to be offensive, but his answer verily exploded in Hayward's face. Thanks to the younger man's training he did not wince or change countenance, but he was so bursting full of wrath that he never knew whether any further word was spoken between them. He moved with the throng toward the door, but stepped into a vacant pew for fear he would run over some one in furious impatience. True it was that in his attempt to volunteer three years before, he had been roughly impressed with the idea that there was some recognized difference between a white man and a negro, and in his association with the rough troopers of the 10th Cavalry he had become in a measure converted to the correctness of the proposition generally: "but," he thought in infuriated scorn, "I'm as good as any *nigger* that ever drew breath! A footman, am I?"—and he threw back his head with pride as he recalled his answer to the man from Pittsburg—but dropped it again with some humility at the thought that he was now a footman for the money it brought. At the door he spoke to an usher.

"Who was the young woman who sang?"

"Miss Porter—old Henry Porter's daughter."

"So the old scoundrel is Washington's richest negro," he thought. "Well, his manners and his money are not well matched. I'll even the score with him yet."

After the first heat of his resentment was off he admitted that his request to be presented to the negro magnate's daughter was abrupt, informal and unwarranted, perhaps, but he argued and insisted that old Porter ought to have seen that his unconventional request was an impulsive outcome of his admiration for the girl's singing, and at least have been a little more gracious in his refusal. No, he would not forgive the manner of it; and when he remembered the song and its delight to his senses he found it about as hard to forgive the refusal itself.

Not in three years, except for an occasional moment of patriotic uplift, had his soul had a taste of something to drink—till he heard that song. His spiritual sense had virtually lain dormant those three years in the monotonous round of his world-circling outpost duty. In successive enlistments he might indeed altogether have stifled it, while perfecting his intelligence, courage, strength and skill as a soldier: for the only possibility—and there is only possibility, no certainty or even probability—of spiritual uplift incident to the profession of arms, is that of developing a surpassing, unselfish love of the flag. This sentiment in its pure fulness of bloom is of the spirit, and is an exalted virtue; but not all even of the heroes whose ashes the nations keep have appropriated to their souls, untainted with selfish or fleshly impulse, this the very flowering recompense of their travail and heroism.

Hayward had enlisted at the bidding of the most admirable impulses and had made an excellent soldier; but the monotonous round of garrison duty after the brief war was ended had benumbed his purely patriotic motive, and left only a great desire for personal advancement. In the dull grind his very highest nature had become stagnated; and it was with the joy of one first awakened to unforeseen possibilities that he felt reawakened within him by that one song desires not of the flesh but of the spirit so long stupefied and unfed.

As he became acutely conscious of his need in this behalf, he was more seriously regretful than before that an acquaintance with the singer who had revived his finer sensibilities might not be had to satisfy in a measure the need which her singing had recreated. Under the impulse of such desires he set about seeking associates, friendships, wherefrom he might appropriate to himself his God-given share in the kingdom of the Mind. In his quiet and unobtrusive search for friends among his race who would be congenial and satisfy the craving of his higher nature for companionship, success came with starving sloth. Most of the negroes with whom he came at first in contact were of an order of intelligence so far below his own that they met not in any degree the demand from within him, and the few that possessed the intelligence were so unbearable in manner that he found little pleasure in them.

He had held aloof from the troopers of the 10th with the certain feeling that they were below his type and below the type of the best negroes he knew must exist somewhere: but he came to doubt the correctness of his own estimate in his search for congenial spirits in Washington. Educated negroes? Yes, there were many that had seen as much of the schools as he, and more. Men of money? Yes, scores of negroes who could buy him ten times over with a month's income. And yet it seemed that he could not happen upon any in his limited and slowly growing acquaintance who did not in some way offend his tastes.

CHAPTER XII

When the heat of summer came down upon Washington, President Phillips' wife and daughters fled to the shades of the family summer home, "Hill-Top," at Stag Inlet on Lake Ontario. There, in a roomy, rambling old house set back on the low wooded bluffs which enclose in more than half-circle the peaceful little bay, he and his wife and daughters, with a few congenial but not too closely situated neighbours, passed the hot days of summer, and stayed on usually into the red-splashed autumn, when the little cove put on its most inviting dress and brewed its most exhilarating air.

It was Hayward's fortune to be carried to the Inlet with the family carriage and horses for the summer outing. He was happy enough to be quit of brick walls and asphalt pavements for a time, and to get into God's out-of-doors, for whose open air he had become so hungry in a few short months. His duties were not very onerous, and he had much time to employ himself with his own pleasures. One form which this took was in learning to handle the various kinds of diminutive water-craft with which his master's family and their neighbours helped to while away their summer vacations. Before the summer was over he was a fairly good fisherman, a safe skipper on any small sail-craft used in the inlet, and a devoted and skilful driver of the gasoline, naphtha and electric launches of which the cottagers had quite a number. He was quick and adept at any and everything that came to his hand, and so careful and entertaining of the children of the near-by families whom he met and amused when they came down to play by the water's edge, that he came to be quite in demand as one servant who "knew how" and could be depended upon in any circumstances.

Helen Phillips was still a girl, natural, ingenuous, untouched by pride or

affectation. She looked forward with some zest of anticipation to the time of her *début* two winters to come; but was well content to have that time approach without haste. She evinced much interest in the plans that her mother and Elise made and re-made, discarded and revised for the social campaign of the next winter, and many lively and original suggestions did she make offhand and unasked. But as for her own personal plans she gave them no thought a day's time ahead. She was quite willing to receive her pleasures in the order chance ordained.

"I am so glad to get away from Washington and back to Hill-Top," she wrote to her Cleveland chum. "It was awful dull down there. Five whole days in the week I had to spend trying to catch the style dispensed at a Finishing School for Young Ladies there, where it is possible to take lady-like sips and nibbles at literature and music and art and things like that, but where the real purpose seems to be to teach young women to descend from a carriage gracefully. Just think! Another whole year of finishing touches will have to be applied to me before Miss Eugenia can in good conscience certify that I may be depended upon properly to arrange myself upon a chair in case it ever becomes necessary for me to sit down."

Helen's tastes were along lines widely different from the Finishing School's curriculum. She preferred above all things else a talk or a walk, a ride or a romp with her father. She had no brother to share her pranks and enthusiasms, her little sister Katherine was much too young to be companionable, and her father was her necessary and natural ally. Him did she not only love, but him did she glorify. Tall and straight, seemingly lacking in flesh but tough as whip-cord, with a patrician face, prematurely gray hair and moustache, Helen thought he was the model of all manly beauty. None in life or in fiction was to her thinking so brave or strong or good as he. Being in her esteem strong in body, unerring in wisdom, pure in purpose, fearless in spirit, he touched the periphery of her ideal of manhood at every point. Her mother and Elise often were amused at her headlong championship of him upon the slightest intimation of criticism, and rightfully were astonished at her information upon public questions as they affected or were connected with his political fortunes or good name. Helen devoured the newspapers (a limited number it is true) with no other purpose, seemingly, than to know what people said of him. Of those that favoured him and his policies she thought well, and mentally commended their good taste and excellent sense: but those that criticized! Woe to them had she had power to utter condemnation!

* * * * *

One morning in midsummer Hayward brought the saddle-horses to the door for the father and daughter to take a canter and prove Helen's new mount before the

mother and Elise were up. They were about ready to be off when a telegram was brought out to Mr. Phillips by the operator who had an office in the house.

"I was ordered not to wake you, sir, but to give it to you at once when you were up."

Mr. Phillips read it over slowly. Then he turned to Helen.

"Well, little girl, you must miss your ride again. I'm sorry, but it can't be helped."

"Oh, no, papa! Let the country go play till we come back. You promised me this ride sure when we missed the last one."

"Can't do it, little woman. Take the horses back, Hayward," he said, and turned to follow the telegraph man. But seeing the great disappointment in Helen's face, he called to the man.

"Here, Hayward. Get into a proper coat and on my horse and see that Miss Helen has her gallop round the Inlet and back without damage. Can you ride?"

"Yes, sir," answered Hayward.

"I thought so. You seem to be able to do everything else. Now you are fixed up, old girl," he said as he chucked Helen under the chin. "Don't let the mare all the way out. You don't know her yet,"—and he was gone.

Most of Helen's pleasure in the ride was lost with her father's absence, and yet there was much enjoyment in it for her. She felt the liberty to choose her own road, and decided to do a little exploring. She set out at a good canter, with Hayward swinging along a protective distance in the rear; and with the exercise her spirits rose and she gave herself up to the full joy of it. She forgot her father's injunction and sent the mare along several stretches of road with little restraint.

Hayward, on Mr. Phillips' favourite saddler, was having the time of his life, and for himself wished nothing better than that his young mistress would keep up the pace; though he did not altogether approve of her speeding down-hill. He did not like the way the mare managed her feet on the down grades. When Helen pulled up to ask him where a certain road led, he spoke, unconsciously with decision, out of his experience, but with all deference, and said:

"Pardon me, Miss Helen, but it is a little dangerous the speed with which you ride down-hill. I'm afraid your mount is not so sure-footed as she might be.... This road you speak of leads out by Mr. Radwine's cottage into the Lake Drive. It is worse riding than those you have tried."

Helen thought Hayward's apprehensions were creatures of his discomfort in keeping pace with her, and she was nothing more than amused at his attempts to limit the speed to his abilities under pretence of care for her safety. She thought she would give him one more shaking-up to tell her father about—and plunged off down the Radwine road, leaving him to follow as best he might.

Hayward had passed over that cross-road but a few days earlier and he

knew its present condition. Helen heard him call to her, but her spirit of mischief was fully aroused at the thought of his bumping along after her, and she gave the mare free rein.

They were going down a longer and steeper hill than any they had passed, near the foot of which the summer rains had washed out the roadway. Hayward, knowing of this dangerous place ahead, and seeing that it was impossible to stop the young woman in his front before she reached it, sent Prince William after the mare under pressure of the spur and with the hope to come up with her in time. He arrived on the very moment of fate. The thundering horse tore alongside the flying mare just as she reached the washed-out road. Either through feminine excitability at being overtaken or because of the defective foot action Hayward had noted, the mare, when she struck the rough road, stumbled and went down. In that instant the open-eyed Prince William cleared the washout with a magnificent stride, and the ex-cavalryman swept his right arm about Helen and lifted her out of the saddle.

Slowly reining in his horse, Hayward brought him to a standstill and gently lowered his astonished young mistress to the ground. She was almost too overcome to stand, and walked unsteadily a few steps before she recovered herself. Hayward had thrown himself off Prince William and was leading him back down the road to where the mare had fallen. She had already picked herself up, minus a saddle and plus a few bruises, and was standing in the road comparatively unhurt but shaking as with an ague.

Hayward approached her quietly and she came eagerly up to him as if to escape from her fears. He looked her over carefully, and finding no serious damage done, set himself about brushing the dust from her with wisps of weeds and grass. Helen came down while he worked with the mare, and watched him some minutes without speaking. She hardly could think of anything civil to say. She knew that she had disobeyed orders and that he had warned her—and that made her angry. The very silence of the man became irritating to her.

When he had done all he could to put the mare in order he picked up Helen's saddle and started to put it on, but stopped to ask whether he should exchange mounts with her.

"No," his young mistress replied. "I've ridden her here and I will ride her home."

The negro put her saddle on the mare while the girl looked on. When he came to buckle the girth he found that the leather tongue was torn off. He lengthened the girth on the other side and proceeded to bore with his pocket-knife a new hole in the short broken tab. Helen's eyes fell at length on the knife. She looked at it uncertainly a few moments, and then lost interest in everything else. Finally she could keep quiet no longer.

"Where did you get that knife, Hayward?" she asked with something like accusation in her voice.

"Miss Helen, I got this knife in—that is, this knife belongs to—"

"Wait a moment," interrupted Helen. "Let me see it.... Yes, it's the same. I gave my father this knife on his birthday four years ago. I had the carving done at Vantine's. How long have you had it?"

"Miss Helen, I have had it long before I entered your father's service. I—"

"Yes, I know; but just how long have you had it, Hayward?"

"Well, Miss Helen, to be accurate, I've had it three years and—four months."

"Hayward, were you ever in the army—the cavalry—the 10th Cavalry?"

"Yes, Miss Helen."

"You were in the battle of Valencia?"

"Yes, Miss Helen."

"You took this knife from an officer whose life you had saved, didn't you?"

"Yes, Miss Helen."

"Papa says the negro trooper saved his life and stole his knife."

"But I did not steal the knife, Miss Helen—I did not know I had it till two months after the battle, when they gave me back my clothes in the hospital. There was—"

"That stealing part is one of papa's jokes, Hayward. But you didn't know it was papa, did you?"

"Yes, Miss Helen. I knew him when I saw him fall."

"What? And you've never let him know? Why have you kept it secret?"

Hayward did not answer. She continued.

"He would be very grateful. He does not know who it was, for I've heard him say so. All that he knows is that it was a trooper of the 10th."

She stopped and waited for an answer, but he stood in silent indecision as to what he should say to her. If he should now disclose himself the President would doubtless weaken the force of his obligation by giving him in token of his gratitude some appointment which not only would fall far short of the lieutenant's commission to which he aspired, but also would remove him from the young woman who in the last minute had become so simply and earnestly sympathetic in her manner. He weighed the pros and cons quickly.

"Why haven't you told him?" persisted Helen.

"I have preferred not, Miss Helen. In fact there are reasons why I cannot—must not—now."

"What reasons?" demanded Helen.

"Please, Miss Helen, I cannot tell you—nor him."

"You are not ashamed of it, surely?"

"No, Miss Helen. I would do it again this morning—willingly—at any cost

to myself. But do not ask me to tell of it.”

Helen regarded him narrowly for a minute in silence.

”And you kept me from—death—also. Am I not to tell him of that either?”

”Please no, Miss Helen. If I have done you a service and you think it worth reward, I ask that you repay me by telling no one that I am either your father’s rescuer or your own.”

Mystery always annoyed Helen unbearably, and she looked at Hayward as if uncertain whether to preemptorily demand his secret or to inform him she herself would acquaint her father with the facts he sought to conceal. Hayward saw something of her purpose in her eyes, and pleaded with her.

”Miss Helen, I beg you. My reasons are imperative—and honourable. When the time comes that I may I will gladly tell your father, but if now you would do me the greatest favour you will say nothing of it.”

While Hayward was speaking it occurred to Helen that she willingly would have her father remain in ignorance of her disobedience and reckless riding and its consequent narrowly averted disaster. This consideration, together with Hayward’s earnestness in his mystifying request, finally prevailed upon her.

”Very well, Hayward, if you insist. You only will be the loser. It is puzzling to me.... But tell me about your rescue of papa.”

Hayward, glad to buy her silence, gave her a modest account of his very creditable bit of heroism, and in response to Helen’s interested questioning he was still recounting incidents of the battle and his hospital experiences when they reached the Lake Drive and quickened their pace into a fast canter for home. They arrived and alighted and Hayward got the horses away to the stable without any one’s seeing the dust-splashed mare.

Helen could hardly contain herself with her knowledge, but she was as scrupulously honest as she was impulsive, and stood by her promise not to divulge the footman’s secret. She vainly tried to imagine some satisfactory explanation of his strange request, but could conceive none that seemed plausible. She finally came to believe that he was a heroic soul whom some implacable misfortune had denied the right to the fruits of his heroism, and in her heart she pitied him.

Hayward was not certain just how far his young mistress credited him with good and honest reasons for wishing his identity to remain undisclosed to her father. He feared that she must think any reason inadequate. He was very much afraid that in all her interested inquiries she would discover that he was not using his real name. If she became possessed of that knowledge she doubtless would think the circumstance sufficiently suspicious to warrant her laying all the facts before her father. This matter of his name perplexed him no little. He gladly would have Helen acquainted with the facts relating to the crimson pennant, and

yet he must guard against it. That would reveal his masquerade, as she certainly would remember the name of the Harvard man who had saved his college from defeat. He heartily regretted the excess of caution which had made him place himself in this dilemma.

* * * * *

In the long and lazy summer days that came after that morning's ride Helen was given without seeking it some little opportunity to question the footman about the ever interesting matter of her father's rescue and allied incidents of battle and campaign. Her father insisted, on a few occasions when he could not accompany her, on her riding alone, with Hayward as a guard. In her sailing parties, also, in which Hayward was usually skipper of sailboat or launch, she was thrown occasionally with him alone before she had picked up, or after she had dropped off, her guests at the several landings around the Inlet.

She had a child's interest in listening to the ex-trooper's reminiscences of the battle of Valencia, the Venezuelan campaign, and of his world's-end following of the flag. The footman, never for a moment lacking in deference or presuming upon the liberty of speech allowed him, was an entertaining talker. He had used his eyes and his ears in his journeyings through the earth, and the lively imagination characteristic of his race and his negro knack of mimicry, together with his intelligence and his ability to use the English language with precision and skill, made him a raconteur of fascinating charm. Helen quite often wished to acquaint her father and mother and Elise with some of the things he recounted to her, but the tales were always so mixed in with his experiences as a soldier that she could not re-relate them without breaking her promise to respect his secret....

And thus the summer days dragged slowly to an end, with Helen and her footman becoming at odd times better acquainted with the thoughts and personal views each of the other on a wider and ever wider range of subjects. Helen was too unsophisticated in her thought to notice anything unusual in a lackey's being possessed of Hayward's intelligence and ease of manner. The ever present mystery of his refusal to exploit his heroic deeds dwarfed or overshadowed all other questions that might have arisen in her mind as to anything out of the ordinary in him. She did believe that he was suffering some sort of martyrdom in silence, and her womanly sympathy grew stronger as she knew more of him. Not for a moment was the relation of mistress and man lost sight of by either; but the

revelation of the real woman and man, each to other, went steadily on.

CHAPTER XIII

The era of good feeling seemed to have been ushered in along with Mr. Phillips' inauguration. The country was prosperous to a degree. Labour was receiving steady employment and a fair wage and uttered no complaint. Capital was adding surplus to per cent., and was content. The Cuban skirmish with Spain and the trial-by-battle with Germany had cemented again in blood the sections divided by the Great War—so closely indeed that nobody, not even Presidents on hand-shaking junkets, thought to mention it. Any sporadic "waver of the bloody shirt" was considered an anachronism and laughed at as a harmless idiot. It was true that the negro question, being present in the flesh and incapable of banishment, was yet a momentous problem: but it was considered in cooler temper as being either a national or a local question—not sectional in any sense.

President Phillips in his first message to Congress, as in his inaugural address, felicitated his countrymen upon the unity of the American people and the American spirit, and on both occasions gave a new rhetorical turn and oratorical flourish to the statement that his father was from Massachusetts and his mother a South Carolinian. In sections of the South where his party was admittedly effete or undoubtedly odorous he hesitated not to appoint to office men of political faith radically differing from his own—and all good citizens applauded. Partisanry was settling itself down for a good long sleep, and strife had ceased. The lion and the lamb were lain down together, and there was none that made afraid in all the holy mountain of American good-will and fair prospect.

Into this sectionally serene and peaceful situation, which Mr. Phillips deemed largely the result of his personal effort as a non-sectional American executive, he deliberately or impulsively pitched an issue which set one-third of his admiring countrymen by the ears.

The good commonwealth of Mississippi was in a state of upheaval. A peaceable revolution was being attempted there which would have changed the essential nature and purpose of the State government. Incited by the wordy eloquence of a provincial governor, with a few scraps of statistics gone mad, good men, honest men, men of intelligence were seriously considering the proposition to so amend the State constitution as to put upon the negro in his ignorance and

poverty the whole burden of his own education—by a division of the school fund between the races in proportion to the taxes each paid to the State.

This reactionary and truly astonishing proposition of Governor Wordyfellow was commonly known as the Wordyfellow Idea. It was giving great concern to the sober statesmanship of the entire nation, North and South—indeed greater concern to the thoughtful men of the South who realized its momentous import, its far-reaching effect upon Southern white people, than to the thoughtful outsiders who viewed it philosophically as having a speculative interest but no actual part in its settlement or effects.

The proposition to so divide the school funds indeed found its most violent and active opposition, as it found its strongest advocates, not only among the men of the South but even in the very State of Mississippi itself. The fact soon developed that this was to be the greatest political battle that was to be fought concerning the negro. All prior conflicts had been white man against negro. This was white man against white man, with the negro as an interested onlooker.

The lines were drawn roughly with the church, the schools and the independent press allied against the politicians, the political press and the less intelligent citizenship. Notable individual exceptions there were to this alignment—which all men remember—but the line of cleavage, taking it by and large, was as stated. Though the matter of an actual constitutional revision was presented as yet only to the people of Mississippi, the battle was being waged in serious purpose to a no less actual finish in every State from the Potomac to the Rio Grande.

It was into this situation, fraught with dire possibilities of course, but full of promise to the negro's friends, that the new President projected his impulsive and forceful personality. Anxious as always to be in the fight and leader in the fight, he set about to devise some plan for helping along the black man's cause. That he might do this more intelligently he conferred often with his most trusted advisers.

It was on the occasion of the memorable Home-Coming Week at Cleveland in 191- that he held the famous conference which gave that great civic celebration a fixed place in history. He stood loyally by his home city in its effort to enjoy and advertise itself, for he betook himself and family and several friends, including two members of his cabinet, away from busiest Washington for two days, and opened up his Cleveland home at great expense for that brief stay.

Doctor Woods, a negro of national reputation, also claimed Cleveland as his birthplace, and he had journeyed thither from afar to swell the throng of loyal sons of the city, and had brought with him Doctor Martin, now a bishop of the A.M.E. Zion Church, to add dignity and strength to the negro end of the programme. Meeting officially with these two dignitaries of colour suggested

to Mr. Phillips a discussion of the Wordyfellow disturbance, and he called an impromptu consultation.

In between the review of a morning parade and luncheon, therefore, on the second day of his stay, he sandwiched this hurried conference. At it, beside Martin and Woods, were Secretary of the Navy Mackenzie, whose wisdom seemed to cover all politics and statecraft, and the Secretary of Agriculture, Baxter—himself a Mississippian, but thoroughly opposed to the Mississippi governor's policy.

The conference, which was held at Mr. Phillips' home, rejoiced his heart. He was pleased at the favourable reports which Bishop Martin and Doctor Woods gave of the situation in the several Southern States. He accepted with approval the suggestions of the sapient Mackenzie; and when he saw with what earnestness and vigour and assured personal knowledge of the situation Baxter was putting his energies into the fight and predicting victory even in Mississippi, his enthusiasm knew no bounds. The conference was of such interest that luncheon was announced before a definite plan of action was threshed out.

"By George, I'm hungry as a wolf!" exclaimed Mr. Phillips. "Come along to the dining-room, gentlemen, and we'll wind this thing up while we replenish our stores."

While this invitation was quite unexpected by the bishop and Doctor Woods, it completely confounded Secretary Baxter who was right in the middle of a little speech when the interruption and invitation came. He looked confused for a moment, and began mumbling some excuse as Mr. Phillips held open the door and his other guests passed out into the hall.

"Oh, you don't have to go," said Mr. Phillips. "Come on and finish up your idea. I know you have no other engagement, for you were to lunch with me to-day to discuss that Williams matter."

The Secretary of Agriculture saw he was caught, and his manner changed in a moment as he decided to meet the issue squarely.

"You will please excuse me, Mr. President," he said formally and finally.

"Why, Baxter, surely I do not have to explain to you that—"

"You certainly do not, Mr. President," interrupted the Secretary. "Good morning, gentlemen,"—and he bowed himself out.

President Phillips turned in ill-restrained anger and followed his guests to the dining-room. They found Mrs. Phillips and Helen awaiting them. With these Mr. Mackenzie shook hands, and to them the President introduced Doctor Woods. The bishop was already acquainted, and spoke of the dinner at the Saratoga restaurant.

Mrs. Phillips had long been accustomed to the surprises her husband made for her, and had too good control of her faculties to show any annoyance on beholding her unexpected and unwelcome guests.

Any possible shade of restraint in her manner would not have been noticed, however, in the general feeling of constraint which Mr. Baxter's abrupt departure had left on Mr. Phillips and his other guests. The host set himself to the task of throwing off this feeling by plunging volubly into a résumé of the discussion they had been having. His vigour and enthusiasm were such that by their very physical force he was bringing a wholesome situation to pass, when Elise came humming down the hall with Lola DeVale, stopped short in the doorway—and turned quickly back.

[image]

"ELISE ... STOPPED SHORT IN THE DOORWAY—AND TURNED QUICKLY BACK."

While there was nothing unusual or pointed in Elise's manoeuvre her father felt and resented her protest. He talked away for a few minutes in nervous hope that his supposition was wrong and that she would come and bring Lola in to lunch. When she did not his choler rose at this open mutiny in his own household, and he awkwardly tossed the ball of conversation to Mackenzie and busied himself keeping his indignation within bounds.

From this point the meal progressed uncertainly. In the midst of the embarrassment of it all there was brought to the President a note, upon opening which he read:

"SIR:—I have the honour to present my resignation as Secretary of Agriculture, to take effect at the earliest moment you may be able to relieve me of the duties of the office.

"With assurances of my highest consideration and sincerest good wishes for yourself and the success of your administration, I am

"Your obedient servant, W. E. BAXTER."

At the bottom of the page there was added:

"P.S.—I am willing to assign any plausible reason for this resignation that you

may desire, or that may suggest itself to you as likely to relieve you of any embarrassment as a result of it. W.E.B.”

Mr. Phillips punctuated his first hasty perusal of the note with a snort of contempt, and checked an outburst of sarcastic, wrathful comment to read it over a second time. Fortunately at this moment Bishop Martin and Doctor Woods rose and apologized for having to withdraw in order to catch a train.

Their host was loth to have them go, and expressed regret that they had not been able to arrive at some definite plan of campaign. He asked that they inform him if they should come to Washington, so that he might discuss the subject further with them. Expressing their great pleasure that the chief executive took such a lively and intelligent interest in the weal and progress of their race, the two negro worthies withdrew, Mrs. Phillips dismissing them with a formal bow and smile and Helen, following her father, giving them a cordial hand-shake as they retired.

When they had gone Mr. Phillips thrust the letter of resignation at Mackenzie, and exploded:

”Mac, just read that! The provincial, patronizing, postscript-writing popinjay! Could you have imagined the impudence of it! Does not wish me to be embarrassed as a result of his quitting us—the conceited ass! I wonder if he thinks I care a rap, or that the people care, for his cheap little melodramatics. I might have known that it was too much to have expected a sensible secretary from that cursed negro-phobia State! But he was so strongly pressed for a cabinet appointment, and really did appear to be such a strong fellow. I might have guessed his apparent excellences were too good to be true! Oh, but the patronizing insolence of his offer to hush it up for us! I swear it’s unbearable. Damn the superior high-and-mighty airs these Southerners assume! My mother was a South Carolinian, but I can’t feel a sympathetic tremor in my blood for any such damnable bigotry. I’ll give Mr. Baxter and all his hide-bound, moss-backed, supercilious gang to know that this is one administration that proposes to make a democratic government a reality in this democratic country. A man shall be measured by the essential qualities of manhood he possesses, and dealt with accordingly, whatever his position, pull, size, sentiments, claims or colour! What do you think of that infernal note?”

”He does show great consideration for us—distinguished consideration, I may say. He will not tell it on us,” sarcastically commented Mackenzie.

”The devil take his distinguished consideration!” snapped Mr. Phillips. ”I’ll accept his little resignation before he can wink, and give the papers a full statement of the circumstances just as they occurred. I’ll show the upstart what a

small potato he is—damn his impudence! And then just to think, Mac, of the inexpressible insult in refusing to lunch with persons that I deem worthy to dine with my wife and daughters! It really makes it almost too damnably personal to be overlooked. He must understand that respectability, presentability, acceptability, in my home is a matter that is as sacred to me as such things are to him with all his Bourbon notions!—but thank God he may understand also that such acceptability is based on true merit, and that a man's colour has absolutely nothing to do with it.... Come along with me to the library and we will accept this little resignation before it gets cold, and have it at his hotel before he gets cold!"

CHAPTER XIV

Mrs. Phillips, ill at ease during the luncheon, had taken the opportunity to retire offered by the departure of the negro guests, and had taken Helen with her; but that young lady, feeling the electric condition of the atmosphere and full of lively curiosity, had returned to hover around the dining-room door and learn what all the row was about. She heard her father's outburst with great interest—being no little shocked at his sulphurous words, but no less deeply concerned at the suggestion of embarrassment to him politically, and forcibly and enthusiastically impressed with his fine scorn of subterfuge and manly decision to fight out his battles in the open.

When President Phillips came in to dinner and asked for his daughters, their mother told him Helen was in her room and Elise had gone driving with Lola. "I did not like Elise's conduct at lunch. It was too pointed, entirely too pointed. I shall talk to the young lady very plainly."

"Now, Hayne, don't worry the child with this affair. It is bad enough as it is. I hope—"

"Bad enough as it is! Why, one would think you wished to resign also. Were you insulted, too?"

"Not insulted, Hayne; but ever since you sent me to the pinelands of North Carolina that winter for Elise's throat I have not been able to think of a negro as I did before—and Elise feels the same way, I know. It is so plain down there: the negroes are so many and so—different. I can't receive them with any sort of pleasure. Just think of what the Southern papers will have to say. The awful things they said about your negro quartette were almost unbearable, and I know

that was mild to what this will be. I do wish you had not brought them in to lunch, Hayne."

"Why, May, you are surely not going over against me with those supercilious Southern fanatics?"

"Hayne! That is almost insulting. You know that I am for you against the world, whatever comes. No one, not even Elise or Helen, has ever heard me offer the least criticism of anything you have done—and no one ever will, my dearest"—she spoke simply and earnestly as she held her hands up toward him in a gesture eloquent of abiding love—"but I cannot have pleasure in receiving negroes. I have seen the negro as he really is, and I cannot feel that some soap and water and a silk hat make a—"

"Stop, May, right there"—Mr. Phillips' arms went about his wife in tenderness as he placed a hand upon her lips. "Listen to me. You dear women are creatures of impulse and sentiment—and thank Heaven for that, too: for when the time ever comes that you shall judge men from your heads instead of your hearts, woe to us!"—and he kissed her hair in reverent gentleness—"but—"

"Well, this is an idyllic scene!" exclaimed Elise, coming into the room with Helen. "It is better than a play. Daddy dear, you do it beautifully. You should have gone on the stage."

Mr. Phillips' state of mind, his bottled-up vexation because of Elise's behaviour at luncheon, his impatience at the interruption of his conversation with his wife at the point where she seemed to have made out her case against him and before he had opportunity to demolish her sentiment with masculine logic, added to Elise's lightness of manner and speech, which nettled him in his serious concern over Baxter's resignation, were, all together, too much for moderation.

"Now look here, young lady," he growled out ungraciously, "you have presumed entirely too much upon your privileges to-day. When did you become too good to dine with people your mother and sister were entertaining?"

"Why, papa!" the girl exclaimed in amazement at the roughness of his manner;—but the sternness of his face did not relax, and she stumbled along seeking some excuse. "Lola and I did not want any lunch, and all those men—"

"Stop! Don't be a dodger! You know very well, miss, that you declined to lunch because Bishop Martin and Doctor Woods were there. Now you must understand that I am as regardful of your honour as you are, that my life is at your service to protect it against the slightest affront, but that I will not be sponsor for any silliness, and will certainly not overlook or permit any high-flown impertinence that affronts me in the presence of guests of my choosing. What do you suppose Mr. Mackenzie thinks of your high-and-mighty rebuke to him for sitting at my table in that company? He must feel very properly subdued, I suppose you think. And the bishop and Doctor Woods—they are doubtless overcome

with humiliation because of your refusal to meet them.”

He dropped his overbearing manner as Elise’s face turned from crimson to white and her lips began to tremble—for he was a tender-hearted and gallant gentleman.

”Now let me say once for all, my daughter, that I must be the judge of who is a proper person to be entertained in this household, and I want no more such exhibitions of filial disrespect as you made to-day. I think no explanation is due: but I will tell you that one of the gentlemen who lunched with us to-day is a bishop in his church and a leader of ten million citizens of this country, while Doctor Woods is a graduate of Harvard and Heidelberg, a man whose learning is surpassed by that of very few men in America, and is the very best type of his own race and a creditable product of any race. Both these gentlemen are entirely worthy of your highest respect.”

”But, papa, they are negroes!” said Elise, emboldened to attempt a defence when her father dropped his browbeating tone and assumed to address her reason.

”Negroes?—and what of that? It is not the first time a negro has lunched with a President of the United States. Calm your misgivings by remembering that it is assuredly safe, either socially or politically, to follow any precedent set by Mr. Roosevelt. But further, my daughter, what does the term ’negro’ impute to these men more than a colour of skin? Nothing. My child, ’the man’s the thing,’—his colour is absolutely nothing. A negro must be judged individually, by his own character and ability—you judge white men so. He is not responsible for the whole race, but for himself, and must stand or fall upon his individual merit and not upon his colour or caste. It is the glory of our America that it has but one order of nobility—a man; and when that order is abolished or others established our democratic institutions will be a hollow pretence and our decadence have set in. Heaven defend a daughter of mine should be either dazzled by a tinselled rank or class pretension, or fail to appreciate simple, genuine, personal excellence.”

Elise was glad enough her father had calmed down and branched off into generalities. She was discreetly, not impudently, silent, and took the first opportunity to retire.

* * * * *

On that afternoon Elise had met Evans Rutledge and had really found pleasure in his friendliness. She speculated whether his manner would have been quite so cordial if he had known of the luncheon then but two hours past. She had seen no little of him in a casual way since living in Washington, for he was an acceptable visitor at most of the desirable places. With repeated meetings they

had come to an unspoken truce, Elise being impelled to friendly simplicity by her very nature, and Rutledge by the love which would not permit him to deny himself any opportunity to be near her despite some rebellious notions of self-respect.

Rutledge's vacillation of mind concerning Elise was evidenced by his presence in Cleveland. It comported very well with his former status as a freelance correspondent that in search of "copy" he should have followed the President out to Ohio, but he confessed to himself that it was somewhat below the dignity of his present position and standing as an editorial writer that he should have asked for the assignment as news representative allotted to his paper on the Presidential special. He called himself a fool, and—thought of many situations that might happen to evolve themselves on the train.... They didn't evolve.

Only one paltry three minutes' talk with Elise did he win for all his journeying. He had stood by her carriage that afternoon as she waited for Lola DeVale in front of Vantine's, and they had talked in the unaffected manner of the first days of their acquaintance until Lola came out and invited him to join them on an evening at the end of the week at an informal gathering of young people at her home in Washington. He had accepted with what he afterward thought was childish and compromising eagerness.

"I like that Mr. Rutledge so much. I invited him for you, Elise," Lola said as they drove homeward.

"Why for me?" asked Elise.

"Perhaps I should say because of you. Can't you see the reason in his eyes every time he looks at you? I can."

"You are mistaken there, my dear. I happen to know that Mr. Rutledge loves, or once loved, a young woman who has greatly disappointed him."

"How?"

"He has learned that her family—and perhaps she—is impossible."

"How did you know of his love for the girl?"

"He told me himself," Elise answered with a nonchalant air that proved her an actress of the finest art.

"He did! You were playing with fire, Elise. The sympathetic 'other girl' is always in a dangerous role. Did he tell you of his disappointment also?"

"Oh, no. But that was—and is—evident."

"But the girl? Was she really—nice—better than her people?"

"Yes. No—yes—that is, nice. Of course you know Mr. Rutledge would not love a woman who was not—nice."

"Oh, certainly; but if he was really disappointed in her, all the more reason he might find a solace in your smiles."

"It was her family rather than herself, I think. He is uncertain about her—is

afraid to love her.”

”He does seem to have an uncertain look at times that has puzzled me. I think you are responsible for some of his uncertainty, however; or perhaps the other girl makes him uncertain about you. If it were not for her you would have to look to your defences.... He must have loved her very much or he could not stand the temptation you are to him.... I’m glad you’ve solved the riddle, but very sorry you told me. I have liked Mr. Rutledge; but I despise any man who would not brush aside all obstacles to marry the woman he loves and who loves him. Don’t you?”

”Oh,” said Elise uncertainly, ”but, really, it was—it may have been—because she did not love him. I do not think he lacks courage—exactly. He simply would not—pursue—the young woman because her father’s—because the—the obstacle was—seemed—insurmountable,—but really I must not be violating confidences. There is no reason why you should not at least respect him, Lola. His course is not without some justification, for the objection, from his point of view, is—vital.”

”But what if the girl loves him? Does she love him?”

”Really, Lola, he—he did not inform me—whether she does or not. He has not made the slightest reference to the subject, nor spoken the smallest of confidences to me since that summer on the St. Lawrence.... I think he regrets ever having told me anything about his—heart’s affairs. I suppose I should not repeat them—they were spoken under peculiar circumstances.”

”There is nothing peculiar, my dear. It is easy to see why a man who is not free to make love to you will choose the next best thing and talk of love with you.... You would better be careful of Mr. Rutledge, however, for I fear his loyalty to that first love totters on its throne every time he looks into your gray eyes. You must not shatter his faith in his own faithfulness.”

CHAPTER XV

The second morning’s papers were aflame with the news of it! President Phillips, true to his outspoken character, himself had called in the Associated Press representative immediately on his return to Washington and dictated a concise statement of all the circumstances leading to Mr. Baxter’s resignation. The Secretary’s house was besieged by reporters, but all were referred to the White House for information. The daily newspapers featured the item in every conceivable style of

display head-lines, and the affair was a nine-day sensation in Washington and a reverberating tempest throughout the South.

Evans Rutledge by the force of his genius, his wide knowledge of men and affairs and the accuracy of his political information had gone rapidly toward the front rank in his profession. He was now the leading editorial writer on the *Washington Mail*, an anti-administration organ.

Of that paper Elise sought the first issue with surreptitious eagerness. She picked it up fully expecting to read quite the most scathing philippic she had ever seen in print. She was surprised to find that the former correspondent had put off his extravagances for a more judicial editorial manner. She recognized his work by several phrases that had been in the *Chicago American* article.

The editorial was severe, but dignified and fairly respectful. Rutledge commended Secretary Baxter for his prompt and emphatic refusal to lunch with a negro even though at the table of a President of the United States and at the President's personal invitation or "command." He said the fact that Mr. Phillips had intended no insult made the insult no less real; and that Baxter had done the only possible thing—the duel being no longer in vogue—declined and resigned.

He went on to say that there was an irreconcilable difference between the Northern and the Southern ideas of the social equality of the races; that the Southern man's idea was bred in the bone, and no amount of argument or abuse or lofty advice from the Northern press, or boyish impulsiveness in the President's chair, could change that idea one iota; that while their fears sometimes might be lulled to sleep, might be forgotten like other ills in the interest or excitement of other concerns, the black peril was their great Terror in both their waking and sleeping hours, and even when asleep they slept upon their arms.

Elise read that in face of this Terror all other questions were insignificant, and all arguments, prejudices, passions, *loves and hates* (she put her fingertip on the words) among Southern gentlemen melted away or were fused into a mighty and unalterable sentiment to go down to death rather than to permit social intermingling with the negro race.

The editorial concluded that the Southern feeling on this subject was ineradicable, and was so deep-seated and universal that it became a great Fact which any man of fair discretion and sensible purpose would have recognized and reckoned with; that no President with an abiding sense of the proprieties would have proposed the luncheon to Baxter, and no gentleman of the South would have hesitated for a moment in declining the insulting invitation. The subject was dismissed with the prediction that the cause of the negro immediate and remote would be damaged immeasurably by this act of the impulsive gentleman in the White House who would take the Southern situation by the seat of the trousers as though it were a self-willed small boy pouting in a cellar and

yank it incontinently up the Phillips stairs of progress.

There was no other subject discussed in hotel lobbies, committee-rooms or wherever else two or more men were gathered together on the day after the facts were known. In the afternoon in one of the committee-rooms of the Senate, Senators Ruffin and Killam, Representatives Smith and Calhoun of Killam's State, and Representative Hazard of a New York City district, were ventilating their views on the matter when Rutledge joined them, on the hunt for Calhoun.

The comments on the President's negro luncheon were all adverse, though expressed in terms of varying elegance and force from the keen and polished irony of Mr. Ruffin to Mr. Killam's brutal outbursts and picturesque profanity. Mr. Hazard, not having the same sectional view-point as the others, though of the same political creed, was an interested listener. Senator Ruffin referred to the editorial in *The Mail* and drew Evans into the discussion.

The young man, glad to be untrammelled by editorial discretion, gave free rein to his indignation, but in deference to Mr. Hazard's presence was careful to make some allowance and excuses for the opinion of Northern people on the matter of social amenities to negroes. However, to compensate for this concession and leave no doubt of his opinion, he was even more picturesque than Mr. Killam, if not so profane—and consequently more forcible, Hazard thought—in paying his respects to Mr. Phillips' negro policy.

But Senator Killam resented even the suggestion of excuse for Northern opinion, and opened up an even more choice and outrageous assortment of profanity and invective. Rutledge, Calhoun and Senator Ruffin were ashamed at his disregard of ordinary decencies, while Hazard assumed a look of polite amusement. Mr. Killam's satellite, Smith, however, was vastly tickled at his master's performance, and took pains to show his surpassing admiration. Smith was a raw-boned, half-washed giant with long hair that never knew a shampoo, who owed his election to Congress to a gift of stump-speaking and a consistent devotion to Senator Killam's political fortunes. He usually kept quiet when his chief was there to speak. He did so on that afternoon till, carried away by Mr. Killam's extravagances about niggers in white dining-rooms, he blurted out:

"Yes; I suppose now Miss Elise Phillips will be getting sweet on Doctor Woods. The nig—"

Smash!

Rutledge struck him on the point of the jaw and he fell in an awkward heap between a chair and the wall. He was up in a moment growling like a mastiff, but was restrained by Calhoun and Hazard. Rutledge was standing perfectly still, his thumbs in his trousers pockets, showing no excitement save in the glint of his eye. Smith was muttering his desire to fight it out. He could not talk plainly, for the blow had unhinged his loosely clacking jaw. Hazard, Killam and Calhoun

held him by force till he was quiet. It would have been impossible to prevent his forcing a further clash perhaps if Senator Ruffin had not insisted on ending the matter just there.

"Gentlemen!" he said, "this must stop right here. None of us can afford to pursue the miserable affair further. We should all be ashamed that a young lady's name has been used in this discussion at all, and especially in such a manner was it unpardonable! Mr. Smith certainly forgot himself; and while Mr. Rutledge acted from a chivalrous impulse he will learn when he is older that a blow usually advertises rather than suppresses an insult to a woman."

It began to dawn upon Mr. Smith by this time that he had committed a woeful breach of good manners, and with a parvenu's awe of "propriety" he was more than anxious to have the affair hushed up. None the less did he wish to keep secret his knockdown. He got out as quietly as possible in search of a surgeon. Rutledge retired with Calhoun, who slapped him on the back as they went down the corridor and whispered, "Good old boy! Served him right, the damn dog."

Senator Ruffin sent for the attendant who had left the committee-room as soon as quiet was restored, and bought his silence with a five-dollar bill. This honest man was true to his promise to keep his mouth shut, but he overlooked informing the Senator that he had already given the first of his co-labourers he met in the hall a fragmentary account of the mix-up. He had given the names only of Senators Ruffin and Killam, as he did not know the others, all of whom he thought were members of the Lower House.

The reporters were on the trail in an hour. They interviewed the Senators, but these were dumb. They found that the Senate attendant who had his information second-hand was the only source of news supply. What this fellow lacked in knowledge, however, he supplied out of his imagination; and the details grew and multiplied as different reporters interviewed him. At best there was much to be supplied by the young gentlemen of the press, and the result was as many different stories as there were men on the job. The nearest any of them got to the truth was to say that two Congressmen had been discussing the negro question and had come to blows because some woman's name had been dragged in, and that one had broken the other's jaw. This much in the evening papers.

By the next morning the newspaper ferrets had located all the actors and eye-witnesses and gave their names to the public. Fortunately the attendant had not caught Smith's remark but only his rebuke by Senator Ruffin. So that the public knew only that Evans Rutledge had unset or broken the jaw of Congressman Smith because of some improper use of a young lady's name. Whose, none of the gentlemen would say.

Evans Rutledge was in a fever of anxiety lest that name should get to the public. He was sure that he could not face Elise again if it did. Senator Ruffin's rebuke had sunk deep into his heart and he felt more guilty than Smith. He looked over the morning and evening papers very carefully to see whether they had discovered the young woman, before he finally decided to go to Senator DeVale's as he had promised Lola. When he arrived he found, beside Elise, only Alice Mackenzie, Hazard and young MacLane, an under-secretary of the British embassy. Others who were to come failed to appear.

Elise was not pleased with the situation. She was quite willing to be ordinarily civil to Mr. Rutledge, but she knew that nothing could separate MacLane and Alice Mackenzie, and that Hazard had known Lola so long and had proposed to her so regularly and insistently that he was for her or for nobody. It looked a little too much, therefore, as if she had chosen Evans for her very own for the evening. She did not want him to think such a thing possible. She remembered his point-blank editorial utterance that those small sentiments—loves and hates—melted away before exhibitions of social equality with negroes—so at least she construed it—and she could not but resent it, though she would not admit she troubled herself to do that.

"Now, young people," said Lola, "as the programme has been spoiled we will make this an evening of do-as-you-please."

"Good, very good," commented Hazard. "In that case you will please to come over here and take this chair and let's finish that conversation we were having last night when the unpronounceable Russian took you away from me."

"I am afraid that conversation is a serial story," she laughed, taking the chair he placed for her.

MacLane asked Alice Mackenzie some vague question about a song, which only she could interpret, and they by common impulse went through the wide door to the piano in the back parlour, where after she had hummed a short love ballad for him to piano accompaniment they dropped into a pianissimo duet of love without accompaniment.

Elise, feeling that she was being thus thrown at Mr. Rutledge's head, came to the mark with spirit and kept him guessing for an hour. She resented his possible inference that she had chosen him for an evening's *tête-à-tête*, and set about to show him that such was not the fact by a display of perversity and brilliance which dazzled while it irritated him. She would assume for a moment an intimately friendly, even confiding, manner that like the breath of the honeysuckle at his Pacolet plantation home would set his senses a-swim,—and in the next moment chill his glowing heart with the iciest of conventional reserve or answer his sincerest speeches with the light disdain and indifference of a mocking spirit. At one time she would kindle his admiration for her quickness of thought and

keenness of repartee; and again appear so dull and careless that he must needs explain his own essays at wit.

Her caprices, so plainly intentional yet inexplicable, exasperated him almost to the point of open rebellion, and the more evident his perturbation became, the more spirit she put into the game. She won him back from a half-dozen fits of resentful impatience to the very edge of intoxication,—only to bait him again more outrageously.

Lola DeVale, perfectly familiar with the theme of Oliver Hazard's serial, found time even while admiring Hazard's ability to decorate his story in ever-changing and ever pleasing colours, to note that Elise was giving Rutledge a tempestuous hour.

"It's a shame for her to treat him so," she said to Hazard, interpreting her meaning by a nod toward Elise and Evans.

"I hadn't noticed. What's she doing to him?"

"I believe he loves her, and she has been treating him shamefully all evening."

"So that was it," murmured Hazard. "She certainly ought to be good to him."

"Beg pardon, I didn't understand you," said Lola.

"I said she ought to be good to him."

"I heard that. But the other remark you made?"

Hazard caught himself, and looked at Lola steadily. "I was so bold as to express an opinion—which had not been requested—and to aver that—she—er—ought to be good to him," he repeated with an over-done blankness of countenance.

"You come on," said Lola as she rose. "We are going to scare up something for you people to eat," she remarked to the others.

"Now, sir," she said when she had gotten him into the dining-room, "I'll see what sort of a reporter I could be. Stand right there, and look at me. Now.—why did Mr. Rutledge knock Congressman Smith down? No, no, stand perfectly still—and no evasion."

"What are you talking about?" asked Hazard.

"Don't be silly," the girl said impatiently. "I read something more than the society and fashion columns in the newspapers. Tell me. Why did he break Mr. Smith's jaw?—who was the young lady?—and what did Mr. Smith say of her? I know it was Elise; but tell me about it—and hurry, for those people are getting hungry."

