

One day, however, Bayne insisted that he see Viola personally. He was ugly to the point of ferocity when she received him coldly.

"I shall proceed to foreclose on the property unless my interest is paid," he announced.

"I am sorry," fluttered Viola meekly, "but unless my father returns—"

"He will never return," growled Bayne brutally. "He is dead long since and you may as well make up your mind to it. See here, you had better be sensible, unless you want to be a beggar. I'll give you 30 days to decide to become my wife."

"That never will be!" affirmed Viola indignantly.

"Then I shall turn you out in the streets."

And the 30 days were nearly past, and, but for the faithful love of Julian, she would have been crushed utterly.

Of all this Julian was thinking as he strolled down the village street. He had a problem to solve, he felt, for he was not in a condition financially to care for a wife as he would have liked to do.

He paused as he crossed the platform of the little railroad station and with natural curiosity watched the passengers alight from the evening train from the city. Then he made a positive jump forward. A man, bronzed, travel-worn, with threadbare attire, thin, but brisk, and carrying a battered satchel plastered with foreign labels had stepped from the train.

"Dr. Bliss!" shouted Julian. "Oh, this will brighten the heart of a poor, patient girl."

"Morse! But it seems grand to see you!" cried the returned traveler cheerily. "Yes, it's me, and I've been through something, my boy, believe me. Morse, Viola, my sister? All well?"

"Glorious, now you're home!" enthused Julian. "Come, hurry. Oh, but Viola will be glad!"

Poor Viola! Jovious Viola! She

clung to her beloved parent, crying, laughing, fairly hysterical, when Julian, happy as a schoolboy, ushered him into the home that had so missed him. It was amid their glad, mutual greeting that a summons came at the doorbell. Aunt Lucy ushered old Bayne into the room.

The money lender had not anticipated the return of the master of the house. He was staggered, sought to retire, but the doctor, unaware of his treachery and meanness, treated him like some bosom friend.

"Ha! ha! Come after your money—getting anxious about it, I suppose," cried Dr. Bliss uproariously. "You will be paid and well paid, neighbor, for your patience. I don't look very prosperous, eh? Well, I've not been for many a month. In prison in Belgium, in prison in Prussia, knocked from pillar to post, blown up twice, nearly hanged for a spy. At last I'm here and I've come to pay up everything. You know that letter I sent you with the pictures, Viola?"

"We received no letter, father," replied Viola.

"But the pictures?"

"Oh, yes, they came all right and mystified us not a little."

"Where are they?"

"In the attic."

"Have them down. I want to show my old friend here what a rare, royal bargain I made abroad. You see, there were six of those gems. A rich old stadtholder under government suspicion offered me the lot, worth \$100,000 for \$15,000 to get cash to flee the country. I shipped them as common freight."

"Why, father, they are worthless daubs," ventured Viola, but her father at this roared with gleeful jollity. Viola and Julian went to the attic and brought the set of oil paintings down into the sitting room.

Dr. Bliss lifted the wretched daubs from the box with great gusto. He rested them against various chairs.

"There you are!" he announced diffusively, "a clear value of \$100,000