

Between Two Shores

By ELLEN GLASGOW

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HE was leaning against the railing of the deck, gazing wistfully down upon the sea of faces on the landing below. She wore a skirt and coat of brown cloth, and her veil was raised in a white film above her small hat.

In the crowd clustering about her eager for the last glimpse of friends she looked shy and nervous, and her brown eyes were dilated in alarm. Despite her thirty years there was something girlish in her shrinking figure—a suggestion of the incipient emotions of youth. The fine lines that time had set upon brow and lips were results of the flight of undifferentiated days and lacked the intensity of experimental records. One might have classified her in superficial survey as a woman in whom temperamental fires had been smothered rather than extinguished by the ashes of unfulfillment. To exist once, which is a series of rhythmic waves of the commonplace, she offered facial serenity; to life, which is a clash of opposing passions, she turned the wistful eyes of ignorance.

A tall girl, carrying an armful of crimson roses, pressed against her and waved a heavily scented handkerchief to some one upon the landing. On the other side a man was shouting directions in regard to a missing piece of baggage. "I marked it myself," he declared frantically. "It was to have been shipped from New Orleans to the Cunard dock. I marked it 'Not wanted' with my own hands, and, by Jove, those dirty creoles have taken me at my word."

She rested her hand upon the railing and leaned far over. Down below a pretty girl in a pink shirt waist was kissing her gloved finger tips to a stout gentleman on deck. An excited group were waving congratulations to a bride and groom, who looked fatigued and slightly bored.

For the first time she recognized in this furtive shrinking a faint homesickness, and her thoughts recoiled to the dull southern home, to the sisters-in-law who made her life burdensome and to the little graveyard where the husband she had never loved lay buried. The girl with the crimson roses jostled her rudely and from behind some one was treading upon her gown. The insipid heat of the July sun flashed across her face, and in a vision she recalled the sweeping pastures of the old plantation, with the creek where the willows grew and the thrushes sang.

Suddenly the steamer gave a tremor of warning, and a volley of farewells ascended from below.

"Pleasant voyage!" called the man to the girl beside her. "Pleasant voyage!" called some one to the lady on her right. Then she realized that she was alone, and for the first time regretted that her father-in-law had not come. When the news of his delay had first reached her and she had unlearned to start alone, she had experienced a vivid elation. There was delight in the idea of freedom, of being accountable to no one, of being absolutely independent of advice. Now she wished that she had an acquaintance who would wish her godspeed or shout an indistinct pleasantry from the crowded landing.

The steamer moved slowly out into the harbor, and the shore was white with fluttering goodbys. Then the distance lapsed into gradual waves of blue.

She left the railing and stumbled over a group of steamer chairs placed midway of the deck. She descended to her stateroom, which was in the center of the ship. At the door she found the stewardess, who inquired if she was "Mrs. L. Smith."

"That is my name, and I am going to be ill. I know it."

"Lie down at once. And about this bag? I thought it would give you more space if I put it in the gentleman's room. He hasn't much luggage."

Lucy Smith looked up in mystification. "But it is mine," she explained, "and I want it."

Then the boat gave a lurch, and she undressed and climbed into her berth.

The next day, after a sleepless night, she struggled up and left her stateroom, the stewardess following with her wraps. At the foot of the stairs she swayed and fell upon the lowest step. "It's no use," she said plaintively. "I can't go up—I can't, indeed."

The stewardess spoke with professional encouragement. "Oh, you're all right," she remonstrated. "Here's the gentleman now. He'll help you."

"Isn't there but one gentleman on board?" Mrs. Smith began, but her words failed.

Some one lifted her, and in a moment she was on deck and in her chair, while the stewardess wrapped her rugs about her and a strange man arranged the pillows under her head. Then they left her, and she lay with closed eyes. "Perhaps you would like yesterday's Herald?" said a voice.

She started from an uncertain daze and looked around her. Hours had passed, and since closing her eyes the sea had grown bluer and the sun warmer. A pearl colored foam was glistening on the waves. "I beg your

garden," she replied, turning in the direction whence the words came. "Did you speak?"

