LADY ATHLYNE

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LADY ATHLYNE

CHAPTER I.
ON THE "CRYPTIC"

On the forenoon of a day in February, 1899, the White Star S. S. *Cryptic* forced her way from Pier No. 48 out into the Hudson River through a mass of floating ice, which made a moving carpet over the whole river from Poughkeepsie to Sandy Hook. It was little wonder that the hearts of the outwardbound passengers were cheered with hope; outside on the wide ocean there must be somewhere clear skies and blue water, and perchance here and there a slant of sunshine. Come what might, however, it must be better than what they were leaving behind them in New York. For three whole weeks the great city had been beleaguered by cold; held besieged in the icy grip of a blizzard which, moving from northwest to south, had begun on the last day of January to devastate the central North American States. In one place, Breckenridge in Colorado, there fell in five days—and this on the top of an accumulation of six feet of snow—an additional forty-five inches. In the track swept by the cold wave, a thousand miles wide, record low temperatures were effected, ranging from 15° below zero in Indiana to 54° below at White River on the northern shore of Lake Superior.

In New York city the temperature had sunk to 6.2° below zero, the lowest ever recorded, and an extraordinary temperature for a city almost entirely surrounded by tidal currents. The city itself was in a helpless condition, paralyzed and impotent. The snow fell so fast that even the great snow-ploughs driven by the electric current on the tram lines could not keep the avenues clear. And the cold was so great that the street-clearing operations—in which eight thousand men with four thousand carts dumping some fifty thousand tons of snow daily into the river were concerned—had to be suspended. Neither men nor horses could endure the work. The "dead boat" which takes periodically the city's unclaimed corpses to Potter's Field on Hart's Island was

twice beaten back and nearly wrecked; it carried on the later voyage 161 corpses. Before its ghastly traffic could be resumed there were in the city mortuaries over a thousand bodies waiting sepulture. The “Scientific editor” of one of the great New York dailies computed that the blanket of snow which lay on the twenty-two square miles of Manhattan Island would form a solid wall a thousand feet high up the whole sixty feet width of Broadway in the two and a half miles between the Battery and Union Square, weighing some two and a half million tons. Needless to say the streets were almost impassable. In the chief thoroughfares were narrow passages heaped high with piled-up snow now nearly compact to ice. In places where the falling snow had drifted it reached to the level of, and sometimes above, the first floor windows.

As the *Cryptic* forced her way through the rustling masses of drifting ice the little company of passengers stood on deck watching at first the ferry-boats pounding and hammering their strenuous way into the docks formed by the floating guards or screens by whose aid they shouldered themselves to their landing stages; and later on, when the great ship following the wide circle of the steering buoys, opened up the entrance of Sandy Hook, the great circle around them of Arctic desolation. Away beyond the sweep of the river and ocean currents the sea was frozen and shimmering with a carpet of pure snow, whose luminous dreariness not even the pall of faint chill mist could subdue. Here and there, to north and south, were many vessels frozen in, spar and rope being roughly outlined with clinging snow. The hills of Long Island and Staten Island and the distant ranges of New Jersey stood out white and stark into the sky of steel.

All was grimly, deadly silent so that the throb of the engines, the rustle and clatter of the drifting ice-pack, as the great vessel, getting faster way as the current became more open, or the hard scrunch as she cut through some solid floating ice-field, sounded like something unnatural—some sound of the living amid a world of the dead.

When the Narrows had been reached and passed and the flag of smoke from the great chimney of the Standard Oil Refining Works lay far behind on the starboard quarter; when Fire Island was dropping down on the western horizon, all became changed as though the wand of some beneficent fairy had obliterated all that was ugly or noxious in its beneficent sweep. Sky and wave were blue; the sun beamed out; and the white-breasted gulls sweeping above and around the ship seemed like the spirit of nature freed from the thrall of the Ice Queen.

Naturally the spirits of the travellers rose. They too found their wings free; and the hum and clash of happy noises arose. Unconsciously there was a general unbending each

to the other. All the stiffness which is apt to characterize a newly gathered company of travellers seemed to melt in the welcome sunshine; within an hour there was established an easiness of acquaintanceship generally to be found only towards the close of a voyage. The happiness coming with the sunshine and the open water, and the relief from the appalling gloom of the blizzard, had made the freed captives into friends.

At such moments like gravitates to like. The young to young; the grave to the grave; the pleasure-lovers to their kind; free sex to its free opposite. On the *Cryptic* the complement of passengers was so small that the choice of kinds was limited. In all there were only some thirty passengers. None but adventurous spirits, or those under stress of need, challenged a possible recurrence of Atlantic dangers which had marked the beginning of the month, when ship after ship of the giant liners arrived in port maimed and battered and listed with the weight of snow and frozen spray and fog which they carried.

Naturally the ladies were greatly in the minority. After all, travel is as a rule, men's work; and this was no time for pleasure trips. The dominant feeling on board on this subject was voiced in a phrase used in the Chart room where the Captain was genially pointing out the course to a tall, proud old man. The latter, with an uneasy gesture of stroking his long white moustache, which seemed to be a custom or habit at certain moments of emotion, said:

"And I quite agree with you, seh; I don't mind men travelling in any weather. That's man's share. But why in hell, seh, women want to go gallivantin' round the world in weather that would make any respectable dog want to lie quiet by the fireside, I don't know. Women should learn——" He was interrupted by a tall young girl who burst into the room without waiting for a reply to her breathless: "May I come in?"

"I saw you go in, Daddy, and I wanted to see the maps too; so I raced for all I was worth. And now I find I've come just in time to get another lesson about what women ought to do!" As she spoke she linked her arm in her father's with a fearlessness and security which showed that none of the natural sternness which was proclaimed in the old man's clear-cut face was specially reserved for her. She squeezed his arm in a loving way and looked up in his face saucily—the way of an affectionate young girl towards a father whom she loves and trusts. The old man pulled his arm away and put it round her shoulder. With a shrug which might if seen alone have denoted constraint, but with a look in the dark eyes and a glad tone in the strong voice which nullified it absolutely, he said to the Captain:

"Here comes my tyrant, Captain. Now I must behave myself."

The girl standing close to him went on in the same loving half-bantering way:

“Go on, Daddy! Tell us what women should learn!”

“They should learn, Miss Impudence, to respect their fathers!” Though he spoke lightly in a tone of banter and with a light of affection beaming in his eyes, the girl grew suddenly grave, and murmured quickly:

“That is not to be learned, Father. That is born with one, when the father is like mine!” Then turning to the Captain she went on:

“Did you ever hear of the Irishman who said: There’s some subjects too sarious for jestin’; an’ pitaties is wan iv them? I can’t sauce my father, or chaff him, or be impudent—though I believe he *likes* me to be impudent—to him, when he talks of respect. He has killed men before now for want of that. But he won’t kill me. He knows that my respect for him is as big as my love—and there isn’t room for any more of either of them in me. Don’t you Daddy?”

For answer the old man drew her closer to him; but he said nothing. Really there was no need for speech. The spirits and emotions of both were somewhat high strung in the sudden change to brightness from the gloom that had prevailed for weeks. At such times even the most staid are apt to be suddenly moved.

A diversion came from the Captain, a grave, formal man as indeed becomes one who has with him almost perpetually the responsibility of many hundreds of lives:

“Did I understand rightly, Colonel Ogilvie that you have *killed* men for such a cause?” The old gentleman lifted his shaggy white eyebrows in faint surprise, and answered slowly and with an easiness which only half hid an ineffable disdain:

“Why, cert’nly!” The simple acceptance of the truth left the Captain flabbergasted. He grew red and was beginning: “I thought”—when the girl who considered it possible that a quick quarrel might arise between the two strong men, interrupted:

“Perhaps Captain, you don’t understand our part of the world. In Kentucky we still hold with the old laws of Honour which we sometimes hear are dead—or at any rate back numbers—in other countries. My father has fought duels all his life. The Ogilvies have been fighters way back to the time of the settlement by Lord Baltimore. My Cousin Dick tells me—for father never talks of them unless he has to—that they never forced quarrels for their own ends; though I must say that they are pretty touchy”—
She was in turn interrupted by her father who said quickly:

“‘Touchy’ is the word, my girl, though I fear you use it too lightly. A man *should* be touchy where honour is concerned. For Honour is the first thing in all the world. What men should live for; what men should die for! To a gentleman there is nothing so holy. And if he can’t fight for such a sacred thing, he does not deserve to have it. He does not know what it means.”

Through the pause came the grave voice of the Captain, a valiant man who on state occasions wore on his right breast in accordance with the etiquette of the occasion the large gold medal of the Royal Humane Society:

“There are many things that men should fight for—and die for if need be. But I am bound to say that I don’t hold that the chiefest among them is a personal grievance; even if it be on the subject of the measure of one’s own self-respect.” Noticing the coming frown on the Kentuckian’s face, he went on a thought more quickly: “But, though I don’t hold with duelling, Colonel Ogilvie, for any cause, I am bound to say that if a man thinks and believes that it is right to fight, then it becomes a duty which he should fulfil!”

For answer the Colonel held out his hand which the other took warmly. That handshake cemented a friendship of two strong men who understood each other well enough to tolerate the other’s limitations.

“And I can tell you this, seh,” said Colonel Ogilvie, “there are some men who want killing—want it badly!”

The girl glowed. She loved to see her father strong and triumphant; and when toleration was added to his other fine qualities, there was an added measure in her pride of him.

There came a tap on the panelling and the doorway was darkened by the figure of a buxom pleasant-faced woman, who spoke in a strong Irish accent:

“I big yer pardon, Miss Ogilvie, but yer Awnt is yellin’ out for ye. She’s thinkin’ that now the wather’s deep the ship is bound to go down in it; an’ she sez she wants ye to be wid her whin the ind comes, as she’s afeard to die alone!”

“That’s very thoughtful of her! Judy was always an unselfish creature!” said the Colonel with an easy sarcasm. “Run along to her anyhow, little girl. That’s the sort of fighting a woman has to do. And” turning to the Captain “by Ged, seh! she’s got plenty of that sort of fighting between her cradle and her grave!” As she went out of the door girl said over her shoulder:

“That reminds me, daddy. Don’t go on with that lecture of yours of what women should learn until I come back. Remember I’m only ‘a child emerging into womanhood’—that’s what you wrote to mother when you wouldn’t let me travel to her alone. Some one might kill me I suppose, or steal me between this and Ischia. So it is well I should be forewarned, and so forearmed, at all points!”

The Captain looked after her admiringly; then turning to Colonel Ogilvie he said almost unconsciously—he had daughters of his own:

“I shouldn’t be surprised if a lot want to steal her, Colonel. And I don’t know but they’d be right!”

“I agree with you, by Ged, seh!” said the Colonel reflectively, as he looked after his daughter pacing with free strides along the deck with the stout little stewardess over whom she towered by a full head.

Miss Ogilvie found her aunt, Miss Judith Hayes, in her bunk. From the clothes hung round and laid, neatly folded, on the upper berth it was apparent that she had undressed as for the night. When the young girl realised this she said impulsively:

“Oh, Aunt Judy, I hope you are not ill. Do come up on deck. The sun is shining and it is such a change from the awful weather in New York. Do come, dear; it will do you good.”

“I am not ill Joy—in the way you mean. Indeed I was never in better physical health in my life.” She said this with grave primness. The girl laughed outright:

“Why on earth Aunt Judy, if you’re well, do you go to bed at ten o’clock in the morning?” Miss Hayes was not angry; there was a momentary gleam in her eye as she said with a manifestedly exaggerated dignity:

“You forget my dear, that I am an old maid!”

“What has old-maidenhood to do with it? But anyhow you are not an old maid. You are only forty!”

“Not forty, Joy! *Only* forty, indeed! My dear child when that unhappy period comes a single lady is put on the shelf—out of reach of all masculine humanity. For my part I have made up my mind to climb up there, of my own accord, before the virginal undertakers come for me. I am in for it anyhow; and I want to play the game as well as I can.”

Joy bent down and kissed her affectionately. Then taking her face between her strong young hands, and looking steadily in her eyes, she said:

“Aunt Judy you are not an old anything. You are a deal younger than I am. You mustn’t get such ideas into your head. And even if you do you mustn’t speak them. People would begin to believe you. What is forty anyhow!” The other answered sententiously:

“What is forty? Not old for a wife! Young for a widow! Death for a maid!”

“Really Aunt Judy” said the girl smiling “one would think you wish to be an old maid. Even I know better than that—and Father thinks I am younger and more ignorant than the yellow chick that has just pecked its way out of the shell. The woman has not yet been born—nor ever will be—who wants to be an old maid.”

Judith Hayes raised herself on one elbow and said calmly:

“Or a young one, my dear!” Then as if pleased with her epigram she sank back on her pillow with a smile. Joy paused; she did not know what to say. A diversion came from the stewardess who had all the time stood in the doorway waiting for some sort of instructions:

“Bedad, Miss Hayes, it’s to Ireland ye ought to come. A lovely young lady like yerself—for all yer jabber about an ould maid iv forty—wouldn’t be let get beyant Queenstown, let alone the Mall in Cork. Bedad if ye was in Athlone its the shillelaghs that would be out an’ the byes all fightin’ for who’d get the hould on to ye first. Whisper me now, is it coddin’ us ye be doin’ or what?” Joy turned round to her, her face all dimpled with laughter, and said:

“That’s the way to talk to her Mrs. O’Brien. You just take her in hand; and when we get to Queenstown find some nice big Irishman to carry her off.”

“Bedad I will! An sorra the shtruggle she’d make agin it anyhow I’m thinkin’!” Aunt Judy laughed:

“Joy” she said “you’d better be careful yourself or maybe she’d put on some of her bachelor press-gang to abduct you.”

“Don’t you be onaisy about that ma’am,” said Mrs. O’Brien quietly. “I’ve fixed that already! When I seen Miss Joy come down the companion shtairs I sez to meself: ‘There’s only wan man in Ireland—an that’s in all the wurrld—that’s good enough for you, me darlin’. An he’ll have you for sure or I’m a gandher!’”

“Indeed!” said Joy, blushing in spite of herself. “And may I be permitted to know my ultimate destination in the way of matrimony? You won’t think me inquisitive or presuming I trust.” Her eyes were dancing with the fun of the thing. Mrs. O’Brien laughed heartily; a round, cheery, honest laugh which was infectious:

“Wid all the plisure in life Miss. Shure there’s only the wan, an him the finest and beautifullest young man ye iver laid yer pritty eyes on. An him an Earrl, more betoken; wid more miles iv land iv his own then there does be pitaties in me ould father’s houldin! Musha, he’s the only wan that’s at all fit to take yer swate self in his charrge!”

“H’m! Quite condescending of him I am sure. And now what may be his sponsorial and patronymic appellatives?” Mrs. O’Brien at once became grave. To an uneducated person, and more especially an Irish person, an unknown phrase is full of mystery. It makes the listener feel small and disconcerted, touching the personal pride which is so marked a characteristic of all degrees of the Irish race. Joy, with the quick understanding which was not the least of her endowments, saw that she had made a mistake and hastened to set matters right before the chagrin had time to bite deep:

“Forgive me, but that was *my* fun. What I meant to ask are the name and title of my destined Lord and Master?” The stewardess answered heartily, the ruffle of her face softening into an amiable smile:

“Amn’t I tellin’ ye miss. Shure there is only the wan!”

“And who may he be?”

“Faix he may be anything. It’s a King or a Kazer or an Imperor or a Czaar he’d be if I had the ordherin’ iv it. But what he is is the Right Honourable the Earl av Athlyne. Lord Liftinant av the County iv Roscommon—an’ a jool!”

“Oh, an Irishman!” said Miss Judy. Mrs. O’Brien snorted; her national pride was hurt:

“An Irishman! God be thanked he is. But me Lady, av it’ll plaze ye betther he’s an Englishman too, an’ a Welshman an’ a Scotchman as well! Oh, th’ injustice t’ Ireland. Him borrn in Roscommon, an yit a Scotchman they call him bekase his biggest title is Irish!”

“Mrs. O’Brien, that’s all nonsense,” said Miss Judy tartly. “We may be Americans; but we’re not to be played for suckers for all that! How can a Scotchman have an Irish title?”

“That’s all very well, Miss Hayes, yous Americans is very cliver; but yez don’t know everything. An’ I may be an ignorant ould fool; but I’m not so ignorant as ye think, ayther. Wasn’t there a Scotchman thit was marrid on the granddaughther iv Quane Victory hersilf—An Errll begob, what owned the size iv a counthry in Scotland. An him all the time wid an Irish Errldom, till they turned him into a Sassenach be makin’ him a Juke. Begorra! isn’t it proud th’ ould Laady should ha’ been to git an Irishman iv any kind for the young girrl! Shure an isn’t Athlyne as good as Fife any day. Hasn’t he

castles an' estates in Scotland an' England an Wales, as well as in Ireland. Isn't he an ould Bar'n iv some kind in Scotland an him but a young man! Begob! av it's Ireland y' objict to ye can take him as Scotch—where they say he belongs an' where he chose to live whin he became a grown man, before he wint into th' Army!"

Somehow or other the announcement and even the grandiose manner of its making gave pleasure to Joy. After all, the compliment of the stewardess was an earnest one. She had chosen for her the best that she knew. What more could she do? With a sudden smile she made a sweeping curtsey, the English Presentation curtsey which all American girls are taught, and said:

"Let me convey to you the sincere thanks of the Countess of Athlyne! Aunt Judy do you feel proud of having a Peeress for a niece? Any time you wish to be presented you can call on the services of Lady Athlyne." She suddenly straightened herself to her full height as Mrs. O'Brien spoke with a sort of victorious howl:

"Hurroo! Now ye've done it. Ye've said the wurrds yerself; an' we all know what that manes!"

"What does it mean?" Joy spoke somewhat sharply, her face all aflame. It appeared that she had committed some unmaidenly indiscretion.

"It manes that it manes the same as if ye said 'yis!' to me gentleman when persooin' iv his shute. It's for all the wurrld the same as bein' marrid on to him!"

In spite of the ridiculousness of the statement Joy thrilled inwardly. Unconsciously she accepted the position of peeress thus thrust upon her.

After all, the Unknown has its own charms for the human heart. Those old Athenians who built the altars "To the Unknown God," did but put into classic phrase the aspirations of a people by units as well as in mass. Mrs. O'Brien's enthusiastic admiration laid seeds of some kind in the young girl's heart.

Her instinct was, however, not to talk of it; and as a protective measure she changed the conversation:

"But you haven't told me yet, Aunt Judy, why you went to bed in the morning because you pretend to be an old maid." The Irishwoman here struck in:

"I'm failin' to comprehind that meself too. If ye was a young wife now I could consave it, maybe. Or an ould widda-woman like meself that does have to be gettin' up in the night to kape company wid young weemin that doesn't like to die, alone ..." she burst into hearty laughter in which Miss Judith Hayes joined. Joy took advantage of the

general hilarity to try to persuade her aunt to come on deck. She finished her argument:

“And the Captain is such a nice man. He’s just a wee bit too grave. I think he must be a widower.” Aunt Judy made no immediate reply; but after some more conversation she said to the stewardess:

“I think I will get up Mrs. O’Brien. Perhaps a chair on deck in the sunshine will be better for me than staying down here. And, after all, if I have to die it will be better to die in the open than in a bed the size of a coffin!”

When Joy rejoined her father in the Chart-room she said to the Captain:

“That stewardess of yours is a dear!” He warmly acquiesced:

“She is really a most capable person; and all the ladies whom she attends grow to be quite fond of her. She is always kind and cheery and hearty and makes them forget that they are ill or afraid. When I took command of the *Cryptic* I asked the company to let her come with me.”

