"CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS"

A STORY OF THE GRAND BANKS.

BY RUDYARD KIPLING.

Author of "The Jungle Book," "Barrack-Room Ballads," &c.

Copyright 1896 by Rudyard Kipling.

CHAPTER VI.

The thing that struck him most was the exceedingly casual way in which some craft loafed about the broad Atlantic. Fishing boats, as Dan said, were naturally dependent on the courtesy and wisdom of their neighbors, but one expected better things of steamers. That was after another interesting interview, when they had been chased for three miles by a big lumbering old cattle boat, all boarded over on the upper deck, that smelt like a thousand cattle pens. A very excited officer yelled at them through a speaking trumpet, and she lay and lolloped helplessly on the water while Disko ran the We're Here under her lee and gave the skipper a piece of his mind. "Where might ye be—eh? Ye don't deserve to be anywheres. You barnyard tramps go hogging the road on the high seas with no blame consideration for your neighbors, an' your eyes in your coffee cups instid o' in your silly heads."

At this the skipper danced and said something about Disko's own eyes. "We haven't had an observation for three days. D'you suppose we can run her blind?" he shouted.

"Wa-al, I can," Disko retorted. "What's come to your lead? Et it? Can't ye smell bottom, or are them cattle too rank?"

"What d'ye feed 'em?" said Uncle Salters with intense seriousness, for the smell of the pens woke all the farmer in him. "They say they fall off dretful on a v'yage. Dunno as it's any o' my business, but I've a kind o' notion that oil cake broke small an' sprinkled——"

"Thunder," said a cattle man in a red jersey as he looked over the side. "What asylum did they let His Whiskers out of?"

"Young feller," Salters began, standing up in the fore rigging, "let me tell yeou 'fore we go any further that I've——"

The officer on the bridge took off his cap with immense politeness. "Excuse me," he said, "but I've asked for my reckoning. If the agricultural person with the hair will kindly shut his head, the sea-green barnacle with the wall eye may condescend to enlighten us."

"Naow you've made a show o' me, Salters," said Disko angrily. He could not stand up to that sort of guying, and snapped out the latitude and longitude without more lectures.

"Well, that's a boat load of lunatics," said the skipper, as he rung up the engine room and tossed a bundle of newspapers into the schooner.

"Of all the blamed fools next to you, Salters, him an' his crowd are abaout the likeliest I've ever seen," said Disko as the We're Here slid away. "I was jest givin' him my jedgment on lullsikin' round these waters like a lost child, an' you must cut in with your farmin'. Can't ye never keep things sep'rate?"

Harvey, Dan, and the others stood back, winking one to the other and full of joy, but Disko and Salters wrangled seriously till evening, Salters arguing that a cattle boat was practically a barn on blue water, and Disko insisting that, even if this were the case, decency and fisher pride demanded that he should have kept "things sep'rate." Long Jack stood it in silence for a time—an angry skipper makes an unhappy crew—and then he spoke across the table after supper:

"Fwhat's the good o' bodderin' fwhat they'll say?" said he.

"They'll tell thet tale agin us fer years—that's all," said Disko. "Oil cake sprinkled!"

"With salt, o' course," said Salters the impenitent, reading the farming reports from a week-old New York paper.

"It's plumb mortifyin' to all my feelin's," the skipper went on.

"Can't see ut that way," said Long Jack the peacemaker. "Look at her, Disko! Is there another packet afloat this day in this weather cud ha' met a tramp an', over an' above givin' her her reckonin'—over an' above that, I say—cud ha' discoursed wid her quite intelligent on the management av steers an' such at sea? Forgit ut! Av coorse they will not. 'Twas the most compenius conversation that iver accrued. Double game an' twice runnin'—all to us." Dan kicked Harvey under the table, and Harvey choked in his cup.

"Well," said Salters, who felt that his honor had been somewhat plastered, "I said I didn't know as 'twuz any business o' mine, 'fore I spoke."

"An' right there," said Tom Platt, experienced in discipline and etiquette. "Right there, I take it, Disko, you should ha' asked him to stop ef the conversation wuz likely, in your jedgment, to be anyways—what it shouldn't."

"I dunno but that's so," said Disko, who saw his way to an honorable retreat from a fit of the dignities.

"Why, o' course it was so," said Salters, "you bein' skipper here; and I'd cheerful hev stopped on a hint—not from any leadin' or conviction, but fer the sake o' bearin' an example to these two blame boys of aours."

"Didn't I tell you, Harve, 'twould come araound to us 'fore we'd done? Always those blamed boys. But I wouldn't have missed the show fer half share in a halibutter," Dan whispered.

Still, things should ha' been kep' sep'rate," said Disko, and the light of new argument lit in Salters's eye as he crumbled cut plug into his pipe.

"There's a power av vartue in keepin' things sep'rate," said Long Jack, intent on stilling the storm. "That's fwhat Steyning of Steyning and Hare's f'und when he sent Counahan fer skipper on the Marilla D. Kuhn, instid o' Cap Newton, that was took with inflam'try rheumatism an' couldn't go. Counahan the navigator we called him."

"Nick Counahan, he never went aboard fer a night 'thout a pond o' rum somewheres in the manifest," said Tom Platt, playing up to the lead. "He used to bum araound the c'mmission houses to Boston lookin' fer the Lord to make him Captain of a towboat on his merits. Sam Coy, up to Atlantic avenoo, give him his board free for a year or more on account of his stories. Nick Counahan the navigator. Tck! Tck! Dead these fifteen year, ain't he?"

"Seventeen, I guess. He died the year the Caspar McVeagh was built; but he could niver keep things sep'rate. Steyning tuk him fer the reason the thief tuk the hot stove—bekaze there was nothin' else that season. The men was all to the Banks, and Counahan he whacked up an iverlastin' hard crowd fer crew. Rum! Ye cud ha' floated the Marilla, insurance an' all, in fwhat they stowed aboard her. They lef' Boston harbor for the great Grand Bank wid a roarin' nor'wester behind 'em an' all hands full to the bung. An' the hivins looked after thim, for divil a watch did they set, an' divil a rope did they lay hand to, till they'd seen the bottom av a fifteen-gallon cask o' bug juice. That was about wan week, so far as Counahan remembered. (If I cud only tell the tale as he told ut.) All that whole the wind blew like ould glory, an' the Marilla—'twas summer, and they'd give her a fore topmast—struck her gait and kept it up. Then Counahan tuk the hog yoke an' thrembled over it for a whoile, an' made out, betwix that an' the chart an' the singin' in his head, that they was to the south'ard o' Sable Island, gettin' along glorious, but speakin' nothin'. Then they broached another keg, an' quit speculatin' about anythin' fer another spell. The Marilla she lay down when she dropped Boston light, and she never lifted her lee rail up to that time—hustlin' on one an the same slant. But they saw no weed, nor gulls, nor schooners; an' prisintly they observed they'd bin out a matter o' fourteen days, and they mistrusted the Bank had suspended payment. So they sounded, an' got sixty fathom. 'That's me,' sez Counahan. 'That's me iv'ry time. I've run her slat on the Bank fer you, an' when we get thirty fathom we'll turn in like little men. Counahan is the b'y,' sez he, 'Counahan the navigator.'

"Nex' cast they got ninety. Sez Counahan: 'Either the lead-line's tuk to stretchin' or else the Bank's sunk.'

"They hauled ut up, bein' just about in that state when ut seemed right an' reasonable, and sat down on the deck countin' the knots, an' gettin' her snarled up hijjus. The Marilla she'd struck her gait, an' she held ut, an' prisintly along come a tramp, an' Counahan spoke her.

