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It was growing dusk in the drawing room, but the lamps were not yet lighted, and the young women in the picturesque huts clustered around the little tea table so closely as their huge sleeves and flimsy, frilly shirts allowed, and sipped their Assam-Pekoe between the bursts of confidence proper to the half hour. They had discussed the reigning topic, touched delicately on the last scandal, and were now busy with Jack Rodney's name and money. Alas! he had no money. A decision of the court had given his great inheritance to another heir, and then he had gone into Wall street and been caught on the wrong side of the market.

"I can't picture it," said Sally Little-John, fashioning her little gold spoon. "What will become of him? The spoiled darling! Why, he will have to go to work!"

"Poor Jack!" said Arabella. "He wouldn't know himself out of his habits. How is he to go without his horses, his club, the opera, his London tailor?"

"I don't believe he will try to," said Felicia.

"Why, what will he do?"

"The only thing he can do—stop living."

"Oh, Bab! How horrid of you! Jack Rodney, the dear, splendid fellow! Has any one seen him? I wonder what he is doing now," said Sally.

"Walking on his uppers, don't they call it?" said Bab.

"Such a sunbeam! And he has lent and given

"I Suppose It is a Dream."

away a fortune to other people. He never seemed to care about money."

"No, indeed; I suppose he has dropped a modest fortune in cards before this."

"Why, Bab, with the poor fellow in such a strait! He only does what all the other men do."

"And he does a great deal they don't do," said Arabella. "Every one else was going Willie Loys rough what he owed, but Jack had good all the misappropriation—isn't that the new term?—and gave Will a fresh start. And if it was Jack's yacht that went cruising up the Mediterranean and had princes on board for guests, it was his steamer that took those children from Seven Alleys down the harbor every afternoon all the hot summer——"

"You always had a specific talent for turning a telescope on microscopic subjects," said Bab.

"No, thanks. I can't drink another drop of your tea, Felicia, though I declare it does put the spirit in you," said Julia. "Well, just one cup—lemon—yes" as Felicia's jeweled hand suspended the sugar. "What a perfectly lovely cup! Did you know that one of Dolly Van Vet's engagement cups was a tiny thing of gold, crusted with peridots?"

"No."

"And who do you think gave it to her? Well, Jack Rodney, and she cut him dead last week."

"She ought to," said Felicia, "for doing such an utterly silly thing."

"I suppose he paid for it?" said Bab.

"Well, deliver me from my friends," said Arabella.

"And that reminds me," said Sally, "apropos of nothing. Do you know that no one can imagine what has become of Lena Vallory's black pearls?"

"Apropos of nothing, Lena hasn't any friends," said Bab.

"You mean," said Julia, "that every one can imagine. Isn't it too bad?"

"Well, Mrs. Harry said to her the other night at the opera—you know there is nothing Mrs. Harry doesn't dare. 'Just see that string of pearls on Violetta's throat. Shouldn't you think they were yours if yours weren't locked up at home?'"

"And what did Lena do?"

"Oh, she didn't do anything just then. But a little while afterward she fainted or something."

"The poor child!"

"Well," said Bab, "he can give her another string now. Vallory is one of the cousins that came into Jack Rodney's money. It's bad blood anyway."

"How prejudiced you are! Where is Jack; does any one know?" said Sally.

"Going to Texas, ranching. He has cleared up everything and starts at once, some one said. He'd like it if it were play, the poor fellow!"

"Oh, it is really getting dark," exclaimed Arabella, as the maid stole gently about the room, and the great lamps flared up like moons dressed in the fashion. And she pulled up her ermine capes. "We must be going. Why, Felicia, how white you are! I should think you were ready to faint yourself!"

"The sudden light," murmured Felicia. And then she saw herself in the glass, and passed her hand quickly over the shining olive eyes that glittered there for half a moment like points of steel.