“And quite right too, Captain. That brogue of hers is quite wonderful!”

“It is indeed. But, my dear young lady, its very perfection makes me doubt it. It is so thick and strong and ready, and the way she twists words into its strength and makes new ones to suit it give me an idea at times that it is partly put on. I sometimes think it is impossible that any one can be so absolutely and imperatively Irish as she is. However, it serves her in good stead; she can say, without offence, whatever she chooses in her own way to any one. She is a really clever woman and a kind one; and I have the greatest respect for her.”

When Aunt Judy was left alone with the stewardess, she asked:

“Who is Lord Athlyne?—What kind of man is he? Where does he live?”

“Where does he live?—Why everywhere! In Athlyne for one, but a lot iv other places as well. He was brought up at the Castle where the ould Earrl always lived afther he lift Parlimint; and whin he was a boy he was the wildest young dare-devil iver ye seen. Faix, the County Roscommon itself wasn’t big enough for him. When he was a young man he wint away shootin’ lions and tigers and elephants and crockodiles and such like. Thin he wint into th’ army an began to settle down. He has a whole lot av different houses, and he goes to them all be times. He says that no man has a right to be an intire absentee landlord—even when he’s livin’ in his own house!”

“But what sort of man is he personally?” she asked persistently. The Irishwoman’s answer was direct and comprehensive:

“The bist!”

“How do you know that?”

“An’ how do I know it! Amn’t I a Roscommon woman, borrn, an’ wan av the tinants? Wouldn’t that be enough? But that’s only the beginnin’. Shure wasn’t I his fosther-mother, God bless him! Wasn’t he like me own child when I tuk him to me breast whin his poor mother died the day he was borrn. Ah, Miss Hayes there’s nothin’ ye don’t know about the child ye have given suck to. More, betoken, than if he was yer own child; for he might be thinkin’ too much of *him* an puttin’ the bist consthruction on ivery little thing he iver done, just because he was yer own. Troth I didn’t want any tellin’ about Athlyne. The sweetest wean that iver a woman nursed; the tindherest hearted, wid the wee little hands upon me face an his rosebud av a mouth puttin’ up to me for a kiss! An’ yit the pride av him; more’n a King on his throne. An’ th’ indepindince! Him wantin’ to walk an’ run before he was able to shtand. An’ ordherin’ about the pig an’ the gandher, let alone the dog. Shure the masterfullest man-child that iver was, and the masterfullest man that is. Sorra wan like him in the whole wide wurrld!”

“You seem to love him very much,” said Miss Hayes with grave approval.

“In coorse I do! An’ isn’t it me own boy that was his fosther brother that loves him too. Whin the Lard wint out to fight the Boors, Mick wint wid him as his own body man until he was invalided home wid a bad knee; an’ him a coachman now an’ doin’ nothin’ but take his wages; And whin he kem to Liverpool to say good-bye when the *Cryptic* should come in I tould him to take care of his Masther. ‘Av ye don’t,’ sez I, ‘ye’re no son iv mine, nor iv yer poor dear father, rest his sowl! Kape betune him an’ any bullet that’s comin’ his way’ I sez. An’ wid that he laughed out loud in me face. ‘That’s good, mother,’ sez he, ‘an iv coorse I’d be proud to; but I’d like to set eyes on the man that’d dar to come betune Athlyne an’ a bullet, or to prevint him cuttin’ slices from aff iv the Boors wid his big cav-a-lary soord,’ he sez. ‘Begob,’ he sez, ‘t’would be worse nor fightin’ the Boors themselves to intherfere wid him whin he’s set on his way!’”

“That’s loyal stock! He’s a Man, that son of yours!” said Miss Judy enthusiastically, forgetting her semi-cynical rôle of old maid in the ardour of the moment. The stewardess seeing that she had a good listener went on:

“And ’tis the thoughtful man he is. He niver writes to me, bekase he knows well I can’t read. But he sends me five pounds every Christmas. On me birthday he gev me this, Lord love him!” She took a gold watch from her bosom and showed it with pride.

When she was dressed, Miss Hayes looked into the Library; and finding it empty took down the “de Brett,” well thumbed by American use. Here is what she saw on looking up “Athlyne.”

ATHLYNE EARL OF FITZGERALD

Calinus Patrick Richard Westerna Hardy Mowbray FitzGerald 2nd Earl of Athlyne (in the Peerage of the United Kingdom). 2nd Viscount Roscommon (in the Peerage of Ireland). 30th Baron Ceann-da-Shail (in the Peerage of Scotland). b. 6 June 1875 s. 1886 ed. Eton and University of Dublin; is D. L. for Counties of Ross and Roscommon: J. P. for Counties of Wilts, Ross and Roscommon.

Patron of three livings:—Raphoon, New Sands, and Politore.

Seats. Ceann-da-Shail Castle and Castle of Elandonan in Ross-shire, Athlyne Castle C. Roscommon. Travy Manor, Gloucestershire and The Rock Beach, Cornwall, &c. &c. *Town Residence*. 40 St. James’s Square S. W.

Clubs. Reform. Marlborough. United Service. Naval and Military. Garick. Arts. Bath &c.

Predecessors. Sir Calinus FitzGerald—descended from Calinus FitzGerald the first of the name settled in Ross-shire, to which he came from Ireland in the XII century—was created by Robert the Bruce Baron Ceann-da-Shail, 1314, and endowed with the Castle of Elandonan (Gift of the King) as the reward of a bold rally of the Northern troops at Bannockburn. Before his death in 1342 he built for himself a strongly fortified Castle on the Island of Ceann-da-Shail (from which his estate took its name) celebrated from time immemorial for a wonderful spring of water. The Barony has been held in direct descent with only two breaks. The first was in 1642 when direct male issue having failed through the death of the only son of Calinus the XXth Baron the Peerage and estates reverted to Robert Calinus e. s. of James, 2nd s. of Robert XVIII Baron. The second was in 1826 when, again through the early decease of an only son, the Barony reverted to Robert e. s. of Malcolm 2nd s. of Colin XXVII Baron. The father of this heritor, Malcolm FitzGerald, had settled in Ireland in 1782. There he had purchased a great estate fronting on the River Shannon in Roscommon on which he had built a castle, Athlyne. Malcolm FitzGerald entered the Parliament of the United Kingdom in 1805 and sat for 22 years when he was succeeded in Parliamentary honours by his son Robert on his coming of age in 1827. Robert held his seat until the

creation of the Viscounty of Roscommon 1870. Three years after his retirement from the House of Commons he was raised to an Earldom—Athlyne.

When she went out on deck she found her niece taking with her father the beef tea which had just been brought round. She did not mention to Colonel Ogilvie the little joke about Lady Athlyne, and strange to say found that Joy to whom a joke or a secret was a matter of fungoid growth, multiplying and irrepressible, had not mentioned it either.

CHAPTER II.
IN ITALY

During the voyage, which had its own vicissitudes, the joke was kept up amongst the three women. The stewardess, seeing that the two ladies only spoke of it in privacy, exemplified that discretion which the Captain had commended. Only once did she forget herself, but even then fortune was on her side. It was during a day when Joy was upset by a spell of heavy weather and had to keep her cabin. In the afternoon her father paid a visit to her; and Mrs. O'Brien in reporting progress to him said that "her Ladyship" was now on the road to recovery and would be on deck very shortly. Colonel Ogilvie made quite a lot of the error which he read in his own way. He said to his sister-in-law as they paced the deck together:

"Capital woman that stewardess! There is a natural deference and respect in her manner which you do not always find in people of her class. Will you oblige me, Judy, by seeing, when the voyage is over, that she gets an extra honorarium!" Judy promised, and deftly turned the conversation; she felt that she was on dangerous ground.

Judith Hayes called herself an old maid, not believing it to be true; but all the same there was in her make-up a distinctive trait of it: the manner in which she regarded a romance. Up to lately, romance however unlikely or improbable, had a personal bearing; it did not occur to her that it might not drift in her direction. But now she felt unconsciously that such romance must have other objective than herself. The possibility, therefore, of a romance for Joy whom she very sincerely loved was a thing to be cherished. She could see, as well as feel, that her niece by keeping it a secret from her father had taken the matter with at least a phase of seriousness. This alone was sufficient to feed her own imaginings; and in the glow her sympathies quickened. She had instinctively at the beginning determined not to spoil sport; now it became a conscious intention.

Mrs. O'Brien, too, in her own way helped to further the matter. She felt that she had a good audience for her little anecdotes of the child whose infancy she had fostered,

and towards whom in his completed manhood she had a sort of almost idolatrous devotion. Seeing the girl so sympathetic and listening so patiently, she too began to see something like the beginnings of a fact. And so the game went merrily on.

The telegrams at Queenstown were not very reassuring, and Colonel Ogilvie and his party pressed on at once to Sorrento whence his wife had moved on the completion of her series of baths at Ischia. Naturally the whole of the little party was depressed, until on arrival they found Mrs. Ogilvie, who was something of a valetudinarian, much better than they expected. The arrival of her husband and daughter and sister seemed to complete her cure; she brightened up at once, and even after a few days began to enjoy herself.

One day after lunch as she drove along the road to Amalfi with Judith and Joy—the Colonel was lazy that day and preferred to sit on the terrace over the sea and smoke—she began to ask all the details of the journey. Judy who had not had a chance of speaking alone with safety began to tell the little secret. Her method of commencement was abrupt, and somewhat startling to the convalescent:

“We’ve got a husband for Joy, at last!”

“Gracious!” said Mrs. Ogilvie. “What do you mean, Judy? Is this one of your pranks?”

“Prank indeed!” she answered back, tossing her head. “A real live lord! A belted Earl if you please—whatever that may mean.”

“Is this true, Joy?” said her mother beaming anxiously on her—if such a combination is understandable. Joy took her hand and stroked it lovingly:

“Do you think, Mother dear, that if there was such a thing I should leave you all this time in ignorance of it. It is only a jest made up by the stewardess who attended us on the *Cryptic*. Aunt Judy seems to have taken it all in; I think dear you had better ask her; she seems to know all about it—which is certainly more than I do.”

“And how did this common woman dare to jest on such a subject. I don’t think Judy that this would have happened had I been with her myself!”

“Oh my dear, get off that high horse. There’s nothing to be alarmed about. The stewardess—who is a most worthy and attentive person——”

“She is a dear!” interrupted Joy.

“—took such a fancy to Joy that she said there was only ‘wan’ in all the world who was worthy of her—a young nobleman to whom she had been foster-mother. It was certainly meant as a very true compliment, and I am bound to say that if the young

man merits a hundredth part of all she said of him there's certainly no cause of offence in the mere mentioning his name."

"What is his name?" There was a shade of anxiety in the mother's voice.

"Lord Athlyne!"

"The Earl of Athlyne!" said Joy speaking without thought. Then she turned quickly away to hide her blushing.

"I—I—I really don't understand!" said Mrs. Ogilvie, looking around helplessly. Then with the shadow of a shade of annoyance in her voice she went on:

"I really think that in a serious matter of this kind I should have been consulted. But I seem not to count for anything any more. Colonel Ogilvie has not even mentioned the matter to me. I think I ought to have some say in anything of importance relating to my little girl."

"Lord bless the woman!" said Aunt Judy throwing up her hands and lifting her eyes. "Sally dear don't you comprehend that this was all a joke. We never saw this young Lord, never heard of him till the stewardess mentioned him; and as for him he doesn't know or care whether there is such a person in the world as Joy Ogilvie——" The mother interrupted hotly—it seemed want of respect to her child:

"Then he ought to care. I'd like to know who he is to consider himself so high and mighty that even my little girl isn't ... Oh! I have no patience with him."

There was silence in the carriage. Mrs. Ogilvie had come to the end of her remonstrance, and both the others were afraid to speak. It was all so supremely ridiculous. And yet the mother was taking it all so seriously that respect for her forbade laughter. The road was here steep and the horses were laboriously climbing their way. Presently Judy turned to Joy saying:

"Wouldn't you like to look at the view from the edge of the cliff?" As she spoke she looked meaningly at her niece who took the hint and got down.

When she was out of earshot and the driver had stopped the horses Judy turned to her sister and said with a quiet, incisive directness quite at variance with all her previous moods:

"Sally dear I want to speak a moment to you quite frankly and, believe me, very earnestly. I know you don't usually credit me with much earnestness; but this is about Joy, and that is always earnest with me." All the motherhood in Mrs. Ogilvie answered

to the call. She sat up with eager intensity, receptive to the full and without any disturbing chagrin. Judy went on:

“You have been thinking of your ‘little girl’—and actually speaking of her as such. That is the worst of mothers—their one fault. With them time seems to stand still. The world goes flying by them, but in their eyes the child remains the same. Gold hair or black turns to white, wrinkles come, knees totter and steps become unsteady; but the child goes on—still, in the mother’s eyes, dressing dolls and chasing butterflies. They don’t even seem to realise facts when the child puts her own baby into the grandmother’s arms. Look round for a moment where Joy is standing there outlined against that Moorish tower on the edge of the cliff. Tell me what do you see?”

“I see my dear, beautiful little girl!” said the mother faintly.

“Hm!” said Judy defiantly. “That’s not exactly what I see. I agree with the ‘dear’ and ‘beautiful’; she’s all that and a thousand times more.”

“Tell me what you do see, Judy!” said the mother in a whisper as she laid a gentle hand imploringly on her sister’s arm. She was trembling slightly. Judy took her hand and stroked it tenderly. “I know!” she said gently “I know. I know!” The mother took heart from her tenderness and said in an imploring whisper:

“Be gentle with me, Judy. She is all I have; and I fear her passing away from me.”

“Not that—not yet at all events!” she answered quickly. “The time is coming no doubt. But it is because we should be ready for it that I want to speak. We at least ought to know the exact truth!”

“The exact truth ... Oh Judy ...!”

“Don’t be frightened, dear. There is nothing to fear. The truth is all love and goodness. But my dear we are all but mortal after all, and the way to keep right is to think truly.”

“Tell me exactly what you see! Tell me everything no matter how small. I shall perhaps understand better that way!”

Judy paused a while, looking at the young girl lovingly. Then she spoke in a level absent voice as though unconsciously.

“I don’t see a child—now. I see a young woman of twenty; and a fine well-grown young woman at that. Look at her figure, straight and clean as a young pine. Type of figure that is the most alluring of all to men; what the French call *fausse maigre*. She has great gray eyes as deep as the sky or the sea; eyes that can drag the soul out of a man’s body and throw it down beneath her dainty feet. I may be an old maid; but I

know that much anyhow. Her hair is black—that isn't black, but with a softness that black cannot give. Her skin is like ivory seen in the sunset. Her mouth is like a crimson rosebud. Her teeth are like pearls, and her ears like pink shell. Her head is poised on her graceful neck like a lily on its stem. Her nose is a fine aquiline—that means power and determination. Her forehead can wrinkle—that means thought, and may mean misery. Her hands are long and fine; patrician hands that can endure—and suffer. Sally, there is there the making of a splendid woman and of a noble life; she is not out of her girlhood yet, but she is very near it. Ignorance is no use to her.
She *will* understand; and then she will take her own course. She has feeling deep and strong in the very marrow of her bones. Ah! my dear, and she has passion too. Passion that can make or mar. That woman will do anything for love. She can believe and trust. And when she believes and trusts she will hold the man as her master; put him up on a pedestal and be content to sit at his feet and worship—and obey ... She ..."

Here the mother struck in with surprised consternation "How on earth do you know all this?" Judy turned towards her with a light in her eyes which her sister had never seen there:

"How do I know it! Because she is of my blood and yours. Have I not seen a lot of it in you in our babyhood. Have I not gone through it all myself—the longing part of it—the wishing and hoping and praying and suffering. Do you think Sally that I have arrived at old maidhood without knowing what a young maid thinks and feels; without having any share of the torture that women must bear in some form or another. I know it all as well as though it was all fresh before me instead of a lurid memory. Ah, my dear she has all our nature—and her father's too. And he never learned the restraint that we had to learn—and practice. When she is face to face with passion she may find herself constrained to take it as he has always done: for life or death!" ... She paused a moment, panting with the intensity of her feeling. Then she went on more quietly:

"Sally, isn't it wiser to let her, in her youth and ignorance of herself and the world, break herself in to passion and romance. It would be hard to get a safer object for sentimental affection than a man she never saw and is never likely to meet. After all, he is only an idea; at best a dream. In good time he will pass out of her mind and give place to something more real. But in the meantime she will have learned—learned to understand, to find herself." Then she sat silent till Joy turned round and began to walk towards them. At this the mother said quietly:

"Thank you, dear Judy. I think I understand. You are quite right, and I am glad you told me."

That journey round the Sorrentine Peninsula became a part of Joy's life. It was not merely that every moment was a new pleasure, a fresh delight to the eye; her heart was in some mysterious way beginning to be afire. Hitherto her thoughts of that abstract creation, Lord Athlyne, had been impersonal: an objective of her own unconscious desires, rather than a definite individuality. Up to now, though he had been often in her thoughts, he had never taken shape there. The image was so inchoate, indefinite, vague and nebulous. She had never tried or even wished to find for him in her imagination features or form. But now she had begun to picture him in various ways. As she stood beside the Moorish tower looking down across the rugged slope of rock and oleander at the wrinkled sea beneath, his image seemed to flit before the eyes of her soul in kaleidoscopic form. It was an instance of true feminine receptivity: the form did not matter, she was content to accept the Man.

The cause—the sudden cause of this change was her mother's attitude. She had accepted him as a reality and had not hesitated to condemn him as though he was a conscious participant in what had passed. Joy had found herself placed in a position in which she had to hear him unfairly treated, without being able to make any kind of protest. It was too ridiculous to argue. What on earth could her mother know about him that she should take it for granted that he had done wrong? He who had never seen her or even heard of her! He who was the very last man in the world to be wanting to a woman in the way of respect—of tenderness—of love. … Here she started and looked around cautiously as one does who is suspicious of being watched. For it flashed across her all at once that she knew no more of him than did her mother. As yet he was only an abstraction; and her mother's conception of him differed from hers. And as she thought, and thought truly for she was a clever girl, she began to realise that she had all along been clothing an abstract individuality with her own wishes and dreams—and hopes. … The last thought brought her up sharply. With a quick shake of the head she threw aside for the present all thoughts on the subject, and impulsively went back to the carriage.

There were however a few root thoughts left which *would* not be thrown aside. They could not be, for they were fixed in her womanhood. Another woman had accepted her dream as a reality; and now, as that reality was her doing, he was her own man. And he was misunderstood and blamed and unfairly treated! It was her duty to protect him!

Had Aunt Judy been aware of her logical process and its conclusion she could have expressed it thus:

“Hm! a man in her mind.—*Her* man. Her duty to protest. … We all know what that means. He’s only in her mind at present … Hm!”

The whole day was spent on the road, for the beauty was such that the stoppages were endless. Joy, with the new-arisen soul which took her out of her own thoughts, found delight in every moment. She could hardly contain her rapture as fresh vistas of beauty burst upon her. When the curve of the promontory began to cut off the view of Vesuvius and the plain seaward of it, she got out of the carriage and ran back to where she could have a full view. Underneath her lay the wonderful scene of matchless beauty. To the right rose Vesuvius a mass of warm colour, with its cinder cone staring boldly into the blue sky, a faint cloud hanging over it like a flag. Below it was the sloping plain dotted with trees and villas and villages, articulated in the clear air like a miniature map. Then the great curve of the bay, the sapphire sea marked clearly on the outline of the coast from Ischia which rose like a jewel from a jewel. Past Naples, a clustering mass with San Martino standing nobly out and the great fortress crowning grimly the hill above it. Past Portici and the buried Herculaneum; till getting closer the roofs and trees and gardens seemed to run up to where she stood. To the left, a silhouette of splendid soft purple, rose the island of Capri from the sea of sapphire which seemed to quiver in the sunshine. Long she looked, and then closing her eyes to prove that the lovely image still held in the darkness, she turned with a long sigh of ecstasy and walked slowly to the waiting carriage.

