

# **The Island of Regeneration**

The Island of Regeneration

A Story of What Ought to Be

Cyrus Townsend Brady

1888

With constantly increasing affection and admiration,

I dedicate this book to my friend,

Beverly E. Warner

# BOOK I

## Chapter I

Whether she had fainted or fallen asleep, she did not know, but of this one thing she was sure: it had been dark when consciousness left her and it was now broad day, although the light seemed to come to her with a greenish tinge which was quite unfamiliar. The transition between her state of yesterday and that of to-day was as great as if she had been born into morning from the womb of midnight. Like a young animal vaguely stirring she drank in life blindly with closed eyes. She could hear the thunderous roaring of the breakers crashing upon the barrier reef. Alone her boat had been wrecked in the darkness of the night before the noise softened and, mellowed by distance, came to her in a deep, low accompaniment to the sharper and nearer sounds of the birds singing and the breeze rustling gently through the long leaves of the trees overhead.

The dry sand on which she lay was soft and yielding and made a comfortable bed for her tired body, racked with weary days in the constraint and narrowness of a small boat. It was hot, too. She had been drenched and cold when she scrambled on the shore and fell prostrate on the beach, retaining just strength enough and purpose enough to crawl painfully inward to where the tall palms grew before she lapsed in whatsoever way it might have been into oblivion, and the warmth of the shore was very grateful to her.

Incoherent thoughts raced through her bewildered brain; each one, however, bringing her a little nearer the awakening point of realization. Then there ran through her young body a primal pang which dispelled the tremulous and vague illusions which her fancy had woven about herself as she lay warm and snug and sunny at the foot of the tall trees. She realized that she was frightfully thirsty, so thirsty that she did not know how hungry she was.

The demand of the material awakened the animal in her. Her thoughts centered instantly; they were at once localized on one supreme desire. Coincidentally her eyes unclosed, and she sat up, blinking in the strong light. The rising sun, still low on the horizon, smote her full in the eyes and left her for the moment dazed again. She sat leaning upon her hands extended behind her back, staring seaward, saying nothing, thinking nothing, until a strange sound to the right of her

attracted her attention. It was a sound made by a human voice, and yet it was like nothing human that she had ever heard. It was a wordless, languageless ejaculation, but it aroused her interest at once despite her material cravings.

She weakly turned her head, and there, standing erect with folded arms, looking down upon her, was a man. He was unclothed entirely save for a fantastic girdle of palm leaves about his waist. She stared at him puzzled, amazed, affrighted. He returned her look with an intent curiosity in which there was no suggestion of evil purpose, rather a great incomprehension, an amazing wonderment. There was nothing about him, save the fact that he was there, which should have caused any alarm in her heart, for with a woman's swift mastery of the possibilities of the other sex, she noticed in her vague terror and wonderment that he was remarkably good to look at. Indeed, she thought that she had never seen so splendid a specimen of physical manhood as that before her. In color he was white. Save that he was bronzed by the tropic sun, he was perhaps whiter than she was. His hair, which hung about his head in a wild, matted tangle, not unpicturesque, was golden; his eyes bright blue. Beneath his beard, unkempt but short and curly, she could see his firm, clean-cut lips. His proportions were superb. He was limbed and chested like the Apollo Belvidere. In him grace and strength strove for predominance. He was totally unlike all that she had read of the aborigines of the South Seas.

Instantly she saw him he naturally became the object of her undivided attention. There was much in Nature that might have awakened her interest. She sat in the shadow of great palms; below her hung a long reach of sand dazzlingly white in the sun. Bordering this was a smooth expanse of sea, waveless and still and bluer than any heaven she had ever looked into. Beyond that ran the jagged edge of the barrier reef, white-crested with foam from long assaulting breakers rolling landward over countless leagues of seas. Back of her and on either side the ground, gently undulating, was covered with the luxuriant verdure of the tropics. The island was set in the blue of the Pacific like an emerald bordered with pearls and sunk in a great sapphire of flashing light. She would have time to grow accustomed to this scene. Through weary days of staring seaward and longing for that which never came, it would be imprinted upon her soul, etched upon her consciousness with a graver's burin of unsatisfied desire. But for the moment the one object of her faculties was the man. Before Nature, in Nature, throughout Nature, the supreme interest is always in Man.

In her surprise, astonishment, admiration, and curiosity she even forgot for the

moment that she was hungry and that she was thirsty; that she was starving for food and dying for water while she looked upon him. She was not the first woman nor will she be the last to forget earth and sea and every material passion while she looked upon a man. So Eve might have looked on Adam, awakening in the primal dawn. Nay, from his view point, so Adam might have looked on Eve at that selfsame hour. For this woman had looked on many men; this man had seen no woman but this at least since he clung to his mother's breast!

It was the man who broke the silence, as it had been the man whose hard stare had broken the spell of her slumber although she knew it not. He made that queer little chuckling noise in his throat which sounded familiar enough, albeit she had heard it from the lips of no man before. It meant nothing to her except that he who stood before her at least was not dumb, although the noise he made was certainly no articulate speech as she knew speech or could imagine it.

At any rate it was a stimulus to her. She opened her own parched lips and strove to make reply, but her thirst, with a rising terror and nervousness, made her dumb and no sound came forth. The man might be preparing to kill her. He could do so, if he willed, she thought, but she must drink or die. If she could not speak, she could make signs. She leaned forward, raised her arm, hollowed her hand and dipped as if from a well and made as if to pour it into her lips. Then she stretched out both her hands to him in the attitude of petition. The man stared hard at her. His brow wrinkled. It was such a simple sign that any savage would have comprehended it, she thought, and yet it appeared to her, watching in despair, that it took a long time for the idea to beat into his brain. She could wait no longer. She rose to her knees and stretched out her hands again.

“Water!” she gasped in a hoarse whisper. “Water, or I die!”

The man had started violently at her speech. Giving him no time to recover, she went through the motion again, this time with greater effect, for the man turned and vanished. She sank down on the sand too exhausted to follow him even with her eyes. If he brought the water, she would drink it and live; if he did not, she would lie where she was and die. She did not care much, she thought, which would happen. She had so sickened of life before she essayed that open boat, that she believed it was simply an animal craving in her which would make her take the water in case it should be brought her. And yet when he did appear with a cocoanut shell brimming with clear, sparkling liquid, she felt as though the elixir of life had been proffered her.

She seized the shell with both hands, which yet so trembled that most of the precious water spilled on her dress as she carried it to her parched lips. This was good in the end, for if that vessel had been the famed Jotunheim drinking horn, she would have drained it dry ere she set it down. As it was, she got but little; yet that little was enough to set her heart beating once more. Emptying the shell of the last drop and with that keenness of perception which her long training had intensified and developed, marking the while that it had not been cut clean by any knife or saw or human implement, but was jagged and broken as if from a fall, she dropped it on the sand and looked again toward the man. He held in his hand fruit of some kind, she did not know what it was. It might have been poison. What mattered it? Having drunk she must also eat. She took it. It looked edible, it was inviting to the eye, and as she sunk her teeth into it, she found it agreeable to the taste also. He had brought it to her. If he had meant harm, present harm, surely he would not have given the water. She ate it confidently.

He held in his hand fruit of some kind. It might have been poison. What mattered it?

As the man saw her partake of what he had given her, he clapped his hands and laughed. She was grateful for that laugh. It was more human than the babbling sounds which he had made before.

There was but little of the fruit, just what a child would have brought, and this again was good for her, for had there been an abundance, in her need she would have eaten until she made herself ill. When she had eaten, she rose to her feet. Before doing this she had extended her hand to him as if seeking assistance, but he had simply stared at her uncomprehending and she had been forced to get to her feet unaided. Once standing, she trembled and would have fallen but that she caught his arm and steadied herself by holding tightly to it. The man at her touch started back. Color came and went in his face; little shudders swept over him; his mouth opened; he looked at her with a singular expression of awe not unmixed with terror in his eyes, for this was the first time in his recollection, or what would have been his recollection if his retrospective faculties had been developed, that he had ever felt the touch of a woman's hand, of any human hand upon him.

Noticing his peculiar demeanor in the, to her, perfectly natural situation, the woman, summoning some of the remains of the reserve of force which is in every human body until life is gone, released his arm and stared about her,

leaning against the trunk of the nearest palm. This time, and for the first time, she took in that great expanse of sea, lonely yet beautiful, upon which her eyes were to look so often. Out of the deep and the night she had come. Into what deep and into what day had she arrived?

She turned and surveyed the shore. The beach curved sharply to the right and to the left, the long barrier reef following roughly its contour until the land obscured it on either side. Back of her stretched a grove of palms and back of that rose a hill; its crest, bare and craglike, towered above a sea of verdure. Through a chance vista she saw the mass of rock as a mountain peak. On one side of her high precipitous cliffs ran down close to the shore and shut out the view. Over them water fell to the beach.

Save in the person of the man beside her there was not an evidence of humanity anywhere. No curl of smoke rose above the trees. No distant call of human voices smote the fearful hollow of her ear. The breeze made music in the tall palms and in the thick verdure farther up the hillside, birds sang softly here and there, but about her a tropic stillness prevailed, to which one great heaving diapason on the distant barriers was a foundation of sound upon which to build a lonely quiet. Human beings there might be, there must be, on that island, if island it were; but if so, they must be abiding on the farther side. She and the man were alone.

Standing on her feet, with a slight renewal of her strength from what she had eaten and drunk, the woman now felt less fear of the man. He had treated her kindly. His aspect was gentle, even amiable. He looked at her wistfully, bending his brows from time to time and ever and again shaking his head, as a great dog looks at the master with whom he would fain speak, whose language he would fain understand, to whom he would fain impart his own ideas if he could.

She stared at him perplexed. She was entirely at loss what to do, until her eyes, roving past him, detected a dark object on the water line just where the still blueness touched the white sand. The sun light was reflected from a surface of metal, and thinking that she recognized it, she stepped from the shade of the palms and made her way unsteadily toward it. The man, without a sound, followed closely at her side.

Her vision had been correct, for she drew out of the sand a leather handbag, such as women carry. It had been elaborately fitted with bottles and mirrors and toilet

articles. Alas, it was in a sad state of dilapidation now. The bottles were broken, their contents gone. The bag had been lying in the boat when it had been hurled on the barrier in the night, and the same storm and tide which had borne her ashore had cast it also on the sand. It had come open in the battering and its contents were pitifully ruined. With eager eyes and fingers she examined everything. She found intact a little mirror, a pair of scissors, a little housewife, which was not a part of the fittings, and she wondered how it failed of being washed away, two combs, and a package of hairpins.

She had fought against starvation and thirst and loneliness and despair as she had fought against men, and she had not given way. She had set her teeth and locked her hands and endured hardship like the stoutest-hearted, most-determined soldier in the history of human struggles. But as the realization of this small misfortune burst upon her, she sank down on the sands and put her head in her hands and sobbed. Tears did her good. She had her cry out, utterly unhindered, for the man stood by, shaking his head and staring at her and making those strange little sounds, but offering in no way to molest her.

The water was beautifully clear and she could see on the other side of the barrier the remains of her boat. Perhaps some time, if there were need, she could get at that boat, but for the present all the flotsam and jetsam of her wild and fearful voyage lay in a water-soaked bag full of broken glass and battered silver from which she had rescued a pair of scissors, a mirror, two combs, a housewife full of rusty needles, and some hairpins. *O vanitas vanitatum!*

She was wearing a serviceable dress of blue serge with a sailor's blouse and a short skirt. Putting her precious treasure trove within the loose blouse and carrying the battered bag, which she meant to examine more carefully later, she turned and made for the shade of the trees again. For one thing, the sun, rising rapidly, was gaining power and beating down with great force upon her bare head. She had enjoyed the protection of a wonderfully plaited straw hat on her long voyage, else she could not have borne the heat, but that, too, was gone.

As she walked inward, she noticed again off to her right that stream of water which dropped over the tall cliff in a slender waterfall making a sweet inviting pool at the base before it ran through the sands toward the sea. She made her way thither and at the brink knelt down and took long draughts of it. Eating and drinking evidently went together in the mind of the man, for when she raised her head, she found him standing before her with both hands filled with some of the



fruit she had partaken of before and other fruit. She thought she recognized the breadfruit and a species of banana. At any rate, she ate again and, having by this time recovered to some extent her mental poise, she ate sparingly and with caution.

Then having satisfied her material needs, she knelt down by the stream again and washed her face and hands. How sweet was the freshness of that water to her face, burned by the sun and the wind and subjected for a long time to the hard spray of the briny seas! She would have been glad to have taken off her clothing and plunged into the pool, to have washed the salt of days from her tired body, to have had the stimulus and refreshment of its sparkling coolness over her weary limbs. But in the presence of her doglike attendant this was not yet possible.

Still she could and must arrange her hair. Of all the articles in her dressing bag, she was more fervently thankful at that moment for the combs than anything else, the combs and the little mirror and the hairpins — small things indeed, but human happiness as a rule turns on things so small that the investigator and promoter thereof generally overlook them. And we know not the significance of the little until upon some desert island we are left with only that.

Washed, fed, and dressed — for it is astonishing the difference that the neat coils in which she arranged her hair made in her appearance — and now in her right mind, she rose to her feet. As she did so, as an experiment, she handed the man the little silver-backed mirror. He stared into it and again uttered that cry of surprise. Then he turned it around as if to look on the other side. Then he looked again and still again. She took it from him unresisting; his eyes full of strange terror. Life was full of surprises for him that day. He had not only been touched by a woman, but he had looked at a man as well.

She put the mirror into her waist and then looked at her watch. By a miracle it was still running, and in a panic lest it should run down and she be timeless, she wound it up again, while he watched her with the same great interest. She would learn presently that time on that island was the least notable of all facts and the least valuable of all the things that she had to spend.

It was still early, about eight o'clock. How was she to pass the day? She must do something. She felt she could not sit idly staring from sea to shore. She must be moving. No business called her; she must invent some. The compelling necessity of a soul not born for idleness was upon her. She would explore the land. That

was logically the first thing to be done any way, and this was a highly trained woman who thought to live by rule and law, albeit her rules were poor ones.

She started inland, the man following after. She had gained confidence in herself with every passing moment. The man who looked at her as a dog she would treat as one. She must have some privacy. She could not always have him trailing at her heels. She turned by a great boulder, pointed to it, laid her hand on the man's shoulder and gently forced him to a sitting position by it. Then she walked away. He stared wistfully after her departing figure, and as she turned around to look at him, he sprang to his feet.

“No, no!” she cried imperatively, making backward threatening motions with her hands, whereat he resumed his sitting position, staring at her until he lost her among the trees.

Presently she turned and came back to him. It was so deathly lonely without him. He leaped to his feet as he saw her coming and clapped his hands as a child might have done, his face breaking out into a smile that was both trustful and touching. She felt better since she had him under this control, and together they walked on under the trees.

## Chapter II

High noon, and they were back at the landing place, and she at least was very tired. Accompanied by the man, who made not the slightest attempt to guide her, after some difficulty she had succeeded in forcing her way through the trees to the top of the hill. Part of the time she had followed the course of the rivulet from which she had drunk at the foot of the cliff. She was determined to get to the top, for she must see what was upon the other side. Humanity's supreme desire when facing the hills has always been to see what was on the other side. The stimulus of the unknown was upon her, but it was coupled with a very lively wish begot of stern necessity to know what there was to be known of the land upon which she had been cast up by the sea.

Her view from the hilltop — she did not essay the unclothed and jagged peak, she could make her way around its base and see all that there was to see — was not reassuring. She could detect on the other side of the island no more evidences of life than were presented by that she had first touched upon. In every direction lay the unvexed sea. The day was brilliantly clear; there was not a cloud in the sky. No mist dimmed the translucent purity of the warm air. Nothing broke the far horizon. The island, fair and beautiful, was set alone in a mighty ocean. In so far as she could tell, she and the man were alone upon it. The thought oppressed her. She strove to throw it off. The silence of the man oppressed her as well. She turned to him at last and cried out, the words wrung from her by the horror of the situation :

“Man, man, whence came you? How are you called? What language do you speak? Why are you here?”

The sound of her own voice gave her courage. Waiting for no answer, and indeed she realized that none could come, she stepped to the brow of the hill where the trees happened not to be and, raising her voice, called and called and called. There were answering echoes from the jagged crag behind her, but when these died away, there was silence, unbroken save by the queer babbling, chuckling noises of the man.

She looked at him with a sudden sinking of the heart. Had this godlike creature roaming the woods, this Faun of the island, been denied a brain, articulate speech? Was she doomed to spend the rest of her life alone in this Paradise of the

Pacific with a harmless madman forever by her side? What a situation was that in which she found herself?

She was a highly specialized product of the greatest of universities. In science and in philosophy she was a master and a doctor. She should have had resources within herself which would enable her to be independent of the outside world, a world in which her experience, self-bought, had been bitter, in which the last few weeks had been one long disillusionment. And yet she was now overwhelmed with a craving for companionship, for articulate speech, as if she had never looked into a book or given a thought to the deep things of life. If this man beside her would only do something, say some thing, be something rather than a silent satellite for ever staring in wonder. If she could only solve the mystery of his presence, answer the interrogation that his very existence there alone presented.

Her future, her present, indeed, should have engrossed her mind. What she was to do, how she was to live, the terrible problems in which his presence on the island involved her, should have been the objects of her attention; they should have afforded food for thought to the keenest of women. She simply forgot them in her puzzled wonder at him. It would have been much simpler from one point of view if she had found the island uninhabited, and yet since the man was human and alive, in spite of her judgment, her heart was glad that he was there.

She motioned to him to sit down and then she sat in front of him and studied him. He looked as little like a fool as like a knave. She could indeed detect no evidences of any intellectual ability, but she thought, as she studied him keenly, that he possessed unlimited intellectual possibilities. There was a mind back of those bright blue eyes, that broad, noble brow, but it seemed to her a mind entirely undeveloped, a mind utterly latent. Here was a soul, she thought, half in fancy, half in earnest, that was virgin to the world. Howsoever wise, howsoever deeply learned she might be, she was face to face with this primeval norm.

Could she teach this man anything? He seemed tractable, reverential, deferential now. Knowledge was power. Would it be power with him? Could she open those sealed doors of his mind, what floods would outpour therefrom, of power, of passion? Would she be swept away? It mattered not. She must try. The impulse seized her to begin now. Fixing her dark eyes upon him, she pointed directly at him with her finger.

“Man,” she said clearly and emphatically.

He was always looking at her. He had scarcely taken his eyes from her since she had seen him in the tall grass by the shore, but at her gesture and word his eyes brightened. There was that little wrinkling of the brow again which she had noticed, outward and visible sign of an inward attempt at comprehension.

“Man!” she said passionately. “Man,” she repeated over and over again.

And then the unexpected happened. After innumerable guttural attempts, her unwitting pupil managed to articulate something that bore a distinct resemblance to the clearly cut monosyllable.

“Man!” he said at last.

It was a tremendous step in evolution, almost too great for any untutored human brain, for at once the man before her received a name, and the idea of name as well. In that instant, on that heaven kissing hill, he was differentiated from all the rest of creation forever. His consciousness, hitherto vague, floating, incoherent, indefinite, was localized, given a habitation and a name. He knew himself in some way to be.

“Man!” he cried, growing more and more confident with every repetition and more and more accurate in catching the very intonation with which she spoke.

“Man!” he cried, laying his hand upon his breast. “Man.”

He leaped to his feet and stretched out his arms. The doors were open a little space. Ideas were beginning to edge their way through the crack.

“Man! Man! Man!” he said again and again, looking eagerly at her.

She rose in turn and patted him on the shoulder encouragingly as she might a dog. And again the touch, the third touch that she had given him, affected him strangely, so strangely that for a moment she felt the soul within her shrink, but realizing at once that her domination over him was spiritual and immaterial, and that the slightest evidence of timidity would be translated into universal language which even the lowest creation understands, and that her dominion would go on the instant, she mastered herself and so mastered him. Although she was but a woman whom he might have broken in his hands, she dominated him

as the conscious soul ever dominates the unconscious soul.

She essayed no more lessons, but turned and retraced her way to the shore where she had landed, which, because she had landed there, she called home. On the way, she attempted an experiment. She plucked from a low bush a bright-colored fruit of whose quality and characteristics she was ignorant and slowly made as if to convey it to her lips.

“Man!” cried the voice behind her, uttering its only word. She turned to find her companion looking fixedly at her and proffering other fruit which he had quickly gathered. She handed him that she had plucked in exchange. He shook his head, not in negation but rather in bewilderment, and threw it from him, and then she understood in some way that the fruit was not good for food. How he had divined it, she could not tell. Some compensating instinct, sharpened by use into a protecting quality, had taught him. She had no such instinct. She had learned to depend upon reason and observation, and these failed her in the presence of this unknown. She was humbled a little in this thought.

She craved meat and salt, having been trained to these things, the artificial diet and stimulant to which she had become accustomed, and her craving was the more insistent because she had been without them all that time in the boat. And yet when, she had eaten the fruit that nature had provided in that tropic island, her craving was abated and she was satisfied. She felt that she could soon grow accustomed to such a diet if it were necessary. So musing she passed on under the trees and sat down, on the sand again.

The next thing she remembered, she was unclosing her eyes as she had done early in the morning, and the man was still watching by her side. She had been so utterly tired out by her strange adventure, by her long wrestling with thirst and starvation in the open boat, that before she knew it, weariness overcame her and she slept. He had watched by her side without molesting her.

It was late in the evening now. The problems of the night had to be faced. This time the man took the initiative. He walked along the shore a little way and then looked back at her; then came back to her, then left her, and repeated the process once or twice as a dog might have done who was desirous of bringing his master to some appointed place. Understanding, she rose and followed him. He led her along the sands, now shadowed by the tall palms, until they came to the rivulet, where she stopped and drank once more. They passed it, he plunging bodily

through its shallows; she leaping from rock to rock until she reached the other bank. He went swiftly around the face of the cliff. As she passed the point she saw that it curved suddenly inward away from the shores into a sort of amphitheater, and fair in the center of the face she perceived an opening. He halted opposite and entered fearlessly, she following.

The cave was roomy and spacious, at least it seemed so in the fading light. In the morning when the sun shone through the opening, it would be flooded with daylight, but now, when the sun was sinking behind the hill, it was quite dark. It was dry and clean and apparently empty. The man stood looking at her smiling, at least there was a suggestion of a smile upon his lips. He was nodding his head. She understood that he lived there. The dog had come back to his kennel and had taken this chance acquaintance there, too.

It would be a good place to pass the night. The night had to be passed somewhere. How, was the problem. She had little fear of any savage animals on the island. There had been no evidences of them observed in her progress; the man himself was testimony to immunity from attack from that source. Had it not been for him, she could have lain down in that cave with quiet confidence and slept without apprehension of molestation, but he complicated the issue.

Twice he had watched by her asleep, but that was in the broad daylight. When darkness came, what then? Her heart was filled with terror. She was suddenly afraid of the dark, a childish fear at which her soul would have mocked in other days and under other conditions. But now she was a prey to vivid apprehension, and the night was coming on with the swiftness of the tropics. She was glad that she had slept through the long afternoon. She would endeavor to keep awake during the night. She must turn the dog out of his kennel and occupy that her self. How was she to enforce her will under the circumstances? She could only try.

“Man!” she said, pointing to the door, “go!” The words conveyed nothing, but the gesture meant much. Even to that man association with his kind for one day had effected a revolution in him. He hung undecided, however, before her, while she repeated again and again her injunction. Finally she took him by the shoulder, risking the peculiar emotions that contact seemed to bring to him, and thrust him gently through the entrance outside. Then she went back farther into the cave and waited with a beating heart. She could see him silhouetted against the twilight standing where she had left him. He came toward the door at last and

stood in the entrance.

“No, no!” she cried fiercely, praying that the note of terror might be lost in the imperative tones of her voice. “Man, go!”

She stood waiting, and he likewise. Mustering her courage at last, she went over to him and boldly thrust him out. Again and again the little drama was played until by and by it became impressed upon the mind of the man that he was to stay out and she was to stay in. He came no more to the entrance. He stood outside, aloof, looking in, although in the growing darkness he could not see her.

It was the second thing he had learned. The first ray of light in his dawning consciousness had illuminated the ego, the personal, the concrete. He was learning now the significance of a verb, and an abstract idea was being bred in him and some concept of constraint was entering his being. The first of those long checks that circumstances impose upon freedom in order that civilization may begin to be, was meeting him face to face. He had slept in that cave, she imagined, for years, and suddenly he was thrust out. There was no hardship in that, except the hardship in the necessity for obedience, if hard ship that might be. The night was balmy and pleasant; no shelter was needed. It was the fact that he had to go; that he was subject to another will and purpose; that something higher than himself was overruling him which might be hard. It would have been hard for the woman. She thought, however, that the limited comprehension of the man might not enable him to realize it.

He stood a long time on the sand while she watched him. Had she conquered? Had he learned his lesson? Had she laid foundations upon which consciousness of life and its relations might be builded? Would she be free from the terror of molestation, which in spite of herself sought expression in her voice and manner? Would she be permitted to pass the night undisturbed? Was her power over him sufficiently definite to be established and to be of value? Suppose she had not succeeded in mastering him, in dominating him? She shuddered at the probabilities involved. Of all the beasts of the field, the most terrible when he is a beast is man.

She was not a weak woman. She was above the middle height, athletic, splendidly developed, accustomed to the exercise of the gymnasium and the field, but her strength was no match for his. One ray of safety appeared in the fact that she believed him ignorant alike of the extent of his power or of the



possibilities of the situation. She wondered what strange thoughts were going on in that latent brain over which, by the use of moral force and courage, she was striving to establish domination. She rejoiced to find that even in the midst of her anxieties she could think so clearly about the situation.

Did he know his lesson, she wondered. She could only hope. If she only had a weapon, she thought, the weakness of sex might be equalized. There was nothing. Yes, her thought reverted to the womanly pair of scissors. With trembling hand she drew them forth and clenched the little tool of steel tightly. It was a poor dependence, but the best she had. And then she drew quietly back into the recesses of the cave and sat down, leaning against the wall, her eyes bright with dread, anticipation, and curiosity. She watched and waited, resolved, if necessary, to remain awake the long night through.

Outside the man had stood motionless a long time after the final repulse. The dusk had not yet melted into dark out there and he was easily visible against the sky framed by the opening as a dim picture. She was hardly aware of the intensity with which she watched him, and she was greatly surprised when she saw him at last kneel down upon the sands. She saw that the palms of his hands were pressed together in front of him; that his head was bowed; that his attitude was that of prayer! He was saying something. She could hear him without difficulty. She could distinguish no words in the rude succession of sounds that seemed to come from his lips, but her acute and quickened perception seemed to recognize a nearer resemblance to articulate speech than anything she had yet heard from him.

What was he doing? In a flash the woman realized that the man was praying. The realization smote her like a blow, for this woman had long since put away prayer. In her philosophy of life there was no place for God; in her scheme of affairs the divine was un-imminent. And yet alone on that island, in that darkness, despite her attempt to mock away the consciousness, she was relieved at that sight.

The little ritual on the sand ended with the one word her pupil knew.

“Man!” he said, striking his breast again and staring upward toward the heavens. “Man!” he cried, as if in his new consciousness he would fain introduce himself to his Maker, the woman thought. His Maker! Her lips writhed into a bitter smile that was half a sneer.

What would he do next? He rose to his feet and peered toward the door. She grasped the scissors tighter and held her breath. But he had learned his lesson. With indescribable relief she saw him turn aside and cast himself down upon the sand, where he lay motionless before her. If she had had any faith, she would have breathed "Thank God." As it was, she was very glad.

She watched him a long time, speculating on the questions she had asked him on the hill in the morning; who he was; what he was; whence he came; where he had learned that babble of prayer; why he was devoid of speech; what was the God to whom he prayed? She would study those things. The problems fascinated her. The desolation and loneliness of the island might have crushed her. Relieved from her immediate apprehensions, the man delighted her. She would investigate him, analyze him, synthesize him, teach him. She would mother him as a woman a child. No such opportunity as was hers had ever presented itself to a human being. Free, as she imagined herself, from inherited prejudices, devoid of old superstitions, crammed with new learning, illuminated with new light, abhorrent of narrow things, she fancied herself well fitted for that strangely maternal and preceptive role in which chance had placed her. She would play upon that mind, virgin to her touch, if she might use a woman's word, until it ran in harmony with her own. Alone upon that island, the rest of the world away, she would find occupation, interest, inspiration, in that nascent man.

He lay so still and so quiet that presently she arose and tiptoed softly to the entrance, where unseen she could look down upon him. The moon rose back of the hill. Although he was in the shadow, there was still refraction sufficient to enable her to see his face. He was asleep. The quiet, dreamless, unvexed sleep of a healthy animal, she thought. Their positions were reversed. He had watched her before when she was off guard and asleep, with what dim-dumb, inchoate effort it might be to comprehend, her. Now it was her turn. He took no disfavor in her mind after her inspection. He was a bold, splendid piece of ... what? Clay. She would put a soul in him, her soul. Her soul was the only thing she knew. She forgot, or if she remembered it, disdained the ancient concept that before the dust of the earth became alive, it had to be impermeated with the breath not merely of man or woman, but of God.

She came back at last and sought her corner, disposed her limbs to rest and kept through silent hours her lonely vigil. So long as he slept she was safe. When he awakened, what then? So long as his mind slept, his soul slept, his consciousness slept, she was safe, but when they, too, awakened, when whatsoever light there

might be that dawns in personality dispelled the night of idle dreams in which he lived, what would happen then?

Instinctively she shrank from the thought of the future. She was as one who had a potent talisman in her hand and feared to put it to the touch. So the fisherman in the Arabian tale, if he had known the contents of the corked bottle thrown up from the sea, might have hesitated ere he drew the stopper and released the prisoned spirit. She must watch, she must wait, she must be on her guard. She forgot that when she had called him "Man" and laid her hand upon his shoulder that she had begun an evolution which no human power could stop.

Never had the hours seemed so long and so strange to her. Nothing happened. Even the capacity to think gives out in the strongest mind, the acutest brain, temporarily or otherwise. She was very tired; the silence was oppressive; the rusty scissors fell from her hand and at last she slipped down upon the sand and drifted away into that slumber, that suspension of consciousness, in which for the moment she was even as the man.

The upper edge of the sun was just springing from the sea when its level rays woke her. She unclosed her eyes to find the man standing in the opening of the cave.

## Chapter III

This awakening was not as had been that of yesterday. She prided herself on being in full possession of her faculties at once, and she arose instantly and stepped out upon the sand. The man gave way to her respectfully as she passed through the entrance. The mind is brightest in the early morning after sleep. She would give him another concept before the uses of the day impaired his receptivity. She had differentiated him from the rest of creation when she taught him that he was a man. She would show him now that his was a divided empire by declaring herself a sharer in it. She laid her hand upon her own breast and said clearly:

“Woman!” giving the first syllable the long “o” and definitely accenting the second. She pointed to him and repeated “Man “; to herself and repeated “Woman.” Patiently over and over again she said the word until by and by he could say it, too.

The baby begins his language with monosyllabic sounds which mean little, and yet which have been identified with the mother. It was fitting that this man, who was as a child and yet as a man, should begin with something deeper than infantile babble. Man and Woman! she drove these two ideas into his consciousness before she ceased her task. If his idea of man was at first infinite, she gave him the concept of limitations immediately following.

He was avid for instruction. Once he had learned the words, he babbled them “man, woman, man, woman,” until the iteration was almost maddening.