Years afterward Felicia had only to make that motion with her hand across her eyes to call up the whole scene—the lovely, lofty room, with its old Gobelin hangings, the great mirrors framed in alabaster, the moony lamps, the high vases heaped with red roses, the lounges heaped with silken cushions, the Dresden and silver, the beautiful girls getting into their princely furs, talking scandal like dowagers, her sister Bab's face with the scarlet on both cheeks, and her own, white and angry, in the glass, as the marble Diana behind her.

It was while the last dinner guests that night were still saying tender nothings to Bab, as she leaned against the mantel and the low firelight played on the satin sheen of her white gown till she looked as if taking life from a flame-tinted jewel, that a slender shape slipped swiftly down the steps and passed along in the shadow of the houses like a shadow herself. The girl had never been in the street at night before without attendance; every sound affrighted her, she shrank even behind her veil from every passerby. As soon as she had turned the corner she brought into plainer sight the large parcel she carried, that she might pass the more readily as a maid. A half hour's rapid walk and she ran up some steps to make sure of a number, rang the door-bell, said something explanatory to the man that answered it, passed in and followed him to the door of a room up one flight of the broad, low stairway there.

The room was in confusion. A leather box and a portmanteau lay packed and strapped by the door. There were empty and discolored spaces on the walls where pictures had hung, brackets had held their busts and great cases and cabinets had stood. It was plain to see in its dismantled state that it had lately been a place of luxury.

A man sat there, with his head bowed upon his arms as they lay along the table, in an attitude of utter dejection. He did not look up when the door opened and closed. But the girl crossed the room quickly, and standing behind him stooped with her arm laid across his shoulder. He lifted his head, looking straight before him. "I suppose it is a dream," he said, half to himself. "If you are a dream"—

"I am not a dream, Jack," she said, bending lower, her soft, cold cheek touching his. "I am Felicia."

There was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour. For one moment there was silence and rapture here. And then the transfer men came for the luggage. "And this parcel, too," said Felicia.

"Felicia!" he exclaimed.

"This parcel," she repeated. "You know I cannot go back after coming here," she said, when they were alone again. "I have burned my ships behind me."

"Do you mean it?" he exclaimed joyously. And then his tone fell. "I thought—oh, yes; certainly, I must take you home before my train leaves."

"You will take me home? My home is with you, Jack."

"You don't know what you say!" he answered her. "Oh, no; I cannot accept the sacrifice!" the eager gleam of his eyes belying his words.

"Jack," she murmured, "the sacrifice was in my coming here unasked."

"You knew I loved you, you knew I loved you! And then this crash came—and there was nothing for me to say—to you, who have lain in the lilies and fed on the roses of life. I whose part was the husks?"

"Yes, I knew it or I would not have come," she replied, and she moved away from him, going about the room, and pausing in the curtainless window-place, where

"I Can't Picture it," said Sally Little-John.

the moonlight lay upon her, pale and impassioned.

"Don't make it so hard for me!" he exclaimed. "An hour ago it was the blackness of despair. I was going to bury myself in that ranche, with its bunch of cattle, the one thing left me, as if it were a grave. Now I shall go out into that new life radiant with this happy knowledge and my hope. And even if I should never prosper enough to come for you," he said after a moment, taking a step toward her, "if you should weary in the long waiting and give some other man the love I have won—well, I could bear it, perhaps, remembering and living again in this night's joy."

"Some other man!" she exclaimed, unclasping his arms and looking for the hat and jacket that had been thrown aside. "I am going with you, Jack. If you can live summer and winter in a camp in Texas I can, too. I have the fit clothes in that parcel. I have my jewels here. They were my mother's and are mine, and I have the right to take them, and their price will hinder my being a burden."

"A burden! O Felicia, if I migh, if I dared——"

"You will have to," said Felicia.

"You will have to," said Felicia, calmly. "The Church of Blessing is round the corner, and the rector is my friend. Jack, you made me propose to you. I shouldn't think you would make me ask you to marry me!"