Again and again she stooped, till at last she made up her mind to walk altogether until she should get tired. The driver took his cue from her movements when to stop and when to go on.

The road round the Peninsula runs high up the mountain side with mostly a steep precipice to seaward and on the other hand towering rocks. But such rocks! And so clad with the finest vegetation! Rocks rich in colour and quaint in shape; with jagged points and deep crevices in which earth could gather and where trees and shrubs and flowers could cling. High over-head hung here and there a beautiful stone-pine with red twisted trunk and spreading branches. Fig and lemon trees rose in the sheltered angles, the long yellow shoots of the new branches of the lemon cutting into the air like lances. Elsewhere beech and chestnut, oak and palm. Trailing over the rock, both seaward and landward, creepers of soft green and pink. And above all, high up on the skyline, the semi-transparent, smoke-coloured foliage of the olives that crowned the slopes.

Then the towns! Maggiore and Amalfi quaint close-drawn irregular relics of a more turbulent age, climbing up the chasms in the hillside. Narrow streets, so steep as to

look impossible to traffic. Queer houses of all sorts of irregular design and variety of stone. Small windows, high doors, steep, rugged irregularly-sloping steps as though time and some mighty force had shaken the very rock on which they were built. Joy felt as though she could stay there for ever, and that each day would be a dream, and each fresh exploration a time of delight. In her secret heart of hearts she registered a vow that if ever she should go on a wedding journey it should be to there.

At Amalfi they had tea, and then made up their minds that they would drive on to Salerno and there take train home; for it would be time to travel quick when so long a journey had been taken.

When they were at the end of the peninsula a sudden storm came on. For awhile they had seen far out at sea a dark cloud gathering, but it was so far away that they did not think it would affect them. The driver knew and began to make ready, for there was no escaping from it. He turned his horses' heads to the rock and wedged up the wheels of the carriage with heavy stones so that in case the horses should get frightened their plunging could not be too harmful.

Heavier and heavier grew the cloud out at sea, and as it grew denser it moved landward. Its grey changed to dark blue and then to a rich purple, almost black. A keen coldness presaged a coming storm.

There was stillness all round the mountain road; a positive desolation of silence from which even the wondrous beauty of the scene could not distract the mind. Joy absolutely refused to sit in the carriage which was now properly hooded. She threw on the cloak which she had brought with her and stood out on the open road where she could enjoy the scene undisturbed by human proximity. As she stood, the velvet black cloud was rent by a blinding sheet of lightning which seemed for a moment to be shaped like a fiery tree, roots upward in the sky. Close following came such a mighty peal of thunder that her heart shook. Ordinarily Joy was not timorous, and for thunder she had no fear. But this was simply terrific; it seemed to burst right over her head and to roll around her in a prolonged titanic roar. She was about to run to the carriage when she heard the shrieks of fear from the two women; the driver was on his knees on the road praying. Joy felt that all she could do to help her mother and aunt would be to keep calm—as calm as she could. So she moved her hand and called out cheerfully:

"Don't be afraid! It is all right; the lightning has passed us!" As she spoke the rain came down in torrents. It was tropical; in a few seconds the open road was running like a river, ankle deep. By the exercise of her will the girl's courage had risen. She could now actually enjoy what was before her. Far out to sea the black cloud still

hung, but it was broken up in great masses which seemed to dip into the sea. It was almost as dark as night; so dark that the expanse became lit by the lightning flashes. In one of these she saw three separate water-spouts. The sea appeared to have risen as the cloud sank, and now were far apart three great whirling pillars like hour-glasses. And then, wonder of wonders, without turning her head but only her eyes she could see away to the left a whole world of green expanse backed up by the mountains of Calabria. With each second the sinking sun brought into view some new hilltop flaming in the glow. A little way in front of her at the southern side of the peninsula the copper dome of the church at Vietri glowed like a ball of fire. Away to the south on the edge of the sea rose the many columns of the majestic ruins of Pæstum, standing still and solemn as if untouchable by stress of storm or time.

Joy stood entranced, as though the eyes of her soul had opened on a new world. She hardly dared to breathe. The pelting of the rainstorm, the rush of the water round her feet, the crash and roar of the thunder or the hissing glare of the lightning did not move or disturb her. It was all a sort of baptism into a new life.

Joy Ogilvie, like all persons of emotional nature, had quick sympathy with natural forces and the moods of nature. The experience of the day, based on the superlative beauty around her, had waked all the emotional nature within her. Naples is always at spring time; and the young heart finding naturally its place amongst the things that germinate and develop unconsciously, swayed with and was swayed by the impulses of her sex. Beauty and manhood had twin position in her virgin breast.

Aunt Judy's insight or prophecy was being realised quicker than she thought. Joy's sex had found her out!

CHAPTER III.
DE HOOGE'S SPRUIT

In Italy Joy Ogilvie learned to the full, consciously and unconsciously, all the lessons which a younger civilisation can learn from an elder. To the sympathetic there are lessons in everything; every spot that a stranger foot has pressed has something to teach. Especially to one coming from the rush of strenuous life, which is the note of America, the old-world calm and luxury of repose have lessons in toleration which can hardly be otherwise acquired. In the great battle of life we do not match ourselves against individuals but against nations and epochs; and when it is finally borne in on us that others, fashioned as we ourselves and with the same strength and ambitions and limitations, have lived and died and left no individual mark through the gathering centuries, we can, without sacrifice of personal pride, be content to humbly take each his place.

The month spent at and round Naples had been a never-ending dream of delight; and this period of quiescence told on her naturally sensuous nature. Already she had accepted the idea of a man worthy of love; and the time went to the strengthening of the image. There was a subtle satisfactoriness in the received idea; the wealth of her nature had found a market—of a kind. That is to say: she was satisfied to export, and that was the end of her thoughts—for the present. Importation might come later,

"The mind's Rialto hath its merchandise."

None of the family ever alluded to Lord Athlyne in the presence of her father. Each in her own way knew that he would not like the idea; and so the secret—it had by this very reticence grown to be a secret by now—was kept.

On the voyage back to New York Joy's interest in Lord Athlyne became revived by the surroundings. They had not been able to secure cabins in the *Cryptic*; and so had come by the Hamburg-American Line from Southampton. By this time Aunt Judy's interest in the matter had begun to wane. To her it had been chiefly a jest, with just that spice of earnest which came from the effect which she supposed the episode would have on Joy's life. As Joy did not ever allude to the matter she had almost ceased to remember it.

It was Joy's duty—she thought of it as her privilege—to make her father's morning cocktail which he always took before breakfast. One morning it was brought by Judy. Colonel Ogilvie thanking her asked why he had the privilege of her ministration. Unthinkingly she answered:

"Oh it's all right. The Countess made it herself, but she asked me to take it to you as she is feeling the rolling of the ship and wants to keep in bed."

"The who?" asked the Colonel his brows wrinkled in wonder. "What Countess? I did not know we had one on board."

"Lady Athlyne of course. Oh!" she had suddenly recollected herself. As she saw she was in for an explanation she faced the situation boldly and went on:

"That is the name you know, that we call Joy."

"The name you call Joy—the Countess! Lady Athlyne! What on earth do you mean, Judy? I don't understand." In a laughing, offhand way, full of false merriment she tried to explain, her brother-in-law listening the while with increasing gravity. When she had done he said quietly:

“Is this one of your jokes, Judy; or did this Countess make two cocktails?” He stopped and then added: “Forgive me I should not have said that. But is it a joke, dear?”

“Not a bit!” she answered spiritedly. “That is, this particular occasion is not a joke. It is the whole thing that is that.”

“A joke to take … Is there a real man of the name of the Earl of Athlyne?”

“I believe so,” she said this faintly; she had an idea of what was coming.

“Then Judith I should like some rational explanation of how you come to couple my daughter’s name in such a way with that of a strange man. It is not seemly to say the least of it. Does my daughter allow this to be done?”

“Oh Colonel, it is only a joke amongst ourselves. I hope you won’t make too much of it.”

“Too much of it! I couldn’t make enough of it! If the damned fellow was here I’d shoot him!”

“But, my God, the man doesn’t know anything about it; no more than you did a minute ago.” Miss Judith was really alarmed; she knew the Colonel. He waved his hand as though dismissing her from the argument:

“Don’t worry yourself, my dear: this is a matter amongst men. We know how to deal with such things!” He said no more on the subject, but talked during breakfast as usual. When he rose to go on deck Judy followed him timidly. When they were away from the few already on deck she touched him on the arm.

“Give me just a minute?” she entreated.

“A score if you like, my dear!” he answered heartily as he led her to a seat in a sheltered corner behind the saloon skylight, and sat beside her. “What is it?”

“Lucius you have always been very good to me. All these years that I have lived in your house as your very sister you never had a word for me that wasn’t kind …” He interrupted her, laying his hand on hers which was on the arm of her deck chair:

“Why else, my dear Judy! You and I have always been the best of friends. And my dear you have never brought anything but sunshine and sweetness into the house. Your merriment has kept care away from us whenever he tried to show his nose … Why my dear what is it? There! You mustn’t cry!” As he spoke he had taken out a folded silk pocket-handkerchief and was very tenderly wiping her eyes. Judy went on sobbing a little at moments:

“I have always tried to make happiness, and I have never troubled you with asking favours, have I?”

“No need to ask, Judy. All I have is yours just as it is Sally’s or Joy’s.” Suddenly she smiled, her eyes still gleaming with recent tears:

“I am asking a favour now—by way of a change. Lucius on my *honour*—and I know no greater oath with you than that—this has been a perfectly harmless piece of fun. It arose from a remark of that nice Irish stewardess on the *Cryptic* that no one was good enough to marry Joy except one man: the young nobleman whom she had nursed. And she really came to believe that it would come off. She says she has some sort of foreknowledge of things.” The Colonel smiled:

“Granted all this, my dear; what is it you want me to do?”

“To do nothing!” she answered quickly. Then she went with some hesitation:

“Lucius you are so determined when you take up an idea, and I know you are not pleased with this little joke. You are mixing it up with honour—the honour that you fight about; and if you go on, it may cause pain to us all. We are only a pack of women, after all, and you mustn’t be hard on us.”

“Judy, my dear, I am never hard on a woman, am I?”

“No! Indeed you’re not,” she avowed heartily. “You’re the very incarnation of sweetness, and gentleness, and tenderness, and chivalry with them … But then you take it out of the men that cross you!”

“That’s as a gentleman should be, I take it” he said reflectively, unconsciously stroking his white moustache. Then he said briskly:

“Now Judy seriously tell me what you wish me to do or not to do. I must have *some* kind of clue to your wishes, you know.” As she was silent for the moment he went on gravely. “I think I understand, my dear. Be quite content, I take it all for a joke and a joke between us it shall remain. But I must speak to Joy about it. There are some things which if used as subjects for jokes lead to misunderstandings. Be quite easy in your mind. You know I love my daughter too well to give her a moment’s pain that I can spare her. Thank you Judy for speaking to me. I might have misunderstood and gone perhaps too far. But you know how sensitive—‘touchy’ Joy calls it—about my name and my family I am; and I hope you will always bear that in mind. And besides my dear, there is the other gentleman to be considered. He too, may have a word to say. As he is a nobleman he ought to be additionally scrupulous about any misuse of

his name; and of course I should have to resent any implication made by him against any member of my family!"

"Good Lord!" said Judy to herself, as he stood up and left her with his usual courtly bow. "What a family to deal with. This poor little joke is as apt to end in bloodshed as not. The Colonel is on the war-path already; I can see that by his stateliness!"

Colonel Ogilvie thought over the matter for a whole day before he spoke to Joy; he was always very grave and serious regarding subjects involving honour and duty.

Joy knew that he had something on his mind from his abstraction, and rather kept out of his way. This was not on her own account for she had no idea that she was involved in the matter, but simply because it was her habit to sympathise with him and to think of and for him. She was just a little surprised when the next afternoon he said to her as they stood together at the back of the wheel-house over the screw, the quietest place on the ship for a talk:

"Joy dear, I want you to listen to me a minute."

"Yes, Daddy!"

"About that joke you had on the *Cryptic*."

"Yes, Daddy." She was blushing furiously; she understood now.

"My dear, I don't object to your having any little harmless romance of that kind. I don't suppose it would make any difference if I did. A young girl will have her dreaming quite independent of her old daddy. Isn't it so, little girl?"

"I suppose so, dear Daddy, since you say it." She nestled up close to him comfortably as she spoke: this was nicer talk than she expected.

"But there is one thing that you must be careful about: There must be no names!"

"How do you mean, Daddy?"

"I gather that there has been a joke amongst some of you as to calling you the Countess or Lady Athlyne, or some of that kind of foolishness. My dear child, that is not right. You are not the Countess, nor Lady Athlyne, nor Lady anything. A name my dear when it is an honourable one is a very precious possession. A woman must cherish the name she does possess as a part of her honour."

"I am proud of my name, Father, very, very proud of it; and I always shall be!" She had drawn herself upright and had something of her father's splendid personal pride. The

very use of the word ‘Father’ instead of ‘Daddy’ showed that she was conscious of formality.

“Quite right, little girl. That is your name now; and will in a way always be. But you may marry you know; and then your husband’s name will be your name, and you will on your side be the guardian of his honour. We must never trifle with a name, dear. Those people who go under an alias are to my mind the worst of criminals.”

“Isn’t that rather strong, Daddy, when murder and burglary and theft and wife-beating and cheating at cards are about!” She felt that she was through the narrow place now and could go back to her raillery. But her father was quite grave. He walked up and down a few paces as though arranging his thoughts and words. When he spoke he did so carefully and deliberately:

“Not so, little girl. These, however bad they may be, are individual offences and are punished by law. But a false name—even in jest, my dear—is an offence against society generally, and hurts and offends every one. And in addition it is every one of the sins you have named; and all the others in the calendar as well.”

“How on earth do you make out that, Daddy?”

“Take them in order as you mentioned them. Murder, burglary, theft, wife-beating, cheating at cards! What is murder? Killing without justification! Does not one who approaches another in false guise kill something? The murderer takes the life; the other kills what is often more than life: self respect, belief in human nature, faith. One only kills the body; but the other kills the soul. Burglary and theft are the same offence differently expressed; theft is the meaner crime that is all. Well, disguise is the thief’s method. Sometimes he relies on absence of others, sometimes on darkness, sometimes on a mask, sometimes on the appearance or identity of some one else. But he never deals with the normal condition of things; pretence of some kind must always be his aid. The man, therefore, who relies on pretence, when he knows that the truth would be his undoing, is a thief.”

“Daddy you argue as well as a Philadelphia lawyer!”

“I don’t believe much in lawyers!” said the old man dryly. “As to wife-beating!”

“I’m afraid you’ve struck a snag there, Daddy! There isn’t much pretence about that crime, anyhow!”

“Not at all, my dear. That comes within the category of murder. The man who descends to that abominable crime would kill the woman if he dared. He is a coward as well as a murderer, and should be killed like a mad dog!”

“Bravo! Daddy. I wish there was a man like you to deal with them in every county. But how about cheating at cards. *That’s* a poser, I think!”

“No trouble about that, Joy. It *is* cheating at cards.”

“How do you argue that out, Daddy?”

“Any game of cards is a game of honour. So many cards, so much skill in playing them according to the recognised rules of the game; and, over all, a general belief in the honour of all the players. I have seen a man shot across a handkerchief—in honourable duel, my dear—for hesitating markedly at poker when he stood pat on a ‘full house.’ That was pretence, and against the laws of honour; and he paid for it with his life.” Joy wrinkled her brows; “I see it’s quite wrong, father, but I don’t quite see how it fits into the argument,” she said.

“That is simple enough, daughter. As I say, it is a pretence. Don’t you see that after all a game of cards is a simple thing compared with the social life of which it is only an occasional episode. If a man,—or a woman either, Joy—misleads another it must be with some intention to deceive. And in that deception, and by means of it, there is some gain—something he or she desires and couldn’t otherwise get. Isn’t that plain enough!”

“All right, Father; I quite see. I understand now what you mean. I did not ever look at things in quite that way. Thank you very much, dear, for warning me so kindly too. I’ll stop the joke, and not allow it to go on—so far as I can stop it.”

“How do you mean? Does anyone else know it?”

“I may have written to one or two girls at home, Daddy. You know girls are always fond of such foolishness.”

“Had you not better write to them and tell them not to mention it.”

“Good Gracious! Why you dear, old goose of a Daddy it is evident you don’t know girls. That would be the very way to make things buzz. Oh no! we’ll simply drop it; and they’ll soon forget it. I may have to tell them something else, though, to draw them away from it.”

“Hm!” said her father. She looked at him with a sly archness:

“I suppose, Daddy, it wouldn’t do to have it that an Italian Grand Duke proposed for me—to you of course!”

“Certainly not, Miss Impudence! I’m not to be drawn into any of your foolish girls’ chatter. There, run away and let me smoke in peace!” She turned away, but came back.

“Am I forgiven, Daddy?”

“Forgiven! Lord bless the child, why there’s nothing to forgive. I only caution. I know well that my little girl is clear grit, straight through; and I trust her as I do myself. Why Joy, darling” he put his arm affectionately round her shoulder “you are my little girl! The only one I have or ever shall have; and so, God willing, you shall be to me to the end.”

“Thank you dear, dear Daddy. And I pray so too. I shall always be your little girl to you and shall come to you to cheer you or to be comforted myself. Mother has of late taken to treating me like a grown-up which she always keeps firing off at me so that I don’t know whether I am myself or not. But whatever I am to anyone else, I never shall be anything to you but your ‘little girl!’”

And that compact was sealed then and there with a kiss.

Nine months later whilst Colonel Ogilvie was in the library of his own house, “Air” in Airlville, Joy came in and closed the door carefully; she came close and whispered:

“Am I still your little girl, Daddy?”

“Always my dear! always!”

“Then you don’t mind having a secret with me?”

“*Mind* my dear! I love it. What is it you want to tell me?” She took a folded newspaper from her pocket and handed it to him, saying:

“I came across this in the New York *Tribune*. Read it!” Colonel Ogilvie turned it over with a rueful look as he said:

“The whole of it!”