"I must not tell that, Lola," Hazard answered her seriously.

"A man should have no secrets from his—proposed—wife."

"Make it *promised* wife and I'll agree," Hazard replied eagerly, taking her hand.

"No; we'll leave it *proposed* awhile longer," she answered him archly. "I've become so accustomed to it that way that I'd hate to change it." The smile she gave him as she slowly drew away her hand would have bribed any man to treason.

"But we will compromise it," Lola continued. "I will be real careful of your honour. I'll ask you a question, and if the answer is *yes* you needn't answer it. Now—was it not an insult to Elise that Mr. Rutledge resented?"

"Lola, when you said that word *wife* a moment since you were—heavenly."

"Hush your nonsense, Ollie.... I knew it was Elise when you said that thing in the parlour.... Did Mr. Rutledge really break his jaw?"

"Oh, it was beautiful, beautiful," said Hazard with enthusiasm. "Such a clean left-hander! Dropped him like a beef—he's big as two of Rutledge—in a wink—before he could finish his sentence,—the low-bred dog! Yes, beautifully done, beaut—"

"Here they come," said Lola. She was busily breaking out the stores from the sideboard when Elise and Rutledge appeared.

"Here, Mr. Hazard, take this dish in to that mooning young couple in the back parlour. And you, Mr. Rutledge, just force them to eat enough of these pickles to keep their tempers in equilibrium."

* * * * *

"Oh, my dear," she exclaimed when the two men were gone, "I've discovered the name of the young woman Mr. Rutledge fought for. Ollie let it get away from him—not the name, but I figured it out. And for whom do you suppose it was?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," answered Elise in all truthfulness.

"Of all women you should. I told you I could see it in his eyes," laughed Lola.

"Not for me?" Elise cried in genuine surprise.

"For you."

"What did the man say?" she asked quickly.

"Some caddish thing, of course. Men are so nasty. I didn't have time to get the particulars before you and Mr. Rutledge followed us in here. But Ollie says it was just b-e-a-u-t-i-f-u-l the way Mr. Rutledge dropped him—and he's three times as big as Mr. Rutledge, too—"

"We've tried moral suasion, strategy, force, every expedient," interrupted Hazard as he and Rutledge came back into the dining-room, "but the Scotch lass and her laddie positively decline to be fed by us. They are fully supplied by their own ravings—ho! don't throw that salad at me!"

"Here, take a dose of celery quick—a biblical pun like that is a too serious tax upon the simple Congressional brain," said Lola.

Hazard looked foolish, and he felt like a fool; but what real manly lover outside the story-books was ever else than foolish when love's fit was upon him?

None of the quartette in the dining-room was the least bit hungry, and it was but a very few moments till the young hostess led the way back to the parlour, Elise and Rutledge following slowly. When they reached the stairway Elise seated herself on the third step and by the gesture with which she arranged her skirts invited Evans to a seat below her.

"Look at that," said Lola to Hazard, glancing over her shoulder as they passed into the parlour. "Now she's going to be good to him."

"In the name of heavens, woman, you didn't tell her!"

"Why not? She's the very one that ought to know. She will not inform the reporters."

"But what will she think of me?" asked Hazard in some concern.

"You? Why, you don't count! You are only a pawn in their game." As his eyes flashed she added, with a bewildering tilt of her chin: "I promise to make good all your losses."

"May my losses prosper!" prayed Hazard audibly.

* * * * *

Elise used a makeshift conversation with Rutledge till she heard the humming accents of the others well going, and then—

"Mr. Rutledge," she said. "I wish to speak to you of your defence of my name when that Mr. Smith—"

The suddenness of it routed all Rutledge's cool senses.

"Oh, Miss Phillips," he broke in, "I am so sorry that I should have done anything to accentuate that abominable fellow's remark. I am so heartily ashamed of my unpardonable boyish thoughtlessness and lack of consideration that I cannot find words to express my contempt for myself," etc., to the same effect, without giving Elise a chance to speak, till she was surprised in turn, then amused, then annoyed. Finally, in order to bring him to a reasonable coherency, she interrupted his self-denunciations.

"What did Mr. Smith say of me, Mr. Rutledge?"

"I can't repeat that to you, Miss Phillips."

"You must if the words are decent. Tell me at once. I must know."

"He simply coupled your name with that of—Doctor Woods—the negro who—lunched at your home in Cleveland."

Evans forced out the last half-dozen words with a visible effort—which the girl may have misinterpreted.

"Oh!" She dropped her face in her hands. She had not dreamed of that

explanation. But she gathered herself in a moment. Every pennyweight of her admirable pride came to her support. At the mention of "negro luncheon" she was on guard against Rutledge, her kindly purpose forgotten. She sat straight up and with a perfect dignity said:

"I thank you, Mr. Rutledge, for your well-meant efforts in my behalf, but my father is abundantly able both to choose the guests who shall dine at his table, and to protect my name, whenever indeed it shall need a champion." She closed the discussion by rising.

Evans did not tarry long. He was too badly scattered. The other guests soon followed, except Elise, who remained overnight at Lola's insistence.

"Come right up to my room and tell me all about it.... What *did* you do to that miserable man? You ought to be spanked, Elise."

"I did nothing to him."

"And why didn't you? I said to Ollie when you sat down on the stairs, 'Now she's going to be good to him.' Did you tell him you knew?"

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"He—apologized," said Elise with a nervous laugh.

"*Apologized!* For mercy's sake!—and what else?"

"I accepted his apology—on condition he would not do it again;" and she broke out into real mirth at sight of Lola's scandalized face.

CHAPTER XVI

If *The Mail's* editorial was conservative, other papers were not so respectful. It was worse even than Mrs. Phillips had predicted. All over the South the papers ran the whole gamut of indignation and abuse from lofty scorn all the way down to plain editorial fits. The entire Southern press, Democratic, Republican, and Independent, except a few sheets edited by negroes, were of one mind on the subject of negroes dining with white men. Papers that had supported Mr. Phillips heartily were all severe, some of them bitter, in their denunciations.

The Wordyfellow element in the school-fund fight welcomed the President's act as a boon from heaven. They raised a howl that was heard in every nook and corner of the Southland, and that by the very thundering shock of its roar broke through and drove back the forces of the negro's friends. The weak-

willed were borne down and the timid and the doubting were carried away by the purely physical force of noise or by having lashed to fury their sometimes latent but ever-present terror of the Black Peril. And not only the weak, indeed, and the timid and the doubting went in crowds to the Wordyfellow camp, but strong men, fearless men, men of the most philanthropic impulses toward the negro race, men who had fought openly and ably the Wordyfellow propaganda, became silent and began to waver, or deserted the negro's cause and unhesitatingly espoused the other side.

In vain did the negro's staunchest friends proclaim their indignation at the President's lurching with Bishop Martin and Doctor Woods, and try to convince their people that the South should be true to its own interests and do simple justice to the negro despite any act of his fool friends. It was useless. The Southern people—the floating vote, the balance of power—were in no mood to draw fine distinctions, nor to listen to theories in face of facts. A careless hand had struck the wavering balance, and the beam went steadily down.

Reports of defections began to come rapidly to Mr. Phillips. Those from the negroes in the South told of the losses faithfully, but gave any other than the true reason for the change of sentiment; while letters from his white advisers told him more or less plainly that his negro luncheon had done the damage and that the cause was as good as lost.

These reports roused the President's fighting blood. He sent for Mackenzie.

"Read that stack of letters, Mac, and you will see that the negroes in the South are in a fair way to be trampled to death. Now I must head this thing off, and I want your help. I am determined to defeat that Wordyfellow movement if there is power in the Federal government. I'll not be content to have the laws annulled by the Federal Supreme Court after they are passed, even if that can be done. We must find some way to win this fight *in the elections* and thus give the lie to these prophecies that that luncheon has lost the battle."

So he and the astute Mackenzie rubbed their heads together for a week: and finally came to a remedy so simple that they were ashamed not to have thought of it at once. Simple indeed—if they could apply it. In less than another week, Mr. Hare, the recognized administration mouthpiece in the House, introduced a bill appropriating moneys from the national treasury to the States in proportion to population for purposes of public education. The milk in this legislative cocoanut was a provision that the money apportioned to each State should be so distributed among the individual public schools of the State that, when taken together with the State's own appropriation, all the schools in the State should be open for terms of equal length.

From statistics carefully compiled in the office of the Commissioner of Education Mr. Phillips and Mr. Mackenzie had calculated the amount of the appro-

priation so that if the Southern States adopted the Wordyfellow plan the negro race would get virtually the whole of the appropriation from the national government.

Elise Phillips, persuading herself that she was on the lookout for reasons to despise Mr. Rutledge, regularly read the editorial column of *The Mail*.

There one morning she learned that "the immediate effect of the introduction of the Hare Bill in the House has been to transfer the fight from the South to Washington. True, the Wordyfellow speakers and press have raised a more ear-splitting howl, and opened up with every gun of argument, appeal, abuse, expletive and rant; but they see clearly that this bill if passed will bring all their schemes to naught, and that the issue has been taken out of their hands. It is tantalizingly uncertain to them whether the bill will become a law; for there are many incidental questions and considerations which complicate the issue here at Washington. But all men know that when Mr. Phillips sets his head for anything he will move heaven and earth to attain it. Few doubt his power to whip many Representatives and Senators into line or his readiness to wield the whip if the fate of any pet measure demands it. There is much of the Jesuit in Mr. Phillips' philosophy of life and action. When he believes a thing is right he believes that no squeamish notion should prevent his bringing it to pass. Keep your eyes on him! It is always interesting to see how he does it."

"Pity he is not a Senator!" Elise commented with scornful impatience as she threw the paper down, "that papa might whip him into becoming modesty!"

* * * * *

At the moment Elise was so delivering her mind, a telegraph boy was handing Rutledge a message. He tore it open and read:

"COLUMBIA, S.C, Jan. 9th, 191-.

"EVANS RUTLEDGE, "Washington, D.C.

"Exactly how old are you and where do you vote?

"W. D. ROBERTSON."

Evans looked around behind the telegraph-sheet as if seeking an explanation. He gazed quizzically at the messenger-boy, but that young gentleman only grinned and then looked solemn.

"Well," Evans muttered, "what the devil's up Robbie's back now?"

He sat down and thought the thing over awhile. Then he constructed a reply.

"WASHINGTON, Jan. 9th, 191-.

"W. D. ROBERTSON, Atty.-General, "Columbia, S.C.

"Your telegram received. If it is official I decline to answer. *Entre nous* I will be thirty-one on the 29th of February at something like twenty minutes past three in the morning—they didn't have a stopwatch in the house. I vote in Cherokee County, Pacolet precinct, generally of late in a cigar-box in the shed-room of Jake Sims's store where Gus Herndon used to run a barber-shop when you and I were young, Maggie. Why? EVANS RUTLEDGE."

"Send that *collect*, youngster. We'll make old Robbie pay for his impertinence."

"Look here, sonny," he called to the boy who had gotten out the door, "bring any answer to that down to the Capitol. I am going to have a look at the Senate."

He was sitting beside Lola DeVale in the members' gallery when the answer came.

"COLUMBIA, S.C, Jan. 9th, 191-.

HON. EVANS RUTLEDGE, "Washington, D.C.

"Nothing much. The governor of South Carolina simply did not feel like giving a United States Senatorship either to a boy or to a man from another State. He is just mailing your commission as Jones's successor. Don't decline it before you hear the whole story. Congratulations to you.

"W. D. ROBERTSON."

"This has 'an ancient and fish-like smell.' Read it," Rutledge said to Lola when he had recovered from his astonishment sufficiently to speak.

She took the telegram and while she was trying to interpret its import Senator Killam came hurriedly into the gallery and seized upon Rutledge.

"I got a telegram from the governor half an hour ago and have been trying to find you ever since," he exclaimed. "He has appointed you—oh, you have heard, I see. Well, come right down with me. I want to present you to your colleagues."

Evans could doubt no longer, and Lola DeVale had grasped the meaning of it.

"I am so glad to be the first to congratulate you," she said, and he felt the sincerity of her good wishes in her warm hand-grasp. Then Senator Killam carried him off.

* * * * *

"I know it came 'like a bolt from the blue' to you," Robertson wrote to him; "but the whys and wherefores need not mystify you. There cannot be the slightest doubt of your ability to fill the office—full to the brim; and the rest is easy. You know the old man fully intended all along to contest for the place with Jones, whose term would have expired with the old man's term as governor. Jones's demise, however, presented a problem to him that has driven him to the verge of lunacy for a week. He couldn't give himself the commission, of course. He couldn't resign and get it, for the lieutenant-governor has been the avowed supporter of LaRoque for the Senatorship. He couldn't give it to LaRoque or Pressley, for the three of them are too evenly matched.... When he finally came to the idea of appointing some one to fill the vacancy who was clearly not in the running so that the primaries might settle it among the three of them, I suggested you. He jumped at the idea.... The old man has every reason to feel kindly toward you both for your father's sake and for your own excellent work's sake, and he does not doubt your friendliness to himself.... You will have less than six months in which to make a name for yourself, but—perhaps—who can tell? ... I wish I had such an opportunity. I am heartily glad you have it."

* * * * *

Senator Rutledge was pitched right into the middle of the fight on the Hare Bill—and fight it was for him. Senator Killam essayed to take the young man under his wing and chaperone his conduct according to his ideas of the political proprieties, but he found that the junior Senator had a mind of his own, and could not be managed, overawed or bullied. This roused Mr. Killam's ire at once. He wasn't accustomed to it. The dead Senator Jones had never had the effrontery to think for himself; and for this youngster to presume to walk alone was more than Mr. Killam could forgive.

Solely because of Mr. Killam's personal attitude and treatment of him, Rut-

ledge wished it were over and done with long before the finish; but he never lost his nerve.

* * * * *

It seemed that the suspense would be ended quickly when the House under pressure of the rules passed the Hare Bill almost without debate: but when it came before the Senate it was evident at once that those dignitaries would take abundance of time to consider it,—if for no other reason than to prove to themselves they were the greatest deliberative body on earth.

However, with all the Senate's deliberation the very frenzy of the Wordyfellow crowd's screams evidenced their realization that their game was balked—and that, too, in a manner that was maddening: for it left them not the frenzied pleasure of fighting their precious battle against the negro out to the end and going down to harmless defeat in pyrotechnic glory. No; it placed them in a dilemma where they must humiliate themselves by a surrender before the battle, or fight it to a barren victory at the polls, which would not only bring actual benefit to the negro in the South but also give to the Northern States the lion's share of a large appropriation.

Facing this dilemma, they lost heart if they lost nothing of noise. In all of the interested States except Mississippi serious discussion of the question grew less and less rapidly, and was postponed until after the Senate should vote. In Mississippi, however, the tension was increased by the Senate's deliberation because the date set for the election on the proposed Wordyfellow amendment to the State constitution was some time before the Senate would be forced to vote. The Mississippians could not decide for their lives whether they preferred to vote on their amendment first or have the Senate vote first on the bill. With a faint hope that the bill might not pass, they were in obvious difficulties in either case.

Southern Senators were overwhelmed with all manner of conflicting and confusing petitions, and as a result about one half of them favoured the bill for one reason or another, while the other half more or less bitterly opposed it. The discussion, when the bill finally came out of committee, took the widest range,—from the constitutional objections raised by the Texas Senator (whose State, having a large school-fund income, did not need the appropriation) and the savage attacks upon the negro race generally by Senator Killam, to the purely pro-educational reasoning of most of the supporting Senators from the South—among whom was Senator Ruffin—and the pro-negro speech of the young Senator Rutledge.

The adjective *pro-negro* may give an erroneous impression of Senator Rutledge's ideas. The term is the Senator's own. From his speech in full in the

Congressional Record the reader may determine for himself whether the term is apt.

CHAPTER XVII

Senator Rutledge gave notice that on February 23d he would address the Senate on the Hare Bill. On that day the galleries were crowded to hear him, his State's delegation in the House was present in a body, accompanied by many other representatives from North and South. No one knew how he would vote, for he had listened much and talked little. He said:

"Mr. President: There have been many terms used on this floor and in the public prints since this bill was introduced, by which to distinguish and define and lay open to public view the motives which are supposed to lie behind the votes that will be cast for and against it.

"We have heard 'unconstitutional,' 'anti-negro,' 'pro-educational,' 'watch-dog of the treasury,' and others equally descriptive if less parliamentary. I have not heard 'pro-negro.'

"So, to save my friends—and enemies, if I have any—the trouble of search and imaginings, I adopt that term, '*pro-negro*,' as descriptive of my attitude toward the matters affected by this bill.

"It is an open secret, Mr. President, that this measure, which bears the non-committal title of 'an act to promote education' is a White House production designed and introduced for the single purpose of defeating what is known as the Wordyfellow school-fund movement in the South generally, more specifically now in the State of Mississippi. Because I think it will accomplish that purpose, both general and special,—because I am 'for the negro,'—for him on his own account,—for his elevation as a race to the highest level which his essential nature in the purposes of God will permit him to attain,—because I believe the success of the Wordyfellow movement would mean his degradation, his hopeless continuance in his present low estate,—because, in a word, I am *pro-negro*; I shall vote for this bill.

"I should despise myself, sir, if I had within me other sentiments toward any man or race of men, and I feel, therefore, that it is not unbecoming in me to arrogate to myself the pure unselfishness of this motive. And yet, sir, if the love of one's race may be called a selfish passion, I must confess that right alongside of

this unselfish desire for the negro's welfare, there lies in my heart a selfish passion for the progress, the multiplying prosperity and more abounding happiness of my own people, the white men and women of the South, which desire also with no less power but indeed with compelling forcefulness bids me to oppose the Wordyfellow idea with every faculty and expedient, and therefore to vote for this measure.

"I wish to make it clear at the outset that, while I shall heartily support this White House bill, I give not the slightest credit to the President for having prepared it and sent it here. He deserves none. The bill is a necessity, and as such I vote for it: but the President is the one man who has made it a necessity.

"If he had not injected into the situation his negro luncheon (and to that I will pay my respects before I have finished), my people would have defeated the Wordyfellow movement; for the battle was going our way. It is as little as President Phillips can do now to suggest this method, expensive though it is, to repair the damage he has done the negro's cause in the South. He comes praying us to pay the negro out of the difficulty in which he has involved him, and *as friends of the negro* there is nothing for us to do but furnish the money, however much we may deplore the Executive folly that makes the outlay imperative.

"Now, Mr. President, let us inquire directly into the merits of the Wordyfellow plan. The proposed amendment to the constitution of Mississippi provides that the school fund shall be divided between the white and negro schools in proportion to the taxes paid to the State by each of the two races for school purposes. As there are six negroes to four whites in the State, and as the negroes pay less than ten per cent of the school taxes, such a division of the school fund will give the white children thirteen days' schooling to the negro's one.

"Such a proposition is illogical, pernicious, insane.

"Look at the logic of it. Governor Wordyfellow defends the general proposition by some scattering statistics which prove to his mind that education generally is not good for the negro; but he justifies the division of the school fund on the basis of contribution upon the supposed principle that the negro will get back all that he pays in and therefore cannot rightly demand more.

"That so-called principle will not hold water a moment. I would say to the gentlemen from the South, Mr. President,—to those who are supporting the Wordyfellow propaganda—that if they proceed on that theory they must give to *every* man what he pays into the treasury: which means that the State must expend more for the tuition of the sons of the rich than the sons of the poor. If every man has a right to demand for his own children the taxes he pays for school purposes, then the State has no right to tax one man to educate another's child—and the promoters of this idea have pulled down the whole public school system about their ears.

"If such a division is proposed on the ground that no sort of education is good for the negro, and we believe that, then let us take away from the negro by constitutional amendment *all* the money collected from him by the State for school purposes and give it to the white children. That would be logical, that would be sensible, that would be Scriptural. Let us be logical and sensible and fearless about this matter.

"But I cannot think these leaders of the Wordyfellow forces believe that, Mr. President, though I fear that they have persuaded thousands of their less intelligent following to believe it thoroughly. No, you do not believe it; but you do believe that some particular kinds of education—literary education, for example—is positively harmful to the negro, while some other particular sort—industrial education, perhaps—is beneficial and would uplift the negro race.

"If you admit that,—and it has been conceded on this floor by some of the leaders of the Wordyfellow movement that industrial education is good for the negro and will make a better man and a better citizen of him; then in face of the appalling menace of his ignorance and depravity which have been painted in such lurid colours here, *let us by constitutional amendment give him more than his per capita share of the school tax.* Yes, let us give to him proportionately in keeping with our keenest fears, our wildest terror, of the Black Peril—all if need be—to educate him *in that particular line that will uplift him* and make a safe citizen of him, in order that we may save ourselves alive and escape the woes of that peril. All education administered by the State is given in the exercise of a sort of quasi police power—to protect itself from the violence of ignorance: and we would be well within an ancient principle if we should lay out extraordinary funds to police the black cesspools that threaten our civic life.

"It is clearly demonstrable, therefore, that upon any theory of the negro's inability or limited ability to be benefited by education, or upon the assumption of its positive hurtfulness to him, the Wordyfellow amendment is absolutely illogical. The whole Wordyfellow proposition is based upon a false assumption in the first place, and the Wordyfellow remedy does not have the merit of being true even to the fictitious Wordyfellow premises. For all this agitation against the education of the negro race proceeds upon the theory that the negro is not altogether a man, that he is without the one aptitude common to all other peoples, white, yellow or red—the disposition to be uplifted in civilization by the spread of a higher intelligence among his race.

"That theory, Mr. President, is false! And while I believe the great majority of my people reject it despite the insistence with which it has been in small measure openly, in large measure indirectly, presented to them for acceptance, I have thought it worth while to inquire closely and specifically into the effect of the *higher literary* education upon the black men and women who have been

so fortunate as to acquire it. I give to the Senators not only as the result of my investigation but as the result of my personal observation as a man brought up in the South, my sincere opinion that education of the negro in the usual literary studies from the kindergarten to the college, as well as along industrial lines, is as a rule beneficial and uplifting to him.

"It is true that a smattering of education in some instances gives a negro the idea that he is to get a living without work, and that such notions would not be wholesome if prevailing among a population which must do manual labour. This need not alarm us, however; for it is not an unusual thing for a college education to give a white boy the same notion. We do not limit his education on that account. In the post-graduate school of Hard Knocks he always finds out—and no less surely will the negro boy of similar delusion learn—especially as education becomes more and more a possession of the masses and not a privilege of the few—that the great majority of men, whether black or white, lettered or unlettered, must work, and work with their hands.

"Let me add, lest I be misunderstood, that while I believe the negro race as a race will be hewers of wood and drawers of water for generations to come, and that education will be beneficial to them as a toiling class, I am not of those who believe that when by education you spoil a negro field-hand you have committed a crime. I have no sympathy with a sentiment that would confine any man to a limited though respectable and honourable work when he has within him the aspiration and the ability to serve his race and his time in broader fields.

"Those, in a nutshell, Mr. President, are the primary reasons why I am opposed to the Wordyfellow movement, and shall vote for this bill. The secondary reasons are hardly less forceful.

"I want this bill passed and passed quickly in order to avoid the pernicious incidental effects of the agitation of this question among my people. It has bred and is breeding antagonisms between the white and black races in the South such as did not result from the horrors of reconstruction or the excitement of negro disfranchisement. In those issues the negro truthfully was told and well may have believed that the white man was driven to protect himself against the ignorance and depravity of the black. In this case, however, the negro feels, and rightly, that the white man would condemn him perpetually to that ignorance and depravity. From the negro's view-point the white man's motive is now what it never was before: base, worse than selfish, wantonly, vindictively cruel.

"Again the propagation of the Wordyfellow idea teaches incidentally that in this democratic country, where by the very nature of our institutions the welfare of each is the welfare of all, where forsooth a Christian civilization has reached its highest development, even here, the strong may desert the weak and leave them to their own pitiful devices and defences.

"It teaches also the doctrine—more potent for evil—that the government may take note of racial classes for the purpose of dealing out its favours and benefits with uneven hands, preferring one to the other. If it may do this when the class differences are racial, it is but half a step to the proposition that it may do so when the differences exist whether they be racial or other. It takes no seer to see that after that proposition—no, *with* that proposition—comes the deluge.

"Such, Mr. President, are some, not all, of the incidental effects of the propagation of the Wordyfellow idea which clearly and with vast conservatism may be called pernicious. But there is yet another effect which will be inevitable upon the adoption of the Wordyfellow plan, and which has been in large measure produced already by the discussion of it, in the light of which deliberate advocacy of the Wordyfellow idea fairly may be called insane; and that is the severing of all bonds of sympathy and good-will between the races when the negro is told by white men, 'Here, take the pitiful portion that is yours, and go work out your own bitter, black salvation, alone—if you can.'

"All this agitation, all our concern, is predicated upon the deadly menace which this people, numbering one-third of the population of the South and gathered in many sections in overwhelming majorities, is to our civic and industrial happiness and progress: and it does seem the sheerest insanity to sever the bonds of sympathy and helpfulness which now bind the races together, surrender all our interest and right to control in the method of the negro's uplifting, and leave him to develop along any haphazard or dangerous lines without sympathy, respect, or regard for us, our ideas, or our ideals.

"The negro has been enough of a problem and a terror to my people with all our ability to control him through his ignorance, his fears, his affection and his respect for us. We have been careless at times perhaps as to how we made use of these instruments for his management. The more fools we if we now throw away his affection and his respect, cut loose from him entirely, and leave him to develop under teachers of his own race who with distorted vision or prejudiced heart will replace his ignorance with a knowledge at least of his brute strength, and cancel his fears with hate.

"My people give freely hundreds of thousands of dollars yearly to the degraded of other lands in whom they have only the interest which Christians have in universal humanity, and they place in the calendar of the saints the names of the godly men and women who go to work personally to uplift the heathen. I do not think that in their cool senses their Christian impulses, to which is added the motive of self-interest, will permit them to cut off their contributions to and support of any instrumentality which will elevate the degraded in their own land whose depravity is so pregnant with dire possibilities to them. I pray the day to come when, among my people, it shall be thought just as praiseworthy, as noble,

as saintly for a Southern white man to give his life and energies to the personal instruction, uplifting and redemption of the negroes in America as of the negroes in Africa or the heathen in any land.

"That prayer, Mr. President, which is sincerely from my heart, brings me to the discussion of President Phillips' negro policy. I shall not expect to see the prayer answered so long as the Chief Executive of this nation shows a disposition to deal so carelessly, so arbitrarily, with such cock-sure flippancy, with the convictions, prejudices if you will, of the brave and generous people who are face to face in their race problem not with a far-away academic question about which they may safely speculate and theorize, but face to face with a present, tangible, appalling issue in whose solution is life or death to them.

"To my people the consequences are so vital that they sometimes are led perhaps beyond what is really necessary in the way of defence,—for any sane man prefers to be doubly guarded against death. So it has been that while they are not favourable to the Wordyfellow plan they have been stamped to it by the Phillips negro luncheon.

"Let me explain that when I speak of the President's negro policy I do not mean to include his appointments of negroes to office. I think we of the South have in these matters to some extent confused the issues, and proportionately weakened our position before the outside public. Not that I approve of appointing negroes to office in the South, for I do not. I think the weight of all considerations is against it. But the considerations either for or against it are considerations of expediency. They are not vital. If the President wishes to vindicate his negro appointments on the ground that his appointees are of his party, the best men of his party, and fairly efficient,—let him. Such reasons have been given for political appointments time out of mind, although they are not conclusive in any case and especially not in the matter of negro office-holding in the South. *But let him not* go into cheap heroics such as were indulged in by a recent negro appointee, who tragically exclaimed that if his appointment was not confirmed his race would be set back thirty years!

"Such rant is only ridiculous. Office-holding is not a recognized or an actual instrumentality for uplifting or civilizing a people; and it is not a theory of this or any other form of government that its mission or method is to uplift its citizenship, white or black, by making place-holders of them. It is not closing any legitimate door of hope to negro or white man to refuse him a Presidential appointment. The 'door of hope,' whatever else it may be to white or black, is not the door to a government office.

"The real basis of the race issue, Mr. President, has nothing to do with politics or political appointments, with office-getting or office-holding. If by some trick of chance a negro—some prodigy lofty in character and in the science and

wisdom of statecraft—were President of this nation to-day, and were by unanimous consent a model Executive, the real race problem would not be affected a feather's weight. The world must understand that the Southern white people in the measures they have taken and will take to protect themselves against the negro are impelled by weightier considerations than the pre-emption of the dignities or emoluments of politics. It is true that they have taken the governments of the Southern States into their own hands, away from negro majorities in many sections. It may be true that in order to do this they have nullified provisions of the Federal constitution. But they have done so from no such small motive as a desire to hold public office.

"My people have all respect for the wisdom of the makers of the constitution, who framed an instrument perfectly suited to the conditions as they existed at the time and continued to exist for eighty years, prescribing the method of majority rule for a people who were of an approximately equal civic intelligence and virtue. But when the conditions were changed and a vast horde of illiterate and—in the hands of unscrupulous leaders—vicious voters were added to the electorate, stern necessity forbade them longer to give a sentimental support to so-called fundamental principles in the constitution and permit ignorance to rule intelligence and vice to rule virtue.

"The 'fundamental principles' in that constitution, Mr. President, are nothing more or less than wisely conceived *policies* which were tried, proved, and found good under the conditions for which they were devised. The 'fundamental principle' upon which the race problem of the South may be solved will have been discovered with certainty only *after* a solution has been accomplished by the conscientious effort and best thought of Southern white men.

"And they will solve this problem. It can never be settled, of course, till Southern white men acquiesce in its settlement. They will settle it in righteousness and will accept with gratefulness any suggestion which their fellow countrymen have to offer in a spirit of sympathy and helpfulness. But it may as well be understood that any such exhibition as the President's negro luncheon, which affronts the universal sentiment of the final arbiters of this question, must necessarily put further away the day of settlement. The negro problem cannot be worked out by any simple little rule o' thumb, and the negro will always be the loser by any such melodramatic display of super-assertive backbone and misinformed conscience.

"The President would settle this matter upon a purely theoretical academic basis, this matter that in its practical effects will not touch him nor his family nor his section, but will affect vitally the happiness, the lives, the destiny of a chivalrous people whose ideas, traditions, sentiments and convictions he carelessly ignores or impetuously insults. Such exhibitions do not become a brave

man. They betoken, rather, a headstrong man, an inconsiderate man, a thoughtless man, a fanatical man. It does seem that President Phillips would have learned wisdom from the experience of his illustrious predecessor, President Roosevelt, who did somewhat less of this sort of thing once—and only once.

”Mr. President, it has been repeatedly said that the hostility of the white people of the South to social intermingling with the negro race is an instinct—a race instinct. I do not so consider it,—and for two reasons: first, because many men of Anglo-Saxon blood—and of these President Phillips is the most conspicuous example—do not have such an instinct; second, because instinct is not the result of reason, while the Southern white man’s opposition to social recognition of the negro is defensible by the purest, most dispassionate reason. These convictions are so well fixed in the Southern mind that they may appear to be instinctive and measurably serve the purpose of instinct; but the vital objections of my people to intermingling socially with the negro are not founded in any race antipathy, whim, pretence, or prejudice. They are grounded in the clearest common sense, and as such only do I care to present or defend them.

”In face of the disaster to be averted, I could wish that it were an instinct; for instinct does not fail in a crisis. But men are more than beasts: the power to rise is given to them conditioned upon the chance to fall. So in this race matter: instinct does not forbid a white man to marry a black woman; instinct—more’s the horror!—does not forbid a white woman to wed a negro man. For this reason it is—for the very lack of a race instinct is it—that the social intermingling of the white and black races, as advocated and practised by President Phillips, would inevitably bring to pass an amalgamation of the races with all its foul brood of evils.

”President Phillips, living in a section of the country where negroes are few—especially such as are of sufficient intelligence to be interesting to a man of his attainments—does not dream of amalgamation. I would not insult him by assuming such a thing. And yet upon a superficial estimate of conditions in the South he gives us this impulsive exhibition of what in one of his high official positions is criminal carelessness.

”The positive element of crime in it is not in the affront which a Presidential negro luncheon puts upon Southern sentiment, but in the suggestion to Southern and Northern people alike that a social intermingling of the races—which means amalgamation, however blind he may be to the fact—is the solution of the race problem. The crime would be complete in all its horror if the South, if the nation, should follow his lead and achieve the logical result of his teaching.

”From long and intimate acquaintance with the negro’s character, my people know that the Phillips negro luncheon stimulates not the negro’s ambition and endeavour to improve himself as it tickles and arouses his vanity. When the

ordinary darkey hears of it he thinks it not a recognition of the superior abilities of Bishop Martin and Doctor Woods, but a social recognition of the negro race; and forthwith deems himself the equal of the white man and desires unutterable things. And not without reason.

"The black people appreciate what the President's act means for them. They do not misinterpret its tendency. A prominent negro said in a recent mass meeting in Richmond: 'No two peoples having the same religion and speaking the same tongue, living together, have ever been kept apart. This is well known and is one of the reasons why the dominant race is crushing out the strength of the negro in the South. I am afraid we are anarchistic and I give warning that if this oppression in the South continues the negro must resort to the torch and the sword, and that the Southland will become a land of blood and desolation.'

"This inflammatory utterance indicates the interpretation put by negroes upon President Phillips' open-dining-room-door policy, and the nature of the hopes and aspirations it arouses in the black man's heart. And the serious thing is the element of truth in the negro's erroneous statement. It is true as gospel that no two races of people, living together, have ever *intermingled socially* without amalgamating. It is hardly necessary to cite evidence of that fact or to give the reasons underlying it. It might be taken as axiomatic that social intermingling means amalgamation.

"If men and women were attracted to each other and loved and mated because of equal endowments of virtue, or intelligence, or beauty, or upon any basis of similar accomplishments, tastes, or mental, moral or physical excellences, then a gulf-stream of Anglo-Saxon blood might flow unmixed and pure through a sea of social contact with the negro race; but until love and marriage are placed among the exact sciences, social intermingling of races will ever result as it ever has resulted: in the general admixture of racial bloods.

"When racial barriers are broken down and it is proper for negroes and whites to associate freely and intimately, when you—white men—receive negroes on a plane of social equality, your women will marry them, your sons will take them to wife. Shall you say to your daughter of the negro whom you receive in your home: 'He is an excellent man but—do not marry him'? Shall you say to your son enamoured of a quadroon: 'She is a very worthy young woman and an ornament to our circle of friends, but—I have chosen another wife for you'? When did such considerations ever guide or curb the fancy of the youthful heart or diminish the travel to Gretna Green? No, the line never has been drawn between free social intercourse and intermarriage; and while the Southern people believe they could draw that line if any people could, they do not propose to make any reckless experiments where all is to be lost and nothing gained.

"A president of one of our great universities is quoted as saying: 'The

Southern white sees a race danger in eating at the same table with a negro; he sees in being the host or the guest of a negro an act of race infidelity. The Northern white sees nothing of the kind. The race danger does not enter into his thoughts at all. To be the host or the guest of a negro, a Mexican or a Japanese would be for him simply a matter of present pleasure, convenience or courtesy. It would never occur to him that such an act could possibly harm his own race. His pride of race does not permit him to entertain such an idea. This is a significant difference between Northern white and Southern white.'

"In noting significant differences between Northern white and Southern white this authority must have been advertent to the fact that the pride of race of his 'Northern white' does not prevent them from furnishing the overwhelming majority of interracial marriages with negroes, as well as with Chinese, Japanese and every other alien race—this, too, with a very small negro population. If the negroes were proportionately as numerous in the North as in the South and such sentiments prevailed, how long, with interracial marriages increased in numbers in proportion to opportunity, would there be an Anglo-Saxon 'Northern white' to have a pride of race? If with these facts before his eyes the distinguished educator sees no race danger in the social mingling of white and black people, it easily may be inferred that he sees no objection to amalgamation.

"The Southern white man does see a race danger in these social amenities, Mr. President; for he cannot view amalgamation or the faintest prospect of it with any sentiment save horror: and he fortifies himself against that danger not only with the peculiar pride of race—of which he has a comfortable supply—but with every expedient suggested by his common sense, his experience, and by the horrible example which that distinguished educator's 'Northern white' has furnished him.

"In providing against this danger my people are moved from without by the sight of no occasional negro such as at odd times crosses this New Englander's vision, nor from within by any unreasonable or jealous hatred of the negro such as has characterized certain 'Northern whites' from the time they burned negro orphan asylums in resentment at being drafted to fight their country's battles down to this good day when they mob a negro for trying to do an honest day's work. No! the Southern white man is driven to his defences by a sentiment void of offence toward the negro, and by the daily impending spectacle of black, half-barbarous hosts who menace the Anglo-Saxon civilization of the South and of the nation.

"President Phillips has modestly borrowed from one of his predecessors words with which to defend his social amenities to negroes. He quotes and says he would 'bow his head in shame' were he 'by word or deed to add anything to the misery of the awful isolation of the negroes who have risen above their

race.' Two things may be said of that, Mr. President: first, isolation has been the price of leadership in all ages, and the negroes who are the pioneers of their race in their long and painful journey upward may not hope to escape it: second, the President's borrowed sentimental reason cuts the ground from under his feet, for that forcible Rooseveltian phrase, 'the misery of the awful isolation of black men who have risen above their race,' concedes the premises on which the South's contention is based, since it admits there is such a great gulf between the negro *race* and the *risen* negro that his isolation fitly may be described in the words 'misery,' 'awful.' It is a peculiar order of Executive intellect and sensibility that can have such a keen sense of the misery which association with the lowly of his own race brings to an educated negro—who cannot in the very nature of things have put off all his hereditary deficiencies and tastes in a generation; and that yet seems not to be touched with any sense of the unspeakable misery such association and its inevitable consequences would have for my people—his Anglo-Saxon brethren—who, if there be any virtue in the refining processes of civilization, any redemptive power in the Christian religion, any progression in the purposes of God in the earth, are a thousand years ahead of the negro—any negro—in every racial excellence.

"Oh, but, you say, President Phillips means for us to associate only with those who are worthy, those who have 'risen.' Even that would be fatal, Mr. President. Beyond the truth already stated that considerations of merit will be forgotten and brushed aside if the social racial barrier is broken down at any point, and that social intermingling inevitably leads to intermarriage, there is a greater fact, a deeper truth, underlying this question. That fact, that truth, is that in estimating the result of mixing racial bloods not the man only and his personal accomplishments or individual culture must be considered, but his heredity, his race peculiarities and proclivities, every element that has gone into his blood.

"An occasional isolated negro may have broken the shackles of ignorance, measurably and admirably brought under control the half-savage passions of his nature, acquired palpable elegances of person and manner, and taken on largely the indefinable graces of culture: yet beneath all this creditable but thin veneer of civilization there slumber in his blood the primitive passions and propensities of his immediate ancestors, which are transmitted through him as latent forces of evil to burst out in his children and grandchildren in answer to the call of the wild. A man is not made in one generation or two. Every man gets the few ruling passions of his life from the numberless endowments of a hundred progenitors, and these few show out, while scores of others run so deep in his blood that they never crop out in his deeds but pass quietly on as static forces of good or evil to his children and their children before rising to the surface as dynamics in life and character.

"A Northern gentlewoman in a recent magazine article, defending her willingness to offer social courtesies to a prominent negro, speaks of him as one 'of whom an exquisite woman once said he has the soul of a Christian, the heart of a gentleman, and the eyes of the jungle.' That illustrates the idea perfectly, Mr. President,—*the eyes of the jungle*. Despite the fact that it is easier to breed up physical than temperamental qualities in man or beast, easier to breed out physical than mental or moral or spiritual blood-traits, this negro, with all his culture, with a large mixture of white blood in his veins, has yet in his very face that sinister mark—the eyes of the jungle: and in his blood who shall say what jungle passions, predilections and impulses, nobly and hardly held in check, that hark back to the African wilds from which they are so lately transplanted.

"A negro—any primitive being—may be developed mentally in one or two generations to the point where a certain polish has been put upon his mind and upon his manners; his purposes may be gathered and set toward the goal of final good; the whole trend of his life may be set upward: but there is yet between his new purposes and the savagery of the primitive man in him a far thinner bulwark of heredity than protects a white man from the elemental brute and animal forces of his nature. A number of educated negroes in this country to-day are superior in culture of mind and in personal morals to many white men, but even these individual shining lights of the negro race do not possess the power to endow their offspring so favourably as white men of less polish but longer seasoned hereditary strength of mental and moral fibre.

"It always offends a proper sense of decency to hear the suggestion that the negro may be bred up by crossing his blood with that of white men,—for the obvious reason that with our ideas of morals the most common principles of the breeder's art cannot be applied to the problem: but one single fact which eliminates such cold-blooded animal methods from our consideration is that when animals are cross-bred it is in the hope and for the purpose of combining mutually supplementary elements of strength and of eliminating supplementary weaknesses; while in this race matter the Anglo-Saxon is the superior of the negro in every racial characteristic—in physical strength and grace, in mental gifts and forces, and in spiritual excellence. Even if amalgamation did the very best that could be expected of it, it offers to the world nothing and to the white man less than nothing: for it would be a compromise, a striking of an average, by which naught is added to the total: it would pull down the strong to upraise the weak, degrade the superior to uplift the inferior: it would be a levelling process, not a method of progress. *And yet amalgamation does not even that much*, for it does not make an average-thick, even-thick retaining wall of culture between the hybrid product and the weaknesses of his mottled ancestry. There are always blow-holes in this mongrel culture, for heredity does not work by averages. It is an elusive

combination of forces whose eccentricities and resultants cannot be formulated, calculated, or fore-determined. It is certain only that by no mere manipulation of it can the slightest *addition* be made to the stock of ancestral virtues. Only slow processes working in each individual through generation after generation can add increments of strength to racial fibre.

"Therefore, if the negro will insist upon some *race manipulation* in order to raise the average of intelligence, thrift and morality in our national citizenship, the only safe and sane method is to take measures to restrict the increase of the negro race and let it die out like the Indian. But, you scream, that would be to suggest the annihilation of a race God has put here for some wise purpose! Even so: but amalgamation would no less surely annihilate *the race*—two races—and fly in the face of a Providence that has segregated all races with no less distinctness of purpose, and so far has visited with disaster all attempts to violate that segregation.

"Now, Mr. President, what is the immediate past history, status and condition in Africa and America of this race with which Southern white men are asked to mingle socially? What are the racial endowments of these *risen* negroes whom we are urged by lofty example to invite into our drawing-rooms upon terms of broadest equality—for upon other terms would be a mockery—as eligible associates, companions, suitors, husbands for our sisters and daughters?—for a sensible father or brother does not admit white men to his home on any other basis. Of what essential racial elements and sources is the negro, risen and unrisen alike?

"Let answer the scientists and explorers, missionaries and travellers,—a long list of them, English, French, German, stretching all the way back a hundred years before there was a negro problem in the South. I quote verbatim, as nearly as the form will permit, their very words and phrases. Listen.

"The negro in Africa was, and is yet, in largest measure 'Without law except in its very crudest form'—'no law at all as we conceive it'—'in densest savage ignorance'—'no writing, no literature, no arts, no sciences'—'some development of perceptive and imitative faculties and of memory, but little of the higher faculties of abstract reasoning'—'in temperament intensely emotional, fitful, passionate, cruel'—'without self-control in emotional crises, callously indifferent to suffering in others, easily aroused to ferocity by sight of blood or under great fear'—'particularly deficient in strength of will, stability of purpose and staying power'—'dominated by impulse, void of foresight, unable to realize the future or restrain present desire'—'indolent, lazy, improvident, neglectful, happy-go-lucky, innately averse to labour or to care'—'given to uncleanness'—'an eater of snakes and snails, cannibal, eating his own dead'—'vilely superstitious, a maker of human sacrifices, charm-wearing, fetich-worshipping'—'of a religion grossly an-

thropomorphic, explaining all natural phenomena by a reference to evil spirits'— 'his religion has no connection with morality, nothing to do with man's relation to man'—'thieving his beloved pastime, deception more common than theft'— 'national character strongly marked by duplicity'—'lying habitually and thinking lying an enviable accomplishment'—'a more thorough and unhesitating liar than one of these negroes is not to be found anywhere'—'cruelly obliges his women to work'—'sensual, polygamous, unchaste'—'buying and selling his women'— 'valuing his daughter's virginity solely as a marketable commodity'—'accounting adultery simply as a trespass upon a husband's property rights, and seduction and rape as a violence only to parent's property in daughters as destroying their marketable value'—'wifehood is but an enslavement to the husband's will'—'no conception of chastity as a virtue'—'of strong sexual passions'—'a devoted worshipper at the shrine of his phallic gods'—'sexual instincts dominate even the most public festivals, and public dances exhibit all degrees of sex suggestion.'

"Those in short, Mr. President, are some of the horrible details of the bestial degradation of the west-coast Africans, from whom our slave-marts were recruited almost to the time of the Civil War, and who, says Keane, are 'the very worst sweepings of the Sudanese plateau,' and, Ellis says, are 'the dregs and off-scourings of Africa.'

"Such was the negro in Africa. What he is in America, only my people know. He has been the gainer at all points, the loser at none, because of his enforced residence here and his bondage to Southern white men: and yet that awful picture of the negro in Africa is so startlingly familiar to one who has spent his life in the South that he examines it closely with something of fear.

"He finds the colouring too vividly heavy and some details untrue for a picture of the negro in America to-day: but the negro as the Southern white man knows him is too alarmingly alike, too closely akin to, that African progenitor. He has advanced—yes! but just how much, and *just how little*, from out the shadow of that awful category of horrors, my people know.

"They know that he has but just emerged from those depths that those bestial racial traits held in check by the man's law have only well begun to be refined by a change of environment and the slow processes of heredity: and yet we, white men of the South, are in a way advised to treat as our social equals certain immediate heirs to such a blood inheritance because, forsooth, they have *risen*.

"We resent bitterly the insulting suggestion, however high or respectable or official its source: and we call upon you, white men of the North, to warn you against appeals for social recognition as a balm for 'the misery of the awful isolation of black men who have risen above their race.' When the blood of your daughter or your son is mixed with that of one of this race, however *risen*, redo-

lent of newly applied polish or bewrapped with a fresh culture, how shall sickly sentimentalities solace your shame if in the blood of your mulatto grandchild the vigorous red jungle corpuscles of some savage ancestor shall overmatch your more gentle endowment, and under your name and in a face and form perhaps where a world may see your very image in darker hue there shall be disported primitive appetites, propensities, passions fit only to endow an Ashanti warrior or grace the orgies of an African bacchanalia? In Heaven's name think to the bottom of this question!—and think *now!* Await not the day '*when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.*' Do not be distracted by considerations that are superficial and incidental—such for example as the negro's record for criminal assaults upon women. The crime of rape will be abated by some means, but long after that must the negro develop before he loses his primal jungle habit of regarding woman as a personal possession. It is a matter of attitude and not of assault: and as in his fundamental attitude toward women, so in every racial characteristic the superiority of the white man is blood deep, generations old, ingrained, inherent, essential.

"Knowing this, my people despise President Phillips' social amenities to negroes of high degree. They do not fear the issue; but what insults and outrages them is that a personage in the highest official position, by an act in itself impulsive, empty, and futile, should put desires and hopes of miscegenation into the minds and hearts of the inflammable, muttering, passionate black masses of the South. Standing themselves ever in the shadow of dire calamity which they are facing and must face for long years to come as they painfully work out a righteous and practical solution of their problem, my people cry out to you, oh, white men of the North, of the insidious danger in these sentimental social practices of an exuberant Executive; and we tell you that, however well or ill you may guard the purity and integrity of your race, we will stand fast. Whatever else may or may not be true, we will never acknowledge any equality on the negro's side that does not *overtake* the white race in its advancing civilization, and we will certainly not submit to an equality produced by degrading the white race to or toward the negro's level. We will not make with the negro a common treasure of our Anglo-Saxon blood by putting it in hotch-pot with his in a mongrel breed.