"'Hev ye seen any fishin' boats now?' sez he, quite casual.

"'There's lashin's av them off the Irish coast,' sez the tramp.

"'Oh, go shake yourself,' sez Counahan. 'Fwhat have I to do wid the Irish coast?'

"'Fwhat are ye doin' here?' sez the tramp.

"'Sufferin' Christianity,' says Counahan (he always said that whin his pumps sucked an' he was not feelin' good); 'sufferin' Christianity,' he sez, 'Where am I at?'

"'Thirty-five mile west-sou'west o' Cape Clear,' sez the tramp, 'if that's any consolation to you.'

"Counahan fetched wan jump, four feet siven inches, measured by the cook.

"'Consolation!' sez he, bould as brass. 'D'ye take me fer a dialect? Thirty-five mile from Cape Clear, an' fourteen days from Boston Light. Sufferin' Christianity, 'tis a record, an' by the same token I've a mother to Skibbereen!' Think av ut! The gall av um! But ye see he could niver keep things sep'rate.

"The crew was mostly Cork an' Kerry men, barrin' one Marylander that wanted to go back, but they called him a mutineer, an' they ran the old Marilla into Skibbereen, an' they had an illigant time visitin' around with friends on the ould sod for a week. Thin they wint back, an' it cost 'em two an' thirty days to beat to the Banks again. 'Twas gettin' on towards fall by thin, and grub was low, so Counahan ran her back to Boston, an' no more bones to ut."

"What did Steyning say?" Harvey asked.

"Fwhat could they? The fish was on the Banks, an' Counahan was at T-wharf talkin' av his record trip east! They took their satisfaction out o' that, an' ut all came av not keepin' the crew and the rum sep'rate in the first place; an' confusin' Skibbereen wid Queereau. Counahan the navigator!"

"Once I was in the Lucy Holmes," said Manuel, in his gentle voice. "They not want any of her feesh in Gloucester. Eh, wha-at? Give us no price. So we go across the water, and think to sell to some Fayal man. Then it blow fresh, and we cannot see well. Eh, wha-at? Then it blow some more fresh, and we go down below and drive very fast—no one know where. By and by we see a land, and it get some hot. Then come two, three nigger in a brick. Eh, wha-at? We ask where we are, and they say—now, what you all think?"

"Grand Canary," said Disko, after a moment. Manuel shook his head, smiling.

"Blanco," said Tom Platt.

"No. Worse than that. We was below Bezagos, and the brick she was from Liberia! So we sell our fish there! Not bad, so? Eh, wha-at?"

"Can a schooner like this go right across to Africa?" said Harvey.

"Go araound the Horn ef there's anythin' worth goin' fer, and the grub holds aout," said Disko. "My father, he run his packet, an' she was a kind o' pinkey, abeout fifty ton, I guess—the Rupert—he run her over to Greenland's icy mountains the year ha'af our fleet got tryin' after cod there. An' what's more, he took my mother along with him—to show her haow the money was earned, I presoom—an' they was all iced up, an' I was born at Disko. Don't remember nothin' abaout it, o' course. We come back when the ice eased in the spring, but they named me fer the place. Kinder mean trick to put up on a baby, but we make mistakes in aour lives."

"Sure. Sure," said Salters, wagging his head. "All baound to make mistakes, an' I tell you two boys here thet after you've made a mistake—ye don't make fewer'n a hundred a day—the next best thing's to own up to it, like men."

Long Jack winked one tremendous wink that embraced all hands, except Disko and Salters, and the incident was closed.

Then they made berth after berth to the northward, the dories out almost every day, running along the east edge of the Grand Bank in thirty to forty fathom water, and fishing steadily.

It was here Harvey first met the squid, who is one of the best cod baits, but uncertain in his moods. They were waked out of their bunks one black night by yells of "Squid O!" from Salters, and for an hour and a half every soul aboard hung over his squid-jig—a piece of lead painted red and armed at the lower end with a circle of pins bent backward like half-opened umbrella ribs. The squid—for some unknown reason—wraps himself round this thing and is hauled up ere he can escape from the pins. But as he leaves his home he squirts first a stream of water and next a stream of ink into his captor's face; and it was curious to see the men weaving their heads from side to side to dodge the shot. They were as black as sweeps when the flurry ended; but a pile of fresh squid lay on the deck, and the cod thinks very well of a little shiny piece of squid tentacle at the tip of a clam-baited hook. Next day they caught many fish, and met the Carrie Pitman, to whom they shouted their luck, and she wanted to trade—seven cod for one fair-sized squid; but Disko would not agree at the price, and the Carrie dropped sullenly down wind and anchored half a mile away, in the hope of striking on to some for herself.

Disko said nothing till after supper, when he sent Dan and Manuel out to buoy the We're Here's cable and announced his intention of going to bed with the broadaxe. Dan naturally repeated these remarks to a dory from the Carrie, who wanted to know why they were buoying their cable since they were not on rocky bottom. "Dad sez he wouldn't trust a ferryboat within five mile o' you," Dan howled cheerfully.

"Why don't he git out then? Who's hinderin'?" said the other.

"'Cause you've jest the same ez lee-bowed him, an' he don't take that from any boat, not to speak of a driftin' gurry butt as you be."

"She ain't driftin' any this trip," said the man angrily, for the Carrie had an unsavory reputation for breaking her ground tackle.

"Then haow d'you make berths?" said Dan. "It's her best p'int o' sailin'. An' ef she's quit driftin', what in thunder are you doin' with a new jibboom?" That shot went home.

"Hey, you Portugoosy organ grinder, take your monkey back to Gloucester. Go back to school, Dan Troop," was the answer.

"Overalls, overalls," yelled Dan, who knew that one of the Carrie's crew had worked in an overall factory the winter before.

"Shrimp! Gloucester shrimp! Get aout, you Novy."

To call a Gloucester man a Nova Scotian is not well received. Dan answered in kind.

"Novy yourself, ye Scrabble-towners! ye Chatham wreckers! Get aout with your brick in your stockin'!" And the forces separated, but Chatham had the worst of it.

"I knew how 'twould be," said Disko. "She's drawed the wind raound already. Some one ought to put a deesist on that boat. She's snore till midnight, an' jest when we're gettin' our sleep she'll strike adrift. Good job we ain't crowded with craft hereaways. But I ain't goin' to up anchor fer her. She may hold—perhaps."

The wind, which had hauled round, rose at sundown and blew steadily. There was not enough sea, though, to disturb even a dory's tackle, but the Carrie Pitman was a law unto herself. At the end of the boys' watch they heard the crack-crack-crack of a huge muzzle-loading revolver aboard her.

"Glory, glory, hallelujah!" sung Dan. "Here she comes, dad; butt-end first, walkin' in her sleep same's she done on 'Queereau.'"

With any other boat Disko would have taken his chances, but now he cut the cable as the Carrie Pitman lurched down directly upon them. The We're Here, under jib and riding-sail, gave her no more room than was absolutely necessary. Disko did not wish to spend a week hunting for his cable, but scuttled up into the wind as the Carrie passed within easy hail, a silent and angry boat, at the mercy of a raking broadside of bank chaff.

"Good evenin'," said Disko, raising his head gear, "an' haow does your garden grow?"

"Go to Ohio an' hire a mule," said Uncle Salters. "We don't want no farmers here."

"Will I lend you my dory anchor?" cried Long Jack.

"Unship your rudder an' stick it in the mud," said Tom Platt.

"Say!" Dan's voice rose shrill. "Sa-ay! Is there a strike in the overall factory, or hev they hired girls, ye Shackamaxons?"