While she washed her face and hands at the stream, he plunged into a brimming pool fed by the brook ere it descended to the sea. She noticed that he could swim like a fish itself, naturally, instinctively, in an untrained way, of course, without the fancy strokes in which she had been taught, but brilliantly and well nevertheless. She would have given the world for a dip, but it was not to be, not yet, that is.

Then they breakfasted, and she tried to teach him “No” and “Yes” and the meaning thereof. She intended to make a circuit of the island later, but there was no hurry. She began to realize that time was nothing to her or to him, and so she idled under the trees, setting him tasks, as the picking of fruit, and then stopping

him with “No “; then encouraging him with “Yes,” until he had some idea of those words also. It was a relief to her to get them firmly fixed in his mind, for they provided him with alternatives to the man and woman words on which he harped.

After a while they started around the island. It was perhaps six or eight miles in circumference. There was a sand beach everywhere, except in one place where the rocks came sheer down to the shore. From what she could tell by an inspection of the surface there was an underwater entrance to some cave in the rocks which some day might be worth exploring. They could not follow the shore at the foot of these cliffs, but managed to scramble over them, each for himself, although there were places where the man’s strong arm and wonderful agility — he climbed like a chamois, she noticed — would have helped her. It was her policy, however, to be self-reliant, to depend upon him for nothing. To be independent was her mental habit, too. She confessed to no inferiority when compared with the other sex, save that physical weakness which was hereditary, for which she was in no way responsible, and which she assiduously strove to minimize by every means or expedient at her command.

On the other side of the island from the cave, which was already denominated home in her mind, she came across the remains of a ship’s boat deep bedded in the sand. The boat had been perhaps wrecked and broken on the barrier reef, or possibly it had sailed through the entrance near at hand the only opening in the encircling guard of splintered rock which she had seen and had been hurled upon the beach where it had lain through years until buried in the shifting sand. Only the gunwales of the boat and the stem and the stern were exposed. She had no idea as to what its condition was, but she promised that so soon as she could she would make shift at something for a shovel and dig it out. She gazed at it for a long time, wondering if it were an explanation of the presence of the solitary of the island, but nothing was to be gained by wonderment and speculation.

A little stream she noticed trickled from under a thick covert across the sand toward the sea. She turned and idly walked away from the beach, following the stream. The man, who had stood with her watching the boat, did not for a moment notice her, but so soon as he discovered her direction, he ran after her and, without offering to touch her, barred the way with extended arms.

“No, no!” he cried, his first real spontaneous use of the word.

She stopped, reflected, waved the man aside, and went on. There was something in the coppice that he feared. She had not known that he possessed the faculty. Her curiosity was too strong to be denied. She must see what it was. She quickened her pace as if to shake him off, but he easily kept by her side, plaintively ejaculating his monosyllabic negative. It was evidence that he knew the meaning of the word she was glad to see.

When she reached the undergrowth of the coppice, she hesitated in apprehension of she knew not what, but summoning her courage, parted the reeds and peered in them. She shrank back with a sudden cry of horror, for at her feet, the vegetation springing through in every direction, lay a skeleton, a human skeleton. It lay athwart her path, and at the feet was a smaller skeleton which she judged to be that of a dog. With instinctive repugnance she released the rushes and turned hastily away.

“Yes, yes,” said the man by her side, with an expression of unusual relief on his face which she could scarcely fail to notice.

She knew that she could not thus evade her duties or shrink from her problems. She had marked the gleam of metal amid the bones. She knew that she would have to come back and examine those last remainders of human presence, other than their own, upon the island, but she could not do it just then.

She was of the stuff that when the danger is realized approaches it deliberately, rather than of the rash and headlong courage which proceeds upon an undertaking without thought of consequence. And yet, in spite of the possibilities of power in the knowledge she bestowed, she was deliberately proceeding to enlighten this man in every way. If her death or worse were at the end of it, she could no more have helped it than she could have stayed the rising of the sun, she thought, although of course she counted upon maintaining her control by spirit over the animal before her. She had not learned the lesson, apparently, that animal apprehension and spiritual development sometimes grow side by side, and that unless the superiority of the one is early and definitely established, the superiority of the other will inevitably come about.

There was nothing else that she discovered on her tour about her prison until she returned to the cave. It was afternoon by this time, and she determined to employ some of her hours in a more careful inspection of it. Realizing that the lesson of the night before, if reinforced and maintained, would stand her in good stead, she

made the man remain outside while she went within. Her hope was to establish in his mind a custom of avoidance of that recess which should develop into a fixed habit, else she could not be free. She could always secure a few moments respite from his presence, at least she had done so heretofore, but she did not dare to try how he would sustain longer absences; hence the necessity for establishing herself in the cave as a harbor of refuge, a sanctuary.

At first glance there was nothing within the little apartment, washed out ages ago from the hard stone by what action of water she could well imagine, but as she scrutinized it closely, she noticed in a recess a part where the rock wall cropped out in a sort of low shelf. On the shelf — wonder of wonders! — lay a book! Next to humanity, a book, she thought, would be the most precious sharer of her solitude.

It was a small, leather-bound volume. Dust in the form of tiny particles of sand lay thick upon it. The cave was sheltered from the prevailing winds, else it might have been buried, but under the circumstances, it might have lain there for ages and in that dry, pure air have suffered no deterioration or decay.

Crusoe was petrified when he saw the footprint in the sand. The woman was not less startled or less amazed when she saw the book on the rock. With a little cry of delight she stepped toward it, bent down, lifted it up, handling it carefully in spite of nervous exultation, shook the dust from it, and opened it. She instantly let it fall from her hands with a look of disappointment and disgust. One glance was enough. The book was the Bible. She had no interest in the Bible, a collection of ancient genealogies and time-worn fables, myths for the credulous and impossible legends, mixed up with poetry whose inspiration was trivial, and history whose details were false. For this woman, who had forgotten how to pray and who had abolished God, had little use for the Book of Books. Rather any other printed page, she had thought bitterly, than that one.

She had acted upon impulse, not in her disdain of the Bible and that for which it stood that was grounded upon reason and philosophy, she fondly believed but in her action in casting it from her. It had no more than rolled upon the sand at her feet when, with swift reconsideration, she stooped and lifted it again. It had occurred to her that there might be writing therein and that the writing might give her a clew to the mystery of the man. She knew that births and deaths were frequently entered upon the blank leaves interposed between the Old and New Testaments. Unfamiliar though she was with the contents of the book, she easily

found the place and eagerly looked at the leaves. Alas, they were blank. She turned to the fly leaves at the beginning of the book. There was a name written there and in a woman's hand.

"John Revell Charnock," she read.

Below was a date twenty-five years before the moment of her landing.

John Revell Charnock! It was a strange name, English in part, with a suggestion of France in the middle name. It meant nothing to her. Was this John Revell Charnock who stood outside looking at her? If so, who was John Revell Charnock? The problem was not greatly elucidated. There was no evidence that the book belonged to the man or the man to the book, or even that the one appertained remotely to the other. There was a certain likelihood, however, that they had come to the island together.

She had been sure that the man was a white man. She had thought that he looked like an American, or an Englishman, an Anglo-Saxon, and the longer she looked at him with the Bible in her hand, the more sure she became.

She had been disappointed that the book had turned out to be the Bible, but at least it would serve one useful purpose. By it, without the laborious effort involved in making letters upon the sand, she might teach the man before her to read. She wished she had had a worthier volume from her point of view through which to introduce him to the world's literature, but she would do the best she could with that. It was pitiful, as she saw it, that with a nascent soul to work with, she should be compelled to enlighten it through the medium of time-worn superstition.

Musing thus, she opened the book again and idly glanced at it. One phrase from the printed page caught her eye, and she read these significant words. "The Fool hath said in his heart there is no God." It was a Psalm of David's she recognized from the heading, a poet's dream, therefore. Her idea of a fool was one who made such confession. With a gesture of contempt she closed the volume, not throwing it away — whatever it was, it was a printed book and too precious to risk damage which would be irreparable through mistreatment — and looked further in the cave.

Below the shelf, not quite buried in the sand, there was a small metal box. She knelt down, scraped the sand away and presently uncovered it. It appeared to be



of silver. It was of such a size that she could clasp it easily in her hand. She opened it not without some difficulty, and found within it nothing! Well, not exactly nothing, but certainly that for which she could see little value. There were several hard pieces of stone of a reddish color, chipped and shaped in curious fashion, and a little bar of metal, nothing else. She turned the box over and examined it on all sides. There were initials upon it, a monogram. She rubbed it clean with her hands and studied it carefully "J. R. C." The book and the box had belonged to the same person, John Revell Charnock.

She laid the box aside and searched the cave further. There was absolutely nothing else to be seen. Disappointed vaguely, although she had expected nothing and had found more indeed than she realized if she had thought about it, she laid the book and box down upon the ledge and went out again. She walked along the sands until she came to the place where she had landed the day before. The tide was low. She could see the wreck of her boat, partly on the barrier reef and partly in the water. It would have been no trick for her to swim to it in the stillness, yet she hesitated to attempt it. Certainly weighted down by all her clothing, it was a matter of difficulty and inconvenience. If it were not for this man by her side! She tried to think of some way to restrain him, keep him away, but nothing occurred to her. Invention was paralyzed by the situation in which she found herself.

Desperately bidding him stay where he was, she went back to the cave. She was face to face with a crisis which had to be met. Indeed, the question of clothes was becoming a very serious one with her, and she knew she should have to decide upon some course of action immediately.

For the present, she took off her garments, hoping and praying in a shiver of dread and anxiety that he would remain where she had left him, which indeed proved the fact. She laid aside all that she had worn except the blouse and skirt, including her sadly worn shoes and stockings. Thus lightly clad she came out on the sand again. He did not notice any change in her condition. As a matter of fact, she gave him no time, for she flashed across the sand at full speed and plunged boldly into the smiling water of the lagoon. He followed her instantly and swam by her side with scarcely any exertion whatever.

It was not long before she reached the barrier reef. It stood up a foot or two above the water now, the tide being low, and she clambered upon it. The sharp rocks cut her naked and tender feet, unused to such exertions and unfitted for

such demands, but she persevered. The boat had been beaten to pieces. It had been forced over the reef by the hurl of the sea. The stern had been wedged in between some projecting rocks. The rest of it had been torn away and had fallen into the lagoon. There was no wind, the sea was unruffled. She could see as if through a glass the wrecked remains of the boat. There was nothing in it except the battered motor, useless for days before she landed since her supply of gasoline had been exhausted. Everything else had been washed out of it and carried into the deeper recesses of the lagoon, where they were inaccessible to the human vision.

Stop! Under what remained of a piece of thwart, she caught a little gleam of metal. Calculating the distance nicely, she plunged in and dove. Keeping her eyes open, she easily found the piece of metal, dislodged it from the place where it had fallen and came to the surface with it. It was a sailor's sheath knife with a bit of lanyard fastened to it. She had had a fancy to wear it in her sailor's blouse and she had missed it since she had come ashore.

But there was nothing else in the boat, not a thing; nothing on the barrier reef. She tried to pull the stern away where it had been wedged, but found that impossible. She tugged at it valiantly, but could not move it. In despair she turned to the man who had watched silently as usual and pointed. He seemed to understand, for he came and with great effort lifted the torn part of the boat from the rocks and laid it down at her feet. She threw it into the water, where of course as it was wood, it floated easily. Then with a nod to him, she plunged in and together they guided it to the shore, he taking his cue from her action.

She had a fancy to test his strength, and she managed to convey to him by signs, mainly by trying herself in vain to pull it apart, what she wished him to do. The impossible to her was child's play to him, and in a moment the several pieces of the boat which made up the stern were scattered on the beach. There was one straight piece which went across the stern of the boat and made a little box for the coxswain to sit in, which would do for a shovel. It was too wide, but she broke it against a big stone and was possessed of what she wanted. The ends were rough and serrated and unfit for her hands, but these she smoothed by the aid of her knife. She sharpened the other end and soon had a rude semblance of a shovel. She intended to use that on the boat on the sand the next day.

Finished with this, she looked at the man and sighed in despair. Could she ever get rid of him. Instantly there flashed into her mind that which she had before

overlooked as of no moment. A long heavy boat rope, the boat's painter, she had noticed when she dove, lay floating by the side of the boat from which it had not been severed. An idea came to her. Dropping the shovel and followed by her satellite, she plunged in once more and again swam to the boat. Wasting no time, she dove as before, found the rope and, having previously opened her knife, cut it quickly and came to the surface gasping.

There were perhaps fifteen or twenty feet of line. It was a stout piece of rope, of unusual quality, as had been everything on board the yacht. The very best of stuff had gone into it and she did not believe any man on earth could break it. She had amused herself on the cruise by learning the rudiments of seamanship, and she could tie knots like any sailor. This little accomplishment was to stand her in good stead. She wrapped the rope around her neck, plunged in the lagoon for the third time and swam once more to the shore.

She led the way up the sands to the palm grove. Then she tied the rope around the man's neck, not in a slip noose, of course, but in a hard circle, and quickly made a running bowline around the nearest tree. He had not made the slightest resistance. He had no idea evidently of what she was doing or the purport of her motions. Then she turned and went away from him quickly. He started for her at once and was nearly jerked from his feet by the tautening of the rope. It was a new situation for him, yet his hands instinctively went to his throat and he strove to tear away the noose, putting forth such a prodigious amount of strength that she stood in horror lest he should part the lashing. But it was made of stout stuff and he had no purchase; although he pulled until the sweat stood out on his forehead from the violence of his efforts, they were of no avail. She had not dared to interfere or to say a word, but when she saw his efforts slacken, she pointed to the sands to indicate to him that he was to sit down, and then she went away conscious that while the rope held she was free. She was conscious of another thing, too, and that was that he was learning a sad and bitter lesson of physical restraint, to which he had evidently never before been subject.

The look in his eyes — and she had learned to estimate with a reasonable degree of accuracy what was going on behind his brows — was one of intense and utter bewilderment. Whether to it would succeed the natural anger consequent upon restraint the cause for which is unrealized, and sometimes when it is realized as well, she could not tell. At any rate, she was free. She did not believe that he could by an possibility release himself. His hands were free, but she knew that he could have no experience in the untying of knots and he could bring nothing

to aid him except brute strength, which had already proved inefficacious.

She had rejoiced in his companionship, of course. It had given her something to do, her mind something to work upon, and would do more in the future, but she never enjoyed a moment's freedom more. She ran to the little amphitheater formed by the cliffs where the cave was and, throwing aside her blouse and skirt, she luxuriated in a bath in the fresh, cool, delightful waters of the pool at the base of the fall. There was a certain amount of apprehension, for, of course, he might break his tether at any time, but she was sufficiently confident not to let this take away the pleasure she felt in the bath of fresh water after the long experience with the salt seas. If she had had a cake of soap, she would have been completely happy.

She had much to do and she could not linger. For one thing, she had to face the problem of clothes. She had absolutely nothing when she landed except what she wore. Besides the usual underwears, these consisted of her blue serge blouse and skirt — a short skirt at that — and a silk petticoat. She left the blouse and skirt outside on the rocks where they would soon dry in the sun. They had been wetted so often that there was no possibility of their shrinking further. Then she took stock of the rest. With needles and thread, of which she possessed some store in the housewife which had been saved from the bag, she thought she could make shift to manufacture three or four garments, open at the neck, without sleeves, and with skirts that came to the knee, garments just sufficient for modesty. There was no other need for clothes, so far as that went, in that balmy island.

Naturally she shrank from this, but unless she resorted to this expedient, her clothes would wear out all at once. Indeed they were in none too good a condition as it was, and when they were worn out she would have nothing. She would not have hesitated a moment had it not been for the man, but man or not, the decision in her mind was one to which she must come.

Unlike most overeducated women, she was still expert with her needle, and as her garments were to be of the simplest, she had not much difficulty in making over her silk skirt in the way she fancied. Belted in at the waist, it would do. She would use the rope that bound the man for that purpose, keeping it always about her. She had, of course, but one pair of stockings and one pair of light canvas boating shoes which were almost cut to pieces. She would have to go barefoot.

Putting her blue serge dress and the rest of her clothing carefully away, including her shoes and stockings, she stepped out on the sands, bare armed, bare footed, a gleaming figure like to an Olympian goddess. She was a woman naturally dark in complexion, and while the sun would probably burn her cruelly and turn her young flesh, never before exposed to its intensity, darker, she would not grow red or blister. She was thankful for that with unconscious femininity. At any rate, she must get used to going out in the sun without a hat, too. People, natives who were born and lived in this latitude, did become accustomed to such things, she knew, so undoubtedly could she.

With these thoughts, she stepped around the head land and walked across the beach toward the palm tree where she could see in the fading light of the late afternoon her prisoner was still tied.

Modesty is a negative term. That which is in decent exposure in a ballroom is the height of convention on a sea shore, and vice versa. Certainly this man had no concept of such a quality. He had not noticed before when she had come out barefoot to swim to the barrier reef, and yet somehow she fancied as he stared at her approaching that this time he marked the difference. And a slow, fiery blush flamed over her from her bare feet to her bare head, extending along her bare arms. She stopped under the persuasion of impulse to turn and go back to the cave and resume her clothing, at least so long as it might last. But she was a woman of strong will. She reasoned that all the emotions to which she was subject were in her own bosom; that the man before her neither knew nor cared as to the things which vexed her. So she went on.

She had in her hand the sailor's knife, with the blade open. She could not tell exactly in what mood her prisoner might be. Indeed, she approached him with a certain terror, accounted for partly by the situation and partly by the fact that in making this change in her garments she had, as it were, cut herself off from civilization and brought herself in some degree at least nearer his physical level. But she could not leave him there all night. Summoning her courage, therefore, and with a bold front before him, she advanced to the tree and untied the rope from the trunk and untied it from his neck as well. He stood silent, unresisting, through it all, a rather pitiful figure, she thought at first, until he was freed from the degrading halter.

Then she waited in intense and eager curiosity as to what he should do next. The iron of his situation had eaten into his soul. He had been mastered by force. He

could not understand it. He did not love the mastery. Still without the knowledge of his own powers, there occurred to him no way to resent the ignominy to which he had been subjected. He turned and walked away from her. She stood amazed, staring after him. It was the first time he had withdrawn himself from her presence. Where was he going? Was this a declaration of war? Was there to be enmity between them? In vague terror, moved by a sudden impulse again, she called him.

“Man!” she said.

He stopped, hesitated, looked back, turned and went on again. He was deeply hurt. She could not see him go. It was unthinkable that he should go. He was dangerous away from her. By her side she could control him.

“Man!” she called again.

But this time he did not heed. An idea sprang to her brain, working quickly under the pressure. She lifted up her voice, for he was far from her now and plodding steadily, doggedly toward the trees.

“John!” she cried. “John Revell Charnock!”

And at that sound the man stopped. He turned and looked at her again.

“John!” she repeated. “John!”

She approached him. As she did so and when she could get near enough to him, she observed that wrinkling of the brow, that look of amazement which she had noticed before. It was as if some latent memory, some recollection of the past, were struggling against the obscurity of years, as if some thing were endeavoring to thrust itself through a sea of oblivion and forgetfulness that overwhelmed his mind, as if she were a voice which brought back things he could neither understand nor utter, and yet which meant something to him.

“John!” she cried again, coming nearer to him.

She thrust out her hand; she touched him. Again she noticed that strange emotion consequent upon her touch. She laid her hand upon his shoulder. There was amity, confidence, reassurance. She patted him as she might a dog.

“John!” she said, and then she turned away and walked toward the shore.

Obediently he followed her. She thrust the knife between her waist and the rope which she had rapidly twisted about her middle and walked on in triumph. If he had learned something, so had she. Someone else had called this man John in days gone by. The sound was not unfamiliar to him. He answered to his name. That was he, John Revell Charnock! She felt as if she were entering upon the solution of the mystery of his presence. Perhaps the morrow would tell. She would examine that boat and those decaying evidences of humanity on the farther shore.

She felt elated that night ere she went to sleep in the cave. The clew to the mystery, she fancied, was in her hand. She had such occupation before her as she had never hoped to come upon in a desert island, at least. The rope added to her security. By piling stones before the entrance to the cave and reinforcing them with the boards from the wreck of the boat and some fallen tree branches on the shore, she made a sort of a barrier to it, not a barrier that would have kept out of the cave anyone who desired to enter, but one which would have to be removed before one could enter. And she so arranged matters, tying the end of the rope to her wrist, that any attempt to remove it would immediately waken her. That night she slept secure and unmolested.

## Chapter IV

The task to which she set herself in the morning would have been an impossible one to many women, and indeed it was a hard one to her. The buried boat lay in the sand some rods distant from the nearest tree. There was absolutely no shelter from the fierce heat of the tropic sun. She was not yet fully accustomed to it, and, indeed, perhaps she never would be able to endure it without some sort of a head covering. She improvised a bonnet from the leaf of a low springing palm tree, which with her remaining handkerchief she tied about her head. And then with her watchful friend by her side she descended the beach to the boat and began to dig.

It was hard and very tedious work. With the flat makeshift shovel in the shape of a rough piece of board it was almost impossible to lift the sand. Yet she attacked the task resolutely, and persevered sturdily for a long time until the sweat beaded her forehead; her back ached; her hands, unused to manual toil of any kind, were almost blistered. She realized at last that she would have to give it over.

She wondered as she ceased her labors whether the constant observation which the man had subjected her to would enable him to continue the work. As an experiment she handed him the shovel, stepped out of the excavation she had made, and pointed toward it. He understood instantly. She was surprised at the unusual quickness of his apprehension, for he set to work with a right good will and in a minute the sand was flying. She noticed, half in envy, how much more progress he made than she could effect. What was labor for her was play for him, and yet after a little space he stopped, threw down the shovel and looked at her.

She had got in the habit of speaking to him as if he understood, so she pointed to the shovel again, exclaiming :

“Pick it up and go on.”

Her meaning was obvious to him if her language was not. It equally was evident to her that he had no desire whatever to proceed with his task, but he was still under the constraint of her superior personality, and presently he did as she bade him. It amused her to reflect that in addition to all the other lessons, so remarkable as almost to make his brain reel and whirl, he was now learning the lesson of toil. If she could only keep abreast of these great abstract concepts she



was putting into his being by giving him some mental realization of them, so that the spiritual development would keep pace with the practical, she would be thoroughly satisfied with her educational processes.

She mused on the problem as he labored silently and vigorously. He stopped once or twice, but she kept him to it, a feat vastly greater than she realized, until the interior of the boat, which was a small ship's boat, a dinghy, had been entirely cleared out. She had watched carefully every spadeful of sand which had been tossed over the buried gunwales, and now she searched eagerly the boat itself. Her inspection revealed nothing. There were lockers at either end. These she opened, finding nothing therein but mouldering remains of cloth, bags of some sort which she surmised might have contained ship's bread, and a little barrel or keg, which had probably carried water for the voyagers.

The boat was in an excellent state of preservation. There was even a pair of oars lying on the thwarts. If she could have dug it out of the sand entirely, she fancied she could have launched it and used it. But such a task was utterly beyond her. Besides, there would have been no gain in having the boat afloat. She would not dare to take it out beyond the barrier reef, and there was nothing to row for in the lagoon.

She easily broke the rotting lines with which the oars were secured and took them out. They would be useful perhaps in some way. And then after a long look at the boat, and with a feeling that her labor had been mainly wasted, she was about to turn away when the thought struck her that sometimes boats carried the names of the ships to which they belonged on their bows or across their sterns. She had recourse to the shovel once more, and after some deliberation essayed the stern of the boat.

It was not so hard to shovel the sand away from it, and here she did make a discovery, for although the letters had been almost obliterated by the action of the sand, she could still make them out. After some study she decided that the name of the boat, or of the ship to which it had belonged, had been Nansemond, of Norfolk, Virginia. That was the net result of the hard labors of a long morning. It told her something, but not much. Assuming that the man with her was John Revell Charnock, and assuming that he had come to the island in the past on that boat, it indicated that he was at least an American and a Virginian. It identified him, if her suppositions were correct, and whether there was warrant for them or not, instinctively and naturally she concluded that she was right.

Admitting all this, however, it gave her no other clew from which to deduce a history. The testimony of the boat was interesting, that was all. Her first thought was to leave it all where it was, but her second thought was better. With the aid of the stout piece of board which had served her for a shovel, she hammered away at the stern-piece until she broke it off. She saw now that the boat must have lain there in the sand for many years, for the wood was brittle and the fastenings largely destroyed, for the stern-piece came easily away. She laid it aside for a moment, intending to preserve it with the Bible. Heaven knows what dream of future usefulness in the way of evidence establishing identity these might be entered her mind.

Then she threw herself down under the trees and rested. She had left her watch, her precious watch, back in the cave with the book. She did not dare to carry it around with her. She had no way of carrying it in the thin single garment which she wore, but she judged from the height of the sun that it must be noontime. They made their meal off the fruits of the island, this time with a rich and juicy cocoanut added, which the man got for her at her suggestion, in the sign language at which she was becoming expert, by climbing with wonderful agility, apelike agility almost, one of the tall cocoanut palms with which the island abounded. There were fruits of various sorts in great plenty on the island, and she was becoming accustomed to the diet by degrees.

She passed the noon hour in trying to add to the mental equipment of her companion. He could say a number of words now and had some idea of their meaning, although he had not yet attempted to frame sentences, nor had she yet tried to teach him so to do. It was pleasant under the shade of the trees. She found herself marveling at times as to the contentment that possessed her, a product of the civilization of the very end of the age suddenly plunged into this Edenlike existence which her forebears might have enjoyed ten thousand years before.

The hours ran on until the declining sun and the coolness that came with the late afternoon warned her that if she were to continue her explorations, she must be about it immediately. So she rose and, nerving herself to her task, went toward the coppice where lay the ghastly remains of what had been a human being. Forcing herself to the duty, with her knife she carefully cut away the rushes, being particular not to disturb the bones of the skeletons. As before, she did all this in the face of a vigorous remonstrance from the man. In some way, she could not tell how, the place was horrible to him. He would never have come near it

evidently of his own will, and although the power of memory in him was but latent, the impression that had been produced upon him by what she found there at some period in his life was strong enough to make him avoid it forever.

She did not ask him for any assistance; indeed, she would not have trusted him with the knife under any circumstances, and he made no attempt to keep close to her. He stood on the outskirts of the coppice in a great state of excitement, uttering without sequence or reason, such words as she had taught him. To him, in this instance, she gave no heed.

Presently she had completely uncovered the two skeletons. She had studied anatomy, but was not a specialist in that department of human learning. She thought that the skeleton before her was that of a woman. She measured its length with a piece of tall grass and compared it with her own. They were both of a size. The soil on which the bones lay was soft and porous. Every vestige of clothing had long since rotted away and disappeared with the flesh it covered. If the person whose bones lay there had worn any articles of gold or silver which, being rustless, would have survived the long exposure, they were probably buried in the earth beneath the bones. She would attend to that later.

Then she looked toward the bones at the feet of the human remains and decided at last that they were the bones of a dog. Across the vertebrae lay a piece of metal. She picked it up, recognizing it instantly as a plate which had probably belonged to a dog-collar. There was an inscription on it which she did not take the trouble at the moment to read. Slipping it into the bosom of her tunic, and making sure that the confining rope would keep it from falling out, she stooped down and gathered the bones of the human being up in her arms, repulsive as the task was, and carried them down to the boat on the beach. She laid them in the bottom of the boat carefully, and then, moved by a sudden impulse, she went back and gathered up those of the dog, which she put in the boat also. It was an easy matter to tumble a few spadefuls of sand over the bones. Then she left them in that rude Viking sepulture, knowing that time would soon refill the empty dinghy, and the bones would be safely buried unless some other investigator should uncover them.

The man had assisted her in no way in this process, but his excitement was very great. While she stood looking down at the little heap of sand which covered all that remained of this forlorn and forgotten visitor to this island, wondering if the fate of that trespasser upon these silent shores would some day be hers, the man

suddenly dropped on his knees, as she had seen him do on her first night on the island. He put his hands together and began that mumbled jargon which she had not been able to understand, but which had seemed to her more like language than anything to which he had given vent. She was surprised beyond measure, yet she listened with every faculty on the alert, if possible to comprehend what he might be saying, and presently a familiar sound or two flashed into her mind that he was making use of a prayer which she herself had used in childhood; that, absurd, fantastic, impossible though the conclusion was, he was saying the childish petition:

“Now I lay me down to sleep!”

The first impulse of the woman was to laugh. The next impulse was to take off the palm leaf hat and stand with bowed head and clasped hands.

What marvelous miracle was this that throughout the years which she could no longer doubt this man had been alone on the island, there had survived the one childish habit of prayer, and that the one vestige of language which had remained to him was the language of petition. She did not believe in it, of course. It was absurd to her, but it was none the less wonderful. It filled her with a certain awe. It was as if some power had maintained a hold upon the consciousness of this man in this way. What power?

“Now I lay me down to sleep!” How long it had been since she had said that! She believed nothing, she cared for nothing, but the woman hid her face in her hands for a moment. She clenched her teeth and forced out of her mind that which at that moment was striving for birth. She was to teach this man everything. She was to make him know life and history. She was to bring him in touch with all the glories of to-day, and she recognized in that hour, although she did not and could not admit it, that perhaps he might teach her some thing as well, something that she had not known, or something that she had forgotten, without the knowledge of which all her science was a vain, a foolish, a futile thing.

As she stood there with these thoughts running through her mind, there came back to her recollection those words of Scripture which she had read with such disdain last night, “The fool hath said in his heart there is no God” Was the poet right? Had there been vouchsafed to him revelations greater than those revealed to the microscope of the scientist, the scalpel of the anatomist, the telescope of

the astronomer, the pure reason of the philosopher. Was she a fool? Nonsense —

The little prayer was ended. The man rose to his feet. She took her spade and went back to the place where the bodies had lain, and there began carefully to scrape away the earth, examining scrupulously every shovelful ere she threw it aside. In one place, where the hands had rested, she remembered, her labors were rewarded. She came across two rings, a diamond and a plain circlet of gold. These she placed in her tunic with the collar and continued her digging.

It was growing late and growing dark, but she left no square inch of ground unexplored. She found nothing else. The rings belonged to a woman evidently. Her surmise in that particular was right. There were no other metal parts of her apparel left. The nails in her shoes, the steels of her corset had rusted away and left no sign. There was nothing remaining but the two little baubles pressing against her own warm flesh.

So intent had she been that the sun had gone down before she ceased, and upon the island there descended that quick and sudden night of the tropics.

The wind had risen, the old ocean was thundering on the barrier reef, and a heavy sea breeze was shrieking through the trees. The sky on the horizon was overclouded, and the clouds were rising rapidly. There would be a storm, which was developing with tropic rapidity. Quickly she retraced her steps along the sand toward the cave on the other side, the man following.

They had progressed not more than half the way when the storm burst upon them. Peals of thunder and flashes of lightning filled the air. It was such a display of the Titanic forces of the world as might have appalled the stoutest heart. It filled the woman with a vague terror. She noticed with satisfaction that the man was entirely unmoved by the terrific demonstrations of nature. By the flashes of lightning as they stumbled along in the otherwise total blackness, she could see his face serene. In a moment of apprehension she caught his hand with her own and clung to it tightly. It was the unconscious appeal of the physical weaker to the physical stronger. Her hand had clasped the hands of her fellow creatures many times. Never before had his palm met the palm of human being, much less a woman's. She could feel that tremor run through him, but by instinct as it were, he met her hand clasp with his own, and together they made their way to the cave.

