

CHAPTER IX.

THE CAR OF DESTINY

Athlyne did not feel safe till the French vessel was dipping her nose into the open Atlantic seas, and the Long Island Hills were a faint blue line on the western horizon. The last dozen hours of his stay in New York had been as though spent in prison. He knew well now that he really loved Joy; that this was no passing fancy, no mere desire of possession of a pretty woman. All phases of the passion of love, from the solely physical to the purely spiritual, have their own forces commanding different sets of nerves. Any one of these many phases may be all-compelling—for a time. But it is rather the blind dogged reckless pursuit of an immediate purpose than the total abandonment to a settled conviction. All the passions—or rather the phases of one passion—are separate and co-ordinate. Inasmuch as they are centred in one physical identity they are correlated. Nature has its own mysteries; and the inter-relations of various functions of a human being form not the least of them. As there are broad divisions of them—Christians accept three, the ancient Egyptians held to eight—so must we accept their uses and consequences. “Body and soul,” so runs the saying of the illiterate, not seldom used in objurgation. “Body, mind and soul” says the quasi-thinker who believes that he has grasped the truth of the great parcelling-out of qualities. “Heart, soul and flesh” says the lover who knows that he understands. The lover alone it is who knows as distinguished from believing. For his world is complete; in it there is no striving after knowledge, no vain desire of many things, no self-seeking. For the true lover’s one idea is to give. In such a world there can be no doubting, no fearing, no hoping. Before its creation Pandora’s box has been emptied to the last. It may be that the lover’s world is only a phantasm, a condition. It may be that it is a reality which can only be grasped by those who have been gifted with special powers. It may be that it is an orb as real as our own world, whirling in space in darkness, and can only be seen by those who have a new sense of vision. Surely it is not too much to believe, following the great analogies, that the soul as well as the body has eyes, and that all eyes of all sorts and degrees have vision of one kind or another; that there may be even a power of choice. We know that in the great manifestation which we call Light are various rays, each with its own distinctive powers and limitations. When these are all classified and understood, then science may take breathing time for its next great effort at investigation. Why, then, may not certain visual organs be adapted to specific purposes! We know through our sensoria that there is response in various ways to seekings of our own; whatever be the means of communication; whatever it be—electrical or magnetic, or through some other of the occult root forces, the message is conveyed. Why may it not be, again following the great analogies, that two

forces of varying kind coming together are necessary for creation of any kind. We know it of lightning, we know it of protoplasm, and of whatever lies between them of which we know anything. We find or have ground for believing that the same conditions hold in all the worlds which germinate and increase and multiply. May it then not be that in love—"creation's final law"—the meeting of the two forces of sex may create a new light; a light strange to either sex alone; a light in which that other world, spinning in the darkness through ether, swims into view in that new-created light.

In physical life when flesh touches flesh the whole body responds, provided that the two are opposite yet sympathetic. When ideas are exchanged, mind come forth to mind till each understands with a common force. When soul meets soul some finer means of expression comes into play. Something so fine and of condition so rare that other senses can neither realise nor conceive.

But in the lover all the voices speak, and speak simultaneously; the soul and the mind and the body all call, each to its new-found mate. What we call "heart" gives the note for that wonderful song of love; that song of songs whose music is as necessary in a living world as light or air, and which is more potent in the end than the forces of winds or seas.

To Athlyne this new world had dawned. In the light which made it visible to him other things looked small; some of them base. And this, though the consciousness of love was still wanting; it had only spoken instinctively. The completeness only comes with that assurance of reciprocity which need not be spoken in words. Athlyne had been very close to it. The yearning of his own nature had spoken in that call out of the depths of his heart: "Joy look at me!" And if there had been time for the girl's new-wakened love to surge up through the deep waters of her virgin timidity his happiness might have been by now complete. As yet he only believed that there might yet be happiness for him; he did not know! Had he seen in Joy's beautiful eyes the answering look which he hoped for, he would have been justified in a change of his plans. He would then have spoken to her father at the earliest possible opportunity, have told him the entire story of his visit to America under an assumed name, and trusted to his good feeling to understand and absolve him. As it was he had to accept existing circumstances; and so he prepared himself for the future. First he would get rid of his alias; then he would try to see Joy again and form some idea of his fate. After that he would make his confession to Colonel Ogilvie; and if the latter still remained friendly he would press his suit.

If some impartial reasoner, like Judy for instance, had been summing up the matter for him the same would have said: "What are you troubling yourself about. You are as

good as he is, you are a suitable match for the girl in every way. You have a title, a large estate, a fine social position personally. You have a more than good record as a soldier. You are young, handsome, strong, popular. You saved the girl's life at the risk of your own. Then why, in the name of common sense, are you worrying? The old man is not an ass; he will understand at once that you had a good reason for assuming another name. He will see that the circumstances of your meeting were such that you had no time to undeceive him. He owes you already the deepest debt of gratitude that a father can owe. The girl owes you also her life. What in the world better chance do you want? You love the girl yourself ...”

Aye! there it was. He loved the girl! That hampered him.

During the whole time of the voyage he kept to himself. He made no new friends, not even acquaintances; he had begun to feel that so long as he remained under the shadow of that accursed alias each momentarily pleasant episode of his life was only the beginning of a new series of social embarrassments. When the ship arrived at Havre he got off and went at once to London. There he stayed for a few days in the lodgings which he had taken in the name of Hardy. He set himself gravely to work to wipe out from his belongings every trace of the false name. It was carefully cut or scraped from the new luggage, obliterated from the new linen and underclothes by the simple process of scissors. The cards and stationery were burned. It was with a sigh of relief that, having discharged all his obligations, he drove to his chambers in the Albany and resumed his own name and his old life. He was, however, somewhat restless. He tried to satisfy himself with long rides, but even the speed of the Kentucky horse who got more than his share of work did not satisfy him. There was some new uneasiness in his life; an overwhelming want which nothing of the old routine, no matter how pleasant it might be, could fill.

When “Mr. Hardy” had said good bye to her, Joy's new life began. New life indeed, for Love is a new birth, a re-creation. Whenever she thought of herself she seemed to be leading a double life. All the routine, the cares and the duties of the old life remained unchanged; but superimposed on it was quite a new existence, one of self-surrender, of infinite yearning, of infinite hope, of endless doubting as to whether she was worthy of all that which she shyly believed really existed. She was all sweetness to those around her, to whom she seemed happy—but with a tinge of sadness. Both her father and mother believed that she was feeling the reaction from the shock of the Riverside adventure. Her mother possibly had at first an idea that she had given some thought to the handsome young man who had saved her; but when she herself reviewed in her

mind how quietly, not to say unconcernedly, the young man had taken the whole episode she was content to let it take a minor place in both her concern and her recollection.

In due course the Ogilvie family set out on their European journey, and in due course without any occurrence of note they arrived at their destination.

Hotel Bellevue,
Casamicciöla, Ischia.

Dear Mr. Hardy:

As I promised to write to you I now try to keep my word. I dare say you will think that an old maid is glad to get a chance of writing to a man! Perhaps she is! But I may say a word in your ear: the habit of personal reticence begins younger and lingers longer than you would think. However this is not the time or place—or weather for philosophising. The scenery is far too lovely to think of anything unpleasant. We got here all right after a voyage which was nice enough, though rather dull, and with no opportunities of making new friends. We can't have runaway horses on shipboard! My sister will remain here for some weeks and I shall stay with her as it wouldn't do to leave her all alone. It brought the whole caboodle of us hurrying over from America through a blizzard the last time! No, thank you! And Colonel Ogilvie doesn't care to travel by himself. He is set on going up to Westmoreland which he says is the original Country of his branch of the Ogilvies. He is complaining of getting no riding here; and yet he says that when he gets to London he will hire a motor. Men are queer things, aren't they? The rest of us are quite well and looking forward to our English visit where we may meet some friends. How are you? I suppose spending your time as usual galloping about like a knight-errant on a big black horse rescuing distressed ladies. And writing letters to a pack of women not *all* old maids! I suppose you will spare a moment to write to one in answer to this, just to say where you are and where you will be in the next few weeks. My brother's section of our party leaves here next week. As I am an old maid I am shy of telling my sister, and most of the rest of us, that I am writing to a gentleman; but if they knew it they too would send their love. For my own part I must confine myself to kind remembrance.

Believe me,
Yours faithfully,
Judith Hayes.

P. S.—By the way, I forgot to say that the first contingent will after a few days in London go on to Cumberland or Westmoreland—I know it is the “Lake” country!

Athlyne read the letter eagerly; but when he had finished he dropped it impatiently. There was not a thing in it that he wanted to know—not once the name he wanted to see. He sat for a while thinking; then he took it up again saying to himself:

“She’s no fool; it must have taken her some pains to say so little.” As he read it the second time, more carefully this time and not merely looking for what he wished to find, the letter told its own story, and in its own way. Then he smiled heartily as he sat thinking it over and commenting to himself:

“Not a word about her; not even her name! And yet she must know that it would be of *some* interest to me to hear of her. I wonder if it would do to run over to Ischia. There seems to be a party of them ...” He read over the letter again with a puzzled look, which all at once changed to a smile. “Good old Judy! So that’s it is it! That’s not the first letter Miss Judy has written with a double meaning in it. She hasn’t those fine eyes and that quick wit for nothing. Why it’s as clever and as secret as that sent to Basing at Pretoria.” For a good while he pondered over it, making notes on the back of the envelope. Then he read these over:

“We are at Ischia.

“I am writing because I promised.

“The habit of personal reticence (that means not saying a thing for yourself) is for both young and old.

“Our voyage was dull, no adventure, no meeting any one like you.

“Mrs. Ogilvie and Judy remain at Ischia some weeks.

“Colonel Ogilvie doesn’t like going alone and goes to the Lake County (who is to be with him but Joy?)

“He wants to go motoring (seems more in this—think it over).

The rest of us—(that can only mean Joy) are looking forward to meeting friends in England—(that proves she is going with her father).

“Let me know where you will be during the coming weeks.

“My brother’s section of our party—(He and Joy)—leave here next week.

“I haven’t told Mrs. Ogilvie *or most of the rest of us* (Besides Mrs. O. there are only two so that *most* of them must mean the bigger—that is Colonel Ogilvie—she has not told that one of the two—then she *has* told the other. And the other is Joy!)

“If any of those kept in ignorance knew they *too* would send their love!

“*Too!*” Then one does. Judy sends her own ‘kind remembrance.’ The only other one, Joy, sends her love—to me.

“Joy sends her love to me!”

He sat for a moment in an ecstasy, holding the letter loosely in his hand. Then he raised it to his lips and kissed it. Then he kissed it a second time, a lighter kiss, murmuring:

“That’s for Aunt Judy!” He proceeded with his comment:

“The postscript: ‘After a few days in London—will go on to Cumberland or Westmoreland.’ No address in either place, what does that mean? She has been so clever over the rest that she can’t be dull in this. She *must* know the London address ... she thinks it best not to tell it to me—why?”

That puzzled him. He could not make out any reason from her point of view. He was willing to accept the fact and obey directions, but Judy had been so subtle in the other matter that he felt she must have some shrewd design in this. But the simple fact was that in this matter she had no design whatever. She intended to write to him again on hearing from him and to give him all details.

But for his own part Athlyne had several reasons for not seeing Colonel Ogilvie in London. Knowing that the father might make some quarrel out of his coming to his home in a false name he wanted to make sure of the daughter’s affection before explaining it to him. Besides there was the matter of continuing the fraud—even to Judy. Until things had been explained, meeting and any form of familiarity or even of hospitality on either side was dangerous. He could neither declare himself nor continue as they knew him. He was known in London to too many people to avoid possible *contretemps*, even if he decided to continue the alias with them and take chance, until he could seize a favourable opportunity. And as he could not introduce the old gentleman to his friends and his clubs it would be wiser not to see him at all. When all was said and done the pain of patient waiting might be the least of many ills.

All the morning and afternoon he thought over the letter which he was to write to Judy. He despaired of writing anything which could mean so much; and beyond that again he felt that he could say nothing which would be so important to its recipient as the message of Judy’s letter had been to him. How could he hope for such a thing! The letter, which just before the time of collection he posted with much trepidation, ran:

“My Dear Miss Hayes:

“Thank you very much for your most kind letter and for all that you have said and left unsaid. I too had a dull journey from New York and found London duller still. As a town it seems to have fallen off; but it will brighten up again I am sure before long! I am glad you are all well. I suppose your party will re-unite after Mrs. Ogilvie’s cure has been completed. It is strange how we are all taking to motor cars. I am myself getting one, and I hope in the early summer to have some lovely drives. I am looking out for a companion. But it is a difficult thing to get exactly the one you want, and without such it is lonely work. Even going the utmost pace possible could not keep one’s mind away from the want. When I went to America that time I was feeling lonely and dull; and I have felt lonelier and duller ever since. But when I get my motor I hope all that will shortly cease. I hope that when you arrive—if you and Mrs. Ogilvie do come over—that you will honour my car by riding in it. I shall hope to have some one with me whom you must like very much—you seem to like nice people and nice people seem to be fond of you. I greatly fear it will not be possible for me to see Colonel Ogilvie in London, for I have to be away very shortly on some business, and I probably shall not be back in time; but I am going up North in a few weeks—in my new car if it is ready—and I shall hope to see my friends. Perhaps Colonel Ogilvie and some of his friends will come for a drive with me. Won’t you let me know where he will be staying after he leaves London. Please give, if occasion serves, my warm remembrance to all. I have not forgotten that delightful conversation we had before tea the day I called. Tell Miss Joy that I wish we could renew and continue it. Miss Ogilvie must be a very happy girl to have, in addition to such nice parents who love her so much, an aunt like you so much her own age, so sympathetic, so understanding. I cannot tell you how much I am obliged to you for writing. I look eagerly for another letter.

“Believe me,
Yours very sincerely.”

There he hesitated. He had meant never to write again the name Richard Hardy. Here the letter seemed to demand it. He had already thought the matter over in all ways and from all points of view and had, he thought, made up his mind to go through with the fraud as long as it was absolutely necessary. There was no other way. But now when he had to write out the lie—as it appeared to him to be—his very soul revolted at it. It seemed somehow to dishonour Joy. Since he had looked into the depth of her eyes, scruples had come to him which had not ever before troubled him. It was unworthy of her, and of himself, to continue a lie. And so with him began again the endless circle of reasoning on a basis of what was false.

A lie, little or big, seems gifted with immortality. At its creation it seems to receive that vitality which belongs to noxious things. The germs which preserve disease survive the

quick lime of the plague-pit and continue after the seething mass of corruption has settled into earthly dust; and when the very bones have been resolved into their elements the waiting germs come forth on disturbance of the soil strong and baneful as ever.

Sometimes Athlyne grumbled to himself of the hardness of his lot. It was too bad that from such a little thing as taking another name, and merely for the purpose of a self-protective investigation of a lie, he should find himself involved in such a network of deceit. Other people did things a hundred times worse every day of their lives. He had often done so himself; but nothing ever came of it. But now, when his whole future might depend upon it, he was face to face with an actual danger. If Colonel Ogilvie quarrelled with him about it that would mean the end of all. Joy would never quarrel with her father; of that he felt as surely as that he loved her. All unknown to himself Athlyne had an instinctive knowledge of character. Any one who had ever seen him exercise the faculty would have been astonished by the rapidity of its working. The instant he had seen Joy he had recognised her qualities. He had understood young Breckenridge at a glance; otherwise he was too shrewd a man to trust him as he had done. It is not often that a man will entrust the first comer in a crowd with a valuable horse. To this man, too, an utter stranger, he had entrusted his secret, the only person who now knew it on the entire American continent. So also with Colonel Ogilvie. He was assured in his inner consciousness that that old gentleman would be hard to convince of the necessity for disguise. There was something about his fine stern-cut features—so exquisitely modified in his daughter—and in his haughty bearing which was obnoxious to any form of deceit.

One of these grumbling fits came on him now, and so engrossed him that he quite forgot to sign the letter. It was in the post box when he recollected the omission. He rejoiced when he did so that he had not written the lie. It was queer how sensitive his conscious was becoming!

One immediate effect of the awakened conscience was that he went about a motor car that very afternoon. He had said to Miss Judy that he was getting one, and his words had to be made good. Moreover he had, in addition to the train of reasons induced by Miss Judy's mention of Colonel Ogilvie's getting a car, a sort of intuition that it would be of service to him. Of service to him, meant of course, in his present state of mind with regard to Joy—of service in furthering his love affair. He had wished for a horse and got one, and it had brought him to Joy. Now he wanted a motor ... The chain of reasoning seemed so delightfully simple that it would be foolish to dispute it. Sub-conscious intuition supplied all lacunæ.

The logic of fact seemed to support that of theory. He looked in at his club to find the name of a motor agency. There in the hall he met an old diplomatic friend, who after greeting him said:

“This is good-bye as well.”

“How so?” he asked.

“I am off for Persia. Ballentyre got a stroke just as he was starting and they sent for me in a hurry and offered me the post. It is too good to refuse, so I am booked for another three years. I was promising myself a long rest, or a spell in a civilised place anyhow. It is too bad, just when I was expecting home my new Delaunay-Belleville car which has been nearly a year in hand.”

“Do you take the car with you?” asked Athlyne feeling a queer kind of beating of his heart.

“No. It would be useless there; at all events until I see what the country and the roads are like. I was just off to the agents to tell them to sell it for me.”

“Strange we should meet. I came here to look up the address of an agent. I want to buy a car.”

“Look here, Athlyne; why not take over this? I shall have to sell it at a sacrifice, and why shouldn't you have the advantage. I'll let you have it cheap; I would rather clear it all up before I go.”

“All right, old chap. I'll take it. What's the figure?”

“I agreed to pay £1,000. You may have it at what you think fair!”

“All right. Can we settle it now?”

“By all means.” Athlyne took out his cheque-book and wrote a cheque which he handed to the other.

“I say,” said Chetwynd. “You have made this for the full sum.”

“Quite so! What else could I offer. Why man, do you think I would beat you down because you are in a hurry. If there is any huckstering it is I who should pay. I get my car at once, the very car I wanted. I should have to wait another year.”

Three days after, the car arrived. Athlyne had spent the time in getting lessons at a garage and learning something of the mechanism. He was already a fair mechanic and a fine driver of horses; so that before another week was out he had learned to

know his car. He got a good chauffeur so that he would always have help in case of need; and before the next letter arrived from Miss Judy he was able to fly about all over the country. The new car was a beauty. It was 100-110 h. p. and could do sixty miles an hour easily.

The next letter which he received from Miss Hayes was short and devoid, so far as he could discern after much study, of any cryptic meaning whatever. She thus made allusion to the fact that he had not signed his letter:

“By the way I notice that you forgot to sign your letter. I suppose you were thinking at the time of other things.” The later sentence was underlined. The information in the letter was that Colonel Ogilvie and “his daughter” expected to be in London on the Saturday following her letter and would stay at Brown’s Hotel, Albemarle Street, “where I have no doubt they will be happy to see you if you should chance to be in London at the time. I think Lucius intends to write you.”

The latter sentence was literally gall to him. He knew that he must not be in London during their stay there. To be away was the only decent way of avoiding meeting them. He must not meet Colonel Ogilvie until he had made certain of Joy’s feeling towards him, for he could not make his identity known till he had that certainty. He could then explain his position ... The rest of the possibilities remained unspoken; but they were definite in his own mind.

As he had to go away he thought it would be well to study up the various branches of the Ogilvy as well as of the Ogilvie family. He would then make a tour on his own account to the various places where were their ancient seats. As Colonel Ogilvie was interested in the matter some knowledge on his part might lead ... somewhere.

CHAPTER X.

A LETTER

Before he set out for London, Colonel Ogilvie wrote a letter to “Mr. Hardy” which he sent to the address given on the card handed to him at New York. He had thought over the matter of writing with the seriousness which he always gave to social matters. Indeed he was careful to be even more punctilious than usual with this young man; firstly because he had got the idea that his overtures had not been cordially received and he wished to be just, secondly because he felt he must not forget the great service rendered to his daughter and himself. In his letter he apprised Mr. Hardy that with his daughter he was coming to London for a week or more, that they would be staying at Brown’s Hotel, Albemarle Street, and that they would be very pleased to see him there if he would honour them with a visit, and that perhaps he would make it

convenient to dine with them any evening which he himself might select. He also told him that Mrs. Ogilvie and her sister were to remain some weeks longer in Italy, and that they would join him in the North of England, whence they would go all together to some bracing part of Scotland, to be decided later on when the time came for the after-cure. Of course, as he did not know that Athlyne was already in correspondence with Miss Judy, and was particular to give details of his future movements. Before posting it he showed the letter to Joy so that he might have her opinion as to whether all was correct. Joy was secretly fluttered, but she preserved admirably her self-control and came well through the ordeal, leaving no suspicion in the mind of her father as to the real state of things. She was now very deeply in love; the days that had passed had each and all fed the flame of her incipient passion. Time and the brain working together have a period of growth of their own which the physiopsychists have called "unconscious cerebration," a sort of intellectual process whereby crude thoughts are throughout the darkness of suspended effort developed into logical results. Again, one of Nature's mysterious workings; again one of her analogies to the inner and outer worlds of growth. As the hibernating seed, as the child in the womb, so the thought of man. Growth without ceasing, in light or darkness. Logical development, from the gates of Life to the gates of Death.