“Oh Daddy, don’t be tiresome; of course not.” Her father’s face brightened:

“Then you read what you want me to know. Your eyes are better than mine!” Joy at once began to read:

“From our own Correspondent, Capetown. Some details of the lamentable occurrence at de Hooge’s Spruit which was heliographed from the front yesterday

have now come to hand. It appears that a battery of field artillery was ordered to proceed from Bloomgroot to Neswick escorted by a Squadron of mixed troops taken from the Scottish Horse and the Mounted Yeoman. When they had begun to cross the river, which here runs so rapidly that great care has to be observed lest the horses should be swept away, a terrific fusillade from an entrenched force of overwhelming numbers was opened on them. Colonel Seawright who commanded ordered a retreat until the disposition of the enemy could be ascertained. But before the manœuvre could be effected the British force was half wiped out. Accurate fire had been concentrated on the artillery horses, and as the guns were all on the river bank ready for the crossing it was impossible to rescue them. Gallant efforts were made by the gunners and the cavalry escort, but in the face of the hail of bullets the only result was a terrible addition to the list of killed and wounded. Seeing that the ground was partly clear, a number of Boers crept out of cover and tried to reach the guns. At this our troops made another gallant effort and the Boers disappeared. Still it was almost hopeless to try to save the guns. One only of the battery was saved and this by as gallant an effort on the part of one young officer as has been as yet recorded in the war. Captain Lord Athlyne" Here Joy looked up for an instant and saw a frown suddenly darken her father's brow—"who was tentatively in command of a yeomanry troop took a great coil of rope one end of which was held by some of his men. When he was ready he rode for the guns at a racing pace, loosing the rope as he went. It was a miracle that he came through the terrific fire aimed at him by the Boer sharp-shooters. Having gained the last gun, behind which there was a momentary shelter, he attached the end of the rope. Then mounting again he swept like a hurricane across the zone of fire. There was a wild cheer from the British, and a number of horsemen began to ride out whilst the firing ran along the front of the waiting line. But the instant the rope was attached the men began to pull and the gun actually raced along the open space. In the middle of his ride home the gallant Irishman's cap was knocked off by a bullet. He reined up his charger, dismounted and picked up the cap *and dusted it* with his handkerchief before again mounting. Despite their wounds and the chagrin of defeat the whole force cheered him as he swept into the lines.

"Daddy I call that something like a man! Don't you?" Her colour was high and her eyes were blazing. She looked happy when her father echoed her enthusiasm:

"I do! daughter. That was the action of a gallant gentleman!" There was a silence of perhaps half a minute. Then Colonel Ogilvie spoke:

"But why, my dear, did you tell this to *me*?"

“I had to tell some one, Daddy. It is too splendid to enjoy all one’s self; and I was afraid if I told Mother she might not understand—she’s only a woman you know, and might put a wrong construction on my telling her, and so worry herself about me. And I didn’t dare to tell Aunt Judy, for she’s so chock full of romance that she would have simply gone crazy and chaffed me out of all reason. There is no holding back Aunt Judy when she is chasing after a romance! And besides, Daddy dear” here she took his arm and looked up in his face “I wanted you to know that Lord Athlyne is a gentleman.” Her father frowned:

“Why should I know—or care?”

“Not on your own part Daddy—but—but only because I want you to. It is hard to explain, but I think you took a prejudice against him from the first; and you see it makes it less awkward to be coupled with a man’s name, when the name and the man are good ones.” The Colonel’s frown was this time one of puzzlement.

“I’m afraid I don’t understand. You never saw the man. Why should you dislike less to be coupled with him because he did a brave thing? Besides, the whole thing is mere nonsense.”

“Of course it is, Daddy. All nonsense. But it is better to be good nonsense than bad nonsense!”

“Look here daughter—my little girl—I’m afraid you have got or may get too fond of thinking of that fellow. Take care!”

“Oh, that’s all right, Daddy. He is only an abstraction to me. But somehow he interests me. Don’t you be worrying about me. I promise you solemnly that I will tell you everything I hear about him. Then you can gauge my feelings, and keep tab of my folly.”

“All right; little girl! There can’t be anything very dangerous when you tell your father all about it.”

It was three months before Joy mentioned the name of Lord Athlyne again to her father. One morning she came to him as he sat smoking in the garden at Air. Her eyes were glistening, and she walked slowly and dejectedly. In her hand she held a copy of the New York *Tribune*. She held it out, pointing with her finger to a passage.

“Read it for me, little girl!” In answer she said with a break in her voice:

“You read it, Daddy. Don’t make me. It hurts me; and I should only break down. It is only a dream I know; but it is a sad dream and is over all too soon!” Colonel Ogilvie

read the passage which was an account of the fighting at Durk River in which numbers of the British were carried away by the rapid stream, the hale and those wounded by the terrible fire of the Boers alike. The list of the missing was headed by a name he knew.

“Major the Earl of Athlyne, of the Irish Hussars.”

The old gentleman rose up as stiff as at the salute and raised his hat reverently as he said:

“A very gallant gentleman. My heart is with you, my little girl! A dream it may have been; but a sad ending to any dream!”

A week after Joy sought her father again, in the garden. This time her step was buoyant, her face radiant, and her eyes bright. The moment her father saw he felt that it had something to do with what he called in his own mind “that infernal fellow.” When she was close to him she said in a low voice that thrilled:

“He is not dead, Daddy! He was wounded and carried down the river and was captured by the Boers and taken up to Pretoria. They have put him in the Birdcage. Beasts! It’s all here in the *Tribune*.”

Colonel Ogilvie was distinctly annoyed. When he could look on Lord Athlyne as dead he could admire his bravery, and even tolerate the existence that had been. But this chopping and changing—this being dead and coming to life again—was disturbing. What sort of fellow was he that couldn’t make up his mind on any subject? Couldn’t he remain dead like a gentleman? He had died like one; wasn’t that enough! Joy saw that he was not pleased. She was too glad for the moment to take her father’s attitude to heart; but every instinct in her told her not to remain. So she laid the paper on his knee and said quietly:

“I’ll leave it with you, Daddy. You can read it yourself; it’s worth reading. You are glad, I know, because your little girl is glad that there is one more brave man in the world.”

Just as she was going her father called her back. When she was close he said in a kindly manner but with great gravity:

“No more mentioning names now, little girl!” She put her finger to her lip as registering a vow of secrecy. Then she blew a kiss at him and tripped away.

CHAPTER IV.
THE BIRD-CAGE

The “Bird-cage” at Pretoria was the enclosure wherein the captured British officers were imprisoned during the second quarter of the year 1900. Here at the beginning of May two men were talking quietly as they lay on the bare ground in the centre of the compound. The Bird-cage was no home of luxury; but the men who had perforce to live in it tried to make the best of things, and grumbling was tacitly discountenanced. These two had become particular chums. For more than a month they had talked over everything which seemed of interest. At first of course it was the war and all connected with it which interested them most. They were full of hope; for though six months of constant reverses were behind them they could not doubt that Time and General Roberts would prevail. These two items of expected success were in addition to the British Army generally and the British soldier’s belief in it. When every battle or engagement which either of them had been in had been fought over again, and when their knowledge of other engagements and skirmishes had come to an end they fell back on sport. This subject held out for some time. The memories of both were copious of pleasant days and interesting episodes; and hopes ran high of repetitions and variations when the war should be over and the Boers reduced to that acquiescence in British methods and that loyalty to the British flag which British pride now demanded. Then “woman” had its turn, and every flirtation with the bounds of memory was recalled, without names or identification marks.

Then, when they knew each other better, they talked of the future in this respect. Young men, whatever exceptions these may be, are very sentimental. They are at once imaginative and reticent. Unlike girls their bashfulness is internal. The opening of their hearts, even in a measure, to each other in this respect was the crowning of their confidence. At this time they were occasionally getting letters. These had of course gone through the hands of the censor and their virginity thus destroyed; but the craving of all the prisoners for news of any kind, from home or elsewhere, was such that every letter received became in a measure common property. Even from intimate letters from their own womenkind parts were read out that had any colourable bearing on public matters. A few days before one of the men had a letter from his wife who was in Capetown; a letter which though it was nothing but a letter of affection from a loving wife, was before the day was over read by every man in the place. It had puzzled the husband at first, for though it was in his wife’s writing the manner of it was not hers. It was much more carefully written than was her wont. Then it dawned on him that it had a meaning. He thought over it, till in a flash he saw it all. It was written by her, but she had copied it for some one else and signed it. The passage of the letter that now most interested him read:

“I do so long to see you, my darling, that if I do not see you before, I am going to ask to be allowed to come up to Pretoria and see you there if I may, if it is only a glimpse through that horrid barbed wire netting that we hear of. You remember my birthday is on Waterloo day; and I am promising myself, as my birthday treat, a glimpse of the face of my dear husband.”

It did not do to assemble together, for the eyes of the jailors were sharp and an organized meeting of the prisoners was suspicious and meant the tightening of bonds. So one by one he talked with his fellows, telling them what he thought and always imploring them to maintain the appearance of listless indifference which they had amongst themselves decided was the attitude best calculated to avert suspicion. Some did not at first understand the cryptic meaning; but the general belief was that it was a warning that the capture of Pretoria was expected not later than the fifteenth of June. This created enormous hopes. Thenceforth all the talk in private was as to what each would do when the relief came.

To-day the conversation was mainly about Athlyne’s affairs. He had been unfolding plans to his friend Captain Vachell of the Yeomanry and the latter asked him suddenly:

“By the way, Athlyne, are you married.”

“What!—Me married! Lord bless you man, no! Why do you ask?”

“I gathered so from what you have been saying just now. Don’t be offended at my asking; but I have a special purpose.”

“I’m not a bit offended; why should I be? Why do you ask me?”

“That’s what I want to tell you. But old chap this is a delicate subject and I want to clear the ground first. It is wiser.” Athlyne sat up:

“Look here, Vachell, this is getting interesting. Clear away!” The other hesitated and then said suddenly:

“You never went through a ceremony of marriage, or what professed to be one, with anyone I suppose? I really do ask pardon for this.”

“Honestly, Vachell, I’m not that sort of man. I have lots of sins on me; more than my fair share perhaps. But whatever I have done has been above board.” The other went on with dogged persistence:

“You will understand when I explain why I ask; but this is your matter, not mine, and I want to avoid making matters still more complicated. That is of course if there should be any complication that you may have overlooked or forgotten.”

“Good God! man, a marriage is not a thing a man could overlook or forget.”

“Oh that’s all right with a real marriage; or even with a mock marriage if a man didn’t make a practice of it. But there might be some woman, with whom one had some kind of intrigue or irregular union, who might take advantage of it to place herself in better position. Such things have been you know, old chap!” he added sententiously. Athlyne laughed.

“Far be it from me to say what a woman might or might not do if she took it into her pretty head; but I don’t think there’s any woman who would, or who would ever think she had the right to, do that with me. There are women, lots of them I am afraid, who answer the bill on the irregular union or intrigue side; but I should certainly be astonished if any of them ever set out to claim a right. Now I have made a clean breast of it. Won’t you tell me what all this is about?” The other looked at him steadily, as though to see how he took it, as he answered:

“There is, I am told, a woman in New York who is passing herself off as your wife!”

Athlyne sprang to his feet and cried out:

“What!”

“That’s what I took it to mean! By the way—” this was said as if it was a sudden idea “I take it that your mother is not alive. I had it in my mind that she died shortly after you were born?”

“Unhappily that is so!”

“There is no dowager Countess?”

“Not for more than thirty years. Why?”

“The letter says ‘Countess of Athlyne.’ I took it to be your wife.”

“Let me see the letter.” He held out his hand. Vachell took from his pocket—the only private storage a man had in the Bird-cage—an envelope which he handed to his comrade, who took from it a torn fragment of a letter. He read it then turned it over. As he did so his eyes lit up; he had seen his own name. He read it over several times, then he looked up:

“Have you read it?”

“Yes. I was told to do so.”

“All right! Then we can discuss it together.” He read it out loud:

“So Athlyne is married. At least I take it so, for there is a woman in New York, I am told, who calls herself the Countess of Athlyne. I know nothing of her only this: a casual remark made in a gossipy letter.”

“Now tell me, Vachell, can you throw any light on this?”

“Not on the subject but only on the way it has come to you. I had better tell you all I know from the beginning.” Athlyne nodded, he went on:

“Whilst we were in the trenches at Volks Spruit waiting for the attack to sound, Meldon and I were together—you remember Meldon of the Connaught Fusiliers?”

“Well! We often hunted together.”

“He asked me that if anything should happen to him I would look over his things and send them home, and so forth. I promised, but I asked him why he so cast down about the fight that was coming; was it a presentiment or anything of that kind. ‘Not a bit,’ he said, ‘it’s not spiritualism but logic! You see it’s about my turn next. All our lot have been wiped out, going up the line in sequence. Rawson, my junior, was last; and now I come on. And there is a message I want you to carry on in case I’m done for. You will find among my papers an envelope directed to Lord Athlyne. It has only a scrap of paper in it so I had better explain. The last time I saw Ebbfleet of the Guards—in Hospital just before he died—he asked me to take the message. ‘You know Athlyne’ he said ‘I got a letter saying a woman in New York was calling herself his wife, and as I know he is not married I think it only right that he should know of this. It will put him on his guard.’ Well you know poor Meldon went under at Sandaal; and so I took over the message. When you and I met up here I thought we were in for a long spell and as we couldn’t do anything I came to the conclusion that there was no use giving you one more unpleasant thing to think of and grind your teeth over. But now that we know Bobs and Kitchener are coming up before long I want to hand over to you. It is evident that they expect us to be ready to help the force from within when they come, or else they wouldn’t run the chance of telling us. Four thousand men, even without arms, are not to be despised in a scrimmage. If the wily Boer tumbles to it they will take us up the mountains in several sections, and I may not have another chance.”

“That is all you know of the matter I take it?”

“Absolutely! Of course should I hear anything more I shall at once let you know. Though frankly I don’t see how that can be; both men who sent the message are dead. I haven’t the faintest idea of who sent the original report. Of course, old chap, I am mum on the subject unless you ever tell me to speak.”

“Thanks, old man. I fancy there won’t be much time for looking after private affairs for a good spell to come after we have shifted our quarters. There will be a devil of a lot of clearing up when the house changes hands and continues to ‘run under new management,’ as Bung says.”

All that had been spoken of came off as arranged by the various parties. On the fifth of June Roberts took Pretoria in his victorious march. Mafeking and Ladysmith had been relieved, and Johannesberg had fallen. Now, Kruger and the remainder of his forces were hurrying into the Lydenburg mountains to make what stand they could; and not the least keen of their foes were those who had been their guests in the Bird-cage. Athlyne rejoined his regiment and was under Buller’s command till the routed army escaped into Portuguese territory. Then he was sent by Kitchener along the ranges of block houses whose segregations slowly brought the war to an end.

When his turn came for going home three years had elapsed. London and his club claimed him for his spells of his short leave, for there was still much work to be done with his regiment. When he began to tire of the long round of work and distractions he commenced to think seriously of a visit to America.

His experience of the war had sobered him down. He was now thirty-two years of age, the time when most men, who have not arrived there already, think seriously of settling down to matrimony. In other respects he wanted to be free. He was tired of obeying orders; even of giving them. The war was over and Britain was at peace with the world. Had there been still fighting going on anywhere such thought would not have occurred to him; he would still have wanted to be in the thick of it. But the long months of waiting and inactivity, the endless routine, the impossibility of doing anything which would have an immediate effect; all these things had worn out much of his patience, and stirred the natural restlessness of his disposition. At home there seemed no prospect of following soldiering in the way he wished: some form in which excitement had a part. Indeed the whole scheme of War and Army seemed to be shaping themselves on lines unfamiliar to him. The idea of the old devil-may-care life which had first attracted him and of which he had had a taste did not any longer exist, or, if it existed it was not for him. Outside actual fighting the life of a soldier was not now to consist of a series of seasonable amusements. And even if it did the very routine of amusements not only did not satisfy him, but became irksome. What, after all, he thought, was to a grown man a life of games in succession. Polo and cricket, fishing, shooting, hunting in due course; racquets and tennis, yachting and racing were all very well individually. But they did not seem to lead anywhere.

In fact such pastimes now seemed inadequate to a man who had been actively taking a part in the biggest game of them all, war!

When once the idea had come to him it never left him. Each new disappointment, the unfulfilled expectation of interest, drove it further and further home. There was everywhere a lack of his old companions; always a crowd of new faces. The girls he had known and liked because they were likable, had got married within the few years of his absence. The matrons had made fresh companionships which held possession. Bridge had arisen as a new society fetish which drew to itself the interests and time of all. A new order of "South African Millionaires" had arisen who by their wealth and extravagance had set at defiance the old order of social caste, and largely changed the whole scheme of existing values.

When he fled away from London he found something of the same changes elsewhere. In the stir of war, and even in the long weariness of waiting which followed it, the whirling along of the great world was, if not forgotten, unthought of. The daily work and the daily interest were so personal and so absorbing that abstract thinking was not.

In the country, of course, the changes were less, but they were more marked. The few years had their full tally of loss; of death, and decay. The eyes that saw them were so far fresh eyes, that unchecked memory had not a perpetual ease of comparison.

For a while he tried hard to find a fresh interest in his work. But here again was change with which he could feel neither sympathy nor toleration. Great schemes of reform were on foot; schemes of organization, of recruiting, of training. The ranks in the Service, of which he had experience, were becoming more mechanical than ever. Had he by this time acquired higher rank in the army it is possible that he would have entered with ardour into the new conditions. He was fitted for such; young, and energetic, and daring. Those in the Cabinet or in the Army Council have material for exercising broader views of the machinery of war, and to the eyes of such many things which looked at in detail seem wrong or foolish stand out in their true national importance.

His dissatisfaction with the army changes was the last straw. He took it into his head that in future the army had no place for him. The idea multiplied day by day with an ever-increasing exasperation. At last his mind was definitely made up. He sent in his papers; and in due time retired.

It is generally the way with human beings that they expect some radical change in themselves and their surroundings to follow close on some voluntary act. They cannot understand, at once at all events, that the "eternal verities" are eternal. "I may die but

the grass will grow" says Tennyson in one of his songs. And this is the whole story in epitome. After all, what is one life, howsoever perfect or noble it may be, in the great moving world of fact. The great Globe floats in a sea of logic which encompasses it about everywhere. What is ordained is ordained to an end, and no puny hopes or fears or wishes of an individual can sway or change its course. Conclusions follow premises, results follow causes. We rebel against facts and conditions because they are facts and conditions. Then for some new whim or purpose entirely our own we take a new step—forward or backward it matters not—and lo! we expect the whole world with its million years of slow working up to that particular moment to change too.

This belief that things *must* change in accordance with our desires has its base deep down in our nature. At the lowest depth it is founded on Vanity. We are so important to ourselves that we cannot but think that that importance is sustained through all creation.

For a little while Lord Athlyne tried to persuade himself that now, at last, he was enjoying freedom. No more parades or early hours; no more orderly rooms or mess dinners, or duties at functions; no more of the bald, stale conventionalities of an occupation which had lost its charm. He expected each day to be now joyous with the realization of ancient hopes.

But the expectations were not realized. The days seemed longer than ever, and he actually yearned for something to fill up his time. Naturally his thoughts turned, as in the case of sportsmen they ever do, on big game. The idea took him and he began to plan out in his mind where he would go. Africa for lions? No! no! He had had enough of Africa to last him for some time. India for tigers; the Rockies for bear?

Happy thought. Bear would just suit. He could put in two things: look up that woman in New York who claimed to be his wife and silence her. He wouldn't like such an idea to go abroad in case he should ever marry. Then he would go on to the Rockies or Colorado and have a turn at the grizzlies.

He went straightway into the reading room of the club he was in and began to study Bradshaw.

At last he had found a new interest in life. For a week he devoted himself to the work in hand, until his whole sporting outfit was prepared. Then he began to think of the other quest; and the more he thought of it the more it puzzled him.

CHAPTER V.
AN ADVENTURE

With regard to his quest after his alleged wife the first conclusion Lord Athlyne came to was that he must go incognito—"under an alias" he expressed it to himself. Otherwise he would give warning of his presence, and that was the very thing which he wished to avoid. The woman must be an unscrupulous one or she would not have entered on such a scheme of fraud; and she would naturally be quick to protect herself by concealment or flight. An ordinary individual would have left such an investigation to his solicitors who would have procured the services of local detectives. But then Athlyne was not an ordinary individual. He liked to do things for himself in most matters which interested him; and in this case there was so distinctly a personal bearing that he would not have been satisfied to leave it to any one else.