"The Anglo-Saxon has blazed the way of civilization for a world to follow in: but if he, the torch-bearer, the pioneer, goes back to join hands with the tribes who are following afar his torch and trail, then the progression of civilization and of character must not only stop but must actually recede for him to effect a juncture with the black and backward race in the blood of a hybrid progeny. There the fine edge would be taken off every laudable characteristic of the white man. There the splendid Anglo-Saxon spirit of leadership and initiative would be neu-

tralized by the sluggish blood of the Ethiop race. There the Anglo-Saxon's fine energies and clear sensibilities would be deadened and muddled by the infusion of this soporific into his veins. There vile, unknown, ancestral impulses, the untamed passions of a barbarous blood, would be planted in the Anglo-Saxon's very heart.

"You may believe that in the dim beginning God by imperial decree set the dividing line between these races; or, less orthodox and more coldly scientific, you may know that Nature, impartial mother of men, giving her white and black sons equal endowment and an even start in body, mind and spirit, since has stood, in unerring wisdom still impartial, to watch the white bound away from the black in his rush toward that perfection of mind, of heart, of character, which she has set as goal for the striving of her children. From whichever view-point you look upon the age-long history of men and the age-long lead of white men over their black brothers,—whether evolutionist or traditionist, scientist or mystic, you offer violence to your own particular deity, be it God or Nature, when in their present measureless inequality of development you by amalgamation would beat back the white into the lagging footsteps and gross animalism of the black.

"Menacing thus the effectiveness and integrity of a race which is the pathfinder for the progress of a world of men, the danger is not only a race danger, but a danger to universal civilization; and the preventative is a social separation of the white and black races in America *from the lowest to the highest*,—at least, yes in all reason, at the dictate of the plainest common sense, *at least*, if so be, till the black becomes approximately equal to the white in racial excellence. After which let the ethnologists take the question and give us the answer of science as to the advisability of mixing racial bloods.

"Naturally you ask me when the time of equality in racial excellence will come. I answer that I commit myself unreservedly to the support of every means used for the negro's uplifting; I admit—nay more, I contend—that we white men cannot be dogs in the manger with civilization; we cannot as a Christian people even hope that the negro race may not come *up* to our level, nor can there be any reason why we should refuse to acknowledge that race as our equal if it shall indeed become our equal. And yet, while I would not in puny wisdom presume to foretell the purposes of God in the earth, nor to set bounds to the efficacy of his unspeakable redemption, nor to appoint the places of white, black, yellow, red or brown men in the pageantry of 'that far-off divine event toward which the whole creation moves'—yet, I say, with carefully acquired information of the negro's history and habits in Africa, and with an intimate knowledge of his present status and rate of progress toward civilization in America, I tell you frankly that the day of his approximate equality in racial excellence with the

white man is beyond the furthest reach of my vision into the future.”

CHAPTER XVIII

Senator Killam was against the bill tooth and nail,—and he was against Rutledge. He obtained the floor and began to speak in a desultory but picturesque fashion in ridicule of some of the junior Senator’s new-fangled heresies almost before Rutledge had caught his breath, and his vitriolic opening stayed the steps of many who in courtesy would have gone over to Rutledge’s seat to felicitate him upon his maiden effort. Mr. Killam presented his felicitations openly and with such a mixture of sarcasm, irony and some seeming admiration that his colleague was puzzled. When Mr. Killam talked his dearest enemy would stop to listen. Rutledge, tired and blown, leaned back in his chair to hear him thunder.

As he sank back into a comfortable pose he caught sight for the first time of Lola DeVale and Elise Phillips in the gallery. They had heard his speech from start to finish,—and were differently affected by it. Lola was more impressed with the Senator’s manner than by his words.

”Senator Rutledge verily believes all that he says against the negroes,” she had commented; ”but surely they are not so black as he paints them. Papa says that it is impossible for a Southern man to judge the negro fairly.”

Elise did not reply. She was filled with revulsion amounting almost to nausea, and her temper was on edge. As her father’s daughter, the personal element was unbearably irritating to her. She resented the entire situation and discussion. She had not known what was under consideration, nor who was to speak, and she would have left the gallery if she had not felt that it would be beating a retreat. She also had a desire to see whether Evans had the impudence to say what he thought right in her face.

In her stay in the South she had seen a very disreputable class of negroes, and under the spell of Rutledge’s words her antipathies were over-excited to such a degree that she was faint with disgust. On the other hand she was full of barely suppressed anger. Rutledge smiled a salutation to the young women; and though Elise was looking straight at him she did not join Lola in her gracious acknowledgment.

”Don’t you see Mr. Rutledge, Elise? He waits for your smile like a dog for a bone.”

"I wish that man were dead," Elise declared.

Lola raised her eyebrows and scanned the profile of her friend for some moments, and there came into her mind an idea that appeared to be worth some thinking over....

If Senator Rutledge was distasteful to her, Elise had little cause to complain of him: for seldom had any of the scores of young fellows who followed in her train the good fortune of a minute's talk with her alone; and Rutledge, oppressed by the result of their last meeting at Senator DeVale's, unsatisfied with the empty nothings which passed for conversation in the brief glimpses he had of her at formal gatherings, and chilled by the coldness of her manner which had been oh, so different in that halcyon summer when he had lost his heart to her, was well content to stand further and further away from her in the crowd that was always about her, and to worship in spirit the real Elise Phillips unfettered by convention and unaffected by untoward incident. He took what comfort he could from the fact that as yet no favoured one appeared among Elise's admirers, and that among the sons of fortune, army officers, attachés, and all that sort who aspired to make life interesting for the President's eldest daughter it seemed none could flatter himself he was preferred above another.

As for those who exhibited the liveliest interest in Elise, gossip gave that distinction to two. One evening at a reception at Secretary Mackenzie's Senator Rutledge was talking to Lola DeVale when Elise passed, accompanied by a stalwart young fellow whom Rutledge had never seen.

"Who is Sir Monocle?" he asked.

"Where?" asked Lola.

"Miss Phillips' escort."

"Oh. He has no monocle."

"I know. But he should have. He looks it. Who is he?"

"Captain George St. Lawrence Howard, second son of the Earl of Duddeston. He was taking a look at America, but an introduction to Elise seems to have persuaded him to limit his observations to Washington City."

"Sensible fellow," commented Rutledge.

"Yes," said Lola, "and a very likable fellow. He won his captaincy with Younghusband in the Thibetan campaign before he was twenty; and the fact that an invalid brother is all that stands between him and the earldom doesn't make him any the less interesting."

"Titles are talismanic—whether military or other. With two, he ought to be fairly irresistible."

"Yes, and besides that he has plenty of money and leisure to make love with a thorough care for detail."

"With all those and a manifest supremely good taste," said Rutledge, "I

would back him for a winner.”

”You are forgetting Senatorial courtesies!”

”How now?”

”Senator Richland.”

”What of him?”

”He also is in the running.”

”Richland? I hadn’t heard.”

”Yes; and remember that his fortune is ten times that of the Earl of Duddeston, and his brains are of the same grade as his bank account.”

Rutledge was interested. He had a thorough respect for Richland’s ability.

”He is nearly twice Elise’s age,” Lola continued, ”and Senatorial dignity will not permit a display of violent enthusiasm. But Senator Richland has acquired the habit of winning, and he is young enough and abundantly able to make the game interesting both for Elise and for any rivals. He is young indeed for his honours, has the ear of the people, and is a politician of rare acumen. His followers predict for him nothing less than the Presidency itself when his time is ripe. What more could a girl wish? Don’t lay all your salary on the Englishman—you might lose.”

* * * * *

Lola DeVale had not misread Senator Richland’s purposes. He was seriously in the running. Elise was the first woman he had ever thought of marrying. She seemed to him to fit perfectly into all the plans which his ambition had made for the future. He had met her at Mr. Phillips’ inauguration, and after thinking over her charms during the summer vacation had come back to Washington in December fully determined to wage a vigorous campaign for her hand.

Of the other men who were rash enough to dream of Elise it is needless and would be tiresome to go into detail. They were more or less interested, enamoured or devoted: but the Senator and Captain Howard were too fast company for them, and they are of interest only as a numerous field which made the running more or less difficult for the leaders.

Evans Rutledge willingly would have entered the lists against Richland or the Englishman—against anybody—if Elise had been ordinarily civil to him; but he had been in such evident disfavour since the Smith knock-down that he deemed himself one of ”the gallery” at this game of hearts. Elise when indeed she had time to think of it, felt that she had dealt with him ungenerously if not unjustly, but that only made his presence less grateful to her.

The unreasonableness of Elise’s attitude toward Rutledge and Rutledge’s behaviour whenever she saw him near Elise, mildly stirred the womanly curiosity of Lola DeVale to the point of investigation. She found Elise averse to the slightest

discussion of Senator Rutledge or of anything connected with him. Baffled there, she turned with more determination and softer skill to the man. He will never know how he came upon terms of such friendliness and sympathy with Miss DeVale. Soon doubtless he would have confided the story of his love to her. But events came about differently.

A score of young people were at Senator DeVale's country-place one evening in May. Elise had met Evans with something of her old-time friendliness and he was in an uncertain state of happiness.

"Now don't make an ass of yourself because the Lady Beautiful is in a mood to be gracious," he solemnly admonished his heart. "Sir Monocle may just have proposed and been accepted."

The thought was as bracing as a cold shower and gave him a vigorous grip on his rebellious affections. Then he danced with her—on the wide, dimly lighted veranda—a slow, lotus-land waltz, just coming back in vogue after more than a decade of galloping two-steps.

He took another grip on himself. He must not think of the woman in his arms. Luckily the old-fashioned dance was diverting: while the movement was intoxicating it was reminiscent. He remembered his first waltz—the Carolina hill-town—the moonlight, the smell of the roses—the plump little girl in the white dress, with the red, red sash, and the cheeks as red, with the black eyes and the blacker hair, with the indefinable sensuous physical perfume of Woman, and the very Spirit of the Dance,—she who—yes, she who married the station-agent and was now such a motherly person. He began a speech that would have been cynical. Elise stopped him.

"Don't talk," she said. "Let's dream."

Tumult! Riot! What's the use to hold one's pulses steady when the Lady Beautiful herself incites revolt!

"Let's dream." His heart-strings were set a-tremble by the vibrant richness of her voice, which seemed to have caught the dreaminess and rhythm and resonance of the violins that drew them on. And—

"Don't talk." No: he would not profane the enchantment of that waltz with words; and yet surely My Lady Beautiful were heartless indeed not to catch the messages of love which, pure of the alloy of breath and speech, his every pulse-beat sent unfettered to her heart.

He held her for a moment after the violins had ceased, and the spell of the slow-swinging waltz was still upon them both—when a quick jerk of the fiddles in the ever rollicking two-step brought Sir Monocle to Elise's side. Evans resigned her with a bow and, without so much as a "thank you," went out on the lawn to commune with his heart.

How long that two-step continued, he, seated in a retired nook, did not

know. Sometime after it was finished he saw Elise and the Englishman walk down the winding path that led from the front door to the roadside. They stood talking together a minute perhaps till Captain Howard boarded a passing car city-bound. Rutledge noted with a twinge of jealousy the cordial good-bye the girl gave the man, but even at that distance and through the uncertain light he thought he saw—and, queer to say, resented—a certain formality in Captain Howard's adieus to the woman.

He watched her through the trees as she came slowly back up the hill following the turns of the smooth hard walk as it wound through darkness and half lights from the broad gateway to the house. She moved along, a white shadow, slowly at first, and Evans imagined that she was in some such mood as possessed him. Then she started suddenly and ran at a stone stairway which mounted a terrace. She tripped, stumbled and fell against the granite steps.

Rutledge was flying to her before she was fairly prone. He spoke to her and tried to help her up. She made no answer, and her hand and arm were limp. "Elise!" he said, with fear in his voice. Still no answer.

He took her in his arms and made directly up the hill for the front door.

"Elise," he whispered fearfully again. "Oh, my heart, speak to me!"

Her cheek was against his shoulder. He buried his face in her hair, as he prayerfully kissed the snow-white part visible even in that darkness. Her head dropped limply back, and a sigh came from her lips so close to his. Still she answered not his call. He loved her very much and—he kissed her again, softly, where the long lashes lay upon her cheek, and—"Elise!" he murmured appealingly. She turned her face feebly away from him, like a child restless in sleep.

He had not delayed his climb to the house.

"Here!" he cried. "Get Dr. Sheldon quick! Miss Phillips is dangerously hurt!"

There were excited screams among the women and a stir among the men as he carried his burden across the piazza and into the wide hall. There in the full light he saw—Miss Elise Phillips talking quietly to Donald MacLane. He almost let fall the woman in his arms. He looked again at her face. She was Lola DeVale.

Dr. Sheldon and Lola's mother fortunately were at hand. At their direction Rutledge carried the young woman up the stairs and laid her on a couch in her sitting-room. She opened her eyes and smiled languidly at him as he put her down.

Elise and all the other young people knew of Rutledge's mistake as to Lola's identity, but Elise could not understand why he blushed so furiously as he gave her an account of the mishap.

At her next *tête-à-tête* with Rutledge Lola gave him her very sincerest thanks and—laughed at him till he was uncomfortable. Finally she said: "You are a very gallant but a very mercenary knight, Mr. Rutledge." Rutledge was hopelessly confused.

Lola continued, mischief in her eyes: "Alas! the spirit of commercialism has pervaded even Southern Chivalry, and forlorn maidens must pay as they go." Rutledge was plainly resentful.

"Now I am very unselfish, Mr. Rutledge, and—I wish it *had* been Elise." Her mischief dissolved in a confiding smile, full of sympathy,—and Rutledge was very humble.

Lola DeVale's sympathy was warm and irresistible, and before he was aware he was telling her of his love for Elise in a way to set her interest a-tingle.

"Why don't you tell her of it?" asked Lola. "Tell her that it just overwhelms all earlier loves."

"Earlier loves? I never loved any other woman," Rutledge answered.

"Oh, of course not." Lola could scarcely repress a smile at the thought that a man always swears only his last passion is genuine.

"But tell her—tell her!" she repeated.

"I have told her."

"When?"

"Three years ago."

"Plainly? or with artistic indirectness?"

"Plainly."

Lola looked at him incredulously, but saw that he was telling the truth.

"The sly thing!" she exclaimed under her breath. "But tell her *again*! I declare if I were a man and loved Elise—and I would love none else—I'd tell her so every time I saw her."

"Oh I'll not love another—no fear of that," Evans replied half lightly; "but as for telling her again, self-respect will not—"

"Self-respect—fudge! If I loved a girl I'd tell her so a hundred times—and marry her too—in spite of everything."

"Perhaps so," Evans commented skeptically.

Lola was shooting in the dark, but her warm heart would not let her leave the matter at rest. Both because of her desire, being happily in love herself, to see the love affairs of her friends go smoothly, and because of the riddle it presented to her, she approached Elise again in order to straighten out the tangled skein for everybody's satisfaction. She thought to match her wits against Elise's and proceeded with more caution.

"By the way, Elise," she said, apropos of nothing at all, "I think you were right about Senator Rutledge's being very much in love with that young woman

you told me about.”

Elise exhibited a perfect indifference and said nothing.

”I asked him about her, after becoming duly confidential and sympathetic, of course, and he confirmed your statement. He still loves the girl—oh, you ought to hear him tell of it. ’He will never love another till he’s dead, dead, dead,’—or words to that effect: but he will not tell her—”

Elise was listening with a polite but languid interest.

”—again. He thinks his self-respect forbids; but *I* think—”

”Did he say that? To you?” Elise demanded.

”Yes; when I asked h—”

”Well now, once and for all, Lola, I tell you I despise that man, and never must you mention his name to me again!”

”But Elise, I think he—”

”Stop, Lola! I’ll not hear another word!”

”But let me tell you, Elise. He—”

”No! Stop *now*! Not another word if you care for my friendship. I’ll never speak to you again if you speak of him to me!”

Elise’s anger was at white heat, and she looked and spoke like her father. Lola was frightened at her manner, but made another brave attempt to set matters straight, which was met by such a blaze of personal resentment in Elise’s eyes that she gave up in abject defeat—though she did pluck up courage to fire a parting shot.

”Very well, my dear,” she said, as if dismissing the subject.... ”I have something of yours I must give you before I go. There—take it,” and she kissed the expectant Elise warmly on the lips as she added: ”Senator Rutledge gave it to me by mistake as he carried me up the hill the other night.”

CHAPTER XIX

Lily Porter finally became conscious that she was the special attraction for a stranger who regularly every other Sunday evening sat in a forward pew and listened to her singing with attentive interest, but who showed little or no care for any of the service beside. Several months had gone by before she noticed him and his faithful attention to herself. When she did realize his presence she was conscious that he had been paying her this tribute for a long time. She observed

him quietly and satisfied herself that he came only to see or to hear her. He did not force himself upon her vision, but none the less did she understand that she was the chief object of his respectful consideration.

The preacher's manner and style of thought did not appeal to Hayward, while Lily Porter's face and voice did. He always sat where he could look at her in the choir-loft, for he argued that as he went only to see her he would see as much of her as possible. His face was mobile and easily read, and as he was good to look upon and so evidently appreciative of her efforts the girl came ere long to sing with an eye to his approval and admiration—to sing for him and to him. This interested her for a time, but she was piqued at length for that he seemed content to admire at a distance and made no effort to come nearer to her.

One evening, unexpectedly to them both, a negro prominent among his race because of his position as Registrar for the District, John K. Brown, with whom Hayward had picked up a mutually agreeable though casual acquaintance, introduced him to the singer in the aisle of the church.

"Miss Lily, I want to introduce my friend Mr. John Hayward, who goes into extravagances about your singing—as he very properly should."

Hayward was overjoyed at his good fortune. To be presented as John Brown's friend was a passport to the best negro society in Washington. He was as much pleased to know that Brown regarded him so favourably as he was delighted to meet the young woman. As he walked with her to the door she presented him to her mother, a bright mulatto woman about fifty or more, who did the grand dame to the best of her ability: which was indeed perfect as to manner but was betrayed the moment she tried to do too many things with the English language.

When he had opportunity Hayward was profuse in his thanks to Brown, and told him volubly of his love for music. Finding a sympathetic listener, he was led on to an impulsive story of the social longings and lackings in his life. Brown, more than ever impressed with the young fellow's intelligence and worthiness, was at some pains thereafter to look after him and set him going in a congenial social current.

With Brown's approval and his own gifts and graces it was not remarkable that Hayward won his way to social popularity as fast as his confining duties would permit. He began to see much of Lily Porter and was consistent in his devotion to her despite the fact that the habit of his college days of being attracted by each new and pretty face still measurably clung to him. His information and accomplishments were of a sort superior to that of any of the young women he met, and none made a serious impression on his heart. Lily Porter was more nearly his equal in education and general cultivation of mind and manner, and was really the most attractive to him; but his harmless vanity could not forego

the admiration of the others, and he gave some little time to small conquests. He did homage to Lily by his evident admiration of her talents and comeliness and by his unconcealed pleasure in her friendship. At the same time he met her petty tyrannies and autocratic demands with an unmoved indifference.

He had become very well acquainted with Lily and had called on her several times before Henry Porter knew that his daughter was receiving the footman whom he had snubbed some months before.

"Lily, who was that young man that called on you last night?"

"Mr. Hayward."

"Umhuh, I thought he was the same fellow. You'll have to drop him. I don't want you to be receivin' no footman in this house. We must draw the line somewhere."

"He's no footman, papa. He's one of Mr. Brown's friends. Mr. Brown introduced him to me himself. I think he is connected with Mr. Brown's office."

"No such thing. Hayward's footman at the White House—told me so hisself 'bout a year ago, and I saw him on the President's carriage no longer'n yesterday. Nice lie he's told you 'bout bein' in Brown's office."

"Oh, he didn't say so, papa. I supposed so because Mr. Brown said he was his friend and has introduced him to all the nice people. Surely you can't object to one of Mr. Brown's friends. Everybody likes Mr. Hayward and he is received everywhere."

"Everybody likes him, do they? Well you see to it you don't like him any too much. I can't kick him out if Brown stands for him, but you make it your business to let him down easy. Have you seen Bob Shaw lately?"

"He was here last night when Mr. Hayward came," answered Lily; and she seemed to be amused at something.

"Well, what's funny 'bout that?"

Lily knew that she must not tell her father what she was laughing at. She created a diversion.

"Mr. Shaw is so backward, and so—dark."

"Dark! He's jus' a good hones' black,—so'm I—all African and proud of it. Mebbe I'm too dark to suit yuh. Bob Shaw is not backward, miss. He's got the bes' law practice of all the niggers in the Distric', and he'll be leader of the whole crowd in a few years. He's the bes' one in the bunch of these fellers who tag after you and you better take him. My money and his brains and pull with the party 'd make a great combernation."

Lily did not commit herself. She was accustomed to her father's blunt method of indicating his wishes. She liked Shaw well enough, but old Henry's awkward interference and zeal did the lawyer's cause no good. Shaw was below the ordinary in the matter of good looks, and in his love for Lily was too submis-

sive to her whims. He had not Hayward's easy manner, nor his assurance—for the footman was not at all abashed by Henry Porter's money nor his daughter's gentle arrogance. It is needless to say the girl preferred the serving-man to the lawyer.

After the first flush of interest in Lily and her songs had subsided Hayward made love to the pampered belle warmly or indifferently as the mood was upon him. He noted that, taking her charms in detail, they were alluring without exception; and such moments of reflective analysis were always followed by a more determined pursuit of her. Yet the careless moods came. However, he always delighted in and could be extravagant in praising her singing, even when the personal attraction was the weakest, and the general effect on the woman was a continuous tattoo of love-taps at the door of her heart.

The negro magnate's favourite, Shaw, clearly was being outdistanced, and the outraged father stamped and threatened and commanded: but to no purpose. When Hayward discovered the bitterness of the old man's opposition he chuckled.

"Here's where I get even," he said; and became more assiduous in his attentions to Lily and more aggressive in his methods.

"Your father does not appear to hold much love for me," he told Lily one evening after she had sung him into an affectionate frame of mind and the conversation had drifted along to the confidential and personal stage.

"Did I ever tell you what he did with my first request for an introduction to you?"

"No. What?"

"He stamped the feathers off of it," said Hayward, and laughingly told her the details.

"Papa thinks—everybody—should be a lawyer, or a politician with a pull," Lily commented complainingly.

The temptation to vindicate his dignity was too much for Hayward.

"I was not always a footman and do not intend always to be a footman; and yet, footman as I am, if your father values a pull with the President, perhaps, if he knew—oh, well, he might think better of me."

"Oh, you have a pull? How interesting. Do tell me about it. I have read so much about pulls that I am dying to know what one is like. How do you work it? I believe you work a pull, don't you? Or do you pull the—"

"I haven't pulled mine yet. I'm waiting," said Hayward. "But it will work when the time comes."

"And when will the time come? Tell me. I'm so anxious to see the wheels go round in a genuine political machine. How many Southern delegates can you influence in the next national convention? That's the mainspring, isn't it?"

"I'm no politician or vote vender. I've never had the pleasure of influencing my own vote yet, and won't as long as I live in the District."

"What! Without politics or votes, and yet you have a pull?"

"It is a personal matter entirely," Hayward answered carelessly, as if personal friendships with Presidents were very ordinary affairs for him. Lily Porter was a mite skeptical, but she hoped he spoke the truth, for it would more than confirm her estimate of him and would be such an effective counter to her father's nagging opposition.

"Oh, isn't that interesting! Tell me all about it!"

"Really I cannot. I have never told that, even to my mother. There is only one other person who knows of it. It is my one secret, and my life—that is, my future—depends largely upon it. There's too much at stake."

"Would you fear to trust your life—your future—in my hands?" asked the woman softly. "I could be a very good and a very faithful friend."

The lure in her voice was irresistible.

"I would trust my soul with you," he answered, and with the spoken faith the trust was perfected in his heart. "Listen."

He told her all about himself, of his name and his history, of his life and his hopes. He was modest in his recital of the creditable things he had done; but when he had told her of his claim upon the President's gratitude and the purpose toward which he would use it, and began to talk of his ambition and his dreams, his heart was fired by its own fervour, and before the very warmth of his own eloquence all obstacles and difficulties faded as mists before the sun, and he felt that he needed only to put forth his hands to grasp his heart's desires.

The girl was touched with his fire. She listened with ready sympathy to the beginning of his story, heard with quickening pulses of his rescue of Colonel Phillips, and in the telling of his hopes was caught in the current of his transporting fervency and carried along with him to realize the vision of his martial career.

"And that is the picture of your life! It is—it will be—glorious!" She rose in her enthusiasm. "Oh, that a woman might—"

"Glorious—yes," the man said; "and till to-night it had seemed perfect to me. But I have been blind to its greatest lack. You have made me conscious of it." Hayward stood up and moved toward the girl, who wavered uncertainly between reserve and complaisance.

"I would paint another figure into that picture, Lily—the figure of a woman." He put his hands out toward her, and her coldness was melting when—"Lily," said her father from the hall, "what did you do with the evenin' paper? I want to read Mr. Shaw's speech before the convention this mornin'. Mr. Brown told me that it is the greatest speech that's been made yet."

Henry Porter came into the parlour in time to catch a glimpse of confusion and unusual attitude in his daughter and Hayward. He thought best to mount guard, and decided to talk Hayward into flight. He began with a panegyric on Shaw. Hayward caught the hint and took his leave, pulling Lily to the front door by a chain of conversation.

"Now remember," he murmured tenderly, "you hold my secret; and must keep it sacredly."

"Have no fear of me. Watch your other confidante," Lily whispered, her manner full as his of tenderness.

"Oh, she is—"

"Shaw told 'em," began the persistent and suspicious parent, coming out of the parlour;—but the footman was gone down the steps.

Hayward's mood changed in a twinkling and with a jolt. He walked a hundred paces thinking confusedly.

The question slowly framed itself in his mind... "Do I love Lily?"

But he did not answer it.

CHAPTER XX

The oncoming summer promised to be long and uneventful for Helen Phillips. Late in May her mother took her and her two little sisters to Stag Inlet, leaving a perspiring father to await the perverse pleasure of a stubborn Congress before beginning his vacation, and Elise to set out upon a round of visiting that would permit her to see very little of home during the hot months. To Mrs. Phillips the restfulness of "Hill-Top" was gratefully refreshing after her trying first winter in Washington. She gave herself over fully to its soothing quiet and arranged her daily programmes on the simplest lines.

Hayward, because of his versatile abilities an indispensable part of the simple Hill-Top outfit, did not have an opportunity before leaving for Stag Inlet to see Lily Porter again. Nor indeed was he regretful on that account. He was in a state of indecision and wanted time to think. He heartily wished that he had not been so free with his confidences: yet could not justify this feeling when he sought a reason for it.

After awhile he wrote Lily a letter which was a model of diplomacy—which said much and said nothing. It did not disappoint or displease her. She read be-

tween the lines an admirable modesty and restraint, complimentary to herself and true to the artistic instinct which, she had read somewhere, always saves a full confession for a personal interview. She took her own good time to answer it. She felt sure of the man's devotion, despite the fact that his other and unknown confidante was a woman other than his mother. The tenor of her reply was reserved, though not discouraging. Hayward's impatience was not excited by the delay, nor his interest quickened by the coy missive.

* * * * *

The first morning Helen was on the lake after coming to the Inlet her launch passed a small catboat commanded by Jimmie Radwine and flying a Yale pennant from her diminutive masthead. The crew, consisting of Captain Jimmie and another youngster, both younger than Helen, were yelling themselves dizzy.

"What's Jimmie Radwine saying, Helen?" asked Nell Stewart.

Jimmie had no intention of leaving them uninformed. He had put his boat about, and come up alongside.

"Hello, Helen!" he shouted, "Harvard can't play ball! Quincy can't pitch! Tom got a home run and two two-baggers off him in four times up! Rah! rah! rah! YALE!"

Helen was a famous Harvard partisan, and many a verbal tilt had she had with Jimmie, whose brother Tom was Yale's right-fielder, as to the comparative merits of the blue and the crimson in all things from scholarship to shot-putting.

"What was the score, Jimmie?" she asked him.

"Wasn't any score—for Harvard: all for Yale. Wow! Yale—Yale—Yale!" he yelled.

Helen looked a dignified reproof of his unmannerly enthusiasm, but Jimmie's youth was proof against any such mild rebuke, and her irritation only kindled his joy. She nodded to Hayward for more speed, but as Jimmie was favoured by a stiff breeze they could not shake him off. He followed them for two miles or more up the lake, volunteering much information sandwiched between cheers for Eli, which, when he had delivered it fully and in detail, he began to repeat in order to impress it upon them. Hayward cheerfully would have bumped him with the launch.

Having so thoroughly enjoyed the morning's sport, Captain Jimmie regularly afterward flew the blue pennant from his mast, and was ever on the alert to greet Helen with the Yale yell and further particulars.

* * * * *

Less than a month later the Harvard crew rowed rings around the Yale men at New London. Helen's cup was full. The next day she and Nell Stewart and Nancy Chester were sitting out on the lawn reading an account of the race when they saw Jimmie's catboat beating about the lake.

"Come, girls," exclaimed Helen, "we must carry the news to Jimmie!"

"Hayward, come here," she called to the footman, who was tinkering at a gasoline runabout a hundred yards from them. "Get the launch ready," she added when he came nearer, "we want to overtake Mr. Radwine's boat out there."

"I guess Jimmie will haul down that blue flag now," said one of the girls when they had come to the boat-house.

"Hayward," said Helen, "run up to the house and tell mamma to give you the Harvard pennant that is in my room—and hurry!"

Hayward needed no urging. Out of the chatter he had caught the news of Harvard's victory at the oars, and he was as full of excited pleasure as Helen herself. He hurried up the hill and, not finding Mrs. Phillips, rushed to his own quarters and turned out from his trunk the crimson pennant.

Helen was too intent on the chase of Jimmie Radwine to notice that the short staff of the flag Hayward brought her, and the faded and wrinkled folds of the cloth, did not belong to the crimson emblem which was part of the decoration of her dressing-table. Jimmie, already informed of Yale's bitter defeat, surmised the purpose of the Phillips launch's coming, and tried to sail away and away: but he was relentlessly pursued and overtaken, and mercilessly repaid for all of his taunts of the last fortnight. As they came up with him Helen cried out to her friends:

"Now, everybody give the Harvard yell!"

The feminine chorus was shrill, but lacked volume.

"Again! and louder!" she commanded. "You too, Hayward!"

That was the most grateful order Hayward had received since the 10th was sent into the charge at Valencia. He stood up to drive the deep-mouthed, long-drawn rah-rah-rah's from his lungs, and added a few kinks and wrinkles at the end in orthodox phrasing and intonation by way of trimming off the severely plain Harvard slogan. Helen looked at him in some surprise, and saw that he was oblivious to his situation and seemed bent on "rattling" the hostile blue skipper. He came to himself at last, and pulled himself together in some confusion to give attention solely to his duties in running the launch. Helen thought his behaviour unusual, and watched him covertly while the badgering of Jimmie Radwine was in progress.

Jimmie was far from an easy mark, however, for by his unblushing impudence and boyish pretension to vast knowledge of facts and figures he time and again crowded Helen to her defences. Hayward could hardly keep his tongue

when Jimmie presumed too much on the ignorance of the young women as to the athletic history of the blue and the crimson, and Helen could see that the negro was keeping quiet with difficulty. At one of Jimmie's most reckless statements, which overwhelmed Helen, Hayward, bending over the launch's little engine, shook his head in violent dissent.

"What is it, Hayward?" his mistress called to him.

"Beg pardon, Miss Helen, but he's—he's—misstating it!" Hayward answered with vigour.

"Then tell him of it!" Helen exclaimed impulsively.

"Pardon me, but you are altogether mistaken about that, Mr. Radwine," the negro sang out to Jimmie, shoving the launch up a little nearer the boat's windward quarter.

"What do you know about it?" Jimmie demanded scornfully.

"I know all about it," retorted Hayward with rising spirit; and he went into details in a way to take Jimmie's breath. Warming up, he did not desist on finishing the matter in dispute, but challenged others of Jimmie's audacious inaccuracies and proceeded to straighten them out. Jimmie demurred and replied more recklessly, and was soon in a rough and tumble discussion covering the whole field of college excellences. He found he was no match for Hayward either in information and enthusiasm or in assurance. Before the argument was half finished the footman was talking to him in a patronizing and fatherly way that pricked him like needles. He did not relish the idea of a controversy with, much less being routed by, this serving-man, especially in the presence of the young women. He wished the girls anywhere else so that he might smother the lackey with a sulphurous blast. But he had to stand to the losing game while Helen and her friends laughed at his defeat or waved the crimson flag and cheered the Harvard hits in a shrill treble. Helen indeed felt some compunctions for having brought about the situation but was enjoying Jimmie's discomfiture too much to end it.

Hayward had forgotten he was a lackey, had forgotten he was a negro, had forgotten he was anything save a Harvard man proud of his college, proclaiming her fair record with love and joy, confident in himself as one of her sons.... "As a man thinketh. so is he." ... The occasion was trivial, but the transforming power of thought, its triumph over circumstance, was strikingly evidenced in the footman's face. Helen noted that his bearing had lost every trace of conventional or conscious servility, that he looked easily and confidently *a man*, calling no man master.

After harrying Captain Jimmie enough to pay off all old scores they gave him good-bye with a final yell for the crimson, and turned the launch for home. In the run back Helen had her first opportunity to notice the pennant. It was not hers.

"Hayward, whose flag is this?"

"Mine, Miss Helen. I could not find your mother quickly, and I brought that to save time."

She looked from the flag to the negro. A nebulous idea floated through her mind, and she tried to fix it, but it was too elusive. She put Nell and Nancy off at their landings, and tried to grasp the intangible explanation that was hovering about her brain. It was characteristic of her to prefer working out her own answers to looking at them in the back of the book. Finally, however, she decided she did not have a full statement of the problem.

"When did you go to Harvard, Hayward?" she ventured.

"Class of 191-, Miss Helen."

"191-. Then you did not finish. The battle of Valencia was—"

"No, Miss Helen, I did not finish: but I understand two others of my class who volunteered were passed on the spring term's work and graduated by a special resolution of the Overseers. I think I will apply for my diploma sometime—if I need it."

Hayward spoke lightly, but his last words brought to Helen the same question which had occurred to her so often in the last year since she had discovered in him her father's rescuer. They only made the question more insistent.

He was a Harvard man,—to Helen's mind a title of all excellence and dignity. That explained much. His intelligence, even his physical grace and soldierly courage, seemed to fit naturally into that character. But why a flunkey?—shirking higher duties and the honours that pertained to his degree, careless of the evidence of his scholarly merit, putting aside the rewards of his soldierly heroism.

"Do you care nothing for everything, Hayward?—except this flag? You seem to have valued it."

"It is the one possession dearest to my heart," he answered in simple truth, and then showed the first faint trace of embarrassment she had ever seen him exhibit.

"Yes, you have loved the Harvard pennant but concealed your Harvard lineage. You champion Harvard's name enthusiastically against Jimmie Radwine's gibes, but you affect to be careless of Harvard's diploma. You carry the Harvard culture, and yet—you choose to be a footman."

Hayward winced. Helen tempered the thrust by adding:

"You do a soldier's work, but decline a soldier's honours. You are *too* modest. You overdo the part."

"I hope yet to do something worthy of Harvard, Miss Helen. I am not without ambition, however much you may think it. Indeed I fear I have too much ambition."

A Harvard man need set no limit to his ambition. Helen spoke with the

wisdom and confidence of youth and loyalty.

The launch was at the landing. The girl climbed out and up the steep stairs. At the top she bethought herself and turned about.

"Oh, here's your 'heart's dearest possession,'" she said with a laugh, and she pitched the little crimson flag down upon Hayward, who was making the boat fast.

The man looked up to catch the flag as it fell, and memory in that instant worked the magic which brought the scene on Soldiers Field clearly before Helen's mind. She knew him in that moment. She gazed at him without speaking. She looked at the flag and then at him—once, and again. All the incidents of the driving finish of that ever memorable football game came back to her, bringing to her pulses an echoing tremor of its tense excitement and wild enthusiasm and her unstinted girlish admiration for the player who had saved his college, her Harvard, from black defeat.

At last she remembered his words about the pennant which she had quoted to him a moment since. Her cheek flushed and she was in two minds whether to be offended or amused. Graham saw her look of surprised recognition, her glances at the pennant, and read the significance of her rising colour. He felt the presumption of his very presence, and, conscious and guilty, he looked abjectly out across the lake.

The man's humility went far to mollify Helen's anger or levity; but she could not spare him entirely.

"So you prefer another name to your own," she said. "Why is that?"

"Oh, no, Miss Helen. I am not ashamed of my name. There's no reason why I should be. I—"

"Then why use another?"

"My name is John Hayward Graham. I am using my own, but not all of my own."

"But why the masquerade? It doesn't look well. What have you done to be afraid of your full name?"

"Nothing, Miss Helen, I declare upon honour. I'll tell you the whole story. You have been kind to respect my wishes not to make known my services to your father, and I'll gladly tell you all about it. But I must go now, if you will excuse me? Mrs. Phillips ordered the carriage for five o'clock and it's nearly that time now."

"I'll excuse you, Hayward," Helen answered, intending a dismissal of the

subject as well as of the servant.

CHAPTER XXI

For a year now Helen had had an unconsciously growing regard for her footman's mental abilities and for his gift of entertaining her with his tales of battle and camp and other incidental themes of conversation which at odd times had beguiled the moments of the past summer after his identity had been revealed to her as "the trooper of the 10th" of her father's most thrilling battle story. It was but natural that conversation with a man of his cultivation of mind and wide information should dull the sense of caste and superiority and enhance a feeling of genuine respect. It was only occasionally now that she assumed an air of command:—at best it is a difficult thing to patronize intellect.

Helen did not have an opportunity to hear Hayward's proffered explanation for quite a long time, and she cared little to know anything further of it; but her attitude of mind toward him had changed. Formerly she sometimes had wondered that a footman should be so intelligent. Finding that he was a Harvard man, however, had reversed the problem. It raised him to a level of respectability above his calling, and left the fact that he was a serving-man to be accounted for as anomalous. That he was a negro counted with her, of course, for naught one way or the other. He was nothing less than a footman.

However, with all her democratic ideas, she was a President's daughter; and that he was a footman, until it was explained, and even after it was explained,—as long, in fact, as he remained a footman,—would cause that vacillation between anger and amusement which came to her yet with the remembrance of his embarrassed declaration that her pennant was his heart's dearest possession.... She was somewhat annoyed by her own mild self-consciousness—an unusual mental state for her; more so than by any forwardness on the man's part in speaking the speech,—for there had been nothing of that.... She would not think of it.... Why should she think of it? The idea was ridiculous. She would laugh it away.... Of course the pennant was a dear possession: the man prized it as a memento of his college life and his daringly won victory.... Certainly, it was a very dear possession: she had similar school-day souvenirs which were precious to her heart though recalling moments of less energy of loyalty and wild delirium of joy.... Besides he may have meant, he could have meant, nothing personal to herself,—for

he could not have known her—she was nothing more than a child seeing her first great football match—and he had caught but a glimpse of her in all that yelling throng—if he had seen her at all.... It would be a miracle if he remembered her... And yet he seemed to remember.... Though why should she think so? He had *said* nothing to indicate it.... But he knew—she was sure that he knew.... And what if he did know, and did value the pennant on that account? The personal consideration was not imperative. Was she not the President's daughter, and would not any man deem it an honour to be decorated by her hand or high privilege to carry her flag? The lowest menial might properly take pride in her approbation and set great store by a token of her approval.... But—this man is neither low nor menial, for all his servile livery. He is a gentleman by every token: educated, brave, strong, modest, self-sacrificing, chivalrous. It is hard to consider him as an underling—a footman.... And why is he a footman? ... She does not care why he is a footman ... or that he is a footman.... He must keep his place.

CHAPTER XXII

Helen was taking her early morning ride. She pulled her horse up sharply and waited for her groom to overtake her.

"Why are you a footman, Hayward?"

Hayward was startled. The girl had been uncertain in her treatment of him for a month, and he was expecting anything that might happen, from a plain discharge to arrest as a suspicious character. He was confused by the suddenness of the question, and by the peculiar mingling of sympathy and impatience in Helen's voice.

"Who are you, and what are you trying to do?"

"I am John Hayward Graham, Miss Helen, as I told you before. I am a footman now because it seems to be necessary. I did not intend to be a footman so long as this when I obtained the position." Helen thought she detected a shade of embarrassment again. "But after I was employed at the White House my mother's health gave way suddenly and she could no longer support herself and I was compelled to keep the place."

The man saw that he was making an awkward mess of it, and the quick intelligence of Helen's eyes showed him her inferences were all adverse.

"Oh, well," he said, "I'll begin again. It took all the money my mother had,

Miss Helen, to pay for my education—all, and more. That she ever met the expense of my tuition has been a miracle to me. But she did it—insisted upon doing it. My father was a Harvard man. He died when I was two years old, leaving as his only admonition the injunction that I be thoroughly educated. My mother was faithful to that exhortation. She spent her meagre fortune and the abundant strength of her life to the last cent and almost to the last heart-beat in a religious obedience to it.”

”Your mother is still living?”

”Yes; and please do not think I was so ungrateful and so unfilial as purposely to wait till she was helpless before lifting the burden of breadwinning from her shoulders. I was in five months of graduation when the call came for volunteers in the spring of 191-; yet I could not resist that call, nor would my mother have me resist it.”

”A Spartan mother,” commented Helen.

”My grandfather died in the front of battle, Miss Helen,—to make men free. My father was a soldier. The first bauble that I can remember playing with as a child was a medal of honour with its red, white and blue ribbon which was given to him for some daring service to the flag, I know not what. That medal and his good name was all that he left to me. I lost the medal before I knew what it stood for, and I have temporarily laid aside the name of Graham; but none the less is the memory of that bronze eagle-and-star an inspiration to me to a life work creditable to the name.

”When I enlisted I was really taking a large financial burden from my mother, and if, after my first term of enlistment was up, I was unthinking of her, it was because out of the blood of my fathers and my army experience had been born a life ambition which filled all my thoughts: the ambition to be a soldier. I was off my guard, for I had never thought of my mother as having a human frailty. When she came to place herself in my care I noticed, as I had not a month before, how far spent was her strength, and I was alarmed at the sudden change in her appearance. This change had come to her as it comes to many—with the moment of her surrender to the inevitable. Men and women may stand with determined and unshaken front against the assaults of weakness until it wins into the very citadel of their strength and possesses everything save the flag which flies at the tower-top. So with my mother: she had stood to her duty till there remained of her wonderful energies only her unshaken resolution, and when that flag was hauled down there was nothing left to surrender.”

Everything in the man’s tribute to his mother—sentiment and metaphor—appealed to Helen, and the tears came to her lashes.

”But she still has the strength to be vastly ambitious for her son, Miss Helen. Death itself will hardly weaken that. She talks to me of little beside the day when

I shall be an officer in the army.”

”You aspire to a commission, then?”

”Yes; and it is for that reason that I desire the President shall not know now that I am the man who carried him out of danger at Valencia. I know that naturally he will be grateful, and I wish to make no draft upon his gratitude till I ask for that commission. I expect much difficulty, and I wish to marshal at one moment every circumstance in my favour.”

”As papa says, ‘attack with horse, foot and guns,’” said Helen.

”Yes, that’s the idea. I had hoped that by the end of a second term of enlistment my preparedness together with your father’s friendliness and a growing liberality in public sentiment toward men of my race would win for me my heart’s desire—a lieutenancy of cavalry.”

”Your race will not count against you, Hayward,” said Helen. ”Papa has no such provincial notions as that. And I am sure he will not be ungrateful.”

”I thank you for the assurance, Miss Helen. Your father is my ideal of a fearless and just man. I count more upon his fearlessness and fairness than upon his gratitude. But my heart is too keenly set on realizing this ambition for me to omit to enlist any favourable influence.”

”But why are you a footman?” Helen repeated the question with which she had first addressed him.

”I was on my furlough, Miss Helen, when I took this place temporarily, fully intending to re-enlist when my time was up; but my mother’s break-down just before that time compelled me to forego re-enlistment and to hold this position which pays a wage sufficient to support the two of us. A soldier’s pay would not accomplish it, and my mother’s condition would not permit me to leave her. However, I have not thought of foregoing my career as a soldier. I am studying every day to prepare myself for the duties of an officer. My Harvard training fortunately supplies me with all but the purely technical knowledge required, and makes it possible for me to acquire that without assistance. I will win yet, Miss Helen.”

”A Harvard man *must* win.” Helen spoke with dogmatic faith.

”And *I* must win,—not only a commission, but the ‘well-done’ which is a soldier’s real recompense for a life-time’s service. Not only my ‘Harvard lineage,’ as you once called it, but my grandfather’s death, my father’s life, my mother’s toil and sacrifice, lay the compulsion of endeavour and success upon me. My mother is a hopeless invalid, but I pray she may live to read my lieutenant’s commission. I have concealed from her the juggling with my name. I—”

”And why did you juggle with it?”

”Some pride in my patronymic and in that very Harvard lineage would not permit me to degrade either by becoming a footman as John Graham.”

"And again, then: why are you a footman? You have not answered that question yet. Your purposes in life are admirable, your motives are—beautiful, your success will be brilliant I earnestly hope,—even more, I dare to prophesy; and I shall be proud to know when your name is famous, that I gave you your first flag;"—She laughed—"but why did you become a *footman*, Hayward?"

She pulled her horse up to wait for his answer. Hayward looked steadily in her eyes, which were regarding him with frank enquiry, until a quickness came to his pulses and a rashness into his heart, and by his gaze her eyes were beaten down and the colour brought to her cheek.

"Why?" Her voice had as much of appeal as of demand.

Hayward caught his breath quickly.

"You have read *Ruy Blas*, Miss Helen?"

"No," Helen answered. "What has that to do with it?"

Hayward had the same sensation as when in the Venezuelan campaign he had first keyed his nerves for battle at sound of the picket's shots only to have the danger pass. Then the releasing tension had been painful. Here it was grateful. He drew a breath of relief. He was very glad the girl had not read of *Ruy Blas*,—of the lackey who loved a queen.

"The place of footman was the only position open to me. I applied for another but failed to get it." He ignored the question and through this lie outright, told in words of perfect truth, he made a precipitate retreat. "The service was to be short, and it gave me an opportunity to see at close range something of the man upon whom my hopes so much depend," he added as an afterthought.

"And a closer view has not dampened your hope?" asked Helen.

"No, Miss Helen. Increased it, rather. Your father puts heart into a man. His broad sympathies and firm principles of justice inspire one to the highest and best that is in him. The lofty example of his courage and purity and effectiveness, personal and civic, is a living inspiration to the nation."

"For which the nation is indebted to your heroism," added Helen. "For myself and all the people I thank you."

If Hayward had been white he would have blushed. The personal turn Helen gave the matter left him with nothing to say. He sat his horse abashed.

A stray thought of her dignity flitted across Helen's mind. She drew herself up, touched her horse with the crop, and rode on. Hayward, at the command of her manner, stiffened into *attention* as she drew away, and followed—at the

proper distance.

CHAPTER XXIII

Helen inherited Bobby Scott when the real men came around.

Elise had brought Lola DeVale, Dorothy Scott and Caroline Whitney with her for a two-weeks stay at Hill-Top and they had planned for a breathing-spell in which they hoped to be rid of men and have a restful girlish good time. Bobby Scott, Dorothy's brother, had been asked to come because he was present when the thing was first proposed, and had accepted—much to Caroline's disappointment. But really he did not disturb their plans very much. Bobby was somewhat young, and entirely manageable: and, as said before, Helen inherited him when the real men came along.

And they came: Hazard, the moment Congress adjourned; Tom Radwine, every minute he was not asleep after he knew Caroline Whitney was there; Captain Howard, after three days' wait at Newport; and, for a day and a half, no less a personage than Senator Richland. The Senator had a heart to heart talk with President Phillips about a certain matter of politics, but he deceived no one, not even himself.

Bobby Scott felt his importance, for the reason that he and the Senator were entertained at Hill-Top. He felt that he was in a position of vantage and really ought to profit by it. But the ease and sang-froid with which Tom Radwine always relieved him of Caroline was not only exasperating but rather confusing to him. Why couldn't Tom look out for Dorothy? She was not his sister; and, beside, she was no end better looking than Caroline. Here came Tom now, straight past the other young women, to disturb his *tête-à-tête* with Caroline.