Standing there in the moonlight, adjusting her disordered hair, she was too beautiful, too sweet and tender for mortal man to resist. "The train leaves at midnight," he said, controlling his voice as he could. "There is scant time—— Oh, my darling, if you should regret—if you should repent—— If! Oh, you must, you will!"

"Never!" said Felicia. And then, lip to lip and heart to heart, they lingered one moment before they went out together.

It was a year afterward that Felicia sat one night in the refulgent moonlight of the high prairie, after a day of heat, tempered by the great gulf breeze blowing over three hundred miles of flowers.

"Are you sorry I came?" she said.

"Are you?"

"Do you know, it seems to me precisely as if we were living on an outskirt of the Holy Land, with flocks and herds, and the fig and the pomegranate and the tender grape giving a good smell!" she said.

"Precisely. And the flocks and herds are prospering so that we shall have to take counsel of the prophet. Wasn't it Isaiah that said: 'Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitation; spare not, lengthen thy cords, strengthen thy stakes?' Col. Upshur lived in a tent over the range yonder for a dozen years. But we may build our house next year, I fancy."

"With roses lying on the low roof and a night-blooming cereus clambering across the gallery, like some of the houses in the old Spanish town there. I don't know, but I like this better though—the lovely freedom of it. Oh, we never lived before!"

"Are you sure you never regret?" he asked.

"Regret! Well, I confess I should like to have heard Bab read out our marriage notice at breakfast—and Bab so bitter the day before for fear of it! But regret those days of listlessness and idleness and gossip, the confining clothes, the cramping life!" And the large white lamp-lit room, sumptuous with mirrors and marbles and carving and gilding, with bronzes and paintings, with priceless rugs and lounges, with its voluptuous roses and great vases, hung for a moment before her like the room you see painted through a window in the dark. She saw the young and lovely women, heard the sweet high-bred voices, heard her stepmother's low laugh and Bab's shriller tone. And then she looked around her, at the sky flooded with splendor, at the vast, softly dark, slumbering land below, felt the perfumed

"Are You Sorry I Came?"

wind fan her forehead, felt the preciousness of the love that was hers, and it seemed to her that to return to that other life would be like a butterfly creeping back into its chrysalis. "I—I miss my father," she said, and her lip quivered. But her husband's arm clasped her, and the pressure of his own lips quieted the sob. "But even," she said presently, "if he never forgives us or comes to see us, and if poor Bab should never come down here and learn what it is to live, I shall be sure, I shall be sure, my dear, that love is best."

A Bunch of Daffodils.

"Where are you going to spend your Easter vacation?" Little Mita made her way between property boxes and scenic shrubbery to where the contralto was waiting.

"At home, dear; I spend all my vacations at home with the children. Poor little things, it is so seldom they see their father and mother that we never let an opportunity go by for being together." The contralto's sentences, like some of her strong notes, were long, but they were as pure in thought as the notes were in expression.

"So you're going home for Easter?" Miss Jewell's step was light and they had not heard her approach. The breadth of carpet spread from her dressing-room to the stage to spare her dainty gowns and white shoes, deadened the sound of her footsteps. Her question was an idle one, asked solely for the sake of saying something to the contralto, whom she liked.

"Yes, I was saying to Mita that the children hardly know they have a father and mother. It always seems a pity to me that parents and children should be parted, though of course it is necessary sometimes."

There was a careless smile on Miss Jewell's lips as she came from her dressing-room. She knew the audience was anxiously waiting for her to make her appearance; she knew just how the applause would ring out when the curtain went down, and how an usher would come down the aisle bearing a bouquet of her favorite roses, or perhaps a basket heaped with purple and white violets. She loved the flowers, she was proud of the applause, and she had a child's fondness for the color and light that was always about her.

"Where will you spend your holiday, Miss Jewell?"

It was Mita's question. One always forgave Mita for asking questions on matters that could not possibly interest her; she was such a childish creature.