They had scarcely reached it when the rain burst upon them. The heavens were opened, the floods descended, they beat upon the sands in fury. She could not drive him out there in that flood for the night. She motioned him to come within the entrance of the cave, which was sheltered from the wind and which was dry and still. She made him lie down near the entrance, and then withdrawing herself into a recess at the side, she disposed the oars which he had carried home on his shoulder, in front of her, from wall to wall, and lashing them with the rope to her person, made another feeble barrier, but which would yet give the alarm to her and waken her if it were moved. And presently she went to sleep. She was too tired even to speculate on her discoveries, or to piece them together; that would be occupation for the morning.

## Chapter V

It rained hard during most of the night. The woman slept lightly, and whenever she woke she could hear outside of her sanctuary the roar of the storm. The man, as usual, slept the long hours through as undisturbed by the commotion as a child. It was apparent to her that he had absolutely no fear. Whether this was due to ignorance or temperament she could not say. Was fear, after all, under the conditions in which his life had been lived, a purely artificial quality, or was it natural and inherent? He had avoidances, abhorrences, antipathies, as the skeletons in the coppice which she had buried. Was that avoidance fear, or was it something else? Was it instinct, or did it arise from recollection? She rather fancied the last. If so, it was evident that the man had been on the island a long time. It would have taken years for the metal that must have been about that woman's person to rust away, for the steel clasps of the dog's collar entirely to disappear.

Upon that faint memory that he cherished, upon that prayer that he prayed, she could build the foundation of his education. She had been so successful in training him and in restraining him, in influencing him and swaying him so far, that she had abundant confidence in her ability to do so to the end. It was quite evident that life would be easily supportable under the conditions in which it must be lived on that island. She need have no physical concern as to her material well-being or comfort, and here was mental occupation and stimulus which made her for the time being forget the rest of the world.

Indeed, she thought bitterly, as she lay awake during the long watches of the night, that the rest of the world was nothing to her and that she hated it. She therefore not only was becoming resigned to her situation, but was rejoicing in it. She would teach this man all she knew. She would teach him to think, to reflect, to reason. She would teach him to talk. Since she had a book, albeit a sorry one, she would teach him to read.

It was evident that the island was an unknown one. At least no one could have landed upon it from any passing ship since this man had come there. No one could have sailed near enough to it to have espied him. She remembered that on the yacht she had sought for lonely and unfrequented seas, and had gained her wish. The most unhappy people in the world usually are those to whom wishes are granted. She had just escaped that unhappiness because of the presence of

this man on the island. And yet when she landed on that island, she had escaped other things, she thought bitterly, infinitely more fraught with horrible and revolting possibilities than anything else that could occur to her or which she could imagine to be held in waiting for her by malign fate. Better this primitive savage than civilization as she had found it. How had her philosophy broken down before she reached that island. How abhorrent to remember had been her only attempt to put it in practice.

She would think of none of these things. She would put them out of her mind as they had gone out of her sight. She was lost to her world, to any world with which she had been familiar. She would create a new world of her own, he and she together. Her thoughts took strange leaps forward in the darkness. He would be hers, the product of her ability. She would teach him. She stopped. Would he teach her? That question came again and again. Like Banquo's ghost, it would not down. She was a woman, and he a man. What were the possibilities of that situation? She belonged to the sex called the weaker, to the sex characterized by dependence. She resented these things as she ever had, and yet she could not blind her eyes to the truth in them. Her resentment against things which ought not to be could in no wise alter conditions. Physically this man was the most perfect of his species. She had an artist's eye for the symmetry and perfection of his proportions. If his brain corresponded, what then? What would he teach her? What did Adam teach Eve, and what did Eve teach Adam?

The names of the ancient myth, the vague personalities associated with it, brought back the book that lay upon the ledge by her side. She reached her hand out in the darkness and laid it upon the volume. How strange that it alone of all the literature that the world held should have been thrown at her feet. In her enlightenment, with her superior knowledge, the book that she disdained from its spiritual side, although she regarded it with a certain amount of interest archeologically, was all she had of the world's writings. Yet she did not take her hand away from that book. Somehow, although she did not reason about it or understand it, possibly even admit it in her heart, certainly she would have denied it had anyone pressed it upon her attention, she took comfort from the mere feel of it under her hand.

“The fool hath said in his heart there is no God!” What a strange saying! In spite of herself she began to reason about it, to explore the sentence, to find out its meaning. What did it signify? That he who denied God was a fool? Certainly that, but anything more? Was there something subtler, deeper, in its content? Did



it mean that he who would fain play the fool must begin by denying God? That there could be no ultimate folly so long as a belief in God abided? The saving grace of that mumbled prayer on the sand, uncomprehended, but remembered! What did it all mean? Might there be above this fine human intelligence a Power higher? She would look at that book in the morning.

The rain fell more softly now. Her eyes drooped. She would look at that book again in the morning. The fool had said... Who was a fool?... What had he said?

She slept again, only to wake and muse once more. She could have slept better had he been outside. How could he lie there in the complete and steeping insensibility of slumber. Her hand fell against her breast. There was the treasure trove of her existence the day before. What would they tell her? She could scarcely wait until morning to look. So she woke and slept and woke and slept until the day broke.

It was bright and sunshiny out, although there were ominous clouds all about the western horizon. It was probable that the rainy season was at hand, if not upon them. She regretted that she had not given more time to the study of nature, to the fauna and flora of the South Seas, to the conditions of wind and weather under which life was lived there. Much philosophy would she gladly have parted with for such practical information. She had to piece her ideas of affairs out from scraps and tags of knowledge, unclassified, incoherent; from vague recollections of childhood stories and romances; from carelessly scanned collections of voyages, books of travel and adventure. The result was unsatisfactory. In some particulars the instinctive man before her was her master. At the things which went to make up physical comfort and well-being in a state of absolute nature he certainly surpassed her.

She was thankful when she walked abroad that she had had the shelter of the cave, for everything was drenched from the terrific downpour. If it was the beginning of the wet season, she knew that the rains would soon come again. Still she luxuriated in what freedom she had. Without removing her single garment she plunged into the lagoon for a refreshing bath. The man followed her and swam about her, moving slowly, with less skill than she, but as easily as a porpoise plunges about the bow of a progressing ship.

Refreshed, she came back to the mouth of the cave and brought thence for a careful inspection all her worldly possessions save the little heap of clothing

which she had carefully piled upon the jutting shelf in the shadow of the cave for time of need. She ranged them on the sands before her. There was the Bible, and the little silver box which she had found in the cave. She examined more critically its contents, wondering what they might be, and finally there came into her mind recognition that they were flint and steel! When she wished, she could make a fire. She was happy for the moment in the knowledge, and then the uselessness of the power came across her curiously. What did she want of fire? There was nothing to cook. Its warmth was unnecessary. Still she was glad to have the ancient flame kindlers, and she laid them aside carefully in the box, not knowing when they might be useful, under what circumstances invaluable. At least she might regard them as apparatus which would be helpful in the curriculum through which she meant her savage pupil should pass.

Then there was her watch, which she guarded as the apple of her eye. It was an American watch of the very best make, and although it had gone with her through the waters, such was the workmanship of the case that it had taken no harm. It was ticking away bravely, marking time. She thought that for her time had stopped, and yet she was glad indeed for the almost human sound it made when she laid it lovingly against her cheek.

There were the hairpins, also, for which she was most grateful. They enabled her to keep her hair in order. She had a wealth of glorious hair, black as the midnight sky. With the aid of the mirror and of the comb, which also was a priceless treasure, she arranged it carefully according to the mode which best became her, irrespective quite of the fashion that had prevailed. At least she was free from that tyranny upon the island! Sometimes, when she had finished her toilet, she shot a glance at the watchful man, a human, natural, instinctive glance, but she was able to detect no change in his mental attitude, which was that of such complete and entire adoration, mingled with timidity and hesitation, that no transient change apparently was able to modify it. He looked upon her as he might have looked upon a god, she thought, had he known what a god was and had there been such a thing to look at.

There was also the pair of scissors, together with the little housewife with needles and thread. Mirror, hairpins, scissors, sewing materials, comb — woman's gear; and the Bible, a woman's book, she reflected with a certain bitterness, unconscious of the truth of her thought, — a book for children, old women, and women-led men! Well, that philosophy upon which she prided herself must come to her assistance now, and she could not afford to disdain the

volume, which was all that the world of many books offered to her for her purpose, because she did not believe in it. The truth was in her, and she could tell him what it was despite the assertions of the printed pages.

In the leather bag there was absolutely nothing except broken glass and scratched bottle tops of silver, and the bag itself was ruined. She separated the pieces of metal and the metal fittings of the bag, which were also of silver, and, filling the rotting leather with sand, she presently sank it in the lagoon.

Last of all she examined what she had brought from the other shore of the island the night before. The silver was tarnished, but by rubbing it in the sand she soon brightened it. It was heavily engraved, and she had no difficulty in making out the words "John Revell Charnock — His Dog." After that was a date, "July 22, 1875." John Revell Charnock, then, would be twenty-one years old, assuming that this was he and that the dog had been given him when he was born. It was more probable, however, that he was from three to five years old before he became the owner of a dog, which would make him about twenty-five.

The man before her looked younger to her scrutiny than that. Care and trouble had passed him by. With nothing to vex him he might have been any age. He would probably look just as he was for twenty years or more. Still fancifully adjusting external relations to internal relations, which, after all, she realized was the secret of life according to her favorite philosopher, she concluded that the man was twenty-five, three years older than she at that moment, a proper difference in their ages for... Her face flamed.... She scarcely knew why, and she turned to an inspection of the rings.

The first was a diamond, a solitaire, of large size and of rare beauty, she judged. Although she was not especially expert in such matters, she deemed it must be of great value. There was no inscription of any sort within the narrow hoop of gold, although she searched keenly the inner surface. The diamond was curiously set. There was an exquisite tracery of a little coat of arms on either side of the setting, done in miniature, but with a skill to marvel at, yet too small even for her brilliant vision to decipher in detail.

The other she recognized with a sneer as one of those fetters of convention, a wedding ring. It was a heavier hoop of gold, much engraved within. She washed it in the stream and rubbed it in the sand until she could make it out. "J. R. C.," she read, "to M. P. T." There was a date after, "September 10, 1869," and then

these cabalistic words, "II Cor. xii-15," which she presently divined to be a reference to some text in the Bible, fit source from which to select the "posy of a ring," agreeable to those who submit to such ancient follies as the well-named bonds of matrimony.

She reached for the Bible and with unfamiliar fingers searched through it until she found the place.

"I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved"

The beauty of the phrase caught her fancy. She read with a strange new interest the chapter in which these words were enshrined. The touch of human passion came to her across the long years, and with the ring sparkling in her own white hand she embodied its tradition in personality, and the woman who had been so loved stood before her. Her eyes fell again upon the man, and the dream was broken.

She pieced together now all that she had of him, smiling as she did so at the thought of certain strange stories she had read wherein men of marvelous deductive powers had brought to solution problems which appeared as impossible of detection as this presented to her.

John Revell Charnock, evidently the father of the man of the island, had married one M. P. T. on the 10th of September, 1869. Perhaps within a year afterward this John Revell Charnock, assuming him, as was likely, to have borne his father's name, was born. Charnock was an old English name. The best English stock in the United States was of Massachusetts and Virginia. The stern-piece of the boat bore the name of a Virginia river and of a Virginia town. The man before her was a Virginian, therefore. Say he was born in 1871; it would make him twenty-five years old, in accordance with her first guess. The father and mother, possibly ruined by the results of the Civil War, had embarked on some vessel to seek fortune in a new land. Some thing had happened to the ship, and the woman, the little boy, and the dog had landed in some way upon these shores alone after some horrible voyage, perhaps like that she had passed through. The boy must have been five or six years old, else he would have died, being deserted. The woman had indeed died, and the dog with her, and left the lad alone. Alone he had been for a score of years on that island. What watchful Providence!... Stop! She believed in no Providence. What strange, mysterious

fate had kept him from the end of the other two, had preserved him alive... for her?

So she wove a history out of her treasure trove for this man, a history which at least satisfied her and which, the more she reasoned about it and the more she tested it, seemed absolutely adequate and entirely correct. Well, she had opportunity now, and she was glad. She faced the future calmly, recognizing her chance and her work, and set about with systematic method, order, and persistence to teach this man what it was to be a human being, to give him, as rapidly as she might communicate it and as he might receive it, all the learning she possessed; to compensate him, with no further delay, for those twenty years of silence.

Was it for this she had been trained and educated at great cost of time and money and effort? That she, being a woman, should give it all to this one man without money and without price?

## BOOK II — THE SHIELD

### Chapter V

True philosophy is ascetic. It may best be practised under conditions in which the material is in abeyance. It exalts the spiritual. It is distinguished by indifference to environment. There is nothing so fatal to its profession as extravagance. Frugality is to the philosopher what modesty is to a woman the essential thing without which it and she cease to be of value.

The atmosphere into which Katharine Brenton was suddenly plunged by her bold step was the very antithesis of all these requirements. It was unhealthful, and, like unhealthful airs, it bred disaster. She had been trained to independence of conditions, to disregard of circumstances, as well as to disdain of restraint; but there was that within her surroundings which, from her first experience of them, she felt instinctively to be vitiating, which tended to deprave, which precluded the exercise of clear, uninfluenced mentality. Especially in her case was this true since the luxury with which she had been surrounded appealed so subtly to the preponderant and, it must be admitted, immortal feminine in her composition. Sex distinction, sex difference, was the one thing against which she fought. Sex equality was the supreme good to be desired in her scheme of right relationships between the individual and the universe. Whiles she rebelled against her sex, whiles she rejoiced in it. Glad was she sometimes on that very account that to her was given the opportunity to prove her superiority to the limitations, disabilities, and man-made trammels of womankind.

Born of two fanatics on the same subject, whose insanity was modified and mollified by brilliancy of intellect in every other field of investigation and experiment, Katharine Brenton had been trained to the hour for her profession, for the exploitation of her principles. The greatest of universities pointed to her with peculiar pride as one of the children of the free; free from everything in thought, and determined to be free from everything in action. Much was expected from her, and the world was not disappointed at the first result of her mental labor. There were certain old-fashioned people who deplored the perversion of so much talent, and even genius, to the defense of error, but these did not count. The world bought her book in thousands, read it avidly, and regarded it as the last word of the last woman of the end of the age on the sex

problem. Cleverly disguising her philosophy in the form of fiction, with one bound she had leaped to the fore front of all the writers struggling for recognition. Publishers sought her. Magazines pursued her. An other book took shape in her mind.

Singularly enough, her education and the erratic bent of her mind had left her primarily quite unspoiled. She was the product not merely of her age, her environment, her parents, but of a long generation of people to whom her thoughts would have been as abhorrent as her person was agreeable. The unconscious Christianity which surrounds the world, and especially the world of woman, kept her pure and sweet and lovable these In spite of, not because of, her perverse and perverted philosophy. Though she defied convention in its spirit, she was naturally subject to it in its exercise. For instance, to her the marriage bond was indeed a bond, the marriage vow a confession of weakness on the part of the woman at least and the marriage relation an acknowledgment of inferiority again on the part of the woman. She would have none of these things in her life. Yet, as she thought, she had given her heart to a man alas, the submission to the eternal law! and although their relationship was sanctioned by nothing but their affection, it was to her as pure and as holy a thing as if the contract had been witnessed and blest by a thousand priests. What was it to him? She counted without the other sex. Many other women, unfortunately, have done the same.

Not content with the writing of books, her intense devotion to her cause, coupled with her unflagging energy, had found vent upon the lecture platform. The curious crowded to hear her, at once so bold, so radical, so beautiful, and so innocent. One of her first converts had been the only son of a multi millionaire, bygone bonanza king of the Pacific slope. His conversion was not so much an effort of pure reason as of primal passion, although that fact was in no wise apparent to her. She would find that out later. This modern Hypatia, skilled in the learning of the schools, burning with exhaustless zeal, permeated with fiery energy, was yet as innocent in some ways as any of her humbler sisters. As that good Book which she disdained in the newer illuminations which had come to her might have said of her, she was in the world, but not of it.

Unconsciously she fulfilled many injunctions of Him who, had she but known it, was the greatest of philosophers. Naturally she kept herself unspotted from the world. Yet when the young man who had engaged her affections proposed to her that they should put her theories in practice, after some hesitation she had acceded to his proposition. It was a species of self-immolation not far from

heroism that made her consent. Indeed, she did not realize how heroic it was. With no other ceremony than a clasp of the hand and an unspoken, wordless promise of trust, devotion, single-hearted alliance, publicly and before God and man, without a thought for the one and with no full realization of the thoughts of the other at least on her part they had gone away together, hand in hand, he and she together, in love like any other pair since Eve mated with Adam in the dawn of the world's first morning.

Yet there has never been an Eden of which man has known without its serpent. In the cabin of that gorgeous yacht, Sathanas reared his head. The first week or so of the adventure had been filled with idyllic happiness, happiness so great that it was strong enough to quiet certain low, still, small voices of conscience which the woman rightly ascribed to a strange atavism of ancient prejudice to which her philosophy was as yet unequal.

However, such conditions did not long persist. Her disciple was inclined, presently she found to her sorrow, to take a somewhat lower view of the situation than suited her own high-souled views. The ardor of her devotee cooled as his passion increased. Shut up in the narrow confines of a ship — great and splendid though this yacht was beyond imagination — little characteristics, heretofore unsuspected, developed in the mere man. The course of true love was not so smooth as the summer seas over which they sailed. The air in which they lived was ruffled by flurries in which experience would have found presage of coming deeper storm. The image that had feet of clay sought for similar earthly alloy in the companion image which was made of pure gold all through, and finding it not, resented it desperately. The convert, having gained his desire, weakened in his principles. There was no relaxation in his devotion, in his tenderness, in anything outward and visible, but the high philosophy which had made the joint effort almost a self-sacrifice of demonstration was slowly vanishing from one heart while the other clung the more tenaciously to it.

It was the old, old story. In a little time the cats-paw developed into the tempest. When it appeared it came with surprising swiftness. The woman found that in neither abstract thought nor mental speculation was there any protection for her. There might be no God in heaven, but there was a conscience in her breast. Finally she broke away from the man so far as she could do so when they were both in the same ship of which he was lord and master. She would have nothing more to do with him save that which common decency and the bare civilities of life demanded of her. Denied the privileges upon which he had counted, the man



grew savage and showed the cloven foot. The disagreement became a quarrel. The quarrel ran through several phases. Ashamed of himself, he had recanted at first. Then he had sworn again allegiance to the specious philosophy which she now realized he had only professed, consciously or unconsciously, that he might possess her. But she was not deceived. There was no truth in his words; his asseverations carried no conviction to her soul. Again he stormed and raged; once more he apologized and appealed, but the periods of calm grew shorter and the periods of storm grew longer and more vehement. The woman alone was steadfast. She was overwhelmed with shame, the horror of the situation was rising upon her.

She began to realize how helpless she was. Under, the inspiration of a belief which was as honest as it was mistaken, she had put herself in the power of this man. Even if she were ashore, there would be no one to whom she could appeal, and here on the ship she was helpless. Lingering remains of better things had kept him from the last resort of the tyrant force! but how long these would be operative in restraint, she could not tell. She fancied not for long. What should she do then?

She saw the end coming when in his anger he resorted to drink, to drink which exploded the last vestige of his philosophy, however he had professed it. She was frightened beyond measure when she realized the depths to which he had sunk and to which, in spite of herself, he had dragged her. What further descent was before her? She did not even yet abandon that philosophy which had served her so ill. She clung to that with the more tenacious pride because of its very weakness, but she loathed mankind. On that yacht he summed up for her the whole human race, and she hated him and it. To what sorry pass had a few weeks practical experience reduced her? In the last analysis she felt that she could die. Suicide was always possible. Rather than endure further pollution, what she now characterized as the degradation of his touch, she could slip overboard into the blue depths whose calm was so attractive to her storm-torn soul.

Yet, in spite of the loathing with which she regarded herself for having been so foolish, so swayed by human feeling to which she had believed herself superior, as to be blinded to the real character of the man with whom she had so defiantly gone away in the full light of day, she still loved life. She protested in her soul that a single mistake should not blight her career; the decision of a moment should not be allowed to settle the affairs of a lifetime. She could repair her awful blunder and take up her life again, she thought fatuously, if she could only

get away.

There was another thing that made her cling to existence. Suicide would be a confession of failure. She would not admit to herself that she had failed. She would not allow the world, which had stood at her feet with acclaim, to point, as it would do with the same zest, the finger of scorn at her. She must live. She had work to do. If she could only get away!

Her affection for this man, which had been largely maternal, experimental, inquisitorial, which had been begot of the martyr spirit in which she had resolved to show humanity that she could despise convention when it was wrong and live, was gone. She despised him and she pitied him. There yet remained one completing feeling which she would presently entertain for him, and when that found lodgment in her bosom, action would become imperative.

She had said, as they took their departure through the Golden Gate of vain, fond dreams that she wanted to go to unknown seas, when he had asked, on that never-to-be-forgotten night when they had left civilization behind, what was her pleasure. She felt somehow a sympathy for the unknown sea when adventuring upon such a course, and the yacht, provisioned for a long cruise, had steamed steadily to the southwest through the great Pacific. They had long since passed the line and were in strange and unfrequented waters. The navigating officer had told her that at any time they might expect to run across unknown, unvisited islands, from the exploration of which, when she started out with such rosy hopes, she had promised herself much pleasure. Now she desired only civilization, base, ignoble, restrained, thwarted, dwarfed, hideous civilization. As it was, she longed to be free of a presence even, not realizing that at least she could never be free from a recollection. She longed to stand before her kind and tell them how she despised them, perhaps lead some of them to better ways, warn some others from follies and trusts which had betrayed her; to be a philosopher once more, and not merely a stricken woman.

She had begged and pleaded with him to alter the yacht's course, but he had sworn he would go farther South into those unknown seas, and keep her there until she crawled to his feet. So the long hours dragged on. The inevitable rupture drew nearer. At last it came. In its details it was horrible, but there was in it a great relief after all.

## Chapter VII

One night at dinner she had fled from him. He had been drinking more heavily than usual and was in an ugly mood. His handsome face was flushed, a savage frown overspread his brow. He had risen during the meal and with a coarse endearment had attempted to lay hands upon her at last! She had broken away and darted into the nearest cabin, which happened to be his own. She had closed the door and turned the key against him before he realized what she was about. She stood within the little room panting, enraged, fearful, yet ready to defend her all, and almost glad the crisis had arrived. She could hear his drunken laugh outside the door.

“Why, you little fool!” he cried, “do you think I can’t break that lock down in a moment? The ship’s mine, every man on it’s mine. I pay ‘em. They do my bidding. I have you where I want you, and I can have you again as before when I please; now or later.”

Was it true? Could she appeal to the men? But what could she say? Although the world knew there was no binding tie between them, to the officers and men of the yacht she was his wife. They would not interfere. And if she declared the truth, she would put herself beyond the pale of their sympathies. Being merely stupid men with conventional ideas about propriety, in that event they would be less apt to interfere than ever. It was true she could do nothing. She sank down on a transom, clenching her hands. She could hear him outside chuckling to himself and, by the clink of bottle and glass, evidently drinking deeper. She feared him desperately when he was in his cups. Then he was another man, losing all resemblance to the being for whom she had fatuously thought she cared. Therefore she would wait until he drank himself into insensibility, as he had once or twice, or went up on deck, and then she would go out and go to her own cabin, although it would merely mean changing from one prison to another. What could she do by temporizing any way, temporizing and warding off as best she might until she was face to face with the final decision, death or compliance, freedom in the beyond whose existence was so vague and indefinite to her, or a slavery so base that any thing were preferable to it.

As she sat, her eyes fell on a chest of drawers screwed against the bulkhead. The top contained various toilet articles of silver. Among them was a picture, the picture of a woman. It was not her picture. Moved by what impulse she did not

stop to analyze, she rose and picked it up. The face she looked at was ineffably vulgar and common.

Across the bottom was written in a scrawly, unformed hand, "Your devoted wife." There was a date several years before that hour. Your devoted wife! She had been in that stateroom before; she had never seen that picture. He had only brought it out since the rupture between them.

And so while entering into this relationship with her, in compliance with principles and ideas which she at least regarded as sacred and holy, he had not been a free man. There was another woman to whom he had been bound. Oh, not by the marriage tie that she disdained, but by the honor which was supposed to exist among thieves, and which certainly should exist among philosophers. And such a woman! A cold fury filled her mind as she looked at the picture. The last completing touch had been given. To contempt and pity for him was added hatred. The combination transformed her. In stead of avoiding, she would seek him.

He was still in the cabin. She could hear him muttering thickly to himself. Impulsively she stepped to the door, turned the key in the lock, threw it open and entered the brilliantly lighted, luxurious cabin. He had dismissed the stewards some time since with orders not to reappear unless he summoned them, and they were alone. There was no likelihood of any interruptions whatsoever. The man, who was leaning back in his chair, bent forward when she opened the door. He laughed viciously.

If she had reflected, she would have marveled at the change that a few weeks had wrought in one whom she had hitherto deemed worthy of her affection, but she had eyes and thought for nothing except the business in hand.

"So you've come out, have you?" he stammered triumphantly. "Come of your own free will? You've found out, have you, that I am master, and you are coming to heel?"

He whistled to her derisively, whistled as if to a dog!

"Who is this?" asked the woman in a voice care fully suppressed, yet which shook with wrath.

She held the photograph in its heavy silver frame up before him.

“That’s my wife,” he said equably, with no surprise or consternation. “We haven’t lived together for some years,” he went on with drunken good nature, “or I’d take you back to San Francisco and introduce you to her.”

“Your wife!” exclaimed the woman in that same low, tense voice. “Then what am I?”

“My mistress,” said the man bluntly, throwing the last shred of concealment and decency to the winds, “and a damned obstreperous one at that,” he went on.

Now, the woman believed in no Providence, but a trick got from her ancestry wrung the words from her lips.

“My God! My God!” she whispered.

“You haven’t any,” sneered the man. “You told me so yourself.” He laughed. “And I believed you. I would have believed anything to get you.”

Well, there was no God the woman realized, but she would be her own god. Her body shrank together a little, her hands clenched. The feline was uppermost. She could have sprung upon him, but she waited, waited for she knew not what.

“Whom the gods destroy,” ran the ancient phrase, “they first make mad.”

He rushed to his doom with blind folly.

“You needn’t be jealous of her, my dear,” he mumbled on. “I used to think I loved her, and we were married. Damned foolishness, as you might say. She can’t hold a candle to you, even if you are a little touched,” he tapped his forehead impudently “in the upper story.”

And this man, this degraded thing, regarded her as a mad woman. There might be no God, but there was a devil, and he stood before her. There might be no heaven, but there was a hell, and she was in it.

“On second thought,” he rambled on, “I couldn’t introduce you to her. You aren’t respectable, and she is.”

He stopped and poured himself another drink.

“Respectable!” he laughed. “To hell with respectability. We know a better thing than that! ‘Soul to soul, heart to heart, the union of equals without the trammels of conventional bonds for weaker beings.’ Yes, that’s what you said.”

And she recognized with horror that he was quoting her own words.

“But it doesn’t go, you see. It’s all very well in theory, but it doesn’t work out in practice. The world’s got some ideas of its own. It’s been holding ‘em for a good many thousands of years, and you can’t change ‘em. You belong to me now. To hell with your equality! You are nothing more nor less than my property and, mark you,” he reached out a trembling finger and shook it at her “your salvation is with me. If I cast you off, you go into the gutter.”

She wondered vaguely how much more of this she could stand and live.

“But don’t be afraid,” he went on with a drunken attempt at reassurance, “you are too fine and too handsome, even if you are cracked, for that... yet. I’m glad to see you’ve come to your senses.”

He rose heavily as he spoke and felt his way around the table hand over hand. He approached her. She let him do it. She shrank a little closer together, every muscle tense for action. She was no longer a woman; she was a human tigress, and her philosophy was gone. He was too drunk to see it, too incapacitated to take warning.

“That’s right,” he continued as he lurched nearer to her. “Stay right there. I’m coming to you as fast as I can, and when I get close to you, we’ll kiss, and...”

He was by her side now. He straightened himself up with a spasmodic effort, released his hold on the table, and stretched out his arms toward her. And then she sprang at him. How she did it she could never tell, but in some way her outstretched arms, grasping for his throat, struck him in the breast. Unsteady on his feet, he went down as if he had been shot. Such was the violence of his fall that the momentum carried her with him. She fell upon him with all her force. His head went back and struck the deck with a frightful crash. She herself was almost stunned by the violence of her own fall, although his body broke it.

She arose and stood over him for a minute, and then in her frenzy she lifted her foot and brought it down upon him. He had said she was a mad woman, and it was true. She was crazed by what she had heard, by the horror of the situation.

She had not changed her dress for dinner that afternoon. She was wearing a pair of light boating shoes. It was lucky for him. If she had worn evening slippers with high, rigid heels, she would have torn his face beyond recognition. As it was, she left horrible marks upon it. He lay absolutely motionless. She could see that he was yet breathing and was not dead. If she had had a weapon, she might have killed him in the fury and transport of her rage. This wretched, wretched philosopher! As no resistance came from him, she presently stopped, the feminine in her slowly rising to the fore.

She realized now that the irrevocable had happened; that there was no longer room for two of them on that ship. As the mists of passion cleared away, although the fire of rage still burned in her heart, her mind cleared also. She thought with such rapidity as she had never thought before.

First she picked up a cloak, threw it about her and went on deck. A cabin steward was standing at the companion-way, as was always the case, waiting a possible summons. She told him that his master was ill and did not desire to be disturbed. He did not even want the dinner things cleared away. He wanted to be left entirely alone until morning. The servant smiled slightly, she thought, in the light from the cabin skylight. She noticed that it was a moonless night, cloudy, overcast, for she could see no stars. She knew what that smile meant; that the man realized what sort of sickness his owner and master was liable to. She bade him tell the officer of the deck her message, and then dismissed him.

Then she returned to the cabin and carefully locked the door. She glanced at the man as she did so. He lay just as he had lain before. She bent over him. He was still breathing, she noted with was it regret? But she wasted no time over him. Time was the most precious of all things to her at that moment.

She had a clear and definite plan of action. She knew exactly what she intended to do and how she intended to do it. Fortunately the means of escape were at hand. They had passed one or two tiny islands during the day, mere treeless spots of sand or coral in the vast of the ocean, but prospects that others more inviting might be raised had caused the man to order the power tender to be got overboard. This was a good, substantial boat, fifteen feet in length, broad-beamed and built for heavy seas, yet powerfully engined and capable of good speed. By his direction the tanks had been filled and everything overhauled so that it would be in readiness for use. The sea was very calm and the gentle air scarcely raised a ripple on its surface. To save the trouble of hoisting it aboard

again the tender had been left trailing astern at the end of a long line. It would be ready for instant use. She would escape in that. She knew how to run the motor and how to steer the boat. She had done it many a time.

Carrying her heavy boat cloak, she entered her cabin, hastily packed her bag with what things she fancied she would need, returned to the table, took from it every scrap that was edible and portable, without much regard for the niceties in her hurry. She made it up in a heavy parcel which she tied with napkins. She remembered that the water tank in the launch had been filled, so that for a time at least she would lack nothing. Carrying bag and bundle in her hands and with the boat cloak over her arm and a straw hat tied on her head, after one long look at the man, she turned and went aft and re-entered the starboard after stateroom, her own.