The man in the next chair leaned toward her, holding a paper in his hand. He was tall and angular, with commonplace features, lighted by the sympathetic gleam in his eyes.

"I asked if you would like a Herald," he repeated.

She looked at him reproachfully. "I am ill," she answered.

He smiled. "Oh, I beg your pardon," he said. "You didn't look it, and it is so hard to tell. I offered a lemon to that gray-green girl over there, and she flew into a rage. But are you ill in earnest?"

"I shouldn't exactly choose it for jest," she returned, "though somehow it does make time pass. One forgets that there are such divisions as days and weeks. It all seems a blank."

"But it is very calm."

"So the stewardess says," she answered aggressively, "but the boat rocks dreadfully."

He did not reply, and in a moment his glance wandered to the card upon her chair. "Odd, isn't it?" he questioned.

She followed his gaze and colored faintly. The card read, "Mrs. L. Smith." Then he pointed to a similar label upon his own chair, bearing in a rough scrawl the name "L. Smith."

"It is a very common name," she remarked absently.

He laughed. "Very," he admitted.

"Perhaps your husband is Lawrence Smith also?"

The smile passed from her lips.

"My husband is dead," she answered; "but his name was Lucien."

He folded the newspaper awkwardly.

Then he spoke. "Nicer name than Lawrence," he observed.

She nodded. "A name is of very little consequence," she rejoined. "I have always felt that about every name in the world except Lucy. Lucy is mine."

He looked into her eyes. Despite her illness they shone with a warm, fawn like brown. "I think it a pretty name," he said. "It is so soft."

"It has no character," she returned.

"I have always known that life would have been different for me if I hadn't been called Lucy. People would not treat me like a child if I were Augusta or even Agnes—but Lucy?"

"People change their names sometimes," he suggested.

She laughed softly. "I tried to. I tried to become Lucinda, but I could not. Lucy stuck to me."

"It wouldn't be so bad without Smith," he remarked, smiling.

"That was a horrible cross," she returned. "I wonder if you mind Smith as much as I do."

At first he did not answer. To her surprise his face grew grave, and she saw the haggard lines about his mouth which his smile had obscured. "It was a deuced good chance that I struck it," he said shortly.

For a time they sat silent. Then, as the luncheon gong sounded and the

(Continued on page 6)

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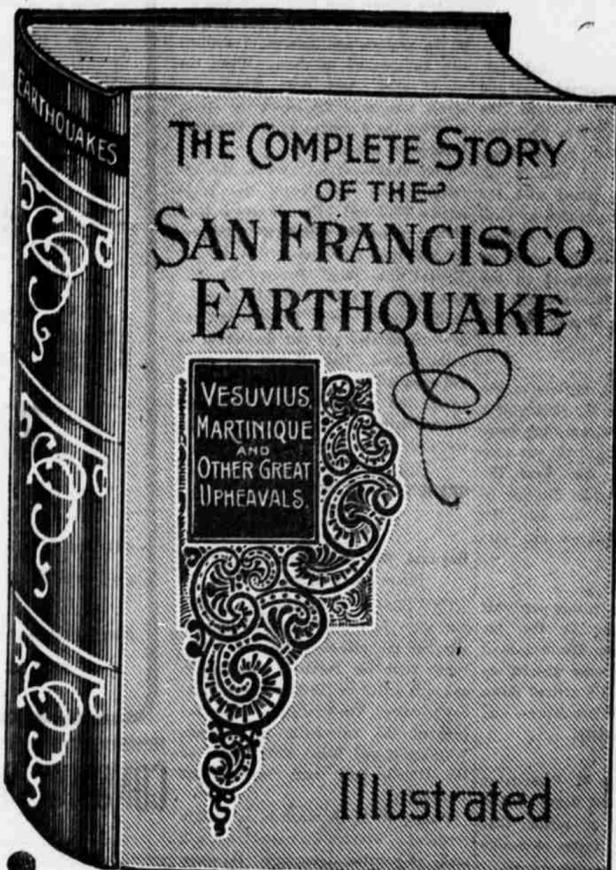
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