"I have not made my arrangements; I shall probably stay in town." A rather thoughtful expression came to Miss Jewell's face, for she remembered a letter she had received only that morning from a little town among the hills.

"My daughter," the letter ran, "your father and I would like to see you. I hope we may soon."

Who but a mother could write like that?

She had folded up the note and put it away in her desk. It would be impossible for her to go to Dale for the short vacation Easter week, and she knew it would be almost impossible to get away from Dale after a stay of only a day or two. And then the Allens had asked her to accompany them to Old Point, and she had made up her mind if they insisted she would go.

It had been a long time since Alice Jewell had paid a visit to Dale. Last summer she had been in the West; one week's vacation last winter had been spent in New York shopping; summer before last she had been yachting with the Rainbridge-Gladstones. In one way and another it had been three years since she had felt the clasp of home hands and received the warm kiss of those who loved her best and whose pride she was. To be sure, papers with notices were always sent home; each birthday and holiday was marked by appropriate gifts; the father had a warm coat for Christmas and the mother a shell comb and the other trifles that mothers love, but the daughter's presence had been lacking.

The audience was waiting for the fair singer's appearance. The basso and contralto had sung their song and little Mita had added her bit of color to the scene; then the gracious, beautiful singer came softly on in her creamy robes and was singing her song as the lark sings as he rises up and up from a marshy meadow in the earliest morning. Triumphant in its strength, her voice rang out and when the curtain rang down the applause arose, sounding to those behind the scenes like the snapping of a brisk fire in underbrush.

The curtain slowly rolled up and an usher glided down the aisle, as she knew he would, and the leader leaned forward with her bouquet in his hand. Then as the applause continued the leader tapped the stand with his baton and the first violin took up the air of the song she had sung and she repeated the refrain, and the curtain went down again, with her standing there with the flowers in her arms. They were not roses this time nor violets fresh as if rain washed, but great yellow daffodils, creamy at the tips of the petals and deepening to the richest yellow in their cup-like hearts and exhaling an odor like nothing else upon this earth—a combination of springtime scents, a suggestion of cowslips and springing grass blades, of damp moss in the woods. Holding the flowers in her arms, she passed back to her dressing-room.

She pushed aside the articles on the shelf under her mirror and laid the flowers there. It had been her wont to fasten some of the blossoms she received each night in her dress and hair. Some one out there in the audience had sent her flowers every evening for weeks, and had stayed on this side the water long after he was due in political circles at home, waiting to take his fair girl's promise back with him, but she delayed long in giving it.

She pulled a few long-stemmed blossoms from the bunch and held them in her hand, looking at them. It had been a long time since she had held daffodils in her hands. They were the flowers that hedged the garden path leading down to the street from that little cottage in Dale. When the last snow was melting under the hemlocks in the ravine in the spring it was time for the "daffys" to be in bud, the little sharp points of green that stand like lances to grow and swell and burst into rich bloom.

They were the first flowers her childish fingers had gathered. They were the flowers that always decked the table on her birthday. She remembered with start that the day after to-morrow was her birthday. She had quite forgotten it until now.

There is something that comes to one at times; one is not conscious of its approach until it is an actual presence. Some call it sentiment, but whatever it is it was surely designed by an all-wise Providence to touch and redeem the heart when it becomes world-hardened, purse-proud, selfish, and forgetful. The blase man of the world will sneer at his fellow-men and will pick up a tramp on the corner and take him where he can get a hearty supper. The modern Shylock, holding his purse-strings with fingers of steel, will put a coin into a beggar child's hand because she has eyes like some one he once knew. These yellow flowers, fresh as if just plucked in the prettiest garden in Dale, brought back sweet memories to Alice Jewell and old-time acquaintances, as if she had met them face to face.