When, however, he began to work out details of his alias he found that he had landed in a perfect hornet's nest of difficulties. The mere matter of clothing and luggage was, he found, almost enough to turn his hair prematurely grey. What was the use of taking a false name when his true one was engraved on the brass plates of his portmanteaux and bags so that every porter would know everything about him within five minutes of his arrival; the chambermaid and laundress would see the marking of his linen. He very soon found that he would have to set about this branch of his effort very systematically if he did not want to give himself away hopelessly even before he started. He had already come to the conclusion that he must not take a valet with him. It would be quite enough to support an alias amongst his equals, whose habits and breeding had at least a certain amount of reticence, without running the risk of the world of servants who were much more inquisitive than their employers and much more skilled in matters of suspicion and detection.

First he had to decide on the name, and to get familiar with it in all sorts of ways; speaking, writing, and hearing it spoken. The latter he could only effect by hearing his own voice; he was conscious that he must, for some time at all events, be open to the danger of a surprise. He shrank in a certain way from using a name not his own; so he salved his conscience by selecting two of the simplest of his many names. Thus he became for his own purposes Richard Hardy. He fixed his domicile as "Sands End," a small place in the middle of Wiltshire which he had inherited from his mother. It was too small to be included in his 'list of seats' in Debrett, and thus answered his purpose. Then he got quite fresh store of linen from a new shop and had it marked 'R. Hardy' or 'R. H.' He bought new trunks and kit of all kinds. He had them marked with the same letters, and sent to a lodging which he had taken for the purpose under his new name. He had cards printed and got plain notepaper as he had to avoid a crest. Then he found that all his sporting things, which had already been packed, had to be unpacked and overhauled lest the real name should remain anywhere. When all this

was done, and it took weeks to complete, he began to feel an unmitigated fraud and a thorough scoundrel. To a man who takes honour to be a part of a gentleman's equipment any form of dissimulation must always be obnoxious.

One person alone he took into his confidence: his solicitor. It was necessary that he should have a bank account opened in New York. Also that in case of any unforeseen accident it would be at least advisable to be able to explain his actions. When the solicitor remonstrated he explained his purpose and made a special request that he should not be subjected to any opposition. "I go to protect myself" he said. The other shrugged his shoulders and remained silent. He arranged before he terminated the interview that his letters should be sent to him under cover to his new name at his bankers in New York. In due time an account for a large sum was opened there. Then, when all was as complete as he could think of, he took a cabin in one of the French boats as he thought that in a foreign ship he would run less risk of running up against some acquaintance than would be likely on a British or American vessel.

He had hardly got clear of land when he began to realize in what a false position he had placed himself. He felt that any acquaintanceship which he could make might possibly lead to some imbroglio. To those who took him in good faith and made friends he must either reveal his purpose or accept a false position from which he might never be able to extricate himself. As the former was impossible, without creating a suspicion which would destroy his purpose, he had to take chance for the latter. The result was that had to be aloof and unresponsive to any of the proffered friendlinesses of the voyage; and seeing this the other passengers did not press friendliness on him or even repeat their overtures. He felt this acutely, for he had been always in the habit of making friends. Such is one of the delights of travel, as all know who have been about the world. Those who once "rub shoulders" in a casual way often make acquaintanceships which ripen into friendship and are life-long. Perhaps this is from the fact that in such cases each is taken from the first on his personal merits. There being no foreknowledge there cannot be any premeditation of purpose of gain of any kind. Like meets like, recognises natural kinship; and union is the result.

When after a somewhat tedious and uneventful voyage he landed in New York he was altogether in a disappointed and a discontented frame of mind. The acute cause of this was the filling up of the immigration paper which is so exhaustive as to details as to become inquisitorial. The answering of each question seemed to him like telling a lie—as indeed it was. As, however, he had nothing to declare and was without obvious objection he had no trouble. The only effect from the Customs examination that he noticed on himself was that when he drove out of the gates he felt somewhat as he had done when he passed from the prison pen at Pretoria into the cheering ranks of

the victorious British army. He was lucky enough to escape from the ranks of the journalists who make copy out of any stranger of distinction who lands. His name was not sufficiently striking to even attract attention. He took quiet rooms high up in the "Manhattan," and for two days kept his own company.

The third day he went out. He walked through street after street; took trolley-cars now and again; went "up town" and "down town" on the road. Crossed the ferries to New Jersey and Long Island. Lunched at Martin's and dined at Delmonico's; and returned to his hotel without having made so far as he knew a step towards discovery. The only thing which he brought back was a slight knowledge of local geography. He had seen something of New York—from the streets; but except to ask his way from policemen or for food from foreign waiters he had not spoken to anybody.

The next few days he spent in walking about the streets. In summing up this afternoon he came to the conclusion that there was, for him, nothing so bad in Pretoria. All the time he felt with increasing force that he was a fraud, and constantly found himself evolving schemes as to how he could shed his incognito. The question of clubs alone made him unhappy. He had always been a clubbable man; in London he belonged to a number of the best. Whenever he had been in any city where there was a club its doors had always through the forethought of some friend been thrown open to him. Here was a city so full of those masculine refuges that it might be called the "City of Clubs." In every fashionable street was at least one, palatial places where men who were of the great circle met their friends. And yet he felt like the Peri outside the gates of Paradise. The feeling grew on him that he could not enter any one of them, even if he got the chance. How could he explain to men that he was not what he seemed—what he professed to be. Club-land is in some ways to men holy ground. Here they can afford to be natural—to be true. Except the club laws, written or unwritten, there is no conventional demand. As a man who had grown old knowing little of any other life put it; "In a club you can afford not to lie." (It is to be presumed, by the way, that the speaker did not take a part in the conversations regarding episodes of fishing or *bonnes fortunes*!)

He could not see any way in which he could even *begin* to make his inquiry; or he could get honestly within any house he had seen. He became sorry he had ever thought of making the inquiry himself—that he had ever come at all. Dimly at the back of his thoughts was an intention to go back to London, resume his proper name, and then perhaps return in an upright way—as a gentleman should. Still he was a masterful man and did not like giving up... He thought a ride would do him good; it would clear his mind and freshen him up. A horseman is never lonely so long as he has a horse.

He asked the hotel clerk where he would get one. The man gave him several addresses. Then he added:

“By the way do you want to buy or only to hire?”

“Either. I should buy if I could get something exceptionally good.”

“Then take my advice. Go up to Seventh Avenue right at the top near the Park. There is an auction there this morning of fine horses. You will I daresay get what you want; but you will doubtless have to pay for it.”

“I don’t mind that!” he smiled as he spoke; he did not remember that he had smiled since he left London. The very prospect of a horse brightened him up.

Before going to the Auction he called at the bank and drew out a handsome sum. In horse buying ready money is often a matter of importance.

At the Horse Exchange there was a good show, some of the horses being of real excellence. Prices ran high for these, and competition was spirited. But he got what he wanted: a big “Blue Grass” thoroughbred well up to his weight. His warranty was complete. The Auctioneer at his request brought to him presently a livery man on whom he might, he said, depend; and with him he arranged for the proper keeping of the horse.

For a few days Athlyne was really happy. His horse was as good as it looked, and had evidently been trained by some one who understood him. His mouth was as fine as possible and he realized an inflexion of the voice. Lord Athlyne rode well, and he knew it; and the horse knew it too from the first moment when his hand touched the bridle. After the first ride up the Riverside Drive the two became understanding friends.

The effect of the exercise on Lord Athlyne was to do away with his intention of trying to discover the identity of the offending lady. He would start soon for the Rockies and get after the grizzlies. Or better still he would go home, shake off his alias, and return—a free man.

On the Sunday afternoon he went for a ride in the direction he liked best, up the Riverside Drive. He went quietly till he got near the University where there was a long stretch of proper riding ground. There he let the black horse go, and the noble beast went along at a splendid pace. It was still a little early, and though there were a good many pedestrians there were but few persons in carriages or “horsebacking” and so the “ride” was fairly free. Horse and man were a noble pair. The one jet black, full of fire and mettle, every movement charged with power and grace; the other tall and slim, hard as nails with his long spell of South African soldiering, sitting like a centaur.

Man and horse together moved as one. All eyes were turned on them as they swept by, with admiring glances from both women and men, each in their respective ways. Two park policemen, a sergeant and a roundsman, both finely mounted, were jogging quietly along. As the black horse came dashing up the roundsman said:

“Shall I stop him, sergeant?” The other looked on admiringly and answered quietly:

“Guess not! ’Twould be a burnin’ shame to stop them two. An there won’t be any need neyther, *they* know what they’re doin, Halloran. They ain’t goin’ to ride down nobody. Did ye iver see a finer seat. I’d bet that’s an English cavalry man. Look at the spring of him. Be the Lord I’d like to be in his shoes this minute!”

Amongst the few riders Athlyne passed on his course were an old man and a young woman. The man tall with a big white moustache, a haughty bearing, and steely eyes under shaggy white brows. The girl tall and slim and graceful with black hair and big gray eyes. Both were fairly well mounted, but the girl’s mare was restive and shying at anything. As the black horse came thundering along she had to use considerable skill and force to keep her from bolting. Athlyne had just time for a passing glance as he swept by; but in that instant the face and figure became photographed on his memory. The girl turned and looked after him; she was in the receptive period of her young womanhood when every man has a charm, and when such a noble figure as was now presented is a power. With a sigh she turned and said to her companion:

“That is the horse that we saw sold at the Horse Exchange. I was jealous of whoever bought it then. I’m not now; a man who can ride like that deserves him. Daddy, don’t you think he is something like what a man ought to be? I do!”

“You’re right, little girl! But you’d better not say things like that to any one else but me; they mightn’t understand!” Joy made no answer but she smiled to herself. During the hour or two that followed she chatted happily with her father. They had occasional canters and gallops until the road got too crowded when they went along more sedately. Whenever her father suggested turning homeward she always pleaded for one more turn:

“Just one more, Daddy. It is so delightful here; and the river is so lovely.” Of course she had her way. The old man found more true happiness in pleasing her than in any other way. In her heart, though she did not tell her father for she felt that even he mightn’t understand, she had a wish that the man on the black horse would return the same way. She had a feeling that he would.

After his gallop Athlyne went quietly along the road past Grant's Tomb and followed the course of the Drive. Here the road descended, circling round the elevation on which the Tomb is erected. Below it is the valley of some old watercourse into the Hudson. This valley has been bridged by a viaduct over which the Drive continues its course up the side of the river for many miles. To-day however, it was necessary to make a detour, descend the steep on the hither side of the valley and rise up the other side. Some settlement had affected the base of the up-river end of the bridge and it had given way. The rock on which New York is based is of a very soft nature, and rots slowly away, so that now and again a whole front of a house will slide down a slope, the underlying rock having perished. Not long before, this had actually happened to a group of houses in Park Row. Now the bridge had fallen away; the road ended abruptly, and below lay a great shapeless mass of twisted metal and stone. The near end of the viaduct was barred off with wooden rails, and in the centre was a great board with a warning that the thoroughfare was closed.

Athlyne rode up as far as the Up-Town Club, sat for awhile amongst the trees on the river bank and thought of many things. Amongst these of the girl with the gray eyes who looked so admiringly at his horse—or himself. Perhaps he accepted the latter alternative, for as his thoughts ran he smiled and stroked his big moustache.

When he rode towards town again he kept a sharp look out, unconsciously slackening speed when any old man and young woman riding together came in sight. He had ascended the eastern side of the valley, over which lay the broken viaduct, and commenced to traverse the curved slope leading up to Grant's Tomb when he heard a sudden shouting on the road in front and saw a rush of people to both sides and up the steps to the Tomb. An instant after a mounted constable appeared urging his horse to a gallop as he cried out:

"Clear the road! Clear the road! It's a run-a-way!" Instinctively Athlyne drew to the roadside, a double purpose in his mind; to keep the way clear as directed, and to be able to render assistance if possible. The noise and cries drew closer and there was on the hard road a thunder of many hoof strokes. Then round the curve swept a brown mare dashing madly in a frenzied gallop—the neck stretched out and the eyes flaming. The woman who rode her, a tall girl with black hair and great gray eyes, sat easily, holding her reins so as to be able to use them when the time should come. She was in full possession of herself. She did not look frightened, though her face was very pale. Behind her but a little way off came two mounted policemen and the old man with the big white moustache. Other men variously mounted came hurrying in the background; beyond them a whole long series of horse vehicles and motor cars.

As he saw her Athlyne's heart leaped. This was the girl whose face had attracted him; his time had come quicker than he had dared to hope. He shook his reins and started his horse, spurring him with his heels as he did so. If he was to be of service he should be able to keep at least equal pace; and that would require a quick start, for the runaway was going at a great pace.

And then a great fear fell on him, not for himself but for the girl. He knew what perhaps she did not, that the viaduct was broken, and that her course lay down the steep roadway to the bottom of the little valley. He rode in earnest now; the sloping curved road was so short that if he was to stop the mare the effort should be made at once. He rode close by her, his powerful horse keeping pace almost without an effort, and said quietly to the girl:

"Try to hold her in if ever so little, there is a steep road which you must go down. The viaduct is broken and the road barred."

"I can't," she said "she has the bit and I am powerless."

He struck his heels sharply and the black horse bounded forward. The girl saw the movement and understood:

"Take care" she said quickly. "One policeman tried that and was thrown over, he may be killed." As she spoke, the words died on her lips; they had rounded the curve and the danger ahead lay open to them. It was a choice of evils: a dash down the steep incline with a maddened mare, or a crash against the barrier cutting off the viaduct.

But the woman had no choice; the maddened mare took her own course. Down the curving slope she dashed and went straight for the barrier. This was made of heavy balks of timber below, but the rails above were light. These she broke through as she leaped; hurling a cloud of broken rails and splinters right and left. The girl had nerved herself to the effort when she had seen what was coming and held up as at a jump on the hunting field.

The moment that Athlyne had realized the situation he too was ready. Seeing that the mare was making for the right side of the barrier he went for the left, and they leaped together. The instant they had landed on the other side he was ready and rode alongside the mare. Ahead of them was the chasm—with death beneath. The girl saw it and her pale face grew ashy white. Athlyne, riding level and holding his reins in his left hand, hurriedly cried:

"Loose your stirrup and when I get my arm round you take hold of my collar with your left hand. Then try to jump to me as I pull you towards me."

The girl loosened her boot from the stirrup and let go her rein, bending towards him as his arm went round her waist and catching his collar as directed.

“Go!” he cried and she sprang towards him as well as she could. He drew her towards him with all his strength, and in a second the girl was landed on the pommel of his saddle. She knew what she had to do: to leave his right hand free, so she clasped both her arms round his neck. He pulled at his reins with all his might—it was two lives now—and cried to the horse. The noble animal seemed to understand and threw himself back on his haunches.

He stopped only a few yards from the open chasm, into which the mare went with a wild rush.

Athlyne slid from the saddle, holding the girl in his arms. As the terrible danger came to an end her eyes closed and she sank senseless to the ground.

Then the deluge!

Through the barrier, which appeared to melt away before them, came a rush of people. Some were on horseback, some on foot, others in buggies, carriages, motor cars. Foremost came Colonel Ogilvie who leaped the broken barrier; then after him a policeman whose horse had manifestly been trained to timber. At last several mounted police fearing that some terrible accident might occur from the crowding on the viaduct ranged themselves in front of the opening and protected it till the coming of a sufficient number of policemen, on foot and panting, had arrived to hold it.

Colonel Ogilvie threw himself from his horse and knelt down beside Joy. When he saw that she was only fainting he stood up and lifted his hat to her rescuer:

“I don’t know how to thank you, sir,” he said in a voice broken with emotion. “’Twas a gallant act! Some day, when you have children of your own, you may understand what it is to me!” Athlyne who was kneeling, still holding up Joy’s head, said in the disconnected way usual to such circumstances:

“Do not mention it! It has been a pleasure to me to be of any service,” and so forth. Then, seeing signs in the girl’s face of returning animation, he said aloud so as to divert some of the attention:

“Has any one seen after the mare? The poor brute must be mangled, if it has not been killed; it ought to be put out of pain.”

The poor brute was indeed a pitiable sight; there was a sigh of relief from the crowd round it down below when a policeman put it out of pain with a revolver shot.

Seeing that the lady was now recovering and in the charge of her father, Athlyne wanted to get away. He hated all such fuss and publicity. He could not let her go lest she should be hurt, but he signed to her father who took his place; then he arose. The girl's eyelids quivered and she gave a heavy sigh. Then the eyes opened and she stared wildly at the sea of faces around her. She seemed to recall everything in an instant, and with a shudder and a violent movement sprang to her feet.

"Where is he?" she said anxiously. Then, recovering her full presence of mind and seeing her father, she turned to him and putting her arms round him began to cry on his shoulder.

CHAPTER VI.
TRUE HEART'S-CONTENT

Athlyne's one idea was now to get away quickly. The crowd was gathering closely and were beginning to ask questions. One big, intelligent-looking sergeant of police had out his note-book.

"May I ask your name, sorr?"

"Is that necessary, my good man?"

"Well, we have to report, sorr, but" this he said with a confidential look "it mayn't be necessary to make it public. You see, the lady's all right, and no one is goin' to make trouble over a dead horse. Though why any man would want to keep his name out of the papers for a deed like *that*, bates me!" Athlyne beckoned him aside; they leaned against the parapet with their faces towards the river. He had by now taken out his pocket-book and handed the sergeant a bill with a yellow back. The man's eyes opened when he saw it; and there was more than respect in his voice as he said: "Thank you very much, sorr! Be sure I'll do all I can. An' I don't know that we can't pull it off nayther; but ye must look out for them blasted kodaks!"

"All right sergeant. I'm much obliged for the hint. By the way wasn't one of your men tumbled over?"

"Yes, sorr; but I'm tould he wasn't hurt, only a bruise or two an' the skin from off iv his nose."

"Good! You'll tell the lady, she is sure to be distressed about him. Give him this for me, please. And here is my card. I am at the Manhattan."

“Thank you again, sorr. ’Tis mighty kind of ye. An’ sorr if I may make so bould. If ye want not to be in all the paapers to-morra betther not ride back. There’ll be a million kodaks on the Boulevard.”

Just then a tall man raised his hat to Colonel Ogilvie and said:

“My motor is here, sir, and I shall be very happy if you will use it for the lady. The chauffeur will leave you where you wish.”

“Thank you exceedingly. I shall be very grateful. I dare say I can get somebody to bring my horse to the stables; I couldn’t leave my daughter alone after such a shock.”

“I’ll see to it, sorr,” said the sergeant, who had come close. Colonel Ogilvie gave him his card and said:

“We are at the Holland House. Come up and see me some time to-morrow morning. I have some gratitude to express to you and your men!”

Whilst this conversation was going on a slim young man came up to Athlyne and raising his hat said:

“Can I do anything for you, sir. It will be a pleasure I assure you.” Athlyne summed him up a glance as a soldier.

“Thanks, old fellow,” he said, impulsively holding out his hand. “You’re a soldier aren’t you—a cavalry man?”

“No. Field Artillery 27th Battery. But we’re all cavalry at West Point. I knew you were a soldier when I saw you ride—let alone what you did. What can I do?”

“If it wouldn’t trouble you too much I wish you’d get some one to bring my horse to the Exchange in Seventh Avenue. You see I want to avoid all this fuss and kodaking.”