The boat's painter had been affixed to the starboard side of the yacht. She opened the stern window and looked out. She leaned far out and by great good fortune in the darkness caught the painter. The boat, of course, was swinging to a long scope. She pulled at this line cautiously, although the effort taxed her strength to the utmost. Indeed, she seemed possessed of a fictitious strength for the time being, else she never could have accomplished her hard task. But she managed to get the boat practically under the overhang at last. She fastened the painter to her bed, which was of brass and securely screwed to the floor. Then she cut off the line and tied the bundle of provisions and her bag and the cloak to the end of it. These she carefully lowered into the boat. Among the pretty articles that she had picked up on the cruise was a sharp sailor's sheath knife fastened to a lanyard. She slipped this lanyard around her neck and thrust the knife into her blouse. Then she climbed up on the port sill and essayed the dangerous descent herself. She was glad that she was a strong, athletic woman, used to trusting to her own skill and powers, for it was no easy task to slide down that rope and get into a boat trailing along beneath the counter of a yacht going perhaps twelve knots an hour. Fortunately the motor was well aft and the bow of the launch was high out of the water, else her weight would have pressed it down and the back wash from the yacht would perhaps have swamped the launch.

At any rate, she succeeded, although after she got her foot in the bows she slipped and fell. But that she fell straight aft upon the cloak and bundles, she would have hurt herself severely. If she had not fallen that way, if she had pitched to the right or left, she would have gone overboard, and that would have been the end, for she knew that she would have died rather than appeal to that



ship for help. She was fearful that the noise of her fall might have attracted the attention of someone on the deck, but the poop of the yacht was usually deserted at night and it was unlikely that anyone would be up there.

Scrambling to her feet, she drew her knife and severed the taut rope that held the launch to the yacht. It parted instantly. She was whirled backwards and sideways with a suddenness that again almost threw her out of the boat. For one agonizing moment the launch lay full in the broad beam of light that proceeded from the bright cabin window she had left. For one agonizing moment of suspense she hung there, and then the swirl of the wave carried her into the darkness.

She lay directly in the wake of the yacht, and the launch was pitched up and down by the waves made by the rapidly moving ship with a violence of motion that was sickening. There were a pair of oars in the boat, but she did not break them out. She just drew herself down in the stern sheets and lay there waiting. She knew that the clatter of the motor could be heard a long distance in so still a night and over so still a sea, and, therefore, although her impulse was to start it at once, she restrained herself and waited, watching the yacht rapidly draw away. She could mark her course easily by the light from that cabin window. Her ear was keen and she listened until she could no longer detect the beat and throb of the steamer's engines. Then she rose and started the motor.

The boat was provided with a compass, and although she could see no star, she was able to set a course which was directly at right angles to the course of the yacht. She realized, or at least she thought so, that she would be pursued. She believed that the yacht would retrace its course. She decided that those aboard her would reason that she would endeavor to put as much distance as possible between herself and the yacht, and therefore she would sail straight away from it. Consequently, she went broad off to starboard at right angles to the other course. The gasoline tanks were both full. Inasmuch as the boat had been designed for extended cruising in shallow waters, there was enough fuel to keep the motor going for over thirty hours at full speed. The motor was capable of developing at least ten knots per hour. By the same time tomorrow night she would be two hundred and forty miles away from the present spot. The yacht was going twelve knots an hour. Her escape would probably not be discovered for ten hours. By that time the yacht would be a hundred and twenty miles away. They would be a hundred and fifty miles apart by morning, measured on the hypotenuse, and by night who could tell? At any rate, she had now done all that she could.

Her condition was desperate; her prospects gloomy beyond expression. She was alone in a small power boat which would be helpless, the sport of wind and waves after perhaps thirty hours. That boat was alone in the great expanse of the Pacific Ocean. Somewhere about there were islands probably. Indeed, on the charts those seas were dotted with points of land, but they were small, inconsiderable, uninhabited, unknown. In that little boat she might pass close by many of them without seeing them. She had provisions, such as they were, and water sufficient perhaps for a week or ten days. After that, unless she landed somewhere, she would drift on until she starved and died. If a storm came, the launch probably would not survive it. Her chances of escape in any event were worse than problematical. The end was almost certain.

But she was happy. The first real ray of happiness which had entered her soul since the beginning of the great awakening, which had culminated in the frightful scene of the night, illumined her being. As she sat in the stern sheets, her hand on the steering wheel, listening to the steady drumming of the motor, seeing the black water broken into foam by the boat's bows flash by her, keeping the launch steady on her course by the aid of the compass needle, her eyes turned ever and anon to the fast-diminishing point of light which marked the rapidly disappearing yacht, and she realized that she was free. She had hurled out of her path — and how she exulted in her own prowess; it was some thing of a salve to her soul for the wretched humiliations which had been heaped upon it — she had hurled out of her path and stricken down, as any other animal might have done, him who had brought her to this awful pass. She was away from him, free from him. She was once more, so far as wind and wave allowed, the master of her fate, the mistress of her destiny.

She was glad in her heart, too, that there were to be no physical consequences from her brief alliance. She did not realize that there were to be other consequences which not even all the waters of the seas over which she floated could wash out. There was a strange elation in her soul. She felt as if in some way she had vindicated her right to be. There was something yet in her philosophy, and, did opportunity serve, could she get free from the dangers that encompassed her, she vowed that she would prove it.

All night long she stayed awake, keeping the launch to her course. When morning broke she was absolutely alone upon the ocean. Standing erect upon a seat, from her low vantage point she could see nothing but smoothly undulating sea. She breakfasted sparingly from her scanty store, and resumed her post at the

wheel. She was tired and sleepy, but while the little engine was alive she could not leave it to its own devices. She must hold on her chosen course so long as the motive power remained. She could not lose a moment while that motor throbbed and beat. She must be alive with it. There would be time to sleep when it was exhausted. She must put many leagues between her and pursuit by holding the direct course as long as was possible.

And so she sat there grimly, hands clutching the wheel, through the long day and through the longer night and well into the following morning. It must have been half-past ten on the morning of the second day before the motor stopped. The silence, after the ceaseless drumming of a night, a long day, a longer night, and a still longer morning, struck her with the same strange sense of shock. She calculated that the motor had been running for thirty-eight hours, and that she had gone three hundred and eighty miles at least on her course. She had seen nothing whatever of the yacht. The chances that it would pick her up, even if it came about and cruised for her, a lonely speck in the ocean, were millions to nothing. At any rate, she had done all she could. Her philosophy for once stood her in good stead. There was nothing more to be done. She was dead for want of sleep. The sky had been slightly overcast since she had left the yacht, but there had been no storm, and weather conditions looked just as they had and seemed to be permanent. Taking the precaution to examine the gasoline tanks and finding that indeed they had been drained of the last drop, she carefully closed and locked them, thereby assuring her salvation, and spreading the boat cloak in the stern sheets with her bag for a pillow and her straw hat tied over her face to shield it from the sun, she instantly dropped to sleep.

## Chapter VIII

Day was just breaking again when the woman awoke. Reference to her watch, which she had taken the precaution to wind just before she retired, disclosed the fact that it was four o'clock in the morning. She had slept unbrokenly since eleven o'clock the morning before. Her sleep had been a stupor of utter and complete exhaustion. Added to the tremendous physical strain of keeping awake and attending to the duty to which she had enforced herself, had been the further strain of the terrible events on the night in which she left the yacht, and the apprehension of pursuit, which had been continually with her. Her first motion indeed was to rise to her feet and scan the horizon. With relief indescribable her scrutiny discovered nothing. She was still alone. Neither the yacht nor any other vessel nor any smallest speck of land was silhouetted against the circling skyline.

In her satisfaction she did not stop to think what her loneliness, her failure to sight land or ship, might mean. These possibilities were all obscured by the thrill of rapture which came again to her as she thought once more that she was away and still free. If her life were drawing to a close, if its hours were numbered, at least she could spend those that remained to her in the undisturbed enjoyment of her own philosophy. She had not put curiosity out of her constitution, and, being a woman, she wondered where the yacht was, what was happening, whether the man were alive or dead. The altruistic side of her nature was in abeyance. At the thought of him she locked her teeth and wished the worst. Her desire was that he might suffer as he had made her suffer. She shrank from the thought of his touch. He had robbed her of her ideal, of her trust, of her faith, of a large part of her self-confidence, of her belief in her own teaching. She would have to struggle to get these back. Alas, he had robbed her of more than that, and the extent of her loss, being what she was, thinking as she thought, she could not yet realize, although there was a subconsciousness of it beneath her other cogitations. She fought it down and drove it away, but it came back again and again.

What had she taken from him in exchange for what he had taken from her? she asked, and the answer was, nothing. Under the spell of her beauty and her charm, he had assumed, whether deliberately or otherwise, virtues that he did not possess, opinions which he did not believe. He had no illusions about the matter, and had not been bereft of a single hope or aspiration. And yet she was woman

enough, while she raged at the thought of his possession of her, to realize that his failure to hold her might mean a great deal to that lower nature which had so completely in a few weeks got the ascendancy of the man whom she had fancied that she loved.

Her whole thought of him now was concentrated into intense and bitter loathing in which, in part at least, she included herself. It showed the strength and constancy of her feelings, the intensity of her conviction, that what she had been taught and what she had taught others was the truth, that all of her philosophy was not blown out into the Pacific by the wind of those terribly adverse circumstances.

She sat in the boat musing a long time and then woke to the fact that she was hungry. Again she satisfied her appetite sparingly from her scanty and rapidly diminishing store of food and drink, and then, putting the past resolutely behind her, hoping and perhaps fancying by some exercise of her will power finally she could put it behind her forever, she gave serious thought to her condition.

Life was still sweet to her, the future still presented possibilities to her inexperienced mind, and she had no intention of giving up the one and abandoning hope of the other without a struggle. In the first place, she had only the vaguest idea of where she was somewhere in the South Pacific Ocean. Latitude and longitude were alike unknown to her. In the first two or three weeks of the cruise, when the relation between the two had been altogether lovely, she had taken deep interest in the daily run. She had followed the course of the yacht day by day, and had seen her position plotted on the various charts of the South Seas, but in the last two or three weeks in her despair she had paid no attention to anything but her misfortune, and she had not now the slightest idea of her whereabouts, save that she was far south of the equator in as unknown waters as there were on the globe. She did remember having heard that there were islands in plenty in these waters, and she recalled having passed several in the yacht, but where they were and what they were she did not know. There was absolutely nothing in the boat which would give her any clew. She wished now that she had not been so precipitate in her flight; that the shuddering abhorrence which filled her soul at the sight of the man had not so moved her that her only thought had been to get away, and she barely had presence of mind to bring what she had in the boat with her. For she remembered that there were books on the South Seas in the yacht library, and some of them contained maps and much other information.

There was no use repining over the fact that she did not have them, however; nor was there any use in repining over her total ignorance of her whereabouts. She realized at last that she was in the hands — another would have said of God; she said of chance. The fact that she was so helpless; that all her learning and all her training, and all her skill and all her power were of no avail, made the situation the more galling. Was there nothing that she could do? She reflected deeply, and as she did so the breeze sprang up. She judged that the period during which she had slept had been calm and still. Any violent rocking of the boat would have awakened her. Indeed, she felt bitterly cramped and stiff from having lain so long on the hard floor, which only the boat cloak, thick and heavy, made a tolerable bed.

The coming of the breeze stimulated her imagination. It was a gentle breeze. She noticed that it blew from the direction whence she had come by her compass course. If she only had a sail of some kind, the boat would be driven along. She must move somewhere. She had heard of ocean currents and drift, but she doubted whether the boat was moving, at least sufficiently fast or in any definite direction to make any difference. Unless she got somewhere, she would slowly starve and die just where she was. She stepped forward in the boat and examined the oars. There was a sort of a deck forward over the gasoline tanks. She thought that she might make shift with the remains of the painter, of which she had a good length, to fasten one of the oars in an upright position against this deck. There were bolts and rings of various sorts on this forecabin. She could step the handle of the oar between cleats or ribs at the bottom. At least she would try.

Her training had not been manual, but she was bright enough to supplement her lack of skill, and after some hours of hard work she actually got one oar in an upright position and securely lashed. Out of the heavy cloak — more a huge circular than anything else — she improvised a sail with the other oar as a boom thrust across the boat between the mast and the little forward deck. The coat had been heavily braided. She ripped the silk braid from the edge, cut off the hood of the cloak, and managed a triangular sail laced by the silk braid to mast and boom.

The boom was immobile, and the only way she could sail was straight before the wind. If the wind shifted, she would shift with it. She had some slight control over the vessel with the helm, but that was all. It was noon when she finished her labors, but she was more than satisfied with what she had accomplished, for the cloak was big enough to give an appreciable way to the boat. She guessed it

might be three or four knots an hour. That would be nearly a hundred miles a day. She could eke out her provisions and water for five or six days longer, and she could go without for two or three days after the last drop and morsel had vanished. Perhaps she might run down a habitable island in that time. Possibly, although this possibility was more faint than the other, she might be seen by some vessel and picked up. At any rate, all she could do was now done. She felt better, too, because she had made a human contribution to the determination of her fate. She was no longer absolutely at the play of chance or God!

For five days she sailed steadily on, the breeze remaining even and holding unvaryingly true for that period. She learned the trick of lashing the wheel at night, and so was able to take as much rest as her tired, worn, and racked body permitted in the confinement of the little boat.

She had abundance of time for thought. Time was when she had reveled in such opportunities, but there was less enjoyment in the chances afforded her now. That she who had lived in the high realms of speculation should suddenly become a woman of action, fighting for life, struck her as a strange thing. Insensibly the conditions of her present existence modified her philosophy. It seemed different, a smaller thing. She was less sure and less confident of herself alone in the great immensity than in the crowded city. There were no applauding thousands. She breathed no air of adulation. She was alone with her soul.

The man who is thus alone is always face to face with God, though his eyes may be holden so that he cannot see the divine. It was so with this woman. Never had she so craved other companionship. She would have been happy if she could have believed that there was a God, for had there been a God she would not have felt so deserted. So she fought on against her soul and her circumstances a losing battle.

The sixth day opened dark and gloomy. The wind had risen during the night. The day broke heavily overcast. Even to her inexperience she could realize that a storm was at hand. She had seen nothing during the period; that is, nothing of which she could avail herself. Twice, once to the starboard and another time to port, she had passed lowlying islands, dim on the horizon. She had no way of checking the boat or of changing its course to run down either of them. She had to go on just as she was. She realized that she could never land unless she were driven directly upon some island that might lie in her course. She knew, too, that the chances that might happen were very remote. She had daily diminished the

portion of food and drink she allotted to herself. She had husbanded everything with the utmost care. On the sixth day they were gone. She awoke with a frightful craving, which was greatly intensified as the day drew on.

She was thankful for one thing that the sun was veiled, although the heat in the humid, heavy, over cast air was something almost unbearable. Under the freshening breeze the boat went much more swiftly than heretofore. She had that satisfaction, but she had the apprehension that if the wind grew any stronger her sail, serviceable as it had proved and stout as it was, would be torn to pieces. The silk braid had done splendid service, but she marked that it was now strained to the breaking point. Again the helplessness of her position came upon her. She could not take down the sail. In the first place she was afraid to leave the helm, and in the second place she realized that if she started to furl it, she could only do it by cutting the lashing, and at the first cut the whole thing would blow away. So she held on. There was nothing else to do.

The night fell in a burst of rain which was most grateful to her, but which was a forecast of a fiercer blow, and at midnight the hurricane broke in full force upon the little boat. The first blast tore the sail from the lashings. By a lightning flash she caught a glimpse of it for a second, whirled away like a great bird. For some reason, perhaps because one or two shreds of cloth still clung to the mast and perhaps because the broad blade of the oar offered some surface for the thrust of the wind, she was able, by the exercise of constant vigilance and all the strength of which she was capable, to keep the boat before the wind. Hitherto she had had no idea of the violence of the wave motion. It was with difficulty that she kept herself from being dashed to pieces against the sides or hurled overboard in the mad whirling and plunging to which the launch was suddenly subjected. It was caught up by one wave after another and driven on for hours. She could not tell how long. She lost all consciousness of time and of everything else, except that she must cling to the helm. The boat was still hurled forward. One great wave after another would seize her, uplift her and bear her on. The strain upon the woman's arms was terrific. She locked her teeth and hung on, breathless, exhausted, yet determined.

But there was a limit to her powers, and she felt that it had been reached. Yet she did not deliberately let go. One final and terrific heave jerked her away from the wheel. She fell sprawling in the bottom of the boat, but had sense enough to lock her hands around a thwart and lie there. The launch broached-to in an instant. She was turned broadside to the waves. Fortunately she did not capsize instantly,



and the next breaker filled her. She lay, her gunwales flush with the water. Her motion was still violent, but less jerky. She was swept ever onward by the vast undulations.

The indomitable woman clinging to the thwart managed to keep her head out of the water. She realized that this was the end, and yet while she had a remainder of strength, while she could draw a flickering breath, she would not give up. The boat, being water-logged, did not pitch so much as before, and she was able to maintain her hold, although every wave that broke over her drenched her again and again.

She wondered why the boat did not sink, and then she realized that the empty gasoline tanks which she had closed and locked prevented the final catastrophe; that the boat was in a certain sense a life boat; that it would float so long as the water pressure did not succeed in opening the tanks. Therefore, she was for the moment safe. The only immediate danger would be the capsizing of the boat, which would throw her out. Since the launch was already full of water, the woman did not think this was likely to happen.

She held on, her vitality gradually growing weaker, hoping for the morning and an abatement of the storm. She had no idea of time, of course. She could not tell what the hour was. It was still dark, however, when a strange sound smote her ear. She heard it above the wild scream of the wind and the awful beat of the waves. It was a crashing sound, a battering sound, a fearful, portentous sound. The boat ran forward more swiftly now. She wondered the reason. Taking advantage of a brief lull, she abandoned her grip on the thwart and rose to her knees. Immediately in front of her she saw a white wall disclosed to her by the lightning flashes. She did not know what it was. The roaring sound came from thence. She was being borne rapidly toward it. She was nearing it with astonishing swiftness. The boat was moving more quickly now than at any time since she had been in it. At last it broke upon her consciousness that the white wall was a mass of foam; that the sea was crashing against some hidden shore and that great breakers were there.

The land that she had longed for indeed lay athwart her course. In another moment she would be in that mass of boiling foam. Well, she had fought a good fight. The end was at hand. With some instinct of the heroic she resolved that death would not find her lying down. Desperately she struggled to her feet and stood balancing herself to the wild onward rush of the boat. The wall of foam

was close at hand. For one second she threw out her arms, and the next moment, with a crash which she could feel if not hear, the boat beneath her feet was lifted up and hurled on something fearfully solid. She was thrown through the air like a bolt from a catapult. A wave struck her in the back and beat her almost into insensibility. She was tossed and driven, half-unconscious, over a space of shallow water and rolling sea upon a sandy shore. Some instinct of life gave her motion. Blindly she crawled on. The waves seemed suddenly to have lost their power. She did not know that she had been thrown past a barrier reef and carried over a lagoon and dropped on a sea beach; that only the most unusual and gigantic waves could reach her; but she knew that they had little power to harm her. And so she crept desperately and doggedly on until she fell forward in the warm sand and lapsed into absolute and total unconsciousness.

# BOOK III - THE REVELATION

## Chapter IX

The three years which had elapsed had made a vast change in the relations between the man and the woman. In the beginning and for a long time hers had been the dominant position. So absolutely had she ruled that to him she had been as a god. So entirely had he obeyed that to her he had been as a devotee. Once she discovered his ductility and had begun to teach him, the relationships had commenced to change. Gradually each had recognized the humanity of the other. Together students, they had naturally approached a common level. Every new knowledge she imparted to him was an abdication of some of her supremacy. Every new knowledge he acquired was an aspiration to her high level.

Three years is a short time in the educational life of a human being, but she brought to her side of what was slowly developing into an equation the highest training, a natural ability to impart what she knew, an absolute devotion to the endeavor, and an entire freedom from other interests. So fascinating had the experiment been that she had scarcely missed the rest of the world. Had he been a woman instead of a man, would that absorption have resulted from their intercourse?

On his part he brought to bear upon the problem of learning, it was soon developed, an intellect which, although entirely untrained, was unusually acute, a faculty of acquiring knowledge as great as was her ability to impart it, and a reasoning capacity which kept pace with his other qualities. Indeed, the main thing with which she had to contend at first was his lack of application. But so soon as he had learned enough to enable him to realize the importance of learning more, she had no trouble on that score. It was as if a mature mind had been confronted with the hard problems of adolescence. He grappled with things in that way. Whatever she taught him, he learned, he mastered; all that he mastered inspired him to learn more. His mnemonic ability was prodigious; for all the years of his life he had not been storing up the insignificant, the immaterial, the unnecessary in his brain cells. He remembered all that she taught him with unvarying accuracy. His was a powerful, vigorous mentality which had known nothing and upon which she wrote what she pleased. To the judgment of a man he added the receptivity and ductility of a child.

She had taught him first of all to speak and then to read, then rudimentary mathematics such as he could do in his head. There was nothing that she could devise that was practicable for writing. There was no slate on the island, the rock was not suitable. Therefore he had never learned to write, although he knew what writing was, for she had explained it to him, and had made shift to teach him the Arabic letters. She also taught him geography, astronomy, natural sciences, and, above all, history. She unfolded the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them before his vision, touching lightly, as has been the fashion of such unfolders, upon the misery and the shame. His was a singular knowledge indeed. There were some things about which she was reticent, and some things she could not tell him at all, being a woman; but being a man, with imagination quickened, he thought of these things the more — for these were some of the deeper things of life, and nature!

But the change in the relations between the two was not greater than the change in the woman herself. She was no longer a philosopher. That which she had disdained, she admired; that which she had abhorred, she loved; that which she had refused, she accepted. She was a Christian in belief at least. Alone, or practically so, face to face with God in His world, God in His Book, God in humanity, her specious ideas of life and her relationship to it had broken down. She had learned to kneel beside that man and pray. She had learned to seek elsewhere than in herself for power to enable her to live her life and fulfill her tasks.

She had not wished to be a Christian. She had fought against it, struggled with it, agonized over it, but a compelling necessity was upon her. The convictions of her conversion tore the veil from before her face, dispelled the mist that hung about her. She saw herself as she was, a woman who, under the influence of wrong ideas, false conceptions, had branded herself forever. No, not in the eyes of that God whom she had learned to fear, not in the eyes of that Christ whom she had learned to love, but in the eyes of men; yet she was a woman who was pure in heart. Perhaps these thoughts and this consciousness had more to do with keeping her content even than her intense preoccupation in her man and her work, for she realized what she would have to face if she went back to the world which had mocked her while it applauded her. That world, therefore, she now began to fear.

The one being upon earth with whom she could associate, who knew nothing about it, who could cast no stone at her, was, she realized, the man whom she

had made; and this man looked to her almost as men look to the divine. Yet she felt that some day he would have to know. Some day she would have to tell him. What then? That feeling was ever with her. She constantly asked herself that question, and found no answer.

Indeed, it was he who had taught her the truth of Christ. At first she had not been able, she had felt a strange unwillingness, if indeed it were possible, to break down the lingering remains of faith in that man. That babble of childish prayer had in some strange way caught her heart strings. It was the one memory of intelligence that had remained to him. Now that he was capable of expression, that his mind had been born again, over and over he had told her of the dim returning recollection of a long voyage in an open boat with a woman and some animal, which she knew must be the dog. He could remember nothing of the intercourse between him and that woman except that she had been good to him — sometimes that is as much as the wisest recall of a mother — and that she had taught him and made him say always that prayer whose coherency and meaning, to her intense surprise, she found herself imparting to him. And she could not make up her mind to take from him the reality of the only recollection that remained to him.

Her new belief, as has been said, was both joy and sorrow to her. Save for her experience in the ship, she had been happier in her philosophy. She had suffered grievously through her trust in it and in man, but her consciousness that she was fundamentally right in her beliefs had consoled her. Now to feel that she had been wrong, that she had thrown away under the leading of a false light what she could never regain — ah, no Magdalene ever wept bitterer tears at the feet of Jesus than this woman in her hours of solitude over her mistaken past, her loss and shame.

She had hours of solitude, too. Early in the life they lived she had laid down certain regulations. He was in the formative period then and had unhesitatingly acquiesced in them. So far those regulations neither had been abrogated by her nor broken by him. A cave upon the farther side of the island had been found, and that was his home. They breakfasted together at a certain hour, which he told by means of the sun and she by her faithful watch. The morning was spent in study. In the afternoon they separated, each passing it in accordance with individual preference, but he rigorously kept to his side and she to her side of the island during the period. Certain dividing lines, clearly established and understood, marked which was his and which was hers. At suppertime they met

again and passed the hours together in conversation until the rest period arrived. Things had to be this way else life would have been unendurable. They lived on the natural products of the island, which were varied and sufficiently abundant to fulfill all dietetic requirements.

She had also taught him things not learned from books. Among them, truth, honor, duty, and dignity all the virtues. Her instruction had been originally ethical merely — first that which was natural! — but afterward it had grown spiritual. Unspotted from the world he, and she washed white she hoped and prayed in spite of the spots, they lived a life of pristine innocence. Yet because he was a man and she was a woman, strange fires glowed beneath the outward calm, strange ideas and desires and thoughts rose from both hearts. This was inevitable. Her original relation to the man had been one of so great superiority as to be fatal to the early development of any feeling but the maternal. Even now she possessed the superiority which association with her kind, her longer training and her greater opportunities, had given her. And yet she could only recognize that to the impartial view, considering his abilities and opportunities, he stood quite on a level with her. Perhaps, had he enjoyed her chances, he might have stood higher.

She began to idealize him, to dream about him, to wonder. She trembled on the verge of passion. She knew his to be a brilliant mind. She divined his to be a knightly soul. Physically, in face and figure no more splendid man, untrammelled by base convention, ever stood upon the earth's surface. Grace and strength mingled in a harmony that was as striking as it was full of charm. She had no opportunity to test his courage, for no physical danger ever menaced them. But she believed in his manhood thoroughly. The life they led was absolutely idyllic. It was a life that might have been lived in some serpentless Eden. No manifestation of the powers of nature had ever perturbed him in the slightest degree, she had observed. The island was sometimes visited by the most terrific storms, which were quite appalling to her, but which he endured calmly. Once she had had the curiosity to take his pulse during one tremendous cataclysm, and its ordinary rate was not accelerated by a single beat. His mind, too, was as sweet and fresh as a girl's. Indeed, it could hardly be other wise. Whatever was in it she had put there. No, not quite that, but she had put the seed of whatever was in it, and what had been developed from it had been due to himself.

The woman had had bitter experience with love. Following what she believed to be the highest inspiration, she had wrecked her life and brought herself to this

pass. The revolt in her soul at the thought of the man who had so degraded her, or who had so taken advantage of her ignorance and innocence — the more complete since they were covered by a confidence of knowledge and sophistication — as to allow her to degrade herself, convinced her that what she had mistaken for divine light was only a false fire, an *ignis fatuus* which had led her into the marsh and slough of slime and shame. She loathed the thought of that man. She had loathed, when she had been thrown upon that island, the thought of all men. This one had given back her confidence in her kind. Yet sometimes she wondered whether that confidence were warranted or not because of him. Suppose he should come in touch with the world, what would happen? Was he, too, capable of breaking a woman's heart? Would he do it? Was hers the heart? What would the soiling touch of the sordid conditions under which life was lived as she had known it do for him? Would he still remain unspotted? Would he think her the same? She had taught him many things. But how should he learn to fight temptations — temptations with which he had no experience, which ever came to him, she fondly dreamed.

Yet she had confidence in him. She had confidence in God; and we cannot have confidence in God without some confidence in man. The converse, too, is true. Therefore she believed. She was confident that he would rise supreme in the face of every test. She wondered if the test would ever be applied to him, if she would be there to see. She found herself praying for affirmation in both matters. Her belief in him would only be belief founded upon hope until he had been tried. There was a doubt about him that must be resolved; she must resolve it. She could never be satisfied, in spite of her belief, until she had done so. The very fact that she thought so keenly upon the subject, that she was so interested and engrossed in the situation, was evidence to her that she cared more for the man than she had dreamed it possible.

Indeed, how could it be otherwise? The primal instinct of humanity, by and through which the race persists, is to mate, and love is the motive of the mating if it is to be real and actual and holy. Any woman under such circumstances might be expected to draw toward any man; the much more she to such a man as he.

And so in her hours to herself she dreamed of him and of some future, and of that great test some day to be made. Alas, it was rushing toward them with a swiftness beyond imagination, of which she had not the faintest idea. She had often thought that they might stay upon that island forever; that there they might

live and die. And she had had, too, deeper, stranger thoughts as to what might be in that contingency. Should they live forever apart? Could there be no marriage between them in the sight of heaven? Was life and all that it held for men and women to be forever denied? What would keep them apart? And yet she had trampled upon convention once, with frightful consequences. Because of that she could not do it again. She was not free, but fettered by her past. She would sit, not calmly, but of necessity, and arrange the future and her destiny, forgetful of the fact that she was no longer the sole factor of determination. She no longer thought much about the yacht and the other man, and yet she had wondered at first why no search had been made for her. But as the days and weeks and months sped away and she remained undisturbed in her new-found Elysium, she had come to regard it as an accepted thing that she had dropped out of existence and had been forgot. And so she loved and hoped and dreamed.

And what of him? For once her intuition failed her. She wanted to see him tested and tried; she wanted to see him tempted and triumphant; but he was all of that in those very hours in which she fancied him so unthinking. It never occurred to her that he might entertain an earthly passion for her. She still, from ancient habit, believed herself so far above him that such an ambition would have been little less than sacrilege to him. She lulled herself to sleep with that idea. She believed, she knew, of course, that all that was needed was a suggestion from her. To love is the lot of man. This man had seen no other being than her. If she said the word, it would be accomplished. She held the only key to his heart; her hand could unlock it on the instant. She forgot the master key and the Master Hand.

He had controlled that strange trembling that used to take him whenever he touched her, but she could feel his pulses beat and throb when by chance there was any contact, even of the casual, between them. Sometimes he had asked her strange questions which she had put by, and sometimes she caught him looking at her in strange ways that sent the blood to her skin and sometimes turned her pale. Yet she lived in the fool's Paradise. She did not awake to the possibilities of that which she had made him because her apprehension of him had not kept pace with his apprehension of her. To her he was still in some degree the creature that he had been, and sometimes she thought upon her growing love for him with a feeling of shame, as if it were a condescension, a derogation.

She did not know what blood was leaping in the veins of the man, and how he taught himself, because she had instilled in him honor and decency and



Christlike self-control, to repress these things. She did not know how much faster he had learned certain things than she had intended. She did not know how instinctively he had leaped to conclusions which she imagined were still latent in his mind. This was a good man, this was an honest man, this was a gentleman, this was a Christian man. There was no question about his faith. It was as simple and abiding as it was sincere. The early Christians who had been brought in personal touch with the Master and His men were not more faithful, acceptant, and devoted. Yet this was a very human man in spite of all these things, a man of splendid vigor and health, with all a man's impulses, hopes, dreams, and aspirations. And he loved her.

He, too, sat upon the white sands of the gemlike island and looked out into the far blue of the Pacific washing the distant shores and lands peopled with strange creatures of history and romance, and he, too, wondered. He had had no experience with men and the world, and he longed to get away and to take her away.

She had long since discovered that he was a gentleman, an innate gentleman; that he had been well born, and she had seen to it herself that he had been well bred. Yet no mortal man ever went through greater fires of unknown and mysterious temptations than he. He forced himself not to speak words that burned. He checked the free course of thoughts that bubbled and seethed within his brain, and the relationship between them remained that of mistress and man, teacher and taught, friend and friend. It was he who so maintained it, though of this she was unaware.