Joy was so deeply in love that all her thoughts, all her acts, all her hopings and fearings were tinged by it. Dreams need a physical basis somewhere; and whatever is the outward condition of man or woman so will be the mind. Whatever the inward, so will be the outward; each is the true index to the other. Her father, though an acute enough man in other respects, was sublimely unconscious of any change in his little girl; indeed he held her in his mind as but a child to whom the realities of life had not yet presented themselves. And yet even as a father he was feeling the effects of her developed affection. All the sweetness of her childhood had ripened. Somehow her nature had become more buoyant, more elastic. Sweetness and thoughtful understanding of his wishes seemed to breathe from her. Now and again were languorous moments when her whole being seemed to yield itself involuntarily to a wish outside her own. To a woman these are times of danger. For when the will ceases, passivity is no longer negative; it is simply a doubling of the external domination—as though an active spirit had been breathed into inertness. There are many readings to any of the Parables. When certain devils have been cast out and the house has been swept and garnished may it not be that spirits other than devils may find place therein. May it not also be that there is a virtue in even selfishness; if only that its protective presence keeps out devils that would fain enter the house where it abides.

With a spirit of meekness Joy waited the coming of the friend who had been bidden. She had every confidence that he would come. True that he had not written to her; but she had seen his unsigned letter to Judy, and into its barrenness had read meanings of her own. How could he *not* come to her when she would have so gladly flown to him? Besides there was always with her the memory of that rapturous moment when he had spoken her name: "Joy look at me!" It was not hard to remember that; it was the only time she had heard her name upon his lips. As the weeks had gone by, that little sentence impulsively spoken had arrived at the dignity of a declaration of passion. It had grown in her mind from a request to a command; and she felt the sweetness of being commanded by a man she loved. In that moment she had accepted him as her Master; and that acceptance on a woman's part remains as a sacred duty of obedience so long as love lasts. This is one of the mysteries of love. Like all other mysteries, easy of acceptance to those who believe; an acceptance which needs no doubting investigation, no proof, no consideration of any kind whatever. She had faith in him, and where Faith reigns Patience ceases to be a virtue.

Her father waited also, though not in the same meekness of spirit. Indeed his feeling was fast becoming an exasperation in which the feeling of gratitude was merging. He felt that he had done all that was right and correct with regard to the young man. He had gone out of his way to be nice to him; but with only the result of insult—that was the way in which he was beginning to construe the silence of Mr. Hardy. Insult to his daughter as well as himself; and that was a thing which could not be brooked from anyone no matter how strong or how numerous were his claims for leniency! Joy saw that there was some cause of displeasure with her father, and with a sinking heart had to attribute it to the real cause. She knew—which her father did not—from his letter to Judy that Mr. Hardy would have to be away from London just at the time of their visit; but she was afraid to speak lest she should precipitate catastrophe. It was not that she had fear in the ordinary sense. Much as she loved her father she would face him if necessary. But she felt that it would be unwise to force the issue prematurely; her father was a man of such strong prejudices—he called them convictions!—that once they were aroused they mastered his judgment. What might happen if he should give them scope on this occasion! Her heart sank more deeply still at the very thought.

In her anxiety she took what was probably the wisest course; she kept him perpetually busy, trotting about with her to see the sights of London. This was a pleasure which she had long promised herself with—since the adventure with the run-away horse—the added interest of having present a nice Englishman to point out and explain. This special charm had now to be foregone; and the denial made her secretly sad. However, the best anodyne to pain is pain; her anxiety regarding her father's case was

a counteractant to her own. Father and daughter were so busy, morning noon and night, and the girl appeared to be so tired when the day's programme as laid down had been exhausted, that occasion was lacking for consideration of a disagreeable subject. Towards the end of the first week, however, Colonel Ogilvie's patience began to fail. He felt that he must speak of his annoyance to some one, and there was no choice. Joy felt that the moment had come, and she did not flinch. She had a grim foreboding that there would be something said which would give her pain to hear. Her hands were tied. She could not even mention that Mr. Hardy was away; her father would be sure to ask how she knew it. If he did so, she would not dare to tell him; for she knew well that if he learned that the man who had not even answered his own letter was in secret correspondence with the ladies of his own family—that is how he would put it—the fact would add fuel to the flame, would change chagrin to fury. And so she steeled herself to the quiet endurance of suffering.

The blow fell at breakfast time when her father had looked through the few letters which lay beside his plate.

“Well, I do think that that young man's rudeness is unpardonable!”

Joy looked up with a pleasant smile which belied the chilly feeling about her heart. She felt that she must pretend ignorance; her father might, later on, hold a too ready acceptance as suspicious:

“What, Daddy? Who? Whose rudeness?”

“That—that gentleman whom I asked to dine with us. Mr. Hardy.”

“Perhaps he may not have got your letter.”

“How do you mean, daughter? He must have got it; I directed it to the address he gave me himself.”

“But Daddy, he may be away. You remember he told you at dinner that day in the Holland that he had important business. It may have been prolonged you know. He may not even be in London.”

“Then he should see that his letters are duly sent on to him.”

“Certainly he ought. But perhaps Daddy he's not as careful as we are. He may not be a man of business!” Colonel Ogilvie smiled:

“I'm afraid that is a very bad argument my dear. You have just used the opposite!”

“How so, Daddy?” she asked wrinkling up her brows.

“You said he might be away on business!” He was so pleased with his combating of her argument that her purpose was effected; he abandoned the subject—for a time.

The next morning, however, he renewed it again under similar circumstances:

“I think, my dear, that we had better give up any idea of keeping that young man on the list of our friends. It is quite evident that he does not care to continue our acquaintanceship!” Joy suffered much this time; all the more because there was nothing that she could say which would be wise. She had to content herself with a commonplace acceptance of his views. So she answered with as steady a voice as she could manage:

“Of course, Daddy! Whatever you think right!” The answer pleased her father; he showed it in his reply:

“I am sorry about it, my dear; for he seemed a fine young fellow, and he saved you very bravely. However we cannot help it. We did all we could to make him welcome; but we can’t force him to come to us. It isn’t an occasion for wain-ropes!” After a pause she ventured to say meekly:

“Yes. It would be a pity if we had to quarrel with a man who did so much for us. I suppose if he *could* show that he did not get your letter, then it would be—you could forgive him.”

“Of course I would, my dear. But these English are so stand-off that there is no understanding them. I wanted to be friends with the man who saved my little girl ... But there, it is no use wishing anything when people are pig-headed ...”

His words somehow made Joy’s heart glow. It might be all right yet, if only ...

But the present was sadly un-right. The suspense, the uncertainty, the waiting in the dark were hard to bear. It was little wonder that in the middle of the following week her father noticed that she had grown pale and listless. Deep down in his mind he connected it somehow with “that damned fellow” but he took care not to betray his thought to his daughter in any way. His present wish was that even the existence of the fellow should fall out of the memory of his family. As for himself he never let a grievance fall out of his memory; there had to be a day of reckoning for all concerned in such.

He quietly made preparations for their northern tour, and when all was ready told Joy who joined with alacrity in the move. London was now growing hateful to her.

In the meantime Athlyne, living either in his castle of Ceann-da-Shail—which he had long looked on as his home—as a centre, was flying about in his new motor, learning each day fresh mysteries of driving. The speeds of the motor are so much above those of other vehicles that a driver, howsoever experienced he may be in other ways, seems here to be dealing with a new force. The perspective changes so fast as the machine eats up the space that the mind requires to be practised afresh in judging distances and curves. It had been a bitter regret to him that he had to keep out of London just when Joy had come to it. His mind was always running on what a delight it would be to be with her when all the interesting things came before her; to note the sudden flushes of delight, to see the quick lifting of the beautiful eyes, to look into their mysterious, bewildering depths. At first when such ideas took him whilst driving, he nearly ran into danger. Unconsciously his hands would turn the wheel for speed, and in his eagerness he would make such swerves and jumps that undesirable things almost happened. However, after a few such experiences his nerves learned their own business. It is part of the equipment of a chauffeur to be able to abstract and control his driving senses from all other considerations; and such dual action of the mind requires habit and experience for its realisation. The constant watchfulness and anxiety had at least this beneficent use: that for a part of the day at all events his mind was kept from brooding over his personal trouble.

The arrival of Colonel Ogilvie's letter, sent on to him from London, made in a way a new trouble for him; for whilst he was delighted to get so friendly an overture it was he saw but another difficulty ahead of him. He must either reply in his false name, which was now hateful to him; or he must leave the letter, for the present, unanswered. This latter alternative would be dangerous with a man so sensitive and so punctilious; but, all told, it was the lesser evil. He had had opportunity to make up his mind on the subject before the letter came, for Aunt Judy had said in her last letter that Colonel Ogilvie had spoken about writing to him before they should arrive in London. Still it was a sore trial to him to be so discourteous, with the added chagrin that it might—probably would—stand in his way with the one man in the world whom he wished to propitiate.

As he did not know anything about the history of Colonel Ogilvie's family he went to the peerage books and made lists of the bearers of that name in its different spellings; and then as he decided to go to many of the places named, he made runs into Perthshire and Forfar. He came to the conclusion that he must have misunderstood Colonel Ogilvie in alluding to the "Border Counties." He laid up, however, a good deal of local information which might be pleasing to his prospective father-in-law.

One morning he had a letter which quite fluttered him. It was from Aunt Judy telling him that Colonel Ogilvie had announced his intention of starting on the then coming Thursday for the north, and that he had given as the direction of his letters till further notice the “Inn of Greeting,” Ambleside. The unqualified pleasure which he received from this news was neutralised by the postscript:

“By the way—this of course in your private ear, now and hereafter—Colonel Ogilvie is vastly disappointed that you have not been to see him in London, and that you have not even replied to his letter. Surely there must be some mistake about this. I sincerely hope so, for he looks on any breach of courtesy, or any defect in it, as an unpardonable sin. I know from the fact of his mentioning it to his womenkind that he has taken it to heart. Do, do my dear friend, who have done so much for us and whose friendship we wish to hold, repair this without delay. He is an old man and may possibly expect more from a younger man than from one of his own standing. I am sure that if there has been any omission there is on your part a good reason for it. But do not lose any time. If you wish to please us *all*—and I am sure you do—you would do well to go up to Ambleside—if you have not seen him already—and call on him there. And do like a dear man drop me a line at once to say you have received this and telling me what you intend to do.”

He sat for a while quite still, putting his thoughts in order. It was now Monday so that Colonel Ogilvie would have been already some days at Ambleside. He took it for granted that Joy was with him, but he could not help a qualm of doubt about even that. Aunt Judy had not mentioned her in the matter. The only possible allusion was in the underlining of the word “all.” Otherwise the letter was too direct and too serious for any cryptic meaning.

He came to the conclusion that his best plan would be to go at once to some place on Windermere, and from there go quietly to Ambleside and find out for himself how things lay. The best place for him to stay at would, for his purposes, be Bowness. There he would leave his car with the chauffeur and drive in a carriage to Ambleside. When there he would contrive to meet if possible Joy alone. He would surely be able to form from her attitude some opinion of her disposition towards him. If he were satisfied as to this he would at once go to her father, tell him the whole story, and place himself in his hands.

But then he thought that if he were so near, his name might become known to Colonel Ogilvie; that infernal alias seemed to be always standing in his way! He was so obsessed by the subject that at times he quite overlooked the fact that neither the Colonel nor any of his family knew anything whatever of the matter. It took him an

hour's hard thought before this idea presented itself to him. It took a weight off his mind. If by any chance Colonel Ogilvie should hear that an individual called Lord Athlyne was in the neighbourhood it would mean nothing to him. Nothing except the proximity of one more of that "bloated aristocracy," which one class of Americans run down—and another run after.

He was then up in Ross. As he did not wish to "rush" matters he decided to start next day. When that time came he had fully made up his plan of action. As the Ogilvies were at Ambleside he would go to Bowness. As there was a service of public coaches he could go between the places mentioned—without even the isolation of a carriage for his sole use. He would go quietly to the Inn of Greeting and learn what he could about their movements. The rest must depend on circumstances. But there must be no hurry; the matter was too serious now and the issue too important to take any risk. But when he should have seen Joy and knew, or believed, or understood ... Then he would lose not a moment in seeing her father. But he might not get a chance of seeing him alone and under circumstances favourable to his purpose. He must be ready. All at once an idea struck him ...

All these weeks Athlyne had now and again had a vague feeling of uneasiness which he could not understand: a sort of feeling that he would some time wake and wonder what he had been fretting and fuming about. Why could he not have written to Colonel Ogilvie at any time? Even before he had left New York, or whilst he had been on board ship, or whilst the American family had been in Italy, or even when the Colonel had been in London? Why not now? After all, there was nothing in any way wrong; nothing to be ashamed of. He was of good social position; at least as good as Joy's father was. He was himself rich and wanted no fortune with his wife. He had won certain honours—a man to whose name had been suffixed V.C. and D.S.O. must be considered personally adequate for ordinary purposes. And so on. Vanity and self-interest, in addition to the working of the higher qualities, supplied many good reasons.

And yet! ... He was always being brought up against one of two things: Colonel Ogilvie's peculiar views and character, or his own position towards him with regard to the alias. He could always find in either of these something which might cause pain or trouble to Joy. Moreover there was another matter which was a powerful factor in his conclusions, although it was one which he did not analyse or even realise. It was one that worked unconsciously; a disposition rather than an activity; a tendency rather than a thought. Lord Athlyne was Scotch and Irish; a Celt of Celts on his mother's side. He had all that underlying desire of the unknown which creates sentiment, and which is so pronounced a part of the Celtic character. This it is whence comes that

clinging to the place of birth which has made the peasantry of the Green Isle for seven hundred years fight all opposing forces, from hunger to bayonets, to hold possession of their own. This it is which animated a race, century after century, to suffer and endure from their Conquerors of a more prosaic race all sorts of pain and want, and for reasons not understandable by others. Those who have lived amongst those Celts of the outlying fringes, amongst whom racial tendencies remain unaltered by changing circumstances, and by whom traditions are preserved not by historical purpose but by the exercise of faith, know that there is a Something which has a name but no external bounds or limitations, no quick principle, no settled purpose. Something which to an alien can only be described by negatives; if any idea can at all be arrived at by such—any idea however rudimentary, phantasmal or vague—it can only be acquired at all by a process of exclusions. The name is “The Gloom”; the rest is a birthright. Those who can understand it need no telling or explaining; others can no more understand it than those born without eyes can see. It is a quality opposed to no other; it can exist with any. It can co-exist with fighting, with song, with commerce. It makes no change in other powers or qualities of the children of Adam. Those who possess it can be good or bad, clever or silly, heroic or mean. It can add force to imagination, understand nature, give quiet delight or spiritual pain. And the bulk of those who have it do not think of it or even know it: or if they do, hardly ever speak of it.

Athlyne had his full share of it. Being young and strong and of a class in life which seldom lacks amusement he had not been given to self-analysis. But all the same, though he did not think of it, the force was there. In his present emotional crisis it brought the lover in him up to the Celtic ideal. An ideal so strangely saturated with love that his whole being, his aims and ambitions, his hopes and fears, his pleasures and pains yielded place to it and for the time became merged in it. To him the whole world seemed to revolve round Joy as a pivotal point. Nothing could be of any use or interest which did not have touch of her or lead to her. So, he wanted to know beyond the mere measure of intellectual belief if Joy loved him or was on the way to doing so. When he was satisfied as to this he would be free to act; but not before.

On the journey he had allowed the chauffeur to drive, as he wanted to think over the whole matter without fear of interruption. He had sat in the tonneau and made from time to time notes in his pocket-book. He had now made up his mind that he would write a letter to Colonel Ogilvie telling him the whole circumstances. This he would keep in his pocket so that at the first moment when he was satisfied as to Joy's views he could post it, in case he could not have the opportunity of a personal explanation. After dinner the second night of the journey and then in his bedroom he sat up writing the letter and then copying it out on his own note paper of which he had for the

purpose brought a supply with him. When it was completed it left nothing that he could think of open to doubt. When he had got this off his mind sleep came to him.

Next day he took the wheel himself; and that day when there was fitting opportunity the car hummed along merrily at top speed. Before sunset they arrived at Bowness. There he left the car in charge of the chauffeur, on whom he again impressed the necessity for absolute silence. The man was naturally discreet, and he saw that he was in a good situation. Athlyne was satisfied on leaving him that his orders would be thoroughly carried out.

In the forenoon of the next day he took the steamer which plies along the Lake, and in due course landed at Ambleside. His heart beat quickly now and his eyes searched keenly all around him as he moved. He would not miss a chance of seeing Joy.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BEAUTIFUL TWILIGHT

The first couple of days at Ambleside were a delight to Joy. In the change from the roar and ceaseless whirl of London was such a sense of peace that it influenced even the pain of her heart-hunger. Here in this lovely place, where despite the life and movement of the little town nature seemed to reign, was something to calm nerves overstrung with waiting and apprehension. It was a relief to her at first, a pleasure later, to walk about the pleasant roads with her father; to take long drives beneath shady trees or up on the hillside where the lake lay below like a panorama; to sit on the steamer's deck and drift along the beautiful lake.

Her father was now and again impatient, not with her but because of the non-arrival of the motor which he had ordered in London. It had not been quite ready when they left and so it was arranged that it should follow them. He wanted to have it in possession so that they could fly all over the region; the American in him was clamorous for movement, for speed and progress! He kept up an endless telegraphing with the motor people in London, and when at last they wired that the car was nearly ready he got a map and traced out the route. Each day he marked out a space that he thought it ought to have covered, crediting it for every hour of daylight with top speed. After all, no matter what our ages may be, we are but children and the new toy but renews the old want and the old impatience; bringing in turn the old disillusionment and the old empty-hearted discontent. And the new toy may be of any shape: even that of a motor-car—or a beating human heart.

Partly out of affection for her father and so from sympathy with him, and partly as a relief to herself, Joy looked eagerly for the coming of the car. She used to go with him

to the post office when he was sending his telegrams. Indeed she never left him; and be sure he was glad of her companionship. Now and again would come over her an overwhelming wave of disappointment—grief—regret—she knew not what—when she thought of the friendship so romantically begun but failing so soon. The letters from Aunt Judy used to worry and even humiliate her. For Judy could not understand why there was no meeting; and her questions, made altogether for the girl's happiness but made in the helplessness of complete ignorance, gave her niece new concern. She had to give reasons, invent excuses. This in itself, for she was defending the man, only added fuel to her own passion. Joy's love was ripening very fast; all her nature was yielding to it. Each day seemed to make her a trifle thinner. Her eyes seemed to grow bigger and at times to glow like lamps. Whenever she could, she kept looking out on the road by which He might come. Walking or driving or in the hotel it was all the same. In the sitting-room her seat was near the window, her place at table where she could command a view. All this added to her beauty and so her father took no concern from it. He thought she was looking well; and as she was hearty and always, whilst with him, in good spirits and vivacious and even eager in her movements, he was more than satisfied.

One morning as she was sitting alone close to the window, presumably reading for she had a book in her lap, she caught sight with the tail of her eye of a figure that she knew. There was no mistaking on her part that tall, upright man with the springy step; the image was too deeply burned into her heart for that. For a fraction of a second her heart stood still; and then the wave of feeling went over her. Instinctively she drew back and kept her head low so that only her eyes were over the line of the window sill. She did not wish to be recognised—all at once. With the realisation of her woman's wishes came all the instinctive exercise of her woman's wiles. He was walking so slowly that she had time to observe him fully, to feast her eyes on him. He was looking up at the hotel, not eagerly she thought, but expectantly. This, though it did not chill her, somehow put her on guard. She slipped behind the window curtain and peeped cautiously. As he came closer to the hotel he went still more slowly. He did not come to the door as she expected, but moved along the street.

This all puzzled her; puzzled her very much. She knew that Judy had written to him of their coming to London, she had seen his reply to her letter; and Judy with her usual thoughtful kindness had mentioned—as though by chance, for she was the very soul of kindly discretion—that when she knew what locality and hotel had been fixed on for the visit to the Lakes she would tell him. It was evident, that he knew they were there and in the hotel; why, then, did he not come to see them. How she would have hurried, she thought, had she been the man and loved as she did! She had no

doubting whatever of his good faith. "Perfect love casteth out fear." And doubt is but fear in a timid form. She accepted in simple good faith that he had some purpose or reason of his own. Her manifest duty to him, therefore, was not to let any wish or act of hers clash with it. So she set herself to think it all out, feeling in reality far happier than she had done for many weeks. It was not merely that she had, after long waiting, seen the man; but she was now able to do something for him—if indeed it was only the curbing of her own curiosity, her own desires.