"Veer out the tiller lines," cried Harvey, "and nail 'em to the bottom." That was a salt-flavored jest he had been put up to by Tom Platt. Manuel leaned over the stern and yelled: "Johana Morgan play the organ! Ahaaaa!" He flourished his broad thumb with a gesture of unspeakable contempt and derision, while little Penn covered himself with glory by piping: "Gee a little. Hssh! Come here. Haw!"

They rode on their chain for the rest of the night, a short, snappy, uneasy motion as Harvey found, and wasted half the next forenoon recovering the cable. But the boys agreed the trouble was cheap at the price of triumph and glory, and thought over all the things that they might have said to the discomfited Carrie.

CHAPTER VII.

Next day they fell in with more sails, all circling slowly from the east northerly toward the west. But just when they expected to make the shoals by the Virgin the fog shut down, and they anchored, surrounded by tinklings of invisible bells. There was not much fishing, but occasionally dory met dory in the fog and exchanged news.

That night, a little before dawn, Dan and Harvey, who had been sleeping most of the day, tumbled out to "hook" fried pies. There was no reason why they should not have taken them openly, but they tasted better so, and it made the cook angry. The heat and smell below drove them on deck with their plunder, and they found Disko at the bell, which he handed over to Harvey.

"Keep her goin'," he said. "I mistrust I hear somethin'. Ef it's anything, I'm best where I be to get at things."

It was a forlorn little jingle; the thick air seemed to pinch it off; and in the pauses Harvey heard the muffled shriek of a liner's siren, and he knew enough to know what that meant. It came to him, with horrible distinctness, how a boy in a cherry-colored jersey—he despised fancy blazers now with all a fisherman's contempt—how an ignorant, rowdy boy had once said it would be "gay" if a steamer ran down a fishing boat. That boy had a stateroom with a hot and cold bath, and spent ten minutes each morning picking over a gilt-edged bill of fare. And that same boy—no, his very much older brother—was up at four of the dim dawn in streaming, crackling oilskins, hammering, literally for the dear life, on a bell smaller than the steward's breakfast bell, while somewhere, close at hand, a thirty-foot steel stem was storming along at twenty miles an hour. The bitterest thought of all was that there were folks asleep in dry cabins who would never learn that they had massacred a boat before breakfast. So Harvey rang the bell.

"Yes, they slow daown one turn o' their blame propeller," said Dan, applying himself to Manuel's conch, "fer to keep inside the law, an' that's consolin' when we're all at the bottom. Hark to her. She's a humper."

"Hoooo—whooo—whupp," went the siren. "Wingle—tingle—tink," went the bell. "Graaa—ouch," went the conch, while sea and sky were all milled up in milky fog. Then Harvey felt that he was near a moving body, and found himself looking up and up at the wet edge of a cliff-like bow, leaping, it seemed, directly over the schooner. A jaunty little feather of water curled in front of it, and as it lifted it showed a long ladder of Roman numerals—XV., XVI., XVII., XVIII., and so forth—on a salmon-colored, gleaming side. It tilted forward and downward with a heart-stilling "Ssssooo"; the ladder disappeared; a line of brass-rimmed portholes flashed past; a jet of steam puffed in Harvey's helplessly uplifted hands; a spout of hot water roared along the rail of the We're Here, and the little schooner staggered and shook in a rush of screw-torn water, as a liner's stern vanished in the fog. Harvey got ready to faint or be sick, or both, when he heard a crack like a trunk thrown on a sidewalk, and, all small in his ear, a far-away telephone voice drawling: "Heave to. You've sunk us."

"Is it us?" he gasped.

"Shucks, no; some one outside. Ring! We're goin' to look," said Dan, running out a dory.

In half a minute all, except Harvey, Penn, and the cook, were overside and away. Presently a schooner's foremast, snapped clean across, drifted past the bows. Then an empty green dory came by, knocking on the We're Here's side as though it wished to be taken in. Then followed something, face down, in a blue jersey, but—it was not the whole of a man. Penn changed color and caught his breath with a click. Harvey pounded despairingly at the bell, for he feared they might be sunk at any minute, and jumped at Dan's hail as the crew came back.

"The Jennie Cushman," said Dan, hysterically, "cut clean in half—graound up an' trompled on at that! Not a quarter of a mile away. Dad's got the old man. There ain't any one else, and—there was his son, too. Oh, Harve, Harve, I can't stand it! I've seen——" He dropped his head on his arms and sobbed while the others dragged a gray-headed man aboard.

"What did you pick me up for?" the stranger groaned. "Disko, what did you pick me up for?"

Disko dropped a heavy hand on his shoulder, for the man's eyes were wild and his lips trembled as he stared at the silent crew. Then up and spoke Pennsylvania Pratt, who was also Haskins or Rich or McVitty when Uncle Salters forgot; and his face was changed on him from the face of a fool to the countenance of an old, wise man, and he said in a strong voice: "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord! I was—I am a minister of the Gospel. Leave him to me."

"Oh, you be, be you?" said the man. "Then pray my son back to me! Pray back a nine-thousand-dollar boat an' a thousand quintal of fish. If you'd left me alone my widow could ha' gone on to the Provident an' worked fer her board, an' never known—an' never known. Now I'll hev to tell her."

"There ain't nothin' to say," said Disko. "Better lie down a piece, Jason Olley."

When a man has lost his only son, his summer's work, and his means of livelihood in thirty seconds, it is hard to make consolation.

"All Gloucester men, wasn't they?" said Tom Platt, fiddling with a dory becket.

"Oh, that don't make no odds," said Jason, wringing the wet from his beard. "I'll be rowin' summer boarders araound East Gloucester this fall." He rolled heavily to the rail, singing:

> Happy birds that sing and fly
> Round Thine altars, O Most High!

"Come with me. Come below," said Penn, as if he had a right to give orders. Their eyes met and fought for a quarter of a minute.

"I don't know who you be, but I'll come," said Jason submissively. "Mebbe I'll get back some o' the—some o' the—nine thousand dollars." Penn led him into the cabin and slid the door behind.

"That ain't Penn," cried Uncle Salters. "It's Jacob Boller, an'—he's remembered Johnstown. I never seed sech eyes in any livin' man's head. What's to do naow? What'll I do naow?"

They could hear Penn's voice and Jason's together. Then Penn's went on alone, and Salters slipped off his hat, for Penn was praying. Presently the little man came up the steps, huge drops of sweat on his face, and looked at the crew. Dan was still sobbing by the wheel.

"He don't know us," Salters groaned. "It's all to do over again, checkers and everything—an' what'll he say to me?"

Penn spoke; they could hear that it was to strangers. "I have prayed," said he. "Our people believe in prayer. I have prayed for the life of this man's son. Mine were drowned before my eyes, she and my eldest, and the others. Shall a man be more wise than his Maker? I prayed never for their lives, but I have prayed for this man's son, and he will surely be sent him."

Salters looked pleadingly at Penn to see if he remembered.

"How long have I been mad?" Penn asked suddenly.

"Pshaw, Penn. You weren't never mad," Salters began. "Only a little distracted like."

"I saw the houses strike the bridge before the fires broke out. I do not remember any more. How long ago is that?"

"I can't stand it. I can't stand it," cried Dan, and Harvey whimpered in sympathy.

"Abaout five year," said Disko in a shaking voice.

"Then I have been a charge on some one every day of that time. Who was the man?"

Disko pointed to Salters.

"Ye hain't—ye hain't," cried the seafarmer, twisting his hands together. "Ye've more'n earned your keep twice told; an' there's money owin' you, Penn, besides ha'af o' my quarter share in the boat, which is yours fer value received."