And he, too, longed for some hour to come when he might with right and decency and dignity speak the words which some day he must speak or die. He was not versed in the ways of women. He had no store of knowledge, no lesson of experience to fall back upon. He knew but one woman. He could not predicate from any petty maxim, or from any ancient aphorism, or from any worn-out philosophy, what she would or would not do under certain conditions. Indeed, he only thought that he loved her, and he must tell her or die in the concealment.

And so matters ran on and on. It needed but a spark to ignite the powder, it would have seemed, and yet a vast cataclysm of nature only brought about the explosion. He had never touched her except to take her hand. Her person had been as inviolate to him as if she had been a star above his head. And she had been careful under no circumstances to allow more than that. Their hands had

clasped often. Indeed, with every “Good-night” and “Good-morning” the circuit of touch was made and broken, but that was all. They usually parted at night, on the sands where she had first been thrown ashore. He would stand and watch her as she glided away from him in the darkness toward the cave that was her home. She had impressed upon him how she trusted him, the absolute assurance, the entire confidence, she had that he would respect the agreement between them; and he would have died rather than have transgressed the law, stepped over that imaginary barrier, as potent as the circle of Richelieu, which kept them apart.

And yet she would never know what horrible constraint he put upon himself; how he stood with clenched hands and quivering body and stared after her long after she had gone. She would never know how that intensity of longing grew and grew until sometimes he felt that he could not overmaster it. She would never know how he plunged away, staggering through the woods, and threw himself down upon the sands on his side of the island, disdaining even the rude shelter of the cave which was his home, and fought it out. Sometimes she saw evidences of internal conflict in his soul the next morning. The calm serenity, the indifference, the animal-like satisfaction with which he had faced life when she first knew him had long since disappeared. There were deepening lines upon his face which told of thought, of struggle, and of character thus developed by these two potent factors in shaping human destiny.

And he could never know what was in her mind, either. He never dreamed that she could love him. She was so far above him, so supreme in his eyes, that the possibility never occurred to him. If he had known for a moment how she thought of him, the great passion in both hearts would have over leaped every obstacle and in a moment he would have had her in his arms. Well indeed it is that the power to read human hearts is reserved for the Mind which towers above human passions because it is divine.

And so these two, while drawing together as inevitably and as irresistibly as the tide comes in, were still kept apart. Their feelings were in solution, as it were. A precipitant must be thrown into the atmosphere in which they moved and lived and had their being to disclose them to each other.

On one certain balmy summer night they parted as usual. Was the handclasp longer, was the glance with which he peered at her under the moonlight more self-revealing than usual? Did something in his own breast call to the surface that which beat around her heart? At any rate, it was with a great effort that she

tore herself away at last, and for the first time in his life, although she knew it not, he followed after her with a few noiseless steps, only to stop, his face white in the moonlight, drops of sweat beading his brow from the violence of his effort. Having transgressed even to that degree the law, he turned instantly, without waiting to watch her disappear around the jutting crag that marked the little amphitheater where she slept, and went to his own side of the island resolutely, without another moment's hesitation or delay.

## Chapter X

For the moment she forgot where she was and fancied herself back on the ship or, more naturally, tossing about in that small boat after that long, eventful voyage. Yet no motion to which she had ever been subjected, not even in the wildest pitch of the storm which had finally cast her away, produced in her such strange emotions as she experienced then. For the earth itself was trembling, quivering, rocking. The cave wall above her, seen dimly by the filtering light of very early dawn which came through the openings, partook of the mad, fantastic motion. In another second she realized that it was an earthquake. The air seemed filled with a peculiar ringing sound of storm.

Her bed, of course, was the soft sand over which grass had been strewn. She lay, therefore, on the floor and could not be thrown down, but she was rolled from side to side in a way which paralyzed her senses. Never in all her experience had she known such a sick feeling of terror. When the foundations of things are shaken, when not merely the great deep but the solid earth is broken up, humanity stands as if in the very presence of God. She lay resistless, staring, praying, wondering whether the shaking rock over her head would fall and crush her.

In a moment the instinct of life quickened her to action. She rose to her knees, staggered to her feet and tried to make her way to the entrance. Walking was terrible. The earth seemed to have shaken for hours, and yet the duration of the shock was really less than a minute. Its violence was terrific. Just before she reached the opening, it stopped with one tremendous shock, as suddenly as it had begun. The next second, with a roar that sounded in her ears like a thousand pieces of artillery, the gray, hazy light in front of her was blotted out by a falling mass of rock which just escaped her. The face of the cliff had given away. In deeper, intenser terror than before she threw herself against the barrier. It was as hard and as unyielding as the other walls. No light came to her even. She was imprisoned alive in this rocky sepulcher. She sank down on her knees and buried her face in her hands. She murmured words of prayer.

Her mind flew to the other side of the island, to the Man. Was he, too, entombed? Was this the end of her labors? Outside she could hear the wind roar and the waves thundering with awful violence on the shore. Before the earthquake, had come the storm. There was still some connection between the

cave and the outer air, it seemed, for she was now conscious of lightning flashes. After the storm, came the fire. Her mind went back to what she had read from the Bible a few days before of Elijah's despair. Therefore in like case she listened with all her heart for the still small voice of comfort to her awestruck soul. It did not seem to come. She was doomed; she would never see him again, if indeed he were yet alive. She knew her feeling for him now. She slipped forward and fell fainting on the sandy floor of the cave. And still the voice was there. Presently it came to her as the voice of God usually comes to humanity, through the lips of man. After a space, how long after she could not tell, she was conscious of a human cry through the wild clamor of the tempest. A voice that she knew and loved was calling her by name. Was it some wraith-like fancy of the storm? She rose to her knees, sick and faint, and listened. No, it was a human voice, his voice, her name. The cry was fraught with frantic appeal. It thrilled and vibrated with passion. It told her even in that awful moment a story which she had not read. It revealed to her imaginations of which she had not dreamed. She was fascinated with what she heard. She forgot for the moment to answer. All the woman in her, the eternal feminine in her, listened. Her bosom rose and fell, her heart throbbed, her pulses beat. Alone with that wild, passionate, appealing, frantic cry, she forgot the earthquake, she forgot the prison, she forgot the storm, she forgot the world. She only realized that there out in the dawn, a man, the man of all the world, who loved her, was calling her name. The old call of manhood to womanhood, of mate to mate.

She rose instantly to her feet. This time it was the beating of her heart that pitched and tossed her body. She leaned against the rock wall and then she called his name.

"Man," she cried, "are you safe?"

"Yes," was the answer. "And you?"

"Entirely so, save for this prison." Thank God!" came faintly to her from beyond the wall. "Thank God, I hear your voice. I shall have you out, never fear."

She pressed her ear close to the heap of huge loose stones which filled the opening. She could hear him working outside.

"Don't be afraid," he said at last.

"I fear nothing," she answered, "if you are there."

In one instant the situations of life had been reversed. He was the master now, and she hung upon his words and actions even as he had done on hers in days gone by.

She had no knowledge of what task was before him, but she could hear the progress that he was making. It was evident that he was working furiously, and yet he stopped once in every little while to reassure himself as to her presence.

“Woman,” he cried, “are you still there?”

“Here and waiting,” was the answer.

He needed that assurance of her safety to enable him to achieve his prodigious task. How terrible were the efforts he put forth, she did not know until afterward, but his was the work of a Titan. He was moving mountains with his bare hands. Inspired by love, mightiest of passions, he was tearing asunder, like the earthquake, the rocky foundations of the world. Well for him that he was so thewed and sinewed. Well for her that God had added strength and power and energy to all his other splendid qualities. He had never done any work in his life harder than the climbing of a tree, but no toiler with a heritage of earth’s whole long experience of labor could have struggled as did he.

He had been awakened at the selfsame instant in his lonely cell upon the other side of the island. With the first shock he remembered that some time in his days of darkness before she came there had been a similar upheaval. He realized instantly what it was. Less timorous than the woman, more agile, he did not lie supine for a single second. His thoughts were instantly for her. He had thrown himself from his cave and had raced across the shaking, quivering island without the hesitation of a moment. Never so long as he might live would he forget the shock that came to him when he saw his way to her barred by that great heap of rock fallen from the face of the cliff which lay over the entrance to the cave. For one moment he had stood appalled, and then he had got to work. How much time had elapsed before he arrived at her door, how much time it took him to clear it away, he had no idea. He had no thought but that he must open a passage and get to her, dead or alive.

It was not wise for him to expend breath in cries, but until he had some reply he could not keep silent. After that, when her answer came to him, he worked more quietly save for those periods when he felt that he must hear her voice to enable

him to go on. Such was the furious energy of his toil that by and by the great mass of rock was cleared away save one huge boulder which fairly blocked the entrance. It was light outside now. A gray dawn and full of storm. Through the wider interstices she could see him plainly. She knew now that her rescue was only a matter of time. A branch of a tree for a lever, and his strength would roll the rock away. She started to tell him, but he caught a glimpse of her white face pressed against a crevice, and the sight inspired him. With a great burst of strength, the like of which possibly had never been compassed by mortal man since Samson pulled apart the pillars of the temple, he rolled the great rock aside and stood in the entrance, gasping, panting, with outstretched arms.

But a step divided them. That step she took. With a sob of relief she fell upon his breast, naturally, inevitably. His splendid arms swept her close to him. Her own hands met about his neck. With upturned face she looked upon him in all the abandonment of perfect, passionate surrender. He bent his head and kissed her, the first time in all his years that his lips had been pressed upon another mouth. He clung to her there in that kiss as if to make up in one moment for all the neglected possibilities of the past, as if never in all the bringings forth of the future should such another opportunity be afforded him. He felt for the first time in his life the beat of another human heart against his own, the rise and fall of another human breast, the throbbing of another human soul. Tighter and tighter his arms strained her to him. She gave herself up in that mad, delirious, awful moment to the full flow of long-checked passion and, kiss for kiss, pressure for pressure, and heart beat for heart beat, she made response.

It was too much. It was the man who broke away. There was nothing, no experience, no remembrance to teach him. It was all surprise. He thrust her from him slowly. Her hands lingered about his neck, but his backward pressure would not be denied. He held her at arm's length, her hands outstretched to him, her bosom panting, her eyes shining, her cheeks aflame in the gray dawn. Yielding, giving up to him absolutely, yet something, the magnificent mettle of the man, the restraints through which he had gone, the long battle with his own passion, rose to his soul and gave him mastery once more.

“Woman! woman!” he whispered no mere local name would represent her now, she was humanity to him “Woman,” he whispered, “My God! my God!”

He turned away, sank down on one of the great boulders that he had thrown aside and buried his face in his hands, his body shaking with emotions he could

scarce define but well understand. The woman threw herself down on her knees before him and took him once more in her arms.

“Man,” she said, “I love you!”

She drew his hands away from his face; she laid her own face in his bleeding palm and kissed it.

“Man,” she said, her lips wet with his own blood in a sort of wild, barbaric sacrament, “man, I love you!”

He stared at her as one distraught. He had dreamed of this, he had imagined it, he had prayed for it, he had hoped for it, but no revelation that had come to him in the years of their association equaled in its blinding brilliancy, in its intense illumination, the revelation in that woman’s voice, in that woman’s eyes, in that woman’s touch.

“Man,” she said again, “I love you. Do you understand? Do you know what it means?”

Then he found voice. He took her hand and pressed it against his heart.

“I know,” he whispered. “I understand, here.”

He rose to his feet, stooped, caught her by the shoulders and lifted her to his level. A piece of rock ill balanced on the edge of the cliff fell crashing. The place was dangerous. Without a word he slipped his arm beneath her, lifted her up as he might have done a child and carried her out upon the sand away from the beetling crags of the rocky wall.

She nestled in his arms with a sense of joy and satisfaction and helplessness cared for so exquisite that it was almost pain. He sat her down presently on a rounded boulder and turned away a moment, striving to control himself. Unable to deny himself, he bent over her, his hand on her shoulder. The sunlight sprang through the gray haze on the horizon’s edge and lighted her face as she lifted it up to him. She stretched out her arm to draw him to her. Suddenly he broke away and threw himself prostrate before her and laid his lips upon her feet.

She nestled in his arms with a sense of joy and satisfaction and helplessness.



“Not there,” she whispered, laying her hand upon his bent head, “but here, here in my arms, upon my heart, for Man, Man, I love you!”

Then kneeling by her side he took her once more within his arms.

“But you have not said,” she began at last, “that you loved me.”

“There is no word,” he said softly, “in that speech that you have taught me which is equal to what I feel. You don’t know how I have looked upon you and longed for you ever since you made me know and feel that I was a man with a man’s soul. Night after night I have watched you as you went to your nook in the rocks. But that you have taught me honor and consideration, what it is to be a gentleman, I had followed you and caught you in the dark within my arms.”

She laid her hand upon his breast and looked at him feelingly, entreatingly, with touching consciousness of his strength and her weakness.

“What I have taught you,” she asked, “you will not forget?”

“Never! Never!”

He released her waist and took her hand and kissed it. There was as much passion in the pressure of his lips upon her hand as there was in the beat of his heart against her own she felt.

“You,” he continued, “will say what is to be done.”

“Not I,” she answered piteously, “but you. I have no strength when you are by. Since that moment when you kissed me, you are the master and the man, but you will respect me in my helplessness?”

“As if you were God in heaven,” cried the man, raising his hand as one who makes a vow. “You are to me everything that is pure, that is holy, that is lovely.”

“No! No!” she whispered, a look of terror coming into her face.

“Yes,” he said. “Through you I know God, through you I know woman. You are sacred to me. Never again, unless you give me leave, will I press my lips to yours; never again, unless you say I may, will I take you in my arms; never again will I even touch your hand. Indeed, indeed, I cannot do these things. And yet I

will love you in ways of which you cannot dream so long as I can draw the breath of life.”

He rose to his feet as he spoke and turned away from her and stood with clasped hands and bowed shoulders. In one moment the whole course of their lives had changed. It had taken an earthquake shock to do it, but so terrific had been the submerged fires of mutual passion that a whisper opportunely uttered would have effected the same revolution. She sat and watched him, wondering what would be the end of it. She knew at last what love was, not the pale, philosophic emotion she had experienced in the cabin of that yacht. God, how she hated that recollection! How she wished that it had never been. If untouched by man she could have been cast upon that island to be given to this man who looked upon her as a goddess. She had told him some of her history, but not the part which was vital. It had been easy not to enlighten him wholly as to that. He knew nothing about conditions. He had never seen a ship or a boat within his recollection, and the story she had settled upon and told him was one that received instant acceptance from him. Indeed there was nothing that she had told him or could have told him that he would not implicitly have accepted and believed. The queen could do no wrong. She was incarnate truth. And she would have to tell him all now. She would have to put into that pure soul, alive with passionate devotion, admiration, respect — every feeling that can make up the sum of mighty love! — this story of evil and shame. There was no help for it. She would have to tell him.

But she could not tell him now, not on this day. She would have a few perfect hours. She would stand for a little while within the vales of Eden. She would look for a little time through the gates of heaven. Tomorrow! To-day she would have and she would enjoy it to the full. She rose softly to her feet at last and stepped closer to him. She laid her hand upon his shoulder. She could see the muscles in his arms tighten as he clenched his hands the harder. She turned him gently about and lifted her perfect lips to his. She kissed him again. Her hand sought his; her fingers parted his iron grasp. She drew his arm about her and nestled against him.

“I trust you,” she said, “as I love you. I shall be safe with you. You shall not draw away from me in such isolation. You have waited long for kisses like these.”

And then the man spoke, the man in him.

“Woman,” he said, “yours are the only lips that have been pressed upon mine, save perhaps my mother’s as a child. Has any other man ever kissed you?”

She could not lie to him.

“Don’t ask me,” she said — the futile request!

The man had turned away with a groan. No happiness is unalloyed; no joy comes into our lives that some pain does not dog its footsteps. With love came jealousy before the flood, and many waters have not washed it out.

“At least,” she said, pressing closer to him, and he did not repulse her, “I have loved no man but you.”

“Oh!” he said, taking her once more within his arms, “that I might know for one moment what’s out there, how you lived, who saw you, who followed you, who loved you!”

“I shall tell you,” said the woman.

“But you have told me.”

“Not all.”

“When the rest, then?”

“Tomorrow. Meanwhile let us enjoy the day” — the old, old human prayer, let us enjoy the day despite the morrow, — “let it suffice that I love you; that I never loved anyone else; that no kisses like to yours have ever been pressed upon my lips no, I believe, not upon the lips of mortal woman. Let us pass the day in happiness together. Come, we must breakfast. We must see what the earthquake has done to our island. We have things to think about, things to do.”

“I have nothing to think about but you; nothing to do but to love you.”

Hand in hand, they stepped across the sand to the shade of the trees, a royal and a noble couple, the splendid woman nobly planned, fit mate for the god like man, children of God and Nature, both of them in loose tunics which she had woven from the long soft grass, which left neck and arms bare and fell to knee and were belted in at the waist. Unhampered by any of the debasing or degrading

garments of civilization, they were a pair to excite the admiration and arouse the envy of the gods.

## Chapter XI

They had spent the morning together, but not as usual. Things were different, conditions had changed. For the first time in years the daily lesson which she had given him was intermitted. To-day they were both at school, with Love for preceptor and such willingness in their hearts as made them ideal pupils. The storm which had accompanied the earthquake had died away as suddenly as it had arisen. No visible evidence of it was left save the tremendous thunder of the long undulating seas upon the outward barrier. The earthquake had not greatly damaged the island; the fallen cliff, a few prostrate palms here and there, that was all. But there was visible evidence in them of the storm through which they had passed and which still held them in its throes in the tumult of their souls.

To the man the experience of the morning was absolutely new, and to the woman it was so different from what had hitherto transpired that it was practically so. They luxuriated in their emotions. They sat side by side, hand in hand; they walked together, hand in hand. Yet it was the woman who was the bolder, the woman who made the advances. The man was not passive. Kiss for kiss, look for look, word for word, touch for touch, he gave, but the initiative was hers, not his. He was putting a constraint of steel upon himself. She saw that and was glad. It made her bold. Womanlike she tried and tested the blade that she had forged again and again, growing daring in her immunity, braver in her trust.

The experience to him was a torture of such surpassing sweetness that he could have cried aloud with the exquisite pain of it. She was glad when she divined something of what was going on in his soul. He was proving his worth to her. When memory forced the recollection of another upon her, she contrasted the conduct of the present with the conduct of the past. She contrasted the actions and characteristics of this, what the world would call, half-naked savage, with the brutal vulgarity of the fine specimen of modern civilization with which she had gone away. And even in her shame at the recollection she exulted. This was indeed a man. When the great passion did come in full flood into her heart, she loved, she realized, worthily.

And was she worthy of him? Aye, but for that, worthy of any man. She was too clear-headed to convict herself of moral obliquity, but there was in her a sense and it had never been so keen and so powerful and so penetrating as at this moment when she loved — of personal pollution, under which, by hard fortune,

little of the blame being hers, she had to suffer. She luxuriated in her consciousness of his qualities, in his love for her, in her love for him; but as he suffered, so, too, did she. His suffering was of the present, hers was of the past. Which is the worse, the more unendurable, is a question to which no solution is apparent. Yet hers was the harder case in the particular instance, for hers was filled with shame and dread, and his was only begot by a prayer that he might not forget his manhood.

They stood, in one part of their wanderings, before the door of what had been her cave. Hand in hand they looked down upon the heap of rocks that he had torn away. It was nothing to him; to her it was incredible. She could better estimate what human strength was capable of than he. She had standards of comparison which he lacked.

“It cannot be possible that you lifted that boulder, and that one, alone?” she said, gazing at him wonderingly.

“At that moment I could have torn the rock asunder to release you!” he cried, throwing out his arms in a magnificent gesture of strength and force.

She caught his hand with her own and once more pressed her lips within his palm.

“I don’t know how to say how much I love you!” she exclaimed.

“Say that you will try to care as much for me as I for you, and I shall be content,” he answered.

And so there was a pretty rivalry between them as to which loved the more. In the midst of the strife of tongues, the woman spoke. She could not keep away from the subject.

“You love me,” she said at last, “because you think me more than I am, because,” she ran on in spite of his protesting gesture, checking his denying word, “because you have seen no other woman, because...”

“I will not hear another word!” he cried, finding voice at last and stopping her. “I know not woman or man save as I know you and myself, save as you have taught me by the women of whom you have read to me in that single book we have, the women of whom you have told me who have played their parts in the

world. All of them together are not like you.”

“That is because I am alive and here, and they are dead and away.”

“If they all stood here by me on the sand, if all their excellencies and virtues were centered upon one, and she stood by you on the sand, my heart would turn to you. It isn’t because you are beautiful — you are beautiful, are you not?”

Poor man, he had no standards of comparison, only the instinct for the lovely.

“Men said so,” she answered, smiling at him and blushing in confusion.

“Men!” he cried. “What men?”

“I will tell you tomorrow.”

She sighed deeply at the thought of the revelation.

“Well, then,” he continued, “it isn’t because you are beautiful, or because you are wise, or because you are learned, or because you are kind; it is because you are yourself that I love you.”

“And if I were none of these things?”

“I would love you just the same.”

“But I am not what you think me ... in some ways,” she protested.

“I could never think highly enough of you; I know that.”

“No, no, it isn’t that. When I tell you...”

She stopped and looked at him, paling. After all the greater test was to come then. “To err,” she remembered the ancient Latin proverb, “was human; to forgive divine.” Would he be human or divine in this trial? Had she so trained him that he could forgive the unforgivable? In more ways than one her happiness depended upon what would be his course. If he forgave her and condoned her fault, their love could have free course if ever opportunity for benison upon it presented. But if he followed the common course of men, not only would any future union between them on the only terms to which she could consent be

impossible, but he would kill her heart, her trust in man — some times, she wildly believed, her trust in God.

“Nothing, nothing,” he repeated, “that you could tell me would make any difference.”

So lovers have protested, she recalled, since time and the world began. And yet things told have made differences. What would it do for their future, this revelation of the morrow?

And again she realized that the test, if she herself were compelled to make it, would be not exactly fair, for she would be at once prosecuting attorney, advocate for the defense, even in some phase the passer of judgment. She would be the criminal and the world to him. It would hardly be possible for him to arrive at a correct view and come to a determination unbiased and free. If she could have transported him by some magic power among the children of men, and with them for auditory have told her story, the test would be a true one. What he would do then, after having heard the world’s voices, the world’s appeals, the world’s mockeries, would truly determine what he was, and in no other way could that determination be arrived at. Though she strove to be as impartial as divinity, she could not but make her defense coincident with her revelation, her justification at the same time with her condemnation. He knew nothing of life but what she and instinct had taught him, and neither would be safe guides in this emergency. He could protest and she could believe his protests, but unless they were uttered not merely before high heaven but before surrounding men, they would be of little value.

She put this by resolutely at last. We are the creatures of circumstance and environment. She would have to do the best that she could on the morrow. Meanwhile she would, as she had said, enjoy the day. And so the morning hours wore away until the time came for the customary parting. At first she would have abandoned, in the luxury of the new passion or the new revelation of the old passion, the customary rule, but she still preserved some lingering remains of her common sense, and she clearly perceived that it was necessary to go on as they had. Society cannot proceed without its conventions, and these simple regulations were their conventions which had to be obeyed. And so they parted as usual. But they parted as they had never parted before, torn asunder by their own compliance with their own petty rules, their hearts protesting.



Long before the earthquake they had erected on the topmost hill of the island a huge pile of dead wood from the groves beneath. She had lighted fires with her flint and steel for him from time to time to teach him what they were. She had even managed to cook some of the vegetable growths of the island, as well as the eggs of the turtle, oysters, and mussels which they could gather from the rocks at low tide. And she had taught him — strange whimsy! — to eat of these things on occasion with the use of salt with a sort of dim anticipation that some day he might come into the land of cooked food and of flesh food and find the power capable of development and useful.

She had taught him all sorts of little refinements and niceties of civilization. He had an accurate idea of a fork, although he had never seen one. He knew that to eat with a knife was a thing to be avoided, although he knew no knife except the sailor's sheath knife which she still wore at her waist. A dainty person, she had taught him daintiness just as she had taught him to comb his hair. Indeed, she had done that first herself, marveling at the brilliant golden curls that adorned his head. She had taught him to trim his beard and to care for his person, smiling the while to find how much more inherent daintiness and nicety and refinement are than, as some would have us believe, only external acquirements of civilization. He had had lessons in manners and etiquette, this half-naked savage. Indeed, the time had been all too short for what she would have him learn. But she had gone about it systematically, persistently, and given days and days without break to her task, and the results were wonderful.

When they had parted she had suggested to him— and it was significant that now it was a suggestion; yesterday it would have been a command — that he should take time to ascend the hill and rearrange the great heap of wood which they had builded. During all the time that had elapsed since she had been there no sail had whitened the horizon, no curl of smoke had betokened the distant passing of a steamer. But no spot of the globe could for ever remain unvisited, she thought, and some day that pile of wood might make a beacon light to call civilization to them. He was glad to comply with her suggestion, glad for occupation, and so he promised and went his way.

When he had disappeared, she turned the edge of the cliff in the secluded amphitheater where her cave fronted the ocean. She threw aside her tunic of woven grass and plunged into the cool, delightful pool, which fortunately the earthquake had not disturbed. Her clothes, the scanty garments she had improvised from her underclothing, had long since worn out. It had not been

difficult, however, to plait of certain pliable rushes which grew in plenty upon the island the loose and shapeless garments they both wore. She had used strips torn from what had remained of her clothing for binding and edging, and practice had made her dexterous and skillful in the rude weaving. She still preserved, however, the blouse and skirt of serge, her only pair of stockings, and the canvas boating shoes. Some times in idle moments she tried those shoes on. Fortunately for her they were loose and easy. Going barefoot these years had enlarged her small and slender feet to something like those human and proper proportions which, from the standpoint of nature at least, had greatly enhanced their beauty. She kept these clothes, she hardly knew why; perhaps, for one reason, since she had been able to weave the wattled garment so well suited to her needs she had no use for them; perhaps against the day of the arrival of other civilization than her own.

Greatly refreshed by her bath — and it shows her absolute confidence in him and his worth that interruption never occurred to her; it had never come and therefore it never would — she resumed her tunic and walked toward the cave. The tide was very low. The sands terminated on one side in a rocky ledge where a long arm of the lagoon ran to the foot of the cliff. The cliff had been tremendously shaken apparently, and she noticed just above the water line a narrow opening. She had thought from noises during storms that there was a hidden cave in the cliff with an opening under water. She had imagined that possibly she could enter it by diving, but she had never cared to make the attempt, although by this time she had become as much at home in the water or under it as if she had been native to the South Seas. Sometimes in the morning they swam in the lagoon together, oftentimes she swam alone. It was a great pleasure to her, and a necessity as well in that low latitude.

Curiosity induced her to inspect more closely this opening near the water's edge. Again throwing aside her garment, she plunged into the arm of the sea and swam boldly toward the cliff. There was just room enough between the water level and the top of the opening for her head. She found herself in a straight passageway perhaps eight or ten feet long and as many wide. Cautiously she swam through it and discovered herself in an immense cave. Light filtered through the opening, and one or two fissures had been opened here and there by the earthquake or by some convulsion of nature before, through the rocky wall, invisible on the face of the cliff from the outside but quite distinct within. There was even a stretch of sandy beach on one side. She swam to it, clambered upon it, and sat down to rest.

Here was an excellent haven of refuge, instinctively occurred to her, although a refuge from what she scarcely knew. Except at the very lowest of the ebb the entrance would be covered, and even then it would take a curious and familiar eye to discover the entrance or to imagine it anything more than a deep rift in the face of the sea wall. At any other hour the entrance would be invisible, and even at low tide, if the wind blew from the sea, which it generally did, the breaking waves would cover the entrance completely. Off to one side, quite accessible from the sand strip which rose sufficiently high to afford full shelter above the high water mark, a little stream plunged down the cliff. She tasted the water and found it fresh and sweet. All that one would lack would be food and the hiding place could be occupied indefinitely.

She stayed in the cave some little time, and when she finally decided to return to the outer world she discovered that the tide had turned and that the entrance was now completely under water. This gave her no disquiet. Light still came from the outside to mark the way. She had acquired the faculty of swimming beneath the surface with her eyes open, and the distance was short. She dove into it confidently and presently emerged in the lagoon outside. It was the one place on the island, so far as she had discovered — she had always thought there was a cave there, but had never been able to verify her knowledge — which provided her with a shelter absolutely secure and inaccessible, as she believed. She had no less trust in her man than she had before, but the knowledge gave her a strange comfort.

When she met him that night she did not impart her secret to him. Whatever happened now, she had a place of refuge, she realized, and she was glad. It was a gorgeous golden night in the South Pacific. They wandered and played and loved together under the tropic moon and stars in the gemlike island. Yet when they parted each was unaccountably sad; she because of what she must tell him on the morrow, and he because of what he had begun to fancy he must hear.

There were more things to happen on that morrow than either she in her philosophy or he in his in experience could have dreamed of when they kissed again at parting and together said good-night.

## Chapter XII

Yesterday morning she had been awakened by an earthquake. To-day it was the call of a voice, his voice. Besides hers there was none other on the island. It came to her through the open entrance. By turning her head she could see the bright expanse of sand and sea and sky beyond. Yet no figure darkened that rift in the cave wall. He stood out of sight, but within hearing, calling her name. She rose to her feet, gathered the tunic about her waist by a cincture of plaited grass, mechanically thrust the knife within a rude sheath she had made for it, and stepped out upon the sand. She had a sudden premonition that something unusual had happened, for never before had he ventured to come to the cave and thus awaken her. The change in their relations might have moved him to this extraordinary course, yet she did not believe that it had. She found him in a great state of excitement. As she cleared the entrance, he ran toward her waving his hands.

“There is something,” he cried, his voice thrilling with new and strange emotions, “on the other side of the island!”

“Is it something of enough importance,” she said softly, laying her hand upon his shoulder, “to keep you from kissing me good-morning?”

Evidently whatever it was, it was not, she thought for a happy moment as he swept her to his breast at once. That had been his first instinct, that had been his burning desire the night long. To have her in his arms was his constant thought; but he was new to lover’s ways, unused to lover’s customs, and, besides, he had sworn that the advances must come from her. But once the advance was made, the signal was displayed, the permission was given, he more than did his part. Pressing back her head he fed his fill upon her lips. No, not that, he could never do that; but he kissed her long, and for the moment forgot what he had come to tell. It was she who first remembered.

“And what is it,” she asked, “on the other side of the island?”

“I forgot it for the moment,” he answered passionately, “as I forget everything with you in my arms.”

She laughed at this bold assertion.

“You love,” she said, “as if you had been taught to do it from the beginning.”

“The sight of you, your touch, the air that hangs about your person, they have taught me, and I am only beginning now to show you how much I love you.”

“If this be the beginning,” she laughed, “what will be the end?”

“There is no end,” he replied, laughing in his turn.

“But you came here to tell me something else.”

“When I started from the other side of the island, it seemed the greatest thing that I could tell, but since I have seen you...”

“Man, Man,” she cried with pleasant impatience, “what is it that you saw?”

“I think it is a ship,” he answered with sudden gravity.

“A ship!” she exclaimed in wild amaze.

She laid her hand upon her heart and sank down upon a near-by boulder. If his words were true, what would it mean to them both?

“I have never seen a ship, but there is a dark object out yonder,” he pointed across the island toward the farther horizon, “too far away for me to distinguish what it is, but smoke rises from it.”

“Let us go!”