She rose quietly and went to her bed-room which was at another side of the house—on the side towards which He had passed. Her father was writing letters and would not want her; he had said at breakfast that he would not be able to go out for an hour or two. In her room she went cautiously to her window and, again hiding behind the curtains, glanced into the street. She felt quite sad when she only saw his back as he walked slowly along. Every now and again he would stop and look round him as though admiring the place and the views as the openings between the houses allowed him to see the surrounding country. Once or twice she could see him look out under his eyebrows as though watching the hotel without appearing to do so. Presently he turned the corner of the next street to the left, moving as though he wished to go all round the hotel.

She sat down and thought, her heart beating hard. Her face was covered with both her hands. Forehead and cheeks and neck were deeply flushed; and when she took away her hands her eyes were bright and seemed to glow. She seemed filled with happiness, but all the same looked impossibly demure; as is woman's nature, playing to convention even when alone.

Before she left her room she had changed her clothes, putting on after several experiments the frock which she thought the most becoming. She did not send for her maid, but did everything for herself; even to hanging up the discarded frocks. Then she went back to the sitting room and took as before her seat at the window, keeping however a little more in the background. She wanted to see rather than to be seen. With her eyes seemingly on her book, but in reality sweeping under her lashes the approaches to the hotel like searchlights, she sat quite quietly for some time. At length the eyes suddenly fell for an instant under an uncontrollable wave of diffidence; she had seen Him pass into the garden opposite to the hotel and go secretly behind some lilac bushes opposite the doorway. But after that one droop of the eyes, there was scarce even the flicker of an eyelid; she did not want to lose a single glimpse of him.

Sitting by the window, where he could see her, for a full hour until her father appeared, she thought over the new phase of the matter. If she had ever had any real doubt as to whether Mr. Richard Hardy loved her it was all resolved now. For certain he loved her—and as much, she hoped, as she loved him! He had sought her out at Ambleside; for even in her own secret mind she never went through the pretence of trying to persuade herself that it may have been some one else that he was looking for.

But why was he so secret? Why did he not come at once into the hotel and ask to see her father. He had been invited to come; he had been made a welcome guest at the Holland. He knew their movements; he had written to Judy. But why did he keep so aloof? If he wanted to avoid them altogether he had only to keep away. Why then did he keep coming round the house and looking at it secretly? She was absolutely at a standstill every time her thinking led her to this *impasse*. But, all the same, she never questioned or doubted the man. In her own mind she was sure that he had some good reason for all he did; and it was her duty not to thwart but to help him.

She had already accepted the position of a true wife, a true lover: The man's will was law!

Then her thoughts turned as to how best she could help him. Here all her brains as well as all the instincts of her womanhood came into play; and this is a strong combination in a man's service. Her arguments ran:

As he evidently wishes his presence to be unknown she must not seem to know of it.

As he evidently wanted to know something about her she would take care that he knew what he wished, so far as she could know or effect it.

As (perhaps) he wished to see her (from afar, or at all events without proclaiming himself) she would take care that he would have plenty of opportunities.

But as he did not want Daddy to see him—at present (this last qualification she insisted on to herself) she would have to be careful that her father did not notice his presence. This she felt would be difficult, and might be dangerous; she feared that if the two men should meet just at present (another qualification equally insisted on) her father might make some quarrel or trouble.

As Daddy might make trouble this way, she must keep very close to him. She might thus be able to smooth matters, or do *something* if any occasion came.

And she must be careful that he did not notice that she saw him. This argument came straight out of her sex-artfulness. Every instinct of her being told her that such would be the most effective way of bringing the man to her. And Oh! but she did long to see

him, close to her where they could see each other clearly. “Look at me!” seemed to throb through her every nerve, and make a clang of great music in her brain.

When presently Colonel Ogilvie, having finished his letters, asked her what she would like to do that morning she said she would like to go for a drive. She knew that there would be more security in the isolation of a carriage than when walking, where a chance meeting might occur at any moment.

When Athlyne, who was watching the hotel from the garden where the shrubs gave him cover, saw the landau at the door he thought he would wait and see if by any chance it might be for the Ogilvies’ use. His hopes were justified when he saw Joy follow her father from the doorway. She looked radiantly beautiful; so beautiful that all his love and passion surged up in him till he felt almost suffocated. He had quite a good view of her, for she stood for a minute or two in front of the horses giving them lumps of sugar and stroking their noses. He heard the voices of both father and daughter. Colonel Ogilvie’s was strong and resonant; Joy’s was sweet and clear. Moreover, she spoke on purpose a little more loudly than usual; she knew that He was listening and would like to hear her voice.

“Tell him where you would like to go, little girl.”

“Anywhere you think best, coachman; provided we get a good view. We had better be back here in about an hour. Then, Daddy, we shall keep quiet after lunch—if that will suit you, dear. After tea we can go out again and have a long drive and come back in the lovely English twilight. Of course if you would like to, Daddy. I must say there is one institution that I wish we had in America.”

“And what is that daughter?”

“The twilight! Since I have seen it, our own night seems very cruel! It shuts down too fast. For my own part if ever I fall in love——” here the words became indistinct; she was entering the carriage.

She had chosen her words on purpose. She wished to let Him know the plans for the day. She knew well that at the end of the hour he would be waiting, hidden in the garden, to see their return. Thus he would see her again, and she by going quickly to the window would perhaps see him again. She had spoken of not going out again till after tea, because she did not wish to keep him all day at his post; she knew that this would happen if he were in ignorance of her movements. He, poor fellow! would have to get lunch. ... She was exercising for him already the solicitude of a wife for a husband. As to the remarks about twilight, that had a double origin. Firstly it was quite true; she had long had it in her mind. Secondly it was a sort of *ballon d’essai*; it might

point or lead somewhere. Where that might be she knew not; but she had a vague hopeful feeling that there was an answer—somewhere.

As to the remark about ever loving. Well! she could not have explained that herself. All she knew was that she had a sudden desire to mention the word. ...

Athlyne profited by the lesson; but his acts were not quite what Joy had anticipated. She, thinking from the feminine standpoint, had taken it that he would remain at his post until the return and then avail himself of the longer period for rest and food. But Athlyne was a soldier and had as such long ago learned the maxim that in route marching the camp should be set beyond the bridge. Moreover in the strenuous life of the Boer war he had superadded the wisdom of taking his meal at the first opportunity. As soon as the carriage had disappeared from view he went straight into the hotel and ordered his lunch in the Coffee-room. He was really hungry, and the lamb and salad were excellent; but had he not been hungry, and had the food been poor, he would have enjoyed it without knowing its inferiority. Everything was good to him this morning; he had seen Joy!

He was out in the garden in good time. Fortunately so, from his point of view. For Joy, believing that he would be still waiting, kept the coachman up to time. It might well have been that they had met in the hall.

The drive had increased the girl's loveliness, if such were possible. Her eyes were bright, there was fine colour in her cheeks, and her voice and manner were full of vivacity. The bright sun and the sweet, strong air had braced her; and perhaps some inward emotion had exercised the same effect. One quick glance under her eyelashes as they drove towards the hotel had shewn her the outline of a tall figure close to the lilacs in the garden. As her father helped her from the carriage with all his habitual gallantry of manner she said in a clear voice—Athlyne across the street heard every word:

“That drive was exquisite! Wasn't it Daddy? Thank you so much for it! The lights and shadows on the hills were simply divine. It would be nice to go again to-morrow in something of the same direction. We might go about the same hour, if it would suit you, and see the same effects again!”

When they had gone in Athlyne waited a little while in the garden. He sat in the sunshine on a garden seat placed in the centre of the grass plot. He was not afraid of being seen at present, and as he knew that Joy and her father were in the house he did not even try to look for them. Had he chosen a position for the purpose of giving Joy pleasure he could not have done better than this. From behind her window curtain she

could see him plainly. To her he made a beautiful picture, of which the natural setting was complete: the background of sweet pale lilac, the dropping gold of the laburnum and the full red of scarlet hawthorn; his feet in the uncut grass starred with daisies. She had a long, long view of him, watching every movement and expression with eager eyes. One thing he did which she could not understand. He took from his breast pocket an envelope; this he opened and took from it a letter. Instead of reading it, however, he sat for a long time with it in his hand. Then with a quick movement he put it back in the envelope, moistened the flap with his lips and closed it. Joy's idea had been that it might have been Judy's letter which he had intended to re-read; but this could not be. For an instant a spasm of pain had gripped her heart as the thought came that it might have been from some other woman. But that idea she swept aside imperiously. Now she knew that it was some letter of his own, and the questioning of her brain began to assail her heart:

Whom could he be writing to? What could he be writing about? Why did he have a finished letter in his pocket, not even sealed up?

If she had known the truth she would have sat quiet, not with perturbation but in a silent ecstasy. Athlyne had made up his mind that if occasion did not serve for his seeing Joy alone he would send the letter to Colonel Ogilvie and risk being refused. In such case he would have to take another course, and try to obtain her consent in spite of her father's wishes. He did not, however, intend to send the letter yet. His first hope was too sweet to abandon without good cause. His closing the letter was but an impulsive expression of his feeling.

Suddenly he stood up and moved out of the garden. This did not puzzle her, but awoke all her curiosity. She had a wild desire to see where he was going; but as she could not follow him she made up her mind to present patience. She watched from her window till he had passed out of sight. She was glad that she was concealed behind the curtain when she saw him at the furthest point of sight turn and give a long look back at the hotel. Then she went to her room to get ready for lunch.

Athlyne felt that he must do something to let off steam. Movement of some kind was necessary in his present frame of mind. For his pleasure was not unmixed. He had seen Joy, and she was looking more radiantly beautiful than ever. But she had said one thing that sent a pang through him: "if I ever fall in love." There could hardly be any doubt of her sincerity; she was talking to her father quite alone and unconscious that he of all men was within earshot. "If I ever fall in love," that meant that she had not yet done so. It would be wise to wait before sending the letter so that he might see if that happy time had come or had even begun to peep above the horizon. Unconsciously he

took from his pocket the letter and his pocket-book, put the former into the latter and returned it to its place.

Athlyne was no fool; but he was only a man, and as such took for gospel every word spoken by the woman he loved. Had Joy been present and known his difficulty, and had cared to express herself then as she would have done later, she would have smiled at him as she said:

“Why you dear old goose how could I fall in love with you when I had done that already!”

Had Aunt Judy been commenting on the comment she would have said in her genial cynicism:

“A woman—or a man either—can only fall in love once in a life time; with the same person!”

Athlyne telephoned his chauffeur to whom he had already sent a wire to be prepared, and in a time to be computed by minutes met him outside Ambleside. There he took the wheel himself, telling the man to meet him a little before five o'clock. He felt that he must be alone. He went slowly so long as he was near the town; but when he found himself on a clear road, over which he could see for a long way ahead, the index went round to “speed” and as the car swept over the ground its rush kept pace with his own thoughts.

He went about a hundred miles before he regained anything like calm. Trying afterwards to recall the sequence of his thoughts he never could arrive at any sort of conclusion regarding them.

The only thing definite in his mind was that he wanted to see Joy again, and soon. He knew they would be starting out after tea time which meant, he knew, something after five o'clock; and not for a world of chrysolite would he miss being there. Outside Ambleside he met the chauffeur whom he sent back to Bowness; he did not want his car to be too much *en evidence* at Ambleside at present. He had a wash and a cup of tea at another hotel; and at five strolled back to his nook in the garden.

By this time Joy had made up her mind that he *might* come back that evening though—with still her protective instinct, partly for herself but more for him—she had quite made up her mind that even if he should not come she would not be disappointed. He was not to be blamed in any way, now or hereafter. How could he be? It would not be fair. A few minutes before five she took her place at the window, but sitting so far back this time that she could not be seen from without. She herself could see out, but only

by raising her head high. This she did now and again, but very cautiously. She felt a sort of diffidence, a certain measure of shamefacedness lest he should see her again and suspect anything. We are very sensitive as to the discovery of truth by others when we are ourselves trying to deceive ourselves! The few minutes passed slowly, very slowly. Then when once more she looked out a great thrill of joy shook her. He *had* come. If doubt there had been, it could no longer exist. Her heart beat, her face flushed, she trembled with a sort of ecstasy; the waves of high passion swept her. She was half inclined to stand boldly in the window and let him see her; to let him see that she saw him; to run out to him and fall into his arms. There is no boldness that love will not commit when it is true! She felt this, though not consciously. There was no need for consciousness, for thought, for argument. She knew!

It was perhaps just as well that her father came into the room. He brought a sense of sanity with him; she felt that consciously enough. Her mere faint sigh of regret was sufficient proof.

Joy did not walk down the staircase; she floated, as though matter had ceased to exist and the soul was free. She stood for a minute on the step looking out at the view; but presently kept changing her pose so that her face might be seen with both profiles, as well as the full face. If He had come there to see her He should not be disappointed—if she could help it.

That drive was a dream, an ecstasy. At first there was a miserable sense that each turn of the wheels took them farther apart; but shortly this was lost in the overwhelming sense of gladness. She could have sung—danced—shouted. She wanted some physical expression of her feeling. Then the excitement settled down to a quiet tingling happiness, a sense of peace which was ineffable and complete.

“... if that all of animated nature

Be but organic harps diversely framed

That tremble into thought as o'er them sweeps

Plastic and vast one intellectual breeze

At once the soul of each and God of all.”

So sung, a century before, a poet of that sweet cult of the school centred in the very area in which she moved; and if his thoughts were true there was a true act of worship that sunny afternoon on the rising hills beyond the lakehead. For happiness is not merely to be at rest. It is to be with God, to carry out to the full His wish that His children should appreciate and enjoy the powers and good things given them by His

hands. And when that happiness is based on love—and there is no true happiness on aught that is not high—the love itself is of the soul and quivers with the flapping of its wings. Then indeed can we realize that marvellous promise of the words of the Master:

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” Wordsworth and those who held with him saw God and worshipped Him in those myriad beauties of the lake they loved; and as the beauty and its immortal truth soothed and purified their souls, so was the spirit of the love-sick girl cleansed of all dross. How at such a time, when the soul swam free in grateful worship, was there place for anything that was not clean? Her father thought, as he looked at her and heard the ring of her voice, that he had never seen her look better or happier. She was full of spirits, gay, sweet, tender; and yet there was over her such a grace of gentle gravity that the old man felt himself saying to himself:

“My little girl is a woman!”

That mellow afternoon was to her lovely; the trees and shrubs, the flowers, the fields. The singing of the birds was ethereal music; the lights and shadows were the personal manifestation of Nature’s God. Her heart, her sympathy, her nature were at full tide; all overflowing and in their plenitude full.

The long summer afternoon faded into the softness of twilight during the homeward journey. Perhaps it was the yielding to its mysterious influence which made Joy so still; perhaps it was that she was drawing nearer to the man whom she adored. Her father neither knew nor took note of it. He saw that his little girl was silent in an ecstasy of happiness in that soft twilight of which she had spoken so tenderly; and he was content. He too sat silent, yielding himself to the influence of the beauty around him.

When they reached the hotel Joy seemed to wake from a dream; but she lost none of her present placidity, none of her content. One form of happiness had given way to another, that was all. As she stood on the steps, waiting whilst her father was giving the coachman his instructions for the morrow, she tried to peer into the lilac bushes in the garden. She had a sort of intuition—nay more than an intuition, an actual certainty—that He was again behind them. And once more she so stood and moved that he might see her face as he would. When her father turned to come in she took his arm and pointed to the sky:

“Oh look, Daddy, the beautiful twilight! Is it not exquisite!” Then impulsively she put her hand to her lips and threw a kiss to it—over the square by way of the lilacs. Her voice was languishing music as she said softly, but clearly enough to be heard in the garden:

“Good night; Good night beloved! Good night! Good night!”

And Athlyne peering through the bushes heard the words with a beating of his heart which made his temples throb. His only wish at the moment was that it might have been that the words had been addressed to him.

That evening before going to dress for dinner Joy went to the window and pulled aside the blind so that she stood outside it. The dusk was now thick; the day had gone, but the moon had not yet risen. It was impossible to see much; only the outline of the trees, and out on the grass the shadowy form of a man seated. There was one faint red spark of brightness, face high, such as might be the tip of a cigar.

When she came back into the room her father raised his face from his book:

“Why how pale you are little girl. I am afraid that long drive must have tired you. You were quite rosy when we arrived home. You had better sleep it out in the morning. If mother sees you pale she will blame me, you know. And Judy—well Judy will be Judy in her own way.”

CHAPTER XII.

ECHO OF A TRAGEDY

Athlyne had one other day almost similar to the last. This time he came to Ambleside a little earlier; fortunately so, for Joy had got up early. When he came into the square she was standing in the window looking out. Not in his direction; did a woman ever do such a stupid thing when at the first glance she had caught sight of the man far off. No, this time she appeared to be eagerly watching two tiny children toddling along the street hand in hand. He had time for a good look at her before she changed her position. This was only when the children had disappeared—and he had gained the shelter of the lilacs.

Love is a blindness—in certain ways. It never once occurred to Athlyne that Joy might have seen him, might have even known of his being at Ambleside or in its neighbourhood. Any independent onlooker or any one not bound by the simplicity and unquestioning faith of ardent love would at least have doubted whether there was not some possible intention in Joy’s movements. His faith however saved him from pain, that one pain from which true love can suffer however baseless it may be—doubt. Early morning took him to Ambleside; he only went back to Bowness when those windows of the hotel which he knew were darkened for the night.

The second day of waiting and watching was just like the first, with only the addition that the hearts of both the young people were more clamant, each to each; and that

the rising passion of each was harder to control. The same routine of going out and returning was observed by the Ogilvies, and each of the lovers had tumultuous moments when the other was within view. More than once Athlyne was tempted to put his letter in the post or to leave it at the hotel; but each time Joy's chance phrase: "If I ever fall in love" came back to him as a grim warning. He knew that if he once declared himself to Colonel Ogilvie the whole truth must come out, and then his title and fortune might be extraneous inducements to the girl. Whenever he came to this point in his reasoning he thrust the letter deeper into his pocket and his lips shut tight. He would win Joy on his mere manhood and his manhood's love—if at all!

By the post next morning Colonel Ogilvie and Joy both got letters from Italy. That of the former was from his wife who announced that they were just starting for London where they wished to remain for a few days in order to do some shopping. When this was done she would wire him and he could run up to London and bring them down with him. This pleased him, for he was certain that by then he would have his automobile. He felt in a way that his pride was at stake on this point. He had told his women folk that the car would be ready, and he wished to justify. He wired off at once to the agents, in even a sterner spirit than usual, as to the cause of delay. For excuses had come in a most exasperating way. Long after it had been reported that the car had started and had even proceeded a considerable distance on the way he was told that there had been an error and that by some strange mistake the progress made by a car long previously ordered by another customer had been reported; but that Colonel Ogilvie's esteemed order was well in hand and that delivery of the car was daily—hourly—expected; and that at once on its receipt by the writer it would be forwarded to Ambleside either with a trusty chauffeur or by train as the purchaser might wish. Colonel Ogilvie fumed but was powerless. He wanted the car and at once; so it was useless for him to cancel the contract. He could only wait and hope; and console himself with such attenuated expressions of disapproval as were permissible in the ethics of the telegraphic system.

Joy's letter was from Judy. It was in her usual bright style and full of affection, sympathy and understanding, as was customary in her letters to her niece. Judy had of late been much disturbed in her mind about the future, and as she feared Joy might be taking to heart the same matters as she did and in the same way, she tried to help the other. She knew from Colonel Ogilvie's letters to his wife which they talked over together that he was seriously hurt and pained by the neglect of Mr. Hardy. Indeed in his last letter he had declared that in spite of the high opinion he had formed of him from his brave and ready action he never wished to see his face again. To Judy this meant much, the most that could be of possible ill; Joy's happiness might be at stake.