"Come on, Mr. Scott," called Helen, "we'll go and have a ride."

Bobby pretended not to hear. Helen's assumption that he must vacate when Radwine appeared nettled him. He liked Helen in everything save that she would not take him seriously. He sat still, determined to hold his position against all comers.

"I've won in a walk," said Radwine to the young woman. "It's ten minutes yet to five o'clock—good afternoon, Mr. Scott—oh, I am all sorts of a winner."

Caroline's answer to Radwine was just as meaningless to Bobby, and in half a minute without the slightest discourtesy on the part of the others, he felt that

he was a rank outsider.

"Are you coming, Mr. Scott?" Helen called to him again—and Bobby went.

"If you will excuse me?"—he asked Caroline's permission.

"Certainly, if you must go. Take good care of Helen. She is so young and venturesome."

This last speech in a measure placated Bobby's offended notions of dignity, and he and Helen went off toward the stables, where Hayward brought the horses out and put the saddles on while Bobby looked them over.

"That is a very handsome mount," he said to Helen, indicating Prince William. "He's a dead match for the horse of Lieutenant Lavine, of the Squadron."

"Beg pardon, sir," Hayward interrupted to ask, "what squadron?"

"Squadron A, New York," Bobby replied, and began to relate to Helen some incident of his experience as a trooper in that organization, and afterward to dispense general information as to horses and horsemanship. He would not have been so garrulous about these things perhaps but for the fact that his membership in Squadron A was a new toy from which the gilt had not been worn off. Hayward listened to him, first with interest and then with wonder. He did not know the young gentleman was a very new and very raw recruit in the Squadron's forces, and he came near dropping a saddle at some of Bobby's ebullitions of ignorance.

"This knee," said Bobby with a look of concern as he ran his hand down Prince William's fore-leg, "seems to be slightly swollen. You should be careful to guard against spavin. It is a serious—"

The negro laughed in his face before he could check himself.

"Well, what is it?" demanded Bobby.

"Beg pardon, sir,"—Hayward pulled his face into respectful shape—"spavin is a disease of the hock, not of the knee. The Prince struck that knee against a hub on the carriage this morning. No damage done, I think, sir... They are ready, ma'am."

As Mr. Scott prepared to mount he noticed that Prince William's bridle had only one rein.

"Where is the snaffle-rein?" he asked Hayward.

"The curb rein was broken this morning, sir, and I haven't another yet. I changed that rein from the snaffle-rings to the curb."

"Change it back," Mr. Scott directed. "He will not trot with the curb."

"True, sir, he'll not; but the Prince has not been ridden in several days, and he'll be hard to hold. I think you'd better use the curb, sir."

No use to advise Mr. Scott. He had heard that your true cavalryman delights in a trot.

"Just change it, will you," he commanded.

The footman glanced at Helen before complying.

"Certainly," she said; "put the rein on the snaffle-rings, Hayward."

Hayward obeyed and they were off. He watched them out of sight, and remarked as he turned into the stable:

"What he doesn't know is something considerable."

* * * * *

"If all the flunkeys were as modest and respectful as they are timorous," Bobby said to Helen as they rode off, "the service would be greatly improved the world over. And if they were as full of courage as they are of conceit, bravery would be a drug on the market. I believe you said Hayward is your footman?"

"Yes," Helen answered.

"That explains it. These coachmen and footmen become so accustomed to carriage cushions that the saddle is an uncertain and rather fearsome seat for them. Their personal fears would not be out of the way if they would not impute them to men who can ride."

The sparkle of interest in Helen's eyes encouraged Mr. Scott to proceed.

"My observation has been that the under-classes do not ride well—or cannot ride at all. I think that riding is naturally and really the diversion of gentlemen, the *hoi polloi* do not take to it."

It occurred to Helen that the *hoi polloi* of Bobby's town of New York had not the money with which to "take to" saddle-horses, but she did not raise the point. Bobby continued to talk.

"I would not consider my education complete if I were not accustomed to the saddle. I think that many of our young fellows are not only careless of a most healthful and gentlemanly sport, but are recreant to duty as citizens, in not perfecting themselves in feats of arms and horsemanship. What is it that Kipling says in lamenting the degeneracy in sterner virtues of the gentry of Britain? Something like

"And ye vaunted your fathomless power, and ye flaunted your
iron pride
Ere—ye fawned on the Younger Nations for the men who could
shoot and ride."

"Good for you, Mr. Scott. I did not imagine you were so seriously interested in Kipling as to memorize his lines. He is fine, though, isn't he?"

"Yes, that couplet impressed itself upon me without effort on my part. It appeals to me. I think it is a disgrace for a young man not to know how to shoot

and ride. Alas, there are so many who do not. Little wonder that I am asked to put myself within the precautionary limitations of a timid flunkey.”

Helen said nothing. She saw Mr. Scott was deeply offended because he had known so little about spavin. His dissertation on horsemanship caused her to note with some interest his manner of doing the thing. As they rode along, her mare in a slow canter and Prince William in a trot, the young man was giving a faithful exhibition of the method taught by "Old Stirrups," the Squadron's riding-master; but Helen could see that he was keenly conscious of every detail of the process, from the tilt of his toes to the crook of his left elbow.

Yet Mr. Scott was enjoying the ride—no doubt of that. Never had he had such an opportunity to parade his pet ideas and conceits, and never had he had such a respectful hearing. At last the younger Miss Phillips was taking him seriously. He plumed himself, and essayed a more elaborate panegyric on manly preparedness. Helen permitted him to do all the talking.

He was at some pains to instruct her in the art of riding. He advised her how to hold the reins, how to make her horse change from a canter to a trot then to a gallop, how to change the step-off in the gallop, and, all together, passed on to her about all he could remember of the information acquired from "Old Stirrups." It was imparted, however, after the manner of first hand knowledge born of large experience. He felt that he was living up to Caroline's admonition to look well after Helen, and was gratified that the young lady received his coaching with such beautiful humility and seriousness.

"This the best part of the Lake Drive," Helen suggested finally, "the mile from here to 'The Leap.' May we not let the horses go a little?"

"Why, certainly, if you wish," Mr. Scott consented. "Don't be nervous. Just keep the rein tight enough to feel her mouth firmly so she won't stumble, and let her go 'long.'"

Helen clucked to her mare and swung into a moderately fast gallop.... The exhilaration of it occupied her for a time, and then she noticed Mr. Scott was not altogether comfortable. The Prince was pulling against the bit in a stiff trot that was making a monkey of the young man's memorized method. Helen thought that the riding would be easier for him if Prince William would break into a gallop, and she pushed her mount to a faster pace in order to make the horse break over. Feeling perfectly at ease in her saddle, she unwittingly urged the mare faster and faster in kindly meant effort, till finally the increasing speed became so furious that she was a bit alarmed, and pulled in on her bridle-rein. Horror! the mare was beyond control!

The horses were about neck and neck, with Prince William a nose in the lead and going hard against the snaffle in a trot of such driving speed as the young Mr. Scott had never been taught to negotiate. He was pulling his arms stiff

against the smooth bit, but that only steadied the Prince to his work. Helen gave a despairing pull with all her strength, but it did not affect the mare's seeming determination to overcome the Prince's lead. She called to her escort.

"Stop her! I can't hold her, Mr. Scott!"

Mr. Scott tried to reply, but his effort at speech resulted in a stutter which that merciless trot jolted from between his teeth.... He could not help her.... His own emergency was more than he could meet. His right foot had been shaken from its stirrup, and could not regain it. With his right hand he held in grim determination and desperation the cantle of the combative saddle which was treating him so roughly. No, no help from him.

Helen, riding in perfect comfort, though at a frightful pace, looked toward Mr. Scott to see why he gave no aid. She saw his predicament was worse than hers. He had no hand to offer her. He needed both of his, and more.... She remembered her footman and his lifting her from her falling horse,—and wished heartily for him in this crisis. She realized that she must save herself, and with that to reinforce and stiffen her resolution she again pitted her strength and will against those of the headstrong mare. Her heart sank when she thought how near they were coming to "The Leap," and she threw every ounce of will and muscle against the bit, and held it there.

At last, as if with a knowledge of the danger just ahead, the mare slowed down. But the madcap Prince William took a longer chance.

On a little promontory jutting out into the lake the roadway makes a sharp turn at a point some seven or eight feet above the water and almost overhanging it. Helen and her father had facetiously named it "Lover's Leap." Prince William knew as much about that turn as Helen's mare, but he disdained caution. He was a bold and close calculator,—for he made the turn by a hair's-breadth, at top speed.

Not so Mr. Scott. As the horse swung mightily to the left the rider's momentum pried him away from the saddle, and he took the water clear of all obstacles.... Helen, close behind him, but already relieved of fear for herself, felt her heart stop beating when the man went off his horse, for he missed a tree by a dangerously narrow margin. But he picked himself up unhurt out of two feet of water, and clambered up to the driveway, covered with humiliation and the friendly lake mud.

Helen had been too thoroughly frightened to laugh then, but she preserved in memory the picture of "Bobby's stunt," and many a time afterward laughed at it till the tears came. For many moons she could not think of Kipling or "flaunting an iron pride" without an insane impulse to giggle.

Prince William, having caused all the distress, afterward acted very nicely about it. He permitted himself to be caught, and carried Mr. Scott back to Hill-

Top in the most manageable and equable of tempers. Mr. Scott himself, however, was in a temper entirely other. Inwardly he was choking with stifled oaths, for in Helen's presence he must needs be decent in speech. He began at once to berate Hayward, but realized before he had finished a sentence that he could not make out a case against him, and he saw disapproval in Helen's face. He gave it over as a situation to which no words were adequate, and the ride home was a strenuous essay at lofty silence.

Helen, despite her rising mirth and her contempt for Bobby's puerile desire to shift the blame for his mishap, had enough pity for him in his miserable plight to suggest that they make a detour and approach home from the rear side and avoid the eyes of the people assembled there. Bobby was grateful for the suggestion. It promised success. That Hayward should see him, he of course expected, and he rode up to the stable-door, dismounted and handed his bridle to the footman with an air of unconcern and assurance befitting a man at ease with himself and in good humour with the world. Hayward regarded him calmly from head to heel, but did not betray his flunkey's role by so much as the tremble of an eyelash. This made Mr. Scott angry. He had expected something different, and had prepared a very dignified reproof.

"Damn that insufferable negro. Why didn't he laugh outright?" he growled as he walked around the house. Helen had run away as soon as she had dismounted in order to save her fast toppling dignity. Mr. Scott's flanking movement was successful and he was almost safe when—he ran plump into Caroline and Tom Radwine on the side porch. Caroline's outburst brought the others to see what the fun was.

"Mis-ter Scott!" she exclaimed. "What kind of a stunt have you been doing? You look comical to kill. Oo—ooh!"

Bobby took on a sickly grin when Caroline's gaze first fell upon him; but when she called him comical it was a serious affair at once, and his face showed it. Dorothy rushed up at that moment.

"Oh, Robert, Robert!" she cried, putting her hand upon his shoulder, "what have you done? Tell me. Are you hurt? Have you been pulling Helen out of the lake?" A glance at Helen answered that question. "Well what, then, you precious boy?"

This was the first time that his older sister had ever complied with Bobby's insistent request that she call him Robert, and he somehow wished she hadn't.

"Oh, Dorothy, have some sense—let me go—I must have on some dry clothes. I took a tumble into the lake—yes—that's all."

"Next time you decide to do that, Mr. Scott, I'll be glad to loan you a bathing-suit." This from Tom Radwine made Bobby mad as a hornet.

"Took a tumble into the lake, you say, Mr. Scott?" asked President Phillips,

pushing through the crowd. "How did that happen?"

"I was riding your horse, Prince William, sir, and he was on edge. He spilled me off the drive into the water at that sharp turn a couple of miles up. I had only a snaffle-rein and could not hold him."

"Only a snaffle-rein! Why I would never think of riding that rascal myself without a curb. Hayward," he called to the footman, who was passing, "what kind of carelessness is this?—your sending the Prince to Mr. Scott with only a snaffle-rein? You know very well that brute cannot be controlled without a curb. I'm surprised at you. Such a lack of sense as that is almost criminal. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Don't repeat that performance—see to it you don't!"

As Helen was standing in a yard of her father, Hayward heard this stinging rebuke in unalloyed surprise, but as she made no demur, he saluted when the President was done, and said only:

"Yes, sir; it shall not occur again, sir."

When her father had spoken so sharply to the footman Helen had turned to Mr. Scott, expecting him to exonerate Hayward; but Caroline Whitney's look of genuine sympathy when Mr. Phillips spoke of that brute's being uncontrollable without the curb bribed the bedraggled young man to silence. Helen saw Caroline's glance, and caught the reason for Bobby's lack of candour, but she was disgusted with him.

She was uncomfortable because of the injustice her silence had done, for she was of an eminently fair mind: and she told her father the whole truth of the affair at the first opportunity....

She could not see how Hayward bore himself so composedly under the undeserved rebuke. If he would abase himself thus, would barter his self-respect, would lick the hand that smote him, in order that he might obtain his commission—if he would sell his manhood for it—for anything—he would be contemptible in her sight.... Again the question came: Why was he a footman? She could not remember that he had ever answered it. Oh, yes,—the idea had but just recurred to her—she would read *Ruy Blas*.

So, on a long summer's afternoon she read *Ruy Blas*—read the tale of the love of a flunkey for his Queen: and while, when the idea finally dawned upon her, and she first clearly understood the significance of it all, she was— But let us not detail that.

* * * * *

Helen and Hayward Graham were married on a day in late October.

CHAPTER XXIV

The chronicler of these events is aware that to the readers of this history the bare statement of the fact that Helen and her footman were wed comes as a shock. Nevertheless, it was a plain and straightforward path by which a careless and pitiless Fate had blindly brought Helen to her husband. A girl, treading by chance such a way as has been followed since the world was young by the feet of maidens of high degree who have loved below their station,—among the accidents and incidents of her romance she had come, unwitting, to an open door, an ill-placed door not designed for her passage, a "door of hope for the negro race" which her idolized father had thought to fashion and set wide: and she had passed it through—in reverse.

A secret marriage was not characteristic of Helen's ideas. She was betrayed into that by her warm impulsiveness. She had had a beautiful programme arranged for the fates to follow in. With a heart full of love and of dreams, and with faith in a future that would order itself at her bidding, she had planned the whole course of events that should lead up to a resplendent army wedding after Hayward had won his commission. She never doubted for a moment that all her roseate imaginings would come to pass, and railed upon him that he had not her faith: for Hayward was a doubter. The sheer altitude of his good fortune made him fearful and distrustful.

For the twentieth time she told off to him on her finger-tips the order in which his fortune should ascend.

—"And then, when you are an officer—and famous—you will marry—me."

"But that may never be," the man had answered. "Suppose the Senate should refuse to confirm my nomination? By your condition I should lose the commission and—infinity more—you. If your love and faith are supreme you will marry me whether I win or lose."

"You shall not doubt my love or faith," Helen exclaimed impetuously. "I will marry you now, and as the President's son-in-law you can the more surely succeed. The Senators would not offer a personal affront to—"

"But I must bring this honour to you, not you to me," Hayward interrupted; "and, besides that, while I willingly, gladly, here and now, surrender all hope of

this commission for ever and for ever if only you will marry me now, it is only fair to you for me to remind you that your father would never appoint his own son-in-law to a lieutenantcy in the army."

"Oh, bother!" Helen protested. "I have my heart set on being a soldier's wife. Of course Papa couldn't give a commission to one of his family—what was I thinking about.... Well, there's nothing to do but wait, I suppose."

"And it may be an endless wait if the commission is to come first," Hayward reiterated. "It was an awful temptation to silence a moment ago when you said you'd marry me now, but I could not trick you into it, knowing how much you desire that commission."

Helen's mind worked rapidly for half a minute.

"But I *will* marry you—and *now!*" she cried. The girl's romantic spirit was aroused and her spontaneous, unsophisticated feminine ideal of love was in the ascendant. "I will *prove* my love and faith. I will marry you now, and you may claim me when you have won your laurels. Let the Senate refuse you a commission if they dare!"

"And would you be willing to trust me to keep that secret?" Hayward asked. "I almost would be afraid to trust myself—I would want to yell it from the house-tops! Married to you and not tell it! Why, it would just tell itself to any open-eyed man who looked at me."

"No, no," Helen answered. "I'm willing to trust you. It's a hardship that cannot be avoided, and we must make the best of it."

* * * * *

"And now," Helen had given her husband a last laughing admonition, "since we must be clandestine against our wills, let's be romantic to the last most fiercely orthodox degree. No love-lit glances or conscious looks. You be a perfect footman with that indifferent and superior and high-and-mighty air while you can, for when your bondage actually begins you will never swagger again; and I will be so haughty as almost to spurn your very presence. We must make no foolish attempts at conversation, and when we write must deliver our letters personally into the hand, not trusting even the mails with our secret. And then, when you become an officer we will give the dear people the surprise of their lives. My! won't it be fun to see them! And it may be that when the time comes we will not tell them that we are already married, but will have another ceremony, a brilliant army affair such as I have set my heart on. Wouldn't that be gorgeous!"

"I hardly would have acquaintances enough among the officers to provide my share of the attendants," Hayward answered.

"Oh, yes, you would. You would make them fast enough," the girl replied.

"An American army officer has the entrée everywhere—I've heard papa say so a score of times—and, besides, Mr. Humility, I suppose that my friends among the officers would be numerous enough to fill all vacancies."

Hayward saw clearly wherein his wife's forecasts were faulty; but it profited nothing to take issue with her enthusiasms and he gladly joined in them. She was his wife—that could not be changed; and he felt that with that a fact accomplished he reasonably might work for, and hope for, and expect, anything. He returned to his work in the city, therefore, overflowing with happiness and pride. It was not surprising that as a White House footman he was more than ever the subject of notice and comment, for never one carried a perfect physique with such an air. If his confident swing and tread had been the expression of personal vanity, it had been insufferable; but love is not insolent nor its struttings offensive.

Hayward was on good terms with the world. For the first time he accepted the overbearing manner of superiority of white men with complacency and even with amusement. His time was coming—he could wait. He went so far as almost to invite affronts from several negroes of more or less prominence, who had aforesaid rebuffed his advances, in order, as it were, to keep their offences in pickle so that their chagrin might be more keen when the day of his elevation should come. He was at particular pains to keep Henry Porter's opposition going, and smiled when he thought how thoroughly he would pay him off in his own coin.

For a few weeks he put himself with buoyant determination to the regular study of his text-books, which he had theretofore read with more or less intermittent interest, and began to lay out plans for the political campaign which would be necessary to bring about the issuing and confirmation of his commission. He arranged with a personal friend, a lawyer in New Hampshire, for the transmission of all correspondence and papers relating to the matter in the name of John H. Graham through this lawyer's hands,—thus to conceal from the President even after the request for the appointment had been made the fact that his footman was the applicant.

The thinking out and arranging of these details and the first rush of his attack upon his military studies engrossed him for a month or more in every moment he was off duty. So closely did he hold himself that Lily Porter reproved him gently for his remissness several times before he made his first call upon her. He was really working very hard—in his leisure hours. He had completely reversed the order of work and diversion. To the one-time monotony of his daily tasks he was now held by the fascination of chance moments of speech—most often conventional, occasionally personal, always delightful—with the radiant young woman his wife, upon whom even to look in silence was enough to send his blood

a-leap. Every day from the very first he took time from his work of preparation to write to her.... The habit grew. At first briefly, though always with fervent protestations, and, as the days and weeks ran on, more and more at length and with livening heat did he put his heart-beats in his letters.... The habit grew too fast. By the time that Congress met and the currents of the great capital were in full swing, the forces of Hayward's love had eaten into his ambition's boundaries and the time that he gave to thoughts of Helen, and in seeking variant and worthy phrases in which to indite his passion, more than equalled that in which he worked to earn those things which by her decree should precede possession of her.... It was hard not to stop and think of her. He wrote:

"You disturb me in my work. You ride ruthlessly through the plans of battle and campaign my textbooks show, and make sixes and sevens of them. At sight of you the heaviest lines of battle dissolve into thin air and into mist the fastest fortress falls. At the coming thought of you brigades and armies melt away, and your face stands out a radiant evangel of peace, the very thought even of wars and turbulences dispelling.... What am I to do? I cannot chain myself to study the science of strife when this heavenly vision is calling me—and it is ever calling—to love and love only.... I am fully persuaded there is only one thing worth thinking on in all the earth—and that is you."

* * * * *

His wife's letters were all that mortal man could desire, but only the more distracting for all that. They were always short, but grew in warmth as the sense of freedom grew upon the writer. Hayward devoured them with increasing hunger, and with the ever-recurring, never varying signature, "Your wife," spark upon spark of impatience was enkindled with his love. Finally he must of very necessity have some vent for his restlessness. He sought diversion in the society of Lily Porter. In fact he could with difficulty avoid her: she too had set her heart on an army wedding.

Hayward had only the very kindest of purposes toward Lily. He had continued his correspondence with her during the summer. For the sake of his plans unfolded to her in their last meeting before his going away he could not break abruptly away from her—though the task of remaining on friendly terms and yet not proceeding with the suit so nearly openly avowed was a serious tax upon his resources and ingenuity. In his apprehension "the fury of a woman scorned" loomed fearful and threatening. The object of his apprehensions, on the other hand, while she felt rather than saw the subtle change in him, was yet flattered by his unaccustomed submissiveness to her caprices and experienced delightful thrills of expectancy as she waited for a trembling confession to crown his new-

found humility.

"Lily," her father had said to her on a morning after one of Hayward's scattered visits, "I tol' you once to drop that feller and I hoped you'd done it. Understan' I don' want any footman comin' here. We ain't in that class. You ought to have mo' respec' for yourse'f. What you want with a servant hangin' roun' you when you can take your pick of the professional men in town, I can't see."

"Don't worry about me, papa," the girl sang as she danced over to the piano, "I'll wed a military-tary man."

"Well, thank Heaven you ain't got no idee of marryin' that Hayward. I'll make it wuth while for you to marry a professional or a military man either one, but none of my money for a footman, I tell you now."

"No footman for me either, papa. I'll not marry a footman, I promise you. I tell you I'm thinking of a military man."

"Not that Ohio major who was here with the troops at the inauguration? I'd forgot all about him," her father questioned.

"He's not the only soldier in sight, but don't you think he would do in a pinch?" Lily had forgotten about him too, till her father mentioned him.

"I'd better look into that and see what sort of a feller he is," said the father jokingly, greatly relieved in mind.

"Maybe you had," the daughter replied insinuatingly.

Lily had as many aristocratic notions as her father. More, in fact. Her promise was sincerely given. It was only when Hayward had told her of his purpose and prospect of becoming an officer that he had broken through her reserve. While she had always liked him she had never had any idea of marrying a footman. But an officer in the army!—she would have capitulated on that evening she heard his story but for her father's timely appearance. The idea had grown upon her since, and she loved to reflect upon it and plan for the outcome; though she had had time to collect her thoughts and decide not to precipitate or render a final decision till the commission was in the footman's name. She really had to hold herself firmly in hand to manage it so, for she loved the young fellow with a whole-hearted fervour, and of his love for her she was blissfully assured.

The girl was developing quite an interest in military matters. In one of their not unusual discussions of Hayward's career it was arranged that at his first convenient opportunity he should accompany her out to Fort Myer to see a parade. Hayward went for her on his first half holiday—rather, he went with her, for she drove him out in her own stanhope. As they were turning a corner they were halted for a moment in a knot of vehicles. Lily was driving and Hayward was talking to her with so much interest in her and in what he was saying to her that he was oblivious to the things about them.... He was accustomed to sit quiet and indifferent while another driver solved the problems of the streets....

The first thing that diverted his attention from the girl beside him was the small red-white-and-blue White House cockades on the headstalls of a pair of horses just drawing ahead of Lily's cob. He glanced quickly across to the carriage—and met the full gaze of his wife's eyes. She was sitting on the front seat of the landau facing to the rear, and her eyes were upon him for a half minute at very close range. Helen looked away several times in her effort to be unconscious of his presence. But she could not be perfectly oblivious or withhold her glances altogether. She had heard the very speech—the very gallant speech—Hayward was making.

Lily looked about to find the cause of collapse in her escort's talk, and saw the man's peculiar look at Helen, whom she knew by sight. She accounted for his confusion at once, but the blush that came to the young Miss Phillips' cheek and her evident self-consciousness were so unaccountable as to be puzzling. She searched Hayward's face keenly for an explanation of his young mistress's behaviour—and he did not bear the scrutiny with entire nonchalance. Lily felt insulted in a way.

"I hope she will know us next time she sees us," she said snappishly.

No answer from Hayward; though he felt like a traitor for letting the implied criticism go unchallenged.

"You must hurry and get your commission. It seems to disturb the fine lady to see her footman enjoy the privileges of a gentleman. No doubt she thinks it impertinent for a servant to deal in gallant speeches at all, especially such a beautiful sentiment as she must have heard you speaking."

Lily had hit the mark in the centre—but of course she did not know it. That finely turned sentiment which he had thrown out with such impromptu grace and rhetorical finish was taken word for word from his last letter to his wife, and he had puzzled his brain for an hour in the choosing and setting of the dozen words in which it sparkled. There was nothing particularly personal in that dozen words, but how was Helen to know but that they had been strung upon the same thread in the man's conversation with his unknown companion as they were in the letter lying at that moment upon her own bosom.

Hayward did not enjoy the afternoon with Lily. He had hoped Helen had not heard what he was saying, but Lily's statement of opinion that she had heard seemed to put the matter beyond doubt. He came home quite disturbed in mind. He debated to himself whether to write to Helen or wait for her answer to his last letter. He decided not to plead till he was accused.

With the next morning came—no letter. Night—no letter. Another morning—no letter. He wrote:

"Why do you not write to me—and why is your face so cold?"

The answer came: "Who is that woman? She is not your sister—for your

sister would not look at you like that—no, nor would you look at your sister like that—nor would you say such a speech to your sister. Who is she? And what right has such a woman, what right has any woman to hear what your letters have said to me? That sentiment is mine—you gave it to me. It is mine, *mine*—do you understand?—and you take it and fritter it away on that—who is she? Keep away from her.”

”The woman is a very good friend of mine,” Hayward wrote in reply, ”*and nothing more*. The words you overheard were spoken to her, I swear to you, in no such connection as they were written in my letter to you. If I had thought that you would so value them and consider them your very own I never would have ‘frittered them away’ on any person, believe me. Do be forgiving and remember that men are not so finely wrought as women. Only a woman—only you, the most finely wrought of women—ever would have conceived such a nicety of conduct for a lover. There are good reasons why I cannot keep away from the young lady as you request. I wish I could, since you desire it. She is Miss Lily Porter, and a most estimable young woman. I am indebted to her for very much that goes to make life bearable. She is a great musician and has filled with pleasure for me many an hour that otherwise would have been monotonous and dead. Please do not decree that I shall not hear her sing. To listen to her is such a cooling, refreshing oasis in the dry-hot barrenness of a workaday life; and I declare to you my love for you grows warmer if possible in hearing the ballads that she sings, and to the lullabies she hums so beautifully I dream alone of you. Believe me when I swear that nothing can affect the perfect singleness of my devotion,—and let your face shine upon me. It was so cold yesterday that a most horrible dream came to me last night: they were hunting us with bloodhounds to take you away from me! Just think, I have not so much as touched your hand since the preacher so hurriedly made us one—only your eyes have been mine, and now you withdraw them from me! Oh my queen, smile upon me!”

CHAPTER XXV

Helen’s reply to Hayward’s pleading letter was for the most part reassuring and he felt that the incident of the drive with Lily Porter was closed: but the pains of love were only beginning to be upon him.

Helen’s letters grew briefer and briefer. There was no lack of affection

shown in them, but the expression was not so elaborate as at first. She was in the rush of preparation for her *début*, and less and less was she free to write. Occasionally, as if in specific answer to his prayer and to atone for her shortcomings, she smiled upon him with such warmth that his heart-hunger was appeased. Only for a space, however, did that satisfy. The desire came back with redoubled fury the instant the intoxication was off.

Like any other sufferer from intoxicants he had his periods of depression. In such moments he felt that his marriage was a mockery, that Helen was not his, would never be his, could never be his. Long odds were against his getting his commission—even if the President signed it the Senate would never confirm it. The fight would be too long, and the issue hopeless—he could not win—his colour was too great a handicap—curse it! A negro,—yes, a negro—and white men so insufferably unjust to a negro—curse them all!—curse the whole white-faced race!—save only her—she was his—yes, she *was* his—his by love and law—they could not take her from him, and he would have her yet despite the whine of all the purblind, race-proud Senators who might oppose his confirmation—curse them all! curse them all!!

Such moods were happily intermittent. Again he was himself—a man among men—already a winner—the crowned king of Helen’s heart—the President’s son-in-law. Away with doubt! To whom so much had come with ease everything would come with effort. Confidence uplifted him.

* * * * *

Helen’s *début* was an event of note. No need for her to be the President’s daughter to make it so. Her sensational beauty needed not the stamp of official rank to give it currency, nor the sparkle of her manner and speech any studied purpose to give them vogue. Dominion came to her by divine right of beauty and wit and ingenuous girlish honesty.

In the stately East Room, dressed but not over-dressed for that occasion in palms and ferns and flowers, beside her mother for two hours she stood, the fairest, loveliest flower that ever graced that historic hall, and received the new world which came to take her to itself. Gowned in simplicity and maiden white—with the flush of unaffected joy in her cheeks and the sparkle of genuine youth in her gray eyes—with the splash of October sunsets in her dark hair—with a skin white and clear as purity, but shot through with the evanescent glows and tints of health—with neck, shoulders and arms rising from her gown like a half-opened lily from its calyx—lissome and graceful indeed as a lily-stem—virginal freshness in mind, manner and person: she was a May-day morning.

“My dear,” said Senator Ruffin as he bowed low over her hand, “may an

old man who admired your grandmother in her youth presume to express the extravagant wish that you may be as happy as you are beautiful!"

"And may a young man," said Senator Rutledge, close following Mr. Ruffin, "who has the orthodox faith that *perfect* happiness is found only in heaven, express the hope that the full consummation of Senator Ruffin's wishes for you may be long delayed?"

"And may you both live to repent of trying to turn a young girl's head," Helen replied, making them a curtsey.

"Once on a time I warned you against the day when such speeches would be made to you," said Rutledge, "and you have grown even more astonishingly into the danger than the eye of prophecy could perceive. I warn you again. Senator Ruffin spoke only the words of soberness, as befits his age and station, but wait you till ardent youth tells you what it thinks—and you will have to hold your head on straight with your hands: and—which dances may I have?"

"You unblushing bribe-giver!" said Helen. "But you are just in time. I've only one left if I've counted them right,—the very last. Why did you come so late? The very last man. Listen, the clocks are striking eleven."

"Just couldn't get here sooner. But I'll wait for that last dance if it's a month."

The receiving-party was broken up and proceeded to the refreshment room, afterward to go to the ballroom, where were gathered those younger people who were bidden to both reception and dance.

"Remember," said Evans to Helen as they left the East Room, "I shall worry along with existence till the last number on the card. See if you can't run in an extra for my long-suffering benefit. By the way, where is your sister?"

"In bed and cried herself to sleep two hours ago. Poor thing, she wanted to come in and see me shine, but mamma said 'no,' and packed her off to bed on schedule time."

"Now look here," said Evans, "little Miss Katherine is a young lady of vast consequence—and it's a shame she should be treated so: but I think you knew very well I was inquiring for your older sister."

"Oh, Elise?" she laughed. "She had gone across the hall with Captain Howard just before you came in."

Rutledge did not thank her for the information, and Helen regarded him narrowly with amusement.

"Victoria Crosses are not to be resisted, Mr. Rutledge. Heroes always have right of way."

"Do you speak from theory or experience?" asked Rutledge.

"Both," said Helen, as for the first time that night she thought of her husband.

She thought of him quite a number of times before the evening was over. In her thinking there was no disloyalty to her love nor to her vows: but with all the glowing prospects for a round of gayety which the brilliance of this evening of her *début* promised for her first season, she felt a vague regret that she was not approaching the pleasures of it in the fullest freedom. Some quite well-defined notions of what was due her estate as a wife threatened to put certain limitations and restraints upon her. She half wished that that ceremony had been deferred—only deferred—till the time when she would be ready to enter upon the duties of her wedded life, assume its responsibilities and be obedient to the restrictions which very properly pertain to it.

Her husband, also, was giving some thought to the questions which the situation presented, with the difference that he had not thought of anything else since the evening began. With nothing to do since eight o'clock, and free to go home, he had stopped to see Helen in her coming-out glory.

His livery was a passport; and he divided the time of the reception—rather unequally, to be sure—between scraps of conversation with coming and going coachmen he knew and long periods of gazing upon Helen's loveliness through a broad low window of the East Room. He had never seen her in the role or in the conventional evening dress of womanhood, and the vision enchanted him. Crowning the piquancy of youth and freshness and *élan* in the girl, was the un-studied dignity and stateliness and graciousness of the woman; and the metamorphosis held him entranced.

He looked and looked and looked at her while every variant tremor of love and pride and impatience swept over his heart-strings. He saw the most notable men in America, men whose business was world-politics, bow in evident admiration before her beauty, and linger to barter persiflage for her smiles and airy speeches: and she was *his* wife.

He saw her receive the magnificent Chief of Staff of the Army, resplendent in the uniform of his exalted rank: her, the wife of Sergeant Graham of "the 10th." And that towering figure with the stamp of "Briton" in every massive line? Yes, Hayward recognized him: the English member of the Canadian Fisheries Commission—a lawyer of international repute, a belted earl—bending a grand head low in obeisance to a footman's wife—to *his* wife. The insolence of pride filled his heart for a minute. Then a twinge of doubt went through him: she would not be a *footman's* wife: she had decreed *her* husband must be an officer—oh, the bother and the worry of it—and the uncertainty! But she was his beyond escape, and if the worst came to—no, that would be disloyalty.... Look, who is that shaking hands with her now? Hal Lodge, by all that's Boston! Where did he come from, and what's he doing here? No matter, he's here. Look out, Hal, old boy, don't hold my wife's hand so long—nor gaze into her eyes so meaningly—I

know your failing! My what a joke it would be if you fell in love with her!—it would be too funny. I owe it to old friendship to warn you, but I mustn't."

For the greater part of two hours Hayward watched the reception. He saw the last man presented.

"Yes, I know you, too," he thought. "You made that infernal speech in the Senate last year—said some good things for us, too, but on the whole it was damnable.... I'll excuse you from talking to my wife, you race-proud bigot! You needn't try any of your 'ardent Southerner' on her.... Keep off the grass. She belongs to me. She is mine—mine, curse you! and all your raving speeches can't take her away from me! ... Oh, well, talk on—yes, talk on to her. I wish to heaven *you would* fall in love with her! That would be quite the most delicious dispensation of fate that could ever come to me—it would be too good, too good to hope for—to have you hopelessly in love with *my wife*! ... Oh, you beauty, how can any man resist you!"

On the other side of the house Rutledge afterward swung past the footman's window in several dances with Elise.

"Oh," growled Hayward at last, "it's my brother-in-law you aspire to be! Well, I don't approve of that either. I'm surprised that your High-Mightiness condescends to my humble father-in-law's family anyway—and how they can suffer you to set foot in the house after your deliverances I can't see—I'd jump at the chance to pitch you out."

* * * * *

An idea akin to the footman's had come that night to Elise. For other reasons she, too, wondered why she permitted Evans Rutledge to continue his friendly attentions to herself. She had half made several resolves to put an end to them. But—it is a fact noted by close observers that even the most womanly woman has some curiosity—that she is mildly attracted by a riddle—that she detests—that is, she thinks about—what she can't understand. In the case in point Miss Elise Phillips was the woman and Mr. Evans Rutledge was the riddle.

From the moment that Lola DeVale had told her that Rutledge had kissed *her* believing her to be Elise the eldest Miss Phillips had had a growing desire to know why he should have done it. She was properly resentful that he had taken the liberty with her even by proxy—oh yes, she felt sometimes she could box his ears for his impudence.... But aside from all that, why had he kissed her? Lola had told her plainly long time ago that Mr. Rutledge had told her no less plainly that his self-respect would not permit him to confess his love again. Why then should he kiss her? ... Oh, of course, men kissed women, she knew, or at least had been led to believe, just for the downright fun of the thing; but Mr. Rutledge surely

was not so common—and would not deal with *her* on *that* basis. No, she would not believe it of him.... If she had only been there, she thought, and had seen the way the thing was done, the answer doubtless would appear. The answer to the why was evidently locked up in the *how*. Only Lola knew the details of *how*. Elise had finally decided that she might as well know them also.

Lola was no match for her friend in subtlety. On her own initiative, as she supposed and at the peril of severing their friendship, she gave Elise the whole story. When she saw that the listening Elise was only mildly offended at the disclosure, she again rehearsed the episode for the purpose of colouring it with the eloquence in Mr. Rutledge's tendernesses.

"It's a pity I was just enough stunned to be unable to stop him. I heard every wasted word he spoke and was conscious of all his misplaced kisses."

"Oh, there was no harm done," Elise replied with a contemptuous sniff. "I guess you are not the first young woman upon whom he was thrown away kisses. The modern young man never neglects any opportunity."

"Hear experience speak!" said Lola.

"My experience is not so far advanced as yours, apparently," rejoined Elise; "but I'm not so uninviting that no young man has ever shown a willingness to kiss me. With all my inexperience I know what they would do if I chose to bump my head against the terrace steps."

"Don't be envious and scratchy, dear. Remember I gave you your property as soon as—" but she desisted as Elise angrily tossed up her head and drew her fingers across her lips in belated protest against the transplanted caress.

Elise was verily displeased with Mr. Rutledge, whom she saw at irregular intervals, neither too long nor too short—for the times and seasons of his meetings with her were entirely insignificant. She even went to the trouble of making a special resolve that she would not think of him; but it died and went to the place where all good resolutions go. Now, Captain Howard was her devoted attendant, as far as she would permit him to monopolize her time. Outsiders conceded him first place and probable success in his wooing, and Elise herself had come to feel a sort of possessory interest in him. He was at her beck and call, quietly but evidently elated when at her side, and unmistakably bored when passing time with some other young woman and awaiting Elise's summons. But Rutledge: he was not less elated than Howard when it was his fortune to have Elise's whole attention, and made no effort to conceal his love for her;—and yet he did not attempt by word or look or gesture to add a jot of confirmation to his one declaration of it, or even to remind Elise that he had made it. A score of times she had seen his love in his eyes—plainly, so plainly, when he talked to her: but he talked always about impersonal matters—in an abominably interesting way—and when she dismissed him seemed to become oblivious to her existence and very careless

as to what time should elapse before he came to her again. Indeed he showed no apparent purpose to come—or to *stay away*, which was worse. If it would not give the lie to her indifference she would send him about his business for good and all.

Did he love her? Yes, she was convinced of it—without Lola’s assurances. Then, why had he kissed her? Would he kiss a woman for the love of her and yet be unwilling to tell that love to her? Would his self-respect permit him to kiss her whom his self-respect would not permit him to marry because her father received negroes at his table? ”Self-respect” would be making some peculiar distinctions in that case,—even if everything be conceded to a Southerner’s ideas of ”social equality.” A girl to be kissed, but not to be courted!—Elise’s face burned at the thought. No, she would not insult herself by believing Mr. Rutledge’s love had lost its chivalry—that he could deal with her on any such Tim-and-Bridget basis—there must be some other explanation.... Sometimes she desired the explanation very heartily.

In their last waltz on the evening of Helen’s *début*, both these wrong-headed young folks had been alive to the sensations bordering on the delicious with which her heavenly mood, his unspoken love and the sensuous music had quickened their pulses. There was something, however, in the suddenness, in the completeness, with which he turned away from her which Elise resented, and which made her want to know who it was that must have been in his thoughts even while he was making that last gallant speech to her. As she turned to see, he was being welcomed by little Miss Margaret Preston, a one-year’s blossom, with such a tell-tale flutter of shy admiration, that Elise chose to look that way again after a few moments. Then he was bent down above the little lady in that manner full of all gentleness and deference Elise knew so well, and was saying something to her,—as if nothing else in all the world was worth while,—which sent a rich, red blush to over-colour the blossom’s white and pink.

”So you keep in practice of your arts at all hazards,” thought Miss Phillips, ”even at the expense of young things like that! ... I hope that some *woman* will teach you your lesson yet!”—and she turned to Captain Howard with a bewildering smile, and did not look at Mr. Rutledge again that evening.

CHAPTER XXVI

All this time the footman-husband was doing sentry. With the passing of the receiving party into the supper-room he had changed position and mounted guard where he could look in on the dancing. A White House policeman who had had an eye on him all evening thought his conduct unusual and walked close by to give him a searching inspection. Afterward a secret-service man thought best to look him over carefully. None of these things moved him from his purpose, however; nor did the cold wind nor a thirty minutes' flurry of sleet unset his resolution. He watched his wife's every glide and turn in the dance till the violins sleepily sang of *Home, Sweet Home*.

The effect of his vigil on the dancing side was disturbing to Hayward. As Helen passed from the arms of one man to another he began to grow nervous. His positive resentment was aroused when she was whirled past the window in the embrace of a sprig of nobility attached to the Italian embassy. Her shivering husband's blood jumped. He had heard things about that chap!—oh, the profanation of his even touching the hand of Helen—thank Heaven the muse has stopped to catch its breath! Next it was Rutledge treading a measure with the débutante, and his anger burned again,—flaming no doubt it would have been had he known that the number was an extra devised by his wife in Rutledge's special favour. Anything was better than the Italian though!—some comfort in that.... And now comes Hal Lodge piloting her through the swirl. Careful, old man, don't hold her so close. She is quite able to carry a part of her own weight!

There can be no doubt it takes some culture—of a sort—for a man to be able to look with entire complacency upon his wife in another's arms, however fine a fellow or fast a friend that other is. There be those who have attained unto such culture: but Hayward had had few opportunities in that school—he was happily—in this case unhappily—ignorant of its refinements of learning. He knew, of course, as a matter of pure mentality, that it was a perfectly harmless pastime, but his heart would not subscribe to the knowledge. No, he thought, it was no use to try to deceive himself: he didn't like it and he didn't care to try to like it. She was his wife, and to have other men putting their arms about her even in the dance, when he himself did not have the privilege and would not have it until—oh, damn that commission!

* * * * *

The weeks following Helen's coming-out gave nothing to allay the tumult rising in her husband's heart. The duties of his service compelled him to look on many scenes from which he gladly would have turned his jealous eyes.

By the grim humour of fate was it, too, that his friend Hal Lodge should cause him the keenest heart-burnings. Hayward wrote to Helen all about their

friendship and intimate association at Harvard, and in letter after letter purposely related many incidents of Hal's college loves and flirtations so that Helen might know him as he knew him. He was loyal to his friendship however, and gave also a faithful account of Hal's excellences. There was no stint in his praise, nor any attempt to belittle Lodge in his wife's esteem. In such glowing terms did he sing of his friend's many virtues that he did not have the courage to unsay a word of it when friendship was turned to gall.

Thanks to Hayward's three years in the army he held it not a violation of their friendship that Hal had never given him the slightest word or nod of recognition, though the footman knew his livery had not concealed his identity. However, they met one evening when Hayward was off duty and in citizen's dress. They were on the street, unattended, with no other person in a block of them.

"Hello, Hal!" Hayward cried with the old-time ring in his voice, meeting Lodge squarely in front and holding out his hand.

Lodge stopped and looked at him.

"It's Graham. Cut the stare, old chap. I'd have sworn you knew me all these weeks, but now I see you didn't. Have I changed so much?"

"Oh, I knew you," said Lodge impassively—and turned and left him.

Hayward stared after him in speechless amazement that fast passed into speechless wrath. A hot wave of blood dashed a tingle of fire against every inch of his cuticle.... In such moments men have done murder.... He stood perfectly still till the February breeze had cooled him off.... He was again at his normal temperature, but the brief conflagration had brought calamity—tragedy: it had burned out a part of his life. In the inventory of loss were comradeship and loyalty and faith and affection and friendliness and inspirations and memories—burned to ashes, or charred and blackened and wrecked. Tragedy? The elemental tragedy of all the eternities is in the death of a friendship.... Despite the praises he had sung, Hayward might have told Helen about it—if the iron had not gone so deep into his soul. Men will parade their lighter hurts and gabble of them for pastime or to entertain their neighbours, but death-wounds bring the silence with them.

* * * * *

Helen's letters babbled on with occasional references to Mr. Lodge, in whom from time to time she saw exemplified one and another of the graces which Hayward had described and which she in turn recounted to him, as she thought, for his delectation. After some months of this it is not to be doubted or wondered at that Hayward took time to despise Lodge very thoroughly and sincerely.

From the moment of his rebuff the footman felt that he was not in a position to show his resentment. He wrote to Helen that his friend did not know him and asked her to make no mention of him to Lodge even in the most casual, inferential or roundabout fashion. No need to warn Helen: she had been frightened out of her wits by an incident occurring early after their coming from Hill-Top, and the footman's name was never on her tongue save in connection with his duties as a servant.

* * * * *

As the winter wore on and melted into spring, less and less indeed was the thought of her husband upon Helen's mind. Not, let it be understood, that she loved him less than upon the day of their marriage; but the rush of events gave her little time to think of him. Her letters proved that she thought of him regularly and affectionately, but proved no less that she thought of him briefly—and yet more briefly as time passed.

To Hayward, by nothing diverted from his hungry thoughts of her, his wife's slow but palpable withdrawing from him and from his life was an increasing torment; and the daily sight of her, to which his duties held him, as she attracted and received and appropriated and enjoyed the homage and admiration of the men who crowded about her, among whom in high favour was Lodge, was little less than a maddening torture. She seemed to be escaping him, and his heart was wrung—with love—fear—jealousy—hate. In a nervous hurry of desperation he sent to his lawyer-politician friend in New Hampshire all the information and recommendations he had in hand that were to accompany his application for appointment to a lieutenantancy, and wrote to him: "Stir around and get whatever else is necessary and fire them at Washington. Make all haste, as you value human life, for there is almost that dependent on this appointment. It is no little matter of military rank or of dollars and cents, but of life and—love."

CHAPTER XXVII

In the months leading up to another summer Hayward was more and more racked with impatience and with a reckless vacillation between hope and pessimism. The one thing that made Helen's gayeties in Washington at all bearable

to him was the promise of the coming summer days at Hill-Top when he would get at least an occasional chance of speaking to her and would be rid of the sight of the army of young fellows who were besieging her. There were heartsease and undisturbed love in the Hill-Top prospect, and his anticipations grew apace as the time for the migration came near.... The day was set, and arrived. The ex-trooper's kit was packed. He was ready, expectant.

He got Helen's letter about an hour before their train was to start. It told him good-bye. He looked at the word with dismay. After a time he read on. It had been decided she was not to go to Hill-Top with her mother and the little girls that morning—she did not know just when she would come—she was going to New York for a short visit to Alice Rhinelander, then she was going to Newport, after that to Bar Harbor—she had promised Daisy Sherrol a visit in the Catskills, and Madge Parker to join her house-party at Lake Placid, time not yet fixed—Alice was insisting that she come back to her for the Cup Races in September—besides these there were a number of other things under consideration—and taking it all together it was quite uncertain whether she would get home at all—she was so sorry that she wouldn't, but he must not begrudge her the pleasures of that season—when another came she would probably be an old married woman, steady and settled down—he would please look carefully after mamma and Katherine and May—and with her love she told him again good-bye.

Hayward went to Hill-Top and performed his service admirably as usual: but all the spring and snap were taken out of him. The days were monotonous in their lack of diverting occupation and he had much time to sit still and hold his hands—and think of his wife. But that would not do at all. He tried not to do so much of it. He wrote to his New Hampshire lawyer and had forwarded to him at Hill-Top all the papers relating to his commission, and filled out his spare time for several days in reviewing these momentous documents.

There was indeed a large and various collection of them. He and his friend had pulled many wires—political, personal, military and other. Beginning with a New Hampshire Senator and local politicians, up through army officers and men personally notable to the President of Harvard, from one or another he had drawn largely or moderately of the ammunition with which to wage his battle. Half of these did not know the use he intended to make of their commendations, but they were all sincerely given.