"You are good men. I can see that in your faces. But——"

"Mother av Mercy," whispered Long Jack, "an' he's been wid us all these trips! He's clean bewitched."

A schooner's bell struck up alongside, and a voice hailed through the thinning fog: "O Disko! Heard abaout the Jennie Cushman?"

"They have found his son," cried Penn. "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord!"

"Got Jason aboard here," Disko answered, but his voice quavered. "There warn't any one else."

"We've f'und one, though. 'Run acrost him snarled up in a mess o' lumber thet might ha' bin a foc'sle. His head's cut some."

"Who is he?"

The We're Here's heart-beats answered one another.

"Guess it's young Olley," the voice drawled.

Penn raised his hands and said something in German. Harvey could have sworn that a bright sun was shining upon his lifted face; but the drawl went on: "Sa-ay! You fellers guyed us consid'rable t'other night."

"We don't feel like guyin' any now," said Disko.

"I know it; but to tell the honest truth we was kinder—kinder driftin' when we run agin young Olley."

It was the irrepressible Carrie Pitman, and a roar of unsteady laughter went up from the deck of the We're Here.

"Hedn't you 'baout's well send the old man aboard? We're runnin' in fer more bait an' graound tackle. Guess you won't want him, anyway, an' this blame windlass work makes us short-handed. We'll take keer of him. He married my woman's aunt."

"I'll give you anything in the boat," said Troop.

"Don't want nothin', 'less, mebbe, an' anchor that'll hold. Say, young Olley's gittin' baulky an' excited. Send the old man along."

Penn waked him from his stupor of despair, and Tom Platt rowed him over. He went away without a word of thanks, not knowing what was to come, and the fog closed over all.

"And now," said Penn, drawing a deep breath as though about to preach. "And now——" the erect body sank like a sword driven home into the scabbard; the light faded from the overbright eyes; the voice returned to its usual pitiful little titter—"and now," said Pennsylvania Pratt, "do you think it's too early for a game of checkers, Mr. Salters?"

"The very thing—the very thing I was goin' to say myself," cried Salters promptly. "It beats all, Penn, how ye git on to what's in a man's mind."

The little fellow blushed and meekly followed Salters forward.

"Up anchor! Hurry. Let's quit these crazy waters," shouted Disko, and never was he more swiftly obeyed.

"Now what in creation d'ye suppose is the meanin' o' that all?" said Long Jack, when they were working through the fog once more.

"The way I sense it," said Disko at the wheel, "is this: 'The Jennie Cushman business comin' on an empty stummick——'"

"He—we saw one of them go by," sobbed Harvey.

"An' that, o' course, kinder hove him outer water, julluk runnin' a craft ashore, hove him right aout, I take it, to rememberin' Johnstown an' Jacob Boller an' such-like reminiscences. Well, consolin' Jason there held him up a piece, same's shorin' up a boat. Then, bein' weak, them props slipped an' slipped an' he slided down the ways an' he's water-borne agin. That's haow I sense it."

They decided that Disko was correct.

"'Twould ha' broke Salters all up," said Long Jack, "if Penn had stayed Jacob Bollerin'. Did you see his face when Penn asked who he'd been charged on all these years? How is ut, Salters?"

"Asleep—dead asleep. Turned in like a child," Salters replied, tiptoeing aft. "There won't be no grub till he wakes, natural. Did ye ever see sech a gift in prayer? He everlastin'ly hiked young Olley outer the ocean. That's my belief. Jason was tur'ble praoud of his boy, an' I mistrusted all along 'twas a jedgment on worshippin vain idols."

"There's others jest as sot," said Disko.

"That's diff'runt," Salters retorted quickly. "Penn's not all caulked, an' I ain't only doin' my duty by him."

They waited, those hungry men, three hours, till Penn reappeared with a smooth face and a blank mind. He said he believed he had been dreaming. Then he wanted to know why they were so silent, and they could not tell him.

Disko worked all hands mercilessly for the next three or four days, and when they could not go out, turned them into the hold to stack the ship's stores into smaller compass, to make more room for the fish. The packed mass ran from the cabin partition to the sliding door behind the foc'sle stove; and Disko showed how there is great art in stowing cargo so as to bring a schooner to her best draught. The crew were thus kept lively till they recovered their spirits, and Harvey was tickled with a rope's end by Long Jack for being, as the Galway man said, "sorrowful as a sick cat over fwhat couldn't be helped." He did a great deal of thinking in those dreary days; and told Dan what he thought, and Dan agreed with him—even to the extent of asking for fried pies instead of hooking them.

But a week later the two nearly upset the Hattie S. in a wild attempt to stab a shark with an old bayonet tied to a gob stick. The grim brute rubbed alongside the dory begging for small fish, and between the three of them it was a mercy they all got off alive.

At last, after playing blind man's buff in the fog, there came a morning when Disko shouted down the foc'sle: "Hurry, boys. We're in taown."

(To be continued.)

THE MUTABLE MANY

BY

ROBERT BARR.

Copyright, 1896, by Robert Barr.

CHAPTER XXIII.

On reaching the railway station Marsten's first regret was that he had not taken all the money offered him on the day of his discharge. He had no idea that his quest would lead him to a fashionable and expensive seaside resort. Prudence proposed to him that he should defer his visit to Eastbourne until he had more money; but, he said to himself, if he did not go at once, Sartwell would be certain to learn from his wife of the visit to Wimbledon, and there might be increased difficulties in getting to see Edna at Eastbourne. As it was, he had no idea how the meeting he wished for was to be brought about, for doubtless Sartwell, when sending his daughter to the school, had given the lady into whose care Edna was intrusted a hint of his object in placing her there. Marsten stepped out of the Southwestern carriage at Clapham Junction, and found he had but half an hour to wait for the Eastbourne train. He smiled when he remembered the care and thought he was giving to the union, after having so frequently asserted that he was willing to devote his life to the work. It was a blessing that all the union needed at the moment was to be let alone.

When he arrived at Eastbourne he immediately set out in search of High Cliff School, thinking it well to reconnoitre the situation, hoping the sight of it might suggest some plan that was practical. He would have one thing in his favor, which was that Sartwell would not have warned his daughter against seeing him, fearing to arouse her curiosity or suspicions. If, then, he got one word with Edna alone, he had no fear but that he could arrange for a longer interview. He found High Cliff to be a large house, situated in extensive grounds, with a view of the sea, but with a wall that was even more discouraging than the glass-topped barrier at Wimbledon.

Marsten saw there was going to be more difficulty in getting an interview with his sweetheart than he had at first imagined. He thought for a moment of applying boldly at the front door for permission to see the young student, but quickly dismissed the plan as impracticable. He was certain that so shrewd a man as Sartwell would have more foresight than to leave arrangements at such loose ends that the first person who called to see his daughter would be admitted, even if the ordinary rules of the school allowed such a thing, which was most improbable. He realized that the place was not to be taken by assault, but rather by slow and patient siege; so, wandering down by the shore, he sat on the shingle, within sound of the soothing waves, and gave his whole attention to the problem.

If a man whose ambition it was to emancipate the worker, and change the whole relationship between capital and labor, was going to be baffled in seeking half an hour's talk with a young girl, not immured in a prison or a convent, but merely residing in an ordinary English school, then were his chances of solving the larger question remote and shadowy. Thus he came to bind the two enterprises together, saying to himself that success in the one would indicate success in the other. The first thing to do, then, was to secure some cheap lodging—if such a thing were to be found in this fashionable resort—and so hoard his money and bide his time, for he was convinced he would make haste only by going slowly. It was a case in which undue precipitancy would make ultimate victory impossible. He knew that some time during the day the pupils would walk, though guarded doubtless by vigilant governesses. It might be possible to pass this interesting procession, and, while doing so, to slip a note into Edna's hand; but even as Marsten thought of this plan he dismissed it as impracticable, for Edna would be so surprised at such an inexplicable proceeding on his part that she would not have the presence of mind necessary to conceal the missive promptly enough to escape detection. He left the shore, and, searching in the back part of the town, found lodgings that suited his requirements and his purse. When this was done, he strolled on the promenade, still giving the great problem his whole attention.