She rose to her feet and extended her hand. He took it and they began to run. They ran as often as they walked except in the greater heat of mid-day. Lithe, free-limbed, lightly clad, deep-chested and strong, in this emergency they headed straight across the hill instead of taking the longer way around the sands. The distance was not great. There was a sort of rude path which they had made and often traversed, and in a few moments they stood, panting a little, for they had been unusually speedy and eager, on the top of the hill.

“There!” cried the man, pointing to seaward.

His eyesight was better than hers, but hers was still sufficiently keen, as she

followed his outstretched arm and extended finger, to see upon the far horizon a dark object which was undoubtedly a ship. A hazy column of smoke elongated behind it and told her that it was a steamer.

“You are right,” she said at last, a little sob in her voice, “it is a ship. It means rescue. The world is coming to our shores.”

“My world is here,” he returned, laying his hand upon her shoulder, and for answer she drew closer to him, glad to feel his clasp about her waist.

She had time to think how singularly like the language of convention was the language of nature. It was what any other man who loved would have said and in the same way.

“That ship is passing by,” he went on. “When I saw it as I woke this morning, it was there. It goes rapidly.”

“Yes,” she said, “it passes by.”

“I care not,” he interrupted. “I don’t want anything else or anybody else. Now that I have you, I am content here.”

“But we shall summon it and bring it back,” she went on resolutely.

“How?” he asked curiously.

“By lighting the beacon yonder.”

“I forgot that.”

“But I did not. Go back to the cave and bring the flint and steel. You will find them in the silver box on the shelf by the Bible; and make haste.”

“I will go the quicker,” he said, turning from her, “that I may be the sooner back with you.”

He turned and bounded away like a young deer. She watched him through the trees and then sat down upon the summit of the hill and stared toward the ship. She was glad, of course, that they were to be rescued, but as in the joy of her love there was sorrow, so in her gladness there was apprehension. That test of

which she had dreamed the night before was now to be made complete. She would postpone the telling of her story until he could hear in comment upon it the voice of the world.

They had lived in Eden, Eden without a serpent. They had plucked the tree of knowledge at will and no consequences evil had ensued; nevertheless they must go out into the world now, the world with its pains, its toils and frets, the world with its mockeries and scorns, and take up the appointed life of men. He loved her now there could not be any doubt about that but what would he do when he knew, and when he knew that the world knew, as well what she had thought, what she had been, and what she had done? Alas, when that ship's boat touched the shores of their island to take them away from that paradise, the angel of the flaming sword would always guard the entrance and prevent their returning to it.

She was a brave woman. She could face the inevitable with courage, with a philosophy which now at last was Christian. She had had three peaceful years and a day of such happiness as falls to the lot of few of the children of sorrow. Perhaps that was all that she was destined to look back upon of joy. Perhaps the future held for her only expiation. Perhaps she ought not to rebel against that possibility. She ought to be glad of such an opportunity indeed. But she was a woman, and by and by she hid her face in her hands and wept.

In all their intercourse he had rarely seen her weep. Tears were almost foreign to his experience. He knew what sorrow was, what sadness was, what sympathy was, for his heart had been torn when she had read to him the story of the Man of Sorrows and His sufferings. A child of nature, the pathetic in the Old Covenant and the New had appealed to him profoundly, but his were not easy tears. He had never shed any. He had only once or twice seen any. He was appalled, therefore, when approaching noiselessly he laid his hand upon her shoulder and saw and heard the evidence of her grief. He dropped the box to the sod and knelt beside her.

“Has the sight of that ship made you weep?” he said softly. “I wish that I had never come to tell you it was there!”

“We have been so happy together, you and I,” said the woman. “This island has been my world, my haven, my heaven, rather, and you have been humanity to me, but now the earth opens before you. You will have other interests, other hopes, other ambitions, perhaps....”

“Don’t say it,” protested the man vehemently. “I shall have nothing, nothing but you anywhere, everywhere, and, besides, nothing is changed. See, the smoke grows fainter, the ship more dim. She passes beyond. Things shall be as they were! Here we shall live and love on!”

Her desolation, her sorrow, appealed to him profoundly. He took her in his arms. He laid her head gently upon his shoulder. There was protection and tenderness as well as passion in his touch.

“Together,” he whispered, patting her hair softly, “alone, you and I, forever!”

For one delicious moment, with closed eyes, she let herself be so soothed and comforted. But her better nature woke on the instant as it were.

“No,” she said, drawing away from him gently, “it would not be right. We belong in the world of men. Men and women are not men and women until they have lived among their fellows, until they have fought down the temptations of which we know nothing here, and have conquered them... out there. Give me the flint and steel. I must call back the ship!”

He stooped as she spoke and picked up the little silver box. He extended his hand toward her and then suddenly drew it back.

“You cannot light the beacon,” he said.

“Cannot!” she cried.

“No, for I will not give you the flint and steel.”

“You must give it to me.”

“I will not. I am the stronger and you cannot take it from me,” he returned with growing firmness.

It was the first time in all their intercourse that he had disobeyed a command. She looked at him amazed, her heart nevertheless throbbing at the mastery in his tone, at the thought that he was willing to throw away the world for her. It is true he had had no experience of that he was giving up, but he was not entirely ignorant of the possibility, for she had told him of what lay beyond the horizon, and she had presented it in such a way that it glowed with color and life and



charm. The evil, the sordid, and the wretched had been lightly alluded to, just definitely enough to shade the picture and bring out the higher lights of civilization. His was not the decision, therefore, of an untutored, inexperienced savage, not the abandonment of a toy by a child; there was some reality in it, and the reality measured his affection. Her heart leaped in her breast at that thought. For one fleeting moment she acquiesced. Things would go on in the old way. But things could not go on in the old way. For a day and a night, in spite of the great change that had come to their feelings, life had flowed on as usual, but there was a limit to human power. It was better, what ever betide, that they should go back to civilization. The woman stared at him long, earnestly, her lip trembling, her face pale, her eyes shining. They stood speechless at gaze for a moment, and then she spoke.

“You are right,” she said, “my power over you has gone. I can no longer command. Mine has ceased to be the supreme will, but I beg you, I entreat you, I pray you, give me the flint and steel. See, on my knees I ask you!”

She sank down before him in an attitude which he knew to be that of prayer. They had often read the sacred Scriptures and had said their prayers together on the sand or beneath the trees since she, too, in the solitude had seen God and believed.

“I cannot. I will not,” he answered hoarsely, stepping nearer to her.

“No,” she said, “you must not touch me, you shall not touch me. I shall be to you as a stranger, unless you take me by force, if you will not let me light that beacon.”

“No,” said the man doggedly. “When the world touches our shores, it brings you unhappiness. Let it pass.”

“Listen!” she said. “I have tried to tell you something about honor and duty. My honor says that that ship must be called. My duty bids me call her. You have said that you love me.”

“Said!” exclaimed the man.

“You do love me, then,” returned the woman, “and I you, but that love must be tested, tried in the world. I can never believe in it, in you, until the trial has been made. We must call back the ship!”

“But I can believe in you without any test.”

“I am different. I have been out there. I know what it is. I have seen other men.”

She looked fixedly at him. He bent closer to her and laid his hand upon her shoulder, not this time in caress. She winced from the tightness of his grasp, the fierce intensity of his clutch, yet she did not draw away and he was not conscious of the force he used.

“You have seen other men. They have loved you?”

“Yes,” she forced herself to reply.

“And you?”

“I have loved no man but you.”

“You had something to tell me. You were to tell me to-day.”

“Yes.”

“Was it about some other man?”

“Yes.”

“What was it?”

“I will tell you when we have gone back where men and women live.”

“Why not now?”

“You must hear the voice of the world in comment upon what I say.”

“But if we do not go back?”

“There will be a secret between us which I will carry to my grave. It would be fatal to our happiness. You see we must call back the ship. Give me the flint and steel, for God s sake, if you love me, Man!”

She had never adjured him in that fashion before. He stood irresolute a moment and dropped the box at her feet. She had conquered, conquered by appealing to

his love for her. Nothing else, she felt, would have moved him.

Eagerly she opened the silver box and took thence the tiny implements. Fortunately they were in the heart of the dry season. To strike a spark was easy, to communicate it to the tinderlike brushwood was easier still. In a moment, catching the inflammable wood dried out by the tropic sun, the flames roared through the great mass. The cliff or peak at the top of the island made a background for the flame, and soon a pillar of fire twenty or thirty feet high leaped and curled up into the still air of the morning.

The woman beckoned. The two ran around the peak of the rock until they were sheltered from the fierce heat of the fire. From where they stood they could see the ship.

“Do you think,” asked the man, “that the people on the ship will see the flame?”

“They cannot fail to do so.”

“And how will they regard it?”

“As a signal.”

“And what will they do?”

“Turn about and head for the island.”

“And how can we tell what they are doing?”

“When the smoke ceases to elongate,” she replied, “it will show us that they have turned and are heading this way.”

There was little breeze, apparently, and the smoke would follow the wake of the ship. They watched the little speck on the horizon with strained intensity for a few moments.

“How if she passes on?” asked the man at last.

“I shall take it as a sign,” said the woman slowly, “that... Look!” she cried with sudden emotion.

The ship had turned and the cloud of smoke now rose straight above her in the quiet air.

“They have seen the signal,” went on the woman. “They will come here. We shall be taken away!”

“It is your fault,” said the man grimly. “I wanted nothing but to be alone with you.”

BOOK IV - THE COMING OF THE WORLD

## Chapter XIII

Mr. Valentine Arthur Langford was wearily pacing the quarterdeck of his magnificent yacht, the Southern Cross. Mr. Langford was an intensely disappointed and embittered man. He had made two ventures which, by a stretch of language in one case at least, could be called matrimonial, and both of them had resulted in disaster. Death opportunely had relieved him of one wife; the other, who had stood in the place of the former without the legal ceremony or the spiritual benediction, had vanished under circumstances so mysterious that he had no idea whether she was alive or dead. On a certain night some three years ago he had a dim remembrance that he had behaved like a brute to a woman. His remembrance was only dim as to details. It was entirely clear as to the fact.

What had happened as a result of his conduct, he could not definitely state. The next morning the crew had found him lying insensible on the cabin floor with a fractured skull. The woman was gone, also the power boat which had trailed astern of the yacht in the pleasant weather. Such was his physical condition that when he was not unconscious, he was delirious. He had been unable to give any coherent account of affairs, and equally unable to give any directions as to the future movements of the yacht, which had been bound nowhere in particular upon a pleasure cruise.

The old sailing-master and captain, much distressed by the accident and the emergency in which he found himself suddenly plunged, decided that his best course, in fact his only course, was to get back to civilization and a doctor as soon as possible. He had instantly put the yacht about and headed for the nearest land where he might hope to get suitable care for his terribly ill young employer. He pushed the yacht to the utmost of her speed and in three weeks dropped anchor in Honolulu just in time to save the young man's life. Indeed, for a long time it was touch and go as to whether his life could be saved at all, and it was not until nearly a year had elapsed before the Southern Cross sailed for San Francisco with a weak and shaky but convalescing owner on her quarterdeck.

The departure of Katharine Brenton with Valentine Langford had made a great sensation, but it was nothing to the sensation which raged when it became known that Valentine Langford had returned without her. She was a woman of too much importance, she had played too large a part in the affairs of the world, civilization had manifested too much interest in her, to allow her to drop out of

its sight without at least making an effort to find her. The position of Mr. Valentine Langford became interestingly difficult in the face of a storm of inquiry. Mr. Langford's previous marriage was, unfortunately for him, unknown, but the world had had so complete and adequate an idea of the terms of the union which had been entered upon so blithely between Langford and Miss Brenton that the first question that met him when he came back alone was as to which one had repented. Had the woman come to her senses, had the man grown tired of her, had they parted, and where was the woman? These were the queries which were put to him with the direct simplicity of the American public through its imperious representatives, the reporters. And to these questions Mr. Langford could return no adequate answer whatever except the truth, which he could not bring himself to tell. He declared that she had left the yacht in the South Seas, that he did not know her present whereabouts, and refused to say anything further privately or in public. Miss Brenton had no near relations; what was everybody's business was nobody's, and presently public interest in her declined. She and her philosophy were practically forgotten by all but Langford himself.

Fortune, which had done him some evil turns, here, however, interposed to his advantage. The lady who legally bore his name departed this life and left him a free man. Brute though he had been, Langford was not without some strong ideas of honor and decency. Indeed, he had enjoyed long and undisturbed hours for meditation upon his sins of omission and commission during his period of convalescence, and the calm consideration of his character and previous career had done him good. At heart, in spite of his brutal conduct, for which drink had largely been responsible, he was a gentleman, and capable of things fine and high under the stimulus of some really great emotion. He had come to realize, to put it mildly, what an utter fool he had been, to say nothing of his villainy. What had led him to this realization had been the remembrance of the hours he had passed with Katharine Brenton before the clouds had arisen which had culminated in that awful storm, the recollection of which fairly made him shudder. However he had deceived her by professed adherence to her wild theories and impossible philosophies, he had honestly loved her, and association with her had been of benefit to him. If he only had not given away to his temper and his appetite! If it had not been for his former obligation!

He had married his wife in a moment of boyish infatuation. The union had been impossible almost from the first. She was little more than an adventuress, much older than he, who had entrapped him for his money. There had been a separation on a liberal financial basis, to which the woman had readily, even

cheerfully, agreed, and he had no lingering remains of affection to hold him back. Her death was only a relief to him. He felt that he owed reparation to Katharine Brenton, and he was the more willing to pay the debt because he was honestly and genuinely in love with her so far as a man of his temperament could be in love with a woman. He wanted to make amends for his treatment. He would have given anything he possessed to have been able to say to her how ashamed he was of all that he had done, and to beg her to forgive him and marry him.

She had vanished, however, from under the sun, and he no more than the rest of the world knew her whereabouts. He did not believe that she was dead because he did not wish to believe it, perhaps, and he would not believe that she was dead until he had some positive evidence of it. He had figured out the chances many times; he had discussed them pro and con with the veteran seaman who commanded his ship, and he was able shrewdly enough to forecast to a certain extent her movements. He knew that she would run the boat as fast and as far as the gasoline would carry her and then she would drift. He believed that with the empty gasoline tanks forward and aft the boat was practically unsinkable. It was possible that she could have drifted upon some island. She might be alive in the South Seas somewhere at that hour.

The death of his father and the necessity for the administration of the vast interests of the bonanza king's estate prevented him from at once engaging upon the search which he promised himself he would make, but he expedited matters, sometimes to his own loss, as rapidly as he could, and after nearly a year's stay in San Francisco he found himself in position to undertake his quest. For a year thereafter he and the Southern Cross traversed the unexplored, unvisited waters of the South Seas. He had landed upon island after island which he had examined with minute particularity. Some he had found inhabited by natives whom, through interpreters he had procured, he questioned unavailingly. He ran across stray vessels trading among the islands, and through them, with constantly increasing, ever-widening mediums, he carried on his search, but without results. In thus sweeping the Pacific he had visited everything that was charted and all that he could find that was not, and was now homeward bound, convinced that the launch must have foundered and that he would never solve the mystery of her disappearance.

So assiduously had he prosecuted his search that the crew of the Southern Cross, who knew little as to the cause of his eagerness, with the exception of the

shipmaster, looked upon him as a harmless visionary. They had been away so long and had visited so many islands with so much hardship, often times with so much danger from uncharted reefs in the unknown seas, that they were one and all wildly anxious to return from the, to them, aimless wandering. If he had communicated to them at the first his quest, they would have shared his eagerness, but he kept it to himself as he had kept his own counsel in San Francisco, and he straitly charged his sailing-master to say nothing of it.

Consequently the lookout on the fore-topmast crosstrees on a certain summer morning, catching sight of a dim, blue haze on the horizon far off to starboard, made no report of it. What was the use? It would only delay matters, and they were within a few weeks of Honolulu now, and another fortnight beyond Hawaii would bring them back to the United States, for which they all longed with the desire of men who had been away from home and confined to the narrow decks of a cruising ship for over a year.

Something as to whether it was Providence or not he was somewhat doubtful in his mind afterward brought Langford on deck hours before his usual time for rising. The watch was in charge of a rather sleepy, stupid second officer, unimaginative and unobservant. He had not noticed the land, which it was difficult to see from the deck at any rate, especially as it did not lie between the yacht and the sun, and as it had not been reported from the masthead, he knew nothing of it.

Langford had found sleep impossible. The year of search, the constant disappointment, the pressing sense of mystery, the feeling that his conduct was indeed irreparable, had preyed upon him. He was thin, worn, nervous and irritable. He walked up and down the deck in the cool of the morning, thinking. For three years practically he had had this woman before his eyes as the goal of his efforts. Now she was gone and he must concentrate his life upon something else. He gazed languidly and indifferently about the horizon, his unpractised eye noticing nothing for a time. Suddenly, however, staring off to starboard listlessly during a pause in his steady tramp, he thought he caught a glimpse of light. He looked idly in the direction whence the reflection had come for a few moments and saw it again; a thin cloud of smoke, or was it haze, rose above it. He was puzzled by it, of course, and stood staring. The concentration in his gaze, he thought, discovered to him a cloudy blink in the gray of the dawn which might mean land. He knew there was no land charted in those seas, for he had carefully studied the chart the night before, saying nothing to anyone, as he had become



somewhat sensitive about the matter.

He ran down the companion ladder into his cabin and fetched thence a new and powerful glass which, upon his return to the deck, he focussed upon the distant point of light. By the aid of these wonderful binoculars he made out what it was. He was a man of quick decision and purpose. He called the officer to him, pointed to the light, and handed the glass to the man with the question:

“What do you make of that, Mr. Holtzman?”

The officer took a quick look through the glasses, handed them back to their owner, and said laconically:

“Land! Fire! Smoke, sir.”

“Head the yacht to that island at once.”

Very good, sir,” said the officer, turning to the man at the wheel and ordering the helm to be put apart.

The yacht’s bows swung slowly round until the island and the light were both dead ahead.

“Now, Mr. Holtzman,” said Langford when the maneuver was completed, “who is at the mast head?”

“I ll see, sir,” answered the second officer, step ping forward.

“Bring him to me,” said the owner as the officer turned away.

In a few moments the officer came back to the quarterdeck followed by one of the seamen. The man looked very much frightened, for Langford was in a towering passion, and when he was in a pas sion he was not a pleasant spectacle.

“Did you see that island yonder?” began the owner fiercely.

“I... er... .”

“Answer me!”

“Yes, sir,” said the man desperately.

“You did?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Why didn’t you report it?”

The man hesitated, shifted from one foot to an other, muttered something about a wild-goose chase. Carried away by anger, Langford sprang at him and would have done him bodily violence had he not been quickly restrained by the second officer.

“Mr. Langford, sir,” cried Holtzman, grasping him tightly, “recover yourself, sir.”

The check was sufficient.

“Get forward!” cried Langford, controlling him self with difficulty. “Mr. Holtzman, send for Captain Harper.”

“Very good, sir,” answered the officer.

“And meanwhile you are to keep straight for that island until further orders.”

In a few moments the old captain presented himself before the owner.

“Harper,” began the young man imperiously, “the lookout this morning deliberately failed to report that land, that island yonder. I want him disgraced and his pay stopped. Put him in the brig and set him ashore at the first civilized port.”

“Very well, sir,” said the old sailing-master, not daring to remonstrate under such circumstances.

“Do you know that island?” continued Langford.

“No, sir,” answered Harper. “It’ not set down in any chart. I have never heard of it before.”

“Harper,” said the other, laying his hand upon the old man’s arm, “it is our last chance. We are passing out of the region of these islands. If she be not there, we shall never find her.”

“I am afraid not, sir.”

“I have an idea that our quest is going to be successful this morning,” returned Langford, eagerness flushing his thin face.

“I hope so, sir,” answered the other. “There is somebody on the island evidently, for they have lighted a fire. It should be a signal. It might be savages of some kind.”

“It’s not likely. Why should they signal a ship? And how should there be savages on a lonely island like this five hundred miles away from any other land? You may depend upon it, captain, tis some castaway who wants help, and why not she? Indeed, I am sure it must be.”

Something of the man’s confidence infected the old sailor. He took up the glass from where it lay on the cabin skylight and going forward studied the island.

“It’s one of those volcanic islands, I take it,” he said as he came back. “It seems to be covered with trees. There is a hill rising from the midst of it. The fire is on the top. There should be an encircling reef round about it and deep water up to the very barrier.”

“Could you see anything else?”

“No, sir. No glass would reveal anything more than that at this distance. Try for yourself, Mr. Langford.”

He handed the binoculars to the owner, but his own scrutiny revealed nothing more than the captain had told him.

“How are we going now?” he said, looking over the side.

“About eight, I should judge, sir,” answered Harper.

“Let us have full speed until we get nearer.”

“Very good, sir.”

The captain turned and spoke a word to the second officer, who signaled to the engine room, and in a few moments the motion of the great vessel through the

water was perceptibly accelerated.

“Have you had your breakfast, Mr. Langford?” asked the captain at last.

“Not yet.”

“Then if you’ll allow me, sir, I think you would better get it. We won’t be within landing distance of that island for an hour or an hour and a half. In fact, we’ll presently have to slow down. I don’t like to dash in full tilt so near land through these unknown waters, and you will do well, sir, to go below and get a bite to eat.”

Your advice is good,” said Langford, turning away and entering the cabin.

Never had man less appetite than he. Somehow, he could not tell why, he felt certain that this, which would be his last attempt, would not prove fruit less; that his search, hitherto unavailing, would now be rewarded. He took time to re-examine the chart of those seas. It was quite possible, he thought, for the woman to have made that particular island before them from the point at which she had left the ship. The more he studied it, the more sure he became. At last he forced himself to break his fast, but in a short time he was on deck once more.

The island was perceptibly nearer. Captain Harper was forward staring through the glass. Running along the waist, Langford joined him on the forecastle.

“Can you make out anything?” said the young man, catching the old one by the arm.

“Aye,” was the answer.

“Is she there?” he asked hoarsely, his heart in his mouth.

“There is a figure on the weather side of the fire yonder.”

“A figure!” asked Langford, trembling so he could scarcely control himself. “Is it a woman?”

“I can’t tell. It’s too far off.”

“Give me the glass.”

“I make out another figure. There are two of them,” returned Harper, slowly lowering the glass and handing it to Langford.

Two!” cried the other, rapidly focussing the glass, disappointment in his tone which he strove to keep out of his heart. “You are right,” he said at last, “there are two figures there, but ‘tis impossible to make them out.”

He handed the glass back to the captain, who in his turn fixed it again upon the island.

“They are going down the hill,” said Harper. “I have lost them among the trees.” “We are approaching swiftly,” he continued. “Mr. Holtzman, half speed, if you please.”

Bells jangled below as Mr. Holtzman rapidly set the indicator, and the speed of the yacht was quickly checked. She still approached the island with sufficient rapidity, however, and after perhaps fifteen minutes of easy going Captain Harper signaled her to stop, fearful of any nearer approach.

“What now?” asked the owner.

“I think we better not chance it nearer, sir,” said the captain. “It isn’t more than a half mile to the shore. Shall I call away the launch, or will you be rowed?”

The launch was stowed amidships; the gig swung from the davits. It would be quicker to take the gig.

“I’ll be rowed,” said Langford.

And in a moment the voice of the boatswain’s mate could be heard calling away the crew. All hands were now on deck. The conversations between the captain and the owner had been heard by many and their tenor communicated to all. Consequently when the gig, manned by six of the best oarsmen in the ship, dropped alongside and Langford descended to the stern sheets and took the tiller in his hand, the crew spontaneously manned the rail and sent him off with three ringing cheers.

It did not take the men long to cover the distance between the motionless ship and the island. As they approached the latter, they perceived the barrier reef, which, unless they could find an opening, would effectually prevent their getting

on the shore. Langford swung the boat about at a judicious distance from the reef over which the sea always broke with more or less force, and closely scrutinized the line of foam. The coxswain of the boat, who rowed the stroke oar, also followed with his eyes the jagged reef. It was he who detected the two figures on the beach of the island waving palm branches and apparently pointing. He called the attention of Langford to the figures, and suggested that the inhabitants were trying to show an opening through the barrier.

Following the indicated direction, presently smooth water was discovered. Langford headed the boat for it. The men bent to their oars and soon parted the quiet waters of the lagoon. The two figures stood in plain view upon the beach still too far for those in the boat to make out who or what they were. Langford could only see that one was taller than the other; that both were dressed in some sort of loose tunics that fell to the knee and left the arms bare. He was disappointed, but yet hopeful. The suspense was almost unbearable. The men were doing their utmost, seeing the anxiety in his face, but their utmost was too slow for the impatient man.

## Chapter XIV

“How long do you think it will be before they will be here?” asked the man after they had sat silent on the hill to windward of the fire watching the trail of smoke.

“I should think that it would be perhaps an hour or a little more. Why?” she returned after a moment’s pause. “Are you so anxious to have them here?”

For the life of her she could not keep the bitterness out of her question. The man looked at her in surprise. She had never lost her temper before him in the years they had been together. There had been something singularly simple, free, and unrestrained in their life. Nothing had ever occurred to vex her, at least not after the man had known enough to notice it. She was a woman of sunny, even temper under any circumstances, and she had felt it incumbent upon her to be as nearly perfect as possible since she represented humanity to him, nor had it been a difficult task for her to be gentle. This flash of resentment, therefore, struck him as something entirely novel. In his amazement for a moment he forgot the injustice of it, the unkindness of it. He looked at her strangely and said to her with a little touch of severity:

“You know that it is not that, Woman.”

He had no terms of endearment. He had never heard the words that lovers use, and although he knew that her name was Katharine and he believed that his was John, and though sometimes they made use of these names, generally they called each other by the broad generic terms which stood for sex. Names are only for differentiation and identification in any event, and here was no need for such appellations. She loved to call him “Man,” and she loved to hear him call her “Woman.”

“You know,” he said, “that ‘tis not I who have brought the world upon us.”

“I was unjust, unkind,” she answered quickly enough, stretching out her hand to him. “You must forgive me. You see even the approach of yonder ship brings bitterness into our hearts and into our speech.”

“I guessed that it would be so when I saw you weep,” said the man. “I wish now that I had not given you the flint and steel; that I had not allowed you to light the

beacon.”

“My friend, it had to be. Don’t reproach yourself with that. Sooner or later this island would have been visited by someone. Sooner or later the ship would have come to fetch us off.”

“But we were so happy here,” he protested.

“Yes,” she answered, “but not since yesterday.”

“Are you unhappy because I love you?”

“Because,” she made swift to reply, “I am no longer sure that you will love me always.”

“But you love me, do you not?” he questioned eagerly.

“Yes.”

“Are you sure of yourself?”

“Absolutely.”

“Why not of me, then? Am I less true? Do I love less than you?”

“Not now.”

“What is the difference between us, then?”

“I have seen the world and you have not.”

“But I tell you that will make no difference; that...

“No man can say that who has no experience to draw upon.”

“You are my mentor,” said the man gently. “You have taught me all I know, but sometimes I think that about some things I know more than you, and this is one thing of which I am sure.”

“Yes,” said the woman, “you can be sure so long as conditions remain as they are at present, but other times, other manners...”



“You had something to tell me?” interrupted the other swiftly.

The woman nodded.

You said yesterday you would tell me to-day. Why not tell me now?”

“Because... .”

She hesitated.

“Are you afraid to tell me?”

“Yes,” she said.

“Afraid of what?”

“Of losing you.”

“Banish that fear.”

“But ‘tis not that that keeps me silent.”

“What, then?”

“I would have you hear the world’s comment on what I say when I say it.”

“The world’s comment! What is the world’s comment to me?”

“A test, a trial of your feelings! If it breaks my heart, you must know.”

“If you feel that way about it,” said the man resolutely, “you need tell me nothing at all.”

It was a brave thing to say, for her mysterious words filled him with dubiety and dismay. He had no idea what it was that she could tell him. He had no experience by and through which to embody her vague hints into something real and tangible. He knew that he was terribly grieved, and but that he had no way to describe the pain of jealousy, he would have said that he was racked with that unhappy emotion.

“Tell me nothing,” he repeated again, “if it grieves you.”

“Are you afraid of the test?” she asked swiftly.

“I am afraid of nothing except losing you.”

“I am not worthy of you,” returned the woman, “as I told you, but if you will have me, if you will take me when I have said what I must say and when the world has said what it will say, then I shall be yours so long as I live.”

“It is well,” said the man. “I wait the ship now eagerly, that I may show you that what I have said is true.”

“The vessel is nearer now,” she said at last, rising from where they had been seated together upon the grass absorbed in each other, and pointing sea ward.

“Yes,” he answered. “I can even see figures upon deck.”

“Your brother men.”

“Will there be women on the ship?”

“I do not know,” she answered quickly. “It isn’t likely. Do you wish to see other women?”

“None,” was the instant answer. “I wondered if my brothers would bring your sisters. That was all.”

There was absolutely no dissimulation about the man. There had been no coquetry about her. He would simply have failed entirely to understand what it was. He was as honest, as straightforward, as absolute simplicity and sincerity must ever be, and she had met him exactly on his own ground. It was impossible, therefore, for her to misapprehend his mere casual interest.

She stood quietly studying the approaching vessel. As she did so, it came to her mind that there was something strangely familiar about the oncoming ship. She stared longer and the conviction grew upon her. When she realized it, she clasped her hand to her heart with a sudden gasp and turned a white face upon him. He was all solicitude in an instant.

“What is the matter?” he cried. “Your face is white; you look so strangely.”

“It is a sudden pain,” she gasped, terror and dismay constricting her throat.

She wavered. He thought she was going to fall. He stepped closer to her and put his arm about her.

“No, no!” she said, repulsing him.

It was like the first command she had given him in those bygone days when he had stood dumbly before her.

“No, no!” she pushed him away. “I shall be all right.”

“And has the approach of men deprived me of the privilege of touching you?” he asked wistfully. “What is the matter?”

“Don’t ask me now,” she answered. “I ... I ... cannot explain.”

The vessel was nearer now and, as she stared, it came to a stop and swung broadside to the reef. There was no mistaking it. It was the Southern Cross. She knew it as well as she knew her own face. The thing which she had dreaded so when she fled from that vessel in the launch, which she had dreaded for a time in the first period of her sojourn on the island, had come to pass. It was the very yacht from which she had escaped. Undoubtedly it bore the man from whom she had fled. He had come to claim her. Of all the teeming millions which the world held, this was he whom she would fain have avoided. Rather anyone and everyone had come to her than he! What would happen when these men met? The story that she would have told him to-day in her own way had the ship not appeared, the story that she would have told him on her decks had that ship been other than it was, he must now learn by the brutal force of circumstances, through some compelling necessity which she could not in any way influence or alter. She loathed the man who was coming toward her. Her Christianity trembled in the balance. She would fain have called invectives down upon his head, and for the moment she swept the whole sex together in one unreasoning hatred and resentment in which the man of the island participated. What sorry jest had blind fate played upon her?

She moved farther away from her companion under the constraint of these thoughts, and when he would have approached her nearer she flamed upon him in sudden anger that left him appalled. But under the influence of it he kept his distance. She saw the way of the yacht checked. She saw the boat dropped from

the davits and manned by the men. She saw a figure, too far off to recognize, but which she divined must be his, descend the battens from the gangway. She saw the little boat headed toward the shore. Then she turned to the man. He was standing with folded arms, his brow as black as midnight, staring out to sea. He knew nothing, understood nothing, comprehended nothing, suspected nothing. His only realization was that she, his gentle goddess, whom he had loved, was angry with him, so far as he was concerned with out rhyme or reason or cause.