And he had made out a strong case. Such a forcible one in truth that, barring the handicap of his colour, he would win hands down. A man of his intelligence could not but know that it was a strong case, stronger indeed than he had dared to hope for. In the contemplation of it he was elated. The colouring of his outlook was roseate with promise. In that outlook he saw Helen *coming toward him*, not going away as she had been all these months. With his commission was she

coming, and his commission was coming so fast, so fast.

He felt that his appeal was irresistible, and his spirit was on a high wave of assurance. So high, indeed, that he decided to omit the personal claim upon the President's gratitude. He had felt for some time that perhaps that would not be altogether fair.... He bundled up the papers along with his final suggestions and sent them back to his lawyer with orders to lick them into shape and forward them to the President without another minute's delay.

He wrote to Helen of the imminence of the crisis in their affairs, but of doubt or apprehension he did not speak. He told her of his decision not to appeal to her father's sense of personal obligation. He exulted in his approaching triumph as if he had already apprehended and went into rhapsodies about the double prize it would bring to him: the shoulder-straps and her: a gentleman's work in serving the flag, and a gentleman's supremest guerdon—her love openly confessed and without reserve.

Helen's answer was brief but warmly sympathetic. She applauded his purpose to win on merit alone. His decision only confirmed her estimate of him. Her faith in his winning was fixed. A tender line closed the missive, and a laughing postscript besought him not to believe the half he saw in the papers about her.

Ah, the postscript! It suggested a thing which Hayward had not thought of before. He began to read the society notes in the metropolitan dailies, with special reference to Newport and Bar Harbor gossip, and with more especial reference to Miss Helen Phillips' doings thereat. He bought one or another of the papers at the village every day, and studied them religiously. In the very first was the interesting item that Mr. Harry Lodge was spending a time at Newport. So was Helen, as Hayward knew, though that paper did not say so. But the next day's issue did: and he began to exercise his brain with a continuous problem of its own devising. The problem was to figure out in his imagination the details of Helen's daily life.

Some days the papers said nothing of her, and then there would be so much that her husband resented the intrusion upon the right of privacy which the correspondents so ruthlessly invaded,—but he welcomed the news of her. The President's daughter was a public personage, and the great newspapers did not hesitate to treat her as such. Her comings and goings, her graces and beauty, her dresses and dances, her thoughts and her tastes, her wit and her charm were never-ending sources of supply for the bright young men who were paid by the column for their "stuff." Hayward read every word of it—though a Harvard man ought to have had more sense: and Mr. Lodge began to figure more and more largely in "the conditions of the problem."

Hayward made no allowance for reportorial zeal or mendacity, the first always much, and the last, while unusual, always possible. The young gentlemen

furnished him enough to think about, and his imagination began to add enough, and more than enough, to worry about. When imagination sets out to go wrong it invariably goes badly wrong, for the reason that it plays a game without a limit.

However, the footman's imaginings were not entirely without provocation. As the days passed, Helen's letters became mere scraps, generally tender, sometimes quite tender, but hurried, snatchy, with long silences between. To supply the lack of authentic information of her, her husband studied more assiduously the newspaper columns: and the poisoned tooth of jealousy struck deeper into his heart. At last, between Helen's indifference and the nagging news-notes, he could not endure it longer. He wrote her a protest hot with the fever of heart-burning and of outraged love. He re-read that letter a dozen times in indecision—and trembled as he dropped it in the box.... Nervously he waited for an answer,—and yet he waited.... The silence grew ominous.... His fears grew also. But why, thought he, should he fear? She was his wife, and he had the right to protest.... His anger rose at her contemptuous disregard of him: his anger—and his fear. He knew she was bound to him past undoing. Nevertheless, his fears did abide and thicken, while the summer and the silence drew along slowly hand in hand.

* * * * *

September had come, bringing yet no letter from his wife to fetch the confusion of Hayward's fear, his resentment, his love and his jealousy to something of peaceful order. His spirit was already beset with wild imaginings and desire, when one day he opened a *Journal* to read:

ROMANCE IN HIGH PLACES
The President's Daughter, Besought
By Eligibles of Many Lands, Will
Wed An American Citizen
Superb American Beauty Follows Her Heart
Engagement of Miss Helen Phillips and Mr. Harry
Lodge

Hayward sat down on the first thing that offered itself. He felt just a little uncertain about standing up. He read the staring headlines over again, and, hot and cold by turns, plunged into the details of this High Romance.

Unbelievable? Beyond doubt. Unthinkable even—to him who knew. But the fabrication artist hammered his brain and heart with such a mass of de-

tail, with such a crushing tone of assuredness and authority, that the footman's thoughts and beliefs were pounded into stupefaction and he knew neither what to think nor what to believe. His brain jumped to recall the details of their marriage, in fearful search of a possible defect or omission which might vitiate it. It had been very hurriedly done, all superfluities were omitted, but the officer had assured him that they were hard and fast man and wife.

Had Helen discovered a flaw in the contract? And would she evade it thus? ... When that last question struck his brain, a dozen passions swarmed to fight within his heart: love, jealousy, fear, defiance. Shaking with the tumult of them all, he wrote to Helen again.

"It has been six long weeks since you received my last letter. Not a word has come to me in answer till this, to-day:

(Here he pasted in the headlines clipped from the *Journal*.)

"Is this your reply? If it is, I swear to you it shall not be. That insufferable cad cannot live upon the earth to take you from me. I will snuff his contemptible life out rather. You know that you are mine—wife—by every vow and promise which the law prescribes. It is incredible that you should ignore your troth plighted to me. It is impossible for you to break it in this fashion. I would not have believed you could be a fickle and unfaithful Helen. I do not believe it. It is a lie. Write and tell me it is a lie. Write quickly for the love of God. No, no, you need not write. It is false. I know it is false—for you cannot be false.

"But oh my Helen, why did you not listen to me? Why did you, a wedded wife, persist in receiving attentions from men, from this one man in particular, the most contemptibly caddish creature among all your admirers? I have deplored your unrestraint but I resent it that *Lodge* should have found such special favour at your hands as to give currency to this report. He is unutterably unworthy. I beseech you by the love I shall dare to believe is mine until you tell me I have lost it to conduct yourself so that such lies as this shall not be printed. Think what will be said of your gayeties when it is announced that you have been married a year. I love you, wildly, madly, as this incoherent letter shows. You have told me that your love is mine and I believe it. Forgive me and write to me, queen of my heart. I am starving for lack of the love which is already my own."

Helen's reply to that letter came quickly enough.

"I refer you to yesterday's papers," it said icily, "for my answer to your ravings about that absurd newspaper story. Your jealousy is insulting, and your aspersions of Mr. Lodge are inexplicable. He is everything that is honourable, and it is only your frenzied attack upon him that is 'unutterably unworthy.' I sincerely regret that I was so foolish as to marry you when I did. You are unreasonably exacting and I will not be bound by it. You have no right to make demands of me."

Hayward had the sensation of being struck in the face. If he had been disturbed with vague doubts theretofore, he was now harassed by very certain and lively fear. The "yesterday's papers" to which Helen referred him had had a very explicit denial of the engagement, and Helen's sharp reply admitted her marriage to him; but the last declarations of her letter were ambiguous and defiant, and his heart sank when he remembered that marriages were often annulled, and that, even though the courts might not give freedom, there was no way to compel a wife to live with her husband.

Every manner of possibility and expedient whirled round and round in his brain until his thoughts were an almost insane jumble of fear, indecision and wrath. Finally out of the travail of his hopelessness and confusion of ideas there rose his fighting spirit and was born the mighty oath he swore, that she was his, he must have her, and in spite of the world, flesh and the devil, by God, he would have her!

One never-to-be-forgotten night was the first he spent after receiving Helen's letter: a nightmare from his lying down until the dawn. A tumult of shifting phantasms, disordered, chaotic, terrible, assailed him with incessant horrors the night long, while through it all there ran as a continuing and connecting tragedy his struggle to possess himself of Helen. In his wild dreams she was sometimes his and again escaping him; but always when he held her it was by right of might. A time he was clasping her close and warm in his arms, but fainting and unconscious, as he ran with her down Pennsylvania Avenue, Lodge, Rutledge, Phillips and an angry horde in hot pursuit. Again, he was dragging her through a never-ending swamp, limp and lifeless, one side of her face a-drip with blood. With a blood-stained axe he was fighting a furious, breath-spent way through vines and tangled undergrowth, the while there sounded in his ears the lone-drawn baying of hounds upon his track.

From that bed of horrors he sprang with relief before the first light in the east. He was glad just to be awake and he felt as if he wished never to close his eyes again.

CHAPTER XXVIII

"You will have Shortman and the landau at the door at ten o'clock," said Mrs. Phillips to Hayward when he appeared for duty that morning. Shortman was

the coachman.

When the servants appeared at ten for orders they were told that they should proceed to Cahudaga and bring back with them in the afternoon Miss Helen and two friends.... Shortman, stolid and indifferent as he usually was, was yet interested to note that he could not understand some of the things the footman said and did on that ride to Cahudaga.

Alice Rhinelanders's sudden indisposition forbade her to attempt the long drive to Hill-Top, and Lucile Hammersley, of course, could not leave her guest. As Helen was to have but one day at home, however, she decided to go alone, and leave the two others to follow her on the morrow. As it was, she deferred starting till the latest possible moment. A threatening sky, splashed with sunshine but brushed with the fleeting clouds and winds of the close-coming equinox, was Mr. Hammersley's pretext for insisting that she also remain over night; but a childish desire to go home now that she was near it impelled her to tear herself away at the last minute for the solitary drive.

She spoke pleasantly to Shortman and Hayward when she came out to get in the carriage, and Hayward thought that her perfect composure in what seemed to him a tense situation was marvellous to behold. At the first sight of her glorious beauty he had an impulse to prostrate himself in adoration, but that something of the grand lady which she had unconsciously taken on held him stiffly to his character, if nothing else had done so. He held open the door for her, pushed her skirt clear—his pulses gone wild at the touch of it—shut her in securely, climbed to his seat beside Shortman and faced steadily to the front. He was afraid to seek a personal look from Helen's eyes. She, looking upon his broad back, erect and flat, strong in every line, did not guess the storm that was shaking him within. She was no little surprised at the grip he had on himself, and really indulged in some admiration of his indifferent air in what had been to her notion, also, a rather tense situation—for him. Her father's daughter, she had never met or imagined the situation to which she would not be equal...

While Hayward's spirit was being storm-swept, a literal tempest was driving down upon them. They were less than half-way home and on a lonely and unpeopled part of their road when the storm fell. The men and Helen, too, had ascribed the increasing darkness to the fast-coming nightfall, for the air about them was still and warm, and the sun had gone some time before behind a bank of low-lying clouds. A lightning-flash was the first herald of danger; and drive then as Shortman might, it was a losing race.

The storm seemed disposed to play cat-and-mouse with them. Hurrying over them in scurrying clouds darker and blacker growing, it only watched the hard-driven horses, nor so much as blew a breath upon them.... Mocking them now, it blew a puff, puff—and again was silence. As if to incite them to more

amusing endeavours, along with another puff it threw at them a capful of giant rain-drops: and again drew off from the game to watch them run with fright.... Next came a brilliant sheet of lightning, revealing the cavernous furrows and writhing convulsions on the storm-god's front—but not the *sound* of thunder nor the jarring shock of the riving bolt—that would be carrying the joke with these scared and fleeing pigmies too far.... Another awful, mocking grimace of the storm, and then another. After each, the darkness coming like a down-flung blanket closer and closer to envelop the earth. And through it all, that awful silent stillness, broken so far only by the clatter of those sportive raindrops and the rustle of the contemptuous puffs.... But the giant hadn't time to play with children: Crash, ROAR—the hurricane struck the hapless carriage!

Shortman was driving wildly to reach a little farmhouse two miles yet ahead, the first hope of shelter. In the sheets of light his eyes swept the ill-kept road to fix his course, and in the inky blackness following he held to it in desperate and unslacking haste till another flash revealed it further to him.

The thundering wind mauled and pummelled them. It shook and tore them. It shook and tore the very earth as they plunged fearfully forward through the terrible light and the awful darkness. In the deafening, blinding roar and rush, sight and hearing were pounded almost into insensibility and Helen tried to cry out to the swaying figures on the driver's seat—but screamed instead in terror as calamity caught them. Crack! *Crash!* CRUSH!—and woman, men, horses and carriage were buried under a down-coming treetop.

* * * * *

Helen felt she had not lost consciousness, but she did not know. Hayward was struggling to release her from the wrecked landau. He was calling to her, screaming rather,—for the shrieking wind was raging as if with the taste of blood. She could see him plainly as he fought through the threshing branches of the giant oak that had smashed them. The light which revealed him to her was continuous, but flashing and dancing. She looked to see whence it came, and her blood froze as she saw the sputtering end of an electric transmission cable which the falling forest monarch had broken and carried down. At the foot of Niagara were mighty turbines a-whirl which sent the deadly current to threaten and to slay. Men had intended it for works of peace and industry in lake villages, but Nature had stepped in to reclaim it as one of her own cataclysmic forces, and Niagara's rioting waters, unwitting and uncaring, sent it just as merrily and as mightily to works of death.

Hayward well knew that death was in the touch of that whipping wire, tangled in boughs beaten and lashed by the demoniac winds: but Helen was in

danger, and he hesitated not to come to her. After a struggle that tested muscle as well as courage, he dragged her free and started to carry her up the roadside bank to a small hut or shack which the light revealed. Helen shook herself from his arms.

"Where is Shortman?" she cried against the tempest.

Hayward pointed to the wrecked carriage. As she looked, one of the horses, uttering a cry and trying to rise, was flicked on the head by the end of the hissing wire, and, in a flash of greenish-blue flame, sank down and was still.

"Help Shortman!" Helen cried again.

At her command Hayward plunged into the tree-top and after a longer struggle than had been necessary in rescuing Helen, he pulled the coachman out and laid him limp at his wife's feet. He understood rather than heard the question she asked. He nodded his head in affirmative answer, and said, as if talking to himself:

"Dead, Miss Helen."

It had not been more than two minutes since the fury of the storm broke upon them. The rain-drops, which had been desultory, now came down in torrents. Hayward turned toward his wife. She was sinking trembling to the road. He caught her up and hurried her to the hut.

Their refuge was quite small, but afforded shelter from the downpour of water. It was a little patched-up affair that had been used by the labourers who constructed the electric transmission line, and was without opening except the door, there being no shutter to that. A rude table of rough planks built against the wall was its only furnishing. What had been a small bench was broken up and useless.

Hayward held Helen in his arms while he inventoried the contents in the uncertain light, but at her first movement to free herself from his embrace he gently seated her on the little table and stood beside her at the end of it. She was faint with horror and fright and, closing her eyes, sank back against the wall for support: while the wind-driven torrent howled and surged past the door and the fierce but unspeaking lightning lit up the awful night.... Helen was getting some sort of grip on her nerves again when, turning toward the door, in the pallid light she had a vision of the ghastly face lying in the road below them. She shuddered—the faintness was overmastering—and toppled unconscious against her husband's arm. He caught her tenderly, not knowing she had lost consciousness, and, putting his arm around her, drew her softly and closely to himself.

For a long time he stood thus in silence, fearing that speech might break the spell. At last he spoke to her, but she did not answer. He ascribed her silence to fright, and with gentle and reassuring words essayed to compose her fears. He took note of her failure to speak to him: but she was submissive to his caresses,

and he was well content with that. At her non-resistance he became more affectionate in his tendernesses, and was lost in the ecstasy of holding her to his heart.

Gone—far removed—from him was the thought of the storm-riven night. An end, he exulted, to nightmares in which she was fleeing from him. His wife was in his arms at last! The silent modesty with which she had committed herself to him was eloquent of her heart's love and faithfulness:—and his pulses sang with joy despite the tragedy that had befallen.

The wind and rain were slackening, but the lightning played on. With a sigh and shiver Helen stirred, and pushed feebly away.

"Where am I? Where are we?" she asked confusedly.

"About two miles and a half from the Lake Drive," Hayward answered, "about four miles from home."

"But what are we doing here? How did we get here?"

Hayward started. In heaven's name, her mind was not unsettled!

"The wreck—I carried you in here out of the storm."

"Oh—yes,—now I remember," Helen said, leaning back against the wall and putting her hands before her eyes as if to shut out memory.

In a flash Hayward was in the clutch of the old terror.

"She did not know, then," he thought. "She was unconscious, and did not give herself to me." Again he was on the rack, all his doubts and fears and jealousies a-surge, but maddened and fired by the memory, the lingering perfume, of her smooth cheek and warm lips.

"How long must we stay here?" Helen asked, starting up.

"Until the storm is over, at the least. They may send after us when we do not arrive on time. I cannot leave you here, or I would go after help now."

"No! you must not leave me here! We will wait till help comes or until—I can go with you. Do you think it will be long?"

Hayward went to the little door and surveyed the heavens.

"Another storm seems to be headed this way," he said. "If that strikes us there's no telling when we will get away. We are perfectly safe here, however. This cabin is built back against the hill and there are no trees near enough to fall on us."

"Were you hurt?" asked Helen abruptly, for the first time thinking of the dangers they had gone through as dangers.

"Nothing worth reporting," said Hayward in order to allay her fears. It was a lie well told, for he had a decidedly caved-in feeling about his ribs.

"You saved my life again—this time at risk of your own. When the carriage was crushed I thought that I—oh, it is too horrible!" She trembled violently.

Hayward saw that he must divert her thoughts from this direful night. He

was much desirous of discussing other matters anyway. After a silent minute he began.

"Your return was quite unexpected to—us," he said.

"Yes, and a very short visit I'm to make as it is. I leave again day after to-morrow morning."

She stopped and apparently did not care to say more of herself—or of her plans.... Hayward was of a different mind.

"You didn't say anything of this visit in your last letter," he ventured.

"No, I had not decided on it then." ... Silence again.

"Helen, why did you write me that letter?" Hayward squared himself for battle and fired the first shot.

"I only answered yours—your two letters, rather. You insisted on making your—demands, and I simply told you what I thought. You also attacked one of my friends, and I defended him."

Helen was not versed in the art of indirection or evasion. Hayward was very thankful for that. It made the issue clear, and made it quickly.

"As for your friend," said Hayward, "your defence of him is without knowledge—"

"As your attack upon him was without justice," Helen interrupted.

"I said he was a contemptible cad, and I stand ready to prove it. You may be the judge of it. He was my friend at college, and our relations were of such intimacy as I have told you about, and yet, knowing me full well, he refused to know me in Washington, or to shake hands with me, or to speak to me, even."

"Perhaps he did not remember you. Remember it has been five or six—"

"I'm telling you he did know me. He admitted it—in order that his affront might be unequivocal. I tell you he's a cad, a damnable cad, and I want you to cut him off your list. Promise me that you will have nothing more to do with him."

The man in his half-demand, half-plea, put out his arm toward her to reinforce his appeal with a caress, but his wife drew away from him and warded off his hand as she spoke to him.

"No," she cried, "I cannot believe it. There must be some explanation—I cannot do it—I'm to be one of his automobile party next Thursday.... Don't—don't!"

"What! May I not kiss you?"

"No, no. Not—not now."

"But you are my wife—I have the right to kiss you."

"You have no right," said Helen.

Hayward grew suddenly cold with passion.

"I have every right—more right than that contemptible Lodge has to put his arm around you in the dance!"

"He at least has my permission," Helen replied spiritedly. But she would not have provoked him perhaps if she had known of the fever rising in his blood for all these months.

"Your permission, has he! And I am to beg for rights that are mine—and be refused!" His voice rose in anger with the roar and rush of the new-coming storm.

"You are mine!" he screamed. "I forbid you to meet him again! No man shall take you from me! I love you—I love you—and I will kill any man who tries to rob me of you! Helen, Helen, tell me you are mine—mine now! Not that you will be mine when I win my commission, but that you are already mine—*mine now!*"

Helen turned away from him, terrified by his violence of speech. The man's every passion went wild as he read refusal in her movement. Only for a moment does she look away, however. In that instant she sees again the dead coachman, prone and ghastly as before, but with the end of that blazing wire lying against the back of his head, from which rises the vapour of burning flesh. Sickened with horror she turns to Hayward and reaches out her hand for his support. He clutches her passionately. His blood rushes to his heart in a flood—and then stands still.

"This is surrender," he thinks,—and his veins are aflame.

Helen is quiescent in his arms for a short space and suffers his caresses. Suddenly startled, she looks at his face. In a flash of light she sees it—distorted! With a shriek of terror she wildly tries to push him from her: but the demon of the blood of Guinea Gumbo is pitiless, and against the fury of it, as of the storm, she fights and cries—in vain.

CHAPTER XXIX

With his editorial duties and with the plans of his campaign for Mr. Killam's seat in the Senate, Evans Rutledge was as busy a man as Washington knew. However, he dropped his work long enough to attend upon Lola DeVale's marriage. He was no little surprised when Oliver Hazard asked him to stand by at his wedding. He was on friendly terms with the bride—and with Hazard, too, for that matter; but he did not know the strength and sincerity of Lola DeVale's friendship for him.

"We must have Mr. Rutledge," she had said to Hazard when they were

choosing their attendants; "and he shall be paired with Elise. I have set my heart on that match, for if it fails I have been kissed for nothing."

"Certainly we'll have him if you wish. He's a great fellow, I think, and he'll be a winner all right, don't worry yourself. He'll win out on naked luck, for any man who can just stumble along and kiss you by mistake is evidently a special protégé of the gods." ...

The score or more of young people in the bridal party met at Grace Church on the afternoon before the event to get the details of their marching and counter-marching in order. Lola was there to overlook putting them through their paces, but she left the details of straightening out the chattering, rollicking bridesmaids and groomsmen to Elise and Hazard. Rutledge soon learned his role and stood to it like a schoolboy when he was ordered, but he spent most of the time in sympathetic talk with the bride-to-be.

That night when the other girls who filled the house were scattered to their rooms and Elise and Lola were snuggled up in bed, Lola put her arm around her friend and began to say what was on her mind.

"I think it's very rude to refuse to answer a civil question, don't you, Elise?"

Elise was thinking of something else, but she heard enough of what Lola said to answer "yes" in an absent-minded way.

"That would be so with any question. But if it was about a matter of importance the refusal to answer would be more than rude, it would be—exasperating, don't you think?"

"What are you talking about?" Elise asked.

"And if it were a matter of the very greatest importance," Lola continued, "and by every right and custom an answer of some sort was due, and one was flatly told there was *no answer*, then such unpardonable rudeness should be resented, and self-respect would *demand* that the question be not repeated."

"Lola DeVale," said Elise, turning to face her, "in the name of sense, have you gone daffy?"

"I agree with Mr. Rutledge," said Lola in the same monotone, as she in turn faced away from Elise, "self-respect forbids."

"Here," exclaimed Elise, "turn back over here and say all that again."

"Haven't time," said Lola with a yawn. "I must be getting my beauty-sleep. Good night."

Elise was quiet half a minute.

"Of all the silly people!"—she stirred Lola up with a poke in the ribs—"when did he tell you that?"

"I'm not divulging any confidences," said Lola.

"And what, pray, are you divulging?" asked Elise.

"My opinion that a civil question demands an answer of some sort—a good

round 'no,' if nothing else—not the dismissal one gives a telegraph messenger.”

”There you go again—and I don’t understand; but you said something of ‘self-respect’?”

”I’m glad he has it. A man’s not made for a woman to wipe her feet on, even if he does love her.”

”For goodness sake, Lola, quit making riddles. Just what do you think you are talking about?”

”Do you mean to tell me,” demanded Lola, turning toward her, ”that Mr. Rutledge did not ask you to marry him and that you didn’t tell him there was *no answer*,—that you didn’t treat him with contempt, with indifference, with just about as much consideration as you would a clerk who gave you a hand-bill of a cut-price sale? There now!”

”So that’s the cause of all this—this *self-respect*, the reason for all this religious silence of his lips—while his eyes work overtime? I thought it was because that it—that there was really something; and is *that* all!” Elise laughed merrily.

”I think it’s shameful, myself!” said Lola severely. ”I glory in his resentment.”

”I have never noticed any resentment, and—*I did not treat him so*,” replied the quick-witted Elise combatively. Quietly her heart laughed on.

”You deny it?” asked Lola.

”Yes, I deny it. He did not ask me to marry him. He simply told me—quite abruptly—that he loved me, and, after some time, asked me for my answer. What was I to answer? When there is no question there can be no answer. So I told him there was *no answer*. If a man will insist upon an answer he must not be so stupid as to forget to put a question.”

Elise chuckled inwardly as she constructed this specious defence. She was in very good humour with herself,—and with Lola.

”But promise me,” she hurried on to say, ”that you will not intimate to Mr. Rutledge that it is his stupidity that has swelled his bump of self-respect for these last four years.”

Lola demurred to this form of statement: bless her, she was a loyal friend. But Elise insisted.

”Not a word to Mr. Rutledge! Let him discover his mistakes unaided. Promise me. *Promise*,” she demanded.

Lola promised.

”Cross your heart and hope you may die,” Elise added.

Lola laughingly went through these binding formalities.

”Now the goblins will get you if you ever tell him and besides that I would know it at once. If you do I’ll send him packing for good and all.”

Lola protested that she would leave Mr. Rutledge entirely to his own

devices,—and she kept her promise.

Lola had insisted on retiring early for a good night's rest, but it was long after midnight before she and her school-day chum grew sleepy over their confidences. Along at the last Elise pressed her face down in the pillow beside Lola's cheek and whispered:

"Honey, if it wasn't very dark and our last night together I couldn't tell you; but do you know if Mr. Rutledge were to ask me to marry him to-morrow I would have to tell him there was no answer."

Lola lay still till she caught the meaning of this confession. Then she softly kissed Elise good-night.

"Let your heart decide, dearest," she said.

At the wedding breakfast next morning, and at the church at noon, Rutledge was bewildered by the softness, the gentleness of Elise's manner toward him. There was nothing of the cold brilliance, nor of the warm combativeness, nor of the lukewarm indifference of her moods for such a long time past. Like the breath of long forgotten summers, of one particular halcyon summer, was her simple-hearted friendliness on that day. He harked back by a conscious effort to keep in touch with his grievance, but it seemed to be eluding his grasp.

For a great part of five hours on the train returning to Washington he sat beside her and steadily forgot everything that had come to pass since the days when he first knew and loved this adorable girl. His resentment and his resolutions were toppling and falling, despite his efforts at reserve in his few scattering lucid intervals of "self-respect."

Elise, outrageously well-informed of the reasons and resources and weaknesses of his resistance, almost laughed outright at the ease with which she scattered his forces and at his spasmodic attempts to regather them. She recalled the rigour of her treatment of him, the contempt she had had for the quality of his love, the apparent heartless lack of appreciation of his championship of her name in the Smith affair: and she was of a mind to make amends. In making amends she tore Rutledge's resentment and "self-respect" to tatters, and set his love a-fire. She really did not intend to overdo it. She sincerely wished only to make amends.

At last he turned to her with a look which scared her. She saw that the last shred of his "self-respect" was gone, and that only the crowded car prevented a precipitate, outspoken surrender. She felt very generous toward that "self-respect" now that it was defeated. She did not care to humiliate it. She was also in a temper to be mischievous and a mite reckless. And, further, she was not ready to have Rutledge putting any questions. As the train was rolling under the shed at Washington she said to him in the very friendliest and most serious way:

"Mr. Rutledge, it seems that you are under the delusion that once upon a

time you asked me a question which has never been answered. In order that I may not appear rude or unappreciative I will say that my answer to that question would have been 'no.'"

And she left him to think over that.

CHAPTER XXX

On the day that Congress convened after the Christmas holidays President Phillips sent to the Senate, among other nominations, that of John H. Graham to be a second lieutenant of cavalry.

Hayward had been for a long time unhappy, depressed, apprehensive of failure. That his name had not been among those submitted at the beginning of the session in December had almost assured his defeat.

All his attempts at communication with Helen since the night of the storm had been met with an accusing silence. Her pale face, which had not regained its colour for weeks, was always averted, and by no trick or chance, by no wild torrent of self-denunciation, nor heart-moving prayer for pardon, nor protestations of love, nor dumb humility of sorrow in his eyes or attitude, could she be brought to look upon him. Neither had she written a line in answer to all his letters of pleading and repentance. True, he had his fiery moments of self-assertion and desperate resolves, and they had fought self-revilings for possession of his soul in many an hour since that wild night, but he crushed them under heel within his heart, and ever wrote contritely to his wife.

For several days after his nomination went to the Senate he waited in hope to receive Helen's congratulations. It had meant so much to them. With a last remnant of hope he wrote to her of it. If that would not break the silence he was undone. At the end of the letter he added in most abject contrition:

"I would joyfully die to atone. My life awaits your command."

The silence was not broken.

* * * * *

Miss Lily Porter's eyes had not fallen on Hayward since his return from Hill-Top. When she saw in the papers that his nomination was before the Senate she hesitated not to write to him to come to see her. On his first night off, Hayward

went.

If ever a man was pursued by a woman the White House footman was that man. He saw the game ahead of him before he had been five minutes within the door. A proposal was expected of him. Clearly, it was expected that evening. Hayward was in a frame of mind to welcome the diversion. He had no idea of making the proposal, of course, but he was careless enough of what should happen to him to be quite willing to give Miss Porter the worth of her trouble in the way of mild excitement.

Lily opened up the subject with her congratulations: and the game was on. Up and down, back and forth, round and round the field of conversation she chased the quick-tongued, nimble-witted young fellow in her effort to coax, persuade, lead, drive, push him into the net. The young man was entertaining, but elusive. He was gallant, admiring, soft-spoken, confiding—but there was no way of bringing him to book. The girl took another tack. She went to the piano and sang for him. She sang for him at first, many of the ballads and one thing and another that he formerly had delighted in. Then she sang to him. Hayward leaned against the piano and listened with a very lively appreciation. Music had a power for him where many other things would fail, and the music in Lily Porter's throat was enough to enthrall even though he were deaf to the song in her heart.

Henry Porter was caught by the real note in his daughter's voice as he passed the door, and, stopping where he could see as well as hear, he was enlightened by the tale her face was telling. He was mad all over in a minute, and he made short work of it.

"Git out of my house," he blurted out at Hayward as he stalked angrily into the midst of Lily's melodious love-making. "I tol' you once I didn' want any footman callin' on my daughter!"

"Oh, papa! What do you mean?" Lily cried, springing up from the piano.

"I mean git out when I say git out!"

"Wait a moment, Mr. Hayward," Lily called to the footman, who, chin in air, was leaving the room, truth to tell, no little relieved at this complete solution of what was fast becoming an embarrassing situation for him.

"No use to wait. Move on!" the father growled, placing himself across the door to prevent Lily's following her caller. Upon her attempt to push by him he caught her and shoved her into a chair. As the outer door closed with a very modest and well-mannered snap, he released his hold upon her arm. He was yet in a fury.

"So you've lied to me! Thought you could fool your ol' daddy! But I guess not!"

"I haven't lied to you."

"You have! You tol' me you were goin' to marry a military man, and here

you are, dead gone on this footman—and no use to deny out of it!”

Lily didn’t attempt to deny it.

”Umhuh, I knew it! Already promised him, ain’t yuh?”

No denial of that either, to her father’s consternation.

”What! And you a-tellin’ me all the time you were goin’ to marry a military man! You lyin’ huzzy!”

”But he’s a military man—he’s the John H. Graham whose commission is before the Senate—now I hope you are satisfied!”

Henry Porter stopped his stamping about and looked at his daughter several seconds in silence.

”He’s—he’s who?” he asked in astonishment.

”He’s the same John H. Graham you were reading about in the *Post* this morning—the man the President has appointed a lieutenant in the cavalry.”

”But his name’s not Graham.”

”His name *is* Graham—John Hayward Graham—Lieutenant John Hayward Graham when the Senate confirms it.”

Old Henry looked a little bit nonplussed. His daughter took courage. She jumped up and grabbed him.

”Come on right now and write him an apology, and send it so that it will get to his rooms by the time he does!”

Old Henry demurred. His dignity was a very real thing—as hard and substantial as his dollars.

”Oh, no, no. Wait awhile. Le’s think about it. No use to be in a hurry. He’ll come back agin. What did he go sneakin’ roun’ here without his name for if he wanted people to treat him right? A man’s got no business monkeyin’ with his name.”

”But you *must* write him an apology, papa. You just must!”

”Oh, well, mebbe I will. But I’ll wait till to-morrer. Better wait till the Senate confirms him though, and be certain about it.”

”Oh, no! That would *never* do. It would be too plain,”—and Lily went into a long disquisition to fetch her hard-headed old daddy to her way of thinking. He showed some signs of relenting but could not be persuaded that night. When the morning came it took all her powers to push him to the point of sending a suitable note to Hayward: but she accomplished it. Hayward’s stinging, sarcastic, withering reply was not written till late in the afternoon, and in the footman’s agitation over other concerns was not mailed till his mother found it in his room on the day after that. By the time Mr. Henry Porter received it, other events had come to pass that gave it some emphasis....

When Hayward Graham returned to his room after his dismissal from Porter’s house he found a letter addressed to him in his wife’s writing. He tore

it open hungrily.

"You say you would joyfully die to atone. That would be the very best thing you could do—the only fitting thing you could do.—H."

A grim smile lighted the man's face. At the moment the blood of some long-dead cavalier ancestor splashed through his heart, and he wrote the brief reply.

"Your wish is law, and shall be obeyed. Grant me one day to put my house in order."

* * * * *

Her maid handed the message to Helen before she was out of bed the next morning. The girl read it, caught its meaning, and shook with an ague of fear. Her love for her husband, outraged and stricken, may not have been dead—for who shall speak the last word for a woman's heart?—and her tender soul recoiled at the murder so calmly forespoken: and yet neither of these impulses was elemental in her agony of terror. Her impetuous letter of the day before, breaking a silence she had sworn to keep, was not intended as a reply to anything that Hayward had written. It was but a wild protest against the new-born realization that her situation was tragic, and could not be ignored nor long concealed. She had not meant to suggest or to counsel death, but to rail against life. The possibility of his taking-off had not occurred to her. His letter terrified her! Death!—her husband's death? It was the one thing that must *not* be! When she had read his words, her blood was ice. "No! No!" her teeth chattered as she dressed, "he must not, he must not!" In the nervousness, the weakness, the faintness, the sickness into which fevered meditations upon the day-old revelation had shaken her, she did not think to question the sincerity of Hayward's purpose at self-destruction. The calamity was imminent—and trebly calamitous. The chill of more than death was upon her. When she had dressed she dashed off a hurried scrawl.

"No, no, no. I did not mean that. It is not my wish that you destroy yourself. You must not. *You must not!* I need you—above everything I *need you*. If you die I am undone! Where is our marriage certificate? Or was there one? And who was that witness? Do not die, do not die. As you love me *do not die!*"

She carefully arranged every detail of her toilet, pinched her pale cheeks into something of pink, put on her morning smile, and, with a very conscious effort at lightness of manner, tripped out into the hall and down the stairs. She knew the very spot on which she would see her husband standing. With a round-about journey she approached it. He was not there. She laughed nervously, and with an aimless air, but a faster thumping heart, sought him at another haunt. Failure. And failure again. She went to breakfast, and displayed a lack of appetite and a tendency to hysterics. After breakfast she lingered down-stairs on every conceivable pretext, and journeyed from one end of the house to the other many times and again. At last when her nerves could not stand the strain a second longer she asked the coachman, who had driven the carriage to the door, where Hayward was. She felt that there was a full confession in the tones of her voice.

"Hayward asked for a day off this mornin', mum. He didn't come. Just telephoned."

Helen felt the tension of her nerves snap. She hurried to her room, suppressing fairly by force an impulse to scream, and locking the door, threw herself across the bed. There for three hours, pleading a headache and denying admittance to all who knocked, she cowered before the thoughts of her seething brain—and suffered torment.

Along about two o'clock she sprang up suddenly and turned out of her trunk all of her husband's letters and began feverishly to search for one she remembered written long ago which by chance contained the street number of his lodgings. She was nearly an hour finding it.

Again she went through the womanly process of making herself presentable, and sauntered freshly forth in quest of the post office and a special delivery stamp. With an added prayer that he relieve her suspense quickly, she dropped her agonized note into the box under the hurry postage. Having thus done all that was possible to save her husband's life—and her own—she went back to her bed in collapse, and waited for the night-fall as one, hoping for a reprieve, who must die at sunset.

CHAPTER XXXI

Helen waited in vain for a word from her husband. Her letter did not come to his hand. She tossed in agonized suspense through the long hours—through the

snail-paced minutes—through the dragging, tortured moments.

Elise came in to see her. Helen gave the first explanation of her indisposition that came to mind, and declined all ministrations. Her mother came, and she would have dismissed her as briefly had not Mrs. Phillips asserted authority and ordered her into bed and suggested calling the family physician. At this intimation Helen demurred. She felt that she would suffocate if she were to be tucked up and made to lie quiet, with the doctor fingering her pulse and talking of sleeping potions while her soul was throbbing in such a frenzy of horror.

To escape from them and from herself, she suddenly sat up and announced her intention of attending the dancing party which Elise was giving for the evening. There was a vigorous opposition to this procedure by both her mother and Elise, and by her father also, who had come in to have a look at her: but she outwilled them all.

* * * * *

Elise's dancing party was an affair to be remembered—an affair that is remembered. It deserved to be an unusual occasion, for in arranging it Elise was conscious of being in an unusual frame of mind. She was in some way disposed to be so perfectly even-handed in her dispensations. She directed the three invitations to Mr. Evans Rutledge, Captain George St. Lawrence Howard and Senator Joseph Richland with her own hand and with almost one continuous stroke of the pen. She took this batch of three invitations as a separate handful and placed them together in the basket for the mail. She assigned to each of these gentlemen one dance with herself, and one only, in the programme of the formal first half of the evening. She appointed as attendants for the eleven o'clock collation Mr. Rutledge to Mrs. Hazard, Captain Howard to Helen, and Senator Richland to Alice Mackenzie—the fiancée of Donald MacLane. In everything she was judicially impartial. She played no favourites.

Her plans carried through charmingly, and after dancing through the card a delighted lot of guests sat down to the light luncheon, though three men in the party, despite all their gallant attentions to the women beside them, were using half of their brains at least in planning for the catch-as-catch-can hour and a half that was to follow. Elise had smiled upon them equally and tormentingly, and not a man of them but felt that the briefest little five minutes *tête-à-tête* might do magical things.

"Well," said Lola, after she and Rutledge had effervesced in a few minutes of commonplaces and conventionalities, "is your money still on the Englishman?"

"No," said Rutledge, "I've quit gambling."

"Lost your sporting nerve?"

"No, not that; but a man who bets against himself deserves to lose, and I can't afford to lose."

"But your self-respect?" laughed Lola.

"Now Miss—ah—Mrs. Hazard, don't jump on a fellow when he's down. Self-respect is nothing less than an abomination when it comes between a man and a girl like—that,—and besides, she didn't mean it that way."

"Oh, didn't she?"

"No, she didn't, and she's just the finest, dearest woman in the whole wide—unmarried state!"

"Thank you," said Lola, "but you needn't have minded. And so I'm to congratulate you? I've been so anxious to hear, but our mail has never caught up with us since the day we left New York."

"Oh, bless your heart, there are no congratulations—only good wishes, I hope. Take note of the exact mathematical equality in the distances by which Richland and Sir Monocle and I are removed from the chair of the Lady Beautiful. Could anything be more beautifully impartial?"

"And who is the ancient gentleman with Elise?" Lola asked.

"Some old party from York State. Bachelor uncle or cousin or some such chap—quite a character too, it seems—danced with Dolly Madison or Martha Washington or the Queen of Sheba or somebody like that in his youth. Miss Phillips was telling me of him awhile ago."

"That was a very safe subject of discussion," said Lola.

"Yes," Rutledge replied grimly, "and do you know I tried my very hardest to lose him out of the conversation and he just wouldn't drop. Miss Phillips must be greatly interested in him."

"Anything will do in a pinch, Mr. Rutledge. What were you trying to talk about?"

"Oh, that's it, you think? Well I wish I had ten good minutes with her. I'd make the talk—for half the time—or know the reason why."

"I think I remember that Elise told me once that you could be very abrupt."

"Yes, and I'm going to do a few stunts in abruptness that will surprise her the next time I have a chance. I've tried the easy and graceful approach for the last six weeks, and it's getting on my nerves."

"I tell you what, Mr. Rutledge," Lola laughed, "Elise is to be with me to-morrow evening. You come around after dinner, and I promise you shall have a square deal and ten minutes at least for your very own. Come early and avoid the rush."

"Good. I'll do it. You are a trump!"

"And you may run along now if you wish," she said as they came out of the dining-room, "and take her away from the old party before the others get a

chance at her.”

”You’ll go to heaven when you die,” Rutledge whispered as he left her....

Evans met some difficulty in cutting Elise out of the herd. It took time and determination and some strategy to carry the smiling young hostess off down the hall alone; but he brought it to pass, and drew a breath of exultation when he had shaken himself free. However, turn where he would, every nook and corner seemed to be occupied. He was not openly on the hunt for a retired spot, but he was wishing for one with a prayerful heart and wide-open eyes.

Now a man can make love to a girl right out in the open—in full view of the multitude—in fact there is a sort of fascination in it—in telling her what a dear she is with the careless air and gesture which, to the onlookers, suggests a remark anent the blizzard in the west or the hot times in South Carolina; but when it comes to putting the cap-sheaf on the courting and running the game to earth, in pushing the inquiry to ultimate conclusions and demanding the supreme reply,—a man who dares to hope to win and whose blood has not been thinned by promiscuous flirtations ever wants the girl to be in a situation grab-able.

When Evans became convinced that the fates were against him on that evening, he set definite plans in order for the next.

”Mrs. Hazard tells me that you are to be with her to-morrow evening,” he said to Elise, with something of that abruptness. ”May I not call upon you there? There is something I wish very much to tell you, and the crowd here is always too great.”

Elise looked up at him quickly. The something he wished to tell her was to be read in his face, but she could not presume to assume it had been said. The man waited quietly for his answer.

”Why, certainly, yes, I will be very glad to see you,” she said in a tone of conventional politeness; but assuredly, Rutledge thought, the light in her gray eyes was not discouraging.

”But I must be going now, if you will take me back,” she said; and they turned to go up the hall. A lumbering crash and a stifled little cry changed their purpose.

Three minutes before, they had seen Helen and Harry Lodge turn a corner in the hall and pass round behind some of the overflowing greenery which almost shut off a side entrance. Lodge was as intent upon the pursuit of Helen as Rutledge of Elise, and was making more of his opportunities. Helen was welcoming any excitement that carried her out of herself. With Lodge’s pushfulness and her indifference to consequences, it did not take long to bring the issue to a point. From her manner Harry did not gather the faintest idea of losing. She listened to his speeches with a smile which was not in the least false but none the less deceiving. She did not offer the slightest objection to his wooing nor

put the smallest obstruction in the way of it. In his enthusiasm he developed an eloquence, and, taking her unresisting hand, he rushed along to the climax of a rapturous declaration.

"—And will you be my wife?" he asked, with his arm already half about her.

"No," Helen answered dispassionately, drawing herself back from him as if his meaning were but just now made clear to her: but that "no" came too late.

A pair of eyes in which the lightnings had gathered and gone wild had looked upon the whole of this tender scene except the last moments of it. Hayward Graham felt the devils in the blood of all his ancestors white and black cry to be uncaged as he looked upon Lodge in his ecstasy of love-making, and when Lodge took Helen's hand and it was not withdrawn, the devils broke the bars.

"So," cried Hayward in his soul, "it's for you—to resign her to your arms—that I am asked to die! No! If I may not possess her, not you, you hound!"

A door was wrenched open and Lodge had only time to straighten himself before he was knocked senseless by the infuriated husband.

Hayward drew himself up, terrible, before his wife, and Helen in the moment of recognition threw herself into his arms with a glad cry.

"Oh, you have come at last!" she moaned. "You got my letter at last and have come to me!"

"No. What letter?" asked Hayward—but as he asked it Helen was pushing herself from him as savagely as she freely had thrown herself to him. Her ear had caught the sound of people approaching. Hayward was too confused to notice that. He was in consternation at the lightning change from love to aversion, and clung to her desperately.

A second later he was lying prone upon the floor with Evans Rutledge standing above him, murder in his eyes. He made a wild attempt to rise, when another terrific blow from Rutledge's arm sent him again to the floor. The hall was in an uproar, and a couple of palms were knocked aside as President Phillips burst into the midst of the *mêlée* in time to restrain another smash from Rutledge's clenched fist.

"In the name of God, what's the row?" he asked.

"This nigger has assaulted Miss Helen," said Rutledge, gasping and choking with fury.

Mr. Phillips trembled with a fearful passion, but, seeing Helen apparently unhurt, pulled himself down to a terrible quiet.

"Get up," he growled to Hayward. "Now"—when the footman was on his feet—"what have you to say for yourself?"

Hayward looked for the hundredth part of a second in Helen's eyes.

"I have no excuse," he answered simply.

Only silence could greet such an admission. For five seconds the silence

and the stillness were torturing.

As Mr. Phillips moved to speak, Helen took two quick steps to the negro's side. His renunciation, his silent, unhesitating committal of the issue—of his life—to her decision, had touched her heart.

"I am his wife," she said, as she took his hand and turned to face the circle of her friends.

[image]

"I AM HIS WIFE," SHE SAID."

CHAPTER XXXII

Helen's announcement was made quietly, without any melodramatic display.

In the circle immediately surrounding her and her husband were her father and mother, Elise and Evans Rutledge, and Hal Lodge but just now coming to his senses and his feet. Behind these were Mrs. Hazard, Captain Howard, Senator Richland, and a gathering of other excited guests. For a space after Helen's speech the scene was steady and fixed as for a flashlight picture, and was photographed on Elise's brain: the incredulity on her father's face—the horror on that of Evans Rutledge—the perfectly restrained features of Howard—the quickly suppressed smile of Richland as he glanced at Evans in lightning comprehension of all the situation meant—the ghastly pallor of Mrs. Phillips as she sank voiceless in a dead faint—

"No—o!"

The harshly aspirated protest of Mr. Phillips was propelled from his lungs with a burst of indignant anger, but drawn out at the end into a pathetic quaver—and the scene dissolved.

Rutledge caught and lifted Mrs. Phillips whose collapse was unnoticed by her husband in his transfixed stare at Helen, and pushing back through the crowd was about to place her upon a settle in the hall; but at Elise's bidding he carried her up the broad stairs and left her in the care of her daughter and Lola Hazard. There could be no good-bye said—no time for it; but at the glance of dismissal Elise gave him from her mother's bedside—at the look of suffering in her eyes—

his heart was like to burst.

Down-stairs the confusion was painful. The guests were hesitating between being accounted so ill-bred as to stare at a family scene, and running away from it as from a scourge.

To her father's unsteady denial Helen repeated her simple statement: "I am his wife."

"Since when?" Mr. Phillips demanded.

"A year ago last October."

The father looked about him as for help.

"Come along with me," he said. "Both of you. Good night, ladies and gentlemen," he added to the hesitating guests—and there was a breath of relief and a scattering for home.

* * * * *

With his hand upon Helen's arm, and Hayward following, President Phillips led the way to his offices.

"I am not to be disturbed," he told a servant after he had stopped at the door and waved Helen and Hayward into the room. "Ask Mrs. Phillips if she will please come here."

Entering, he motioned Hayward to a chair, and, taking Helen with him, went into the inner office and closed the door behind him.

"Now, my child," he said, with a break in his voice despite every effort to keep it steady, "tell me all about this, and we—we'll find a way out."

He patted her hand reassuringly.

"There's no way out, papa. I loved Hayward, and I married him."

"No, no, child, not love. You were infatuated—he was a footman and you are—"

"He was a gentleman," interrupted Helen.