Suddenly he received a staggering blow in the back which almost thrust him forward on his face. Recovering himself, he turned around breathless, alarmed, and angry, to see before him the huge form and smiling face of Barney Hope, who genially presented the hand that had smitten him.

"Hello, old fellow!" cried Barney, laughing aloud at the other's resentful glare. "What are you doing down here? Has the strike taken it out of you so that you had to have sea air to recuperate?"

"No strike ever took it out of me like the blow you struck just now."

Barney threw back his head and roared; then linking arms with Marsten in the most friendly manner, he said:

"No, my paw isn't light, as all my friends say, and it has got me into trouble before now. I had to thrash a fellow in Paris once, merely because I could not convince him that the gentle tap I gave him was in fun. He admitted afterward that there was a difference, and that he would rather have my open palm on his back than my closed fist in his face—but what can you expect? The French have no sense of humor, and yet they can't box well. It should occur to them, as a nation, that they ought either to know how to take a joke, or else how to put up their dukes, if they are going to take things seriously. But my slap on the back is nothing to my handshake when I'm feeling cordial toward a fellow creature. Let's see, have we shaken hands this go?"

"Yes, thanks," said Marsten, with such eagerness that the other laughed again.

"Well, I'm delighted to meet you so unexpectedly, don't you know. Your name's Langton, if I remember rightly?"

"My name is Marsten."

"Oh, yes, of course. I'm the stupidest fool in the kindom about names, and it's an awfully bad failing. People seem to get offended if you can't remember their names. I'm sure I can't tell why. I wouldn't care tuppence what I was called, so long as you don't say I'm no painter. Then I'm ready to fight. A man who won't fight for his art oughtn't to have an art. And, talking about art, I remember now that Langton was the fellow you sent me who can play the piano as if he were a Rubinhoff—that Russian player, don't you know. Well, I'm thundering glad to see you; I was just hoping to meet some fellow I knew. I'm dying for some one to talk to. It's a beastly dull hole, Eastbourne, don't you know."

"I was never here before. It seems to me a very nice place."

"Yes, it looks that way at first, but wait till you've been here a day or two. It's so wretchedly respectable!—that's what I object to in it. Respectability's bad enough on its native heath, but sea air seems to accentuate it, don't you know. I can't tell you why it is, but it's so; and respectability that you can put up with in London becomes unbearable down by the sea. Haven't you noticed that? And it's all on such a slender basis, too; the third-class fair to Brighton is four shillings and tuppence-ha'penny, while to Eastbourne it's four shillings and eleven pence, so all this swagger is on a beggarly foundation of eightpence-ha'penny. You see what I mean? I wouldn't give a week in Brighton for a day in Eastbourne, although I should hate to be condemned to either, for that matter. London is the only town that's eactly my size, don't you know."

"Then why do you stop at Eastbourne?"

"Ah, now you come to the point; now you place your finger right on the spot. Why, indeed? Can't you guess? I can tell in a moment why you are here."

"Why?" asked Marsten, in some alarm.

"Oh, simply because some fool of a doctor, who didn't know any better, sent you down. You're here for the air, my boy; you don't come for the society, so it must be the air—that's the only other thing Eastbourne's got. You were told it would brace you up in a week, and it will if your reason holds out for so long. I'd be a madman, sane as I am, if I were compelled to live in this place a fortnight; I would, on my honor! No, you don't catch me in Eastbourne for either air or the society, and yet, in a way, it is the society, too, only it doesn't seem to come off; and here I am stranded, don't you know, with a coachman and a groom, not to mention a valet, two horses, and one of the smartest carts that ever left London. That's my turnout, there. I drive tandem, of course; it's the only Christian way to drive. Not that I care about the style of it—I hope I'm above all that sort of thing—and I'm not to be blamed because so many other fellows do it, don't you know; I love a tandem for itself alone. Ever drive tandem?"

"I never did," said Marsten, looking at Barney's handsome equipage, which was being slowly driven up and down the road by a man in livery. He had noticed it before, but now he gazed at it with renewed interest, as Barney modestly proclaimed himself the owner.

"Well, it isn't as easy as it looks. It's not every fool can drive a tandem, although I am said to be one of the first tandem drivers in London, don't you know. I don't say so, of course; but there are those who do, and they are judges, too. But it's no fun driving about alone; to enjoy tandem driving you need to have a pretty girl beside you."

"And are there no pretty girls in Eastbourne?"

"There are, my boy, and that's just what I want to talk to you about. Let's sit down here in this shelter, because I want your whole attention. Now, I did you a favor one day, even though it was for another fellow, didn't I?"

"Yes. You have done me two favors."

"Well, that all right. I may be able to do you a third or a fourth—who knows?—and I mention it because I'm about to ask you to do me a great one now. That's what made me so glad to see you, don't you know, as well, of course, as the pleasure of talking with you again in this dismal hole. I was just thinking about it and wondering whom I could get, when I looked up and there you were. Providence always helps me when I'm in a pinch—always, don't you know. I never knew it to fail, and yet I'm not what you call a devout man myself. You've got nothing particular to do down here, I suppose?"

"Nothing but my own pleasure."

"Quite so. And, as there isn't any pleasure to be had here, you may just as well turn round and help me; it will be a great lark. You see, I want a man of intelligence, and I don't suppose one is to be found in Eastbourne—for if he was intelligent he wouldn't stay. Then, too, he must be a man not known in the town—you see what I mean? Also, he must know something about the laboring classes and their ways; so you see, my boy, Providence has sent the very man I want, don't you know. Now promise you will help me."

"If I can, I will."

"Right you are. You're just the individual who can, and no one else can do it half so well. Now, in the first place, have you ever seen Sartwell's daughter? He's only got one."

"Have I ever seen her?"

"Yes. She was at my reception the day you were there. I don't suppose you noticed her among so many; but she was the handsomest girl in the room, far and away."

"Yes, I have seen Miss Sartwell. She used to call for her father at his office often."

"Good again. That's a fourth qualification needed by the person who is to help me, so you see you are the man of all men for this job. Now it happens that this charming girl is at school at Eastbourne, which is, in a word, the reason I am here. I want to get a message taken to Miss Sartwell at the school, and I want you to take it."

"Oh, I don't think I should care to go on a mission of that sort, Mr. Hope. If Mr. Sartwell were to find out that I——"

"My dear fellow," interrupted Barney, placing his hand confidentially on Marsten's shoulder, "it's all right, I assure you. There is really nothing surreptitious about it. Heavens and earth, Langton, you don't think I'm that kind of a man, I trust. Oh, no, I've the parents' consent all right enough."

"Why don't you go to the school and see her."