She remembered how the little mother would say, when there were guests at the cottage:

"Alice, get some flowers for the table." And on Sunday morning before church they always made a tour of the garden to see what roses were in blossom, what flowers were budding, and how long it would be before the "cups and saucers" and emperor pansies would be in bloom.

She and Walter Hale, the boy, who lived next door, had sown pansy seed in the autumn under the north windows, and had gathered the blossoms in the spring when they were children. Walter was fond of flowers and of her. Then when they were older he came to sing with her, and when she left home they had written to each other often. He was a student then in a distant city, but he said in one of his letters: "As soon as my graduation is over I am coming to the city to hear you sing." He was a full-fledged M. D., and he told her her mother was failing, and had grown very old in these past two years.

"I think it would do her good if you would go home once, Alice," he had said, and she had answered that it was impossible then. She had promised to go with some one to the seaside.

He had looked very grave, and seemed disappointed. He reminded her then of a promise she had made him, but he said: "I do not expect you to keep it, Alice. Good fortune has come to you in such a way that you cannot leave it to become a village doctor's wife, but it was the hope of my life and my spur in college days." She felt rather piqued at his giving her up so easily, and when he left the city, and sent her only a formal note of good-bye, she had cried a little, and her eyes were misty now.

Her dressing-room was filled now with the peculiar odor of the flowers. The call-boy had knocked twice. In another moment the stage would be waiting. She touched the flowers caressingly, and then laid them down, and in the moment that she was crossing from her dressing-room to the stage she made the grand resolve of her life-time.

There was a dark man in the audience, who was deeply disappointed when he saw she was not wearing his flowers. He classed her a coquette, and felt that she was trifling with him. She gave no glance in his direction after the performance, and as she entered her carriage after the performance a note was handed her. The writer was sorry he had made such a miserable choice of flowers this evening, as they were the last he would have an opportunity of sending; he must sail in a day or two. Would she kindly honor him on the morrow with a few moments' time that he might receive her definite answer. This, he thought, would settle the matter. When she found he was really going she would not let him slip through her fingers.

She read the note by the shaded light on her desk when she reached home. Her white cloak was still about her shoulders as she took up her dainty silver pen to answer it.

"You never sent me flowers that touched me so much," she wrote. "Daffodils are my favorites, and I shall keep this bunch always. I am sorry that I will not see you again, for by the time you receive this I shall be out of town. I am going to take a long vacation. I wish you bon voyage and good-by."

She felt that it was little to say, after he had been so kind, but it was better so. Another little note went to Mrs. Allyn:—

"It will be impossible for me to accept your kind invitation to accompany you to Old Point. Another engagement will prevent."

Then she read over again the letter beginning "My Daughter." Between the lines she could read all the longing and all the love and the tenderness, and she kissed the page where her tears were dropping, and she said: "Never mind, little mother, I am coming."

She would not let them know; she would walk in upon them when they least expected her, just in time for her birthday dinner. She wondered if Walter would be there; she supposed he was busy. Then a sudden resolve seized her and she took up her pen and wrote: "My birthday is the day after to-morrow. I am coming home for a while. I do not know how long I shall stay—perhaps as long as you all care to keep me. Will you help me gather Easter posies for the table, as you used to do?"

She folded the note and sealed it with her dainty monogram, and addressed it in her bold, dashing hand to "Dr. Walter Hale."

And then, when the maid had taken the letter to be posted, womanlike, she rested her head upon her desk and cried as if her heart would break. With those tears she washed away all the ambition, selfish in its intensity, that had compassed her round, and when she raised her face it shone with a peace and humbleness as if "the voice that breathed peace to the waves of the sea" had spoken to her and she had heard.—Chicago News.

New York's Cat Skin Trade.

Among the vast crowds that visited the cat show probably few were aware of the enormous traffic that is done in this city alone in cats' skins. Their value lies in the fact that they can be used as imitations of other more valuable furs.