"In a way, perhaps, but uncultured and common—how could—"

"He is a Harvard man," Helen cut in again, "a man of intelligence and education. He is—"

"But a weakling—no genuine Harvard man could be a menial—a flunkey—"

"He's not a weakling, papa. He stooped to the service for love of me. He loved me long before we came here—when he was a student at Harvard. It was so romantic, papa—he saw me first at a football game and he has loved me from that day. He was the hero of the game and he has yet the Harvard pennant I gave him—and, oh, he's a greater hero than that, papa—he was a soldier and he was the trooper that—wait a moment." Helen ran to the door.

"Here, Hayward, give me the knife," she called; and she came running back,

holding it out to her father.

"The knife that the trooper stole!" she said, with a pitiful little attempt at gayety in her voice and face.

"What's that?" her father asked harshly.

"Why, papa, you surely don't forget the knife I gave you on your birthday? The one that was taken by the trooper who rescued you at Valencia?"

The light of understanding came to her father's eyes.

"Well, Hayward was the man, papa! He it was who saved your life to us—oh, how I have loved him for that! Just think, daddy dear, how often you have told me what a heroic thing it was—and for such a long time I have known it was Hayward and wanted so to tell you, but I couldn't."

"Why couldn't you?" demanded her father.

"Well, I found it out by accident when he caught me off my falling horse—there it is again, papa—he saved my life as well as yours—it was just the grandest thing the way he did it!—no wonder I have loved and married him—he's the sort that can take care of a woman—enough different from Bobby Scott, who couldn't stay in his own saddle!"

"But Mr. Scott is of an excellent family—distinguished for generations—while Hayward is a nobody—a—a nothing—no family and no recognized personal distinction or merit of his own—the commonest circus clown can ride a horse, my child."

"But he is personally distinguished, papa; and you have approved his merit by making him a lieutenant of cavalry."

"When? How?" the father asked.

"He is John H. Graham, papa—John Hayward Graham; and there can be no denying his fitness or ability, for you have certified to both."

Mr. Phillips saw he was estopped on that line; but it only made him angry and stirred his fighting blood.

"That's the reason," Helen continued, "that Hayward wouldn't let me tell you who he was or thing about his service to you. He wanted to obtain his commission absolutely on his merit and without appealing to your gratitude—wasn't it noble of him?"

A grunt was all the answer Helen got to her question.

"But his people, who are they? What sort of a family have you married into? Do you know?" Mr. Phillips demanded sharply.

"He lives with his mother—his father is dead—oh, I wish you could hear him tell about his father and mother, and his grandfather—it's just beautiful. I don't know whether he has any other relatives,—but that doesn't make any difference. I am not married to them, papa, and he's not responsible for his people but must be judged by his own personal character and excellence!"

In this last speech of Helen, Mr. Phillips thought he caught an echo of something he had heard himself say, and he winced a little: but it only added a spark more to his anger.

"But he's so far below you socially, Helen. You cannot be happy with him! You must remember that you are the President's daughter and—"

"And my husband," interrupted Helen, "is of the one order of American nobility—a *man*! I've thought about all that—the man's the thing, you said, papa—and besides, an army officer has no social superiors."

There was no mere echo in Helen's defence now. It was plain fighting her father with his own words: and it irritated him beyond endurance. His wrath burst through and threw off the shell of theories and sentiment which he had built up around himself and the man's real self spoke.

"But he's a negro, Helen! A *negro*! How could you!"

"A *negro*, papa?" Helen questioned in unmixed surprise. "What has that to do with it? He's the finest looking man in Washington if he is—and didn't you tell Elise that that was nothing more than a colour of skin?—that the man was the thing?—that a—that a—negro must stand or fall upon his own merit and not upon his colour or caste?—and did you not say to Mr. Mackenzie that colour has nothing to do with a man's acceptability in your house?—and that—"

"Oh, my God! yes, my child, but I did not mea—you are too young, too young to be married, my child,—too young and too—yes, too young, and we must annul this marriage—yes, we must annul it, we must annul it—we can annul it without trouble, don't worry about it, child, don't worry—we can annul it, and—for you are too young, my little girl, my little girl, my little girl!"

At sight of her father's tears, and the trembling that shook him as he sank down in a chair, Helen's combative attitude began to melt and her eyes to fill.

"Yes, little girl, don't worry," he said, drawing her tenderly down within his arms, "don't worry, and we will have it annulled in short order."

"It's too late, papa," she spoke against his shoulder.

"No, no, precious heart, it's not too late—we can have it annulled—don't cry, and don't worry, we can have it annulled."

"But, papa," she said again as she pushed herself back so that he looked her full in the face, "it's too late, I tell you! It's—too—late!"—and with outburst of weeping she curled herself up against him.

With a dry sob of comprehension her father gathered her close to his heart.

* * * * *

For a long time after he heard the voices cease Hayward Graham waited in Mr. Phillips' outer office to learn his fate. He had caught some of the excited

discussion—enough to be convinced of his father-in-law's opposition; but he could not be sure of the details. A servant had come in to say that Mrs. Phillips could not come to the office, and had knocked softly on the inner door several times while the discussion was at its warmest. Failing to get an answer, he had left his message with Hayward and retired. When the voices were quiet and the inner room became silent Hayward was on the *qui vive* for developments; and stood facing the door in a fever of expectation.... His fever, however, had time to burn itself out.... In that long silence President Phillips fought his greatest battle.... The issue was predestined, of course. In his heart there was no passion at all comparable to his love for Helen, and that love won over all obstacles.... He saw clearly in what measure he was responsible for her undoing; and he came squarely to the mark with a courage that would face *all* odds for his little girl—that would face a frowning world, a laughing, a mocking world—that would face his own soul even to the death—that her gentle heart might not be troubled.... He held her while her sobs shook themselves out, and then on and on he held her, close and warm, as if he would never again let her out of his sheltering arms,—while he gazed over her bowed head into the dying fire, and fixed and fortified his resolution.

At last Graham summoned courage to knock upon the door. President Phillips started as from a reverie.

"Come in," he said, rising unsteadily and placing Helen gently on her feet, his arm still about her.

"Why, certainly, Hayward, come in,"—and then he added after a short pause: "Helen has told me all about it, and, while I can't approve of the clandestine marriage, I shall do what I can to make my little girl happy—yes, I'll do what I can to make her happy.... And since this has been such an—unusual—evening I'll ask you to go now and come back to-morrow morning."

Hayward delivered the belated message from Mrs. Phillips, stood for a moment uncertain whether Helen would speak to him, and then turned to go.

"And do not wear your livery in the morning, Hayward," said Mr. Phillips.

"Very well, sir," said Hayward, as he withdrew.

CHAPTER XXXIII

When President Phillips came out of his office after dismissing Hayward, he

found a score of reporters and newspaper correspondents fighting for places at the great front door. They were awaiting with what patience they could Mr. Phillips' pleasure in giving to the public an authoritative statement of his daughter's marriage.

The President, after he had obtained from Helen the details of time and place, and other items of interest, gave the press men the story. He customarily had his secretary to make statements to the newspaper people, but he chose to do this for himself: in his infinite loyalty to his little girl he was taking the situation by the horns. There was no elation in his manner, but there certainly was nothing to indicate his slightest objection to Helen's marriage, nor to Hayward Graham as his son-in-law. He gave a short sketch of that young man's life and excellences. He stated that he had not known Graham was either his footman or his daughter's husband when he had nominated him for a lieutenantcy in the cavalry. He did not state that Graham had carried him off the battlefield at Valencia.

When he had finished with the men of the pencil Mr. Phillips went back to his office for Helen, and they sought the mother's room together. With another flood of tears Helen dropped on her knees by her mother's bed.

This scene was hardly less a trial for the father than had been the travail of his own soul. Here also must he win if he would save his child's happiness: and so, amid the tears and the sobs of the mother and daughters, and with misgivings and dread in his own heart, at first unflinchingly, then more zealously, and at last of necessity reserving nothing, he excused, and upheld, and vindicated, Helen.

Mrs. Phillips was too heart-broken to utter a word in opposition or condemnation, and Elise did not open her lips to speak. It was against accusing silence, therefore, and upbraiding tears, that the father made his desperate defence.... Such a debate can never be brought to any real finish; and it was at last only in exhaustion, Helen of nerves, her father of words, and Elise and her mother of lamentation, that the distressed family found peace—enough at least to permit of dispersal to their rooms for the night.

Elise was bowed down in grief for Helen, and for Helen she wept upon her pillow till the fountain of tears was dry: but even then there was no sleep for her. Her mind was painfully alive to her own personal problems, and her brain was awake the night long although weariness held her scalded eyelids down. The incident of the evening, like an electric storm, had clarified the haze of uncertainty for her heart—but only to plunge it into a more intense perplexity.

No longer unchoosing, her heart had spoken its choice. It were better had it never spoken at all; but there could be no mistaking its decree—she loved Evans Rutledge. As she had looked upon the three men who loved her in that brief time when Helen proclaimed her husband, *she had known*: and she had known that not for her was the man who in the fleetest moment could smile while her

heart was breaking; nor for her that other, who, with his alien point of view, was untouched with her distress, and who with his perfect breeding—she resented it—could be so contained, so unmoved, in a situation which brought anguish to her. In the throes of that anguish her soul had turned, unerring, to its affinity in suffering, to *the heart that understood* and wept, not in a ready sympathy for her pain, but in the pains of a common grief.

In such manner Elise accounted for the reading of her heart's message. She believed that it had been undecipherable, confused, until that evening. Yet in all her distress then, and in the heartaches afterward resulting from its choosing, she was strangely happy because her heart had been true to the fancy of its earlier years, had been faithful to its first girlish inclination to love, had not misled her, had not been fickle in any degree, or false. She told herself with a tremor of rapturous, prideful humility that one man had been the master of her love from the beginning.

Thinking on it as she lay unsleeping through the night, she more than once forgot her tears and was lost in the transport of loving. She petted and caressed her heart for its constancy. She made excuses for its indecision in that long time when the man's love had seemed unworthy. She murmured tender things to it because it had prevailed, even though with a hesitating loyalty, against her head's capricious disapproval.

In her wanderings back and forth through the desert of her miseries on that night, she straggled back many times to this oasis of her love and stopped to soothe her troubled heart with its upspringing freshnesses.... And yet a wildness of perplexity was set about her, and she could not find a way out. She knew that Rutledge loved her—had loved her from the time he declared it on the flood-beaten rock in the St. Lawrence till the moment of his tender unspoken good-night three hours ago. That his love could not be shaken by any act not her own, she verily believed. But would he have loved her?—would he have dared to love her?—could he, with his blood-deep, immutable ideas, *could* he have loved her?—if he had known that his love would bring him to this unspeakable extremity, to this heart-breaking dilemma, where he must be traitor to himself and to her—or become brother-in-law to a negro?

Yes, he would have *loved* her—her of all women—despite the slings and arrows of the most outrageous fortune, her heart told her: but, with prescience of such calamity, would he have *spoken* his love?—would he have asked for that interview for to-morrow evening that he might tell it to her again? Was he not even now regretting that appointment? Was he not even now *pitying* his love for her? She must know. But how could she know? By what means could she learn *the truth*? ... Way there was none: and yet she *must know*. Doubt, uncertainty, here would be unendurable—and implacable for she could no longer find

peace in indifference. She loved Evans Rutledge, and her love would fight, was fighting, desperately for its own.... But again, her own must be worthy, without compulsion, or she would repudiate it. Her heart's tenderness, virgin, single, measureless, she held too precious to barter for a love, withal sincere and beautiful, which were weighted with a minim of regret or limitation. Rather would she crush back its fragrance eternally in her own bosom, than dishonour it by exchange for less than the highest.... Yes, she must know.... And she could *not* know.... And the morning came, bringing no relief for heart or brain....

Mr. Phillips was at some pains to intimate to his wife and Elise what he thought a proper pride demanded in the way of the "front" they should show to the public. Queer that he should have thought it necessary: but, unhappy man, he spoke out of his fears for his own steadiness. Elise, at least, had no need for his admonitions. Her pride was the pride of youth: the pride which finds all sufficiency in itself, and needs not the prop of outward circumstance which age requires to hold its chin in air.

It was this pride which gave Elise some hesitation in deciding what she should do with her promise to see Rutledge that evening. Pride said: "Meet him as if nothing has happened to disturb the serenity of your life. Do not show—to him, of all men—chagrin at this episode *en famille*." But pride said: "No! Recall that engagement. Do not appear to hold him by so much as a hair. His love must be undistrained!"

She wavered between these conflicting demands of a consistent self-respect until the middle afternoon. Then the pride of her love overmastered the pride in her pride: and she wrote Rutledge a short note.

"MY DEAR MR. RUTLEDGE:—I find it necessary to change my plans for this evening. This will prevent my seeing you at Mrs. Hazard's as I promised. I am very sorry.

"Sincerely, "ELISE PHILLIPS."

This was her afternoon at home; and after having dispatched the message to Rutledge Elise gave her mind over as far as might be to receiving her callers. They were more numerous than usual, despite many notable absences, and before they fairly well had begun to crowd in she realized that she was on parade. Oh, the duplicity of women! How they chattered and chattered about every imaginable thing under heaven, while they listened and looked for only one thing: to find out what Helen's family really thought of her marriage.

This was not Mrs. Phillips' afternoon, nor Helen's and they did not appear—to have done so would have been to overdo composure: and so it was that Elise alone fenced with the dear, dear procession of sensation hunters who passed in and out of her doors. The women came in such flocks that she really did not have time to be embarrassed, for the sympathetic creatures who showed a disposition to sidle up close to her and begin with low-voiced confidences covert attacks upon her reserve were quite regularly bowled over by their oncoming followers before they could get their sly little schemes of investigation well going. It became fascinating to her to watch them defeat each other's plans, and she was somewhat regretful when they stopped coming. They stopped quite suddenly, for the reason that, in eagerness to see for herself, every daughter of Eve among them had made the White House the first stopping-place in her round of visits for the afternoon.

When the women were all come and gone, save two who evidently were trying to sit each other out, Captain Howard was announced. Elise was unfeignedly glad to see him and in a few minutes the two contesting ladies departed and left the Englishman and the girl together.

Captain Howard's coming was very refreshing, and Elise was grateful. He was the only person she had seen that day who did not seem to be conscious of the electric condition of the atmosphere, and she sat down to talk to him with a feeling of genuine relief and pleasure. His conversation began easily and unconstrainedly and ran along the usual lines with all freedom. As chance demanded he spoke of Helen several times in connection with one small matter, and another, and his manner of doing it was positively restful.

Elise felt so comfortable sitting there talking to him that for the first time she was impressed to think that it might be a nice thing to have him always to come and sit beside her and make her forget that things went wrong. The unfluttered ease and peacefulness of his manner and his words appealed very strongly to her distressed heart, and it warmed toward him in simple gratefulness.

Captain Howard was not without knowledge of the tense situation created by the announcement of Helen Phillips' marriage. He read the newspapers and could not but know that a tremendous sensation was a-blow. He was himself excited by the affair—in a steady-going fashion. It was as if a princess of the blood had eloped and married a—say a tradesman—or, maybe, a gentleman—of course it was sensational.

In his amorous state of mind, however, the captain thought kindly of the wealth of love which had inspired the young woman with such a sublime contempt for rank—for that very real and very puissant divinity, Rank. He also had shaken himself sufficiently free from the shackles of provincialism to be able to recognize the effect of democratic ideas in making possible and permissible such

an event. Affairs of this sort could not be entirely unlooked for in a genuinely democratic society; and, since the President acquiesced in his daughter's choice and had no regrets, there was no more to be said. Altogether Captain Howard viewed the matter very calmly and philosophically.

Having this attitude, he had no hesitation after a time in speaking directly of Helen's marriage and its dramatic announcement. He was a gentleman in every instinct, was Captain Howard; and there could not be the slightest offence taken by Elise at his natural and sympathetic interest in what he considered a most romantic episode. But while one may not be offended or resentful, one may become nauseated. Captain Howard did not know of the chill of disgust and horror that was creeping over the girl's heart, nor notice the silence to which she was come. Her friendliness had been so graciously simple and so promising that his purpose had been formed and he was moving straight toward it, not noticing her silence further than to be glad she was saying nothing to create a diversion.... Elise felt that if she spoke she would be very, very rude.

* * * * *

"—And your America, Miss Phillips, is assuredly the natural home of Romance. Here every man is a peer in posse, and every woman a princess incognita—and possibility keeps pace with imagination. In England a footman is a footman to the end of his life. Here the footman of yesterday is the President's son-in-law today, and may himself be the ruler of his people to-morrow! Can life hold more for a man? The right to aspire and the luck to win!—and to win not only the recognition which his personal merits deserve, but that supreme gift which no man could deserve: your beautiful sister's love! It is almost unthinkable to an outsider like me, but it is glorious! Yes, your America is the Land of Romance!"

This all sounded very well, but Elise's nerves were on the ragged edge. She knew if she spoke it would be to cry out: "Yes, a rank outsider! Oh, why can't you drop that subject before I scream!"

But Captain Howard had only finished the preliminaries. He continued:

"And in this land, Miss Phillips, where a man may hope for anything, I, too, have taken courage to aspire to the highest, and—"

"A note for you, Miss Elise; the messenger is waiting," a servant said.

Excusing herself to Howard, Elise read.

"MY DEAR MISS PHILLIPS:—If I may not see you to-night, may I not see you to-morrow afternoon—or evening? Or day after to-morrow? When?"

"Sincerely yours, "EVANS RUTLEDGE."

Elise read this over several times, and gazed idly at the paper for some time longer. She quite forgot the waiting messenger and Captain Howard. At last she thought, "On his own head be the result!" and sat down at a daintily carved desk to write.

"MY DEAR MR. RUTLEDGE:—The disturbance of my programme for the evening seems to have been largely imaginary. I will be very glad to see you at Mrs. Hazard's as at first agreed.

"Sincerely, "ELISE PHILLIPS."

When she had given her answer to the servant Elise came back to Captain Howard with a commonplace question which made for naught all his words up to that point. He realized he must make a new beginning if he would tell her what he wished. Her face and mood had changed and he saw that her thoughts were elsewhere. After several attempts to pull the conversation back into the old channel he gave it up and retired, mentally cursing his luck and hoping for a more auspicious occasion.

* * * * *

Elise awaited Rutledge's coming at Lola Hazard's with some trepidation. She was uncertain of herself. She did not know what she would do. Being assured of what Rutledge would say to her, under ordinary conditions she would have been elusive for a season, and finally have surrendered when overtaken. But with outside circumstance warring against her love, she felt wildly impelled to let herself go, to fling restraint to the winds and give her heart's impulse free rein. Delicious were the tremors of anticipation with which she waited to hear again words of tenderness from him. Overflowing was her heart with tender response. His insistence on the meeting when she had given him an opportunity to avoid it, proved his faith was fast. He had met the supreme test for a Southern white man: he loved her more than his caste. In her own spirit she knew the agony of his trial. How sweet to surrender to such a love! How tenderly she could reward

it! She longed to meet it with a frank and blissful confession. So, she was in some trepidation: she was afraid she might not be properly reserved.

Lola Hazard came into the sitting-room and found Elise sitting before the open grate.

"Honey," she said, slipping an arm about the girl's waist, "you look positively glorious to-night. I never saw you half so pretty. What have you done to yourself? Your eyes are brilliants, and your colour is—delicious!"

"I have been looking at the fire," said Elise in explanation.

"The pictures you saw must be very pleasing," Lola answered. "I hope they'll all come true. But before we begin to discuss that, let me tell you that Mr. Rutledge asked to call this evening, and he may be here any moment."

"Yes," said Elise, "I know. He told me last night."

"Oh, he did, did he? Well, I promised him if he came early he might have ten minutes for his very own to talk to you to-night. I hope you—"

"He may have ten minutes—and as many—more—as—he—wants," said Elise brazenly.

"Oh, you darling!" Lola gave her a squeeze. "No wonder you are beautiful. It will make any woman heavenly, and you are *such a help* to it!"

"What is *it*?" asked Elise.

"Love," replied Mrs. Hazard.

CHAPTER XXXIV

"Come along back to my own little parlour, Mr. Rutledge. Elise has been singing for me, and we'll not let her stop for awhile yet."

Elise was not expecting Rutledge to be brought in there, and was still sitting at the piano idly weaving the chords into soft and improvised harmonies when he spoke. She slipped from the stool quickly, shook hands with him in an embarrassed way, and crossed the room to sit down.

"Oh, no, please do not leave the piano," Rutledge pleaded, "now that I have just discovered you are a musician."

"I am not a musician, Mr. Rutledge; certainly not for the public."

Rutledge drew himself up as if offended.

"I have been called names variously in my time, Miss Phillips, but never till this moment 'the public.' I resent it as an aspersion—I am not 'the public'—and

demand an abject apology. Think of all the horrible things 'the public' is—and are!”

”And you a politician!” exclaimed Elise. ”You would be lost for ever if those words were quoted against you. Senator Killam would give a thousand dollars for them. See—I hold your fate in my hands—”

Rutledge’s eyes leaped to hers with a quick look that confused her, and she hurried to cut off his words.

”—But—oh, mercy, I’m—I’m sorry, and I retract if it was really as bad as that. The public is really awful, I suppose. I humbly apologize for the aspersion.”

”Then bring forth fruits meet for repentance by returning at once to that piano stool.”

”But I’m such a very amateurish singer, Mr. Rutledge. I fear you will—”

”And I am an amateur listener, the most humbly appreciative, uncritical soul on earth. Please sing. Mrs. Hazard, if you have any influence with this administration will you not use it here?”

”Authority is better than influence,” said Lola. ”Elise, march to that piano.”

Elise complied with an exaggerated air of obedience.

”Since I am singing under orders, I will sing only according to orders. What shall it be?”

”Sing *My Rosary*,” said Lola. ”That’s an old one—and the dearest.”

”I commend to you Mrs. Hazard for sentiment, Mr. Rutledge. Her honeymoon is not yet on the wane.” Having thus made Lola responsible for the song, Elise sang it without further delay or hesitation.

When she had well begun to sing Rutledge recalled having heard that song a long time before. It had not impressed him.

Elise sang simply. The fullness of her low voice and the clearness of her words, together with the unaffected ”heart” in her singing, left her nothing to be desired as a singer of ballads. As Evans listened to the song of sentiment of Mrs. Hazard’s choosing he reformed his opinion of it. Always hitherto he had deemed sentiment an effervescence—refreshing at times as apollinaris, but none the less an effervescence—and the words of *My Rosary* a fair type of it:

”The hours I spent with thee, dear Heart,
Are as a string of pearls to me.
I count them over, every one apart,
My rosary, my rosary.

”Each hour a pearl, each pearl a prayer
To still a heart in absence wrung—
I tell each bead unto the end

And there a cross is hung.

"Oh memories that bless and burn,
Oh barren gain, and bitter loss.
I kiss each bead, and strive at last to learn
To kiss the cross, Sweetheart,
To kiss the cross."

But with Elise sitting there before him, a vision of loveliness and grace entirely, appealingly feminine, "the lady" all gone, and the girl—the woman—unaffected, natural, singing of love with such an air of truth and faith: sentiment became a very real thing to Rutledge.... When she finished he was silent. To comment would have been to comment on Elise, and for her every drop of his blood was singing, "I love you, I love you." He felt that if he spoke to her he must crush her in his arms and tell her so.

"That is a song according to my notion," said Lola. "No *mésalliance* of sentiment and melody there, such as you often see. The words and the music made a love-match—they were born for each other. Who wrote it, Elise?"

"I forget—if I ever knew," said Elise.

"Woman, of course," Lola continued; and Rutledge interpolated "Why?"

"Because a woman always mixes her religion with her love—if she has any religion. A man may have one or the other, or both, but he never confuses them."

"Pardon me for taking issue with you, Mrs. Hazard; but with many a man his love for a woman is his only religion."

"Which means, Mr. Rutledge, that he has love—not religion."

As Rutledge turned to Mrs. Hazard Elise had the first opportunity to look at him unobserved. She saw that his face had less colour than usual, that his manner seemed to lack its accustomed spontaneity, that there was a tired look about his eyes—which provoked in her heart a fleeting maternal impulse to lay her hand upon them. She watched him furtively and became convinced that he was in some measure distressed. At first it rather amused her and flattered her vanity to think that he was approaching her with a becoming self-distrust. As she studied him longer, however, she began to doubt the reason for his constraint.

Lola Hazard turned from her discussion with Rutledge to give Elise another song, and the young woman at the piano sang three or four while Rutledge listened in appreciative silence. Before the last was finished Mrs. Hazard was gone to receive other guests.

"Now will you not sing one of your own choosing?" asked Rutledge.

"I have no choice;" said Elise, "but this occurs to me." She sang him Tosti's

Good-bye.

If she put more of the spirit in that song than into the others it was not because she felt its pertinence to the present status of her love. But through the wakeful night, and all the day long till Rutledge's note had come, the words of that *Good-bye* had come and gone through her brain with passionate realism:

"Falling leaf and fading tree,
Lines of white on a sullen sea,
Shadows rising on you and me—"

her heart had sung its "good-bye for ever" with all the smothered passion of renunciation. So, in the very moment of blissful waiting for the telling of his love, she could sing to Rutledge with all the wildness of farewell which so short a time since had wrung her spirit.

She struck the last chord softly, and, after holding down the keys till the strings were dumb, dropped her hands in her lap. She did not look up, but she knew that Rutledge's gaze was upon her. She waited for a space unspeaking, without lifting her eyes—and realized that she had waited too long.... The silence was eloquent; and with every moment became more significant. She tried to look up, but could not. She knew that the situation had gotten beyond her in that careless ten seconds, and that if she looked up now she was lost.... She sat as if under a spell—and waited for Rutledge to move or to speak.... After an age he was coming toward her.... And he was so very slow in coming. Her heart was thumping suffocatingly, her breathing in suspense.... He did not speak as he came to her.... She felt he was very near.... Still unspeaking—was he going to take her in his arms? ... Her head drooped lower over the keyboard....

Oh, why did he not take her in his arms.

"Elise, I love you. I've always loved you."

Elise's eyes were upon the idle hands in her lap; and her heart had stopped to listen. Rutledge's sentences were broken and jerky. She had never heard him speak in that fashion.

"I've loved you always, Elise, and once I was rash enough to think—you loved me. My presumption was fitly punished.... Now I have only—hope. In the last few months you—have been so—gracious that—I have been led to think you—wait, wait till I have done—so gracious that I have been led to think—not that you love me, but at least that I—do not excite your antipathy—as for a long time it seemed.... So now I have only hope—but such a hope, Elise—a hope that is—beyond words, for my love is such. My love is—I love you, Elise—I love you as—as my father loved my mother."

Elise slowly raised her eyes to his. There was no smile upon her face, but

as she turned it to him it was ineffably sweet, and a smile was in her heart. But she was startled by his look. His was not the face of a lover, whether triumphant, despondent, hopeful or militant. She did not know that he had not been able to banish his mother from his thought for a waking moment since he parted with her at her mother's bed-side the night before.

"Will you—be my wife, Elise?"

Never before in all the world was that question asked in such a voice. Its tone like a dagger of ice touched the girl's heart with a deadly chill. She looked steadily and long into his eyes. At last with a little shiver she murmured inaudibly "*noblesse oblige*"—and answered his question:

"No, Mr. Rutledge, I will not be your wife."

Her words were as cold as her heart, and her self-possession as cold as either. She was surprised that her answer did not bring the faintest shadow of relief to Rutledge's drawn face—rather a greater distress. A tingle of fire shot through her bosom. (It was not too late—oh why did he not take her in his arms.)

"No, I will not be your wife," she repeated slowly. (It was not yet too late—oh why—) "I am deeply sensible of the honour you—"

"Stop! Don't say that! In God's name don't say that! Don't add mockery to—"

"Mr. Rutledge!"

For the moment Rutledge forgot that there was any person in the world other than Elise and himself.

"You *have* mocked me—you have *played* with me! And—"

"Will you please go, Mr. Rutledge!"

"Played with me—yes—as if I were the simplest—oh well, I have been—and you—you have been—you are—an artist. Tell me that you do not love me, that you have only laughed at me. Tell me!" he sneered.

"Go, I say! Oh, *can't* you go!"

"Yes, I'll go—when you say it. Tell me! Do you love me—have you ever loved me?—the veriest little bit?"

"Never. Not the veriest little bit," she said, looking straight at him.

"That's it!—the truth at last—spoken like a m—like a lady!"—he bowed mockingly at her—"and it proves you are false—false, do you understand?—unspeakably false! And I have loved you like m—but very well, it's better so—perhaps."

He turned to go; but turned quickly about.

"I'll kiss you once if I swing for it!—for what I thought you were"—and, for a moment robbed by anger of his sense of proprieties, with unpardonable roughness he crushed and kissed her, flung her violently from him, and went, without looking back at her.

* * * * *

Mrs. Hazard, looking across the shoulders of a knot of her guests, caught a glimpse of Rutledge as he passed down the hall toward the outer door. She waited a minute or more for him to reappear, and when he had not done so she lost interest in the people and things about her. At the first possible moment she sought Elise, and found her again sitting before the grate. Lola came into the room so quickly and quietly that Elise had not time to dissemble, if she had wished to do so. Her head was thrown back against the chair and both hands covered her face. Lola took her wrists and against some little resistance pulled her hands away.

"Elise?" she said.

"He does not love me," Elise replied, defensively, without opening her eyes.

"Didn't he tell you?"

"Oh, yes," the answer came wearily; "he told me; but he told me because he thought he had given me to expect it. It was *noblesse oblige*—not love."

"Noblesse fiddlesticks! I don't believe a word of it."

"Oh well," said Elise, looking up, "he said it was just as well that I refused him, there's no mistaking that."

"Oh, certainly, *after* you refused him. What did you expect?"

"I expected him to—no, I didn't. I didn't expect anything. Southern men are so—" Elise stopped. She was about to be unjust to Rutledge.

"But come, let's go," she said, rising from her chair. "Are all the people here?"

"All except Senator Richland, and he never fails *me*," Lola answered.

"I don't want to see that man to-night," said Elise; and yet she joined the other guests appearing nothing other than her usual self save for the added brightness of her eyes, and when Senator Richland managed finally to isolate her she gave him quite the most interesting twenty minutes of his life.

When the company was broken up, Elise, who was stopping over night with Lola, avoided the customary heart to heart talk by asking for a pen and paper with which to write a letter. Mrs. Hazard was consumed with desire to hear all about it, but she deferred her inquiries with good grace as she argued that a note written by Elise at such an unearthly hour could be only to Rutledge, and must, therefore, be important.

Elise shut herself in her room and, pitching the paper on the dressing-table, sat down to think. For nearly an hour she sat without turning a hand to undress, trying to unravel the tangled skein of her heart's affairs and see a way out; but she could not get her thoughts to the main issue. Like a fiery barrier to her thinking was the man's burning denunciation: "You are false—unspeakably false!" It had

rung in her ears all the evening, and however she tried she could not get away from it. At last she began hurriedly to undress, but before that process was half finished she brushed the toilet articles from a corner of the dressing-table, drew up a chair, and began to write.

"Unspeakably false? No, no, Evans, I am not false. I have not been false: for I love you. Such a long time I have loved you. Sometimes I have believed you loved me, and sometimes I have doubted; but I do not doubt since you told me to-night I was unspeakably false. Shame on you to swear at your sweetheart so!—and bless you for saying it, for now I know. O why did you not say it earlier so that I might not have misread you? I thought you felt yourself committed, and must go on: that your love was dead, but honour held you. You looked so distressed, dear heart, that I was misled. Forgive me. And do not think I do not know your distress. I, too—but no, I must not. I love you, I cannot do more. In your rage were you conscious that your kiss fell upon *my lips*, dearest? Blind you were when you said I was unspeakably false.—"

She had written rapidly and almost breathlessly while the impulse was warm within her heart. She paused for a moment—held the pen poised as if uncertain what to say next—hesitated as to how to say it—next, as to whether to say it—laid the pen down and picked up the sheet to read what she had written. A blush came to her cheeks as she read, and at the end she dropped her face upon her arm on the table and suffered a revulsion of shame for her unmaidenliness. She tried hard to justify her writing and had all but succeeded when Rutledge's words, "It is better so," put all her love's excuses to final rout. She took the written sheet and went across to drop it on the smoldering fire. But her resolution failed her: she felt that it would be to burn her very heartbeats if she gave these words to the flames.

Going again to the dressing-table she laid the letter upon the scattered sheets of paper to await a more mature decision, and, hurriedly disrobing, went to bed.

She found it very hard to go to sleep. Even in the dark she could feel the continuing blushes in her cheeks as she thought of what she had written. Finally in desperation she tumbled up and in the dim glow of the coals in the grate crossed the room to the dressing-table, snatched up and crumpled in her hand the disturbing letter, hurriedly gathered up the remaining sheets of paper and chucked them in the table drawer, walked quickly over and dropped the offending tender missive upon the coals and went to bed again in the light of its destruction. A very long time after its last gleam was dark and dead she found the

sleep she sought.

CHAPTER XXXV

It is not within the province of this chronicle to recall the sensational excitement that swept the nation in those days further than as it affected the persons mentioned in this narrative. The details of that sensation, the screams, the howls, the jeers, the predictions, the warnings, the laments, the philosophizings, a newspaper-reading people but too well remember. They have no proper place of rehearsal in this history; and if they had, a comprehensive statement which would present the matter fairly to those who come after would be too voluminous for the plan upon which this book is projected.

In that time of tumult and of trial Mr. Phillips stood indeed alone. If he had braced himself firmly in his determination to save Helen's happiness at all cost, it was well: for his trial was to the uttermost. Although it would have crushed any other than his adamant will, the storm-beaten father withstood, as one accustomed to do battle, the pressure from without: but the rebellion of his own soul was an unrelieved tragedy that shook him day and night with its terror. If his love for Helen had not approached the infinite, surely in the shrieking revulsion of his spirit he would have cast her off. There was a demand from loud-mouthed people the nation over that he should disown her and drive her into the outer darkness. Some relief there was in that demand, for it only stirred the combative in his nature. The yells and hoots aroused his fighting blood. But the silence, the unspeaking horror—as if in the presence of death—in which sober-minded friend and foe stood aghast and looked upon Helen's plight, made his courage faint and tremulous. It was so awfully akin to the sickening horror and silence in his own heart.

He was indeed alone; and in that loneliness it was given to him to teach to himself the far bounds of a father's love. If he only could have fought something!—or somebody! If he only openly could have snapped his fingers in the face of public opinion, in the teeth of his own mutinous soul—openly—and told them he cared more for Helen's untroubled laugh than for them all, and be damned to 'em! If he only could have died! But no: he must stand and be still to the most thankless task that ever called for a hidden loyalty. Helen must not know of the travail of his love, lest that defeat love's purpose. It was too late, too

late, for knowledge to do other than tear her heart-strings out, blight her young soul, and write *Remorse* eternally upon her life. She must *never* know how much he loved her!

There was no lack of personal—and professing—friends to stand more or less loyally beside the father in that time, but their support was wormwood to him. From the very few who were altogether sincere he turned in aversion even as he suffered their commendations, while for the insincere and sycophantic he had a doubly unspeakable contempt; and that disgust and scorn was agony, for that he must swallow it and belie his own spirit as he listened to these friends.

His private correspondence furnished him as little comfort. Some persons there were—and a few of these men and women of repute—who wrote to him letters that should have been consoling, for they agreed very heartily with his view, or what they thought was his view, and commended him without stint for his attitude: but never an one spoke of the sacrificial love of a father for his daughter—*justice to the negro* was their theme. Upon such letters from men—it would have surprised the writers much to hear it—he uttered maledictions profane; while, for the one woman who thus approved him, he forebore profanity, but relieved his wrath with a volcanic "Freak!"

From the time the announcement burst upon the public the President was overwhelmed with a flood of newspaper comment, most of it harsh, the best of it deprecatingly sympathetic, none, except that from negro papers, uncritical. Very shortly the clippings bureau which served him was ordered to discontinue everything referring to Mrs. Hayward Graham's marriage.

Mr. Phillips did not give that order because he was too weak to stand criticism. Far from it. He was schooled to conflict, and knew the rules. He had never asked concession from an opponent in all his life of struggle, and he would have scorned to ask it then, even with the uncounted odds against him. His critics might have shrieked till the crack o' doom and he would have listened without a quiver of his resolution.

But the impartial bureau had sent, among an avalanche of criticism, an appreciation in the form of the following editorial clipped from the columns of *The Star of Zion*:

"The dramatic culmination of the beautiful romance in which Miss Helen Phillips, daughter of the President of the United States, proudly proclaims herself the wife of Mr. John Hayward Graham, and the graceful acquiescence of the bride's distinguished father in his beautiful daughter's love-match, is but another proof of the rapid coming of the negro race into its own as the recognized equal of any race of men on earth. Mr. Graham's career is an inspiration to his people, for it teaches the rising generation of negro boys and girls that they need no longer live Within the Veil, that in the most enlightened minds there is no longer

a silly prejudice against colour, but that if the young negro will only make the most of himself and his opportunities he will be graciously received as an equal, as a member, in the proudest families in this mighty nation.—”

President Phillips read just that much of that editorial. Then went the order to shut off the press clippings.

It required all the father's self-control to dissemble in Helen's presence and he feared that he would be unable to keep the truth from her. It was fortunate for the girl that her condition demanded seclusion and that her removal from Washington took her away from the danger of enlightenment. At her father's instance preparations were hurried with all speed, and she and her husband went to Hill-Top for their belated honeymoon and a stay indefinite....

Hayward Graham would have been a paragon if he had conducted himself with entire discretion when the limelight first was turned upon him. The colour of his skin was not responsible for his foolish mistakes in those first days. Any footman so suddenly elevated to that pinnacle likely would have made them. One of his errors of judgment was serious. That was his continued offence against the dignity of Henry Porter. The withering letter he had written in answer to the old man's apology was of itself enough to call up the devil in old Henry's heart; but that doubtless would have been forgotten had Hayward remained in obscurity.

To dispute with the President the title to a son-in-law, however, was a distinction too fascinating to the negro magnate. He had already been to Bob Shaw's office for a tentative discussion of the law in his case and was just coming away when he ran plump into Hayward on the sidewalk. A judicious condescension on the young man's part even then might have placated him, but instead an evil spirit called to Hayward's memory his first meeting with Porter, the insufferable affront, and his own oath to even the score. Too strong in Hayward's heart was the temptation to "take it out of him for keeps" then and there. At the worst, though, he hardly did more than any gentleman would do upon meeting another who had driven him from his house.

"Mr. Hay— Mr. Graham!" said Porter, hardly knowing himself whether he intended to be polite or other, but having a general purpose to fetch the young fellow up roundly for that letter.

"I believe I don't know you," said Hayward, stopping and observing him coolly for two seconds, and turning away to continue his journey up the street.

Now, to those of his race, Henry Porter was a "figure" on the streets of Washington, and Graham was by that time almost as well known as the President himself. There were but four people who could have witnessed the meeting of these celebrities. These were three negroes of low degree loafing along the sidewalk and a dago pushing a cart just outside the curb.

At his rebuff Henry Porter gave a gasp, swallowed it, and looked around

to see who had seen him. The "common niggers" at his elbow snickered, and as they passed on burst out into loud guffaws.

"Um-huh! Tried to butt into the White House, but *Mister Graham* *he* don't know him! Can't interdoose 'im! *Too* black! Law-dee, didn't he th'ow 'im down!"

Henry Porter heard enough of this. He rapidly retraced his steps to Shaw's office.

"Here, Mr. Shaw, you can jist git them papers out this evenin'. There's no use waitin'."

"All right, Mr. Porter," said Shaw, who didn't favour the idea but was too much afraid of his client to refuse. "But wouldn't to-morrow do as well? We could think it over a little further."

"No, suh, Mr. Shaw. We don't wait till no to-morrer. We don't think about that damn young nigger no mo' till we take him with the papers and let him think about hissself awhile. Can't you git 'em served on him this evenin'?"

"If he's to be found in the city," said Shaw.

"Oh, he's to be found all right. I saw him goin' up the street jist awhile ago. You jist git them papers out and have 'em served on him this evenin' and no mistake about it."

"All right, if you say so," Shaw consented.

"Well, I say so—and I can pay the damage," said the irate client with emphasis, and stalked out of the office, only to stick his head back into the door with the last injunction:

"This evenin' now, and no mistake about it!"

* * * * *

As chance ordained, Henry Porter did not go amiss in his haste to have the summons served on Graham. It was late in the afternoon and less than four hours before the former footman and his wife were scheduled to leave the city for Stag Inlet that the officer served the paper.

A bomb exploding under Hayward's feet could not have been so unexpected by him. As the officer read the summons and its import broke upon his mind he felt, for the first time in his life, physical weakness in the presence of danger. It staggered him to think of possible results. He had no feeling of guilt: but an awful fear.

President Phillips had passed out of the White House for his regular constitutional while the process was being served, and recognized the officer by his badge and Graham's excitement by the look on his face, but had not stopped to inquire what the trouble was,—for which Graham was profoundly thankful, as it gave him time to catch his breath.

Think as he would, no way of escape could Graham conceive. Being virtually without money, he could not hope in four hours to bring Henry Porter to terms and avoid a publication of the scandal. Exactly what the old man had in mind, anyway, was uncertain, excruciatingly uncertain. The precise nature of the complaint did not appear from the summons. As the suit was based on a lie, it well might be any sort of a lie. But surely, surely, he thought, no woman would *falsely* speak disgrace to herself. He had had a genuine respect for Lily Porter's character. She had been the best of them all, with the highest ideas and the highest ideals. He would have sworn that she could not have lent herself to a thing of this sort. But since she had been willing to do so at all, to what lengths might she not go? What was the limit they had set? To what public disgrace were they trying to bring him? To what awful lie must he make answer?

As he thought of it the keen sense of his peril, the disgrace, the loss of his commission, and his helplessness, became well-nigh unbearable. If Henry Porter could only have known the extremity of torture he had inflicted in thus making the young fellow "think about hisself awhile," his wrath might have been appeased.

Hayward trembled to think of the moment when the public should know of this suit, but he quaked in absolute terror as he thought of Mr. Phillips' hearing it. And Helen!—what must he do to save her from this shame?—he gladly at the moment could have strangled Old Henry.... But heroics would do no good. He was helpless, bound hand and foot. If he could be saved, if Helen was to be saved, there was but one arm that had the power: her father's. Perhaps, *perhaps*, with all his attributes of strength and force, he might be able to bring the vengeful negro capitalist to terms. Whatever his terror of Mr. Phillips, he must tell him.... And what were done must be done quickly.

* * * * *

"I would like to speak with you a moment, sir, about a—a matter," said Hayward to the President as soon as he returned from his walk.

Mr. Phillips could tell with half an eye that it was a matter of some moment. He led the way to his private office.

"Well, what is it, Hayward? You look excited."

Mr. Phillips spoke very kindly, for he did so with studied purpose. It was necessary that he keep that purpose continually and consciously before him. For Hayward the footman he had had quite a high regard: as he had for any man or thing that was efficient. For the negro as his son-in-law, he could not bring himself to consider him with any toleration, nor did he lie to his soul by telling it he wished to. For the negro as a mate for Helen, every rebellious, tortured

nerve and fibre of the man was an eternal, agonized protest. It was indeed very necessary that he keep his kindly purpose always consciously before him.

"What is it?" he asked again.

"I had a paper—a summons, I believe they call it—served on me this afternoon," Hayward stumbled along to say; and then stopped, uncertain how to go at it.

"Well. And what's the trouble?"

"I don't know, sir, exactly what's the trouble; or, rather, I would say I didn't know there was any trouble."

"Then what's it about? Who is it that's suing you? What does the summons say?"

"The summons doesn't say what the trouble is about." Graham was dodging in spite of himself.

"But who is the person that is suing you?" Mr. Phillips questioned again testily.

"The summons says '*Lily Porter, by her father and next friend, Henry S. Porter, against John Hayw—*'"

"Says *what?* A WOMAN?"

President Phillips jumped to his feet and went pale as ashes. Graham, dry-lipped, could only nod his head weakly in affirmation. For five seconds Mr. Phillips was speechless. Then words came back, along with a rush of blood to his face that looked to burst it. So terrible was his wrath, the killing look in his eyes, that Graham instinctively squared away to defend himself from bodily injury. Such a torrent, such a blast, of withering, blistering profanity, wild, incoherent, unutterable, he never had listened to in all his life. Try as he would to interpose a word, an explanation, a defence, his efforts only drove the father to more abandoned fury. After a dozen fruitless attempts he realized there was nothing to do but wait for the furor to burn itself out. To the young man, conscious of the passing of precious time, it seemed that his anger would never cool. When the President showed the first signs of exhaustion he took courage to speak again.

"I swear to you, sir, the young woman has no cause to complain of me. I have done her no—"

"Oh of course not, of course not," said Mr. Phillips in the most bitingly sarcastic tone. "Of course not, of course not! But who the devil is she?"

"Miss Lily Porter, daughter of Henry S. Porter—*Black Henry* the newspapers sometimes call him. Perhaps you have heard—"

"What! That nigger? Not a *nigger* woman! But of cour—oh my God, Helen, how can I pr—" but he choked for a moment in livid anger before he writhed into another frenzy, that was as volcanic, as horrible, and as pitiable as it is unprintable. He cursed, he raved, he choked, he tore wildly at his collar for breath.

It was frightful to look upon, and if Graham had feared for his own safety in the first outburst, he feared for Mr. Phillips' life in the last. It looked as if in the violence of his wrath he would burst a blood-vessel. Graham was in mortal fear that he would die in his tracks, and tried desperately to reinforce his denial of guilt as the only possible relief for his father-in-law's dementia, but all his attempts only inflamed Mr. Phillips the more. The negro seemed not to know that it was not a question of his guilt or innocence that was tearing the father's vitals and threatening his reason, but shame—insufferable shame!

After an age, it seemed to Graham, Mr. Phillips became calmer. His son-in-law, wholly at a loss what to say or do, started out of the door in search of a clearer atmosphere and a chance to regain his scattered faculties. The President looked around and saw him beating a retreat.

"Come back here!" he ordered sharply. "We can't leave this thing like this! Something must be done with it at once, or the scandal will be all over the—" He trembled with the passion of another outburst, but controlled himself by a mighty effort.

"I swear to you no scandal may rightly be laid at my door," said Graham with some dignity. The outrageous injustice of the thing gave him a little of the dignity of righteousness.

"Scandal doesn't depend on truth or falsehood, so we needn't discuss that now." Mr. Phillips cut him off short. "What we must do is to stop this scandal, for scandal it will be if it gets to the public. Where does this—this Porter live? How far from here?"

"About fifteen minutes drive, sir."

"Well—er—send Mr. O'Neill here—in a hurry."

Graham, glad to get action on himself, was out of the room and back with the secret service man in less than a minute. In that short space the President had taken a grip on his self-control.

"Here, O'Neill, take Hayward with you to show you the house, and go fetch Henry Porter up here to see me. He's not to be arrested, mind you, but is to come to see me at my request *at once*, and nobody is to know. And he is not to speak to anybody or see anybody, not even Hayward here, before you bring him to me. So get along and get him here as soon as you can. No force, remember; but he is to come along, at my request." ...

O'Neill and Hayward hurried out, and, finding a street cab, lost no time in getting to Henry Porter's house. On the way Hayward gave the officer some idea of the man he was to deal with and, bringing him to the door, left him to his own devices and himself took a car back home. When Old Henry came to the door O'Neill told him half a dozen lies in half as many minutes, and at the end of the time he had the worthy coloured gentleman safely in the cab and on the way to

the White House.

The President was waiting for him, and when the two fathers were alone together he went at him with a directness calculated to take the negro's breath. Black Henry was much awed, in fact well-nigh overcome by the situation, and he was hardly in condition to make the most of his opportunities; but his native shrewdness did not entirely forsake him. In the drive to the White House he had had time to think it over, and he had concluded that the President wanted to see him very much or he would not have sent for him. He tried to keep that in mind all the time the negotiations were pending. It helped in some degree to steady his shaking confidence in himself.

"You are Henry S. Porter, I believe?" There was an accusing quality in the voice.

"Yes, suh."

"The father of Lily Porter who has instituted a suit against my—against Hayward Graham?" The tone was more accusing.

"Yes, suh." Black Henry wished the suit hadn't been instituted. But he remembered again he had been sent for and he braced up a little.

"Now what is the nature of that suit?" The President was somewhat in fear of his own question, for all his bravado of manner.