The stoppage of the ship, the lowering of the boat, its approach to the island, were now matters of indifference to him. She was angry. He could think of nothing else, and there was bewilderment in his dismay. Nothing had given him power to solve the enigma of her conduct. Where she gazed with serious intentness, he looked listlessly. Her heart smote her again. The sense of justice upon which she prided herself came to her rescue. She stepped close to him and laid her hand upon his arm.

“Forgive me!” she murmured, and her heart leaped within her bosom to meet the great flush of pleasure in his face as he responded instantly to her caress and her appeal.

“What has troubled you,” he said gently, “that you are angry with me?”

“You will know soon enough,” was the answer. “But see, the boat approaches the reef. It would be best for us to go to the shore and direct them, if we can, to the entrance, otherwise they will not be able to make a landing, and they may turn in their search for an entrance and be compelled to the long row around the island.”

“And if they never landed,” said the man, “would you be happy? If they went away without seeing us, would you believe me without the test?”

“My friend,” said the woman gently.

She had often called him that during their long intercourse, and it was a name he had loved until yesterday. Now he would fain have had something near and dearer.

“My friend,” she began, “it is too late now. Such is the temper of men that having once been attracted to this island they would not be satisfied until they had visited it. They saw the fire. They know that human beings kindled it and for some purpose. They won’t go away until they find out who did it and why.”

“Would that I had never given you that flint and steel!” he cried bitterly.

She smiled at him.

“It was my appeal, you remember, and if you repine again, I shall think you fear the test. Come, let us go down to the shore.”

“You said you know men,” the man asked as they threaded their way through the trees and down the hill along the familiar path, “do you know any one on that ship, do you think?”

The question was an absurd one under almost any other circumstances than that. Yet chance had shown him the one point in her armor, and his innocent and casual question had driven into her soul a barb. Evasion would have been easy. Indeed, his trust in her was so great that deceit would have been simple. But she had always told him the truth, and she could not begin to deceive him now.

“Yes,” she said, “I think I do.”

He stopped abruptly, illumination and anguish, the light of pain, in his soul.

“Was it because you know that man that you suffered so on the hill?”

“Yes,” she said, again forcing herself to speak.

“Is he one of those who loved you?”

“He said so, but ...”

“And you, did you love him?”

“I hated him.”

“Why?” asked the man sternly. “Had he injured you in some way?”

“In the greatest way,” she answered with deepening gravity. And here her sense of justice pricked her. “But it was partly my fault.”

“And have you forgiven him?” he asked with a little softening of his voice.

To him forgiveness was as natural and inevitable as breathing. In his ethics there

was no other course. He had never had anything to forgive, be it remembered. She was not so true to her standard as the man she had taught. The pupil was more devoted than the master.

“There are some things,” she replied bitterly, “that a woman never forgives, cannot forgive.”

“What things?” he persisted, wondering ignorantly as to her meaning.

“Don’t ask me,” she answered impatiently. “I told you I would tell you the story to-day, and you will have to wait until I do.”

“But that comment of the world?”

“You will hear it from that man’s lips, if I mistake not,” said the woman wearily. “But you must press me no further. See, they are close to the reef. We must hasten.”

She drew her hand away from his and ran rapidly to the beach. Naturally he followed, overtaking her in a few swift steps and running, as was his wont, by her side. If he had stopped to indulge in the luxury of self-examination, he would have found his feelings in such a turmoil of such strange emotions as would have defied classification and description. Of but two things was he very clear: that he loved this woman, and that in some way, for causes unfathomable and not present to him, he hated the man or the men in the boat off shore.

By the woman’s directions just before they reached the shore, the man picked up two fallen branches of palm. They ran to the beach opposite the entrance and waved the palm branches above their heads. It was too far for the voice to carry, and there was too much noise from the breakers on the reef if the distance had been shorter. But the men in the boat evidently caught sight of the signals and understood them, for she was presently headed about and in a few moments they saw her prow cut the blue waters of the lagoon through the one entrance to the barrier. The man and woman stood silently, a little apart, watching the swift approach. Unerringly steered, the boat struck the gently shelving beach bows on, and a last sturdy pull drove her fairly out of the water. The man in the stern sheets rose, stepped forward between the oarsmen, and leaped out on the sand.

The present was in touch with the past, conventional faced the unconventional, civilization and the primitive confronted one another.

## Chapter XV

Now that the great moment had come for Langford had at once recognized the woman whom he had sought, in spite of her strange garb he became suddenly acutely conscious of trivial details and accurately responsible to matters of no moment. For instance, he stopped near the bow of the boat, told the coxswain that he might allow the men to land but that they must remain close to the beach and within easy call, and directed him to see that the boat was properly secured. Then he turned and walked slowly — singular how eager he had been for that moment and how tardy he was in availing himself of it when it came — toward the two who had stood silently watching a little distance away.

He was dressed in a boating suit of white and wore a white yachting cap. He was distinctly good-looking. His repentance, his anxiety, his disappointment, had refined his face to a marked degree and he was not an unworthy specimen of humanity in appearance. The man looked at him with vivid curiosity and a sudden sense of dismay to find the newcomer so worthy of respect on the ground of appearance at least.

The glance that Langford gave the man was at once casual and indifferent. His whole interest was centered upon the woman. He found himself trembling violently in spite of the superhuman efforts he put forth at control. It was only the most iron constraint indeed that enabled him to approach her at all. As he drew near to her, he took off his cap, bowed to her, and strove to speak calmly.

“Katharine,” he said at last hoarsely, “thank God that I have found you!”

“Woman,” said the man by her side, stepping swiftly forward and confronting Langford, “who is this man?”

“His name,” returned the woman steadily, “is Valentine Arthur Langford.”

“What did you do to her,” asked the man with the bluntest possible directness, “that she weeps at the thought of you; that she is filled with horror as you approach; that she looks at you as she does now? I have never seen that look upon her face since we have been upon this island.”

Langford turned and faced the man as these singular queries were put to him.

“Who is this man, Katharine?” he asked, an angry flush in his face.

“I don’t know for certain,” the woman answered, “but I think his name is...”

“What has my name to do with it?” interrupted the man persistently. “Will you answer my questions?”

“When I know who you are and by what right you put them, I will decide,” was Langford’s contemptuous answer.

The woman had never seen her companion in a temper, but he was perilously near the breaking point now, and Langford, although he realized it not, had never been and would never be in so much danger as at that instant. A swift glance showed her the man strung to the very outbreaking point. The woman laid her hand upon his arm, a calming touch.

“In the world,” she said, striving in the emergency for the calming touch of the commonplace, “people are presented to one another.”

How she loathed the intruder! She thought for a moment that she had only to say the word and her island companion would tear him to pieces. She wondered how far after all she had succeeded in stilling into his mind the restraints of civilization. She began to see dimly that such an achievement was beyond the power of any single individual; that it had been in the past and would always be in the future the result of the cooperation and restraint of the many. Yet she forced herself to speak evenly to the visitor.

“Mr. Langford, I believe this man’s name to be John Revell Charnock. I believe him to be an American, a Virginian. I found him here upon the island.”

“This matters nothing,” said the islander. “I don’t care what this man’s name is, or who he is. I want to know why he distresses you.”

“Sir,” said Langford, wondering what was the best tone to take with this singular being, “pray let us all withdraw yonder to the shade of the trees where we can be more private.”

The men in the boat, who had scrambled out upon the sands, had been eager spectators and auditors of everything that had gone on. Their curiosity was greatly excited and their propinquity was evidently distasteful to Langford.



“You are refusing to answer my questions,” said the man. “I will not be put off further.”

“Man,” said the woman, laying her hand upon his arm, “it is my wish.”

“Oh, if you wish it.”

Without a word he led the way rapidly across the beach out of earshot, but not out of sight, among the trees.

“Now,” he said, turning and facing the other two.

He noticed that the woman was ghastly white and that Langford was scarcely less pale.

“Sir,” said Langford firmly, “I decline to answer your questions. I have business with this lady and with her alone. It does not concern you, and I beg you to withdraw for a moment and give me free speech with her. After that I may have some questions to put to you.”

“Everything that concerns her concerns me,” said the man sternly. “What you have to say to her must be said to me. Speak on.”

For a moment Langford looked as if he would have sprung upon the other, but he was so clearly no match for the wild stranger that discretion came to his aid and kept him still. Besides, he had no wish for vulgar brawling then. He turned to the woman.

“Katharine,” he said, “I have much to say to you. Can’t you make this man hear reason?”

“She has made me hear reason for three years,” answered the man for her before she could speak, “but her power ends in this hour.”

The woman looked at him piteously and nodded her head. She realized that the thread of destiny was taken from her hands and forever.

“Mr. Langford, you will have to say to me what ever you wish before this man,” she said at last.

“Why, ‘tis impossible!” cried the other.

“It must be.”

“And,” interposed the man, “you shall say nothing to her until you have answered my questions.”

There must be no violence,” cried the woman, stepping between the two. “No violence!”

For answer the man gently, but with irresistible force, lifted her out of the way. She knew now where he got the strength to tear the rocky wall, and while she trembled, she thrilled.

“Katharine,” said Langford — to do him justice he was not afraid — “what is this man to you?”

“I am nothing to her,” answered the man, “except that I love her.”

“And you?” said Langford hotly, still addressing the woman.

“She loves me,” again answered the other, “and we were happy until you brought the world to our shores. Since then she has wept. Look at her now.”

“My God,” exclaimed Langford, “is it possible?”

“It is true,” said the woman, finding voice at last and looking steadily from one to the other.

Langford’s emotion passed all bounds. He had trembled before; he shook now as if with the palsy. He reached out and caught the trunk of one of the trees to steady himself.

“What are you to this man, in God’s name?” he cried.

“Nothing. Ever since I fled from the ship on that hateful night and landed on this island, we have been friends, good friends. He was a castaway. He had forgotten his speech. He had lived here alone since he was a child. I taught him everything.”

“To love you?” queried Langford in hot and bitter jealousy.

“That was one thing I learned myself,” answered the man. “And yesterday something, you might call it chance, but I call it God,” said the man gravely, “discovered to us the love we bore each other, and that is all.”

“Are you — forgive the question,” said Langford, addressing the woman, and there was agony in his voice, “as you were when I left you?”

“I am a different woman, thank God!”

“Different!”

Yes, but in the sense in which you mean the question, I am just as I was, save that I love this man.”

“But you had no right to love him or anyone,” burst forth Langford bitterly.

“And do you reproach me with that?”

“Do I?”

Think of your wife.”

“She’s dead,” said the man hoarsely. “I have searched the world for you. I have come back here to make amends, to own my fault, to marry you before God and man, to take you back, to do for you as long as I shall live all that a man can do.”

There was such genuine passion in his voice and in his appeal that the most inimical and indifferent would have recognized it, but there was no response to it in the woman’s heart. A greater love than his had come into her soul. The whole current of her being flowed to the man by her side.

“No,” she said. “Your words have no appeal for me. They awaken no response in my heart. I love this man, not you.”

“Have you thought,” persisted Langford meaningly, “that you are not free to love anyone but me?”

“By heaven!” cried the man, springing forward, “this time I will be answered.

Why is she not free to love me or anyone?"

"Because," said the other resolutely, "before she came into your life she belonged to me."

"Belonged to you?"

"Yes, to me."

"And by what tie?"

Langford hesitated. He was furiously wrought up. He saw that it was necessary to make a break, a rupture, between these two. He thought that if he could do so, his own suit might the better prosper. He was in deadly earnest and therefore he took the risk. How frightful it was, he had no preconception. He did not understand that he was dealing with a primitive man. How should he? He did not understand what passions slept beneath the surface. And perhaps if he had understood, to do him justice, for he was a fearless man, he would have ventured just the same.

"She was my mistress!" he said through his teeth.

"Shame! Shame!" cried the woman, and then she fell silent, clasping her hands and waiting for what might come. The hour of her travail was upon her.

Langford flashed a look at her, and then his gaze reverted to the man. The expected outbreak did not instantly come.

"Mistress!" said the other. "I know not what that means, but 'tis a word of bitterness. Say further and more clearly your intent."

"Why, you fool!"

"He that calleth his brother a fool shall be damned," said the man.

Langford stared at him.

"Where have you lived," he cried, "that you don't know the meaning of words?"

"I have lived nowhere but here, and I have known no language but what this

woman has taught me.”

“Yet she could easily have taught you the meaning of that word,” the other responded with cruel, ruthless meaning.

“I will take the lesson from you.”

“You will have it then!”

“I will.”

“She was my wife, but without the blessing of God or the law of man. I owned her, do you understand? I possessed her, body and soul.”

“Not soul,” said the woman, but the protest was lost.

You lie!” cried the man, swiftly leaping upon him.

No tiger ever sprang with such swiftness or such ferocity. Langford was prepared for an attack. He dealt a blow at the oncoming figure with all the force of his arm, and skill and training enabled him to put into it more than one would have fancied from the slightness of his figure. He struck the man fairly in the chest. The blow apparently might have staggered an ox; it had no effect whatever upon the other. In an instant Langford was caught as if in the grasp of a whirlwind. He was lifted from the earth and held high in the air. For one tense moment, unable to struggle, he hung upon uplifted arms. He heard a voice beneath him cry:

“Woman, shall I throw him down and kill him?”

“Do him no hurt,” said the woman, “for what he has said, as he sees it, is true.”

## Chapter XVI

At these appalling words the strength seemed all at once to go out of the man's arms. Heavily, but not with purposeful ungentleness, he slowly sat Langford down upon his feet on the sand.

"You brute!" cried the man, trembling with impotent anger.

There was nothing that he could do personally. If he had possessed a weapon he would have killed the islander, but he was unarmed and helpless. Therefore he turned toward the beach and called to his men. They had seen the sudden attack and were already running across the sands.

"No," said the woman, "that word belongs to you. You have told the truth, and yet not all." She turned to her companion of the island. "Man," she said, "you have loved me. You must hear what I have to say."

"You have said that it was true," he muttered hoarsely. "And the man who has said it lives. Lives!"

His voice rose to a cry. He turned toward Langford again. But by this time the six blue jackets who made up the boat's crew were close at hand.

"Haley," cried Langford to the coxswain, "seize that brute yonder, and..."

The woman was still wearing the knife that she habitually carried. She used it often and kept the blade bright and of keen edge. She whipped it out on the instant, her civilization falling from her like a discarded garment when the man she loved was threatened.

"Let no one lay hand upon him," she cried, aflame to defend him. "I swear that I will drive it into my own heart if he be touched."

"Give me the knife," said her companion suddenly.

Before she could prevent him, he whipped it out of her hand.

"And now," he said, springing toward the huddled group of sailors, the bright blade lifted, "which of you will touch me?"

The men shrank back. There was something so furious in the aspect of the man, his power was so evident, and his temper as well, that none wished to precipitate the fray.

“I appeal to you,” said the woman, turning to Langford, “send back the men. A moment since I saved your life. At a word from me he would have thrown you from him and broken your back. Be generous. You must. And this man shall give me a hearing. You are safe from him, I promise you,”

What might have been the result of this appeal can never be determined, for at that moment a new factor entered upon the scene, a factor whose presence was as surprising and unexpected as it was determinative. From out to sea, yet near at hand, came a muffled detonation, the roar of a heavy gun. Around one of the headlands that rose on that side of the island there swept the white sides of another great ship beside which the yacht, imposing though she was, was a toy. It was the woman who saw it first.

“Look!” she cried. “A ship of war. See the flag of the United States. This land is America. I claim it by right of discovery. Lay but a hand upon this man and I will have you hanged for murder, Langford. With their glasses they have seen this encounter. That gun was a warning. A boat is putting off. Thank God, we are saved from you!”

Things had transpired even as she said. What the cruiser was doing in those seas, how happened she to be there, were things as yet unknown, but that she was there was apparent. She had approached the island from the other side and had sailed around it. Her men had observed the encounter on the shore, which seemed to be between natives and persons from the yacht which was in plain view a little farther out to sea, and the gun had been fired to call attention to the advent of the United States.

This put an entirely new face on the whole affair. Matters were taken out of the hands of the parties to the quarrel. The law had come to the island. The islander did not, could not, know it, but his baffled antagonist realized it immediately. So did the woman. At Langford’s command, his men, much bewildered at the scene they had witnessed, went back to their boat. He himself presently followed after and stood upon the strand awaiting the approach of the heavy man-of-war cutter which had pulled away from the big white cruiser’s side.

“Man,” she said softly, “this is what I had to tell you.”

He nodded. A hollow groan burst from his lips. “His mistress,” he muttered brokenly.

“I would not have had you learn in this way, and now that you have heard so much, you must hear more” she went on, not sparing herself, though she might justly have resented the word. She was dealing with more serious things than words now, bitter though they might be. “That ship, which is the ship of our country, stands for law as his for license. I was more sinned against than sinning. When you have heard all, then you shall judge. This is the test.”

“Would God that it had never been laid upon me,” said the man hoarsely.  
“Would God that the beacon had not been lighted on the hill!”

“Nay,” returned the woman gently, “that’s past praying for. Decision rests with you, but you must not pass it until you have heard the whole story. The world holds me stained, polluted it may be, as he said, but I am not the sinner that it thinks me or he portrays.”

“You said it was true,” doggedly cried the man.

“Yes, but not all true.”

“And I had him in my hands, and still he lives.”

“Won’t you hear me?” pleaded the woman.

The man shook her off and turned away. That very innocence which had prevented his understanding at first the charge, made it the more hideous when comprehension came. He had loved this woman with a love that passed the love of man, for there had not entered in his mind the faintest possibility that she could ever be or ever have been other than what she seemed, a daughter of the gods, in truth, in sweetness, and in purity. And this man had come from out of the world and proclaimed her his mistress, his cast-off, abandoned mistress. Once the clew was given he found more hideous depths of infamy in that word than would have appeared had his been a wiser and more experienced vision. Indeed, so clear and pure was the soul of this woman that a man of the world would have known instantly that there was an explanation, which this child of nature could not see forthcoming. He wanted to be away from her and alone, and



he turned as if to plunge into the depths of the forest, but with gentle force she restrained him.

“If you are a man, with a man’s power and a man’s soul and a man’s heart, you cannot fly now. You must stay and face the problem. The question must be pursued to the bitter end. My life and your life depend upon what we do now, perhaps his life, too.”

“O God,” cried the man, recurring again to that bitter thought, “I had him in my hands and spared him.”

“But you spared him for my sake,” said the woman, “think of that.”

“For your sake,” declared the man pointedly, “I should and would have killed him.”

“Thou shalt not kill!” said the woman softly.

“Thou shalt not kill!”

“An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,” returned the man. “He and you between you slew my heart. His death would be no murder, but retribution.”

“But it was in part my fault,” returned the woman, bravely making her confession.

“I will never believe it. It cannot be.”

“And yet it was, but you shall have the whole wretched story to-day, and you shall judge. This much I will say, that though all that he said was true, yet I hold myself blameless and innocent. The world judges me harshly, and it may be that you will find its judgment just. Yet I do not hold myself as on trial at this moment, but you.”

“I do not understand.”

“There are many things that you do not understand, my friend.”

“I would that I had been left in ignorance.”

“Nay, that is not a man’s wish, but a child’s.”

“Of one thing am I certain.”

“And what is that?”

“That I should have killed him!”

“Nay,” said the woman again, “that is not a child’s wish, but a brute’s.”

“You said yourself,” he flashed at her, “that there were some things a woman could not forgive, and this is one thing that a man puts in the same class.”

The woman sighed. There occurred to her at the moment no answer which was adequate to the stark realism of this fact. The conversation had reached an impasse beyond which it could not progress without the full and complete explanation which now there was neither time nor opportunity to give, for the boat from the man-of-war was approaching the shore. The woman stepped resolutely down the strand to meet it, and the man, after a slight hesitation, followed after.

So soon as the boat’s keel grated on the bottom in the shallow water a middle-aged officer rose from the stern sheets and stepped ashore, followed by a younger companion in the uniform of a sergeant of marines. A little squad of privates in the bows landed and fell in line with martial celerity and precision. The officer in charge, who wore the white tropic uniform of a lieutenant-commander, now faced the people on the island who had instinctively divided into two groups, one on either side of him. To the right stood the man, and behind him the woman, to the left Langford, back of him his crew. It was to the latter that the officer first addressed himself.

“Sir,” he began, “I am the executive officer of the United States cruiser Cheyenne, detached on special service. We raised this island this morning, ran it down, circled it, saw the yacht yonder....”

He paused.

“It is my yacht, sir, the Southern Cross answered the other. “My name is Langford.”

“Glad to meet you, Mr. Langford. Mine is Whittaker.”

The lieutenant-commander touched his cap as he spoke. Langford lifted his, and the two shook hands.

“We saw,” continued the lieutenant-commander, “what appeared to be some sort of a fracas with the natives, and fired a gun to attract attention, and Captain Ashby sent this boat party ashore under my charge to do whatever was necessary. Perhaps you can explain how you came to be embroiled with the natives.”

“Sir,” said the woman and the fact that she addressed him in his own language and with the cultivated accents of the well-bred and the well-educated caused the officer to start violently “the island is mine.”

Mr. Whittaker turned and looked deliberately at her, his surprise only equaled by his admiration. The tunic that she wore was a rough garment and shapeless, but few vestments were better calculated to set off her exquisite proportions. The grace and beauty of her figure, the nobility and intelligence of her face, took added luster from the contrast of the utterly simple, natural, and primitive. Whittaker’s glance fell upon a well-nigh perfect woman. The constraining influences of civilization had been so long absent that nature had time and opportunity to reassert its claim. She was tall, exquisitely modeled. Her bare arms might have supplied those missing from the Venus of Milo; her limbs, which the short tunic to her knee left exposed, were perfect in their symmetry and strength; her feet were such as those to which ancient Greece had bowed; her hands were shapely, graceful, yet strong; her dark eyes looked at him fearlessly; her dark hair rose like a somber, cloudy crown above her brow. The fierce sun, the open air, the wild wind had not materially altered the clear, slightly olive pallor of her face. The woman had been beautiful before. Now that nature had had free sway, she was nobly lovely. She had stood a little in the rear of the man at first and the lieutenant-commander had not particularly observed her. When she spoke, she stepped into the open. He stared and stared, amazed.

Indeed, the direct intensity of his glance added a sudden new perception to the woman’s faculties, and for the first time in years she realized that she was standing before her fellows half naked. In one swift moment convention leaped across the missing years and caught her in its arms. The red flashed into her cheek; beneath her rude vest her bosom rose and fell. Her instinct for the

moment was to fly. She wished that she had put on those treasured garments which she had kept for a scene like this in that cave all those years. It was too late now. She summoned her courage and, realizing that dignity after all is not made of clothes or conventions, once more addressed him.

“Sir,” she said, “my name is Katharine Brenton. I am not, as you might well think, a savage, but a castaway.”

“I beg your pardon,” said the officer, a man of wide reading and culture, “is it possible that you are the Katharine Brenton who wrote ‘Fate and Destiny’?”

“I am that unhappy woman.”

“Unhappy?”

“Yes,” returned the other, “I...”

““Madam,” said the lieutenant-commander, flushing deeply and bowing in his turn. He had taken off his cap at her first word. “I beg your pardon, I have heard something of your story.”

He was very much embarrassed. It was Langford who took up the tale.

“Since you know so much, Mr. Whittaker, you may as well hear the rest. Indeed, I am anxious that the world shall hear it. Miss Brenton and I, we... er... did not believe in marriage, and we went away... together.”

Every word was agony to Langford, who was a proud man; it was worse agony to Katharine Brenton, who was a proud woman; and it was worst agony of all to the man of the island. But Langford persisted. He did not care how he hurt himself. Indeed, he rather luxuriated in the consciousness of his own pain. It was part of his expiation. He realized that he would have to hurt Katharine, but perhaps the very keenness of her pain would make her realize her position, and he wanted to win her, now that he had found her and seen her, more than ever. Nor was his passion a base one. Again he was ashamed of what he had already said, so he spoke the more frankly. He gave no thought at all to the other man, but if he had, he would have been glad to hurt him until he killed him.

“We went away on my yacht yonder three years ago. I ... in short ... I behaved like a brute on it, I will admit.”

“I discovered that he was a married man,” said the woman swiftly at this juncture. She, too, would be frank. This grave and middle-aged officer should hear all. “He had professed belief in those views which, if you have read ‘Fate and Destiny,’ you realized that I entertained.”

The officer bowed.

“And have you abandoned them now?” he asked.

“Absolutely,” was the firm answer. “I am a Christian woman, thank God!”

“Thank God say I, too,” continued Langford. “Yet I was not altogether a sham or a lie. It is true that I was a married man.”

The lieutenant-commander flashed a contemptuous look at him, at which Langford winced, but he went on. He was determined to make an absolutely clean breast of the whole affair.

“It is true I was a married man, but I was under the spell of Miss Brenton’s eloquence and of her beauty.”

“I can well understand that,” said the officer gravely as a matter of course.

“I thought that marriage meant nothing and that the old tie might be disregarded. I hated the woman who bore my name, and so, as Miss Brenton’s disciple, as her devotee, for I loved her, I will admit,” he smiled drearily, “more than her philosophy, I proposed that we should trample upon the conventions she had taught me to believe she despised, and go away together.”

“But you were not free,” said the woman, “to enter upon such an undertaking.”

“No, by heaven!” cried Whittaker.

Now this conversation had been carried on with three auditors, or groups of auditors, besides those participating, Langford’s yachtsmen, the marines and seamen from the Cheyenne, for the boat was against the shore, and the man of the island. Whittaker first awoke to the situation.

“I beg your pardon,” he said, “but would it not be better to continue this conversation privately?”

“I think so,” returned Langford.

“No,” said the man of the island, addressing the lieutenant-commander for the first time; “you and these men are the world. I want the story told where all the world may hear.”

Whittaker’s surprise at this remark was scarcely less than he had experienced when the woman addressed him. Who was this splendid, godlike form of man standing glooming by the woman’s side, a silent, eager listener to all that transpired? What had he to do with the question that he assumed this tone and manner of authority? The officer turned toward the woman.

“I think,” said he quietly, “that the lady should be allowed to decide.”

“My wish is my friend’s wish,” said the woman, laying her hand softly upon the man’s arm.

Whittaker observed that the man shook it off nervously, but the point being settled, there was no further appeal.

“Pray proceed with your story, Mr. Langford,” he continued.

“No, let me take up the tale,” cried the woman. “Believing that I was right, believing that the education and training which had made me what I was were sound, believing that this man was as free as I to choose his course and order his life, knowing nothing of his wife, I yielded to his pleadings. I thought it was a noble and splendid opportunity vouchsafed me, and, in a measure, vouchsafed him to show the world that we did really believe what we said. Had I believed in God then, I should have said his meeting with me, his conversion to my theories, his passion for me, his willingness to abide by my decision, were providential. I was glad to consecrate my life to the truth, with his aid to take the final step in attestation of my belief, to convince the world that one woman at least had the courage of her convictions. It was a mistake, a frightful mistake, an irreparable mistake, for which I suppose that I must suffer to the end of time.”

“No,” cried Langford, “I am here to repair the blunder.”

“There is no power on earth,” said the woman passionately, “that can put me where I was; that can give me back that I have lost.”

“Kate, Kate,” cried Langford, “you don’t understand!”

“I understand too well. Why continue the sorry story? Mr. Whittaker, and you that are men beyond, that have wives and children and sweethearts, that have been taught to love God, to believe in Him, and to observe His laws, that have submitted yourselves gladly to the conventions of society or if any there be among you who have outraged these and gone against them, taken the law into your own hands you will understand sooner or later what came to me. I discovered that there was nothing high or holy in this man’s regard for me; that he had persuaded himself that he believed what I taught simply to get possession of me. I awoke to a dreadful realization, alone with him on that yacht. He was not kind to me. He acted according to his lights.”

“I will confess it,” said Langford. “I was a brute to her. I drank; I acknowledged that I had a wife; I said she was in my power; I called her vile names.”

There was a low growl, a muttered roar from the men behind Whittaker. Even Langford’s own men, in his own pay, shrank back from him. The man was frightfully pale, yet he went on resolutely, Whittaker stilling the tumult with upraised hand.

“No one,” he cried, “can think more hatefully of a human being than I think of myself now. I have not learned her philosophy; I have learned an other and a better. In some sort of a way at least I know that I can never be happy until I have made her happy. I know that I love her now as I should have loved her then; that I have hunted these seas for her without ceasing since she left me in a drunken stupor one night.”

“Left you how?” asked the lieutenant-commander.

“I am not quite clear. I must have descended very low,” said Langford. “I remember some sort of a scene at supper, and when I woke in the morning, or I didn’t wake for six months they found me in the morning with a fractured skull on the cabin floor and they took me back to the United States. It was a year or more before I could begin the search for her.”

“He said things to me that night,” said the woman, “that no woman could endure or forgive. He came toward me. I threw him from me with such force and violence — I am a strong woman — that he lay senseless in the cabin. The motor launch had been got overboard for a trial and was trailing astern. I got in

it, drifted away, started the motor and ran it until the gasoline was gone. I brought food and water from the cabin table. I lived a week alone in the boat, bearing southward all the time by means of a sail which I improvised from a boat cloak. One night there was a storm. At the height of it I was thrown upon this island. The..."

"I hoped," said Langford, taking up the tale, "that that might be the case, and with that end in view I have searched the Pacific. I have landed upon many uncharted islands. I have explored others little, if ever, visited, praying to God that she might be alive, that I might find her and make reparation, and now I have found her at last when I had given up all hope, abandoned all expectation. And I stand here confessing my fault before men, ready to do anything and everything that a man can do to make amends for the past."

"But you have a wife," said Whittaker coldly.

"No, she's dead these two years, thank God. I never loved her. It was a boyish infatuation with a designing adventuress who wanted a hold upon my father's money. I am free, free to make her my wife. I ask her, I beg her, to take me, to give me a chance to show that I feel what I have done, to devote my life to expiation."

He stopped, wiped the moisture from his fore head, stood for a moment in the silence that followed his words, his face downcast. Then he lifted it, haggard, worn, sad, the humiliation of the last few moments having entered deeply into his soul.

"Kate," he said softly, "your answer!"



## Chapter XVII

“Miss Brenton,” said Whittaker with the deepest gravity he could infuse in voice and manner, “you have been a most unfortunate, a most unhappy woman. Allow me to assure you of my sincerest commiseration, my deepest respect, my most profound admiration. You have suffered, but innocently. If I may speak the voice of society, if I may stand for the world, as your companion has said, I can only express my reverence for you and my homage to you in this way.”

He stepped nearer to her, he seized her hand. He was an old-fashioned, humble-minded, quixotic sort of a sailor, if you will, for before anybody realized what he was about, he bent his head low over it and kissed it. And the sailors behind him and the marines in rank broke into a hearty cheer.

“There, madam,” said Whittaker, “you have the approbation of society for my act. As for you, sir,” he turned toward Langford, “I should be untrue to my manhood if I did not say what you yourself have said; that you acted not only like a brute and a coward, but, sir, when I look at the lady, I am constrained to add like a fool.”

Langford started forward, but the lieutenant-commander checked him.

“Having said all that, I must admit that you have conducted yourself since that time as a man of honor and as a gentleman. I have no doubt but that your offer will be accepted; that the world will forgive you as it will admire and respect your wife.”

“No!” cried the man of the island suddenly.

He had kept silence, resolved to hear it all out without interruption. He had suffered, as the miserable story had been unfolded, to such an extent that all that he had gone through before seemed like child’s play. He had heard Langford’s noble confession, his generous offer to repair his wrong, but without the appreciation of it which the circumstances and its intrinsic quality might have evoked. He had heard the woman’s defense, her splendid justification of her course, the bitter repentance that had followed it, but without that appreciation of what justification there was for her and the value of her remorse which the account should have brought to him. He had observed Whittaker’s prompt and

touching expression of confidence and reverence, but without understanding its force and power. Indeed, he had instinctive shrewdness enough to realize that even though the sailors, touched by the act of gallantry and moved with pity for the young woman who stood there lovely in her misery, had cheered, yet the world would be very slow to the same expression. He saw that the woman was face to face with a crisis; that she would either have to accept or decline Langford's offer to marry her at once.