One wholesale furrier told a reporter that last year he bought 28,000 cat skins, gathered in New York and Brooklyn alone. His firm is reported to pay 10 cents for every cat skin of any description brought to them in reasonable condition.

Mrs. Devine, commonly called "The Cat Woman," who obtained considerable notoriety as the head of the Midnight Band of Mercy claimed to have killed 8,000 stray cats last fall. If she was in the secret of the furriers she probably netted a nice little sum by her so-called humane mission.

Black cats and gray maltese are the most valuable kinds, as they supply sable, but white maltese or tabby cats, after dyeing processes, are all available for genet or French lynx.

Pussy's coat is also largely used by druggists for chest protectors and as a cure for rheumatism, but it is for the winter decoration of ladies that the cat has become most valuable.—New York World.

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The Lay of the Fannie Bradford

John Winthrop Lodge, mariner, and a resident of Martha's Vineyard, aged seventy years, was seated in his room at the hotel. I had been told that the old gentleman had passed an adventurous youth, half buccaneer, half slave. Gradually I brought him to talk of it.

"There's another way we Yankees made money," said John Winthrop Lodge—for he and I also discussed New England riches—"which you haven't mentioned. It was ocean work, but clear off one side from whales, seals, codfish, privateering or Jamaica rum. It was bringing niggers from Africa. Yes, I was in the slave trade myself. I didn't see it was any worse to own a nigger on a boat than own him ashore. I don't yet. For that matter, I don't think it's any worse to hold a nigger in slavery than to cage canary birds, or hold any other animated thing agin its will. I made three years of it slaving, and got sick of it and quit. Here's the way we worked. Our owners was a Boston firm, and apparently carried on a straight ocean traffic. But a pile of their money, as well as outside money, was in the slave business. We had a station on the Guinea coast, where our agents bought niggers and ivory and other African productions. Then there was one boat, the William Stowell, went between Boston and this station, carrying out calico, looking-glasses, knives and cheap guns for barter, and bringing back the ivory. The boat I was in was the Fanny Bradford, and we carried the niggers. We took 'em to Havana to our agents, who afterwards worked them into the United States in small bunches, generally through New Orleans. We never took 'em further than Havana, for it wouldn't do to take a regular slaver like the Fanny Bradford into such crowded waters as the Gulf. We couldn't have got into Havana, but we had everybody in the way bought up.

"The Fanny Bradford was a sort of half schooner, half brig. She was square rigged for'ard, but she was jibbed and bad after sails like a schooner. She counted twenty-seven men for'ard and four in the cabin. Our papers were all made out in Boston and showed we was in the regular Guinea trade for ivory and truck of that kind. They were always new because the William Stowell always brought us out a new set each time she came. This took more bribes at the Boston end. We had to do this as both the English and American navies were after us. We wern't afraid of the Americans, for they didn't hunt for us very hard, but the English were different. They stuck right to it. It sort kept the rust off their navy and got a little prize money out of the boats they captured, so their crews could get good and drunk ashore. We were always on the lookout for the British union jack and always tore our anchors out of Africa just at evening so as to get one good run in the dark.

"The Fanny Bradford was built in Bangor, and was a good sharp sailer, as were many of the boats they built down Maine way them days. She might be called a fast vessel. During the three years I was with her we felt many a fast boat behind. No; we never let anybody come close to us. We turned right away the minute we made out a topsail. But it was a dirty business. You ought to just smell the Fanny Bradford once. You could smell her a mile agin the wind, and to cross our lee was to simply get blighted right there. We on board were used to the odor, and even then it made me sick more than once. We didn't have no fo'es'l for the men. It was given up to the niggers. The slave deck ran from her bows clear aft, most to the cabin. The men berthed about the deck, which was no hardship in hot latitudes. We got $600 a nigger for 'em in the States, and all told, original cost, expenses and everything else was about $15 each. We could take 300 niggers each v'age, which was $135,000 profit. One v'age would pay for the ship itself even if it was lost the second, and in three years I was with 'em I made seven trips myself.