"Breach o' promise," Henry answered shortly.

"Anything else?"

"Nothin' but breach o' promise to my daughter Lily. He was engaged to her and married your daughter, or was already married to her, I don' know which."

For five seconds a murderous passion all but got control of Mr. Phillips' will. He turned away and closed his eyes tight till he had subdued it.

"What evidence have you that he was engaged to your daughter?"

Henry Porter knew he was a fool to give away his case to the opposition, but the President's eyes and manner were too compelling for him.

"My daughter says so and—and I've seen enough myself, and besides that he has written letters to her. I reckon we've got evidence enough all right."

"Well, I have evidence that there is not a word of it true, and I sent for you to tell you you'd better drop it. You'll find it a profitless—more than that—a *very expensive* undertaking."

The last statement was unfortunate. It struck fire in Old Henry's pet vanity.

"Oh, I guess I can stan' the expense all right," he rejoined with the oddest possible mixture of deference and defiance.

"You can, can you!" said Mr. Phillips sharply, his anger beginning to redden. "But I tell you again you can't get a verdict from the courts—no, sir, not for a cent—so what's the use?"

"I don't need the money." ... Clearly Mr. Phillips had given the purse-proud

old darkey the wrong cue.

"Then what the devil are you after?"

"That young nig—young man is mos' too sassy. He's got to know his place."

"His place!" Mr. Phillips' face was again twisted in wrath. But wrath could not serve Helen's cause. He stifled it.

"Yes; he mus'n' come flyin' roun' my daughter for fun, and then go off when he fin's somebody mo' to his notion, and th'ow his impidence in my face."

Through all his blinding anger Mr. Phillips could see clearly enough to realize that it was indeed not a matter of money, but of insult. He was more and more inclined to believe Hayward's statement that there was little or no basis for the suit. But that didn't help matters in the least.

"Now look here, Porter," he said in his most vigorous and decided manner, "I am convinced your claim has no real basis in fact, but is the outcome of pique pure and simple. Nevertheless, it must be settled here, to-night; and I'm willing to see that you don't lose any money in the way of expenses and lawyer's fees for the procedure so far. To that end I will have Hayward pay you a thousand dollars if you will withdraw the suit to-night. What do you say?"

"I don' need the money," said Porter in maddening reiteration. "Besides that I don' know what my lawyer will charge." At the mention of money, however, the sharp-dealing old negro felt a little more at ease and interested in the discussion.

"Who is your lawyer?"

"Mistuh Shaw—Mistuh Robert Shaw."

"Robert Shaw. Is he the Shaw that wants that special solicitorship in the treasury department? A negro?"

"Yes, suh, a negro; but I don' know about the treasury department."

"Well, he's the man, I have no doubt—Robert Shaw, a negro lawyer. Now let me tell you. I had had some idea of giving him the place he asks for, but I say right now if he's inclined to be a fool in a matter of this sort he's not the man the government wants. If he gets his fee he will be well enough satisfied, won't he? He's not the fool kind that wants to advertise himself in a sensational suit, is he?"

"No, suh, no, *suh!* Mistuh Shaw is a ve'y nice young man, suh. He ain't no fool, suh."

"Well, he would be if he disobeyed your wishes and mine in this matter. I think I can speak for *him* myself. Now what do *you* say? A thousand dollars?"

Involving Shaw in the affair was most fortunate for Mr. Phillips. With Hayward out of the running, Henry Porter now looked with much assurance upon Shaw as a son-in-law. That financial-political combination between himself and Shaw was again his pet dream as before Hayward's interference. With Black Henry the controversy was really settled and he was ready to compromise. The

smaller purpose was lost in the presence of the master passion. But his personal pride and cupidity were aroused. If his hoped-for son-in-law Shaw was going to get both honour and revenue out of this thing, he himself ought not to fall too far behind.... And again he remembered that he had been sent for.

"Of cou'se I don' need the money," he said once more, "but if money is to settle it I think five thousan' 'd be little enough. We was suin' for twenty-five."

"Five thousand the devil! I'll not pay it. It's outrageous!"

"Well, suh, I don't need the m—"

"Ah, shut that up, for heaven's sake! What's the best you'll do? Speak out now in a hurry."

"Well, suh, five thousan' is mighty little considerin' the standin' of the pahties. As my lawyer, Mistuh Shaw, said, the standin' of the pahties calls for big damages. My daughter and your son-in-law are up in the pic—"

"Hold on!" said Mr. Phillips. "You can stop that argument right there. Will you take five thousand and shut the thing up?"

"Well, suh, as I said, I don' need—"

"Will you take the five thousand?" The President's eyes had a dangerous blaze in them.

"Yes, suh."

"That settles it. Now get right out after that lawyer of yours at once, to-night, and have him withdraw those papers and destroy them—or no, better than that, you bring them here to me to-morrow—no, bring them *to-night*—I'll wait for you. And hurry, will you please, for I'm quite busy and must be rid of this as quickly as possible. I'll look for you within an hour."

* * * * *

Mr. Phillips could not have been very busy, for he did nothing but walk the room till Porter returned. And two hours had passed before that time.

"I'm sorry to keep you waitin' so long, suh," the negro apologized; "but me and Mistuh Shaw had to hunt up the officer to git the papers. It was so late when he served 'em he couldn' retu'n 'em to court to-night, and he was holdin' 'em over in his pocket till mornin'."

"Thank Heaven for that. Did you tell him to keep his mouth shut?"

"Yes, suh."

"And will he do it?"

"I think he will, suh. Mistuh Shaw fixed him. He's a frien' of Mistuh Shaw."

"Well, he'd better. I'll hold Shaw responsible for him. Let me see the papers.... Yes, this is all right.... Now here's ten dollars and a receipt for that much in full of all claims for breach of promise and so forth you and your daughter

have against Hayward Graham. You just sign the receipt, and I'll pay you the balance of the five thousand to-morrow—there's not a tenth of that sum in the house to-night. You'll take my promise for the balance, won't you?"

"Yes, suh—oh yes, suh," said Mr. Porter, his manner showing his full appreciation of the fact that between gentlemen of standing the ordinary strict rules of business could be waived with perfect safety. With all his discernment, however, he saw nothing more in this proceeding than his trusting Mr. Phillips for \$4,990 till the morning.

* * * * *

When he was ushered into the President's office the next morning Henry Porter received from Mr. Phillips' own hands the \$4,990 in currency of the highest denominations fresh from the treasury. He verified the correctness of the amount almost at a glance.

"I'll give you a receipt, suh," he said.

"Oh, no, don't trouble; the receipt for ten dollars in Hayward Graham's name in settlement of the claim for breach of promise answers every purpose legally."

As he spoke the President smiled in a satisfied way, and it occurred to Black Henry that a ten dollar breach of promise suit would be quite a contemptible and ridiculous affair if it got to the newspapers.

"And now, Mr. Porter," said Mr. Phillips, anxious as ever to make every bid for silence, "you can see that, adding force to your contract, every consideration of decency and self-respect demands that not the slightest whisper of this matter shall reach the public. The highest consideration I have not hitherto referred to. That is your daughter's good name. It could only do injury to her reputation—injury, and nothing but injury. I am indeed surprised that she was so unwise, that she had the disposition to bring this suit and bring herself into what would have been such unfavourable public notice."

"Well, suh, *Mistuh Shaw* said she wouldn't like it, and I had a hard time makin' him bring the suit. He said she wou—"

"Didn't she instigate it?" asked Mr. Phillips.

"No, *suh*—that she didn'. Fact is I've been fraid to tell her about it—fraid she'd make me stop it, she thinks such a heap of *Mistuh Hayward*.... But we've got it all settled satisfact'ry now and there ain't no reason why she sh'd ever know it happened, suh. Good mornin', *Mistuh President*."

"You old scoundrel!"—when Mr. Porter had closed the door behind him.

CHAPTER XXXVI

In trying to be philosophical Rutledge took what comfort he could from Elise's "no" in the fact that he would be less distracted from the work of his campaign against Senator Killam. He gave all his energies to that task, which promised to tax his resources to the utmost if he would hope to win. The owners of *The Mail* were more than willing that he should make the attempt. His temporary stay in the Senate had given the paper a very considerable shove toward the front rank in prominence and authority in affairs political, and there was nothing to be lost by a tilt with that most picturesque figure in national politics, Senator Killam.

Let it be understood, however, that Rutledge did not run simply to advertise himself or his paper. His unfailing friend Robertson wrote to him: "There is a very real opposition to Senator Killam growing up in the State, although at this time its force and numbers are very difficult to compute with accuracy. Your admirable conduct of yourself in your short trying-out has commended you to those who are looking for a leader of conceded ability yet not identified with any of the petty factions in State politics nor with any of the local issues upon which the party is divided and dissentient. Your friends think you fill all the requirements in the broader sense and, besides, that you are the antipode of all things peculiarly, personally and offensively Killamic."

Although they were of the same broad political creed, the stage of antagonism to which he and Senator Killam had come during the younger man's short term in the Senate bordered on the acute. It had reached the point where they were studiously polite to each other. Senator Killam did not usually trouble himself to be civil to any person who aroused his antipathy, but he had the idea that it would be conceding too much to young Rutledge's importance to show any personal unfriendliness to him. Nevertheless, with all their outward show of friendliness, they were both out for blood: Rutledge, because of the many of the older man's taunts and sarcasms which still rankled in his memory; and Senator Killam, because, whatever the time and whoever his opponent, he always gave a correct imitation of being out for the blood of any man that opposed him.

Rutledge had already begun to be very busy with his campaign before his decisive conversation with Elise. When, some ten days later, he received a letter

from his mother in which she set out to discuss his admiration for Elise in light of Helen's marriage, he found himself entirely too pressed for time to do more than read the opening sentences, and lay it reverently away.

He tried to forget Elise,—as many another lover has done before him, and with about the usual lack of success. For the remainder of the Washington season he cut all his social engagements that were not positively compelling and fortunately did not chance to see her again but twice before he went South to take an active hand in the primary campaign.

On those two occasions she exhibited the perfection of impersonal interest, but Rutledge, remorseful for his indefensible behaviour toward her at Mrs. Hazard's, was conscious that, curiously enough to him, her gentle dignity had not the faintest trace of offence. It seemed rather to hold an elusive though palpable element of friendliness. This was puzzling, but he did not attempt to explain it to himself. He had suffered enough from the riddle of her moods, and he was afraid to try to explain it. He was convinced that she was not for him—had she not told him so?—and that, having lost her, it was imperative that he think no more about her lest he lose everything else he had set to strive for. So he strove only to lose the disquieting thought of her out of his work.

President Phillips, also, in those days was attempting to flee his thoughts in a wilderness of work. Unlike Rutledge, with him there was a tax upon heart as well as brain in the political task before him. Rutledge could not feel aggrieved if the people of his State declined to send him to the Senate, for by no merit or custom had he a pre-eminent claim upon them. Defeat, however disappointing, could bring him no heart-burning.

Mr. Phillips, however, was asking no more than was his due: renomination at the hands of his party. By every consideration both of merit and custom it was his due. His official record was *efficiency, faithful execution, striking ability and uncompromising honesty*. But by very virtue of his honesty and ability he had gone up against the two powers in this country that go furthest to make or unmake Presidents: law-breaking corporations and machine politicians. The Greed and The Graft could never be at ease while a Fearless Honesty abode in the White House. They long had planned to displace Mr. Phillips.

The fight was not an open one, with each army aligned under its own banners. It was a night attack where the clash and the struggle could be heard and felt but the assailants could not be distinguished and called by name. Mr. Phillips could well imagine who were the leaders of his enemies, but they were too shrewd as yet to openly declare their opposition.

The consummate skill with which the campaign was conducted made it appear that there was a growing manifestation of the people's disapproval. The boomlets of a dozen or more favourite sons were assiduously cultivated each in its

limited field—but all by the master hand. The favourite sons as a rule deprecated the mention of their names and waived it aside as unworthy of serious thought; but it takes a very great or a very small man to recognize his own unfitness for the presidency of the nation,—and modesty would permit no favourite son to say he was too big for the office.

Mr. Phillips was not of the holy sort that is above using some of the traditional methods of the politician. With good conscience he could drive men to righteousness when necessity demanded it: and believing that his own reelection would be for the country's weal he would not have hesitated perhaps to turn the power of the administration to that purpose if he had not been measurably handicapped.

He was an honest man—as his predecessors in office had been. He desired—as they had desired before him—to give the country a clean and honest lot of officials to administer its interests. But, unlike some of the Presidents gone before, he had made extraordinary personal efforts to see and know for himself that the men of the government corps were of honest purposes at heart and honest practices in office. Result: many and many a cog-wheel, great and small, in the machine had been broken and thrown into the scrap pile.

Therefore the machine silently prayed for deliverance from this Militant Honesty in the executive office, and, with its praying, believed—first article in the creed of Graft: Heaven helps those who help themselves—to deliverance as well as to the public money. So, there was no pernicious activity in Mr. Phillips' behalf among the office-holding class. The defection from his support was impalpable but none the less assured. He could not put his finger upon the men and say "Here are the deserters," for they had not as yet, at four months before the convention, declared against him. But they were not throwing up their hats for him. It was apathy that presaged disaster.

And Greed had so quietly and effectively extended its propaganda that "vested" interests began to think they "viewed with alarm" Mr. Phillips' activities. They were persuaded that he had already gone to the limit in bringing to book the methods of Capital and of Business, and were asked to note that not even yet was there the faintest hint of a promise that he would not run amuck amongst them. They preferred to defeat him in the convention. If not, they would defeat him at the polls. With them there was no sentiment about it. They simply wanted no more of him. They desired a "safe" man.... Few times in the political history of this nation has Money failed to get what it really truly wanted.

Finished politician that he was, Mr. Phillips could read the signs clear. He knew that his political death was being plotted, had been plotted for months. In the consciousness of his official rectitude and efficiency, and with confidence in the discernment and appreciation of his countrymen, for a long time he had

thought contemptuously of the plotters. At length, however, his trained eye had caught the flash of real danger: and his heart was oppressed. Not that overweening ambition made him crave continuance in his exalted office and sicken at the thought of denial. It was not that: not the loss of a double meed of honour in a second term. No; it was the threatened loss of his first term, of the four years already gone, with their unstinted expenditure of energy and honest purpose, brain-fag and strain of heart. To be disapproved, discredited, by the people for whom he had given the very essence of his life! Keener than the sting of ingratitude, even, was the sense of possible loss. *Four years* for naught! *four years for naught!*—if the people should repudiate him. He trembled to think it was possible for him to fail of renomination. He was fighting for his life: for the life he had already given to his country in that four years.

As the weeks and months wore on toward summer he felt that he was losing strength with every sunset. The Southern delegations, makers of so many second terms, were being sent to the national convention uninstructed. That was not conclusive; but it was ominous, for any administration having Mr. Phillips' political faith that cannot hold the delegations from that section is politically in a bad way.

Plausible explanations were offered, assuredly: "Southern delegates have so regularly worn the administration label that they have lost influence and self-respect"—"This time it is unnecessary. There is only one real candidate and they must all vote for him"—"It is better not to appear to endorse the negro luncheon too vigorously, for the negro in the South does not count any more and some of the tenderfoot white recruits might desert." The explanations did appear to explain it; but Mr. Phillips knew that Money and the Machine were taking his Southern delegates from him.

And the Southern delegates were not the only ones that were going wrong. The Trusts and the Grafters were throwing Northern and Western delegations into confusion. Beyond that, the Southern country was somewhat surprised to hear that a negro son-in-law to the Presidency was a little too strong even for Northern stomachs, and that some Northern white folks were making bold to say so.

Hayward Graham's commission? The opposition in the Senate did not have the slightest difficulty in holding it up. Mr. Phillips with unflinching courage unhesitatingly used every whit of his power and influence to have that commission confirmed. He had nominated Hayward because he believed him worthy; and he said to the Senators with a touch of humour, but with much emphasis nevertheless, that being his son-in-law ought not to be held to the negro's discredit. He said many other things, for he was really very much in earnest: but the Senate was non-committal. It postponed consideration of Mr. Hayward Graham for

days, and weeks, and finally adjourned without a vote upon him. That ended it.... With a show of grim determination the President stated that he would send the nomination to the next session, but he knew when he said it that Helen's husband would never be a lieutenant of cavalry in the United States Army.

Let it not be inferred that, as the matter is thus dismissed briefly here, there was little or no discussion of it. This entire volume would not compass a tenth of what was said about it, and the reader who cares for details must seek the files of the newspapers of the period. There is not space here even for a digest of all that talk.

* * * * *

Mr. Phillips could ill brook defeat. In his thinking there were few things worse than failure. So it was that, while in the desperate fight he was making he did nothing unconscionable, he did stand for some things nauseating to him.

It was necessary that in the North he hold the full negro vote, which was the balance of power in several States. It certainly looked an easy thing to do. And it was easy—to everybody concerned except Mr. Phillips. The negro race rallied to him with an enthusiasm that was surpassing even for those emotional folk. The overflowing, smothering approbation which they heaped upon him was loud-mouthed, unceasing, extravagant. Yet it took all his self-control to receive it with any show of satisfaction. In fact on several occasions he was almost goaded to break with his negro allies for good and all. In some of those moments he easily could have done so—as far as personal reasons held him. The personal pride in being decorated with a second term was not always a match or antidote for his personal humiliation and suffering under the mouthings and love-makings of the admiring black men. But a rupture, and a declaration of his real sentiments, meant not alone his defeat: it meant the success of the enemies of honest government: it meant that, his tongue once unloosed, Helen must know—and her heart would break. So he held his peace, and let the negroes say on with their fulsome friendlinesses.

And what he bore as he kept the faith! It tore his nerves to tatters. One incident as an example:

He was invited to address a convention of the Afro-American Association, which was holding its biennial meeting in Washington in May. He accepted the invitation with very great pleasure. It gave him the opportunity he desired. The negroes had been talking to him or at him for months: and he had somewhat to say to them. He welcomed the chance to say it. He was full of his speech, and was intending to be very emphatic. It was *his* day to talk.

But the distinguished chairman of the convention who introduced him

thought that it was *his* day to talk. He presented Mr. Phillips in fifteen minutes of perfervid oratory, sonorous, unctuous, and filled with African imagery. He recited a brief history of the President's life, lauded him as Civilian, Soldier, and Chief Executive, credited to him about every good thing that had come to the human race since he was inducted into office, and crowned him as the negro's Friend, Champion and Hope. He detailed the evidence of Mr. Phillips' love for the negro race, and hailed him as the true and great Exemplar of the Genuine Brotherhood of Man.

"Yes, my Brothers," the orator-chairman swept volubly to his conclusion, "this great man who holds the Stars of Our Flag in his right hand and in his left hand the Golden Sceptre of Supreme Authority and Power in this Peerless Nation has proved himself beyond any Question or Peradventure the very Apostle and Archetype of Equality and Fraternity in this land of theoretical Freedom and Equal Rights. In each of the three great departments of our life he has practised that Equality and Fraternity. In the civil administration of this Great Government he has called to his assistance black men of Mighty Brain-Power to advise with him about his policies of Statecraft and they have spoken Words of Wisdom to him. In the military department he has appointed to an officer's commission under the Stars and Stripes a brave young negro, a Gentleman, a Scholar, a Soldier, who will reflect Honour upon the Star-Spangled Banner and show the world that the Negro is a Patriot and a Fighter. And more than that, my Brothers! As the crowning act of his Fearless Career the Honourable and Honoured Gentleman who will address you has openly recognized the negro's rightful place in the Homes of this Country, for he has admitted the race as an Equal into the Holy of Holies of his own domestic life, and furnished supreme and convincing proof of his love for black men by freely giving his tender and gentle daughter, the Fairest among Ten Thousand and the One Altogether Lovely, over into the arms and affections of that same young Negro Soldier! Connubial Bliss knows no Colour Line, my Brothers! May the union be blessed with—"

But fifteen hundred lusty black throats, not able longer to choke down their cheers, were wildly, exultingly screaming "Phillips! Phillips!! Phillips!!!" The chairman said a few more words in pantomime and gave Mr. Phillips the right to speak.

Mr. Phillips was very slow in coming to his feet. The speech that he had purposed to make was gone—all gone. The chairman's last words like a chemical reagent, had turned his every thought to vitriol, and he was all afire with the impulse to pour it burning and blistering down their open throats.

He stood impassive with tight-shut lips while they cheered and cheered and cheered. In the fires that scorched his spirit, personal and political ambition shrivelled into a cinder and was entirely consumed. A second term—the honour,

the approval, the country's weal—might sink into the Pit rather than that he would blacken his soul even by tacit assent to such a monstrous, awful lie! Given Helen freely to a negro's arms!—he would blast that lie with—

But Helen! in the tumult he thought of *her*. And the tenderness of his love for her made him to tremble. In a moment a war was on within him, and the struggle between his pride and his love shook him as with an ague.

But he knew the end from the beginning. As the cheering died away Helen dominated his thoughts as she dominated his heart,—and he did make a speech to the convention. It was not a forcible speech nor a very long speech, for a man cannot think about one thing and discourse very effectively about another. It was on the order of a prayer-meeting talk, consisting mainly of platitudes and good advice. When it was finished he went directly home and lay down on a couch to rest, for he was tired, mortally tired.

From that day forth Mr. Phillips was in terror of his negro allies. He made no other addresses to them. But he could not escape them. The negro papers called on the race to rally to the Phillips standard. This the joyful blacks construed to mean that they must form themselves in squads and go over to Washington and tell Mr. Phillips about it personally. Many were the delegations from political clubs and orders and associations of all black sorts that called to pay their respects and assure the President of their loyal support and good wishes; and despite all his forehandedness and precautions it was a very dull day when he was not openly hailed as a brother to the race by virtue of the affinity in Helen's choice of a mate. He was not permitted to forget Helen's plight for an hour,—if he had chosen to forget.

Indeed, however, he had lost the zest of thinking about anything else. True, he fought his political battle with energy to the finish, and gave it the best thought his brain could furnish—but that was because he was a born fighter and knew not how to be a laggard: the burden of his voluntary, uncompelled thinking was of Helen, and it grew larger and larger upon his mind. And the more he thought of her, the more he would think of her: and the tragedy of her mating loomed more darkly hopeless and appalling before his face, until his days became one long prayer for a miracle of deliverance.

In his meditations he suffered the tortures of a lost soul. He was too brave a man to shirk his accountability for Helen's undoing. In moments of solitude when he was most racked with remorse and wildly despairing he would cry out against the fatal interpretation she had put upon his words and his deeds—"I did not *mean* that, I did not mean *that*, oh my daughter, my little girl, my little girl!"—but these moments of self-excusing were only the wild cries of unbearable agony. In composed self-confession he accused himself—with a bitterness that had in it the bitterness of death—and in the genuineness of his penitence he might have

proclaimed his error and put his countrymen on guard: if only *Helen must not know!*

* * * * *

Summer was come and the convention was less than two weeks away when Mr. Phillips' first political lieutenant came back from a trip to New York with the very definite news for his chief that even if at that late day he would promise to be more considerate of the business interests of the country the nomination might yet be his. Mr. Phillips promptly sent his answer to the railroad president who had presumed to speak for Business that he "would see the *business interests* damned before he would make any such promise." ...

Three days before the convention met, Mr. Phillips received a letter written in pencil in a weak and uncertain handwriting.

"We have named the boy Hayne Phillips. When are you coming to see us? Daddy dear, it tires me so to write. I love you. HELEN."

CHAPTER XXXVII

The Mr. Phillips who on July the 3d, 191-, alighted from the car at the little station that served the Stag Inlet folks was a very different figure of a man from the vigorous person who on a day in the preceding October had taken the train there to go back to his work in Washington.

There was now no spring in his step, no quickness in his movement. He was plainly fatigued and preoccupied, and he was alone. There was no member of his family with him, nor any of them, except Hayward, to meet him at the station. A single secretary followed him at some little distance as he walked down the platform mechanically raising his hat and smiling at the half score of persons who had stopped to see him take his carriage. He climbed up beside Hayward into the single-seated affair the negro was driving, nodded to the secretary to follow him in the formal and stately victoria that was waiting, and with a parting lift of his hat left the small crowd staring at him as he drove away.

The onlookers commented, as onlookers will, upon everything that struck

their eyes in the simple proceeding. They wondered why he appeared so listless and careworn. They wondered why he crowded into the narrow buggy instead of taking the roomy carriage. They wondered why none of his daughters nor his wife accompanied him—why he looked just a little bit carelessly dressed—and what had become of his swinging, buoyant stride—and whether he was altogether in good health and—well, they left no question unasked, no surmise unturned.

Mr. Phillips had very little to say to Hayward during the drive to Hill-Top. He really desired to say nothing, but it was impossible to ignore all the demands of gentlemanly politeness and interest in his son-in-law's family.

"How is Helen?" he asked after a long while.

"Not so very well yet, sir," answered Hayward. "She doesn't seem to regain her strength very rapidly."

A very much longer silence.

"And the baby?"

"The finest boy in the world, sir—you ought to see him—strong and healthy, with lungs like a steam piano."

Mr. Phillips made no comment. Hayward looked round at him.

"He's not very pretty, sir—no really young baby is, I'm told—but the nurse says it's unusual the way he notices things already. I know all new fathers are said to talk like that about the first baby, but really I think he must be an exception, sir. I think he'll be a credit to his name—which is the most I could say for him."

Mr. Phillips acknowledged the compliment by nothing further than a lifting of his chin—which Hayward had no means of interpreting. Having exhausted the subject and not being encouraged to proceed, the young father became silent—and Mr. Phillips was glad. He had not chosen to ride with Hayward for the pleasure of his conversation, but for the benefit of the onlookers at the railway station; and, having asked the questions absolutely demanded by the occasion, he did no more.

* * * * *

Mr. Phillips waited in the library till he should be told that his daughter and grandson were ready to receive him. Not in the lull before the battle of Valencia did he so prepare himself for a trial of his nerves and his courage. His courage was of the same old sort, but his nerves were sadly shaken by the cumulative happenings of the last half year; and with Helen's happiness as the ruling purpose of his life he felt almost afraid to trust himself before her eyes in the ordeal through which he must pass. Perhaps she might still be unable to read his dissembling. God save them both if she should read him truly.

The nurse came in to tell him that Mrs. Graham was waiting to see him.

Hayward had intended to witness that meeting, but there was something in the father's manner as he passed him in the hall which caused him to forego his purpose. Mr. Phillips followed the nurse into the darkened room. Helen half rose to a sitting posture and clasped her white arms about his neck and sobbed in nervous joy.

"Oh, daddy, you have come!" she said brokenly—and for a long time neither spoke.... "I thought you would never come! I have wanted to see you so. I've been so lonely, daddy. Where are mamma and Elise that they have deserted me?"

Mr. Phillips as he bent down over her almost lifted her out of bed in the force and tenderness of his embrace. The pitiful little cry of loneliness almost tore his heart-strings out of him.

"Your mother has not been strong enough to come, precious heart, and Elise has to stay at her side to care for her. When Dr. Hamilton prescribed Virginia Springs for her in April he thought that two months of rest would restore her to strength. Last winter was a very trying season, and your mother was more broken than usual by its burdens. The doctor tells me that she is recuperating very slowly, almost too slowly, but that rest and absolute quiet and freedom from excitement is the only thing that will cure her. I saw them a week ago to-day—I wrote you—and they sent their love to you. They hope to see you before very long."

"Elise might have come, papa. She has written to me quite regularly—but she might have come if only for two or three days—so that I could see some of you"—and her mouth quivered into another muffled sob.

"No, no, child, she could not leave her mother—you cannot imagine how near your mother has been to collapse—they would not write you for fear that you would worry too much about it—and she is still very weak—nothing seems to benefit her much—the doctor can hardly find the cause of her continued weakness—and perfect rest is the only thing that can help her back to health. So Elise must be there to relieve her from every exertion and effort and be a companion to her, for my visits are necessarily brief. They love you, little girl, as always—though they haven't been permitted to be with you. Katherine is too young to have come, of course, and she would have been more of a care than a comfort, anyway."

"Oh, yes, she's young, but she would have been *somebody*. The last month has been the *longest* month, daddy, that I ever lived in all my life—"

"Well, well, little girl," the father said soothingly as he smoothed the hair on her temple, "don't cry any more. The waiting is over now and we won't be away from you so long again. I could not get away from Washington a day earlier. I have been very busy, you know—doubly busy with the official work and the political campaign too."

"Oh, yes, daddy, I want to ask you. Are you going to get the renomination?" There was an excitement in Helen's question that her father saw was unusual for her, with all her characteristic interest in his political fortunes.

"Why child, I—I think so. We'll know certainly in a very short time now. The convention is in session and they will have the first ballot to-morrow, I think."

"But do you really think you will win, daddy? Is there no danger of losing?"

"I really think I'll win, little woman; but you know politics is a most uncertain thing."

"Then you do think there is some danger! Oh, daddy, is what I've done going to hurt you?" There was distress in her accents.

"What *you've* done?"

"Yes, daddy. It never occurred to me till yesterday. I've seen very little of the papers since we've been up here, but none of them had ever mentioned such a thing—until last night in the very first one the nurse would let me look at even for a minute it said that 'just how many or just how few votes the President will lose in the convention because of his daughter's having married a negro it is impossible at this time to forecast. Southern delegations this year are unusually uncertain quantities.' It said just that, daddy—and oh, I'm so sorry if—"

"Oh, no—no—child. You haven't hurt me, my chance of renomination, in the least. The idea is ridiculous. Haven't you learned by this time that the papers will say anything? They must say something, you know; and when they haven't anything sensible to say they are compelled to say things that are absurd. Suppose the Southern delegates are uncertain. They always have been, except when the machine had them tied hard and fast. Don't distress your heart about political rumours, little girl. I'll win all right. I've never failed in my life."

"Oh, I'm so glad if it is false, daddy. It would break my heart if I thought I had done anything to defeat you. I wish there were no Southern delegates—and no Southern people, with their bigoted notions!"

"You are forgetting, little woman, that your grandmother was a South Carolinian—and the dearest, gentlest soul! If she could have lived to know you she would have loved you more than any other girl in all the world, I think. And you would have loved her, Helen.... Don't quarrel with the Southern people. Their ideas about the—about the negro are in the blood, and cannot be eradicated in two or three generations."

Helen began to speak and turned her face casually toward the baby lying tucked in on the far side of the bed—when her father snatched the conversation suddenly from her and, taking it thoroughly in hand, gave her little time except to listen.

The blow had fallen! And with all his preparation he was unprepared! Helen was confused and bewildered by the incoherency of his talk, by his hurried,

disjointed speeches, by his half-made questions. He was making a blind effort to put off and push back the inevitable. His eyes had grown accustomed to the subdued light of the room and as his vision became clear his heart almost ceased to beat. The baby! In that half light was revealed the darkness of the little fellow's face!—many, many shades darker than the face of Hayward Graham: and the spectral fear that had been with Mr. Phillips at noonday, at morning, at evening, at all the midnights through the last months, was now a real, weakening, flesh-and-blood terror.

With a hope that was faltering indeed had he prayed for the miracle that might deliver Helen entirely from the consequences of her thoughtless folly, but with all his faith had he besought a merciful Heaven that the child which would come to her should not fall below a fair average of its parental graces. Even that were a torture, that were horrible enough: that Helen's gentle blood should be *evenly* mixed and tainted with a baser sort. But this recession below the father's type!—this resurgence of the negro blood, with its "vile unknown ancestral impulses!"—there came to him an almost overpowering desire, such as had come of late with increasing frequency but never with such physical weakness as now: the desire to lie down at full length and to rest.

As he talked volubly and scatteringly to Helen, his shaking soul cried against fate. Why should Nature have chosen his Helen, the very flower of his heart, as a subject upon which to demonstrate her eccentric laws! Why, oh—but he must keep his tongue going to distract Helen from his distress—why, oh, why should atavism have thought to play its tricks and assert its prerogative here! Were there not enough other mongrel children in all the earth through whom heredity could establish her heartless caprices without the sacrifice of Helen and of Helen's baby! Oh, the sarcasm of pitiless Chance, that the most dear, the *very* highest, should be sacrificed to establish the law of the Persistence of the Lowest in the blood of men! Surely, in *this* lesson, that law had been taught at an awful cost: and, as if to show that it had been taught beyond cavil, there was poked out from under the white coverlet a tight-shut baby fist that was almost black.

* * * * *

All things human must have an end,—and Mr. Phillips' subterfuge was very human. His expedients finally failed, he had not a word more to say: and yet he was no nearer being prepared for the inevitable than before. The supreme test was come, and his spirit cowered before it. For the first time in his life he greeted flight as a deliverer, and decided to run away from danger.

"Well, little woman, I must go and rid myself of the dust of travel;" and he was half way to the door when Helen's weak voice arrested him.

"Are you not going to notice the baby, daddy?"

The pathos in that trembling question would have called him to go against all the Furies. Turning, he hesitated an instant, of which the double would have been fatal: but he saved the moment from disaster.

"Dear me, I was about forgetting the youngster."

He walked quickly around the bed and sat down beside the boy. Pulling the covering a little away, he took the tiny hand in his, and grandfather and grandson looked for the first time each into the face of the other.

It was a negro baby: the colour that was of Ethiopia, the unmistakable nose, the hair that curled so tightly, the lips that were African, the large whites of the eyes. Verily a negro baby: and yet in an indefinable way a likeness to Helen, a caricature of Helen, a horrible travesty of Helen's features in combination with— with whose? Not Hayward Graham's. But whose, then? Helen's and whose? ... Mr. Phillips could not answer his own question—he had never seen Guinea Gumbo.

In a moment the smaller hand closed over the man's finger as if in approval; but the man straightened up as if to get a freer breath, and glanced involuntarily at the pale mother. Her eyes were painfully intent upon him. Driving himself, he turned. Murmuring a nursery commonplace, he leaned over and kissed the little darkey as tenderly as he might.

There was no escape from Helen's eyes. He prayed that she had not seen that his were shut when he kissed her son—it was his only concession to himself.

With another pat or two of the small fist he stood up by the bedside, bracing his knees against the rail that he might stand steadily. The fever was not yet gone from Helen's eyes. She had smiled when he caressed the boy, but she was yet expectant. On her father's verdict hung all her hopes, and his face for once in her life she was unable to read. She was vaguely uneasy. His manner was inscrutable, and she had never seen him look just like that. Their eyes met, and the unconscious pleading in hers would have wrung any verdict from him.

"He's a fine boy, isn't he, little woman? ... So strong and healthy looking.... Shakes hands as if he meant it.... And he looks somewhat like you, missy. That will be the making of him.... But I must go now,"—and he went rather precipitately.

"And will you hurry back to us, daddy?" Helen called to him.

"Yes, child; I'll hurry back," he answered,—as he hurried away.

His secretary handed him a telegram. He took the yellow envelope and, without so much as glancing at it, went into the library and shut the door.

Very late in the afternoon the library door was opened, without invitation from within. Mr. Phillips was sitting in a chair with his arms upon his desk and his face upon his arm—dead.

[image]

*"HIS ARMS UPON HIS DESK AND HIS FACE UPON HIS ARM—
DEAD."*

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Again, and of necessity, is the reader cited to the newspapers of the time.

It is not meet that the passing of a chief magistrate of this nation should be passed over quickly or lightly in any history. The people stopped to mourn, to cast up his life in total, and pay respect to its multiplied excellences, to study his virtues as if in hope to reincarnate them, and to glory in his life as a common possession of his country. And yet this narrative may not pause to pay befitting tribute to him, nor to detail the tides of grief that swept the hearts of his countrymen with his outgoing, or the stateliness and grandeur of the ceremonies with which they committed his body to the ground. We may not here give the comprehensive view, for our canvas is not broad enough. Let it be said only that he died as he had lived: a gentleman brave and tender,—honest to his undoing, but dead without having known defeat,—faithful to his love for Helen even to the death, yet making no plaint against love.

The physicians ascribed the President's death to heart failure,—which meant little more than that he was dead. They ventured to say that the heart failure had been superinduced by overwork. This verdict doubtless would have stood if a newspaper man the first at Hill-Top had not chanced to hear of a telegram.

The telegram could not be found although the secretary searched diligently for it. The energetic reporter conceived that that statement was a subterfuge which in some way betokened a lack of confidence in his discretion, and, besides, it smacked of mystery for a telegram to evaporate into thin air in a dead man's hand. Put on his mettle thus, he made it his business to know what was in that

telegram. Being an old telegraph man himself, he hied him down to the station and made himself pleasant and useful to the youngish man in charge.

President Phillips had intended to await the decision of the convention in Washington, and all telegraphic arrangements for convention bulletins had been made accordingly. At the last moment Helen's trembling little letter had changed his purpose, and he had slipped quietly off to Hill-Top, notifying only Mr. Mackenzie how to communicate with him directly.

The moment the President's death had flashed upon the wires, the capacity of the little Stag Inlet office became sadly overtaxed. The perspiring and flustered operator was very grateful for the assistance of the kindly newspaper man who modestly proffered his help in getting the deluge of messages speedily copied, enveloped, addressed and dispatched. Once having his hand on the copy-file it was an easy thing for the good Samaritan to get the full text of the last message that had gone to Hill-Top.

He could not decide whether it was so very valuable now that Mr. Phillips was dead; but he sent it to his paper along with his other stuff, riding a dozen miles in a midnight search for an open telegraph key. Much pride he had in his achievement when he added to his news report a statement to his managing editor that the text of the telegram was a "beat" for his paper and might be displayed as "exclusive." But his feelings were very much hurt next day that they should have published his find under a Chicago dateline and robbed him of his glory.

THE PRESIDENT DIES OF A BROKEN HEART

He Takes the Telegram which Tells of
Defeat and Is Seen No More Alive

Chicago, July 3d—After a conference of the leaders of the Phillips cohorts this afternoon the following telegram was sent to the President at Stag Inlet: "We are moving heaven and earth; but the forces of evil are too many for us. First ballot to-morrow."

The news column was after that fashion. The leading editorial was a scream under the caption, "The Trusts Have Murdered Him!"

Mr. Mackenzie, who had sent the telegram, was mortally angry that the odium of actual defeat from which death had relieved his friend should have been fixed thus upon his memory. He was offended almost beyond endurance with his confidential clerk despite that young man's violent disclaimer of responsibility for the leak; but he was most enraged at the diabolical discretion of the managing editor of *The Yellow* in omitting the name of the sender of the telegram: which

would necessitate that he admit having sent it before he could demand to know whence the paper had knowledge of it.

The convention took a recess for ten days, and, upon reassembling after Mr. Phillips' burial, passed by a unanimous vote a set of resolutions that lifted him to the stars and gave him place among the gods. Then it set out upon a long round of balloting; and without being altogether conscious of the reasons and causes impelling, it finally nominated a "safe" man for President.

* * * * *

Helen could not attend her father's funeral. Pitifully weakened by the awful shock of his sudden passing, she cried out with all her remaining strength to be carried in to look upon his face in death. Her physician's consent after long refusal was due to his kindliness of heart, and the result vindicated his professional judgment, in that it came frightfully near to taking her life.

In utter desolation of spirit was she left when they had taken the great man out of the house upon his stately procession to Washington and the grave. Her husband was unflinching in devoted and anxious attendance, but she was listless to his tenderest efforts to console her. Elise's letters, coming now every day from the bedside of the prostrated mother, Helen read faithfully to the last word, and really tried to take comfort and courage from them, but they could not get down, it seemed, to touch and dissolve the cold mists of desolation in the deeps of her heart. Her father, the stay and fixative of her life, was gone: and there was nothing now to give her footing upon the earth. No one to interpret life, to give meaning to life, to give purpose to life, to give value to life. The days might as well move backward as forward. They appeared not to be moving at all. There was no one to give them direction. He toward whom or from whom or about whom the days had always turned as a sort of first cause or incarnation of the reason and sense of things, was gone: and she was in chaos.

With her weakness of body, her mental processes were weak, and her mind did not take vigorous hold of things: but, confidently as it had followed her father's sentimental speeches about the negro race and loyally as she would defend and abide his words and the consequences of them, she could not control her thinking, even in its weakness, and put down the thoughts which her every look upon her baby brought to disturb her. Very slowly the natural spring and rebound of youth brought her out of her physical relapse, and yet more slowly out of her mental depression. But, even as strength of body and mind returned, there came more insistently the questioning that could not be answered.

In her heart she had always glorified mother-love. In the days and weeks before the baby's coming she had revelled in the dreams of motherhood, and her

heart had been overcharged with love and visions of it.

But this little fellow was not the baby of her dreams. Never in all the hundred varied pictures her heart had painted had there been a child like him. He was not of her mind, surely; and vaguely uneasy and distressed was she that he was not of her kind. Nervously she swung between the moments when pent-up mother-love swept away all questions and poured itself out upon her little son in fullness of tenderness, and the other moments of revulsion when she could not coerce her rebellious spirit.

Feverishly in the doubting moments would she repeat over and over her father's brief words of assurance. Hungrily had she awaited them before he had come to look upon the boy, greedily had she seized upon them when he had pronounced a favourable judgment, and longingly she wished now that he could come back to reinforce them and reassure her faint confidence that all was well. Not finding a sufficient volume of testimony in the few words he had spoken in that last interview, she supplemented them with all she could recall of everything she had ever heard him say about the excellence of the negro race, and added to that all the nurse had to say of the proverbial uncomeliness and possibilities of phenomenal "come out" in very young babies: and for days her pitiful daily mental task was to lie with closed eyes and interminably to construct and reconstruct of these things an argument to prop up her ever-wavering faith.

* * * * *

Hayward Graham was a man of too much intelligence not to see the uncertainty of his wife's attitude toward the boy. He was of too much white blood in his own veins not to have suffered measurably the same torments because of the baby's recession in type. What Mr. Phillips had said of it, he did not know, and dared not ask Helen. In all kindness of purpose he encouraged her to believe *The Yellow's* theory that her father's heart had broken under defeat. He did not know that she was agonizingly fearful of having contributed to that defeat.

* * * * *

Helen was rummaging through her father's desk in the library. With the first escape from the prison-house of her bedroom, her feet had turned instinctively toward the workshop which had been the scene of Mr. Phillips' labours at Hill-Top, and the scene also of much that had been joyous in her association with him. But even as she idly tumbled the odds and ends of papers about—in solemn and fascinated inspection, for that they seemed in a way to breathe his spirit and to invoke his presence—the undercurrent of her mind was busy as ever with its

never-ending task.

She turned up a small package of notes marked "Cincinnati speech," and examined them absent-mindedly; but found nothing that caught her interest. Tossing them back in the desk, she picked up a letter addressed to her father in her own hand. She recognized a rambling and rollicking message she had sent to him more than a year before. From the appearance of the envelope she judged that he must have carried it in his pocket awhile. She had a little cry when she came to the characteristic closing sentence: "Daddy, I want to see you so bad." That had been a simple message of love. Now it was the cry of her heart's loneliness and need.

* * * * *

Dabbing at her eyes with her handkerchief, she pulled out from the bottom of the drawer an unbound section of the *Congressional Record*, from which protruded a slip of paper. Opening it at this marker, she saw a blue pencil-mark which indicated the beginning of a speech before the Senate by Mr. Rutledge. Half-way down the second column her father had made the marginal comment "good." Further along was a blue cross without explanatory note. Still further, "very good." With such commendations in her father's own words she began to read what Mr. Rutledge had to say.... For a short space she noticed her father's occasional marginal notes, favourable or critical, and the more frequent non-committal blue cross. It appeared that he had contemplated preparing an answer of some sort. Very soon Helen became so interested that she saw only the text.

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With faster beating heart and breath that came more irregularly she was drawn irresistibly along. It was an answer to her soul's cry for a word; and whether true or false, welcome or unwelcome, she could not but listen to that answer with quickening pulse as it ran hurriedly under her eyes. Long before she reached the end her anger was ablaze and her fears a-tremble, but she could not throw the speech from her unfinished. Almost in a frenzy of excitement and resentment she rushed along to the very last word: and with a gasping cry of horror and wrath grabbed at the desk-drawer with the intention to hurl the pamphlet viciously back into it. She caught the slide instead, and pulled that out with a jerk. Lying on the slide was a telegraph envelope which her violence threw on the floor. With another impatient trial she slammed the pamphlet into the drawer, and mechanically picked up the telegram.

It was addressed to "The President, Hill-Top." Turning it over to take out the

message, she found it sealed. Instinctively she hesitated a moment, long enough for the question to come, "Why is it unopened?" Then she tore the end off the envelope.

The message read, "We are moving heaven and earth but the forces of evil are too many for us. First ballot to-morrow," and was signed by Mr. Mackenzie.

She read it over and over, stupidly at first, for her mind was excited by other things. Then the meaning of it began to be appreciated, and her heart sank. Confirmation of the newspaper story! The telegram *had* been sent! And her father *had* been defeated, and death alone had saved him from the damning ballot! Defeated, yes, really defeated!—and she had contributed, if only a mite, to that defeat which broke his heart! Guilty—*guilty!* She bowed her head in grief and agonized self-condemnation....

But no:—she started up—the telegram! He had not read it! Had he read it?—she caught up the envelope and examined it feverishly.... It could not have been opened—it had not been opened! He had not read it—he did not know! He had not known of his defeat—he had not died of his defeat—and she had not helped to send him to his death! Oh the joy of this acquittal!—and she held the envelope as one under sentence might clasp a reprieve, and almost caressed it as she made sure of its testimony in her behalf.

When she had assured herself that the envelope had not been opened, the burden upon her heart would have been lifted entirely if the telegram had not confirmed the fact of his defeat. He had not died because of defeat, and she was acquitted therefore of his death, yet she was acutely sensible of the fact that he had gone to his grave in the shadow of defeat, and that death alone had saved him from the shameful actuality.

This was gall and wormwood to her, for his name could never be flung free of that shadow. The very time and manner of his going-out had fixed failure eternally upon him. Oh why, her heart cried, could he not have died before or lived beyond it? Why had he died *then*? Mr. Mackenzie might have been mistaken, or the sentiment might have changed with the balloting, victory have come out of defeat and his fame have been without a cloud upon it. Oh, why had he not lived?—lived to outlive that one reverse—lived to overwhelm his enemies in another trial, lived to put those hateful Southern delegates again under heel? Why had he died so inopportunately? ... Why had he died at all? ... *Why had he died?* ... How could death have taken him so quickly and so unawares? He had gone briskly out of her room with the promise on his lips to hurry back. He had kissed the baby and said it looked like her.... Yes, said it looked like her—the baby—

Hurriedly she snatched the *Congressional Record* out of the drawer into which she had angrily flung it! Breathlessly she turned the pages to see what comment he had made upon that last part of Rutledge's speech.

Mr. Phillips had put but one marginal note against all that fearful presentation. Opposite the words, "when the blood of your daughter ... is mixed with that of one of this race, however 'risen,' redolent of newly applied polish," etc., Helen saw the single written word, "unthinkable."

Unthinkable! Quickly she searched again that portion of the speech that had given supreme offence—and found nothing. Nothing beside the word "unthinkable." No denial had her father entered that "vile unknown ancestral impulses, the untamed passions of a barbarous blood would be planted in the Anglo-Saxon's very heart" by such unions as hers. No hint of his thought as to a "mongrel progeny." No answer to the question, "How shall sickly sentimentalities solace your shame if in the blood of your mulatto grandchild the vigorous red jungle corpuscles of some savage ancestor shall overmatch your more gentle endowment...?" A free expression, critical or approving, of the first half of the speech; but silence, an awful silence, when it comes to this part so pertinent to her situation. Silence!—*for the reason* that her situation is UNTHINKABLE!

In an illuminating flash she sees the Truth—sees all the minute incidents of the past months, the looks, the gestures, the things unsaid, which, unnoted by her at the time, were yet registered in her subconsciousness, and which make so plain, now that she reads them aright, all her father's thoughts and sufferings and sacrifice from the moment when he had cried, "But a *negro*, Helen! How could you!" until the time he had rushed away after kissing her negro baby—rushed away to die! She knew! ... *Despoiled herself!—polluted her blood beyond cleansing!—brought to life a mongrel fright, and brought to death her father!*—with a scream of horror she staggered to her feet.... At the door she met the nurse, who was hurrying to her, still holding in her arms the baby whom she had not tarried to put down.