The aunt, steeped through and through with knowledge of the world and character—a knowledge gained from her own heart, its hopes and pains and from bitter experience of the woes of others—knew that her niece would suffer deeply in case of any rupture between her father and the man who had saved her life. It was not merely from imaginative sympathy that she derived her belief. She had had many and favourable opportunities of studying Joy closely, and she had in her own mind no doubt whatever that the girl's affections were given beyond recall to the handsome stranger. So in her letter she tried to guard her from the pain of present imaginings and yet to prepare her subtly for the possibility of disappointment in the future. Her letter in its important part ran:

“Your father is undoubtedly very angry with Mr. Hardy; and though I believe that his anger may have a slight basis it is altogether excessive. We do not know yet what Mr. Hardy's limitations of freedom may be. After all, darling, we do not know anything as yet of his circumstances or his surroundings. He may have a thousand calls on his time which we neither know nor understand. For all we can tell he may have a wife already—though this I do not believe or accept for a moment. And you don't either, my dear! Of course this is all a joke. We *know* he is free as to marriage, though I don't believe his heart is—Eh! Puss! But seriously if you ever get a chance tell him to try to be very nice to your father. Old men are often more sensitive in some things than young ones, more sensitive than even we women are supposed to be. So when he does come to see you both—for he *will* come soon (if he hasn't come already)—don't keep him all to yourself, but contrive somehow that your father can have a little chat with him. You needn't go altogether away you know, my dear. Don't sit so far away that he can't see you nor you him (this is a whisper expressed in writing) and I dare say you will like to hear all they say to each other. But if he says a word about seeing your daddy alone for a moment, if he begins to look ill at ease or to get red and then pale and red again, or stammers and clears his throat do you just get up quietly and go out of the room without a word in the most natural way in the world, just as if you were doing some little household duty. I suppose I needn't tell you this; you know it just as well as I do, though I have known it by experience and you can not. You know how I know it darling though I never told you this part of it. Women are Cowards. We know it though we don't always say so, and we even disguise it from others now and then. But in such a time as I have mentioned we are *all* Cowards. We couldn't stay if we would. We *want* to get away and hide our heads just as we do when it thunders. But what an awful lot of *rot* I am talking. When Mr. Hardy and your father meet they will, I am sure, have plenty to talk about without either you or me being the subject of it. They are both sportsmen and fond of horses—and a lot of things. It is only if they don't meet that I

am afraid of. I am writing by the way to Mr. Hardy this post to know where he is at present and where he has been. I shall of course write you when I hear; or if there be anything important I shall wire. We are off to London and it is possible that whilst we are there we may have unexpected meetings with all sorts of friends and calls from them. I hope, darling, that by the time we reach Ambleside we shall find you *blooming*, full of happiness and health and freshness, the very embodiment of your name.”

The letter both disquieted Joy and soothed her. There were suggestions of fear, but there was also a consistent strain of hope. Judy would never have said such things if she did not believe them. Moreover she herself knew what Judy did not; her aunt hadn't peeped from behind window blinds at a tall figure behind lilac bushes or sitting in the darkness with only a fiery cigar tip to mark his presence. Poor Judy! The girl's sympathetic heart, made more sympathetic by her own burning love, ached when she thought of the older woman's lonely, barren life. She too had loved—and been loved; had hoped and feared, and waited. The very knowledge of how a woman would feel when the man was asking formally for parental sanction disclosed something of which the girl had never thought. She had always known Judy in such a motherly and elderly aspect that she had never realised the possibility of her having ever been in love; any more that she had given consideration to the love-making of her own mother. Now she was surprised to find that she too had been young, had loved, and had pleasures and heart-pains of her own. This set her thinking. The process of thought was silent, but its conclusion found outward expression; the girl understood now. The secret of her life—the true secret was unveiled at last:

“Poor Aunt Judy. Oh, poor Aunt Judy!”

Athlyne's letter reached him a day later, having been sent on from London. It was a fairly bulky one, with a good many sheets of foreign post, written hastily in a large bold hand.

“My Dear Friend:

I have been, and am, much concerned about you. I gather from his letters that Colonel Ogilvie has been much disappointed at not having heard from you. And I want, if you will allow me to take the liberty, to speak to you seriously about it. You will give me this privilege I know—if only for the fact that I am an old maid; for the same Powers that made me an old maid have made me an old woman, and such is entitled, I take it, to forbearance, if not to respect. You should—you really should be more considerate towards Colonel Ogilvie. He is an old man—much older than you perhaps think, for he bears himself as proudly as in his younger days. But the claim on you is not merely from his years; that claim must appeal to all. From you there is one more imperative

still, one which is personal and paramount: he is under so very deep an obligation to you. A matter which from another would pass unconsidered as an act of thoughtfulness must now, when it is due to you, seem to him like a studied affront. I put it this way because I know you are a man of noble nature, and that generosity is to such even a stronger urge than duty—if such a thing be possible. In certain matters he is sensitive beyond belief. Even to a degree marked in a place where men still hold that their lives rest behind every word and deed, every thought or neglect towards another. I have some hesitation in mentioning this lest you should think I am summoning Fear to the side of Duty. But you are above such a misunderstanding, I am sure. Oh my dear friend do think of some of the rest of us. You have saved the life of our darling Joy—the one creature in whom all our loves are centred. Naturally we all want to see you again—to make much of you—to show you in our own poor way how deeply we hold you in our hearts. But if Colonel Ogilvie thinks himself insulted—that is how he regards any neglect however trivial—he acts on that belief, and there is no possible holding him back. He looks on it as a sacred duty to avenge affront. You must not blame him for it. In your peaceful English life you have I think no parallel to the ungovernable waves of passion that rage in the hearts of Kentuckians when they consider their honour is touched. Ah! we poor women know it who have to suffer in silence and wait and wait, and wait; and when the worst is made known to us, to seal up the fountains of our grief and pretend that we too agree with the avenging of wrong. For it is our life to be silent in men's quarrels. We are not given a part—any part. We are not supposed to even look on. It is another world from ours, and we have to accept it so. Please God may you never know what it is to be in or on the fringe of a Feud. Well I know its dread, its horror! My own life that years ago was as bright and promising as any young life can be; when the Love that had dawned on my girlhood rose and beat with noonday heat on my young-womanhood made it seem as if heaven had come down to earth. And then the one moment of misunderstanding—the quick accusation—the quicker retort—and my poor heart lying crushed between the bodies of two men whom I loved each in his proper way... Think of what I say, if only on account of what I have suffered.

“Forgive me! But my anxiety lest any such blight should come across a young life that I love far far beyond my own is heavy on me. I have lost myself in sad thoughts of a bitter past... Indeed you must take it that my earnestness in this matter is shown in the lurid light of that past. I have been silent on it always. Never since the black cloud burst over me have I said a word to a soul—not to my sister—nor to Joy whom I adore and whose questioning to me of my ‘love affair’—as they still call it when they speak of it—is so sweet a tightening bond between us. I have only said to her: ‘and then he

died,' and my heart has seemed to stop beating. Be patient with me and don't blame me. You are a man and can be tolerant. Think not of me or any gloom of my life but only that makes me sadly, grimly, terribly in earnest when I see similar elements of tragedy drawing close to each other before my eyes. You may be inclined to laugh at me—though I know you will not—and to put down my thinking of possible great quarrels arising from such small causes as 'an old maid's' fears. But when I have known the awful effect of a mere passing word, misunderstood to such disastrous result, no wonder that I have fears. It is due to that very cause that my fears are those of an old maid. I suppose I need not ask you to be sure to keep all this locked in your own breast. It is my secret; I have shared it with you because I deem such necessary for the happiness of—of others. I have kept it so close that not even those nearest and dearest to me have even suspected it. The rowdiness of spirit—as it seems to me—which other friends call fun and brightness and high spirits and other such insulting terms—has been my domino as I have passed through the hollow hearted carnival of life. Judge then how earnest I am when I put it aside and raise my mask for you a stranger whom I have seen but twice; I who even then was but an accessory—a super on the little stage where we began to act our little—comedy or tragedy which is it to be?

“There! I have opened to you my memory, not my heart. That you have no use for. After such a letter as this I shall not pretend to go back to the Proprieties, the *Convenances*. If I am right in my surmise—you can guess what that is or why have you written to the old rowdy aunt instead... there is every reason why I should be frank. But remember that I hold—and have hitherto held—what I believe to be your secret as sacredly as I hope you will hold mine. And if I am right—and from my knowledge and insight won by past suffering I pray to God that I am—you have no time to lose to make matters right, and possibly to save the world one more sorrowful heart like my own. It is only a word that is wanted—a morning call—a visit of ceremony. Anything that will keep open the doors of friendship which you unlocked by your own bravery. We are going in a day or two to Ambleside. In the meantime we shall be in London at Brown's Hotel Albemarle Street where my sister, and incidentally myself, shall be glad to see you. ...

“Won't you let me have a line as soon as you can after you get this. I am torn with anxiety till I know what you intend to do about visiting Colonel Ogilvie. Again forgive me,

Your true friend,
Judy.

“P. S.—I shall not dare to read this over, lest when I had I should not have courage to send it. Accept it then with all its faults and be tolerant of them—and of me.”

Athlyne read the letter through without making a pause or even an internal comment. That is how a letter should be read; to follow the writer’s mind, not one’s own, and so take in the sequence of thoughts and the general atmosphere as well as the individual facts. As he read he felt deeply moved. There was in the letter that manifest sincerity which showed that it was straight from the heart. And heart speaks to heart, whatever may be the medium, if the purpose is sincere. It was a surprise to him to learn that Miss Judy’s high and volatile spirits rested on so sad a base. His appreciation of her worthiness came in his unconscious resolution that when he and Joy were married Aunt Judy should be an honoured guest in the house, and that they would try to lighten, with what sympathy and kindness they could, the dark shadows of her life.

He sat with the letter in his hand for some time. He was sitting in the window of the hotel at Bowness looking out on the lake. It was still early and the life of the day had hardly begun. At Bowness the life was that of the tourists and visitors and it would still be an hour or more before they began to move out on their objectives. He had very many various and whirling thoughts, but supreme amongst them was one: Time was flying. He must not delay, for every hour was more and more jeopardising his chance of winning the woman he loved. He realized to the full that his neglect of Colonel Ogilvie, for so it was being construed, was making—had made—a difficulty for him. Each day, perhaps each hour, was widening the breach; if he did not take care he might end with the door permanently closed against him. As he came to the conclusion of his reasoning he drew once more from his pocket the sealed letter to Colonel Ogilvie, and stood up. He fancied that his determination was made that he would see Colonel Ogilvie as soon as possible and broach the subject to him. As however he went towards the boat—for he was going to Ambleside by water—he postponed the intention of an immediate interview. He would wait this one day and see what would turn up. If nothing happened likely to further his wishes he would whilst at Ambleside the next morning put the letter in the post. Then he would hold himself ready for the interview with Joy’s father for which the letter asked.

At Ambleside he took his place behind the lilacs in the garden and kept watch on the window where Joy was wont to appear. A little before breakfast-time she appeared there for a brief space, and then moved back into the room. He waited with what patience he could till nearly eleven o’clock when the same carriage which they used drove up to the door; waiting became then an easier task. Presently Colonel Ogilvie came out and stood on the steps. Athlyne wondered; this was the first time that Joy had not been before him. Throwing his eyes around in vague wondering as to the

cause he saw Joy standing in the window dressed and pulling on her gloves. She was radiantly beautiful. Her colour was a little heightened and her lovely grey eyes shone like stars. Her gaze was fixed so that her eyes seemed to look straight before her but beyond him. The look made him quiver as though he felt it were directed at him, and his knees began to tremble with a mighty, vague longing. For quite a minute she stood there, till her eyes falling she caught sight of her father standing by the carriage below. She drew back quickly and almost immediately appeared at the hall-door, saying:

“I am so sorry, Daddy. I hope I did not keep you waiting too long!”

“Not a bit little girl. It is a pleasure to me to wait for you; to do anything for you, my dear. Whatever else is the use of being a father.”

“You dear! May we go to-day up the mountain road where we can look over the lake. I want you to have a nice glimpse of it again before you go.”

Here Athlyne’s heart sank for an instant. This was the first idea he had of any intention of moving, and it actually shook him. Joy had as usual a handful of sugar for the horses. She went to the off side horse first and gave him his share. Then when she stood at the head of the other, her face toward the lilacs, she turned to her father and said in a low, thrilling tone:

“Daddy, am I nice to-day? *Look at me!*” She stood still whilst the old man looked at her admiringly, proudly, fondly.

“You are peerless, little girl. Peerless! that’s it!” She was evidently pleased at the compliment, for her colour rose to a deep flush. Her grey eyes shone through it like two great grey suns. Whilst her father was speaking to the coachman she gave the other horse, now impatient, his share of the sugar and stood looking across the road. Athlyne could hardly contain himself. The few seconds, although flying so fast, were momentous. Past and present rushed together to the creation of a moment of ecstasy. The sound of the words swept him; the idea and all it rewoke and intensified, transfigured his very soul. And then he heard her say in a low, languorous voice which vibrated:

“Thank you Daddy for such a sweet compliment. I am glad I said ‘*Look at me!*’” As she spoke it seemed to Athlyne that her eyes fixed across the road sent their lightnings straight into his heart. And yet it did not even occur to him at the moment that the words could have been addressed to him.

During the drive Joy kept her father interested in all around them. He saw that she was elated and happy, and it made his heart glad to that receptive mood which is the

recrudescence of youth. In the girl's mind to-day several trains of thought, all of them parental of action, went on together. She did not analyze them; indeed she was hardly conscious of them. The mechanism of mind was working to a set purpose, but one which was temperamental rather than intentional—of sex and individual character rather than of a studied conclusion. For that morning was to her momentous. She knew it with all her instincts. Unconsciously she drew conclusions from facts without waiting to develop their logical sequence.

A telegram had arrived from Mrs. Ogilvie saying that she and Judy were now ready to leave London and, as her husband had said that he wished to escort them to Ambleside, they would be prepared on his coming to leave on the next morning or whatever later time he might fix. After a glance at the time-table he had wired back that he would go up on that night, and that they would all start on the following morning. Joy had offered to accompany him, but he would not have it: "No, little girl," he said. "Travel at night is all very well for men; but it takes it out of women. I want your mother to see the bright, red-cheeked girl that has been with me for the last week, and not a pale, worn-out draggled young woman with her eyes heavy with weariness. You stay here, my dear, and get plenty of air and sunshine. You will not be afraid to be here alone with your maid!" Joy smiled:

"Not a bit, Daddy! I shall walk and drive all day and perhaps go down the Lake in a boat. If I do the latter I shall take Eugenie with me and we shall lunch down at Newby Bridge. We shall be home here in good time to drive over and meet you all at the station at Windermere."

From that moment Joy hardly left her father out of her sight. Instinctively she knew that the chance of her life had come. She had a conviction—it was more than a mere idea or even a belief—that if she were alone whilst her father was up in London or on the way down, that figure which even now was hidden by the lilacs would abandon secretive ways and come out into the open where she could see him close, and hear the sound of his voice—that voice whose every note made music in her ears. It was the presence of her father which kept him hidden. It was imperative, both in accordance with his wishes as well as from her own apprehensions of what might happen if they should meet unexpectedly before she had time to warn him, that no mischance should prevent an early meeting, free from any suspicion between herself and Mr. Hardy. When Daddy was well on his way. ... Here she would close her eyes; definite thought was lost in a languorous ecstasy. The coming day would mean to her everything or. ...

The drive was a fairly long one and they did not get back till nearly one o'clock. Colonel Ogilvie had said to Joy:

"I shall have a good time to-day, have plenty of fresh air and be ready for sleep when I get into the train. As I shall arrive early in the morning I shall have time to express my opinions on their conduct to those automobile people. They won't expect my coming and be able to get out of the way. I fancy it will do me good to say what I feel; or at any rate enough to give them some indication of what I could say, and shall say if there is any further delay in the matter."

When they arrived Joy went at once into the hotel leaving her father to tell the coachman at what hour to be ready for the afternoon drive. She went straight to the window and, keeping as usual behind the curtain, looked over at the lilac bushes. She could see through the foliage that there was *some one* there, and that satisfied her. She would have liked to have instructed the driver herself so that she would have been sure that he knew; but on this occasion a wave of diffidence suddenly overwhelmed her. Times were coming when she would not be able to afford the luxury of such an emotion, so she grasped it whilst she could.

Colonel Ogilvie was to catch the train from Windermere at nine o'clock, so the second drive should come after lunch and not after tea; and when she was in her own room, Joy feared that He might miss them. When, however, before going downstairs she looked out of the window she saw that he was still at his post. Athlyne's campaigning experience had had its own psychology. Seeing that there was some change in the Ogilvie day he had arranged his own plans to meet it. Whilst they had been taking their morning drive he had provided himself with some sandwiches; he had determined not to leave his post until he knew more. Joy's words had all day rung in his ears, and he was now and again distracted with doubts. Was it possible that there had been any meaning or intention in her words more than was apparent? Was the spontaneity consequent on some deep feeling which evoked memory? Could he believe that she really. ... He would wait now before sending the letter, whatever came. In that he was adamant.

During the drive Joy was mainly silent. It was not the silence of thought; it was simply spiritual quiescence. She knew that the rest of the day was so laid out that it was unlikely it could be marred by an untoward accident. There was this in His persistent waiting that she had come to trust it. There was some intention, so manifest, though what it was was unknown to her, that it was hardly to be disturbed by any sudden exigency. She lived at the moment in a world of calm, a dream-world of infinite happiness. Now and again she woke to the presence of her father and then poured on

him in every way in which a young woman can all the treasures of her thought and affection. This made the old man so happy that he too was content to remain silent when she ceased to speak.

When they got back to the hotel, she spoke to the driver:

“You will be here at eight o’clock please, as you will have to drive Colonel Ogilvie to the station at Windermere in good time to catch the nine o’clock train. I shall not want you in the morning as I intend to take a walk; but you must be at Windermere to meet my father at five o’clock. If to-morrow afternoon there is any change in his plans he will wire the hotel people and they will let you know. Perhaps you had better call here on your way to Windermere as I may go over in the carriage. But if I am not here do not wait for me; I may possibly walk over. When you have left Colonel Ogilvie at Windermere to-night you will have to leave me back here. I am going to the depot with him.”

Then she went into the doorway, and hurried to the sitting-room where she looked out into the garden—where the lilacs grew.

CHAPTER XIII.

INSTINCTIVE PLANNING

Man’s unconscious action is a strange thing. Athlyne had just heard words which took from him a strain under which he had suffered for a whole week of waiting and watching; words which promised him the opportunity for which he had longed for many weeks. His nerves had been strung to tension so high that now it would seem only natural if the relief sent him into a sort of delirium. But he quietly lit a cigar, taking care that it was properly cut and properly lit, and smoked luxuriously as he moved across the garden and into the street. Joy from her window saw him go, and her admiration of his ease and self possession and magnificent self-reliance sent fresh thrills through her flesh.

When Athlyne went out of the garden he had evidently made up his mind, consciously or unconsciously, to some other point in connection with the motor for he visited such shops as were open and made some purchases—caps, veils, cloaks and such like gear suitable for the use of a tall young lady. These he took with him in a hired carriage to the hotel at Bowness, where he added them to certain others already sent from London. Then he told the chauffeur to give the car a careful overhauling so that it be in perfect order, and went for a stroll up the Lake.

Shortly he was in a mental and physical tumult; the period which had elapsed since he heard the news of Colonel Ogilvie’s coming departure had been but the prelude to

the storm. At first he could not think; he had no words, no sequence of ideas, not even vague intentions. He had only sensations; and these though they moved and concentrated every nerve in his body were without even physical purpose. He went like one in a dream. But in the background of his mind was a fact which stood out firm and solid like the profile of a mountain seen against the glow of a western sunset. Joy would be alone to-morrow; the opportunity he waited for was at last at hand! The recognition of this seemed to pull him together, to set all his faculties working simultaneously; and as each had a different method the tumult was in reducing them to unison—in achieving one resultant from all the varying forces. Gradually out of the chaos came the first clear intent: he must so master the whole subject that when the opportunity had come he should be able to avail himself of it to the full. From this he proceeded to weigh the various possibilities, till gradually he began to realise what vague purpose had been behind his wish to have his automobile in perfect working order. It did not even occur to him that with such machinery at his command he might try to carry her off, either without her consent or with it. All that he wanted in the first instance was to have fitting opportunity of discovering how Joy regarded him. The last twenty-four hours had opened to his mind such glorious possibilities that every word she had said, every look on her eloquent face (though such looks had manifestly not been intended for him) had a place in a chain which linked her heart to his. “Look at me!” “I am glad I asked you to look at me!” though spoken to her father seemed to have another significance. It was as though an eager thought had at last found expression. “Good night! Good night, beloved!” though ostensibly spoken to the twilight was breathed with such fervour, with such languishing eyes and with such soft pouting of scarlet lips that it seemed impossible that it should have other than a human objective. These thoughts swept the man into a glow of passion. He was young and strong and ardent, and he loved the woman with all his heart; with all his soul; with all the strength of human passion. It is a mistake to suppose—as some abstract thinkers seem to do always, and most people at some moment of purely spiritual exaltation—that the love of a man and a woman each for the other is, even at its very highest, devoid of physical emotion. The original Creator did not manifestly so intend. The world of thought is an abstract world whose inner shrine is where soul meets soul. The world of life is the world of the heart, and its beating is the sway of the pendulum between soul and flesh. The world of flesh is the real world; wrought of physical atoms in whose recurrent groupings is the elaborated scheme of nature. Into this world has been placed Man to live and rule. To this end his body is fixed with various powers and complications and endurances; with weaknesses and impulses and yieldings; with passions to animate, with desires to attract, and animosities to repel. And as the final crowning of this wondrous work, the last and final touch of the Creator’s hand, Sex for

the eternal renewing of established forces. How can souls be drawn to souls when such are centred in bodies which mutually repel? How can the heart quicken its beats when it may not come near enough to hear the answering throb? No! If physical attraction be not somewhere, naught can develop. Judy, the outspoken, had once almost horrified a little group of matrons who were discussing the interest which a certain young cleric was beginning to take in one of the young female parishioners. When one of them said, somewhat sanctimoniously, that his interest was only in the salvation of her immortal soul, that he was too good a man to ever think of falling in love as ordinary men do, the vivacious old maid replied:

“Not a bit of it, my dear! When a man troubles himself about an individual young woman’s soul you may be quite certain that his eyes have not neglected her body. And moreover you will generally, if not always, find that she has a pair of curving red lips, or a fine bust, or a well-developed figure somewhere!”