"How did I get sick of it? Well, it was, as la wyers say: The slave deck was about four feet between decks. The ship stores were aft with the cabin. We used to stow the niggers like this: Two good sized chain cables, one on the starboard and one on the portside, were carried from the bowsaft, and each hooked onto a bolt in two of the ship's stanchions. The for'ard end of the chains was carried out through hawse-holes and fastened to two bigan chors, one on each side of the bowsprit. I want to call your attention to this because these anchors come in agin. After the chains were run for'ard and aft, fastened and rigged as I say, we brought on our niggers and fastened 'em, each with an iron cuff on his right wrist to these cables. We had four lines of niggers up and down the ship, a line on each side of these cables and fastened as I say. We used to give 'em an hour on deck every two days, bar weather. We had 'em out ten at a time, day and night alike, but always under close guard. No, there was no danger of their pitching into us; but they was likely, bein' a despairin' set of people anyway, to go pitchin' int othe sea to be drowned. I've knowed a heap of 'em to do it. Four times a day we sluiced their deck with water and made a batch of 'em scrub it as well as we could. Twice a day we fed 'em; always porridge, so thick and slab they could eat it outen a bowl with their fingers.

"Now this is how I came to quit. I was first mate of the Fanny Bradford. It was about endin' up my third year. We was four days out from Guinea. All the mornin' we'd had some sort of a vessel astern and a leetle to leeward. We'd tried all we knew shake her loose goin' free, but we couldn't make it. She could go faster than the Fanny Bradford. I thought then and always stuck to it, the Fanny Bradford could have beaten her if our captain had dry-docked her or had had divers clean the barnacles off her copper when I wanted him three months before. But he wouldn't and it being a clear day we could not shake loose this stranger. At any rate she was coming up, she was goin' to overhaul us by eight bells in the afternoon. So we couldn't expect the night to help us none.

"'What do you think she is, Mr. Lodge?' says my captain.

"'I think she's a British war vessel,' says I, and takes a long look through my glass, 'but I can't see nuthin' at her peak.'

"'But I don't want to, no how,' he says, slammin' ti his glasses; 'our business is to keep away from her, no matter who she is.'

"But that was the trouble; we couldn't keep away.

"'They kin beat us saitin' free, Mr. Lodge,' says the captain.

"'I wonder now,' says the captain, 'if we could not oun'int 'em.'

"'We kin try,' I says, 'but here's the trouble, if we tack to starboard, we run down to 'em; if we tack to port, it gives 'em the weather-gage. As it is we hold 'em a little on our lee.'

"'Which is all true,' says the captain, 'but we'll try her anyhow,' so he puts the Fannie on the port tack; and right off the stranger, not havin' to haul her wind so hard, begins right away to come up. So then we goes back to our old course.

"Bimeby our captain, who'd been thinkin', says, 'It's no use, Mr. Lodge, we must clear out the Guineas,' meanin' the niggers. 'I hate to do it. There's $180,000 in 'em.'

"While he spoke a mouthful of smoke was blown from the bow of the stranger. It was too far to hear, but we knowed it was a gun for us to come to.

"This seemed to help our captain to make up his mind.

"'I hate to do it,' he says, and then picked up the cook's ax from where it lay on the afterdeck, and goes for'ard.

"Now, one thing I didn't tell you. On each of our bows, starboard and port, was a hole cut four feet square. It made an opening with top and bottom to match the slave deck. The wood was cut out into quarters and set back in again on hinges, with the hawes hole cut in the center. There were other details, but I won't stop to give 'em. Two of the men at the captain's order went below, where the nigger was, and knocked these openings free, leaving the ports fall loose on their hinges. It was awful hot, and I reckon the poor niggers think it's done to give 'em some air. It was to give 'em water, which is better still on a scorchin' day. The men came back and reports all free below. The captain swings his ax sorter delicately, like a fencer about to begin.