"Take it away! *Take it away!*" shrieked Helen, pushing it from her so violently as to hurl it from the nurse's arms, and staggered on through the hall, out the door, and down the path toward the lake.

CHAPTER XXXIX

The candidates for the Senate were come to Spartanburg in their canvass of the State before the primary election. The campaign was about half finished and had already reached the very personal stage of discussion so dear and so interesting

to the South Carolina heart. LaRoque, Rutledge, Preston and Darlington were all out after Mr. Killam's scalp, and that gentleman was making it sufficiently entertaining for the four of them and for the crowds who flocked to hear.

Major Darlington and "Judge" Preston were running each in the hope that "something might happen." Mr. Rutledge and Colonel LaRoque each in an effort to poll the largest vote next to Mr. Killam and thus be left to try conclusions alone with the old man in a second primary—provided the four of them in an unformulated coalition could keep the old man from winning out of hand in the first trial.

At the hotels on the Saturday morning of the Spartanburg meeting, each of the candidates was surrounded by a coming and going crowd of his admirers and supporters and persons curious to see what he looked like. Senator Killam, as by right, was the centre of the largest interest. Nearest about him were his most trusted lieutenants in the county, who did not come and go with the changing crowd but stood by to whisper confidences to the Senator, to receive his more intimate disclosures, and to present formally sundry citizens who desired to shake the great man's hand and be called by name.

A little further removed from the Senator's person were the inevitable two or three of that super-admiring yokel type which, too ignorant, unwashed and boorish to stand in the Very Presence, is yet vastly joyed to hang about, open-mouthed and open-eared, in the immediate neighbourhood of greatness, in the hope to be counted in among its *entourage*. Still further out the curious viewed "the old man" from a respectful distance and commented upon him, freely and respectfully or otherwise, as freeborn American citizens are wont to do. The while the crowd shifted and eddied, came and went. As about Senator Killam, so in less degree moved the tides about the other aspirants.

"Senator," asked one of the inner circle in a quiet moment, "what do you think of our chances with the national ticket?"

"Not so good as they'd have been with Phillips against us," answered Mr. Killam.

"Oh, of course not," said the questioner, glad to display his political wisdom, "I've told the boys all along that we could have beaten Phillips with that nigger son-in-law of his sure as shootin'."

"That's where you are mistaken," replied the Senator oracularly. "We might have beaten Phillips if we had nominated a dyed-in-the-wool corporation law-agent like they have now put up against us; but the nigger son-in-law wouldn't have cut any ice. I believe at heart they don't like that any more than we do, but if the Trusts would have permitted it they would have put Phillips and his nigger back there just to show us they could do it.... They've got a lot of fool notions about 'justice to the nigger' that make me sick.... Justice to the nigger

is to make him know his place and teach him to be happy in it; but the Yankees haven't got the sense to see it. Rutledge, even, had a lot of that damn nonsense in his speech on the Hare Bill. Half of what he said was very good, if he had only voted accordingly and left out all that rot about educating the nigger.... How in the devil he got his ideas I can't see. He didn't inherit 'em, for his aristocratic old daddy thought it was a dangerous thing to educate the lower classes of white folks."

"You are not worrying yourself much about Rutledge in this race, are you, Senator?"

"No, no, he'll never hear the gun fire. Why man, he's neither one thing nor the other. Some of his ideas about the nigger will make any *white* man mad, and yet nobody ever did make a more forcible protest against Phillips' nigger luncheon, nor paint a more horrible picture of miscegenation.... Strange thing about that, too,"—the Senator lowered his voice to reach only the inmost circle, and the yokels almost dislocated their necks in attempts to burglarize his confidence—"do you know it was whispered that Rutledge was engaged to Phillips' oldest daughter"—the Senator's voice dropped still lower—"no doubt, they say, that he is, or was, very much in love with her."

The smaller circle exchanged glances of interest, and a smile went round.

"Gosh, isn't that a situation!" said one of them.

"Yes, but don't mention it," Mr. Killam requested.

"Certainly not."

* * * * *

"What was it he told 'em?" asked one of the unwashed of his more fortunately placed fellow.

"I didn't ketch it all," replied the other, proud nevertheless to possess even a fragment of a state secret.

* * * * *

The crowd was far too large for the Spartanburg court-house, so the public discussion was had under the oaks of Burnett Park. An improvised platform of planks laid upon empty boxes lifted the candidates high into view of the assembled Spartans, who stood without thought of fatigue for six hours and listened to the merry war of words, and encouraged, interrogated, cheered and howled at the speakers in good old primary campaign fashion.

The primary campaign is inherently prolific of heat and hate: for the candidates, being agreed on political principles, are driven perforce to the discussion

of personal records and foibles. This campaign had developed the most friction between Mr. LaRoque and Mr. Killam, these two having been long in public life and having accumulated the usual assorted odds and ends of memories they would desire to forget.

In the very beginning of the canvass the Senator and the Colonel had rushed through Touchstone's category from the Retort Courteous to the Quip Modest, the Reply Churlish, the Reproof Valiant, the Countercheck Quarrelsome, the Lie with Circumstance, and had pulled up on the very ragged edge of the Lie Direct. There they had hung for days, while an appreciative public feigned to wait in breathless suspense for the moment when the unequivocal words "You are a liar" should precipitate a tragedy and the coroner count one of the gentlemen out of the race. At many of the meetings, the reports had it, were the people "standing on the crust of a muttering volcano," or in tense situations where "a single spark to the powder" would have—played hell; and especially at Gaffney on the preceding day, so the newspapers said, was the feeling so bitter and the words so caustic that partisans of Killam and LaRoque, "desperate men who would shoot at the drop of a hat, had stood with bated breath, hand on pistol, imminently expectant of the fatal word that should cause rivers of blood to flow."

Non-residents who occasionally read of the South Carolina campaigns and have formed the idea that they are things of blood, battle, murder and sudden death, may be somewhat relieved and reassured to learn that in the last thirty years not a single volcano has erupted, not a powder-mine has exploded, not a teaspoonful of blood have all the candidates together shed—notwithstanding the fact that a fiery Lie Direct has more than once been pitched sputtering hot into the powder of these debates. Let timid outsiders not be too much overwrought, therefore, because of these bated breaths and hands full of pistols,—it is just a cute way the good South Carolinians have of manifesting an interest in the proceedings.

The Spartanburg debate drew itself along after the usual fashion. There was plenty of noise, gesticulation and heat, and the usual allotment of "critical moments" when "tragedy was miraculously averted" by the "marvelous self-control and cool head of the Honourable" Thomas, Richard or Henry.

Senator Killam followed Colonel LaRoque, and long before he had finished, the crust over the volcano had been worn thinner than ever, the crowd was in a tumult, and no man could have made an altogether coherent speech to it.

The Senator had not referred to Rutledge in his talk, but at the end of it, as Rutledge was to follow him, he introduced him to the people as "my young friend who believes it is possible for a negro to become the equal of a white man." It had been Mr. Killam's studied practice to ignore Rutledge and treat his candidacy as a harmless youthful caper, and he usually referred to his former colleague briefly

in the very words in which he then presented him to the assembled Spartans.

Mr. Killam's shrewd but unfair characterization of him gave Rutledge a fine opening for a speech, but it gave him no little trouble also, for the Senator always appeared to make the statement casually with an air that said it didn't make the slightest difference anyway what the young Mr. Rutledge thought; and it was a difficult thing for Rutledge to straighten the matter out without magnifying the gravity of the charge.

Rutledge was quite able to take care of himself in any controversy where calm and intelligent reason was the arbiter, but it requires a peculiar order of ability to be master of such assemblies as was gathered there. While far from being a novice or a failure at stump-speaking, Rutledge was not in Senator Killam's class at that business. He had not learned that, whatever else it may be, and however much it may be such incidentally, a stump-speech is not primarily an appeal to reason. He took too much pains to be perfectly accurate, consistent and logical in all the details of his argument. He dealt too much in argument. His reasoning was excellent—as far as he was permitted to deliver it; but many of his choicest webs of logic were demolished half-spun by the irrelevant, irreverent, impertinent questions yelled at him by the crowd.

It takes a shifty man to accept all these challenges and turn them to his own account. Rutledge was well aware of that fact, but it was not for that reason alone that he ignored them as far as possible. He had started out on the campaign with the high purpose and resolve to pay his countrymen the compliment to talk to them as to men who think, and he had held as religiously to that ideal as his countrymen would permit.

Like the other three he was addressing himself principally to the record and claims of Mr. Killam, and the Killam partisans, already fomented by LaRoque's speech, were in a ferment of disorder. In a perfect shower of interruptions Rutledge had held his way unturned and apparently unnoticed when—

"You want to marry ol' Phillips' oldes' daughter, don't yuh?" split the air like the crack of a bull-whip.

Rutledge, hand uplifted in the middle of a sentence, stopped so quickly, so astonished, that he forgot to lower his arm.

"Um-huh! Thought that'd fetch yuh! When're yuh goin' to marry the nigger's sister?"

Before Rutledge could locate the disturber the crowd was in an uproar.

"Kill him!" "Kick him out!" "Hit him in the head with an axe!"—these were only a few of the cries that tore themselves through the pandemonium.

Rutledge stood, pale with passion, while the outburst spent itself. It seemed a very long time.

"My fellow countrymen," he said, when his voice could be heard—and at

the sound of it the assemblage became very quiet—"I will answer my unknown and unseen questioner as though he were a man and not a dog. I have not the honour or the hope to be engaged to Miss Phillips; but, if I had, I would account myself most fortunate. So much for the question.... As for the man who asked it, we certainly have come upon strange times in South Carolina, my countrymen, if the names of women are to be bandied in political debates. It has not surprised me to see you rebuke it. By your quick indignation at such an outrage you have spontaneously vindicated the good name of your State. The dog who made this attack cannot be of South Carolina. If born so he is a degenerate hound. You have no part with him: and before you kick him out there is only left for you to inquire whose collar he wears. What master has fed him and trained him and taught him this trick, and secretly has set him on to make this attack? That is the only question, my countrymen: *Whose hound dog is this?*"

"Rutledge! Rutledge! Hurrah for Rutledge!" "Kick him out!" "Shoot the dog!" "Tie a can to his tail!" "Who's lost a dog?" "Hurrah for Rutledge!" Rutledge's supporters bestirred their lungs to make the most of the situation.

"You go to hell! Hurrah for Killam!"—the defiant voice was the voice of the offender.

Senator Killam sprang to his feet with the bound of a panther.

"Say, you!"—he leaned far over the edge of the platform and shook his fist in a towering rage at his admirer who now stood revealed—"I give you to understand that I don't want the support of any such damn scoundrel as you or any of your folks, you infernal—" but bless you, though the Senator was screaming his denunciation, the rest of it was lost to history in the war of applause in which "Killam!" and "Rutledge!" seemed to bear about equal weight. The deafening crash of sound seemed to double when Mr. Killam, ceasing his screaming pantomime, stepped quickly over to Rutledge and extended his hand, which Rutledge took and shook with warmth as the old man spoke something that of course the crowd could not hear.

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After the speaking was finished, Rutledge went back to his hotel, and, taking from the clerk a bundle of mail that had been forwarded to him, climbed up to his room to look it over.

The third letter he opened was in a plain business envelope with typewritten address. He read:

"Unspeakably false? No, no, Evans, I am not false. I have not been false: for I love you. Such a long time I have loved you. Sometimes I have believed you loved me, and sometimes I have doubted; but I do not doubt since you told

me to-night I was unspeakably false. Shame on you to swear at your sweetheart so!—and bless you for saying it, for now I know. O why did you not say it earlier so that I might not have misread you? I thought you felt yourself committed, and must go on: that your love was dead, but honour held you. You looked so distressed, dear heart, that I was misled. Forgive me. And do not think I do not know your distress. I, too—but no, I must not. I love you, I cannot do more. In your rage were you conscious that your kiss fell upon *my lips*, dearest? Blind you were when you said I was unspeakably false—”

CHAPTER XL

Elise Phillips had not stirred from Virginia Springs since coming there with her mother and two little sisters early in April. Her father had visited them regularly each week-end except when imperative official duties forbade, and had suggested at his almost every coming that Elise take some little outing from her mother's bedside. Elise would not go. She was as constant in ministering to her mother as was the nurse in charge.

Not even when her father died did she go to look upon him in farewell, for she was momentarily fearful lest her mother go away also for ever. It was a forced choice between the claims of the living and the dead. Her heart was torn with a distressing sense of her father's loneliness in death—going to his grave in state, thousands following his catafalque—and yet not a single member of his family beside him: her mother and Helen prostrated, Katherine and May too very young, and she herself drawn on the rack of a divided duty.

Her daily life had been secluded and monotonous, except in the moments when her cumulating sorrows were so poignant that they drove out monotony. With religious regularity and with tenderest love—as for a wayward unfortunate child—she had written to Helen at Hill-Top, and at the private hospital in which she was now detained, until the physician in charge had requested that she discontinue her letters except at such times as he should advise.

Only in the last fortnight, since her mother was beginning slowly to recover strength, had Elise given the slightest heed to her physician's orders that she herself take some appreciable outdoor exercise and care of her health. Few of the summer visitors stopping at the one hotel of the quiet resort ever had a glimpse of her, for the reason that the cottage taken by Mrs. Phillips was quite removed

and secluded. The few friends who did see her remarked upon her loss of flesh and added beauty.

Elise was never beautiful after an assertive, flamboyant fashion, but was of that sublimated type of loveliness that, stealing slowly and softly in upon the senses, at last holds them rapt before the Rare Vision: Woman in Excelsis. Now, however, vigils and griefs had touched her face and form with a spirituelle quality not ordinarily possessed by them, and this ethereal effect caught the eye more quickly, and revealed at once the fine and exquisite modelling of her beauty.

She had seen and heard very little of Rutledge for half a year. During the remainder of the Washington season after Helen's marriage was announced she had bravely kept up appearances by missing none of the functions and gayeties that had claim upon her time and interest, and on one or two occasions had been face to face with him and exchanged brief but formal salutations. Since she had been at Virginia Springs an occasional brief press notice of the South Carolina senatorial campaign was all the word she had of him except a couple of lines in a letter from Lola Hazard in May.

On the Sunday morning after the Spartanburg meeting, at about the usual hour of eleven o'clock, the boy brought the Washington papers. As Elise sat down in the shadow of the porch and unfolded *The Post* she experienced the most acute sensations of interest that had stirred her for months. Over and again she read that Mr. Rutledge had neither "the honour nor the hope to be engaged to" her.

After the first surprise, came anger. The publicity was very offensive; and, beyond that, the denial itself was to be resented. As she understood it, no gentleman has the right to deny an engagement to any *lady*—that was the woman's privilege: and for the man's denial to savour of meeting an accusation—unpardonable!

But he had said "the honour:" oh, yes, of course; she admitted the word was all right, but at best it was such a formal word: and it might have been sarcasm—she could hardly imagine it other—for had he not told her she was unspeakably false? If she only could have heard how he said it! ... "Nor the hope:" worse still, he was trying to purge himself of the very slightest mental taint of guilt. It was an utter repudiation of her—in the face of the mob, he had not even *the hope*—very well, let it be so—doubtless his political career and a South Carolina mob was what he had in mind when he had said to her, "It is better so." ... "Would account himself most fortunate:" oh, certainly, Elise sneered, make a brave show of gallantry, but be particular to have the mob understand that you have *not even the hope* (by which it will understand *desire*)—it will be better so, for the politician.... Resentment possessed Elise.

This state of mind did abide with her—on through luncheon, and after. She thought of little else.

As evening approached she took Katherine and May for a stroll. Following the roadway some little distance toward the hotel, the three turned into a well-defined path leading up the hill that robbed the cottagers of their sunsets.

With an open prospect toward the east, the Virginia Springs folk might have all the glories of the morning as the free gift of God; but to possess the sunsets they must pay tribute of breath and strength in a climb of what the low-country visitors called "the mountain." The long ridge was really not of montane height, but was sufficiently uplifted to stay the feet of all except such as "in the love of Nature hold communion with her visible forms."

Once on top, however,—with its broad, open, wind-swept reaches rolling down to the wide river valley on the west and southwest, with a sweep of vision over the lower hills and lowlands to the north, east and south, and in the west across the river to the far-lying mountains showing under the afternoon sunlight only their smoky heads indistinct above the white haze that veiled the foothills: one had measurably the sensation of standing on top of the world.... The climb was a favourite diversion of Elise, and the red-splashed and golden sunsets and the sense of physical and spiritual uplift, a passion with her.

Before they reached the summit on this summer afternoon, the little May was sufficiently exercised, and wished to return. Permitting her and Katherine to go back alone, Elise climbed on to the top of the hill. and sitting down in her favourite seat, looked steadily into the west—into the future—into her heart.... Pride is inherently not a bad thing. Nor are its works always evil. Elise's pride in her love finally rebelled against her evil thinking of her lover. It preferred to think good of him, and it began to construct a defence of him.... First it set up that she had refused him pointblank, had denied her own love, and that after such a dismissal she certainly could demand from him nothing in the way of loyalty. Further, before dismissing him she had led him on to hope, no doubt about that; and in the light of her conduct his denunciation was just: she had mocked him—he was justified in thinking she was unspeakably false. What right, then, had she now to demand of his love that it should be loyal, that it should sacrifice his political future, that it should confess to a hope,—or even to a desire, if he had so meant it? Her heart admitted she was estopped.... Yet it could not be content and dismiss the matter from her thinking.... Had he meant to deny desire in denying hope? She asked herself the question.... Could one negative hope without admitting desire? ... Is there not desire in the dead as in the living hope? Do not hope and hopeless premise desire? ... Elise's mind was wandering in the maze of the psychology of hope, when she looked about to see coming up toward her *the man*.

Rutledge caught a train Washington bound in thirty minutes after reading Elise's fragment of a letter. He sent a telegram to his campaign manager, Robertson: "I am called north on business. Will miss Greenville meeting. Represent me there. It is probable I can make Laurens meeting Tuesday."

The hurry of his departure over, he sat in the Pullman and persuaded himself that he was undecided as to what he should do and was giving a judicial consideration to the advisability of marrying a woman sister-in-law to a negro: but the while he thought he was debating the matter Kale Lineberger was whisking the New York and New Orleans Limited along the curves of the Big Thicketty and across the bridges of the Broad and the Catawba—speeding him on toward the girl—as fast as an expert handling of throttle, lever and "air" could turn the driving-wheels of the mammoth "1231" and keep her feet on the rails....

As Rutledge in the cool of Sunday morning stepped from the rear sleeper, Jim McQueen climbed down from the engine, oil-can in hand.

"Well," said Jim, taking a look at his watch, "here's one Southern train under a Washington shed on time,—if I do say it, as shouldn't." ... Rutledge had not lost ten seconds in his coming to Elise.

Buying a copy of *The Mail* from a boy, he took a cab to his lodgings. From habit he looked first at the editorials. Turning then to the first page he saw under a modest headline an accurate account of the yesterday's episode at Spartanburg, and his statement that he was not engaged to Miss Phillips. He read it over a second time. Then, as if by the recurrence of a lapsed instinct, unthinkingly he turned the leaves and was reading an item on the "society page."

"Virginia Springs, Va.—Her physician states that Mrs. Hayne Phillips is recovering very slowly from the effects of the terrible shock caused by Mr. Phillips' death, and will hardly be strong enough to be removed to her home in Cleveland before the first of October."

Rutledge had been buried in South Carolina politics for ten weeks and in that time had not seen the Virginia Springs date-line sometime so familiar to him. Of course, he thought, Elise is with her mother! and from the dating-stamp on that letter he had carelessly assumed she was in Washington. He turned back a page and glanced hurriedly at a railroad time-card, then at his watch.

"Here," he called sharply to the cabby, who jerked up his horse, "you've but three minutes to get me back to the station—get a move on!" ... Out of the cab through the waiting-room and at the gate he rushed. The placid keeper barred the way.

"C. & O. west!" snapped Rutledge.

"Gone." The gateman seemed to be thinking of something else.

"How long since?"

"Half minute. Lynchburg, yes, madam—third track."

"When's the next?" Rutledge demanded impatiently.
 "Three-eighteen. Don't block the way."

* * * * *

Desiring to avoid interviews and interviewers, Rutledge drove to his sleeping quarters and shut himself in for the seven or eight hours wait. His fever of impatience had time to rise and fall many times before the hour and minute of 3:18 came slowly and grudgingly to pass. He had so desired to tell Elise that he had come without delay.

It was very late in the afternoon when he reached the Virginia Springs hotel. He was somewhat undecided how to proceed: whether to ask Elise's permission to call or to present himself unannounced, whether to inquire of the clerk in the crowded lobby the way to the Phillips' cottage or to acquire the information more quietly. He noted that not less than half a dozen men within ear-shot of the clerk's desk were at the moment reading various papers that had Elise's name and his own in display type on their front pages.

As he came down from his room after hurriedly making himself presentable he met at the foot of the stairs Mr. Sanders, the managing owner of *The Mail*. He was surprised, but annoyed more than surprised—for he must be deferential to his chief,—and another precious half-hour was consumed in the effort to pull himself away without giving offence. His only compensation for the delay was in learning casually from Mr. Sanders where to seek the Phillips cottage.

Finally shaking himself loose, he set out with more impatience than haste to find Elise. When he had gotten beyond the eyes of the people in the hotel he put some little speed into his steps. He was striding along rapidly when just in front of him Katherine and May Phillips came down out of the hill path into the road.

"Isn't this Katherine Phillips?" he asked, overtaking them.

"Yes," said Katherine, looking doubtfully at him.

"Well," said Rutledge, hesitating a moment, "you permitted me to shake hands with you once. I'm Mr. Rutledge. Do you remember?"

"Yes," said Katherine, though with a shade of uncertainty in her tone.

"That's good. And who is this?"

"May," said Katherine.

"Why, certainly. I might have guessed." Rutledge extended his hand and the little girl took it in simple confidence. "And where are you two little ladies going, if I may ask?"

"Elise sent us home," said May, permitting him still to hold her fingers.

"And where is she?" Involuntarily Rutledge almost came to a halt as he

asked the question.

"Way up on the mountain." May waved her small arm indefinitely back the way they had come.... Rutledge's steps became slower and slower.

"Well, young ladies, I'm glad to have met you. I must be getting back. I suppose you can get home safe."

"Oh, yes," said Katherine. "It's not far."

"So? Well, good-bye."

"Good-bye," said the little girls.

Rutledge's steps quickened as he came to the path and turned hurriedly up the hill.

* * * * *

Your woman of the world is marvelous in her self-possession. In a moment of complete abandon to thoughts of her love and her lover, Elise looked about and saw the man coming to her. With her mind so intent upon him that she wavered for a moment in doubt lest his appearing was an hallucination, her manner of greeting him was the perfection of indifferent politeness—neither warm nor frosty.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Rutledge. What wind blows you across the world to-day?"—she seemed to know that he was just passing across the hill.

With her heart-revealing letter in his pocket—nay more, committed every word to memory in his heart—Rutledge was taken aback by the casual way in which she spoke to him. He knew, of course, that she had not mailed him the letter and was not aware that he had it; yet on the basis of the letter he had conceived words he would say to her and she to him: but not a word he had prepared was possible at the moment.

"I am—I came—I have an appointment with Mr. Sanders, the owner of *The Mail*—at the hotel—at half past eight." The appointment had been made ten minutes ago. It was the only wind he could think of that was blowing him across the world.

The man's confusion and seriousness and conscientious statement of detail ordinarily would have amused Elise; but she had not for months been in a mood to be amused.

A moment later Rutledge was laughing inwardly at himself, his confusion gone, his self-possession perfect. His prosaic accounting for his presence smothered the tiny romantic flame that had kindled in Elise's bosom, and she in turn was taken aback: and the man saw, and knew, and laughed unholily. Not even the most observing eye, fairly limited, would have detected the effect upon her; but he had an unfair advantage—for had he not her letter at that moment snug-

gled up close to his heart?

His laugh was not out-breaking, but the girl saw embarrassment drop as a cloak from his manner, and a flicker of amusement in his eyes; and the quickness of the change was a bit bewildering to her. The word upon her lips was stayed as she looked steadily at him as if for an explanation.

Rutledge spoke first,—but he did not presume upon his unfair advantage. All the tenderness of his soul was bowing before the clear-eyed young woman as she stood there so adorable, swinging her black hat in her hand, the light hill-breeze stirring the loose strands of sunlit hair about her temples and the folds of her simple summery mourning dress. If he had obeyed the impulse he would have knelt to kiss the hem of that dress. Emboldened by the words of her letter, he could not even then with unseemly assurance come to her heart to possess it. Confidently as he came to claim it, he drew near to her love as one whose steps approach a shrine.

"It is a very pleasant surprise to find you up here," he said. "And this view is a surprise also—a revelation. They did not tell me at the hotel that such an one was to be had from this hill."

Elise was deceived by his words, and convinced that the merest chance had appointed this meeting; and yet she could not dismiss from her mind the question, "Why did he walk so straight at me as he came up the hill?" His words, however, put the situation on an impersonal basis and her reply in kind established the conventional status.

They talked of indifferent things, and she was speaking of the splendour that was flaming in the west when the man's impatience broke the bands he had put upon it.

"Elise, I love you, and I want you to be my wife." It was abrupt but it was in tones of humble entreaty.

Taken completely unawares, Elise turned quickly about from the sunset to look at him. Her gray eyes weighed his truth in the balance for five seconds. His manner was softened and natural, his face and attitude spoke love in every line. Her eyes dropped before his, and a rich colour came to her throat, cheek and temple as she turned again to the golden west.

Rutledge made a step toward her as if to take her. Her hand went up to stay him, though the lovelight was on her face.

"Don't," she said gently. She was disposed to play with her happiness, to hold him at arm's length. "Why do you come to me again, Mr. Rutledge? You have had my answer once, and it must have convinced you." Her words and her manner were contradictory, and Rutledge was confused. "You plead without hope. You told the people yesterday that you had not even the hope to be engaged to me. Why pursue a hopeless—no, no, don't!" she again commanded as,

ignoring her words, he moved to answer her smile.

"And it's better so, Mr. Rutledge. You yourself have said it; and you can hardly expect me to gainsay it."

Despite the smile on her face this was a shot that went home, and it put Rutledge on the defensive.

"You could hardly expect me to say less, Elise, after your denial of your love for me."

"My love for you? Of all the presumption!"

Elise caught her breath at this rejoinder, but it only gave zest to the game and she tilted her chin mockingly at him.

Rutledge, with some deliberation, took from an inside coat pocket a letter, and handed it to her. She glanced at it in astonished surprise, and her face went hard.

"Where did you get this?" she cried.

"In the mail, yesterday afternoon. Elise, I didn't delay a moment in coming to you. It came—"

"So this is what brought you!"

"Yes. I—"

"And you thought I sent it?"—her voice was as hard as her eyes were cold.

"No. But you wrote it, and—"

"Did I?"

"Didn't you?"

"What a question!—and you came because you thought a lady called. Certainly you did! You Southerners are so abominably gallant.... You have acquitted yourself very handsomely, Mr. Rutledge. I congratulate you. You have thoroughly vindicated your claim to the name of 'gentleman'—'Southern gentleman,' if the term is of more excellence. Assuredly nothing further is required of you. I ex—"

"Elise, you wrote that letter."

"No."

"Elise!"

"Stop. Don't touch me!"—but his left arm went determinedly about her, and only with both hands could she hold his right hand away.

"You wrote that letter, Elise; and you love me."

"No—never—no!" ... Her physical resistance seemed a match for his strength.

"It is useless, Elise," he said to her as with tense muscles he strove to subdue her will and her wilful pride. "I have always loved you, and now that I know you love me nothing shall divide us. Why should you hold out against love?"

But Elise's resistance was fixed and set. Rutledge pleaded and begged and

made love to her with all the tenderness of his heart and the energy of his passion for her, and exerted his physical strength to break down her defence.

"Tell me that you wrote it, sweetheart," he implored and besought her again and again: but she only shook her head in dissent. He exhausted every prayer and plea without avail.

Desperately resolved to win at any cost, he could only hold her fast and swear in his heart she should not escape him. Finally he called upon all his muscular power to crush her into surrender, and mercilessly bore in upon her.

Elise bore out against him with all her strength. Her face became first crimson and then pale with the effort. Her teeth bit into her lips. Her breathing became fast and faster. But her will would not bend. The man's brute force was almost vicious in its unrestraint. A tear was forced through her tight-shut lashes, but her chin was still uplifted in defiance when—

"You hurt me, Evans," she said, as her resistance collapsed and her face fell hidden against his breast.

"And you wrote the letter, Elise?" he contended, broken-hearted that he had hurt her, but holding her fiercely yet.

"Yes, dear;"—and he is holding her so tenderly now.

* * * * *

Weakly she stood, held close within his arms, until her exhaustion passed, while he murmured to her the gentle nothings which have been messengers of love in all ages. Very gently then she freed herself from his embrace, permitting him still to hold her fingers.

"Let your own lips tell me you love me, Elise."

She looked up at him from under drooping lashes. Her mental decision came before her actual complaisance. She revelled for a time in the ecstasy of her mental abandon to love, and trembled in the very joy of it.

"Yes, yes, I love you,"—and with closing eyes she lifted her face in surrender. A long, long caress intoxicates them, and then, as if in expiation for the blessed delirium of it—

"But not while Helen—not until Helen—oh, it is too horrible to wait for your own sister to die!"—and she is crying her heart out against his shoulder.

Rutledge waited till her tears were spent, and then tenderly he protested.

"But Elise, you will not make any such decree as that. There's no need that we should wait on Helen's account."

"Not while she lives, not while she lives," Elise repeated, looking into his eyes. "I cannot permit your love to bring you to—"

"My love is all-sufficient, Elise; and all else is nothing since you love me.

Do not let your pride defeat us of our happiness, sweetheart. Already it—”

”Pride? I have no pride any more for you, my dear. I do not conceal my heart’s love nor its woes from you. I believe that love alone, not *noblesse*, brings you to me now. I love you, yes, I love you, but my love forbids that I should marry you and destroy your career and your mother’s happiness.”

”My mother! What do you know of that?”

”It is so, then! I knew it, Evans;—prescience, I suppose. I am a granddaughter of South Carolina, you know. I know in my own heart what her sorrow would be.”

”No, no, Elise, you misjudge my mother. She would love you as she loves me.”

”Love me, yes—as well as even now I love—your mother. I believe it and am glad, Evans. But, with all her loving, she could not put away shame and grief. I know, dear, I know. She would love me and—curse me.”

”No, no, you do not know. I am willing to speak for my mother. She will—”

”But who can speak for the voters in the coming election? No, Evans, I must not! It would defeat you. Your sacrifice would be too great!”

”There would be no sacrifice. You are worth it all to me, dearest heart—and more. And beside, I do not think the voters of my State would—”

”Wait,” said Elise. ”Answer me—and answer me truly, for remember my pride is gone and only love is in my heart. Will you win the Senatorship?”

”The prospect is quite alluring,” the man replied. ”The betting is 2 to 1 that the first primary will not elect, and 9 to 10 that I will defeat Mr. Killam in the second. Robertson really seems to be convinced that I am to succeed.”

”Oh, how good that is! I pray for you—but would it not cost you votes, maybe the election, to marry me?—to be engaged to me, even? Do not deceive me. Have you not thought of the hurt it would do your chance of success? Truth and honour, now,—as I love you.”

In the face of that sacred obligation Rutledge hesitated an instant.

”Thought of it, yes,” he said at last, ”but—”

”Then the danger is something considerable. I knew it. My letter’s coming was untimely, thanks to the unknown person who mailed it to you. No, my dear, I will not marry you. I will not engage myself to you. I will not defeat you.”

Rutledge gathered her to himself again, confident to crush her opposition by brute mastery as before. But there was no physical opposition to be mastered now.

”It is useless,” she said wearily. ”I love you too much to marry you now, Evans.”

”Now?” repeated Rutledge. ”If not now, when?”

”Or to engage myself to you.”

Her impassive manner was tantalizingly irritating to him as he laid under tribute every resource of his mind and heart to overturn her decision. Her non-resisting resistance was proof against attack. It was like fighting a fog. Seemingly it offered no opposition, and yet when he had exhausted himself in attempts to brush it aside, it was there, filling all space.

"No, no!" she cried out at last, thoroughly aroused by his passionate plea for their happiness; "go! it is sinful even to dream of being happy while one's sister is so wretched—and I will not have your blood upon my hands—nor your mother's curse upon me!"

Rutledge gazed steadily at her a few moments,—and for an answer drew out his watch to see what the hour was.

"Kiss me good-bye," she said, holding her lips up to him simply as a child.

Taking her hands and drawing them to his heart he bent his head down to hers as reverently as if that gentle, lingering kiss were a sacrament. Turning away, he went swiftly down the path he had come.

Elise sat down upon the boulder from which she had risen at his coming. With her arms clasping her knees, her head was bowed above them, and her shoulders drooped in abject hopelessness.

Looking up at the sound of his steps returning, she half turns to motion him away.

"No, no. It means only that I no longer dissemble before you. Go. There is no hope." And as he obeys she settles back motionless again into that living statue of Despair.

* * * * *

When Mrs. Hazard read in that Sunday's paper an account of the Spartanburg meeting she was dismayed. She had been on the *qui vive* for nearly a week, though not looking to the newspapers for information. Rutledge's repudiation of Elise angered her.

Monday's papers, however, brought her better temper. She laughed softly as she read among the Virginia Springs items that Mr. Rutledge had arrived there on Sunday afternoon. She was somewhat mystified, though, by the fact that Mr. Rutledge had been so hopeless on Saturday afternoon,—and she was struck with consternation when at last she happened upon a local item which said Mr. Rutledge had passed through the city Sunday night on his return to South Carolina.

"I think she might have written me!" she said when Monday's noon mail brought no letter from her friend.

"I'm going to run over to see Elise this afternoon, if I can catch the train," she told her husband at luncheon; and at 3:18 she was on the way. A wreck ahead

of them put her at the Virginia Springs hotel about bed-time.

* * * * *

"How did you get here? I'm so glad to see you!" Elise exclaimed when Lola appeared at the cottage next morning.

"Came last night," Lola said, giving her a hug, "but a miserable wreck held us up till long after dark. I would have come directly here even then, but I did not know how your mother was."

"She is much better," Elise said. "Come right in to see her."

Lola loved Mrs. Phillips very heartily, but she felt that Elise was precipitate in taking her immediately to her mother's room. She went along, of course, and sat down and talked to the two of them for an hour or more. There seemed to be no end to the things they discussed,—the more interminable they were because of the fact that Mrs. Hazard had not made her journey for the pleasure of a general conversation.

She could not understand why Elise did this thing. She tried to read the young lady's reason in her face, but that told nothing. It had not the elation that bespoke a heart joyous in its love. Neither, in the conventional gayety of the three-cornered conversation, did it betray a heart that was desolate. The only thing certain was Elise's evident avoidance of a *tête-à-tête* with her best friend.

It came to pass Mrs. Phillips had to dismiss them on the plea of exhaustion. Lola apologized profusely. Elise felt guilty, but she asked for no pardon.

The young women went out on the broad veranda. Elise offered Lola the hammock; but Mrs. Hazard was unconsciously too intent upon a present purpose to assume such a purposeless attitude. She took a rocking-chair, but she did not rock. As Elise arranged herself in the hammock, her friend bethought herself as to how she should begin her inquiries. She thought best not to display too minute an acquaintance with the situation.

Elise had indeed some curiosity to know how Rutledge had come into possession of the letter, and believed that Lola could throw light on that matter. But to ask about it was too much like opening the grave of love: and she recoiled. Looking at her face in repose, Lola was convinced that things had gone wrong. This made her take the more thought for an opening.

In the hush before the talk would begin, the boy brought the morning's paper. Lola, seated nearest the steps, took it from his hand. She did not have to unfold it to read what was of supreme interest. As she read, her eyes danced. Half finished, she glanced from the paper to Elise, whose face was apathy clothed in flesh. Lola sought the paper again, feeling that the spooks were playing a trick upon her. It was very plain reading, however. She crushed the paper in her lap,

and studied the profile of the girl in the hammock.

"Elise!" she called, still feeling that the spooks had her.

Elise slowly turned toward her a listless face,—which, indeed, took on some life at sight of Mrs. Hazard's excitement.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Oh, full of all guile and subtlety!" Lola exclaimed with a gasp. "Well, I have never!"

Elise looked at her inquiringly.

"Listen, miss; while I read you the news."

Lola picked up the paper and took time to smooth out its wrinkles.

"Don't be impatient, my lady.... Now. Here is the paragraph. It is part of a special despatch from Greenville, South Carolina. You have no idea where that is, of course; but listen:

"Ex-Senator Rutledge spoke last. He had just arrived from Washington, unexpectedly, on a delayed train, and had not had time to brush the coal-dust from his clothes. He made the usual forcible speech with which he has dignified the campaign. At the end of it he said: 'My fellow countrymen, I must be honest and candid with you. At the Spartanburg meeting day before yesterday, in answer to the question of a disreputable dog, I said that I had neither the honour nor the hope to be engaged to the eldest daughter of the late President Phillips. That was the exact truth, my countrymen. To-day I tell you that I do have the happiness to be engaged to Miss Elise Phillips and that we will be married on the last Thursday in next March.'"

There was no apathy in Elise's profile when Lola looked up from her reading. The girl had covered her face with her hands, and flood upon flood of colour was racing over it.

"Is that 'the exact truth, my countrymen?'" Lola demanded, standing over the hammock.

"Yes," Elise said, "why not?"—and Lola grabbed her with a joyful shout.

"Don't make such a fuss," Elise sputtered from out the smother of Mrs. Hazard's kisses, "for I haven't told mamma yet."

* * * * *

"—And look here," a radiant Elise demanded when the two of them had become somewhat composed, "I want to know how it came about that a letter I wrote *and burned* should have—"

"Stop, stop, honey; I will not answer.... But I *do* think it is a very bad Samar-

itan who will not help Dan Cupid when he's in trouble."

CHAPTER XLI

The communications between Hayward Graham and the physician in charge of the private hospital in which Helen was detained had become caustic. So much so, that the great specialist had asked Graham to remove her from his care. This Hayward was unable to do. Mrs. Phillips was paying the hospital fees and expenses, and Hayward felt that he could not keep his wife in proper and befitting manner even if she were altogether sane and sound in health. He had no means with which properly to provide for her if she was really in such a condition as the physician declared.

Not being willing or able to assume responsibility for her removal, he was all the more angered at what he believed to be the eminent alienist's positive misrepresentation of the gravity of Helen's ailment and his unwarranted and cavalier treatment of him, her husband. Provoked beyond endurance he went at last to the hospital.

"Mr. Hayward Graham? Yes. Well, come right into my office. Now, what may I do for you?"

"Your last letter about my wife, doctor, was very unsatisfactory," said Hayward, "and I came to see about it. Surely she cannot be so ill as you report. When you admitted her you said she would recover her health in a very short time."

"Excuse me, Mr. Graham; but if you wish to take issue with me as to your wife's condition, I will have to insist on the request in my letter of yesterday—that you remove her at once," the physician said with decision.

"I do not desire to do that," Graham replied; "but I cannot understand what has happened here to change her prospects of recovery, of which you were so confident when you admitted her. Besides that I do not see why you forbid me to communicate with her. She is certa—"

"Wait a moment, Mr. Graham. You must understand that in our prejudgment of these cases we do not arrogate to ourselves infallibility; but that in our treatment of them we do demand for ourselves absolute authority to say what shall and what shall not be done, and the very strictest obedience to that. This is a very peculiar case. It has one element that is altogether unique. Never before have I met it in my practice or seen it in the books. I am doing the best I can with

it, and if you do not de—”

”That is not it, doctor. I have no suggestions to make to you as to the proper treatment, nor any objection, indeed, to complying with any reasonable restriction; but when you say that I shall not see or communicate with my wife at any time, it seems unreasonable. Does she have no lucid intervals in which I might see her? Does she never think or speak of me—never write to me?”

”Yes, Mr. Graham, she has lucid intervals. She speaks of you at times, oftentimes. And she writes to you occasionally, but I have decided that it would not—”

”Has written to me? And you have not sent me the letters? Surely, surely, doctor, I am not crazy, that you should withhold letters from me! Have you the letters? Has she written often?”

”She has written often; but only on two occasions was there anything except disjointed sentences. She—”

”And when was that? And where are the letters?”

”I have them,” replied the doctor, ”but I do not think that—”

”I demand to see them, sir! I’m not in your hospital for treatment!”

”Very well,” said the doctor, ”I’ll get them for you.”

He went to a filing cabinet and took out a package of papers and came back across the room with two sheets of paper which he handed to Hayward, and watched him as he read them.

The first was as sweet and gentle and loving a letter as the heart of man could desire. Some of the references in it were a little bit obscure and inaccurate, but Hayward was too much elated with the tender, petting things it said to notice trifles so inconsequential. He revelled in it like a hungry man at a feast. He gulped down its sweetness ravenously: and took the second. What! The first sentence was the jab of a misshapen barb—and every following sentence a twisting of that barb in the flesh.

”My God, this is awful!” he groaned. ”I am sorry you gave it to me. Have you no other like the first?”

”No,” said the doctor. ”All her other writings have been mere scraps or incoherent mixtures of such things as are in the first letter you have there with such as are in the one you have just read. These are the only ones in each of which her mood was fixed and distinct.”

Hayward took the first letter and read it over again as hungrily as at first.

”In which mood does she seem most to be?” he asked.

”In the mood to write that first letter, fortunately; but the case is peculiar in that very fact. I have studied it with—”

”Let me see her,” Hayward broke in. ”May I see her? I must see her!”

”I would advise against it,” the doctor said, in a tone and manner that was

intended to be a polite refusal of permission.

"But I *must* see her, I tell you. I demand to see her! I am her husband, and if she is quiet to-day I demand to see and speak to her."

"Mr. Graham, this case is unique, as I have told you before; and even if she is quiet I think it best not to—"

"Now, doctor, stop right there a moment. She is my wife, and I will not be bound by any orders her mother may have given you! I am going to see her this once. I assume all responsibility, sir!"

The physician looked at him with a sneer of contempt on his face.

"Very well, Mr. Graham," he said finally. "You shall see her. But permit me to say that Mrs. Phillips has had the good sense and the good taste to make no suggestions to me as to how I shall manage this case.... Come right along down to the ward, sir."

He led the way down a long hall and, tapping upon a door, was admitted into a transverse corridor by an attendant.

"How is Mrs. Graham?" he asked in an undertone.

"Quiet at the moment, sir."

Hayward heard Helen's voice and started forward eagerly. The physician caught him by the arm and restrained him.

"Wait," he whispered. "Let's listen a minute."

It was hard for Hayward to wait. He could hear Helen's words coming from the second door down the corridor, and only the doctor's hand stayed him from rushing into her presence. They moved quietly nearer to the door and stood still to hear what she was saying. As they listened tides of joy rolled in upon Hayward's heart....

Helen was humming a song that her husband had heard of old. Her voice, though somewhat weak, had its old joyous ring. Hayward could easily imagine she was coming tripping down to the stable for her horse to take a morning canter. When she finished the song and was silent, he noted for the first time that the grated door to her cell was locked and its rungs and pickets were heavily padded. He resented that, and turned upon the physician to protest, but was held by the doctor's signal for silence. He obeyed, but his resentment grew as Helen's words came again in gentle accents to them.

She was moving slowly about, and was evidently arranging some flowers—to judge by the things she was saying to them. It was very kind of the doctor, her husband thought, to let her have her flowers—she was always so fond of them.... In half a minute she was singing a lullaby that she had sung to their baby. Hayward could hardly contain himself. And when he heard her walk across the room,—to a window, it seemed,—and say, in a tone so expressive of longing: "If Hayward would only come and take me out to-day! It is such a beautiful day

outside," he snatched his arm free of the doctor's hand and called to her as he sprang in front of the door.

Helen turned at his call, and looked at him for a space with dilated eyes. In that space Hayward saw that her cell was padded throughout, floor and walls, and that there was not a flower or a flower-pot in the room, that her clothing was torn, her hair streaming and dishevelled. Before he had time to make any inferences from these facts, Helen, still gazing at him with that peculiar stare, started across the room to him, saying gladly, "Oh, you have come to take me out driving!"

Nearly to the door she stopped. Slowly her face changed its whole expression. The wide-eyed stare gave way, and the old Helen looked at him a moment from her eyes. In another moment her face was convulsed in a spasm of aversion.

"Go away! Go away!" she cried out wildly as she turned from him. Retreating into a far corner of her cell, she called to the attendant, "Oh, save me!—take him away!—keep him away!"

"Why, Helen, don't you know me?" Hayward called to her.

"Yes, yes, I know you, but in God's name leave me! Don't let him in! Don't let him in!" she pleaded with the physician, who also had come to the door.

"I'll not hurt you, Helen. You know I'll not hurt you. Don't run from me. You know I'll not hurt you."

Hayward motioned to the physician to unlock the door. Whereupon Helen uttered a blood-curdling scream as she cowered back into her corner.

"Don't! Don't!! He has already hurt me, doctor! Go away! Go away! The poison of your blood is in my veins and will not come out! It is polluted, forever polluted! A knife—a *knife!* Give me a knife, doctor, that I may let it out. Please give me a knife. I have prayed you daily for one and you won't give it to me. Kill me—*save me!* My blood is *unclean*, and he did it! My baby was black, *black!*—and its negro blood is in my veins! A knife, doctor! A knife!! Oo-o-a-ugh!! I'll tear it out, then!"—and she clawed and tore and bit at her wrists in an agony of endeavour to purge her veins of the tainted fluid which had brought to life that fright, her baby.

Hayward stood helpless and terror-stricken before the door, and his staying only drove Helen into more horrible paroxysms.

"Come away, man, come away," the doctor commanded; and he obeyed weakly.

"Great God," he said when he was back in the physician's office, "that is awful, awful! How can she live, doctor, if she is shaken and torn by such dementia as that?"

"I cannot say whether she will live, Mr. Graham," the doctor replied; "but her periods of dementia give her the only relief that she enjoys. As a remedy for

exhaustion they are our only hope for her life so far appearing.”

”I don’t understand,” said Graham, ”how such suffering as that can be a relief from exhaustion.”

”I did not say that,” said the doctor. ”I said her *periods of dementia* give her relief from exhaustion. As I said before, Mr. Graham, this is an absolutely unique case. It is—”

”Unique in what?” asked Graham.

”It is unique in this,” said the physician: ”It is in her sane moments—in her lucid intervals, when she is fully conscious of her condition and situation—that she raves and tears herself and cries out against the devils that are torturing her. It is in such moments that her eyes have the light of reason in them. On the other hand, it is when she is *insane*, demented—when her mind is unhinged and wandering—that she is quiet and peaceful and happy. The letter you enjoyed was written when she was crazy. The one that tortured you was written when she was clothed and in her right mind.”

”My God, doctor, that cannot be! Do not tell me that!” cried Hayward, shaken like a reed. ”Tell me whether there is hope for her?”

”As I said, Mr. Graham, the case is unique and therefore any opinion is nothing more than a bare opinion, but to me her case is hopeless for the reason that her violences are based not upon hallucinations—which might pass—but upon *facts* which no sane mind can deny. At present the only hope for her life is that her periods of dementia, with their peace and quiet, will increase: and that her sane moments, in which she suffers the tortures of the damned, will become briefer and fewer. Only that will save her from death from exhaustion.”

”No, no, doctor! Can’t you—”

* * * * *

A soldier in uniform stepped into the recruiting office, saluted, handed the officer his papers, and stood at *attention*, saying simply, ”I desire to re-enlist.”

The officer unfolded the ”honourable discharge” and read aloud, ”Sergeant John Hayward Graham.” Looking the paper over, he turned to Graham.

”Yes, this is all right—if you are physically fit; but you have waited so long you have lost your rank and will have to begin at the very bottom again.”

”Yes, sir. I understand, sir.”

”Very well, the clerk can make out the new papers from these while the surgeon looks you over. Where do you wish to serve—in the United States or the Philippines?”

”Anywhere my country needs a man, sir.”

THE END.

* * * * *

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* * * * *

The House in the Water

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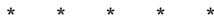
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