"Because, dear boy, the case is just a trifle complicated, don't you know. I can always get the parental consent; that's her money, you know. As a general thing the girls like me, and I won't say the money has all to do with that; no, I flatter myself, personal attractions, a fair amount of brains, and a certain aristocratic reputation come in there; but money tells with the older people. Now Sartwell and I understand each other. Not to put too fine a point upon it, you know, he says, practically: 'Barney, you're an ass, but you're rich, and I don't suppose you're a bigger fool than the average young man of the present day, so I give you a fair field; go in, my boy, and win.' I say to Sartwell: 'You're a grumpy old curmudgeon, with no more artistic perception than the Shot Tower; but your daughter is an angel, and I've got money enough for the two of us.' You see, I never did care for money except to get what I want. So there we stand. Sartwell was coming down here with me; but, after I started, he telegraphed to my studio that there was so much to do in the shops, with all the men newly back, that he would like me to postpone my visit for a week. Well, I had to get the horses and trap down here; so I drove, and I left London a day earlier than I expected to. Hence the present complication. I called at the school, asked to see Miss Sartwell, saying I was a friend of her father's, but the lady in charge looked on me with suspicion—she did indeed, my boy, difficult to believe as the statement is. The lady said she could not allow Miss Sartwell to see any person unless that person was accompanied by her father. She would take no message to the girl—and there I was. I wrote to Miss Sartwell from my hotel here, but the letter was opened by the dragon, who returned it to me, asking me not to attempt to communicate with any of the young ladies under her charge. So here is this stylish tandem, and there is that lovely girl, while I am wasting in the desert air, longing to take her out for a drive. That's the situation in a nutshell, don't you know, and I want you to help me by taking a message to Miss Edna."

"I don't see how I can do it. If you, with her father's permission, could not get a word with her, how can I hope to?"

"Oh, I have that all arranged. I thought first of getting some young man in as a carpenter or plumber; but, so far as I can learn, the pipes and the woodwork of the school are all right. Then an inspiration came to me—I am subject to inspirations. The man who looks after the garden lives in the town, and he is quite willing to assist me; in fact, I have made it worth his while, don't you know. The trouble is that all his assistants are rather clodhoppers, and would be sure to bungle a diplomatic affair like this; however, I was going to chance it with one to-morrow when I saw you, and said to myself: 'Here is the very man!' When Providence sends the right man I always recognize him. That is the whole secret of a successful life, don't you know—to be able to recognize the gifts Providence sends at the moment they are sent. Where most people go wrong, don't you know, is by not appreciating the providential interposition until afterward. You will put on a gardener's smock, take a clumsy and unwieldy broom in your hand, and go to High Cliff School to sweep the walks and that sort of thing, don't you know. Then, as the girls are walking about, seize the psychological moment and tell Miss Edna I am waiting down here with the tandem. The young ladies are allowed to walk out three at a time. Two of them can sit back to back with us and Edna will sit with me. Tell her to choose two friends whom she can trust and we will all go for a jolly drive together. If she hesitates, tell her I am down here with her father's permission, but don't say that unless as a last resort. I would much rather have her come of her own accord, don't you know."

"What I fail to understand about your plan is why—if you really have Mr. Sartwell's permission—no, no, I'm not doubting your word—I should have put it, as you have her father's permission why do you not telegraph him, saying you are here, and get him to send a wire to the mistress of the school, asking her to allow Miss Sartwell to go with you for a drive, with a proper chaperon, of course?"

"My dear Langton——"

"Marsten, if you please."

"Oh, yes, of course. My dear Marsten, what you suggest is delightfully simple, and is precisely what would present itself to the well-regulated mind. It would be the sane thing to do and would be so charmingly proper. But you see, Marsten, my boy, I understand a thing or two about women, which you may not yet have had experience enough to learn. I don't want too much parental sanction about this affair, because a young girl delights in an innocent little escapade on her own account—don't you see what I mean? Of course, if the villain of the piece is baffled, he will ultimately appeal to the proper authority; but you know I have already seen a good deal of the young lady under the parental wing—if I may so state the fact; and although she is pleasant enough and all that, I don't seem to be making as much progress with her as I would like, don't you know. Now a little flavor of—well, you understand what I mean—thingumbob—you know—romance, and that sort of thing—is worth all the cut-and-dried 'Bless you my children' in the market. You'll know all about that as you grow older, my boy."

"Mr. Hope——"

"Look here, my boy, call me Barney. Few of my friends say 'Mr. Hope,' and when any one does say it, I always think he is referring to my father, who is at this moment giddily enjoying his precious self at Dresden, or thereabouts. You were about to say——"

"I was about to say I would very much like to oblige you, but I have scruples about doing what you ask of me."

"Marsten—you'll forgive me, won't you?—but I'm afraid you're very much like the rest of the world. Fellows always want to oblige you, but they don't want to do the particular obligement that you happen to want. If I make myself clear. If you want to borrow a fiver, they will do any mortal thing you wish but lend it. Now it happens that, so far from wanting a fiver, I'll give you one—or a ten-pound note for that matter—if you will do this, don't you know."

"Oh, if I did it at all, I wouldn't take money for doing it."

"But I don't want a fellow to work for love, don't you know. I don't believe in that. If I sell a picture I want my money for it—yes, by Jove, I do."

"If I did this, it would be entirely for love, and for no other consideration. But I don't think I would be acting fairly and honorably if I did it. I can't explain to you why I think this; my whole wish is to do what you ask me, and yet I feel sure, if I were thoroughly honest, as I would like to be, I should say 'No.'"

"My dear fellow, I honor your scruples; but I assure you they are misplaced in this instance. They are, really. Besides, I have your promise, and I'm going to hold you to it. It isn't as though I were going to run away with the girl and marry her against her own wish and the wishes of her combined relatives. If I wanted to see the girl against her father's will—well, then, there might be something to urge in opposition to my project; but I'm not—and don't you see that fact makes all the difference in the world? Of course you do? Why, a man ought to do anything for the girl he loves, and he's a poltroon if he doesn't. That's why I'm taking all this trouble and staying in this town of the forlorn. If a girl doesn't find you taking some trouble in order to see her, why she is not going to think very much or often about you, take my word for that."

"I believe you are right. I'll go."

"You're a brick, Marsten. Yes, my boy, a brick," cried Barney, enthusiastically slapping his comrade on the shoulder.

"A brick of very common clay, I'm afraid, Mr. Hope. I suppose you believe in the saying, 'All's fair in love?'"

"Of course I do, dear boy; it is the maxim on which I regulate my daily life."

"Very well. I will not take a verbal message, for I may not have an opportunity to deliver it; besides, I might forget something, or give it a misleading twist. If you will write exactly what you want Miss Sartwell to know, and give it to me as a letter, I will deliver it if there is the slightest chance of my doing so."

"Right you are, old man! Now come with me, and I'll introduce you to the gardener and see if he has a blouse that will fit you."

CHAPTER XXIV.

In the morning Barney took Marsten to the house of the friendly gardener, whose good will had been secured through the corrupting influences of wealth, and there the young man donned the blouse that was supposed to give him that horticultural air necessary for the part he had to play. Marsten was very serious about it, but Barney seemed to enjoy the masquerade to the utmost, and wanted to take the amateur gardener to be photographed, so that there might be a picture as a memento of the occasion.

At last Marsten got away, with the broom on his shoulder, and, presenting himself at High Cliff grounds, was admitted without question. He made no attempt to conceal from himself the fact that he did not like the fraud he was about to practise, but when his conscience upbraided him, he asked of it what better plan it had to propose, and to this there was no reply.

The grounds were empty when he reached them, and with his natural shrewdness he applied himself first to the walks that were in public view, so that when the young girls came out he might be in the more secluded portion of the plantation, where he was sure the rules of the school would require them to take the air. His surmise proved correct, and the young man felt more embarrassed than he had even suspected he would be when he suddenly found himself in the midst of a fluttering bevy of girls, all chattering, but happily none paying the least attention to him. He had not counted on the presence of any of the teachers, but three of them were there, who, however, sat on a garden seat and did not seem overburdened with anxiety about the pupils under their care.