“I should love to; what a noble animal he is. But I shan’t send him. If you don’t mind I’ll ride him myself. Catch me missing a ride on a horse like that. May I come and see you after.”

“Delighted. Manhattan Hotel.” They bowed and parted. Athlyne went to Colonel Ogilvie, he felt it would be indecorous to leave without a word.

“I hope your daughter is all right, sir.”

“Thanks to you, my brave friend. I am Colonel Ogilvie of Airlville. Joy this is Mr. ——” Athlyne felt in an instant like a cad. He realised now, in all its force, the evil of

deception. Silently he handed his card. “Mr. Hardy” her father said. Joy held out her hand and he took it.

“I’m not able to thank you, now and here!” she said, raising to him her glorious grey eyes. He mumbled out a few words in reply and raised his hat to part. As he was turning away Joy whispered to her father:

“Daddy, won’t you ask him to come to see us. Mother will want to thank him too. Ask him to come to dinner to-night.”

“My dear, you will be far too upset. Better——”

“Nonsense, Daddy dear. I’m all right now. Indeed, dear, it will seem strange if you don’t, after what he has done for—for you, Daddy dear—and for me.”

In his own formal and kindly way Colonel Ogilvie gave the invitation. Athlyne answered with equal kindly ceremony; and they parted.

By this time the stranger’s motor had been taken in through the broken barrier. Colonel Ogilvie insisted that their host should not leave them, and they drove off together.

In the public excitement at their going Athlyne escaped unnoticed. He took the street at right angles and shortly got a down-town West-End Avenue car.

An hour later he had a call from his military friend, who announced himself as “Lootenant R. Flinders Breckenridge.” Athlyne had now made up his mind how to meet him. He said at once:

“I am going to try your patience, old chap, and perhaps your friendship; but I want you to keep a secret. I can’t deceive a comrade; and we military men are that to each other all the world over. I am here under a false name. I had reasons for keeping my identity concealed as I came for a special purpose. So I want you to bear with me and keep even that much a secret between you and me.”

“That’s all right!” said the boy with a hearty smile. “On my honour I’ll keep your secret as my own.”

“And when I can I’ll write and let you know!” And so a friendship began.

“Mr. Hardy” left word at the desk that he would not see any one, especially any newspaper man. But on the Riverside Drive the kodaks had been hard at work; the black horse was recognised, and the morning papers had many execrable likenesses of Lootenant Breckenridge as he appeared galloping.

In the hall of the Holland House Lord Athlyne found Colonel Ogilvie waiting for him with that old-fashioned hospitality which is still to be found in the South. He cordially greeted his guest, and when they had come from the elevator took his arm to lead him into his own suite. Athlyne was quite touched with the greeting extended to him. He had not for years been in the way of receiving anything of the nature of family affection. But now when his host's warmth was followed by a tearful gratitude on the part of his wife which found expression of a quick bending forward and kissing the hand which she held in hers—to the great consternation of the owner thereof—he was sensible of feeling foolish.

"Oh, pray! pray!" he said, and then remained silent; for what could he do but submit gracefully to such an overt outcome of the feelings of a grateful mother. Joy was a girl in whom were the elements of passion; was it strange that the same emotional yeast worked in her as in her mother's nature.

The introduction to Miss Judith Hayes was a relief. She too felt strongly; no less strongly when she realised that the valiant stranger was so handsome and of so distinguished an appearance. But after all the matter was not so vitally close to her. An aunt, howsoever loving her nature may be, cannot be actuated by the overwhelming impulses of motherhood. This very difference, however, made speech easier; she it was who of all the grateful little party gave best verbal expression to her feelings. In frank phrases, touched with the native warmth of her heart and emphasised by the admiring glances of her fine eyes, she told him of the gratitude which they all felt for his gallant rescue of her dear niece. She finished up with an uncontrollable sob as she said:

"If it hadn't been for your bravery and resource and strength there would be no more sorrowful band of poor souls in all the wide world than—than" she turned her head and walked over to the window. Athlyne could see that for quite a minute or two afterwards her shoulders shook. When at last she did turn round, her glassy eyes but ill accorded with her incisive humorous phrases or her ringing laugh. The effect on Athlyne was peculiar; without analysing the intellectual process too closely, he felt in his mind with a secret exultation that he had "found an ally." It may have been the soldier instinct, to which he had been so long accustomed, working in his mind; or it may have had another basis. Anyhow he was content.

His meeting with Joy surprised whilst it satisfied them both. They looked into each other's eyes for an instant, and to them both the whole world became crystal. The "whole world" to them both—their world—the only world that was to them at that

moment, that ever could be, that had been since the ordination of things. This is the true heart's-content. It is the rapture of hearts, the communion of souls. Passion may later burn the rapture into fixed belief, as the furnace fixes the painted design on the potter's clay; but in that first moment of eyes looking into answering eyes is the dawn of love—the coming together of those twin halves of a perfect soul which was at once the conception and realisation of Platonic belief.

At dinner Athlyne was placed between Mrs. Ogilvie and Joy, Colonel Ogilvie being next his daughter and Miss Hayes next her sister. Thus Aunt Judy, being opposite both her niece and the guest, could watch them both without seeming to stare. In the early part of the dinner she was abnormally, for her, silent; but later on, when she felt that things were going dully with some of the party, she manifested her usual buoyancy of spirits. She had in the meantime come to certain conclusions of her own.

Somehow there was an air of constraint over all the party, but in different ways and from different causes. Athlyne was ill at ease because they all made so much of him; and as he was painfully conscious of his false position in accepting the hospitality of such persons under an alias, their kindness only emphasised to him his own chagrin. Colonel Ogilvie conscious, rather by instinct than from any definite word or action, that his guest was more reticent than he would have thought a young man would be under the circumstances, was rather inclined to resent it. The Ogilvies had from the earliest times been very important people in their own place; and many generations of them had grown up to the understanding that their friendship, even their acquaintance, was an honour. Now when he had asked into his family circle a young man known personally to him only by his visiting card and by the fact that he had saved his daughter's life—very gallantly it was true—he found his friendly interest in his new acquaintance was not received with equal heartiness. The truth was that Athlyne was afraid. He felt instinctively that he was not his own master whilst those great grey eyes were upon him—most certainly not when he was looking into the mystery of their depths. And so he feared lest he should become confused and weave himself into a further tangle of falseness. In the background of his own mind he knew what he wished—what he intended; that this beautiful grey-eyed girl should become his wife. He knew that he must first get clear of his false position; and he was determined at any cost not to let anything interfere with this. At first Colonel Ogilvie's allusions to his home and his place in the world were purely kindly; he thought it only right, under the circumstances of his great obligation, to show such an interest as a man of his age might with another so much his junior. But he could not help feeling that though his guest's manner was all that was winning and that though his words were adequate there was no loosening of the strings of self-possession. Such a thing

was new to the Colonel, and new things, especially those that he could not understand, were not pleasing to him. Still, the man was his guest; and only a few hours before had rendered him the greatest service that one could to another. He must not let him, therefore, feel that there was any constraint on his part. And so he acted what was to him an unfamiliar part; that of an exuberant man.

Joy was constrained, for with her deep knowledge of her father's character she saw that he was upset by something; and, as that something could only be in connection with the guest, she was uneasy. She knew well what her opinion of that guest was; and she had a feeling of what her hopes would be, dare she give them a voice. But that must be postponed—till when she should be alone. In the meantime she wanted to enjoy every moment when that guest was by her side. And now her breast was stirred with some vague uneasiness.

Mrs. Ogilvie had her own disturbing cause. She could not but see that her daughter was very much absorbed in this strange gentleman whom she had not ever even seen till that afternoon, and she wanted to know more of him before she could allow matters to become more definite. She knew that he was brave and she could see that he was a gentleman and a handsome one. But still—A mother's heart has its own anxieties about her child. And this mother knew that her child was of no common nature, but had her own share of passions which might lead her into unhappiness. Too well from herself she knew the urging of a passionate nature. Joy had not been tested yet, as she had herself been. She had not yet heard that call of sex which can alter a woman's whole life.

As to Judy her sympathy with romance in any form and her love for Joy acted like the two ingredients in a seidlitz-powder. Each by itself was placid and innocuous, but when united there was a boiling over. It needed no spirit come from the grave, or from anywhere else, to tell her of the power which this handsome, gallant, young man had already over her niece. A single lifting of the girl's eyes with that adorable look which no habit of convenience could restrain; a single lifting or falling of the silky black lashes; a single sympathetic movement of the beautiful mouth in its receptive mood as she took in her companion's meaning told her all these things and a hundred others—told her a story which brought back heart-aching reminiscence of her own youth. She was not jealous, not a particle—honestly and truly. But after all, life is a serious thing, serious to look back on, though it seems easy enough to look forward to. The heart knoweth its own bitterness. "A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things."

So far, as to possibilities. Judith was much too clever and too sympathetic a person to go wrong as to facts on which they were based. She was a natural physiognomist, like other animals who have learned to trust their instincts; and within a very few minutes had satisfied herself as to the worthiness of "Joy's man"—that is how she tabulated him in her own mind. She felt quite satisfied as to her own judgment, not always the case with her. In her own mind, living as she had done for so long in a little world of her own thoughts, she was in the habit of arguing out things just as she would were she talking with some one else, a man for preference. She always wanted to know the truth, even if she did not use it. She had once said to her sister when they were considering how they should act with regard to a scandal in a neighbouring family:

"Well, Sally, it's all very well not being inquisitive; but you know, my dear, we can't begin to lie properly till we know what we are to lie about. There's nothing so destructive of after happiness—no kindliness so full of pitfalls, as a useless lie."

Now, her argument ran:

"You can't be all wrong about a man. You have thought too much on the subject not to be able to form an opinion. And even if your old maid's instinct—for you are an old maid, my dear, despite your saying that you are so to prove that you are not—warps your judgment in favour of the man. The pride that is in that man's features never came out of merely one or two generations of command. It takes a couple of centuries at any rate to put *that* stamp on a face. He is bold—well we know that from to-day's work; he is courtly—a man doesn't do nice things unconsciously, unless it has been his habit. He's in love with Joy—no doubt about that; and small blame to him for it. He's in her father's house, an honoured guest as he should be. He's sitting next to her and she's looking straight into his soul with those big lamps of eyes of hers. He saved her life a few hours ago, and now he can see—if he's not a fool and he's not that whatever else he may be—that she adores him—and yet he's not at his ease... What is it? What does it mean? For Joy's sake I must find that out. I may have to lie a bit; but at least I'll know what I am doing!"

With this object in view she took, when the charm of the meeting began to lose its lustre, the conversation in hand herself. She felt that the time had come. Well she understood when she saw on Colonel Ogilvie's face the very faintest shade of a shadow of that dark look which in earlier years had meant trouble for some one. "Lucius is thinking!" was the way she put it to herself. To a woman of her bringing up, the acts of the men of the family, and especially of its head, were not within the women's sphere. In the old slave-owning families there was perpetuated something of the spirit of subordination—some survival of old feudal principle. This was especially

so in everything relating to quarrels or fighting. It was not women's work, and women were trained not to take any part in it, not even to manifest any concern. Indeed the free-spirited Judy having lived so many years in that particular atmosphere, before being able to look round her in wider communities, compared the dominance of view of a man in his own family life to that of a cock who lords it over the farmyard, struts about masterfully, and summons his household round him with no other purpose than his own will. Woman-like she was content to yield herself to the situation.

"We're all the same," she once said to a farmer's wife, "women or hens. When the master clucks we come!"

As it was quite apparent to her that both her sister and brother-in-law were uneasy, she began to take on herself the responsibility of action, even if it should have to be followed by the odium.

"What's the use of being an old maid if you can't do *something*!" she said to herself as a sort of rallying cry to her own nerves. Such gathering of one's courage is not uncommon; it is, in unusual circumstances, to many men and to most women. It does not as a rule apply to professional or accustomed duties. To the soldier, the lawyer, the engineer, the man of commerce, each as such, the faculties which wait on the intelligence are already braced by habit. And to the woman in her hours of social self-consciousness the same applies. When a woman puts on her best frock she is armed and ready as completely as is the cavalry man with the thunder of the squadron behind him; as the artillery man when "Action!" has been sounded. Ordinarily Miss Judith was equal to all demands made on her; now she was engaging in a matter in which she did not thoroughly understand either the purpose or the end. Now she spoke:

"Have you been staying long in New York Mr. Hardy?" At the moment Athlyne was talking with his hostess and did not seem to hear; but Joy heard and said gently: "Mr. Hardy!" He turned suddenly red, even to his ears.

"I beg your pardon, I didn't ..." There he stopped, suddenly realizing that he had almost betrayed himself. The fact was that he heard the question but forgot for an instant the part he was playing. His ears had been tuned to the music of Joy's voice, and he did not wake at once to the less welcome sound. Partly it was of course due to the fact that as yet he had heard but little of Aunt Judy's speech; her intentional silence had a drawback as well as an advantage. He stopped his explanation just in time to save suspicion from the rest of the family, but not from Judy, who having an intention of her own was alert to everything. She made a mental note to be afterwards excogitated: "I didn't—what?"

She repeated the question. He answered with what nonchalance he could:

“No. Only a few days.”

“Do you remain long?”

“I am sorry to say that I cannot. I had promised myself a few weeks after grizzlies; but that has to be foregone for the present. Something has happened which requires my going back at once. But I hope to renew my visit before long.” He was pleased with himself for the verbal accuracy of the statement, and this reassured him.

“What a pity you have to give up your hunting,” said Colonel Ogilvie, heartily. “You would find it really excellent sport. I haven’t had any of it for twenty years; but I’d dearly like to have another turn at it if I could.”

“What boat do you go by?” asked Mrs. Ogilvie.

“By the French boat. The *Mignonette* which sails on Saturday.” He answered with confidence for he had spent a quarter of an hour looking it up before he had dressed; and had already posted a letter to the Office asking to have the best cabin open kept for him.

“What a pity,” said Joy. “We are going on the *Graphic* on the Wednesday after; you might have come with us.” She coloured up as she became conscious of the dead silence—lasting for a few seconds—of the rest of the party.

“H’m!” said the Colonel.

“Perhaps dear, Mr. Hardy has reasons of his own for choosing his own route,” said Mrs. Ogilvie, determined that her daughter should not appear to be too ardent in pressing the new acquaintanceship.

Athlyne hastened to set matters right, as well as he could. He knew from his own bringing up that such a request should come rather from the parents than from the girl herself; but he understood and tried to protect her. He addressed himself therefore to Mrs. Ogilvie and not her daughter as he spoke:

“It would I assure you, be a delight to me to go on your ship. But unhappily it would not be possible. Some business matters, not altogether my own, are dependent on my arriving in England. If I had only known that you were going—Indeed I may say,” he added with a smile which all three women accepted as “winning” “that if I had known, to begin with, that such delightful people existed. … But until that … that accident I had no such knowledge. I must not say that ‘happy’ accident for it was fraught with such danger to one whom you hold dear. But, that apart, it *was* a happy accident to

me that has given me the opportunity of making friends whom I already value so highly!" This was for him quite a long speech; he breathed more freely when it was over.

When the ladies had gone, he and his host had a long chat over their cigars. He was now more at ease, and as the conversation was all about sport and horses, matters in which he was thoroughly at home, he could speak more freely and more naturally than he had yet done. There was not any personal element which would require him to be on guard and so cause constraint. The result was that Colonel Ogilvie got quite over his stiffness and began to warm to his genial influence.

It was quite a sign of his existing attitude that he now took on himself to say just what he had reprehended in his daughter:

"I am really sorry you can't come on the *Graphic* with us. It would make the voyage a new pleasure for us all!" As he spoke he took the young man's arm in a most friendly way; and to Joy's secret delight, they came in this wise into the drawing-room.

CHAPTER VII.
A DISCUSSION

On reflection Lord Athlyne was glad that circumstances had not allowed him to travel on the *Graphic* with his new friends. At first he felt horribly disappointed; as if Fate had in a measure checkmated him. Had he known that the Ogilvies were to travel on the White Star boat he could have easily arranged his plans. The voyage would in some ways—*one* way—have been delightful. Well he knew that; but as he should have to keep up his alias he would have been in a perpetual state of anxiety and humiliation.

This feeling made it easier for him therefore to come to a definite conclusion regarding his journey home: he would keep to himself, as far as possible, during the journey and try to get at the earliest possible moment out of his present humiliating position. Under any ordinary circumstances he would have gone to Colonel Ogilvie and told him frankly of the state of matters, relying on his good feeling to understand and sympathise with his difficulty. Had there been opportunity for reflection he would have done so; but all was so hurried at the scene of the accident that there had not been time for thought. He had accepted of necessity the invitation to dinner. Then, or before going to the Holland House would have been his chance. But again the Colonel meeting him and taking him at once to his family made present explanation difficult. Dinner finished him. When first on the Drive he had seen Joy he had thought her a beautiful girl. The act of rescuing her had made her of the supremest interest to him. But it was not till he had sat beside her and looked into her eyes that he felt that love

had come. No man could look into those beautiful eyes and remain untouched. But this man, heart-hungry and naturally susceptible after some years of campaigning, fell madly in love. His very soul had gone down into the depths of those unfathomable eyes, and come back purified and sweetened—like the smoke drawn through the rosewater of a hookah. Every instant that he sat beside her the spell grew upon him. Joy was a woman in whom the sex-instinct was very strong. She was woman all over; type of woman who seems to draw man to her as the magnet draws the steel. Athlyne was a very masculine person and therefore peculiarly sensitive to the influence. That deep thinking young madman who committed suicide at twenty-three, Otto Weininger, was probably right in that wonderful guess of his as to the probable solution of the problem of sex. All men and all women, according to him, have in themselves the cells of both sexes; and the accredited masculinity or femininity of the individual is determined by the multiplication and development of these cells. Thus the ideal man is entirely or almost entirely masculine, and the ideal woman is entirely or almost entirely feminine. Each individual must have a preponderance, be it ever so little, of the cells of its own sex; and the attraction of each individual to the other sex depends upon its place in the scale between the highest and the lowest grade of sex. The most masculine man draws the most feminine woman, and *vice versa*; and so down the scale till close to the border line is the great mass of persons who, having only development of a few of the qualities of sex, are easily satisfied to mate with any one. This is the true principle of selection which is one of the most important of Nature's laws; one which holds in the lower as well as in the higher orders of life, zoological and botanical as well as human. It accounts for the way in which such a vast number of persons are content to make marriages and even liaisons, which others, higher strung, are actually unable to understand.

As yet, of course, Joy being a young woman had not her power developed. Such an unconscious power takes in the course of its development its own time. Instinct is a directing principle, and obedience can be given to it in many different ways. With Joy its course had been slow, the growth of time alone. Up to now there had been no disturbing element in her life; most of her years had been spent in a quiet house in a quiet neighbourhood where there were but few inhabitants of her own class; and where, therefore, the percentage of eligible men was small. There was even to her, as there must be to any girl like her, certain protecting oppositions. She was at once practical and sentimental, sensuous and dainty. Her taste was her first line of defence to the attacks of the baser qualities of her own nature. Nothing could appeal to her thoroughly which did not answer widely divergent conditions. Aunt Judy had summed her up well in saying that she would, if she ever fell in love, give herself absolutely. But

it must be the right man to whom she did so give herself; one who must comply with all the conditions which she had laid down for herself. A girl of her up-bringing—with a father and mother who adored her each in special way; with an aunt who represented impulsive youth all the more actively because she professed the staidness of age which is without hope; and with no intimate relationships or friendships of the male kind—had not only a leaning to, but a conviction of romance as a prime factor of life. "Life" was to her not that which is, but that which is to be. As the world of the present, where such thoughts are, is not one which is lit and coloured by love, the world of the future is the World of Love. The Fairy Prince who is to bring so much happiness—when he comes—is no mere casual visitor to feminine childhood. He is as real to the child's imagination as the things of her waking life, though his nodding plume has little in common with the material things which surround her. As she grows older so does he change form, coming more into harmony with living fact; till at last in some lofty moment, whose memory is a treasure for after life, the ideal and the real merge in one.