Athlyne loved Joy in all ways, so that the best of his nature regulated the standard of his thoughts. His love was no passing fancy which might or might not develop, flame up, and fade away. He had, he felt, found the other half of him, lost in the primeval chaos; and he wanted the union to be so complete that it would outlive the clashing of worlds in the final cataclysm. Healthy people are healthy in their loves and even in their passions. These two young people were both healthy, both red-blooded, both of ardent, passionate nature; and they were drawn together each to each by all the powers that rule sex and character. To say that their love was all of earth would be as absurd as to say that it was all of heaven. It was human, all human, and all that such implies. Heaven and earth had both their parts in the combination; and perhaps, since both were of strong nature and marked individuality, Hell had its due share in the amalgam.

Athlyne thought, and thought, and thought; till the length of his own shadow recalled the passing of time. He postponed the thinking over his plans for to-morrow—the active part of them, and hastened back to his place behind the lilacs.

He was just in time. The carriage stood at the door with Colonel Ogilvie’s “grip-sack” at the driver’s feet. Then the Boots ran down the steps and held the carriage door open. Joy came holding her father’s arm. They got into the carriage and drove away. Athlyne waited, sitting on the seat on the grass lawn smoking luxuriously. He forgot that he was hungry and thirsty, forgot everything except that he would before long see Joy again, this time *alone*. His thoughts were evidently pleasant, for the time flew fast. Indeed he must have been in something like a waking dream which absorbed all his faculties for he did not notice the flight of time at all. It was only when, recalled to

himself by the passing of a carriage, he looked up and saw Joy that he came back to reality. To his disappointment her head was turned away. When within sight of the garden, she had noticed him and as she did not wish him, just yet, to know that she knew of his presence, she found her eyes fixed on the other side of the street. It was the easiest and most certain way of avoiding complexities. He slipped over to the lilacs to see her alight. When she had done so she turned to the coachman and said:

“You understand I shall not want you in the morning as I shall be out walking; but if I don’t send for you in the afternoon, or if you don’t get any message you will meet my father at Windermere station at a quarter to five.”

She went to the front of the carriage and stroked the horses’ noses and necks after her usual fashion. He had as good a view of her profile as the twilight would allow. Then with a pleasant “Good evening!” to the coachman she tripped up the steps and disappeared. For more than a quarter of an hour Athlyne watched the windows; but she did not appear. This was natural enough, for she was behind the curtains peeping out to see if he went back to his seat on the lawn.

When she saw that he did not return Joy, with a gentle sigh, went to her room.

That sigh meant a lot. It was the reaction from an inward struggle. All day she had been suffering from the dominance of two opposing ideas, between which her inward nature swayed pendulum-wise. This “inward nature” comprised her mind, her reason, her intelligence, her fears, her hopes, her desires—the whole mechanism and paraphernalia of her emotional and speculative psychology. She would fain have gone out boldly into the garden and there met Mr. Hardy face to face—of course by pure accident. But this vague intention was combated by a maiden fear; one of those delicious, conscious apprehensions made to be combated unless thoroughly supported by collateral forces; one of those gentle fears of sex which makes yielding so sweet. Following this came the fixed intention of that walk to be taken in the morning. The morning was still far off and its apprehensive possibilities were not very dreadful. Indeed she did not really fear them at all for she had privately made up her mind that, fear or no fear, she was going on that walk. The only point left open was its direction. The hour was positively settled; an hour earlier than that at which for the past few days she had driven out with Daddy! Even to herself she would not admit that her choice of time was in any way controlled or influenced by the fact that it was the same hour about which Mr. Hardy made his appearance in the garden.

But all the same her thoughts and her intentions were becoming conscious. For good or evil she was getting more reckless in her desires; passion was becoming dominant—and she knew it.

This is perhaps the most dangerous phase of a woman's trial. She knows that there is at work a growing desire for self-surrender which it is her duty to combat. She knows that all contra reasons which can be produced will be—must be—overcome. She knows with all the subtle instincts of her sex that she is deliberately setting her feet on a slope down which some impulse, perhaps but momentary, will carry her with resistless force. It is the preparatory struggle to defeat; the clearing away of difficulties which might later be hampering or even obstructive; the clamant *wish* for defeat which makes for the conquered the satisfaction if not the happiness of finality. To all children of Adam, of either sex, this phase may come. To the strongest and most resolute warrior must be a moment when he can no more; when the last blow has been struck and the calling of another world is ringing in his ears; to the resolute amongst men this moment is the moment of death. To women it is surrender of self; surrender to the embrace of Death—or to the embrace of Love. It is the true end of the battle. The rest is but the carrying out of the Treaty of Peace, the Triumph of the Victory in which she is now proud to have a part—if it be only that of captive!

There was no sleep for Joy that night. She heard the hours strike one after the other, never missing one. She was not restless. She lay still, and quiet, and calm; patient with that patience which is an acceptance that what is to come is good. In all the long vigil she never faltered in her intention to take that walk in the forenoon. What was to happen in it she did not guess. She had a conviction that that tall figure would follow her discreetly; and that when she was alone they would somehow meet. It might be that she would hear his voice before she saw him; that was most likely, indeed almost certain, for she would not turn till he had spoken ... or at any rate till she knew that he was close behind her. ... Here her thoughts would stop. She would lie in a sort of ecstasy ... whatever might come after that would be happiness. She would see Him ... look into His eyes. ... "Look at me, Joy!" seemed to sound in her ears in sweet low music like a whisper. Then she would close her eyes and lie motionless, passive, breathing as gently as a child; high-strung, conscious, awake and devoid of any definite intent.

When she was dressing for the day she put on one of the simplest and prettiest of her dresses, one which she had directed over night to be got ready; a sort of heavy gauze of dull white which fell in long full folds showing her tall slim figure to its perfect grace. Her maid who was a somewhat silent person, not given to volubility unless encouraged, looked at her admiringly as she said:

"I do think miss that is the most becoming of all your frocks!" This pleased her and sent a red glow through her cheeks. Then, fearing if she seemed to think too much of the matter it might seem suspicious as to some purpose, she said quietly:

“Perhaps then it would be better if I put on one of the lawn dresses. I am going for a walk this morning and as it may be dusty a frock that will not catch the dust may be better.”

“It does seem a pity miss to wear such a pretty frock and spoil it when there is no one here to see it; not even your father.” This gave Joy an opening of which she quickly availed herself. She had not the least intention of changing the frock or of looking, if she could avoid it, one whit below her best.

“Fie, Eugenie! one doesn’t put on frocks to attract. If you think that way, I shall wear it; even if it is to get dusty.” The Abigail who was a privileged person answered gravely:

“That’s quite true, Miss, exactly as you say it. *One* doesn’t put on nice frocks to attract; and that one is yourself. But all the rest do!” Joy’s merry laugh showed the measure of her ebullient happiness.

“Dear me! Eugenie. You are quite an orthoëpist—indeed a precisionist. I shall have to polish up my grammar. However I’ll keep on the frock if only in compliment to your sense of terminological exactitude!”

A little after breakfast, when the time for starting on the walk drew nigh, Joy did not feel so elated. Woman-like she was not anxious to begin. It was not that she in any way faltered in her purpose, but merely that she was suffering from the nervousness which comes to those of high strung temperaments in momentous crises. Humming merrily she put on her hat and finished her toilet for her walk. In the sitting room from the shelter of the curtain she looked out of the window, as she tried to think, casually. Her eyes turned towards the lilac bushes, but caught no indication of the tall figure that she sought. Her heart fell. But a second later it leaped almost painfully as she saw Mr. Hardy sitting out openly on the seat, and strange to say—for she had come to identify that seat with the practice—not smoking. He evidently had no present thought of being concealed. Why? The answer to her own question came in a rush of blood to her face, a rush so quick and thorough that it seemed for the moment to deplete her heart which beat but faintly... When she looked again he had risen and was moving toward the lilacs.

Without a word she walked downstairs and out through the hall-door.

Athlyne had not slept either that night. But the manner and range of his thoughts showed the difference between the sexes. Both his imagining and his reasoning were to practical purpose. He wanted to see Joy, to speak with her, to prove to himself if his

hoping was in any way justified by fact. He had for so long been concentrating his thoughts on one subject that doubts at first shadowy had become real. It seemed therefore to him that in his planning for the morrow he was dealing with real things, not imaginative ones. And, after all, there is nothing more real than doubt—so far as it goes. Victor Cousin took from its reality his subtlest argument for belief: “At this point scepticism itself vanishes; for if a man doubt everything else, at least he cannot doubt that he doubts.” So with Athlyne. By accepting doubt as reality he began the experiment for its cure.

In the silence of the night, with nerves high-strung and with brain excited he tried in those most earnest hours of his life, when for good or ill he was to organise his intellectual forces, to arrange matters so that at the earliest time he might with certainty learn his fate. He had an idea that in such a meeting as was before him he must not be over-precipitated. And yet he must not check impulsiveness as long as its trend was in the right direction. He knew that a woman’s heart is oftener won by assault than by siege. For himself he had plenty of patience as well as a sufficiency of spirit; his task at present therefore was one of generalship alone: the laying out of the battle plans, the disposition of his forces. As he thought, and as his ideas and his intentions came into order, he began to understand better the purpose of those two preparations of his which were already complete: the overhauling of his automobile, and the supplying it with female wraps. He intended by some means or other, dependent on developing opportunity, to bring her for a ride in the motor. There, all alone, he would be able to learn, perhaps at first from her bearing and then from her own lips, how she regarded him.

Athlyne was a young man, a very young man in his real knowledge of the sex. There are hundreds, thousands, of half-pulseless boys, flabby of flesh and pallid with enervating dissipation, who would have smiled cynically—they have not left in them grit enough for laughter—at his doubting.

He would not frighten her at first. Here for a time he took himself to task for seeming to plot against the woman he loved. Surely it would be better to treat her with perfect fairness; to lay his heart at her feet; tell her with all the passionate force that swept him how he loved her—tell it with what utterance he had. Then he should wait her decision. No, not decision! That was too cold a word—thought. If indeed there was any answering love to his, little decision would be required. Had *he* made any decision! From the first moment he had looked in her beautiful grey eyes and lost himself in their depths, his very soul had gone out to her. And it might be that she too had felt something of the same self-abandonment. He could never forget how on that afternoon visit at the Holland she had raised her eyes to his in answer to his

passionate appeal: "Joy, Look at me!" Then at that memory, and at the later memory when she had spoken the words herself only the day before—the sweetness of her voice was still tingling in his ears, a sort of tidal wave of lover's rapture swept over him. It overwhelmed him so completely that it left him physically gasping for breath. He was in a tumult; he could not lie in bed. He leaped to his feet and walked to and fro with long, passionate strides. He threw up the lower sash of the window and looked out into the moonlight, craning his neck round to the right so that his eyes were in the direction of Ambleside as though the very ardour of his gaze could pierce through distance and stone walls and compel Joy's white eyelids to raise so that he might once more lose himself in those grey deeps wherein his soul alone found peace.

In this passion of adoration all his doubts seemed to disappear, as the sun drinks up the mist. He felt as though uplifted. At the very idea of Joy's loving him as he loved her he felt more worthy, more strong, and with a sense of triumph which had no parallel in his life. He stood looking out at the beauty of the scene before him, till gradually it became merged in his thoughts with Joy and his hopes which the morrow might realise. He never knew exactly how long he stood there. It must have been a long time, for when he realised any sense of time at all he was cramped and chill; and the forerunner of the morning light coming from far away behind him was articulating the fields on the hill-slopes across the lake.

He was then calm. All the thinking and reasoning and planning and passion of the night had been wrought into unity. His mind was made up as to the first stage of his undertaking. He would bring the car to Ambleside and leave it with the chauffeur outside the town. Then he would take his place in the garden and wait till she came out for that walk of which she had told her father. He would cautiously follow her; and when there was a fair opportunity for uninterrupted speech would come to her. If he found there was no change in her manner to him—and here once again the memory of those lifting eyes made him tremble—he would try to get her to come for a ride in his car. There, wrapped in the glory of motion and surrounded by all the grandeur of natural beauty, he would pour out his soul to her and put his fate to the touch. Then if all were well he would send on the letter to her father and would pay his formal visit as soon as might be. He would take care to have ready a luncheon basket so that if she would ride with him they might have together an ethereal banquet.

It is strange that even those who are habitually cautious, whose thoughts and deeds alike are compelled and ruled by reason, will in times of exaltation forget their guiding principle. They will refuse to acknowledge the existence of chance; and will proceed calmly on their way as though life was as a simple cord, with Inclination pulling at one end of it and Fact yielding at the other.

CHAPTER XIV.

A BANQUET ON OLYMPUS

On this occasion Athlyne did not continue to sit out on the lawn. Now that he wished to overtake Joy unawares he was as careful to hide his presence from her as he had previously hidden it from her father. He had hardly ensconced himself in his usual cover when Joy came out on the steps. Her maid was with her and together they stood on the steps speaking. As she turned to come down the steps Joy said:

“Perhaps I had better arrange to come back after a short walk; there might be some telegram from father to be attended to. If there is not, I can then go for a real, long walk.” She did not say more but moved briskly down the roadway without ever turning her head. Athlyne slipped through the gate of the garden, following at such distance that he could easily keep out of view in case she should turn. When she had cleared the straggling houses which made the outskirts of the little town she walked slowly, and then more slowly still. Finally she sat on a low wall by the roadside with her back partially turned to Ambleside and looked long at the beautiful view before her where, between the patches of trees which here shut out the houses altogether and heightened the air of privacy of the bye road, the mountain slopes rose before her.

This was the opportunity for which Athlyne was waiting. He had hardly dared to hope that it would be in a spot so well adapted to his wishes. Dear simple soul! he never imagined that it had been already chosen—marked down by a keener intellect than his own, and that intellect a woman’s!

Joy knew that he was coming; that he was drawing closer; that he was at hand. It was not needed that she had now and again thrown a half glance behind her at favourable moments as she went. There was at work a subtler sense than any dealing with mere optics; a sense that can float on ether waves as surely as can any other potent force. Nay, may it not be the same sense specialised. The sense that makes soul known to soul, sex to sex; that tells of the presence of danger; that calls kind to kind, and race to race, from the highest of creation to the lowest. And so she was prepared and waited, calm after the manner of her sex. For when woman waits for the coming of man her whole being is in suspense. Though in secret her heart beat painfully Joy did not look round, made no movement till the spoken words reached her:

“Miss Ogilvie is it not!”

Slowly she turned, as to a voice but partly heard or partly remembered. Athlyne felt his heart sink down, down as he saw the slowness of the movement and realised the absence of that quick response which he had by long and continuous thinking since

last night encouraged himself to expect. The quick gleam of pleasure in the face as she turned, the light in her marvellous grey eyes, the gentle blush which despite herself passed like an Alpenglow from forehead to neck did not altogether restore his equanimity or even encourage him sufficiently to try to regain that pinnacle of complacent hope on which up to then he had stood.

“Why Mr. Hardy,” she said warmly as she rose quickly to her feet. “This is real nice. I was afraid we were not going to see you whilst we were in England.”

It was beautifully done; no wonder that some women can on the stage carry a whole audience with them, when off it so many can deceive intellects more powerful than their own. And yet it was not all acting. She did not intend it as such; not for a moment did she wish or intend to deceive. It was only the habit of obedience to convention which was guiding natural impulse into safe channels. For who shall say where nature—the raw, primeval crude article—ends or where convention, which is the artfulness necessitated by the elaboration of organised society, begins. A man well known in New York used to say: “All men are equal after the fish!” Kipling put the same idea in another way: ... “the Colonel’s Lady an’ Judy O’Grady are sisters under their skins!”

When Athlyne looked into Joy’s eyes—and there was full opportunity for so doing—all his intentions of reserve went from him. He was lover all over; nothing but lover, with wild desire to be one with her he loved. His eyes began to glow, his knees to tremble, then every muscle of his body became braced; and when he spoke his voice at once deepened and had a masterful ring which seemed to draw Joy’s very soul out towards him. Well it was for her main purpose that her instinct had given that first chill of self-possession; had the man been able to go on from where he had first started nothing that she knew of reserve or self-restraint could have prevented her from throwing herself straightway into his arms. Had Athlyne not begun with that same chill, which to him took the measure of a repulse, he would have caught her to him with all the passions of many kinds which were beginning to surge in him.

But what neither of them could effect alone, together they did. The pause of the fraction of a second in the springing of their passion made further restraint possible. There is no fly-wheel in the mechanism of humanity to carry the movement of the crank beyond its level. Such machinery was not invented at the time of the organisation of Eden.

“I have longed for this moment more than I can say; more than words can tell!” His voice vibrated with the very intensity of his truth. Joy’s eyes, despite her efforts to keep them fixed, fell. Her bosom rose and fell quickly and heavily with the stress of her

breathing. Her knees trembled and a slow pallor took the place of the flush on her face. Seemingly unconsciously she murmured so faintly that only a lover's ear could hear or follow it:

"I have longed for it too—oh so much!" The words dropped from her lips like faint music. Instinctively she put her hand on the wall beside her to steady herself; she feared she was going to faint.

Athlyne, seeing and hearing, thrilled through to the very marrow of his bones. His great love controlled, compelled him. He made no movement towards her but looked with eyes of rapture. Such a moment was beyond personal satisfaction; it was of the gods, not of men. And so they stood.

Then the tears welled over in Joy's eyes beneath the fallen lids. They hung on the dark, curly lashes and rolled like silver beads down the softness of her cheeks. Still Athlyne made no sign; he felt that the time had not yet come. The woman was his own now, he felt instinctively; and it was his duty—his sacred privilege to protect her. Unthinkingly he moved a step back on the road he had come. Instinctively Joy did the same. It was without thought or intention on the part of either; all instinctive, all natural. The usage of the primeval squaw to follow her master outlives races.

Then he paused. She came up to him and they walked level. Not another word had been spoken; but there are silences that speak more than can be written in ponderous tomes. These two—this man and this woman—*knew*. They had in their hearts in those glorious moments all the wisdom won by joy and suffering through all the countless ages since the Lord rested on that first Sabbath eve and felt that His finished work was good.

When, keeping even step, they had taken a few quiet paces, Athlyne spoke in a soft whisper that thrilled:

"Joy, look at me!"

Without question or doubt of any kind she raised her shining eyes to his. And then, slowly and together as though in obedience to some divine command, their lips met in a long, loving kiss in which their very souls went out each to the other.

When their mouths parted, with a mutual sigh, each gave a quick glance up and down the road; neither had thought of it before.

The tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil did not die in Eden bower. It flourishes still in even the most unlikely places all the wide world over. And they who taste its fruit must look with newly-opened eyes on the world around them.

Together, still keeping step, not holding each other, not touching except by the chance of movement, they walked to where the bye-road joined the main one. As yet they had spoken between them less than threescore words. They wondered later in the day when they talked together how so much as they had thought and felt and conveyed had been packed into such compass. Now, as they paused at the joining of the roads, Athlyne said—and strange to say it was in an ordinary commonplace voice:

“Joy won’t you come with me for a ride. I have my motor here, and we can go alone. There is much I want to say to you—much to tell you, and the speed will help us. I want to rush along—to fly. Earth is too prosaic for me—now!” Joy looking softly up caught the lightning that flashed from his eyes, and her own fell. A tide of red swept her face; this passed in a moment, however, leaving a divine pink like summer sunset on snowy heights. Her voice was low and thrilling as she answered with eyes still cast down.