Edna Sartwell had a book in her hand, with a finger between the pages, but she walked up and down with another girl, talking in a low tone. Marsten hoped the book was an interesting one, and wished the girl would go into some secluded corner to read it; for he began to see that his enterprise was not going to be so easy of accomplishment as he expected, even though he had gained admittance to the grounds, which at first had seemed the most difficult move in the game. The book at last gave him the opportunity he sought; Edna and her companion stood together for a moment after their walk, then each went her way.

In a corner of the grounds was a secluded summer house, screened from the view of the school by a wilderness of trees and shrubs, almost out of hearing of the lively chatter that made the air merry elsewhere; and to this quiet spot Edna betook herself, reading the book as she walked, for the paths thither were evidently familiar to her. Marsten followed, slowly at first, then more quickly as the chances of observation lessened, his heart beating faster than the exertion he was making warranted. The girl was seated in the little châlet when Marsten darkened the entrance.

"Miss Sartwell," was all he could say.

Edna sprang to her feet, letting the book fall to the floor, and looked at him with startled eyes that had no recognition in them.

"I see you don't know me, and no wonder; for I did not wear gardener's clothes when I stood last in your garden."

A bright flush of pleasure overspread the girl's face, and laughter came first to her eyes, then to her lips.

"How you frightened me," she said, seeming anything but frightened, and quite unable to restrain her merriment as her glance flashed up and down his uncouth apparel. "Have you become gardener here, then, or did you come over the wall?"

"The walls here are too high, or I might have attempted them. I am gardener for the day only, and merely to get a word with you."

"With me? I thought the strike had happily ended. Haven't you gone back to work? How did you get away?"

"Oh, there was no difficulty about that. I can always get a day off when I want it. Yes, I went back to work and have been busy ever since. I came here yesterday in the hope of seeing you. It was very important—for me, at least."

"Has the desired promotion come so soon, then, or do you think I must speak to my father about your position when I next see him? I expected him here before this, but he writes that there is so much to be done, now the men are back, that he will be unable to come for perhaps a week or more."

"I have not come here to beg for your father's favor, but for yours. I love you, Edna, and I have loved you ever since I first saw you! Don't imagine I am so—so conceited—that I have even a hope that you—you—care for me, for of course you don't and can't; but I wanted you to know. I wanted to tell you, and that is why I am here. I am poor—I don't deny that—but your father was also poor once, and he has got on in the world, I will get on; I will work night and day. Whoever my master is, I will serve him faithfully—my God! I will serve him on my knees, if that will convince him of my earnestness to win confidence and a place of trust—and all the time cheerfully and hopefully, with your picture in my mind, as it has been in my mind—for so long—from the first. You see, I have no chance to win you as another might. You are in this school for the very purpose of keeping me from meeting you as I might meet you if I were rich. I have no fair chance—none at all, except what I steal for myself, as I have done to-day.

"It means so much to me—everything!—that I did not dare to take the risk. I know I have spoken too soon—too abruptly—but I dared not set my face at what is before me unless you knew. Some one might win you while I was working for you—there will be plenty to try. I don't want you to say a word—I want neither hope nor discouragement—no promise—nothing! You know, and that is enough for me now. But I would like you to remember—sometimes—that there is no man striving as I shall strive. Think of that—when others speak. My darling—my darling—no man ever felt as I feel since the beginning of the world!"

Whatever diffidence Marsten hitherto experienced in Edna's presence melted in the fervent heat of his passion when he began to speak. The words rushed forth, treading on the heels of those gone before, in jumbled, breathless procession; his face was aflame, and his nether lip trembled when he ceased to speak. At first he seemed to be running a race against time—they might be interrupted at any moment; but he soon forgot his competitor, and, so far as he was concerned, no one existed in the world but himself and the trembling, confused girl before him.

She, after her first look of amazed incredulity, felt backward with her hand for the support of the wall, and then gradually sank upon the seat, an expression, partly fear, overspreading her now colorless face. As Marsten went impetuously on, her head dropped upon her hands, and thus she remained while he spoke.

A pause ensued, so deep and silent that Marsten, as he leaned his hand against the door post, afraid to move forward or retreat, heard the distant girlish laughter, free from any thought of problems other than those of the schoolroom. He knew he should remember every trivial detail of the place all his life—the broom that lay at his feet; the book which had fallen open-leaved upon the floor; even the title glittering in gold on the side, which sent no meaning to his mind except one word that caught his attention. "Courtship" ("The Courtship of Miles Standish" was the whole phrase), and he wondered vaguely if the courtship had prospered. Rapidly as his wandering eye gathered up the accessories of the scene, it always returned to the bowed and silent figure before him, and something in the outlines of her drooping shoulders told him intuitively of a change—elusive, but real. His mind had been too much occupied with the hard realities of life to indulge in speculative analysis of any sort, but now it was uplifted, touched by the magic wand of love, and endowed with a subtle perception unknown to him before. He saw that the girl, who, as a child, welcomed him, would, as a woman, bid him farewell.

At last she slowly shook her head.

"It cannot be—it cannot be," she murmured.

"Not now. I know that—I don't ask that," he cried, eagerly. "But some time—some time."

The girl did not look up.

"It can never be—never," she said.

"All I want is a chance—a fair chance. Don't—oh, please don't say 'No' or 'Yes' now. Your father is prejudiced against me, I know; not against me personally, I think, but because I am poor. It is only another expression of his great love for you. He knows what poverty is, and he wants to shield you from it. He is right, and if I am as poor two years from now, or four years, I shall not ask——"

"Does my father know?"

"Yes. I told him that night—the night you first spoke to me. That is why he is angry."

"Then that is why you—that is the reason—when you were in the garden——"

"Yes, that is why I was afraid to have him find me there."

Again there was a long silence between them. The thoughts of the girl ranged back over her past life, from the time her father forbade her to come to the office until the present moment, flashing like a searchlight upon events hitherto misunderstood, making them stand out in their true proportions. All her father's actions, his words, had to be reconsidered. She saw meanings in former phrases that had been hidden from her; she had now the key that unlocked the room illumined by knowledge; and although her heart yearned toward her father, sympathizing with him when confronted by an unexpected problem, and fully condoning his apparent lack of trust in keeping her ignorant of a situation so closely concerning herself, feeling that she ought to stand by him and repel the stranger who had so daringly come between them with his preposterous claim upon her affection, yet from no part of her being could she call to her aid that emotion of just resentment against Marsten which she knew ought to be at her command.

"I am very, very sorry," she said at last, speaking slowly. "I like you, of course—I think you are a noble, earnest man, and that you will do good and overcome many difficulties, but I don't care for you in the way you wish, and it would not be right to be dishonest with you. I should like to see you get on in the world, and I am sure you will. Some day you will write to me and tell me of your victories, and I shall be glad. It will make me happy then to know you have forgotten—this. Now you must go. Good-by!"

She rose, holding out her hand to him, and he saw her eyes were wet.

"Good-by!" he said, turning away.

Edna sat down, but did not pick up her book. With her hands listless in her lap, she gazed out at the blue sky, thinking. Presently, to her surprise, Marsten returned.

"You have forgotten your broom," she said, with a wavering smile on her lips.

"I had forgotten more than that," he said, "I had forgotten my mission."

"Your mission?"

"Yes; my false pretences do not stop at climbing walls. I am really a traitorous messenger; for the device by which I came here was arranged by another, who wished me to take a letter to you. He is in Eastbourne, and had written to you, but his letter was returned to him. He has written another—here it is."

"Of whom are you speaking?"

"Mr. Barnard Hope."

"Oh!"