To Joy the hour had come. The Prince Charming who had swept across her path in such heroic fashion was all that she had ever longed for. He was tall and strong and handsome and brave. He was a gentleman with all a gentleman's refined ways. He had taste and daintiness, though they were expressed in masculine ways. He too had love and passion. How could she not know it who had seen—had felt—his soul sink into the deeps of her eyes, where mermaid-like her own soul peeping from behind the foliage of the deep had smiled on him to lead him on. How could she forget that strong arm which was thrown around her waist and which tore her from her saddle just in time to save her from a horrible death. How could she forget the seconds when she hung on to him for life, her arms clasped around his neck.

Whilst he was beside her at dinner she was in an ecstasy. Every fibre of her being quivered in response to his. And yet, such is the influence of teaching and convention, all this did not detract from her outward calm. When the ladies had left the table she had gone out with her arm round Aunt Judy's waist as was the convention of the time, and her smile had not lost its frank geniality. But in very truth she did not feel like smiling. She would have given anything to have stolen away to her own room and have lain on her bed, face down, and have thought, and thought, and thought. The whole thing had come on her so suddenly. Even the little preparation which she had had at the auction—the beautiful horse and the fine-looking masterful man who had bought him—did not seem to count. As he had swept past her in the Drive, man and horse seen singly seemed superb; but together a dream. Still there was nothing to fix it in her mind. There needs some personal quality to fix a dream; just as the painter requires a mordant to hold his colours to the canvas. But such luxury of thought would have to

be postponed. It would come, of course—later in the night when there would be loneliness and silence. So she had to contain herself, and wait.

When “Mr. Hardy” came back to the drawing-room arm in arm with her father her heart thrilled. It seemed like a promise of hope if not hope itself. Aunt Judy, ever watchful, saw and understood. To her seeing eyes and understanding nature there was no mistaking the meaning of the girl’s unconscious pantomime—those impulsive expressions of thought made through the nerves: the eager half turning of the ear to catch the sound of the opening of the dining room door and the passing of the feet in the passage way; the uplifting of the head as the drawing-room door began to open; the glad look in the eyes and the quick intake of the breath as she saw the attitude of the two men, each to the other.

As he came in Athlyne looked at her; a look that seemed to lay any ghost of a doubt in her mind. She was glad when he went straight across the room and began to talk with her mother. She was content to wait till when, having done his social duties, he would find his way to her. Mrs. Ogilvie had much to say and detained him, Judy thought, unduly; but Joy gave no possible sign of impatience. When in due course he spoke a few words to Judy herself that estimable young lady managed to find something to say to her sister.

When the guest was at last beside her in her corner of the room Joy felt that all was right and becoming. No matter how willing a woman may be to take steps to the accomplishment of her own wishes, it is an added pleasure to her when she is the objective of man rather than his pursuer. Even the placid pussy-cat when her thoughts tend to flirtation runs—slowly—from her mate until she sees that he notices her going. Then she stops and sings to him—in her own manner of music—as he approaches.

The two young people did not use many words in their speech; such seemed inadequate for what they had to say. Suffice it that what they did say was thoroughly understood.

Athlyne did not prolong his stay, much as he would have enjoyed staying. He felt that it would be better, in every way, if he did not enforce his first opportunity. Mrs. Ogilvie very graciously hoped that he would manage to make them a visit before sailing. Joy said nothing—in words. He had a little conversation with Colonel Ogilvie who was standing away from the rest and leaning on the chimney piece.

When he had gone Joy said good-night to them all; she felt that at present she *could* not talk the little commonplaces of affectionate life; and she could not bear to hear “him” discussed. If that acute reasoner on causes and effects in the female

mind, Aunt Judy, had been able to permeate her heart and brain she would at once have understood that simple way of accepting a man's personality—simulacrum. What need is there to differentiate when there is but one. Names are given as aids to memory; and at times memory ceases to be an important matter.

The next evening after dinner "Mr. Hardy" became the subject of conversation, and Joy was not comfortable. She knew that there must be divergent views regarding any one, and was content to let them all have their own opinions. She had hers. Indeed she would not have been wholly content to hear him praised even up to the perfection which she allowed him. He was by far too personal a possession of her own to share even community of feeling regarding him with any one.

In the night that had passed her own feeling had grown, multiplied; the feelings of the others had changed too, but in a different way. The glamour which had become for her intensified had for them been lost in the exactness of perspective. Perhaps it was that Joy's night had been different from theirs. To her had come all the evils of reaction. Now and again with wearing recurrency came the exciting memories of the day; but always with that kaleidoscopic inconsistency which is the condition of dreaming. The brains of most people are not accustomed to self-analysis, else we should perhaps more widely understand that this very inconsistency is mere reproduction. Whilst we think we do not think that we are thinking, and memory does not adjust our thoughts to comparison. But, all the time, our thoughts are really errant; reflections of the night, which seem to be exaggerations or caricatures, are but just surveys taken from an altitude which is not our own. In the day time thought is too often initiated by carnal or material considerations. Selfishness, and need, and ambition, and anxiety are bases on which thought is built in working and waking hours. But in the dark and freedom of the night the mind borrows the wings of the soul and soars away from the body which is held down by all its weighty restraints. It is perhaps in such moments that we realise that passion, however earthly may be its exciting cause, is in itself an attribute or emanation of the Soul. Over and over again did Joy live through the mad moments of that ride towards death. Over and over again did that heroic figure sweep up beside her out of the great unknown. She began to understand now whence came her calmness and quickness of apprehension as she realised his presence—the presence of a man who dominated her—even whose horse in the easiness of its calm intention outstripped the wildness of her own maddened steed. Here again the abstract mind was working truly; the horse had its own proper place in her memories of the heroic deed. Over and over again did that strong hand and arm seize her; and over and over again did her body sway to him and yield itself to the clasp, so that at his command it went to him as though of its own volition. And then, over and over again, came the

remembrance of the poor mad mare disappearing over the edge; of the sickening crash from below and the wild scream of agony; of the confused rush and whirl; of the crowding in of people; of the vista of moving carriages and crowds down the curve of the road. And then all kept fading away into a blind half consciousness of the strong arm supporting her and her wearied head resting on his shoulder. ...

This evening Mrs. Ogilvie was very quietly inclined to be tearful. She too had had a bad night; constant wakings from vague apprehensions, horrible imaginings of unknown dangers; dread that she could not localise or specify. Altogether she was upset, something as one is in the low stage following an attack of hysteria; nervous, weak, apprehensive, inclined to misunderstand things on the melancholy side.

Colonel Ogilvie was in that state of mind following a high pressure, which is a masculine reaction. He was very hard to please about anything. His wife always thought of this nervous and intellectual condition as “one of Lucius’s humours,” to others she said “the Colonel is worried about something.” Judy called it: “one of his tantrums.” This however did not affect his manner, outwardly. At such times he was perhaps even more precise than usual in his observance of the little etiquettes and courtesies of social life. It had perhaps been unfortunate that his household was exclusively female, for want of opposition rather encouraged the tendency. In his club or amongst men such irritation or ill feeling as he had found more outward expression; and the need to keep himself so that standard of personal hearing which his own self esteem had set, perpetually recalled him to himself. But at home, this, though it would not have been possible for a stranger to find fault with any part of his manner or bearing, still kept the rest of the family in a sort of hushed self-surrender. Even Judy the daring kept her natural exuberance in control at such times and was content to rest in unnoticed quiet. Joy knew well the storm signals and effaced herself as far as possible; she loved her father too well and respected him too much to do or say anything which might cause him disquiet or tend to lower him in his own eyes.

Judy on this as on other occasions maintained a strictly neutral position. But her wits were keener and her eyes more observant even than usual on that very account. She did not know the cause of her brother-in-law’s disturbance, but she understood it all the same. Few things there are which lead so directly to the elucidation of truth as a clever, unselfish woman on the watch.

Silence rather than speech was the order of the day, and the talking, such as it was, began with Colonel Ogilvie. Men when they are carrying out a settled intention or policy can be more silent than women; their nerves are stronger and their nature more fixed. But in the casual matters of life they are children in the hands of women. Here

were three women, all of them clever, all of them attached to the man and all respecting him; but they had only to remain neutral, each in her individual way, and let him overcome the *vis inertia* as well as he could. He could not but be aware that the subject of the guest of last evening had been tacitly avoided. He had been conscious of such in his own case, and with the egotism which was so marked a part of his own character he took it for granted that the avoidance was with the others due to the same cause as with himself. It was therefore with something like complacency—if such a thing could be synchronous with irritability, even if one of the two be in a latent condition—that he began on the deferred subject:

"I am afraid that our guest last night did not enjoy himself!" There was silence for a few seconds. Then each of the three listeners, feeling that some remark must be made by some one, spoke suddenly and simultaneously:

"Why, Lucius, what do you mean?"

"You surprise me, Colonel!"

"Is that so, Daddy!"

He waited deliberately before saying more; he had been thinking over the subject and knew what he wanted to say. Then he spoke with an air of settled conviction:

"Yes, my dear!" He spoke to Joy alone, and thus, to all three, unconsciously gave away his purpose. "I thought so at the time, and to-day, whenever I have considered the matter, the conviction has increased." Mrs. Ogilvie, seeing on her daughter's face a certain hardening of the muscles, took it for granted that it was some form of chagrin; in a protective spirit she tried to make that matter right:

"My dear Lucius, I really cannot see how you arrive at such a conclusion. It seemed to me that the young man was in rather an exalted condition of happiness. I could not help noticing the way he kept looking at Joy. And indeed no wonder after the gallant way he had saved her life." She added the last sentence as a subtle way of reminding her husband that they were all under obligation to the young gentleman. Moreover there was in her heart as a mother—and all mothers are the same in this respect—that feeling of pride in her daughter which demands that all men shall be attracted by her charms. No matter how detrimental a man may be, nor how determined she is that his suit shall not be finally successful, a mother considers it the *duty* of the young man to love her daughter and desire her.

Joy somehow felt humiliated. It was not merely that she should be the centre of such a discussion—for, after all, it was through rescuing her that he was there at all; but she

was hurt and disappointed that this particular man should be discussed in any way. She had seen no fault in him; nothing to discuss in his conduct or his bearing or his words or his person. She herself had admired him immensely. He was somehow different from all the other men she had ever seen. ... Then pride came to her rescue. Not pride for herself, but for him. In her heart he was her man, and she had to protect his honour; and she would do so, if necessary. This idea at once schooled her to restraint, and steeled her to endure. With an unconscious shrug she remained silent.

But Judy's keen eyes had been on her, and both her natural sympathy and the experience of her own heart allowed her to interpret pretty well. She saw that for Joy's sake—either now or hereafter—some opposition to the Colonel's idea was necessary. She had noticed the settled look—it had not yet become a frown—which came over his face when his wife spoke of his looking at Joy. In just such moments and on subjects as this it is that a father's and a mother's ideas join issue. Whilst the mother expects the singling out of the daughter for devotion, the father's first impulse is to resent it. Colonel Ogilvie's resentment had all his life been habitually expressed with force and rapidity; even in a tender matter of this kind the habit unconsciously worked.

"All the more reason, Sarah, for his being candid about himself. For my own part I can understand one attitude or the other; but certainly not both at once!"

Joy began to get seriously alarmed. The mere use of her mother's formal name was a danger-signal of rare use. By its light she could realise that her father had what he considered in his own mind to be a real cause of complaint. She did not like to speak herself; she feared that just at present it might complicate matters. So she looked over appealing at Judy, who understood and spoke:

"What two attitudes? I'm afraid I for one, don't understand. You *are* talking in riddles to-night!" She spoke in a gay debonair manner so like her usual self that her brother-in-law was unsuspicious of any underlying intent of opposition. This was just the opportunity for which he was waiting. With a sardonic smile he went on, singling out Joy as before:

"Your mother, my dear, has told us one of them. Perhaps the young man did look at you. There's little wonder in that. Were I a young man and a stranger I should look at you myself; and I would also have looked at any other man who dared to look at you too. If this is a man's attitude he should be more genial—more explicit—more open—less constrained to her relatives. That my dear Judy,"—he turned to her as he spoke "is the other attitude." Mrs. Ogilvie answered—the conversation to-night was decidedly oblique:

“Really, Colonel, I can’t agree with you. For my own part I thought his attitude towards her relatives was all that was courteous and respectful. Certainly to her mother!” She bridled, and Joy grew more serious. Her mother calling her husband “Colonel” was another danger-signal; and she knew that if once her father and mother got to loggerheads over him—“him” was her way of thinking of Mr. Hardy—it might keep him away from her. She summoned up her courage and said with all the affectionate raillery which was usually so effective with her father:

“Daddy dear do you remember Æsop’s fable about the Boy and the Frogs?”

“I suppose I ought to, little girl; but I’m afraid I have forgotten. What was it about?”

“The Boys were throwing stones at the Frogs, and when the Frogs remonstrated the Boys said they were doing it for fun. So the Frogs answered: ‘It may be fun to you; but it is death to us!’” Colonel Ogilvie puckered up his eyebrows:

“I remember, now, my dear; but for the life of me I don’t see its application here.” Joy said with a preternatural demureness:

“It means Daddy, that you are the Boy and I am the Frog!” Her father’s gravity became intensified:

“That does not help me much, daughter!”

“Well, you see, Daddy, here are you and mother commenting on how a man looked at me—and—so forth. But you don’t take into consideration the sensitiveness of a woman’s heart—let alone her vanity. I think you’ve forgotten that I am not now ‘merely a child emerging into womanhood’—don’t you remember on the *Cryptic*—but a staid woman to whose waning attractions everything relating to a man is sacred. One who looks on man, her possible rescuer from the terrors of old maidhood with the desperation of accomplished years.” As she had spoken unthinkingly the word “rescuer” a hot tide of blood had rushed to her face, but she went bravely on to the end of her sentence. There was not one of the three who did not understand the meaning. Her mother and aunt were concerned at the self-betrayal. Her father’s face grew fixed, now to sternness. With a faint heart Joy felt that she had made a terrible mistake, and inwardly condemned herself for its foolishness. Colonel Ogilvie now went on with grave deliberateness, he was determined that there should be no error regarding his disapprobation. All the time he was inwardly fuming against Mr. Hardy whom he held responsible:

“As I was saying, that fellow’s attitude, as it appeared to me, was wanting in both openness and that confidence which underlies respect.” Here Joy quivered. Judy,

watching her, noticed it and for a moment was scared. But the girl at once forced herself into calm, and Judy's anxiety quite disappeared. She knew that Joy was now quite master of herself, and would remain so. The Colonel, accepting the dejected silence as a request to continue, went on:

"Of course there is no need for me to say that he is a very gallant fellow and a superb horseman, and that his manners are those of a polished gentleman. Nor, further still, that I and mine are under a deep debt of gratitude to him. But there are some things which a man can do, or what is worse which he can leave undone, that show distrust."

"What things, for instance?" It was Judy who asked the question falteringly; but it was to Joy that the answer was directed:

"Well, my dear, I shall illustrate. When I, wishing to show that we all took an interest in him and his surroundings, mentioned Airlville and spoke of clubs and such matters he did not proffer me any information. Still, thinking that his reserve might be that usually attributed to the stand-off-ness of the English as often accepted here—that it was due to habit rather than intent—I asked him where he lived in London. He wrote an address on one of his cards—which by the way has no address graven on it—and handed it to me, saying: 'That is only a lodging. I have not got a house yet.' Then I asked what clubs he belonged to; and he simply said 'Several' and began to ask me questions about what sport we usually have in Kentucky. Now my dear, I am not usually inquisitive; and as this man was my guest I could not proceed in face of such a—a snub." He winced at the word. "But as I was really anxious that we should see more of one who had rendered us so signal a service, I expressed a hope that when we were in England in the summer we might have the pleasure of seeing him. I am bound to say that he reciprocated the wish very eagerly. He asked me a host of questions as to our plans; and I told him what we had arranged about the Lake Country and the Border of which we have such traditions in our family. He certainly has a very winning way with him, and I quite forgot at the time his want of trust about his residence and his clubs!"

"Perhaps he may have no home; he may be a poor man," suggested Aunt Judy. The Colonel answered her, this time directly:

"He may not be a rich man, but he is certainly not a poor one. You and I" this to Joy "saw him pay three thousand for that horse. And he is free with his money too in other ways. That police sergeant who was with me this morning—and who, my dear, asked me to convey his gratitude to you; I gave it for you—told me that the gentleman had given him on the Viaduct a hundred dollars for himself, and then another hundred for the officer who was run down."

“How generous!” said Judy. Joy said nothing; but she leaned forward, gladness in her eyes. There is some chord in a woman’s heart which sounds to any touch of generosity or even of liberality. It is some survival of conditions of primitive life, and a permanent female attribute. Judy, anxious to propitiate her brother-in-law, and to preserve the absent man’s character, said as though it were the conclusion of some process of reasoning:

“He must be some important person who is here on private business.” Ogilvie smiled genially:

“Our dear Judy will find a romance in everything—even in a man’s distrust!” Judy, somewhat nettled, felt like defending her own position. This had nothing to do with Joy so she felt she could argue freely about it:

“It needn’t be a romance, Lucius, only fact!”

“My dear Judy, I don’t see why a man should give so extravagantly merely because he is on private business. Why, it is the very way to attract attention.” Judy was made more obstinate by the apparent appositeness of the remark and by the tolerant tone of the speaker.

“I don’t mean that he gives *because* he is on private business, surely you know that; but that he may be an important man who gives handsomely as a habit. He may be keeping his identity concealed.”

“How do you mean exactly. How keep his identity concealed? He never told me; and he has been my guest!” Colonel Ogilvie had a puzzled look on his face.

“Well, for instance by taking another name for the occasion. Perhaps—” Here she caught sight of the look of positive horror on Joy’s face and stopped short. Joy had seen in what direction the conversation was drifting, but was afraid to interfere lest she should bring on the very catastrophe which she dreaded. She had never forgotten her father’s expressions regarding an alias; and she had reason to fear that should his suspicions be in any way directed towards the new friend whose accidental acquaintanceship already promised so much, some evil or hindrance must ensue. But her hypothetical concern was lost in a real one. As Judy spoke, the Colonel started to his feet, his manner full of suppressed fury. He was bristling all over, preliminary of his most dangerous mood.

Joy rose to the occasion. It was now or never. It was apparent that her father had taken that form of offence which is generally expressed in idiom or slang. Cornishmen call it a “scunner,” Cockneys “the hump,” Irishmen “an edge,” Americans “shirty.” It is a

condition antecedent to active offence; a habitat of the germ of misunderstanding; a searchlight for cause of quarrel. Joy felt cold, into the very marrow of her bones; well she knew that her father would never forgive any such offence to him as was implied in an assumed name. His remarks on the subject flamed before her like fiery handwriting on the walls of her memory. Moreover Judy's incautious remark had but echoed her own thought. All day she had been dreaming of this man who had plunged so gallantly into her life. Naturally enough to a young woman, she had been weaving romances in various forms round that very identity which, even to her, had been unexpressed if not hidden. Naturally her dreams had in them some element of concealment; romances always have. She had in her secret heart taken it for granted that this man must be distinguished—how could he be otherwise; and now her father's suspicion might result in some breach which might result in her never seeing him again. ... It was a possible tragedy! To her, grim and real from her knowledge of her own heart; and none the less a real tragedy or less potent because its bounds were lost in the vagueness of mist and fear. ... She was pale and inwardly trembling; but, all the same, her light laugh rang true; she was desperate and fighting for her man, and so was strung up to nature's pitch:

"Why, Daddy, if you're going to kill anyone it will have to be dear Aunt Judy. She's the one who has made the alias. The poor man himself—who by the way is not here to answer for himself and explain—hasn't done any conceivable thing wrong that we know of—even you Daddy know that; except not having a house and not bragging of his clubs!"