“I’ll go with you where you will—to the end of the world—or Heaven or Hell if you wish—now!”

And then as if compelled by a force beyond control she raised her eyes to his.

“Shall you come with me to the car; or shall I bring it to the hotel?” He spoke once more in something like his ordinary voice.

“Neither!” she answered with her eyes still fixed on his unflinchingly. He felt their witchery run through him like fire now; his blood seemed to boil as it rushed through his veins. Love and passion were awake and at one.

“I must go back to see if there is any wire from Daddy, and to leave word that I am going for a drive. I shall tell my maid that I shall return in good time. Father and Mother and Aunt Judy are to arrive at Windermere at five o’clock unless we hear to the contrary. You bring up the motor to—to there where we met.” Her eyes burned through him as without taking them from his she raised an arm and pointed gracefully up the bye-road, towards where they had sat.

“Don’t come with me,” she said as he moved with her. “It will be sweeter to keep our secret to ourselves.”

And so, he raising his cap as he stood aside, she passed on after sending one flashing look of love right through him.

At the hotel she found a wire from her father to the effect that they would not be able to leave Euston at 11.30 as intended but that they hoped to reach Windermere at 7.05. This pleased her, for it gave her another two hours for that motor drive to which she

looked forward with beating heart. She told her maid that she would be out till late in the afternoon as she was going motoring with a friend; and that she, Eugenie, could please herself as to how she would pass the time. When the maid asked her what she wished as to lunch she answered:

“I shall not want any lunch; but if we feel hungry we can easily get some on the way.”

“Which way shall you be going, Miss, in case any one should ask.”

“I really don’t know Eugenie. I just said I would join in the drive. I daresay it is up somewhere amongst the lakes. That is where the fine scenery is.”

“And what about wraps, miss? You will want something warm for motoring. That dress you have on is rather thin for the purpose.”

“Oh dear; oh dear!” she answered with chagrin. “This will do well enough, I think. We shall not, I expect, be going very far. If I find I want a wrap I can borrow one.” And off she set for the rendezvous.

In the meantime Athlyne had found the car, and had given instructions to the chauffeur to remain at an inn at Ambleside which he had already noted for the purpose and where a telegram would find him in case it might be necessary to give any instructions. He had made sure that the luncheon basket which he had ordered at Bowness was in its place. Then he had driven back to the bye-road and waited with what patience he could for the coming of Joy.

She came up the bye-road walking fast enough. Up to that point she had walked leisurely, but when she saw the great car all flaming magnificently in scarlet and gold she forgot everything in the way of demureness, and hurried forward. She had also seen Mr. Hardy. That morning he had put on his motor clothes, for he knew he had to look forward to a long spell of hard work before him—work of a kind which needs special equipment. More than ever did he look tall and lithe and elegant in his well-fitting suit of soft dark leather. When he caught sight of Joy and saw that she was still in her pretty white frock he began to lift from the bottom of the tonneau a pile of wraps which he spread on the side. Joy did not notice the things at first; her eyes were all for him. He stepped forward to meet her and, after a quick glance round to see that they were alone, took her in his arms and kissed her. She received the kiss in the most natural way—as if it was a matter of course, and returned it. It is surprising what an easy art to learn kissing is, and how soon even the most bashful of lovers become reconciled to its exacting rules!

Then she began to admire his car, partly to please him, partly because it was really a splendid machine admirably wrought to its special purpose—speed. He lifted a couple of coats and asked:

“Which will you wear?”

“Must I wear one? It is warm enough isn’t it without a coat?”

“At present, yes! But when our friend here” he slapped the car affectionately “wakes up and knows who he has the honour of carrying you’ll want it. You have no idea what a difference a fifty or sixty mile breeze makes.”

“I’ll take this one, please,” she said without another word; a ready acquiescence to his advice which made him glow afresh. One after another she took all the articles which his loving forethought had provided, and put them on prettily. She felt, and he felt too, that each fresh adornment was something after the manner of an embrace. At the last he lifted the motor cap and held it out to her. She took it with a smile and a blush.

“I really quite forgot my hat,” she said. “’Tis funny how your memory goes when you’re very eager!” This little speech, unconsciously uttered, sent a wave of sweet passion through the man. “Very Eager!” She went on:

“But where on earth am I to put it? I think I had almost better hide it here behind the hedge and retrieve it when we get back!” Athlyne smiled superiorly—that sort of affectionate tolerant superiority which a woman admires in a man she loves and which the least sentimental man employs unconsciously at times. He stooped into the tonneau and from under one of the seats drew out a leather bonnet-box which ran in and out on a slide. As he touched a spring this flew open, showing space and equipment for several hats and a tiny dressing bag.

“Why, dear, there is everything in the world in your wonderful car.”

How he was thrilled by her using the word—the first time her lips had used it to him. It was none the less sweet because spoken without thought. She herself had something of the same feeling. She quivered in a languorous ecstasy. But she did not even blush at the thought; it had been but the natural expression of her feeling and she was glad she had said it. Their eyes searched each other and told their own eloquent tale.

“Darling!” he said, and bending over kissed again the rosy mouth that was pouted to meet him.

In silence he opened the door of the tonneau. She drew back.

“Must I go in there—alone?”

“I can’t go with you, darling. I must sit in the seat to drive. Unless you would rather we had the chauffeur!”

“You stupid old ... *dear!*” this in a whisper. “I want to sit beside you—as close as I can ... *darling!*” She sank readily into the arms which instinctively opened.

True love makes its own laws, its own etiquettes. When lovers judge harshly each the conduct of the other it is time for the interference or the verdict of strangers. But not till then.

Athlyne took the wheel, feeling in a sort of triumphant glory; in every way other than he had expected. He thought that he would be ardent and demonstrative; he was protective. The very trustfulness of her reception of his caresses and her responsiveness to them made for a certain intellectual quietude.

Joy too was in a sort of ecstatic calm. There was such completeness about her happiness that all thought of self disappeared. She did not want anything to be changed in the whole universe. She did not want time to fly betwixt now and her union with the man she loved. That might—would—come later; but in the meanwhile happiness was so complete as to transcend ambition, hope, time.

Athlyne, who had made up his mind as to the direction of the drive, came down on the high road and drove at moderate speed to Ambleside; he thought that it would be wise to go slowly so as not to be too conspicuous. He had given Joy a dust-veil but she had not yet adjusted it. The present pace did not require such protection, and the idea of concealing her identity did not even enter into her head. When they were passing the post-office a sudden recollection came to Athlyne, and he stopped the car suddenly. Joy for an instant was a little alarmed and looked towards him inquiringly.

“Only a letter which I want to post!” he said in reply as he stepped down on the pavement. He opened his jacket and took from his pocket a letter which he placed in the box. Joy surmised afresh about the letter; she vaguely wondered if it was the same that she had seen him close and put into his pocketbook. The thought was, however, only a passing one. She had something else than other people’s letters to think about at present.

Just as he was turning back from the post box Eugenie, who was taking advantage of her freedom, passed along the pavement. She stopped to admire the tall chauffeur whom she thought the handsomest man she had ever seen. She did not know him. Her service with Miss Ogilvie had only commenced with the visit to London: up to the time of her leaving Italy Mrs. Ogilvie’s maid had attended to Joy. She stood back and pretended to be looking in at a window as she did not care to be seen staring openly at

him. Then she saw that he was no ordinary chauffeur. It was with a sigh that she said to herself:

“Voilà! Un vrai Monsieur!” Her eyes following him as he turned the starting handle and took his seat behind the wheel, she saw that his companion was her mistress. Not wishing to appear as if prying on her either, she instinctively turned away.

As Athlyne was arranging himself to his driving work he said quietly to Joy:

“Sorry for delaying, but it was a most important letter, which I want to be delivered to-night. It might be late if it was not posted till Carlisle.” This was the first knowledge Joy had of the direction of the journey. Eugenie heard only the last word as the car moved off.

The pace was comparatively slow until the outskirts of Ambleside had been passed; then he told Joy to put on her spectacles and donned his own. When they were both ready he increased the pace, and they flew up to the shores of Rydal Water. At Joy’s request they slowed down whilst the lake was in sight; but raced again till the road ran close to the peaceful water of Grasmere. But when Grasmere with its old church and Coleridge’s tomb lay away to their left they flew again up the steep road to Thirlmere. Athlyne was a careful driver and the car was a good hill climber. It was only when the road was quite free ahead that they went at great speed. They kept steadily on amongst the rising mountains, only slackening as they passed to Thirlmere and dropped down to Keswick. They did not stop here, but passing by the top of Derwentwater drew up for a few minutes to look down the lake whose wooded islands add so much to the loveliness of the view. Then on again full speed by the borders of Bassenthwaite Lake and on amongst the frowning hills to Cockermouth.

Joy was in a transport of delight the whole time. Her soul seemed to be lifted by the ever-varying beauty of the panorama as they swept along; and the rushing speed stirred her blood. She was silent, save at ecstatic moments when she was quite unable to control herself. Athlyne was silent too. He had been over the ground already, and besides such driving required constant care and attention. He was more than ever careful in his work, for was not Joy—his Joy!—his passenger.

They did not stop at Cockermouth but turned into the main road and, passing Bridekirk—and Bothel, flew up to Carlisle. As he slowed down at the city wall Athlyne looking at his watch said quietly:

“An hour and a half and some fifty miles. Let us go on and eat our lunch in Scotland.”

“Oh do! Go on! Go on—darling! I forgot to tell you that I have had a wire; they don’t get in till seven; so we have two more hours,” cried Joy enthusiastically. This time she used the word of endearment instinctively and without a pause. “Practice makes perfect” says the old saw.

Athlyne controlled himself and went at quiet pace through the Cumberland capital. He would like to have put the engine at full speed; the last word had fired him afresh. However, he did not want to get into police trouble. When he came out on the Northern road and climbed the steep hill to Stanwix he felt freer. The road was almost a dead level and there was little traffic, only a stray cart here and there. Then he let go, and the car jumped forward like an eager horse. Athlyne felt proud of it, just as though it had an intention of its own—that it wanted to show Joy how it loved to carry her. Joy almost held her breath as they swept along here. The wind whistled around her head and she had to keep her neck stiff against the pressure of the fifty-mile breeze. They slowed at the forking of the road beyond Kingstown; and at the Esk bridge and its approaches; otherwise they went at terrific speed till they reached the border where the road crossed the Sark. Then, keeping the Lochberie road to the right, they rushed away through Annan towards Dumfries.

Joy did not know that at that turning off to Annan they were almost in touch with Gretna Green. Athlyne did not think of it at the time. Had the knowledge or the thought of either been engaged on the subject the temptation it would have brought might have been too much for lovers in their rapturous condition ... and the course of this history might have been different.

The run to the outskirts of Dumfries, where the traffic increased, was another wild rush which wrought both the occupants of the car to a high pitch of excitement.

To Joy it seemed a sort of realisation. On the drive to Carlisle, and from that on over the Border, the fringing hills of the Solway had been a dim and mystery-provoking outline. But now the hills were at hand, before them and to the north; whilst far across the waste of banks and shoals of Solway Frith rose the Cumberland mountains, a mighty piling mass of serrated blue haze. It was a convincing recognition of the situation; this was Scotland, and England was far behind! Instinctively she leaned closer to her companion at the thought.

Between Dumfries and Castle Douglas was a long hill to climb within a stretch of seven miles. But the Delaunay-Belleville breasted it nobly and went up with unyielding energy. Then, when the summit at Crocketford was reached, she ran down the hill to Urr Water with a mighty rush which seemed to carry her over the lesser hill to Castle Douglas. From thence the road to Dalry was magnificent for scenery. At Crossmicheal

it came close to the Ken whose left bank it followed right up by Parton to “St. John’s Town of Dalry” where it crossed the river. Athlyne had intended to rest a while somewhere about here; but the old coach road, winding with the curves of the river, looked so inviting that he ran a few miles up north towards Carsphairn. Coming to a bye-road where grew many fine trees of beech and stone pine which gave welcome shade, he ran up a few hundred yards to where the road curved a little. Here was an ideal spot for a picnic, and especially for a picnic of two like the present.

The curving of the road made an open space, which the spreading trees above shaded. Deep grass was on the wide margin of the flat road which presently dipped to cross a shallow rill of bright water which fell from a little rocky ledge, tinkling happily through the hum of summer insect life. Wildflowers grew everywhere. It was idyllic and delightful and beautiful in every way, even to where, towering high above a Druidic ruin in the foreground, the lofty hills of Carsphairn rose far away between them and the western sky. In itself the scene wanted for absolute perfection some figures in the foreground. And presently it had them in a very perfect form. Joy clapped her hands with delight like a happy child as she glanced around her. Athlyne drew up sharp, and jumping from his seat held out his hand to Joy who sprang beside him on the road. As they stood together when Joy’s wrap had been removed they made a handsome couple. Both tall and slim and elegant and strong. Both straight as lances; both bright and eager; with the light of love and happiness shining on them more notably than even the flicker of sunlight between the great stems and branches of the trees. His brown hair seemed to match her black; the brown eyes and the grey both were lit with a “light that never came from land or sea!” Joy’s eyes fell under the burning glances of her lover; the time had not yet come for that absolutely fearless recognition which, being a man’s unconscious demand, a woman instinctively resists. Athlyne recognised the delicacy and acquiesced. All this without a single spoken word. Then he spoke:

“Was there ever such a magnificent run in the world. More than a hundred miles on end without a break or pause. And every moment a lifetime of bliss—to me at all events—Darling!”

“And to me!” Joy’s eyes flashed grey lightning as she raised them for a moment to his, and held them there. Athlyne’s knees trembled with delight; his voice quivered also as he spoke:

“And all the time I never left my duty once for an instant. I think I ought to get a medal!”

“You should indeed, darling. And I never once distracted you from it did I?”

“Unhappily, no!” His eyes danced.

“So I ought to get more than a medal!”

“What? What should you get—now?” His voice was a little hoarse. He drew closer to her. She made no answer in words; but her eyes were more eloquent. With a mutual movement she was in his arms and their mouths met.

“And now for lunch!” he said as after a few entrancing seconds she drew her face away. “I am sure you must be starving.”

“I *am* hungry!” she confessed. Her face was still flushed and her eyes were like stars. She bustled about to help him. He took the seats and cushions from the tonneau and made a comfortable nest for her, with a seat for himself close, very close beside her. He lifted off the luncheon basket and unstrapped it. Whilst she took out the plates and packets and spread the cloth he put a bottle of champagne and one of fizzy water in the cool of the running stream.

They may have had some delightful picnics on Olympus in the days of the old gods who were so human and who loved so much—and so often. But surely there was none so absolutely divine as on that day that under the trees, looking over at the grey piling summits of the mountains of Carsphairn. The food was a dream, the wine was nectar. The hearts of the two young people beat as one heart. Love surely was so triumphant that there never could come a cloud into the sky which hung over them like a blue canopy. Life and nature and happiness and beauty and love took hands and danced around them fairy-like as they sat together, losing themselves and their very souls in the depths of each other’s eyes.

CHAPTER XV.

“STOP!”

Under the shading trees the time flew fast. It is ever thus in the sylvan glades where love abides:

“... The halcyon hours with double swiftness run

And in the splendour of Arcadian summers

The quicker climb the coursers of the sun.”

Athlyne and Joy sat in a gentle rapture of happiness. She had made him draw up his cushion close to her so that she could lean against him. They sat hand in hand for a while, and then one arm stole round her and drew her close to him. She came yieldingly, as though such a moment had been ordained since the beginning of the

world. Her hand stole inside his arm and held him tight; and so they sat locked together, with their faces so close that their mouths now and again met in long, sweet kisses. More than once was asked by either the old question of lovers—which has no adequate or final answer: “Do you love me?” And at each such time the answer was given in the fashion which ruled in Eden—and ever since.

Presently Athlyne, drawing Joy closer than ever to him, said:

“Joy darling there is something I want to say to you!” He paused; she drew him closer to her, and held him tighter. She realised that his voice had changed a little; he was under some nervousness or anxiety. This woke the protective instinct which is a part of woman’s love.

“We love each other?”

“I do!” As she spoke she looked at him with her great gray eyes blazing. He kissed her:

“And I love you, my darling, more than I have words to say. More than words can express. I am lost in you. You are my world, my hope, my heaven! Beyond measure I love you, and honour you, and trust you; and now that I feel you love me too ... My dear! ... my dear! the whole world seems to swim around me and the heavens to open ...”

“Dear, go on. It is music to me—all music—that I have so longed for!”

“Darling! It seems like sacrilege to say anything just now—but—but—You know I love you?”

“Yes!” The simple word was stronger than any embellishment; it was of the completeness, the majesty, of sincerity in its expression.

“Then there is no need to say more of that now ... But before I say something else which I long to hear—in words, dear, for its truth is already in my heart ...”

“Darling!” she spoke the word lingeringly as though grudging that its saying must end ...

“Before such time I must speak with your father!” He spoke the words with a gravity which brought a chill to her heart; her face blanched suddenly as does liquid in the final crystallization of frost. Her voice was faint—she was only a girl after all, despite her pride and bravery—as she asked:

“Oh, I hope it is nothing. ...”

“Nothing, darling” he said as he stroked tenderly the hand that lay in his—he had taken his arm from her waist to do it—“except the courtesy which is due to an old man ... and one other thing, small in itself—absolutely nothing in my own mind—which makes it necessary in respect to his ... his ... his convictions that I should speak to him before ...” He stopped suddenly, remembering that if he went on he must betray the secret which as yet he wished to keep. Not on his own account did he wish to keep it. But there was Joy’s happiness to be considered. Until he knew how Colonel Ogilvie would take the knowledge of his having introduced himself under a false name he must not do or say anything which might ultimately make difference between her and her father.

Joy erred in her interpretation of his embarrassment, of his sudden stopping. Again the pallor grew over her face which had under her lover’s earlier words regained its normal colour. More faintly even than before she whispered:

“It is nothing I hope that would keep us ...” He saw her distress and cut quickly into her question:

“No! No! No! Nothing that could ever come between you and me. It is only this, Joy darling. Your father belongs to another country from my own and an older generation than mine. His life has been different, and the ideas that govern him are very masterful in their convention. Were I to neglect this I might make trouble which would, without our wish or part, come between us. Believe me, dear, that in this I am wise.” Then seeing the trouble still in her eyes he went on: “I know well, Joy, that it is not necessary for me to justify myself in your eyes.” Here she strained him a little closer and held his arm and his hand harder “but my dearest, I am going to do it all the same. I want to say something, but which I mustn’t say yet, so that you must be tolerant with me if I say unneeded things which are still open to me. Truly, darling, there is absolutely nothing which could possibly come between you and me. I have done no wrong—in that way at all events. There should be no more difference between you and me for anything that is now in my mind than there is between your soul and the blue sky above us; between you and heaven. ...” She put her hand over his mouth:

“Oh hush, hush, dear. ... By the way what am I to call you—darling?” For the moment he was taken aback. To give her his own name as yet would be to break the resolution of present secrecy; to give her a false name now would be sacrilege. His native Irish wit stood him in good stead:

“That is the name for to-day—darling. There can be none like that—for to-day. We began with it. It took me on its wings up to heaven. Let me stay there—for to-day. For to-day we are true husband and wife—are we not?”

“Yes dear!” she answered simply. He went on:

“To-morrow ... we can be grave to-morrow; and then I can give you another name to use—if you wish it!”

“I do!” she said with reverence. She accepted and returned the kiss which followed. This closed the incident, and for a little space they sat hand in hand, his arm again round her whilst again she had linked her arm in his. Presently he said:

“And now Joy dear, won’t you tell me all about yourself. You know that as yet you and I know very little about each other’s surroundings. I want specially to know to-day dear, for to-morrow I want to see your father and it will be better to go equipped.” Joy felt quite in a flutter. At last she was going to learn something about the man she loved. She would tell him everything, and he would ... Her thoughts were interrupted by her companion going on:

“And then to-morrow when we have talked I can tell you everything. ...”

“Everything!” then there was something to conceal! Her heart fell. But as the man continued, her train of thought was again interrupted:

“When you see him to-night you had better ...”

Suddenly she jumped to her feet in a sort of fright. Seeing her face he too sprang up, giving, with the instinct of his campaigning a quick look around as though some danger threatened:

“What is it Joy? What is wrong? ...” She almost gasped out:

“My father! He will be home by seven! It must be late in the afternoon now and we are more than a hundred miles from home! ...” Athlyne in turn was staggered. In his happiness in being with Joy and talking of love he had quite overlooked the passing of time. Instinctively he looked at his watch. It was now close on four o’clock. ... Joy was the first to speak:

“Oh do let us hurry! No one knows where I am; and if when Daddy gets home and finds I am not there he will be alarmed—and he may be upset. And Mother and Aunt Judy too! ... Oh do not lose a moment! If we do not get home before they arrive ... and Daddy finds I have been out all day with you ... Oh, hurry, hurry!”