"'I hates to do it,' he says, and then steps clear into the bows, where he could reach the anchor lashings.

"He made one swing of the ax and cuts nearest inboard. The anchors swing down by the anchor stocks, and then their weight and the strain parts the for'ard lashings.

"Splash! goes the two big anchors into the sea, and with a swish came two black squirming streaks after.

"The streaks were the 300 niggers.

"They goes so quick they never knows what's up. And the yank was so sudden it left all their breath in the ship. None of 'em even peeped.

"And among the rest goes our captain. He either fainted or lost his balance, or something; anyhow, he and the axe struck the water along with the first of the Guineas. They, none of 'em ever came up. We used to miss that axe, too.

"How did we really get out? Of I took command. We all turned in and locked the big bow ports and sluiced the slave deck clean. When the stranger came aboard—and she was a sure enough British sloop—we was all ready. We showed our papers and lied out of it. Of course, he could tell we was a slaver by the smell and the way we was fitted. But the niggers was gone and you can't prove no law case by jest smells, so, after an hour cussin' on a side, he throwed us loose.

"But I'd got enough. I took the Fannie Bradford back to Guinea and came home four months later in the Stowell.

"Who was our captain who went over the bows that time? If I remember right he was from up the Penobscot county some'ere. His name was Royal—Capt. Royal. He was an A1 sailor; but there was a heap of good sailor men in New England, my lad, in the lay of the Fannie Bradford."

A. H. L.

MADAME ZENAIDE A. RAGOZIN.

The Brilliant Russian Historian Who Has Made America Her Home.

New York, June 29.—A new light has suddenly appeared upon the literary horizon, Mme. Zenaide A. Ragozin, the Russian historian, chronicler of the most ancient countries of the Orient from 5000 to 500 B. C.

So quietly has she been working away in New York for a number of years past, that, though living in the very heart of the great metropolis, only the members of her own circle have found her out. But now the interested and aroused public will remain in the dark as to her identity no longer, and appeals to the various journals are beginning to bring to light some of the facts in the life of this brilliant historian and charming woman.

Born in St. Petersburgh, Mme. Ragozin is a Russian of noble family. On her father's side she is of Oriental descent, dating back to the time of Ivan the Terrible, Tsar of Russia.

She has lived a life varied and eventful. In her native land she followed a literary career, being a woman of great natural gifts, and the fortunate recipient of unusual educational advantages. There she married, and twenty years ago determined to sail for America and cast her lot with its people.

Historical study and research being a favorite pursuit with her, she finally made up her mind to devote her time and talents to the writing of a series of eight volumes dealing with Eastern lore. So great has been this learned scholar's success, that to-day she stands alone as the author of the most complete popular history of those early and distant lands so teeming with romance. The volumes already completed are: "The Story of Chaldea," "The Story of Assyria," "Media, Babylon and Persia," and the new one, "The Story of Vedic India." She writes very rapidly, and hopes to finish the series before very long.

She is altogether impartial and unbiased in her work. She defines her methods and position as "On the fence, going down to the bottom facts, simply, and leaving all party feeling to others."

Her style is so delightful, her productions so interesting and yet so truthfully exact, that her readers devour her books with avidity, and call for more.

This spring she delivered a course of lectures in New York on "The Oldest Religion of India," also a talk on "The Cottage Industries of Russia," all under fashionable patronage, for the erudite lady is very much of a swell, and the "400" delight to honor her.

She is a member of the American Oriental Society, the Societe Ethnologique of Paris, the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain, and Ireland, and many others similar.

Personally she is large and handsome, rather Oriental in caste of features, with dark hair, and fine, expressive dark eyes. She is cordial and winning in manner, perfectly simple and unassuming, but bright and full of gay talk and anecdote.

This summer she expects to visit the estates of relatives in Russia, and will collect pictures to illustrate her books and lectures.

CAROLYN HALSTED.

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