She took the letter. Marsten lifted his broom and went away. He wanted to leave the place and get back to London, but the gardener had cautioned him not to return until the sweeping was finished, while Barney himself impressed upon him the necessity of allowing no suspicion to arise, as it might be needful to despatch another messenger on a similar errand. So he kept on sweeping the débris into little heaps by the side of the path. The schoolgirls disappeared into the house by twos and threes until he found himself once more alone, and yet he did not see Edna come from the summer house. He moved nearer and nearer with his work to the place where they had met, hoping to catch a parting glimpse of her as she walked toward the house. At last she came out, but instead of taking the direct path to the house she came toward him, with the thin volume she had been reading in her hand. There was a slight increase of the usual color in her cheeks, but with that exception she had succeeded in suppressing all trace of her emotion. She looked at him with what seemed, at first, all her former straightforwardness, but as he met her gaze he saw it was not quite the same; a misty shadow of difference veiled her honest eyes, so like her father's, but so much kindlier.

"I have brought you this book," she said, holding it out to him, "and I want you to keep it. It is the story of a messenger true to the trust of the one who sent him, who yet failed."

"But you have not read the book yourself," he replied, taking the volume, nevertheless.

"Oh, yes, I have. I was reading it for the second time to-day."

As he hastily concealed the book under his blouse, he looked anxiously about him, fearing they might be observed, unwilling to compromise her in the least. The craft of a man is rarely equal to that of a woman, no matter how young she may be. Edna smiled as she noticed his perturbation.

"There is no one to see us," she said, "and if there were it would not matter. They would merely think I was giving improving literature and good advice to an under-gardener—which, indeed, is exactly what I am doing when I tell him to work hard, and—forget."

As Edna said this she opened her hand and allowed to flutter upon a heap at his feet the minute fragments of a letter, which floated down through the air like a miniature snowfall, and she was gone before he could say "Good-by" for the second time.

Marsten stood there looking down at the bits of torn paper scattered over the heap, the remnants, undoubtedly, of the letter he had brought, and although he had no word of encouragement—which, in spite of his disclaimer, he had yearned to hear—each separate piece of white paper reflected upward to him as a ray of hope.

(To be continued.)

DICTIONARY SNYDER.

An Interesting Character Known to the Students in the Latin Quarter of Paris.

From the Baltimore Sun.

Stories of the unique characters that America contributes to the Latin Quarter of Paris, the section in which is to be found the majority of the art students in the gay French capital, are entertainingly told by Mr. Clinton Peters. Charles Snyder, who has lived for the past thirty-one years in Paris, is well known to the students in the Latin Quarter as "Dictionary Snyder." This soubriquet is due to his fund of information. But he is not an artist, but has for years associated with them. Snyder speaks seven languages, has a superior education, which, however, he has seldom been able to turn to advantage so far as his personal benefit is concerned.

"In everything he is a typical Bohemian," said Mr. Peters yesterday, "and indifferent to the future, so long as his wants are provided for in the present. He is a master of expediency, and has given innumerable illustrations of his remarkable resources in practically living without money.

"At the beginning of the siege of Paris Snyder had but 15 francs, yet he lived on them throughout that long period, when the necessities of life were sold for almost fabulous prices. I asked him once how he managed to survive on such a small sum, and he replied that at the time the siege was announced he resolved to buy a quantity of food that no one else would think of and which would sustain life for a considerable period. Prices were so high that there were very few articles of food that were left to the choice of a limited pocketbook, but he solved the problem accurately. He bought three bottles of olive oil on the first day, when hardly any one of the Parisians thought of such an article of diet, and from day to day purchased small quantities of bread. The oil and bread were mixed together with water and made into a sort of soup, and on this limited though nourishing menu Snyder lived until the siege was nearly ended.

"Toward the close of the siege he became extremely weary of his monotonous diet, and resolved on a bold stroke for a change in the bill of fare. So he left the city secretly and walked boldly up to a German picket. Of course he was brought to a halt by the soldier. Then he explained that he was not a Parisian, but an American citizen, detained in Paris, and a very hungry one at that. He asked permission to enter the German camp, but the soldier told Snyder he had orders to allow no one to pass. Convinced that Snyder meant no mischief but was really a man in need of provender, he finally consented to become a party to a ruse which that fertile gentleman proposed. This was that Snyder was to take to his heels in the direction of the camp, while the soldier, as if in the full performance of his vigilance, was to fire his gun in the air. It was carried out successfully, and Snyder reached the camp in safety.

"Here he was regaled with cheese, beer, and other good things to his heart's content by the Germans, and soon after started to return to Paris. But he had promised the guard who had first arrested his bold flight to return within an hour. Indulging the foaming beer offered him in the camp, he had overstayed the allotted time, and on reaching the outpost found another picket. Explanations followed, and Snyder proposed that he be allowed to run for the gate through which he originally came, while the guard pretended to chase and fire upon him. Again was his scheme agreed to and he reentered Paris. Once inside the gate the Frenchmen regarded him as one who had achieved a marvellous escape and, as the Germans had done, set before him a bountiful repast.

"Although at many times in the greatest penury, Snyder would never accept regular employment. I know of one offer that was made to him by a New York newspaper to take charge of its cable business at a salary of $3,000 per annum. This offer was promptly declined by Snyder, who said that it involved a certain amount of routine work which would kill him. He was then living on about four cents a day.

"At the time I was spending most of my earlier days in Paris there was an art student for whom Snyder had a particular fondness. He has since risen to prominence, but in those days the student was far from prosperous. There was to be a dinner given at a restaurant celebrated in the Quarter for the excellence of its menu, and, of course, this student I speak of was particularly anxious to go. But he lacked a most important essential. He had no white shirt! Snyder was called into the meeting of condolence that was held, and at once set his inventive genius to work. He pondered silently for a brief while, but his brow soon lightened and he cheerily asked, 'Have you a collar?'

"The student responded in the affirmative, but announced that he had no tie to wear with it appropriate to the occasion.

"'I'll fix that easily,' answered Snyder, reassuringly, as he went through the very limited wardrobe of the art student. He fished up a vivid red stocking, and by means of sundry holes cut in the collar and artistic manipulation the flaming stocking was twisted into a very clever imitation of a becoming necktie. The effect was satisfactory to all concerned, and the student departed for the dinner in high feather.

"But unfortunately for appearances, and especially for the poor student, as the dinner progressed he forgot that in his shirtless condition it was important to keep his coat closely buttoned, and in an absent moment he loosened that garment and flung the lapels back against his shoulders. You may well conceive what a sensation the sight of his naked breast culminating in a stocking-hung collar, produced on the company.

"Another instance of Snyder's ingenuity in a desperate strait, and also another instance of the indigence of the same art student, now the head of a great art institution in America, occurred at another social gathering. Such had been the improvement in the student's fortunes that he was able to afford a shirt, but had no studs to ornament the front. Snyder was once more consulted, and, as usual, rendered this tribute to his genius with a ready idea. He cut three black buttons from his shoes and strung them on a heavy thread. The buttons were hung upon the outside of the student's shirt and the thread from the inside held them firmly in place. They presented a respectable appearance, and the student went boldly to take his part in the festivities.

"Dancing was in order, and the student was one of the gayest of those who danced. But also the exertion of his movements caused the thread to loosen and the shoe buttons to dangle at the button holes an inch or so from their proper places. The attention of the student was called to the singular appearance of his improvised studs, but, nothing daunted in the derision such a plight occasioned, he paused in the midst of his dancing, grasped the truant thread, and brought the buttons back in place with a resounding slap against the starchy stiffness of his shirt. He then gravely grasped his partner and continued his gyrations."