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tially smelted ores to the assortment. Driven by expert minds and masters of executive work, an army of men in different walks of life had given their ingenuity and effort toward something of which they knew not, and then the result of their labors had poured out upon a wharf, been swallowed up by the cavernous holds of a collier, and were now being carried out into the broad reaches of the Atlantic, with destination unknown.

A general order had been issued and made public, that, inasmuch as the poaching of Cuban fishermen on American grounds round lower Florida and the keys demanded attention, the gunboat *Penobscot* had been detailed to patrol those waters. In the United States this attracted no attention; but the swarthy fishermen of the tropics took warning and no longer steered their smacks to the forbidden waters, shrugging their shoulders in impatient wrath.

Rumor had it that the transport was carrying mechanics and laborers to the Philippines, where a new drydock was to be constructed, and the collier was generally supposed by men of the waterfront to be laden with materials for this work. And so, despite the momentous significance of the sailing of these three ships, the world remained in ignorance, paid little heed, or forgot.

Those voyagers who were in the secret looked forward with eagerness to the task before them, realizing to the full that on them depended much. And of these was Norma, who leaned over the stern rail of the *Penobscot* as it dropped down the harbor, watched the lights of the city grow dim in the distance, saw the great, silent Statue of Liberty rear itself against the sky, and felt the first free swell lift and sway the deck beneath her feet. Her departure had not been pleasant.

There on the land behind was the man whom she seemed doomed forever to hold at arm's length. She had parted from him with the announcement that her father was compelled to go south for a time, and had insisted on her accompanying him. For how long? Ah, that could be but conjecture; perhaps for two or three months. Was he ill? No, not exactly, but he was going away and needed her. Yes she would write occasionally from Miami, Florida; but not often, because her charge would demand her time. And so, answering and evading, filled with yearning, and yet debarred from giving confidence, she had bidden him good by and come to this; sailing away in the night with all the furtiveness and mystery which enshrouded pirate ships of old bent on plunder and rapine.

The days of the voyage were much alike: filled with work. Down in the cabins the engineers and machinists drew hasty plans of buildings, then marked spots where machines were to have floor space, drew diagrams for transmission of power, and consulted charts showing the depths of water round their prospective shipyard. They had not even time to watch the devious course in and out among the islands which marked their entry to the scene of toil. When the pulsations of the screw stopped and the ship ceased her vibrations, they were still at their several tasks, and were disturbed when the anchor chains went rumbling through their hawser pipes.

Like an army of ants, drilled and acclimated, they swarmed out upon the land, the sappers clearing the way the carpenters donning their aprons, and grasping their tools while piles of lumber, kegs of bolts and nails, and mountains of iron sheathing accumulated upon the beach. And then, as the ringing of a multitude of hammers and the steady biting song of the saws filled the air with sounds of industry, great cases of machinery swung up from the holds, floated dizzily to the bulwarks, and went slowly down to the lighters. A city of tents sprang up as by necromancy, with gutters to carry off the rains, and sewers to prevent disease. Camp surgeons accustomed to sanitation superintended these outposts, paying as much attention to the spreading of a mosquito net to keep away the dread stygoma, as to tautening the canvas roofs and clearing the grounds.

All available means of a resourceful nation had been gathered together as an expert driver seizes the reins of a four-in-hand and guides his horses along a known road to a given destination, and all with the regularity which would distinguish the work had it been the most unimportant action of every day industry.

Norma, having no part in this task of construction, wandered idly up and down the decks or round the clearing throughout the day; and as she watched she saw the birth of a miniature city, saw the heaps of material on the beach dissipated, saw tall steel smokestacks poke their summits upward supported by spider like cables, saw shining, corrugated roofs spread themselves protectively over floors whereon machinery was already being placed, and wondered at the accomplishment.

The sun went down, losing itself among the keys and waters of the farther west, before a bugle gave a quick imperative summons and the toilers dropped their tools for the evening meal. Many of the officers, some of them grimy and stained with work, their linen no longer immaculate, and their hair unkempt, came aboard the gunboat for dinner. They ate hurriedly like men in the field, and one by one, with scant apology to their fellow diners, disappeared. Norma was almost the last to leave the cabin and appear on deck, which to her surprise was vacant. Even as she glanced along its deserted length there came a whistle from the shore.

Darkness had descended abruptly and piled its blackness over the islands and seas of the tropics. The palm trees and shrubbery out to the west were silhouetted against the last faint light of day, and from the swamps of the inland came the cries of night fowl, the whir and chirruping noise of insect life, and the monotonous

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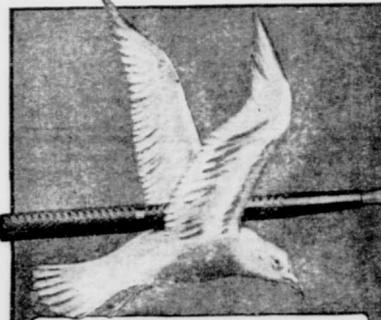
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