Athlyne had been thinking hard whilst she spoke, and his thoughts had been arranging themselves. His intelligence was all awake now. He could see at a glance that Joy’s absence might make trouble for all. Colonel Ogilvie was a man of covenance, and his daughter’s going out with him in such a way was at least unconventional.

She *must* get back in time! His conclusion was reached before she had finished speaking. His military habit of quick action asserted itself; already he was replacing the things in the carriage. Joy saw, and with feverish haste began to help him. When he saw her at work he ran to the engine and began to prepare for starting. When that was ready he held Joy's coat for her and helped her into her seat. As he took the wheel he said as he began to back down the road which was hardly wide enough to turn in:

"Forgive me, dear. It was all my selfish pleasure. But we shall do all we can. Bar accident we may do it; we have over three hours!" He set his teeth as he saw the struggle before him. It would be a glorious run ... and there was no use forestalling trouble. ... Joy saw the smile on his face, recognised the man's strength, and was comforted.

They backed into the road and sprang southward. Without taking his eyes off his work, Athlyne said:

"Tell me dear as we go along all that I must bear in mind in speaking to your father of our marriage. ..."

There! It was out unconsciously. Joy thrilled, but he did not himself seem to notice his self-betrayal. He went on unconcernedly:

"It may be a little uphill at first if we do not get in line in time." Joy looked under her lashes at the strong face now set as a stone to his work and kept silence as to the word. She was glad that she could blush unseen. After a little pause she said in a meek voice:

"Very well, dear. I shall tell you whenever we are on a straight bit of road, but I will be silent round the curves." They were then flying along the old coach road. The road was well-made, broad and with good surface and they went at a terrific pace. Athlyne felt that the only chance of reaching Ambleside was by taking advantage of every opportunity for speed. Already he knew from the morning's journey that there were great opportunities as long stretches of the road were level and in good order and were not unduly impeded with traffic. The motor was running splendidly, it seemed as if the run in the morning had put every part of it in good working order. He did not despair of getting to Ambleside in time. The train was not due at Windermere till seven. And it might be a little late. In any case it would take the arriving party a little while to get their things together and then drive to Ambleside. As they were sweeping down towards the bridge at Dalry he said to Joy without looking round:

"It will be all right. I have been thinking it over. We can do it!"

“Thank God!” she exclaimed fervently. She too had been thinking.

“Stop!”

The voice rang out imperiously; and a policeman, stepping from behind the trunk of a great beech, held up his hand. Instinctively Athlyne began to slow. He shouted back “All right!” He had grasped the situation and as they were out of earshot of the policeman said quickly to Joy:

“We are arrested! Oh, I am sorry darling. If they won’t let me pay a fine and go at once you must take the car on. I shall try to arrange that. But do be cautious dear—you are so precious to me. If you are delayed anywhere and can’t make it in time wire to your father tell him you are motoring and have been delayed. It will soften matters, even if he is angry. I shall go on by train in the morning. And darling if you are not getting on as you wish, take a train the best you can—a special. Don’t stop at any expense. But get on! And don’t tell your name to any one, under any circumstances. Don’t forget the telegram if delayed.” As he was speaking the car was slowing and the panting policeman was coming up behind. When the car stopped, Athlyne jumped out and walked towards the officer; he wanted to be as conciliatory as possible.

“I am very sorry, officer. That beautiful bit of road tempted me; and being all quite clear I took a skim down it?”

“Ye did! Man, but it was fine! But I hae to arrest ye all the same. Duty is duty!”

“Certainly. I suppose the station is across the bridge?”

“Aye sir.” The policeman, who at first sight had from his dress taken him for a chauffeur, had by now recognised him as a gentleman.

“Will you come in the car? It’s all right. I’ll go slow.”

“Thank ye sir. I’ve had a deal o’ walkin’ the day!” When the man was in the tonneau Athlyne who had been thinking of what was to be done said to him affably:

“It was silly of me going at such a pace. But I wanted my wife to see how the new car worked.” He had a purpose in saying this: to emphasise to Joy the necessity of not mentioning her name. It was the only way to keep off the subject when they should get to the station. Joy turned away her head. She did not wish either man to see her furious blushing at hearing the word. She took the hint; silence was her cue.

At the station Joy sat in the car whilst Athlyne went inside with the officer. The sergeant was a grave elderly man, not unkindly. He too recognised, but at once, that the chauffeur was a gentleman. There was an air of distinction about Athlyne which no

one, especially an official, could fail to appreciate. He was not surprised when he read the card which Athlyne handed to him. He frowned a little and scratched his head.

“I fear this’ll be a bit awkward my lord. Ye come frae o’er the Border and ye’ll hae to attend the summons at New Galloway. I dinna want to inconvenience you and her ladyship but ...”

“Will it not be possible to let the car go on. My wife has to meet her father and mother who are coming up to Ambleside to-night, and they will be so disappointed. Her mother is an invalid and is coming from Italy. I shall be really greatly obliged if it can be managed.”

The sergeant shook his head and said slowly:

“’Tis a fine car. A valuable commodity to take out of the jurisdiction and intil a foreign country.” Athlyne had already taken out his pocket-book. Fortunately he had provided himself well with money before coming north.

“I paid a thousand pounds for the car. Will it not suit if I leave that amount in your custody.” The official was impressed.

“Losh! man what wad I be daen wi’ a thoosan poons in a wee bit station like this, or carryin’ it aboot in me claes. Na! na! if ye’ll de-po-sit say a ten poon note for the guarantee I’m thinkin’ ’twill be a’ reet. But how can the leddy get ava; ye’ll hae to bide till the morn’s morn.”

“Oh that’s all right, officer, she’s a licensed driver. Unhappily she has not got her license with her. She left it in Ambleside as I was driving myself and had mine.” He said this to avert her being questioned on the neglect; in which case there might be more trouble about the pace.

“Ooh! aye. Then that’s a’ reet! A maun ax her masel forbye she mayn’t hae the license aboot her. Wimmen is feckless cattle anyhow!”

“Do you think sergeant she may get away at once. It is a long drive, and the day is getting on. I shall be very grateful indeed if you can manage it!” The sergeant was still impressed by the pocket book.

“Weel A’ll see what A can dae!” He went outside with Athlyne to the automobile, and touching his cap said:

“Yer pardon ma leddy, ye’re the wife o’ the defender?” Joy was glad that she had put on the motor veil attached to her cap.

“Yes! My husband told you, did he not?” she said. The thrill that came to her with the speaking of the word “husband” she kept for later thought. The sergeant answered respectfully:

“He did ma leddy. But as an offeecial o’ the law I hae to make sure as ye’re aboot to travel oot o’ the jurisdiction. He says ye hae left yer licence at hame; but as ye hae answered me that ye are his wife I will accept it, an’ ye may go. The defender remains here; but I’m thinkin’ there’s a chance that he may no hae to remain so lang as he’s fearin! Ma service to ye ma leddy.” He touched his cap and went back into the station.

Athlyne came forward and said in a low voice, for the policeman who had effected the arrest was now standing outside the door:

“You will be careful darling. You may be able to do it. But if you are late and your father be angry say as little as you can. Unhappily I must remain here, but I shall do all I possibly can to settle things quietly. I shall follow in the morning; but not too early. Don’t forget to wire your father if you are delayed anywhere, or are certain to be late. For my own part I shall leave proof everywhere of my own presence as we shall be in different countries!” He said this as it occurred to him that if she should be delayed it might later avert a scandal. Then he spoke up for the benefit of the policeman:

“As the time is so short, and we have learned the lesson of the danger of going too fast, you might ask when you get to Carlisle whether it is not quicker to return by Penrith and Patterdale. That way is some miles shorter.” The policeman who had heard—and had also seen the pocket-book—came close and said with a respectful touch of his cap:

“If A may make sae bold, the leddy can save a wheen o’ miles by takin’ the road to Dumfries by Ken Brig an’ Crocketford up yon. A saw ye the morn comin’ up there.” Athlyne nodded and touched his pocket; the man drew back into the station. One last word to Joy:

“I wish you knew the machine darling. But we must take chance for all going well.” As he spoke he was turning the starting handle. Joy in a low voice said:

“Good bye my darling!” Resolutely she touched the levers, and the car moved off quietly to the “God bless you!” of each.

Athlyne watched the car as long as it was in sight; then he went back into the station. He spoke at once to the sergeant.

“Now sergeant is there nothing that can possibly be done to hasten the matter. You see I have done all I can to obey rules—once having broken them. I am most anxious

to get back home as I have some very important business in the morning. I shall of course do exactly as is necessary; but I shall be deeply obliged if I can get away quietly, and double deeply to you if you can arrange it.”

“Well ma lord I dinna think ye’ll hae much trouble or be delayed o’er lang neither. For masel A canna do aught; but A’m thinkin that the Sheriff o’ Galloway himsel will be here ony moment. He nearly always rides by when the fair at Castle Douglas is on, as it is to be in the morn. A’ll hae a sharp look oot for him. He’s a kind good man; an A’m thinkin that he’ll no fash yer lordship. He can take responsibeelity that even a sargeant o’ polis daurn’t. So it’s like ye’ll get ava before the nicht.”

Athlyne sat himself down to wait with what patience he could muster. Once again nature’s pendulum began to swing in his thoughts; on one side happiness, on the other anxiety. The delight of the day wherein he had realised to the full that Joy indeed loved him, even as he loved her; the memory of those sweet kisses which still tingled on his lips and momentarily exalted him to a sort of rapture; and then the fear which was manifold, selfish and unselfish. She might get into any one of many forms of trouble if only from her anxiety to reach home before the arrival of her parents. She was, after all, not a practiced driver; and was in control of the very latest type of machine of whose special mechanism she could know nothing. If she should break down far from any town she would be in the most difficult position possible: a girl all alone in a country she did not know. And all this apart from the possibility of accident, of mischance of driving; of the act of other travellers; of cattle on the road; of any of the countless mishaps which can be with so swift and heavy a machine as a motor. And then should she not arrive in time, what pain or unpleasantness might there not be with her father. He would be upset and anxious at first, naturally. He might be angry with her for going out on such a long excursion with a man alone; he would most certainly be angry with him for taking her, for allowing her to go. And at such a time too! Just when everything was working—had worked towards the end he aimed at. He knew that Colonel Ogilvie was and had been incensed with him for a neglect which under the circumstances was absolute discourtesy. And here he bitterly took himself to task for his selfishness—he realised now that it was such—in wanting to make sure of Joy’s love before consulting her father, or even explaining to him the cause of his passing under a false name. Might it not be too late to set that right now. ... And there he was, away in Scotland, kicking his heels in a petty little police station, while the poor girl would have to bear all the brunt of the pain and unpleasantness. And that after a long, wearying, wearing drive of a hundred miles, with her dear heart eternally thumping away lest she might lose in her race against Time. And what was worse still

that it would all follow a day which he did not attempt to doubt had been, up to the time of the arrest, one of unqualified happiness.

“... nessun maggoir dolore

Che ricordasi del tempo felice

Nella miseria.”

(“A sorrow’s crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.”)

The contrast would be terrible. He knew what the thought of it was to him; what would it be to her! Her sweet, gentle, loving heart would be hurt, crushed to the very dust.

He sprang to his feet and walked about the room, till noticing the sergeant was watching him with surprise and suspicion, he controlled himself.

He talked with the sergeant for a while genially. It was positively necessary that there should not be any doubt in the mind of the latter when the Sheriff should arrive. This episode took the strain from his mind—for a time. He expressed to the officer how anxious he was to get on and interested the worthy man so much that he sent over to the hotel to borrow a time-table. There Athlyne learned that it would be practically impossible for him to get on to Ambleside that night. Not even if he could get a special train at Carlisle—there was no possibility of getting one from a nearer place. When he asked the sergeant his opinion, that grave individual condescended to smile:

“Losh! man they don’t run specials on these bit lines. ’Tis as much as they can do to run a few trains a day. A’m thinkin’ that if ye asked the stationmaster anywhээр along the Dumfries and Kircudbright line for a special he’d hae ye in the daft-hoose, or he’d be there himsel!” Athlyne went back to his seat; once again the pendulum of his thoughts swung to and fro.

He was now face to face with one certainty amongst many possibilities: Whatever befel he could not give any immediate help to Joy. She, poor dear, must fend for herself and if need be, fight her battle alone. He could only try to make it up to her afterwards. And yet what could he do for her, what more give to her who had already all that was his! And here again he lost himself in memories of the immediate past; which presently merged into dreams of the future which has no end.

But again swung the pendulum with the thought of what he was next day to do which might help Joy. He began to realise out of the intensity of his thought, which was now all unselfish, in what a danger of misconception the girl stood already and how such

might be multiplied by any accident of her arrival. In the eyes of her friends her very character might be at stake! And now he made up his mind definitely as to how he would protect her in that way. He could prove his time of leaving Ambleside by his chauffeur, the time of that swift journey would be its own proof; the time of his arrest was already proved. Likewise of Joy's departure for home. Henceforward till he should meet her father he would take care that his movements were beyond any mystery or suspicion whatever. In any case—even if she did not arrive at home till late—Joy would be actually in another country from that which held him, and the rapidity of her journey would in itself protect. He would stay in some hotel in a place where he could get a suitable train in the morning; and would arrange that his arrival and departure were noted.

Naturally the place he would rest for the night, if he should succeed in getting away, would be Castle Douglas; for here lines from Kirkcudbright, from Stranraer, and from Glasgow made junction so that he had a double chance of departure. If he were detained at Dalry the police themselves would be proof of his presence there.

He felt easier in his mind after this decision, and was able to await with greater patience the coming of the Sheriff.

CHAPTER XVI.

A PAINFUL JOURNEY

Joy started on her long journey in a very agitated frame of mind; though the habit of her life and her concern for her lover enabled her to so bear herself that she appeared calm. To start with, she was full of fears; some of them natural, others of that class which is due to the restrictions and conventions of a woman's life. She was by no means an expert driver. She merely had some lessons and was never in an automobile by herself before. Moreover she was not only in a country strange to her, but even the road to Dumfries on which she was started was absolutely new to her. In addition to it all she was—as an American—handicapped by the difference in the rules of the road. In America they follow the French and drive on the off side: in England the “on” rule is correct.

She had no option, however; she dared not make any difficulty or even ask advice or help, for such might betray her and she might not be allowed to proceed at all. So with as brave a face and bearing as she could muster, but with a sinking heart, she started on her journey, praying inwardly that she might not meet with any untoward accident or difficulty. For she did not know anything about mechanism; the use of the wheel and the levers in driving was all that had been embraced in her lessons.

At first all went well enough. The road was clear and she felt that she had the machine well in hand. As far as Balmaclellan she went slowly, carefully, climbing laboriously up the steep zig-zag road; and presently she began to feel in good heart. She did not know the name of the place; had never heard of it. But it was somewhere; one stage at least on the way home. When the village lay behind her she began to put on more speed. With the apprehension gone of not being able to get on at all, she began to think of her objective and of how long was the journey before it could be revealed. With increased speed, however, came fresh fears. The importance of the machine began to be manifest; such force and speed needed special thought. The road changed so rapidly that she felt that she wanted another pair of eyes. The wheel alone, with its speed and steering indices, took all attention. She hardly dared to look up from it. And yet if she did not how could she know the road to take; how could she look out for danger. Happily the mere movement was a tonic; the rush through the air braced her. Otherwise she would have been shortly in a state of panic.

Very soon she began to realise the difficulty of driving on an unknown road, when one is not skilled in the art. So many things have to be considered all at once, and the onus of choosing perpetually is of nightmare shadow. The openings of bye-roads and cross-roads are so much more important than is suspected that there is a passing doubt as to direction; and country roads generally wind about so that distant land-marks, which can guide one in general direction, come and go with embarrassing suddenness. At first every cart-track or farm-road made such doubts, and even when she got to understand such minor trends she got confused over bye-roads of more importance. Cross-roads there were before long, right or left making shortcuts for those who knew. These she had to pass; she could judge only of her course by the excellence of the main road—not always a safe guide in remote agricultural districts. One thing told in her favour: the magnificent bracing air of that splendid high-hung moor through which she passed. By the time she got to Corsock, however, she was beginning to feel the strain severely. She was hot and nervous and wearied; only the imperative need of getting on, and getting on quickly, enabled her to keep up at all. At Corsock she stopped to ask the way, but found it hard to understand the Lowland Scotch in which directions for her guidance were given. The result was that she started afresh with a blank despair gripping at her heart. Already she felt that her effort to reach home in time was destined to failure. The time seemed to fly so fast, the miles to be so long. She even began to feel a nervous doubt as to whether she should even be able to send word to her father. East of Corsock the nature of the road is confusing to a stranger. There are bye-roads leading south and up northwards into the mountains; and Urr Water has to be crossed. Joy began to lose the perspective of

things; her doubts as to whether she was on the right road became oppressive. Somehow, things were changing round her. Look where she would, she could not see the hill tops that had been her landmarks. A mist was coming from the right hand—that was the south, where was Solway Firth. Then she gave up heart altogether. There came to her woman's breast the reaction from all the happy excitement of the day. It was too bright to last. And now came this shadow of trouble worse even than the mist which seemed to presage it ... Oh, if only He were with her now ... He! ... Strange it was that in all that day she had not once spoken to him by name. "Dear" or "Darling" seemed more suitable when her hand was in his; when he was kissing her. She closed her eyes in an ecstasy of delightful remembrance ... She was recalled to herself by a sudden jar; in her momentary forgetfulness she had run up a bank.

It was a shock to her when her eyes opened to see how different were her surroundings from her thoughts. Those hours when they sat together where the sunbeams stole through the trees would afford her many a comparison in the time to come. All was now dark and dank and chill. The mist was thickening every instant; she could hardly see the road ahead of her.

However, she had to go on, mist or no mist; at least till she should reach some place whence she could telegraph to her father. With a pang she realised that she must not wire also to Him as she would have loved to have done. It would only upset and alarm him, poor fellow! and he had quite anxiety enough in thinking of her already! ... With a heavy heart she crawled along through the mist, steering by the road-bed as well as she could, keeping a sharp look-out for cross-roads and all the dangers of the way.

The time seemed to fly, but not the car; the road appeared to be endless. Would she never come to any hospitable place! ... It was a surprise to her when she came on straggling cottages, and found herself between double rows of houses. Painted over a door she saw "Crocketford Post-Office." In her heart she thanked God that she was still on the right road, though she had only as yet come some dozen or more miles. It seemed as if a week had passed since she left Dalry ... and ... She drew up to the post-office and went in. There she sent a wire:

"Went out motoring caught here in mist am going on however but must arrive very late so do not be anxious about me. Love to Mother and Aunt Judy and dear Daddy. Joy."

When she had handed it in she looked at her watch. It was only half-past five o'clock!

It was still therefore on the verge of possibility that she might get back in time. She hurried out. Several people had gathered round the motor, which was throbbing away after the manner of motors, as though impatient to get to real work. A policeman who

was amongst them, seeing that she was about to go on, suggested that she should have her lamps lit as it would be a protection as well as a help to her in the mist. She was about to say that she thought it would be better not; for she did not know anything about acetylene lamps and feared to expose her ignorance, when he very kindly offered to light them for her:

“’Tis no wark for a bonny leddy!” he said in self-justification of bending his official dignity to the occasion. She felt that his courtesy demanded some explanation, and also that such explanation would, be accounting for her being all alone, avoid any questioning. So said sweetly:

“Thank you so much, officer. I really do not know much about lamps myself and I had to leave my ... my husband, who was driving, at Dalry. He was going too fast, and your people had a word to say to him. However, I can get on all right now. This is a straight road to Dumfries is it not?” The road was pointed out and instructions given to keep the high road to Dumfries. With better heart and more courage than heretofore she drove out into the mist. There was comfort for her in the glare of the powerful lights always thrown out in front of her.

All went well now. The road was distinctly good, and the swift smooth motion restored her courage. When in about half an hour she began to note the cottages and houses grouping in the suburbs of Dumfries she got elated. She was now well on the way to England! She knew from experience that the road to Annan, by which they had come, was fairly level. She did not mind the mist so much, now that she was accustomed to it; and she expected that as it was driving up northwards from the Firth she would be free from it altogether when she should have passed the Border and was on her way south to Carlisle.