This seemed to strike her father; it touched him on the point of Justice. The lightness of his daughter's laugh reassured him.

"True!" he said. "That is quite true. I was too hasty. And he saved my little girl's life!" He rose from the table and putting his arm round her shoulders kissed her. Then they went into the drawing-room.

Joy bore up bravely for the rest of the evening. But when she was in bed and assured that she was alone, the reaction came. She was as cold as a stone and trembled all over. Putting her face down into her pillow she pulled the sheet over her head and wept her very heart out.

"Oh what it might have been if all went well. But what might be if Daddy took some queer idea ... and quarrelled ...!"

CHAPTER VIII.
"LOOK AT ME!"

When on Tuesday afternoon “Mr. Hardy” visited at the Holland House he found only the single ladies at home. Colonel Ogilvie had gone out in the morning to see after several matters of business, both in connection with Air and relating to the forthcoming visit to Europe. He had said he would probably not be back till dinner time. Mrs. Ogilvie had gone out after lunch for a drive and would pay some visits before returning home. Joy pleaded headache as an excuse for remaining at home. Indeed her excuse was quite real; no one can pass so melancholy a part of a night as she had done without suffering the next morning. As the day wore on, however, the headache insensibly departed; something else had taken its place. Joy would not admit to herself what that something was; but that afternoon she took unusual pains with her toilet. Judy noticed it with her usual acute observation, understood it with her understanding sympathy; with her wonted discretion she remained silent. She felt, and rightly, that the time had not yet come when she could either be serious with Joy or jest with her on the subject nearest to her heart. One thing she did which can never be out of place, especially when it is true: she showed pleasure in her niece’s looks, taking care, however to put her own reason for it on a non-offensive basis.

“Joy,” she said “that terrible experience of Sunday has not told on you a bit. You are looking simply lovely.” Ordinarily Joy would have known it, and would not have shrunk from admitting it to herself, or possibly even to her aunt; but to-day she was full of self doubting. Her very flush of happy excitement when her aunt spoke would have betrayed her secret to a much less sympathetic or experienced person than Judy.

It is love more than any other cause or emotion or feeling which creates self-distrust with the young. And sometimes with the old, for the matter of that.

When she found that Aunt Judy did not “chaff” her or ask her questions, which she rather feared would happen, Joy beamed. Indeed it looked to Judy’s loving eyes as if she visibly blossomed. Judy spoke of her dress, remarking how well the dark full-coloured green silk became her slender figure; but she was careful not to overdo her praise, or to suggest any special cause for so elaborate a toilet.

But Judy was of a distinctly practical nature. She took care to send a message to the hall that if any visitors should come, though both Colonel and Mrs. Ogilvie were out, Miss Ogilvie and Miss Hayes were at home.

Athlyne found both ladies busily idle. Joy was reading a novel; which by the way she put down hurriedly without as Judy noticed, marking the place. Judy was knitting; that sort of heavy uninteresting knitting which is manifestly for the poor! She was used to say that such was the proper sort of occupation for an old maid. She, too, put down the cause of her occupation, but deliberately; thereby giving time for the guest to

salute her niece without the need of interruption. It did not matter, then, if Joy's hand did remain an instant longer in his than formality demanded, nor if—when released—it was white in patches as when extra force is applied to delicate flesh. For a few minutes Judy joined in the conversation with her usual brilliancy. But to-day she was distinctly restless, sitting down and jumping up again; moving out of the room quietly and coming back noisily—the proper way as she said on an after occasion for all old maids to move. Whenever she came back she would join in the conversation in a sort of butterfly fashion till she flitted away again.

In one of these trios when Mr. Hardy happened to remark that he would like to know what the movements of the Ogilvies would be, and what address they gave for letters when they were away, Joy answered:

"Daddy always has our letters sent to Brown Shipleys in Pall Mall. But we shall be moving about a good deal I expect. Mother has to take baths at Ischia again, and one of us will stay with her; but Daddy wants to go about a bit and see something of England. He is set on seeing the Border counties this summer."

"Then how am I to know where you are?" he asked impulsively. With a bright smile Joy nodded over to Miss Hayes:

"You had better ask Aunt Judy. She might keep you advised. She's the letter-writer of the family!"

When in her turn Joy had moved away on some little domestic duty he turned to Judy and said:

"Won't you let me know the moves on the board, Miss Hayes. It would be very kind of you." He looked so earnest over it that she felt her heart flutter. She said at once:

"Of course I shall, if you will let me have an address to write to." He had evidently thought over this part of the matter, for he took from his pocketbook a card on which he had written below his printed name: care Jonathan Goldsworth, Solicitor. 47B Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W. C. "That will always find me. I may be away or travelling; but my letters are sent on every day."

Judy thanked him, and seeing that Joy was out of earshot added on her own account:

"It is only right that you, who did so much for my dear niece—and so for us all—should know at least where she is."

"Thank you very, very much!" said Athlyne impulsively. He had all an Irishman's instinctive knowledge of woman's character and felt that Judy was to be trusted, that

she was heart-wholly devoted to her niece. On her part Judy *knew* that he could be trusted to the full, especially where Joy was concerned. And from that moment she began to take an interest in the love affair; an interest quite personal to herself and independent of her love for the girl. She felt that she was a participant in all schemes which were to be; and that, she came to the conclusion, was about all the real romance that an old maid could share in. “Thank God there’s that left at any rate!” was her prayer of gratitude.

Athlyne felt a powerful impulse to make a *confidante* of her. This was the first chance he had of disclosing the reality of things, and he was just about to begin when Joy returned. Once again did that self-distrust, incidental to his state of mind, cramp him. He fancied that it might be premature. Not knowing how deeply Joy cared for him already, he was unwilling to take any chance which might militate against his ultimate success. There was also another hampering feeling coincident with the self-distrust: he thought it might be possible that a confidence made to Judy might be embarrassing to her with her own folk. Already his devotion was deep enough and pure enough to prevent his doing intentionally anything which might cause her pain. Could Aunt Judy have looked into his heart, as she could and would have done had he been a woman, she would have been satisfied of the genuineness of his affection; and so she would have had no doubts at all as to the end of Joy’s love affair.

Joy’s return, however, brought somehow a sense of restraint. She had herself originated or initiated a mechanism of correspondence and she feared that Mr. Hardy might notice that she had done so. In her present state of feeling towards the man, the very idea of such a thing was fraught with humiliation. It is extraordinary how much people take to heart the belief on the part of others of that they have intended. Truth, truly, is a bright weapon; even the flash of it has its own terrors!

Judy did not comprehend exactly what the trouble was. She could see that there was restraint on both sides, and was wondering whether it had been possible that he had been speaking too impulsively—“going too quick” was the way she put it to herself—and that Joy had resented or feared it. Not the fact but the rapidity. Well Judy knew that in her youth a woman most holds back when the wildest desire of her heart is to rush forward; that the instinct of woman being to draw man on, she will spend the last ounce of her strength in pushing him back. Judy had once said:

“A woman wants a man to be master, and specially to be her master. She wants to feel that when it comes to a struggle she hasn’t got a chance with him, either to fight or to run away. That’s why we like to make a man follow when in truth we are dying to run after him—and to catch him up!” Some of her circle to whom the heterodox saying

had been repeated professed to be very indignant as well as horrified. This was chiefly noticeable in such of the most elderly of the good ladies as had a lurid past or a large family, or both.

If, however, Judy had any doubts as to the cause she had none whatever of the fact. There was no mistaking the droop of Joy's eyes, or the sudden lifting and quick dropping of the lids which makes the densest man's heart flutter; no mistaking his eager look; the glowing eyes ranging over face and form when the windows of her soul were closed, and entranced in their light when they were open. Judy herself knew the power of those gray, deep eyes. Even when her niece had been a baby there seemed something hypnotic about them. They could disarm anger, or change the iron of theory into the water of fact. Often and often after some such episode when she had thought the matter over she had said to herself:

"Lord! if she's like that as a baby with me, what will she be with a man when she's a woman!" Judy who was a self-observer knew instinctively that in Joy was an inherent influence over men. There was some very subtle, delicate force which seemed to emanate from her; some force at once compelling and tranquillizing, for the explanation of which mere will-power was insufficient. The power was now in active exercise; but it was turned inwards. Joy was in love! Judy knew it as well as if she had herself acknowledged it; indeed better, for the acknowledgment of such a secret, except to the man himself, is given with reserve. And so she made up her mind to further the affair; but to prevent Joy betraying herself unduly during such furtherance. By "unduly" Judy really meant "unwisely" as to ultimate and most complete efficacy.

She had an idea that Joy herself would approve, at present, of such discretion. It seemed a direct confirmation of such idea when presently the girl said to her in a faint whisper:

"Don't go away again Aunt Judy!"

When, however, in the course of conversation as the three sat chatting together happily, Mr. Hardy mentioned that his ship sailed in the early morning and she saw the colour leave the girl's cheeks for a moment, just as a white squall sweeps a sunlit sea, Judy's heart softened. She understood that retreating wave of colour. Nature has its own analogies to its own anomalies; there is a white blackbird, why not a white blush! So when the time drew near for the departure of the visitor Judy slipped away for a minute. When she had gone the two sat still. Athlyne's eyes were on Joy, eager, burning. Her eyes were down, the black lashes curling against her cheeks. In a voice rather husky he said in a low tone:

“Won’t you think of me sometimes till we meet again?” Her answer was given in what she wished to be a matter-of-fact tone, but the slight quaver in it told another story:

“Of course I shall! How can I help it? You saved my life!” There was an entrancing demureness in the downcast eyes. But it was not enough for the man. He wanted to see the eyes, to gaze in them, to lose himself in them once again. There is for each individual nature some distinctive way of expressing itself. Sometimes it is the mouth which tells the story; sometimes it is by simple existence such as the lines of the nose or forehead, by the shape and movement of the hands; sometimes by a characteristic habit. Joy’s nature spoke through the eyes; perhaps it is, that intention is best given by the eyes. Anyhow the lover wanted to see them.

In a low voice—not a whisper—that thrilled with intensity he said:

“Joy, look at me!” He spoke her name, though it was for the first time, quite unconsciously. As she heard it Joy’s heart beat so that she feared he would notice it, and all the self-protective instincts of womanhood rose at the thought. For an instant her face glowed; then it grew pale again. She did not hesitate, however. She raised her eyes and looked him full in the face. Her cheeks were flaming now, but she did not heed it. In the face of nature what, after all, is convention. As Athlyne lost himself in those wonderful eyes he had a wild almost over-mastering desire to take her in his arms and kiss her straight on the beautiful mouth. He was bending towards her for the purpose, she was swaying towards him, he believed; but for long afterwards he could not be sure of the matter.

But suddenly he saw a change in the girl’s face, a look of something like terror which seemed in an instant to turn her to stone. It was but a momentary change, however. The spasm passed, and, just as though it was to his eyes as if he had waked from a dream, she was her easeful self again. At the same moment the outer door of the *piece* opened and Mrs. Ogilvie’s voice was heard as she entered:

“Judy, I am so glad! I am told he has not gone yet. I should have been so sorry if I had not seen him!” When she entered the room, three seconds later, she found the two young people talking quietly according to the demure common-place of convention.

Mrs. Ogilvie was very hearty in her manner; a little more hearty than usual, for she had a sort of feeling as if something extra in the way of civility was due to him after the way her husband had spoken of him. This was illustrative of two things. First the woman’s unconscious acceptance of an unfavourable criticism of an absent person, as if it had been made to and not merely of him; second the way the sternness of a man’s

judgment is viewed by the females of his family. She insisted that Mr. Hardy should stay for tea and asked Joy to ring and order it.

Joy had been at once relieved and disappointed by the sudden entry of her mother. The maidenhood in her was glad of the postponement of the necessity for her surrender; the womanhood in her was disappointed by it. She was both maid and woman; let the female reader say, and the male reader guess, which feeling most predominated. She was glad that *he* was staying a little longer; for so she might at least feast her eyes on him again; but it was at best a chastened gladness, for well she knew that that thrilling moment would not come again—during that interview. And he was going away next morning!

Athlyne, too, was ill at ease. He, too, knew there would be no more opportunity now to follow up his declaration. The chagrin of his disappointment almost made him cross, such being the nature of man. Here, however, both his breeding and the kindliness of his nature stood to him; the shadow quickly passed. Later on in the evening, when he was thinking the matter over, he came to the conclusion that the interposition, though he did not attribute it to any divine origin, was after all perhaps best. It could not, or might not, suit him to declare himself so quickly. He felt that under the circumstances of his false name it would be necessary, or at any rate wise, to take Colonel Ogilvie into his confidence before declaring himself to his daughter.

It is thus that we poor mortals deceive ourselves. He had been just about to declare himself in the most passionate and overt way a man can; by taking the girl in his arms and kissing her, without even a passing thought of her father. But now, from some other cause, quite outside the girl and not even within her knowledge, he found his duty. One might with this knowledge easily differentiate the values of “necessary” and “wise” in his mind regarding his confession to her father.

Joy found a very distinct, though shy, pleasure in handing him tea and cake. Judy as usual presided at the tea-table. She did not interfere unduly with her niece’s ministrations, but she took care that she had plenty of opportunities. “Joy dear won’t you see if Mr. Hardy will take more tea?”—“has Mr. Hardy enough sugar?” and so forth. She had noticed those sudden liftings of the girl’s eyes, and knew what they meant to a woman—and to a man. Athlyne did not as a rule make tea a “square” meal, but this time he got in that direction. He refused nothing she offered. He would have accepted death at her hands now, if it would have pleased her; and it was only the girl’s discretion which saved the situation.

In due time he made his adieux and took his leave. With Joy there was no more than a handshake. It was perhaps part of a second longer than customary, but the force with

which the squeeze was given lingered long in her memory. Perhaps it was the pain inflicted in the operation which made her often during the evening, when she was alone, caress the possibly wounded hand! That night she went to sleep with her right hand pressed to her heart.

Judy had a wild impulse to tell Joy to go to the door with the departing guest, but in the presence of her mother she did not dare to suggest it. Had she been alone she would probably have done so.

Athlyne walked away with his mind in a whirl. In his heart was ever surging up through all other thoughts that one sublime recognition which comes to every man at least once in his life: that which Sir Geraint voiced:

“Here, by God’s rood is the one maid for me!” To this all other thoughts gave way. It obsessed him. When he came to Forty Second Street he did not turn towards the hotel but kept straight on up Fifth Avenue till he reached Central Park. He felt the need of movement. He wanted to be alone in the open. At Central Park his steps took him seemingly of their own accord towards the Riverside Drive. When he came to a place amongst trees seeming to hang over the river he sat on a seat and gave way to his thoughts. There was no one near him. Below him was the quiet river with its passing life; beyond, the Jersey shore so distant that details of life were not apparent. He took off his hat, more in reverence than for ease, as he thought of the beautiful girl who had so strangely come into life. Over and over again he said to himself in endless repetition:

“Joy! Joy! Joy! Joy!” He sat till the light began to fail and for long after the sudden darkness of the American night had swooped down. Then he went home.

In the hotel he found a visitor waiting for him. Mr. Breckenridge had come to say good-bye. He did so with so much heartiness that Athlyne could not bear to be aught but hearty himself. Though he longed to be alone he insisted on the young fellow coming up to his own rooms.

The boy was not quite at ease so Athlyne said to him:

“There is something on your mind. What is it?”

“Well, look here, sir,” he answered gravely. “You have treated me like a comrade, and I want to treat you like one!”

“Go on, old chap. I’m listening.” Not without some nervousness the other proceeded:

“I saw in the *Journal* last evening that you had dined on Sunday evening in the Holland with Colonel Ogilvie.”

“Those damned reporters!” interrupted Athlyne, but at once told him with a wave of his hand to proceed:

“That hung in my mind from something you said to me the other evening. That confidence which I shall always value.” Athlyne nodded. He went on:

“I know something of that family. I’m from Kentucky myself; and I was there for a while—that time of the nigger disturbance you know—and I was quartered not far from Airlville. I have met Colonel Ogilvie; but it was on duty and amongst a good many others so he would not remember me. I never met any of his family; but I need not tell you that I fell in love with Miss Ogilvie. No fellow could help that; one glimpse of her is enough—— However—— I heard a lot down there about the old man, and as I was keen about the girl I took it all in and remembered it. I want to tell you this, because he is a very peculiar man. He is a splendid old chap. As brave as a lion, and as masterful as Teddy Roosevelt himself. But all the same he has his ideas which are hardly up to date. He is as stern as Fate in matters of—of—well, social matters. They told me a story of him which when I recalled it has troubled me since I saw you. It was about a man whose identity he mistook and who for a jest allowed the error to go, and kept it up. He was a Northern of course, for a Southern would have understood, and our boys are sometimes very keen on a joke. But it was no joke when the old man tumbled to it. He called it an unforgivable outrage and insisted on fighting over it. I tell you it nearly cost the joker his life. He was drilled right through, and only escaped death by a miracle. I tell you all this, sir, because of your confidence in me. If I might make a suggestion—you won’t think it beastly presumptuous of me will you?” Athlyne held out his hand; the other after shaking it, went on: “I would venture to suggest that—of course if you have not done so already—you should take him into your confidence before leaving here. It might be awkward if the old man were to find out for himself. He would think it a want of trust, and he might never forgive it. I am sure you would like to meet him and his again—you know you can’t save the life of a girl like that every day——” He stopped there, confused and blushing.

Athlyne was touched by the young man’s kindly frankness and sincerity. He thanked him heartily but in a regretful way added:

“Unfortunately I didn’t tell him. It was all so quick, and there was no opportunity when we did meet; and now I may not have the chance for some time. It would not do to write; I must see him and explain. And I go away early to-morrow. But be sure of this: the very first chance I get I shall tell him. I do wish for the friendship of him and his;

and I should be main sorry if any foolishness hindered it. I shall have to do it carefully, I can see from what you tell me that he may construe my accepting his hospitality in my assumed name as an offence." He went to the door with his friend, but before parting he said:

"By the way I should like you to do something for me if you don't mind. I have asked the Horse Exchange people to get me another mount of the same strain as my black, a mare this time. I have given them full instructions, and if you will, I shall tell them that they must have your approval. I want some one who knows a good horse; and as I have given them carte blanche as to price it is right I should have some one to refer to. They are to send it to England for me."

When Breckenridge was gone he set about his preparations for his early start. Strange to say he never thought of dinner at all that day; the omission may have been due to his hearty tea! As he worked he thought gravely over what his young friend had told him. He could see good cause for concern. Colonel Ogilvie's attitude towards misrepresentation only echoed his own feeling. He came to the conclusion that there lay before him much thought; and possibly much action.

But all the same this branch of the subject did not monopolise his thoughts that night. As he lay awake he kept repeating to himself again, and again, and again:

"Joy! Joy! Joy! Joy!" He fell asleep with the words on his lips. The thought continued in his heart.