In the meanwhile she was more anxious than as yet. The mist seemed to have settled down more here than in the open country. There were lights in many windows in the suburbs, and the street lamps were lit. It is strange how the perspective of lines of lamps gets changed when one is riding or driving or cycling in mist or fog. If one kept the centre of the road it would be all right; but as one keeps of necessity to the left the lines between the lamps which guide the eye change with each instant. The effect is that straight lines appear to be curved; and if the driver loses nerve and trusts to appearances he will soon come to grief. This was Joy’s first experience of driving in mist, and she naturally fell into the error. She got confused as to the right and wrong side of the road. She had to fight against the habit of her life, which instinctively took command when her special intention was in abeyance. She knew that from Dumfries the road dropped to the south-east and as the curve seemed away to the left from her

side of the road she, thinking that the road to the left was the direct road, naturally inclined towards the right hand, when she came to a place where there were roads to choose. There was no one about from whom to ask the way; and she feared to descend from the car to look for a sign-post. The onus of choice was on her, and she took the right hand thinking it was straight ahead. For some time now she had been going slow, and time and distance had both spun out to infinitude; she had lost sense of both. She was tired, wearied to death with chagrin and responsibility. Everything around her was new and strange and unknown, and so was full of terrors. She did not know how to choose. She feared to ask lest the doing so might land her in new embarrassments. She knew that unless she got home in something like reasonable time her father would be not only deeply upset but furiously angry—and all that anger would be visited on Him. Oh she must get on! It was too frightful to contemplate what might happen should she have to be out all night ... and after having gone out with a man against whom her father had already a grievance, though he owed him so much!

The change in the road, however, gave her some consolation; it was straight and smooth, and as the wind was now more in her face she felt that she was making southward. But her physical difficulties were increasing. The wind was much stronger, and the mist came boiling up so fast that her goggles got blurred more than ever. Everything around her was becoming wet.

For a few miles—she could only guess at the distance—all went well, and she got back some courage. She still went slowly and carefully; she did not mean to have any mischance now if she could help it. It would not be so very long before she was over the Border. Then most likely she would be out of the mist and she could put on more speed.

Presently she felt that the car was going up a steep incline. When it had been running swiftly she had not felt such, but now it was apparent. It was not a big hill, however, and the run down the other side was exhilarating, though the fear of some obstacle in front damped such pleasure as there was. Even then the pace was not fast; ordinarily it would have been considered as little better than a rapid crawl. For a while, not long but seeming more than long, the road was up-and-down till she saw in the dimness of the mist glimpses of houses, then a few gleams of light from the chinks of shut windows. Here she went very slowly and tooted often. She feared she might do some harm; and the slightest harm now might mean delay. She breathed more freely when she was out in the open again. That episode of the arrest and the prolonged agitation which followed it had unnerved her more than she had thought; and now the mist and the darkness and the uncertainty were playing havoc with her. It was only when she was long past the little place that she regretted she had not stopped to ask if she was

on the right road. There was nothing for it, however, but to go on. The road was all up and down, up and down; but the surface was fairly good, and as the powerful lamps showed her sufficient space ahead to steer she moved along, though it had to be with an agonising slowness. How different it all was, she thought, from that fairy-chariot driving with Him in the morning. The road then seemed straight and level, and movement was an undiluted pleasure! For an instant she closed her wearied eyes as she sighed at the change—and ran off the road-bed.

Happily she was going slowly and recovered herself before more than the front wheels were on the rough mass of old road-scrappings. In a couple of seconds she had backed off and was under way again. She was preternaturally keen now in her outlook. She felt the strain acutely; for the road seemed to be always curving away from her. Moreover there was another cause of concern. Night was coming on. Even in the densest mist or the blackest fog the light or darkness of the sky is to some degree apparent. Now the sense came on her that over the thick mist was darkness. She stopped a moment and getting out looked at her watch in the light of the lamps.

Her heart fell away, away. It was now close to *eight* o'clock. There was no use worrying she felt; nothing to be done but to go on, carefully for the present. When she made up her mind to the worst, her courage began to come back and she could think. She felt that as the wind was now strongly in her face she must be nearing the Firth, and that in time she would pass the Border and be heading for home and father. She jumped into her seat and was off again.

The fog—she realised now that it was not mist but fog—was thicker than ever; the wind being strongly in her face, it seemed above the glare of the powerful lamps, to come boiling up out of the roadway which she could see but dimly. Fear, vague and gaunt, began to overshadow her. But there was no use worrying or thinking of anything except the immediate present which took the whole of her thought and attention. In the face of her surroundings she dared not go fast, dared not stop. And so for a time that seemed endless she pressed on through the fog. Presently she became aware that the wind was now not so much in her teeth. As she was steering by the road-bed she did not notice curves; there was no doubt as to her route, as there did not seem to be any divergent roads at all. On, on, on, on! A road full of hills, not very high nor especially steep but enough to keep a driver on constant watch-out.

At last she felt that she was close to the sea. The wind came fiercely, and the drifting fog seen against the luminous area round the lamps seemed like a whirlpool. There was a salt smell in the air. This gave her some hope. If this were the Firth she must be close to the Border and would soon be at the bridge over which they had entered

Scotland. Instinctively she went forward faster. And at last there surely was a bridge. A narrow enough bridge it was; as she went slowly across it she wondered how it was that they had seemed to fly over it in the morning.

However she could go on now in new hope. She was in England and bye and bye she would come through the fog-belt, and having passed Carlisle would drop down through the Lake roads to Ambleside. Though the fog was dense as ever she did not feel the wind so much; she crowded on—she did not dare go much faster as yet and as she was now climbing a long steep hill she ceased to notice it. After a while, when there came a stronger puff than usual, she noticed that it was on her back—the high hood of the car had protected her for some time past. After a little however the old fear came back upon her. At the present rate of progress to reach home at any time, however late, seemed an impossibility. And all was so dark, and the fog was so dense; and the road didn't seem a bit like that they had come by between Carlisle and the Border. All at once she found that she was crying—crying bitterly. She did not want to stop the car, and so dared not take her hands from the wheel, even to find her pocket-handkerchief. She wept and wept; wept her heart out, whilst all the time mechanically steering by the light of the lamps on the road. Her weeping aided the density of the fog, and with her eyes set on the road and the driving wheel in her hands she did not notice that she was going between houses. She came to a bridge, manifestly of a little more importance than the one she had already passed, and crossed it. The road swayed away to the left; presently this was crossed by another almost at right angles, but she kept straight on. There was no one from whom to ask the way; and had there been anyone she probably would not have seen him. A little way on there was another cross-road but of minor importance; then further on she came to a place of difficult choice. Another cross-road, again almost at right angles; but the continuance of the road she was on showed it to be but a poor road ill-kept. So, too, was that to her left; but the road to the right was broad and well kept. It was undoubtedly the main road; and so keeping to the rule she had hitherto obeyed, she followed it.

She was now feeling somehow in better heart; the fit of crying had relieved her, and some of her courage had come back. She wanted comforting—wanted it badly; but those whose comfort only could prevail were far away; one behind her in Scotland, the others still far away at Ambleside. The latter thought made her desperate. She put on more speed—and with her thoughts and anxieties not in the present but the future, ran up a steep bank. There was a quick snap of something in front of the car; the throbbing of the engine suddenly ceased. With the shock she had been thrown forward upon the wheel, but fortunately the speed had not been great enough to cause her serious injury. The lamps made the fog sufficiently luminous for her

movements, and she scrambled out of the car. She knew she could do nothing, for she was absolutely ignorant of the mechanism, and she had no mechanical skill. The only thing she could do was to go along the road on the blind chance of meeting or finding some one who could help her, or who might be able to assist her in finding better help. And so with a heavy heart, and feet that felt like lead, she went out into the fog. It was a wrench for her to leave the car which in the darkness and the unknown mystery of the fog seemed by comparison a sort of home or shelter. It was an evidence of the mechanical habit of the mind, which came back to her later, that through all her weariness and distress she thought to pin up her white frock before setting out on the dusty journey.

It was astonishing how soon the little patch of light disappeared. When she had taken but a few steps she looked back and found all as dark as it was before her. One thing alone there was which saved her from utter despair: the fog seemed not to be so absolutely dense. In reality it was not that the fog had lessened, but that her eyes, so long accustomed to the glare of the lamps which had prevented her seeing beyond the radius of their power, had now come back to their normal focus. Though the darkness seemed more profound than ever, since there was no point of light whatever, she was actually able to see better. After all, this fog was a sea mist unladen with city smoke, and its darkness was a very different thing from the Cimmerian gloom of a city fog. To her, not accustomed to winter fogs, it was difficult and terrifying. When, however, she began to realise, though unconsciously, that the nebulous wall in front of her fell back with every step she took, her heart began to beat more regularly, and she breathed more freely. It was a terrible position for a delicately nurtured girl to be in. Though she was a brave girl with a full share of self-reliance her absolute ignorance of all around her—even as to what part of the country she was in—had a somewhat paralysing effect upon her. However she had courage and determination. Her race as well as her nature told for her. Her heart might beat hard and her feet be heavy but at any rate she would go on her set road whilst life and strength and consciousness remained to her. She shut her teeth, and in blind despair moved forward in the fog.

In all her after life Joy could never recall the detail of that terrible walk. Like most American girls she was unused to long walks; and after a couple of miles she felt wearied to death. The long emotional strain of the day had told sorely on her strength, and the hopeless nerve-racking tramp on the unknown road through the gloom and mystery of the fog had sapped her natural strength. Looking back on that terrible journey she could remember no one moment from the other, from the time that she lost sight of the lamps until she found herself in a dip in the road passing under a railway bridge. The recognition of the fact reanimated her. It was an evidence that

there was some kind of civilisation somewhere—a fact that she had begun in a vague way to doubt. She would follow that line if she could, for it must lead her to some place where she might find help; where she could send reassuring word to her father, and where there would be shelter. Shelter! At the first gleam of hope her own deplorable position was forced upon her, and she realised all at once her desperate weariness. She could now hardly drag herself along.

Beyond the railway there was a branch road to the left; and this she determined to follow, rather than the main road which went away from the line. She stumbled along it as well as she could. The time seemed endless. In her weariness the flicker of hope which her juxtaposition to the railway had given her died soon away. The fog seemed denser, and the darkness blacker than ever.

The road dipped again under the line; she was glad of that; manifestly she was not straying from it. She hurried on instinctively; found the road wider, and rougher with much use. Her heart beat hard once again, but this time it was with hope.

And then, right in front of her, was a dim gleam of light. This so overcame her that she had to sit down for a moment on the road side. The instant's rest cheered her; she jumped to her feet as though her strength had been at once restored. Feeling in her heart a prayer which her lips had not time to utter, she climbed over a wire fence between her and the light; stumbled across a rough jumble of sleepers and railway irons. Then the light was over her head—the rays were manifest on the fog. She called out:

“Hullo! Hullo! Is there any one awake?” Almost instantly the window through which the light shone was opened and a man looked out:

“Aye! A'm awake! Did ye think A'd be sleepin' on a nicht like this. 'Tis nae time for a signal-man to be aught but awake A'm tellin' ye.”

“Thank God, oh thank God!” Joy's heart was too full for the moment to say more. The man leaned further out:

“Is yon a lassie? What are ye daein' here a nicht like this? Phew! A canna see ma ain hond!”

“Yes, I'm a girl and I'm lost. Will you let me come in?” The man's voice became instantly suspicious.

“Na! na! A canna let ye in. 'Tis no in accord wi' the Company's rules to let a lassie intil the signal-box. Why don't ye go intil the toon?”

“Oh do let me in for a moment,” she pleaded. “I have been lost in the fog, and my motor broke down. I have had to walk so far that I am wearied and tired and frightened; and the sight of a light and the hope of help has finished me!” She sat right down on the ground and began to cry. He heard her sob, and it woke all the man in him. This was no wandering creature whose presence at such a time and place might make trouble for him. He knew from the voice that the woman was young and refined.

“Dinna greet puir lassie!—Dinna greet. A canna leave the box for an instant lest a signal come. But go roond to the recht and ye’ll find a door. Come recht up! Rules or no rules A’m no gangin’ to let ye greet there all by yer lanes. There’s fire here, and when ye’re warmed A can direct ye on yer way intil the toon!”

With glad steps she groped her way to the door. A flood of light seemed to meet her when she opened it, and she hurried up the steep stairs to where the signal-man held open the upper door.

“Coom in lassie an hae a soop o’ ma tea. ’Tis fine and warm! ... Coom in and let me offer ye some refreshment, an’ if A may mak sae bold may A offer ye all A hae that’ll warm ye? Coom in ma’am. Coom in ma leddie!” he said in a crescendo of welcome and respect as he saw Joy’s fine motor coat and recognised her air of distinction.

Glad indeed was Joy to drink from the worthy fellow’s tin tea-bottle which rested beside the stove; glad to sit down in front of the fire. Then indeed she felt the magnitude of her weariness, and in a minute would have been asleep.

But the thought of her father, and all that depended on her action and his knowledge, wakened her to full intellectual activity. She stood up at once and said quickly:

“What place is this?”

“The signal-box of Castle Douglas Junction.”

“And where is that? I think I have heard the name before.”

“’Tis a toon as they ca’ it here. The junction is o’ the Glasgie an’ South Western, the Caledonian, the Port Patrich an’ Wigtownshire, the London an’ North Western, an’ the Midland lines. But for short there are but twa. One frae Kirkcudbright, an’ th’ ither frae Newton Stewart.”

“In what country are we?” Seeing the astonishment in his face she went on: “I am an American, and not familiar with the district. We came from England this morning—from Westmoreland—from Ambleside—and I am confused about the Border. I had to drive myself because my—we got into trouble for driving fast, and I had to come on

alone. And then the fog overtook me. I went along as well as I could. Are we anywhere near Carlisle?" Her face fell as she saw the shake of his head:

"Eh ma leddie but ye're mony a mile frae Carlisle. 'Tis over fifty miles be the line. Ye maun hae lost yer way sair. Ye're in Kirkcudbright-shire the noo." Her heart sank:

"Oh I must send a telegram at once."

"Ye canna telegraph the nicht ma leddie! The office is closed till eight the morn's morn."

"My God! What shall I do. My father arrived from London to-night and he does not know where I am. I came out for a drive and thought to be back in good time to meet him. He will be in despair. Is there no way in which I can send word? It is not a matter of expenses; I shall pay anything if it can be done!" She looked at him in an agony of apprehension. The man was stirred by the depth of emotion and by her youth and beauty; and his clever Scotch brain began to work. His mouth set fast in a hard line and his rough heavy brows began to wrinkle. After a pause he said:

"A'll do what A can, ma leddie; though A can't be sure if 'twill wark. The telegraphs are closed. Even if we could find an operator it wouldn't be possible to get the wires. Our own lines are closed, for we'll hae no traffic till morn." Here an idea struck Joy and she interrupted him:

"Could I not get a special train? I am willing to pay anything?"

"Lord love ye, ma leddy, they don't have specials on bit lines like this. Ye couldn't get one nigher than Glasgie, an' not there at this time o' day. Let alone they'd no send in such a fog anyhow. But I'm thinkin' that A can telephone to Dumfries. The operator o' oor line there is a freend o' mine, an' if he's on dooty he'll telephone on to Carlisle wheer there's sure to be some one at the place. An' mayhap the latter'll telephone on till Ambleside. So, if there be any awake there, they'll send to the hotel. Is it a hotel yer faither'll be in?"

"Oh thank you, thank you," said Joy seizing his hand in a burst of gratitude. "I'll be for ever grateful to you if you'll be so good!"

"A'm thinkin'" he went on "that perhaps 'twill cost yer ladyship a mickle—perhaps a muckle; but A dar say ye'll no mind that ..."

"Oh no, no! It will be pleasure to pay anything. See, I have plenty of money!" She pulled out her purse.

“Na! na! Not yet ma leddie. ’Tis no for masel—unless yer ladyship insists on it, later on. ’Tis for the laddies that will do what they can. Ye see there may be some trouble o’er this. We signal-men and offeecials generally are not supposed to attend to aught outside o’ the routine. But if it should be that there is trouble to us puir folk, A’m sure yer ladyship an’ some o’ yer graan’ freens’ll no see us wranged!”

“Oh no indeed. My father and Mr. —— and all our friends will see to it that you shall never suffer, no matter what happens.”

“Well now, ma leddy—if ye’ll joost write down your message A’ll do what A can. But ’twill be wiser if ye gang awa intil a hotel an’ rest ye. A can send the message better when A’m quit o’ ye. Forbye ye see ’tis no quite respectable to hae a bonny lassie here ower lang. Ma wife is apt to be a wee jealous; an’ it’s no wise to gie cause where nane there is.”

“But I do not know where to go—” she began. He interrupted her hastily:

“There’s a graan hotel i’ the toon—verra fine it is; but A’m thinkin’ that yer ladyship, bein’ by yer lonesome, may rather care to go to a quieter house. An’ as A’d recommend ye to seek the ‘Walter Scott’ hotel. ’Tis kep by verra decent folk, an’ though small is verra respectable an’ verra clean. Say that yer kent by Tammas Macpherson an’ that will vouch for ye, seein’ that ye’re a bit lassie by yer lanes. ’Tis a most decent place entirely, an’ A’m tellin’ ye that the Sheriff o’ Galloway himsel’ aye rests there when he comes to the toon.”

Joy wrote her message on the piece of paper which he had provided whilst speaking:

“To Col. Ogilvie, Inn of Greeting, Ambleside: Dearest Daddy I have been caught in a heavy fog and lost, but happily found my way here. I shall return by the first train in the morning. Love to mother. I am well and safe. Joy.”

Then the signal man gave her explicit directions as to finding the house. As she was going away he said with a diffident anxiety:

“To what figure will yer ladyship gang in this—this meenistration? A’d joost like to ken in case o’ necessity?” She answered quickly:

“Oh anything you like—twenty-five dollars—I mean five pounds—ten pounds—twenty—a hundred, anything, anything so that my father gets the message soon.” He looked amazed for a moment. Then as he held open the door deferentially he said in a voice in which awe blended with respect:

“Dinna fash yerself more ma leddie. Yer message will gang for sure; an’ gang quick. Ye may sleep easy the nicht, an’ wi’out a thocht o’ doobt. An’ ll leave wi’ ma kinsman Jamie Macpherson o’ the Walter Scott ma neem an’ address in case yer ladyship wishes me to send to yon the memorandum o’ the twenty poons.”

Joy found her way without much difficulty to the Walter Scott. The house was all shut up, but she knocked and rang; and presently the door was unchained and opened. The Boots looked for a moment doubtful when he saw a lady alone; but when she said:

“I am lost in the fog, and Mr. Thomas Macpherson of the railway told me I should get lodging here,” he opened the door wide and she walked in. He chained the door, and left her for a few minutes; but returned with a young woman who eyed her up and down somewhat suspiciously. Joy seemed to smell danger and said at once:

“I got lost in the fog, and the motor met with an accident. So I had to leave it on the road and walk on.”

“An’ your shawfer?” asked the doubting young woman.

“He got into trouble for driving too fast, and had to be left behind.”

“Very weel, ma’am. What name shall A put down?”

Joy’s mind had been working. Her tiredness and her sleepiness were brushed aside by the pert young woman’s manifest suspicion. She remembered Mr. Hardy’s caution not to give her own name; and now, face to face with a direct query, remembered and used the one which had been given to her on the *Cryptic*. It had this advantage that it would put aside any suspicion or awkwardness arising from her unprotected position, arriving as she did in such an un-accredited way. So she answered at once:

“Athlyne. Lady Athlyne!” The young woman seemed impressed. Saying: “Excuse me a moment” she went into the bar where she lit a candle. She came back in a moment and said very deferentially:

“It’s ’all recht yer ladyship. There’s twa rooms, a sittin’-room an’ a bed-room. They were originally kept for the Sheriff, but he sent word that he was no comin’. So when the wire came frae th’ ither pairty the rooms were kept for him. When no one arrived the name was crossed aff the slate. But it’s a’ recht! Shall I light a fire yer Ledyship?”

“Oh no! I only require a bedroom. I must get away by the first train in the morning. I shall just lie down as I am. If you can get me a glass of milk and a biscuit that is all I require. If it were possible I should like the milk hot; but if that is not convenient it won’t matter.” As they went upstairs the girl said:

“Ye’ll forgie me yer Leddyship, but I didna ken wha ye were. Mrs. Macpherson was early up to bed the nicht, when the fog had settled doon and she knew there was no more traffic. To-morrow is a heavy day here, and things keep up late; and she wanted to be ready for it. An’ she’s mighty discreet about ony comin’ here wi’oot—wi’oot——” She realised that she was getting into deep water and turned the conversation. “There is yer candle lit. The fire in the kitchen is hearty yet, an’ I’ll bring yer milk hot in the half-o’ two-twos. I’ll leave word that ye’re to be called in good time in the morn.”

Within a few minutes she came back with the hot milk. Joy was too tired and too anxious to eat; and refusing all proffers of service and of help as to clothing, bade the girl good night. She just drank the milk; and having divested herself of her shoes and stockings which were soiled with travel and of all but her under-clothing, crept in between the sheets. The warmth and the luxury of rest began to tell at once; within a very few minutes she was sound asleep.