His heart was filled with bitter rage. He knew that he loved the woman; that he never would love any person but the woman, but nevertheless the resentment against fate, which had placed him in so awful a position, of whose malign purposes he had been the blind, ignorant victim, was so great that for the time being his love was in abeyance. He pitied himself, he loathed Langford, he was contemptuously indifferent to the world, and for the moment he almost hated the woman. The subconsciousness that possessed him that these feelings were as ungrateful as they were unwarranted increased his wretchedness and misery.

He had the passions of the savage and the civilized man at the same moment. He worshiped her, but he could have killed her then and there. In his blind fury he could have killed them all. He could have wished that the earth might open and swallow him and all who stood upon it. Like Samson, he could have pulled the pillars down upon the company, though he brought the rocks of doom upon his own head, and, like Samson, he was blind, blind with passion, blind with unreasoning resentment, caught in a net, striking out violently on every side, cutting a strand here and there, but feeling generally like one who beats the air and knows not upon what he strikes. He could keep silence no longer.

"No," he cried, "before any answer is made, let me speak!"

"Your pardon," said Whittaker, "may I ask who and what you are?"

He spoke with a tone of authority that could not be gainsaid. Indeed, he largely represented law and order on this strange island. The power of the United States was back of him; over his head particularly flew the flag. In a certain sense this was taking the shape of a judicial inquiry and it behooved him to be accurately informed ere he presumed to pass judgment, to express a comment, or to decide upon a course of action.

"Sir," returned the man, "as to who I am and what I am, I do not know, nor does

it greatly matter.”

“Your pardon again,” returned the lieutenant-commander coolly, “but it matters very much. Unless you have some right to interfere, I do not concede that any suggestion from you in this crisis, which seems to concern these two people, this lady and this gentleman, is at all in order.”

“But it does concern me,” returned the man, impatient of this checking, “for I love this woman myself, and she has done me the honor to say that she loved me. I had intended to make her my wife should Providence ever bring us to civilization again.”

“Had intended!” exclaimed the woman under her breath, but no one noticed her words, for the lieutenant-commander spoke again.

“That being the case, some information as to who you are and how you came here is the more evidently in order.”

“I can answer that,” said the woman. “When I landed on this island, I found this man here. He had been here a long time. I believe he had been cast away here as a child and had grown up alone. He had no speech or language. He had no memory of the past. His mind was a blank. I was glad to find him here. He gave me occupation, companionship. I had been well educated. I determined to teach him. I knew that his ignorance was the result of his environment. I believed him to be naturally acute. I found my beliefs warranted. I taught him all that I could of life and letters from memory. For three years my sole and only occupation has been to teach him what I knew. No preceptor ever had apter or more docile pupil.”

“No learner ever sat at the feet of such a teacher,” cried the man, touched by the recollection. “Think, men, all that I knew was a childish babble of prayer which had remained in my memory. I was ignorant of everything, even that I myself existed; that there was any difference between me and the palm tree or yonder bird; that man was made in the image of his God; that there was such a thing as a woman upon earth. I had no ideas of honor, or honesty, or purity, or sweetness, or truth, or life, or God, until she taught me. I believed in her as I believed in God, and I loved her as I love sunlight and fresh air and the sweet wind. I loved her, as I learned to love, under her teaching, goodness and truth and every virtue. And to think, to think, to think” — he threw up his hand in a wild gesture “that it

has come to this.”

“And he taught me something, Mr. Whittaker,” said the woman. “He gave me back my faith in manhood, which you” — she swept Langford in a bitter glance — “had destroyed. He gave me back, I think, my faith in God. He taught me many things. And when two days ago an earthquake buried me within the cave I call my home and he tore the rocks asunder and freed me and caught me in his arms, I knew that he had taught me what love was, and as he has confessed before you all that he loved me, that he did love me, I will confess the same, and say that I at least have not changed in this hour.”

“Kate, Kate!” cried Langford, “for God’s sake, think what you say and do!”

“Sir,” said Whittaker, turning to the man of the island, “you are a very fortunate man.”

“Of all on earth,” was the bitter answer, “I cannot think there are any more miserable than I.”

“Did you learn nothing of his past, Miss Brenton?” asked Whittaker uncomfortably, unable to answer this strange yet natural assertion. “Could the man remember nothing?”

“I learned a great deal,” returned the woman. “In the cave which he had made his home and which he has since yielded up to me...”

“Where is this cave?”

“On the other side of the island. You shall see it presently. I found a Bible. There was a date in it some thirty years back, and a name in it.”

“What was the name?”

“John Revell Charnock.”

“Of Virginia?” asked Whittaker eagerly.

“I think so, although there was nothing but the name and the date in the Bible.”

“I know the Charnocks in Virginia. They came from Nansemond County.”

“It is a further confirmation,” said the woman. “With the Bible there was a little silver box containing a flint and steel by means of which,” she turned to Langford “we lighted that beacon which brought you here this morning.”

“It was my own eye caught the signal,” answered Langford.

“Would God I had died ere I gave it up to her!” interposed the man.

“I insisted upon it. So soon as I realized this man loved me, I told him I had a story to tell. I knew it would bring sadness to his heart. I wanted him to hear the voice of the world in comment upon my relation, and I knew he would find it on yonder ship.”

“I was happy,” said the man, “to go on as we were. I should not have lighted that fire.”

“Pray continue with your story, Miss Brenton,” said the lieutenant-commander. “I am deeply interested in it. There is a great Charnock estate in Virginia which has been held in trust for twenty-five years or more by the last survivor of the ancient family. And I remember some romantic story connected with it, too.”

“The silver box that enclosed the flint and steel,” continued the woman, “was marked J.R.C. Exploring the island I came upon the remains of a boat buried in the sand. It lies off yonder and any of you may examine it. Near the boat in yonder coppice there were two skeletons, one of a woman and the other of a dog. I excavated the boat, found that it had belonged to the ship Nansemond of Virginia. I have the stern-piece with the name painted on it in my cave. I put the skeletons of the dog and the woman in the boat and filled it up again with sand. There they lie waiting Christian burial. The place where they had died, the woman and her dog, I carefully inspected. Everything but metal, and most of that, had rusted away, but I found two rings.” She stretched forth her hand. “They are here.” She stripped them off. “One of them is a wedding ring. You see it is marked.” She read the markings off, “‘J.R.C. to M.P.T., September 10, 1869, II Cor. xii-15.’ The verse of Scripture to which reference is made is, I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. There was a piece of silver also, which had evidently been part a dog collar. It, too, was marked: John Revell Charnock — His Dog, July 22, 1865. And that is all.”

“Do you remember nothing of your early life, nothing whatever, sir?” asked

Whittaker, turning to the man.

“I have a dim recollection of some sort of a sea happening, of a long voyage with a woman and some kind of an animal in an open boat, of horrible sufferings, of a few words of prayer; that is all.”

“I think that this man, then a child,” resumed the woman, “and his mother must in some way have been involved in a shipwreck, and that she and her son and a dog must have been cast away on this island; that the woman died and the child survived. There is nothing here that would in any way harm him, and his life and growth under such circumstances and conditions are quite possible. He had probably seen his mother read that Bible. He carried it with him, put it in that cave and forgot it with the flint and steel in the silver box of which he would have no knowledge and which he could not use. The dog probably lived some time and when he died crawled back to where his mistress lay and gave up his life at her feet. And therefore I believe this man’s name to be John Revell Charnock; that he is an American and that he came from Virginia. I know him to be a Christian and a gentleman. In all the days that we have been together on this island, he has done me no wrong. He has been gentleness, kindness, docility itself, and despite ourselves we have learned to love each other. Until yesterday we did not know it. Now it is for him to say what we shall do.”

“Kate, Kate,” cried Langford, “you cannot let this untutored savage...”

“Not that,” said the woman, “for I have taught him all I know and all I believe.”

“You cannot let him decide this question,” continued the man, passing over her interruptions.

“Yes,” said the woman, “he must decide, but whatever he decides, whatever the relationship between this man and this woman is to be, I can never be anything on earth to you.”

“Don’t say that,” said Whittaker. “Think, my dear lady, what you do, what this man offers you, the position in which God forgive me! you stand.”

“Sir,” said the woman, addressing the lieutenant-commander, “this man wronged me grievously, terribly. He deceived me. He broke my heart. He killed ambition, aspiration, and respect for my own kind within my soul. I know him through and through. The fact that he failed quickened his passion; the fact that men say I am

beautiful made him the more eager; the fact that he was away and that he could not lay his hands upon me made him the more insistent; the fact that I had flaunted him and said him nay and struck him down made him the more determined.”

“Kate, Kate, you wrong me. Before God you wrong me!” interrupted Langford.

“And indeed, Madam, I believe you do,” commented Whittaker.

“Let her speak on,” said the man of the island.

“It may be that you are right,” continued the woman. “It may be that he is higher, nobler, truer than I have fancied. I should be glad to be able to think so. I am willing to take your view of it, his assertion of it, but I do not love h[i]m. Should I marry him, I would bring to him a heart, a soul, a body that turn to someone else. He could never be anything to me. As I am a Christian woman, a lover of my God and a follower of His Son, I cannot see but that I would be adding one wrong to another to come to this man in compliance with any suggestion of the world, following any dictate of society, subservient to any convention. I cannot see but that I would be doing as great a wrong in obeying as I did before in flaunting all of these forces. I have learned what love is and what marriage should be. I will not give my hand and yield my person where I cannot yield my heart. And there is no expiation or reparation that require it of me, no voice that can coerce me into it. I will not marry you, Valentine Langford. I will accept your expression as evidenced by your words, by your presence here, as testimony to your regret. Indeed, I realize that your confession was itself a great humiliation to a man like you. And perhaps I have spoken harshly of it. But the bare fact remains, I do not love you, I could not love you, I don’t even want to love you. My heart, my soul, goes to this man,” she turned to her companion of the island, “whom up to to-day I have made and fashioned and taught and trained until these hours when he has broken away from me. I love this man who stands silent, who thinks of me as a thing spotted, polluted, damned. Him I love; though he slay me, yet will I love him. Him I trust; though he disbelieve me, yet will I love him. Him I serve; though he cast me off, yet will I love him. And with this in my heart in which I glory and which I confess as openly and with as little hesitation as you confessed your shame, I give you my final, absolute, utterly irrevocable decision. I will not marry you, I will not go back with you. No, not for anything that you can proffer, not for any reason that you can urge, will I come to you when in my soul I belong to an other. There may be no end to this

but my despair. This man may cast me off. This man may trample me under foot. The spots upon my soul may loom large in his view and hide what else is there. I know that I have been forgiven by God. I may not be forgiven by men, but I tell you here and now, again and again, that I will not be your wife. I will be his wife or no man's wife."

Langford turned away and hid his face in his hands. Whittaker stepped forward and laid his hand upon the shoulder of the man of the island. He shook him for a moment.

"You stand immobile," he cried sharply, "after such a confession as that, after such an appeal? What have you to say, man? You ought to get down on your knees and thank God for the love of such a woman."

"Aye, aye," burst out the deep-toned voice of the old coxswain of the cutter. "So say all of us."

"God help me," cried the man, lifting his hand and releasing his shoulder from the grasp of the officer, "I did love this woman. Think how it was, think how I believed in her. No Christian ever believed in his God as I believed in her. She told me what purity was, what innocence was, what sweetness was, what light was, what truth was, and I looked at her and saw them."

"And you can look at her and see them now," cried the officer.

"No," said the man, "I can never look at her and see her the same."

"Oh, Man, Man!" cried the woman.

The test was upon him. He was failing. Her sorrow, her grief, were more for him than for herself.

"Don't mistake me," said the man, "I can't help loving you whatever you are. If you had been as guilty as when he began to speak, and when you corroborated him I fancied that you were. I should have loved you just the same and I should have married you, and I shall marry you. This... this awful thing has come between us, but we will try in some way to live it down, to forget it, to go on as we were."

He stepped toward the woman.



She drew herself up to her full height and looked him unflinchingly in the face.

“No,” she said, “we are not going on as we thought. We will not marry and live together. We will not bury this wretched happening in the past in any oblivion. I will marry no man, although he may have my whole heart, who is not proud and glad to take me, who does not realize that I am as pure and as innocent of wrong and shame as he would fain think his mother, as he would absolutely know his wife must be. I told you that your manhood must be put to the test. I told you that your love must be tried by fire. What I loved in you was the assurance that you would survive the test, that you would triumph in the trial. It is not I that have been before the Great Judge this morning, but you, and you have failed.”

“Kate,” said Langford, “he casts you off, take me. I swear to you that were I in his place, I would not have hesitated a moment.”

“I respect you more than ever,” said the woman, “but I don’t love you and I cannot, I will not take you!”

“Charnock,” said Whittaker, “if that’s your name, permit me to say here, saving the lady’s presence, that you are behaving like a damned fool.”

The man looked at him dumbly, uncomprehendingly, and made no reply. It was the woman who spoke, coldly, impartially. She had seemingly dismissed the whole affair, though at what a cost to herself no one could know.

“Sir,” she said, “is there anyone on your ship empowered to administer an oath?”

“I have that power,” answered the lieutenant-commander. “Why do you ask?”

“I wish you would bring some of your officers here with paper and ink. I wish to make a deposition as to the facts that I have learned concerning this man which may be of service to him in establishing his identity and discovering his history when he returns to the United States.”

“But are you not going back with us, Miss Brenton?” asked the officer in amazement. “We are sailing for Honolulu and thence for San Francisco as directly as we can go.”

“No,” said the girl, “I will not leave the island. You can take my friend here.”

“The Southern Cross,” said Langford, “is at your disposal, Kate.”

“I have had one voyage upon her,” said the woman bitterly, “I want never to see her again.”

“Woman,” said the man of the island suddenly, “if you stay here, I stay here. Without you, I will not go.”

“Not so,” said the woman scornfully; “I would not be upon the same island alone with you again. You have failed me.”

Her voice broke, but she caught it again instantly and resumed her iron self-control.

Then if one of us must stay, it shall be I.”

“No,” said the woman, “I have been in the world and you have not. You may go and learn what it holds for you. I have tried to prepare you, to give you lessons. Now, you may put them in practice.”

“The island is mine,” said the man. “I was here when you came. I shall be here when you return.”

“We shall see,” returned the woman, looking boldly at him. The clash of wills almost struck fire within the eyes of the two who thus crossed swords.

“Meanwhile,” she turned to Langford, “if you will leave the island and go back to your ship, I shall be very glad. There is nothing you can do here. You have nothing to gain by remaining.”

“Kate,” he cried, “one last appeal.”

“It is as unavailing as the first.”

She looked at him steadily. He saw that within her face and bearing which convinced him that what she said was true.

“At least,” he said with the dignity of sorrow and disappointment, “if I have played the fool, I have done my best to play the man.”

He turned slowly away. In a step the woman was by his side.

“You have,” she said. “Whoever else has failed me in this hour, it has not been you. I am sorry that I do not love you, that I never did love you, and that I cannot love you.” She extended her hand to him. “Good-by.”

“Good-by,” he said; “if you think of me, remember that I did my best to make amends, and if you ever change...”

“I shall not change,” said the woman. “Good-by.”

He moved off down the strand, called his sailors to him, got into his boat, shoved off and was rowed over the blue lagoon and through the opening in the barrier toward the yacht tossing slowly upon the long swells of the Pacific.

“As for you, sir,” said the woman after she had watched Langford a little while in silence, “will you go back and bring some officers ashore to hear my story?”

“At your wish, Miss Brenton,” said the lieutenant-commander gravely.

The woman turned to her companion.

“Will you go with them?”

“And leave you here alone?” cried the man.

“I shall be here when you come back, I give you my word upon it. I do not break my word. You know whatever else you may have against me, I have always told you the truth. If you will remember, I said but yesterday that I was not worthy of you.”

She smiled bitterly.

“And in that, madam,” said Whittaker, “give me leave to say that you broke your record for veracity.”

“‘Tis good of you to say so,” she returned. “Believe me, I have taken more comfort from your words and actions in this dreadful hour than I had dreamed it possible for men to give. Now, if you will all go away and leave me and not come back until evening, I shall be so glad and so thankful.”

“Come, sir,” said the lieutenant-commander, not unkindly, touching the man

upon the shoulder, “as a gentleman you cannot do less than accede to the lady’s request.”

Suffering himself thus to be persuaded, the man followed the officer into the boat in which the whole party embarked and was rowed away from the island. His first touch with the world had separated him from the woman he loved and who loved him. Nay, his own frightful folly, his own blindness, his own criminal and heartless decision had done that. And the world upon which humanity loves to load the blame of its transgressions and with which it would fain share the consequences of its own follies, had nothing whatever to do with it. In fact, it was because he was so ignorant of the world, so utterly unable to see things in their relative values and in relation we ascertain truth that he had taken the tone that he had used and entered upon the course which he had followed.

He could only see one thing, that this woman whom he supposed belonged as completely and entirely and absolutely to him, who was as fresh and unspotted from the world as he was, who had been his own even as he had belonged entirely and utterly and absolutely to her, was... different! That the difference was more in his own imagination than anywhere else brought him no comfort. He still loved her, he still wanted to marry her, but he loved her in spite of her shame. A greater, a wiser man would have loved her because of it. And some day this fact, which he himself was inherently large enough to realize, or would be after a time, would cause him a grief so great that the anguish that he suffered now would be nothing.

Whittaker was a man of great tact and shrewdness and one with a wide knowledge of the world. He realized something of what was in the man’s mind. He saw in some measure how the situation presented itself to him, and he felt a deep kindness and pity toward his unhappy fellow passenger.

## Chapter XVIII

The best thing on earth for a man in the islander's position would have been isolation and a chance to think it over. The worst thing on earth for a woman in the islander's position was isolation and a chance to think it over. If the man had been enabled by lack of outside interests to give free rein to his thoughts and let them draw him whither they would, he might have arrived at a different view point whence he could have enjoyed a sight of the affair in all its bearings and could have adjusted himself to them, but the opportunity he needed he did not get. He was immediately plunged in an atmosphere of such strangeness to him, filled with such compelling necessity for attention, that although he loathed the necessity thus imposed upon him, he was constrained to take part in the life that flowed around him. His instinct — and he was almost a woman in his instinctive capacity — was to be alone, but it was impossible, and in spite of himself, what he saw distracted him. The people that he met did more. Whittaker hustled him below, of course, as soon as possible and took him into his own cabin.

Fortunately they were men of much the same height and build, although the islander was the more graceful, symmetric, and strong, and he succeeded in getting him into a civilian suit of clothing for which he had no present use. There was both loss and gain in his appearance. There was no gain in the islander's feelings, at least he thought not, in view of the irk some restraint of clothing, and yet there was a certain satisfaction to his soul in being no longer singled out from among his fellows by the strangeness of his apparel. As clothes the garments became him, and it all depended upon your point of view as to whether you preferred the handsome barbarian with a hint of civilization in his carriage, or the civilized gentleman with a suggestion of the barbaric in his bearing. Whittaker reasoned rightly that the sooner he became accustomed to these things, the better, and that the time to begin was immediately.

He had had a hasty word or two with the captain before he took him below, and when he was dressed and it required much assistance from the lieutenant-commander ere the unfamiliar habiliments were properly adjusted the two passed from the ward room to the cabin of the captain in the after part of the ship.

The few sentences in which Whittaker had made his first brief report to his superior had in a measure prepared the captain for the more lengthy discourse

that followed, and feeling that the situation was one which required more than the simple authority of the master of a ship, he had summoned to conference the surgeon and the chaplain. It was to these three men, therefore, that Whittaker and the islander presented themselves.

The chaplain, like Whittaker, was a Virginian. He had not noted the islander's face when he came aboard in his semi-savage garb, but as his eye dwelt upon him standing clothed and in his right mind before him, he gave a start of surprise, and so soon as the formal salutations had been exchanged, with a word to the captain for permission, he asked Whittaker a question.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Whittaker, but what is this gentleman's name?"

The word gentleman was used naturally and unconsciously, with an absolute sense of its fitness, as everyone in the cabin could perceive.

"It is not definitely known," said Whittaker, "but he is believed to be a Virginian of the..."

"I knew it," said the chaplain impulsively, "he is one of the Charnocks of Nansemond County."

"Your recognition, chaplain," said the lieutenant-commander eagerly, "will be of great value in determining this stranger's name and station. The evidence of it is all circumstantial. I do not know how it will be regarded in a court of law."

"I have always understood that the Charnock estate was a vast one," said Captain Ashby, "and since coal has been mined on the Virginian lands, it has become very valuable."

"It is true," answered the chaplain.

"Who holds it now?" asked the surgeon.

"It is held by an old man, my friend of many years standing, the brother of John Revell Charnock."

"I believe that to be my name," said the islander.

"I have little doubt of it," replied the chaplain, continuing. "The first John Revell

Charnock was lost at sea. He and his wife and young child some thirty years ago set forth on a voyage around the world for her health. The ship, in which I believe he had some ownership, was called the Nansemond. Its course was traced as far as Valparaiso, thence it sailed for the Philippines and was never heard of again. I know the story," said the chaplain, turning toward the captain, "because John Revell Charnock was one of my best friends, as is his brother, Philip Norton Charnock, who now holds the estate."

"Is the present Charnock married?"

"No," returned the chaplain, "he is an old bachelor."

That will make it easier for our friend here," said Mr. Whittaker, "provided the evidence is thought convincing."

The best evidence that he could present," returned the chaplain, "is in his face. He is the living image of his father as I knew him, and he has family characteristics which I think would enable almost anyone to identify him without question."

"Sir," said the islander, addressing the chaplain, "did you know my mother?"

"That I did," returned the old man. "Her name was Mary Page Thorton, and she was one of the sweetest girls in Virginia."

"And will you tell me about her and about my father and my people?"

"With the greatest pleasure," said the chaplain kindly. "Meanwhile Captain Ashby and these gentlemen will wish to hear your story."

"Take him to your cabin," said the captain promptly, "and tell him the things he wants to know. We can wait."

"No," returned the islander, "I can wait. I have waited all these years, and a few hours more or less will make little difference. You have a right to know my story, and here it is."

Rapidly, concisely, with a fine dramatic touch, he told the story as he knew it of his life on the island. He was so entirely unconventional that he interwove the bare details of the strange relation which he gave them with personal touches. He

made no secret of his love and worship for the girl, of the belief in her which he had cherished, of the reverence in which he had held her. He exhibited that strange commixture of feeling with which he regarded her as a human woman and as a demi-goddess. He showed that he was at once her master and her creature, yet through it all there ran such a thread of bitterness, of grief, of resentment, of shame, that his auditors, at first unpossessed of the key to his feelings, listened to him with amazement and could scarce realize or comprehend. He told the story of the two lives up to the sighting of the ship upon the island, and then, his heart failing him, he turned to Whittaker and bade him take up the relation.

It was a delicate matter of which to speak, but the simplicity with which the first part of the tale had been presented gave the officer his clew. He was a man of retentive memory, of quick apprehensive power, and with a nice sense of discrimination, a rare man indeed. And he told the rest of the tale with a subtle sympathy for the situation and the actors that enabled him so to present it to the interested little group of officers that he almost made them see it as it transpired.

“And what,” asked the captain when the final word had been said, “do you propose to do now, Mr. Charnock?”

It was the first time that he had been so addressed, and the man started. He had heard Mr. Whittaker's words as one in a dream. He had been going over that dreadful scene on the sands. His heart was lacerated and torn again. He was blind to everything but the past. He saw her face dimly in the present. He could see nothing of happiness in the future.

“I don't know,” he answered.

“But surely this has not made any difference in your feelings?”

“I can't tell. The difference is in her, not in me.”

“She made a frightful mistake,” said the captain impressively, “but she has nobly atoned, and...”

“She's not what I thought she was,” said the man, “and if I love her, I love her now not because, but in spite, of what she is, and there is a difference.”

“Miss Brenton,” interposed Whittaker, at this juncture, “has settled the matter



herself. She says that she will have no man's pity, no man's contempt, that no man shall marry her on sufferance, and that ..."

"Right," said the surgeon, who was a man of very few words and generally good ones.

"My young friend," broke in the chaplain, "if I might advise..."

"But this," returned the islander with fierceness, "is not a matter for advice. I don't know the world or its customs. I must appear strange to you men. But I take it that a man's choice of a wife, a man's settlement of his future, is not a thing that he brooks counsel over. At any rate, I want none of it."

"Come with me," said the chaplain, "we will talk it over. I have lived in the world," he went on gently. "Perhaps I can help you. Have we your permission to withdraw, Captain Ashby?"

"Certainly," said the captain.

"Pardon me a moment, chaplain," interposed Whittaker, "but the young lady has asked that some of us go ashore to take her deposition as to the matters that have been alleged concerning our friend here. Captain Ashby, will you?"

"Certainly, Mr. Whittaker, I will go. And if you will accompany me, doctor, and you, chaplain, I shall be glad. Mr. Whittaker, you are a notary public and can administer the necessary oaths."

"Very good, sir," returned Mr. Whittaker as the other gentlemen mentioned bowed their acquiescence; "the lady said she would like to be undisturbed until evening."

"At two bells in the first dog watch then have the cutter called away," returned the captain.

"Beg pardon, captain," said the surgeon, "but do you or any of you know this lady to be Miss Brenton?"

"No," said the captain, "I don't know her. Do you, Mr. Whittaker, or you, chaplain?"

“Well then,” said the surgeon as both the officers shock their heads, “it will be necessary to have some one ashore who does know her in order to swear to her identity to make her deposition worth anything.”

“There is Langford,” said Whittaker, “he knows her.”

“Very good,” said the captain, “send a boat over to the yacht and present my compliments to Mr. Langford. Ask him if he will meet us ashore at quarter after five o clock. Say to him also that I should be glad to have him dine with me to-night at seven. Chaplain, will you and Mr. Charnock take luncheon with me later?”

Now, to go back to the island. The woman stood on the strand proudly, resolutely, sternly erect with out a sign of unbending until the boats reached the sides of the two ships. Even then she kept herself in the bonds of a control of steel. She turned slowly, walked up the beach, entered the grove of palms, mechanically found the path and plodded along it, still erect and unbending, until the windings of the trail and the thickening of the grove hid her from any chance watchers on the ship.

Then came the moment of yielding. As if the tension had been suddenly released, she reeled, staggered, her heart almost stopped. Her instinct was to throw herself prone upon the grass, but she recovered herself in time, and with the natural inclination of the troubled toward the place, however rude and humble it may be, that is called home, she summoned her strength and dragged herself on through the trees over the hill whence a backward glance would have given her a sight of the ships, but she never took it — down the other slope across the beach and to the cave which had been her haven for these three years.

Then and not until then did she give way completely. She threw herself down upon the sand in the cool shadow of the great rocks in what to her had suddenly become a weary land, and outstretched her arms as if to clasp the earth to her breast in default of the man she had dreamed of and trusted, she had loved and lived for, and lay there a silent, shuddering, wretched figure.

She was conscious, never more so, of her own entire innocence, of her own purity of soul. Into her heart had entered nothing that had defiled her, and out of it nothing of that ilk had come. And yet there was a soiling bodily consciousness in her mind. The terrible interviews of the morning had brought it all back. Her

fingers clenched and unclenched.

Langford had craved opportunity for expiation. He had offered amends. She could not but believe that his heart was in his words. But what amends could there be? What expiation could he offer? Not all the waters of the blue Pacific could wash out the damned spots that loomed so black and so huge before the eyes of the one man in whose vision she would fain be sweet and pure and innocent.

She had thought bitterly in times gone past, when she had realized her situation, of the voice of the world. She had insisted that he should not think of any future relationship to her until he had heard the voice of the world. She had believed that the world's voice would condemn her; that the world would disbelieve her; that the world would see no possibility of sweetness and light in her; that its mockery and its scorn would be hurled upon her; that its cry would be "Away with her!"

But she had believed that he would be different; that he would see that she had been sinned against rather than sinning; that she had been led astray by a false philosophy for which in large measure her training and heredity had been responsible; that the step she had taken involved no moral turpitude and carried no evil consequences. She had made him, God and she together. In him she believed. She had spoken of a test, but in a last analysis she would have taken him without the test, confident in his love and in his acquittal of her if her cause should ever be pleaded before the bar of his judgment.

He and the world, the one to sustain her, the other to despise her; this she had expected, and in both instances she had been grievously mistaken. If Whittaker and his men represented the voice of the world and there was no reason why she should believe that they did not the world would withhold denunciation; it would extend pity. Pity was not particularly agreeable to a proud woman such as she was, but at least it was not bitter censure and scorn, which was, after all, what she had received from the man in whom she trusted.

She did not make any allowance for the man at that moment. It might have been thought strange that she had developed such a deep, pervading passion for him. She had loved not merely his actualities but his potentialities, which with prescient eye she had divined. She knew, or thought she knew, of what this man was capable. And now in the first moment of trial he had shown himself

unworthy. It is true he still wanted to marry her; he was still willing to do so. But she had refused Langford's offer, which ninety-nine women in a hundred in her position would have jumped at, because she would not give a man her hand where her heart did not go; she could not, as she had said, see that that which she would regard as crime could make anything else that had transpired right. Neither would she accept anything from her island companion which did not carry his whole heart. She would be nothing to the one man unless she loved him, and the other man should be nothing to her unless she seemed to him the supremest thing in this world.

She had had many hours to herself in that long island sojourn, and the sweetest thought that had come to her had been the relationship in which she stood to this man. She had gloried in the position in which he had placed her. She had stood at ease and happy on the pedestal upon which he had enthroned her. And now to be toppled over, to be thrown at his feet as it were, to receive the charity of his condescension rather than the uprush of his adoration — she could not endure it.

Her crushing disappointment at his failure to rise to the measure of her ideal of him, the total end of her dream of happiness, the breaking of all her hopes, the closing of all her ambitions, the tearing asunder of her heartstrings, whelmed her in agony. She had thought that never could humanity experience more than the pain superinduced by the horror of her position upon the ship, but that pain to the present was like a caress. For to all that old horror was added a new sense of loss, of disappointment and despair. She had not loved before; now she did, and the sorrow and anguish were measured by the depth and power of her passion. The period on the yacht had been an episode. This was life, eternal life or death, she thought. And it shows the power of the episode that it had colored and would color — was it darkly? — all the future.

That Christian philosophy which she had fondly believed she had acquired and in which — O fatal error! — she had somehow taken pride, fell from her like every other quality, good or bad, that is developed alone. It had lacked exercise. She, too, had submitted to no tests since she had come to the island. She had surmounted no temptations. She had fought no battles. She had not become a veteran by conquest. She had not perfected her offensive and defensive weapons by a series of smaller conflicts which would give her confidence and courage to fight the great and final battle. Like Elijah of old, dismayed, disheartened, broken, she prayed that she might die, there on the sands.

## Chapter XIX

At five o'clock a boat put off from the big white cruiser, conveying the islander, the captain, the other officers, and Langford to the shore. The woman met them on the sand. She had discarded her woven tunic and was dressed in the faded blue blouse and skirt she had worn when she had left the yacht and which she had ever since preserved with such scrupulous care for an emergency like this. Well was it for her that the garments were loose and easy fitting, else she could not have put them on, so splendidly had she developed in waist and chest and limb. She wore stockings and shoes, and, save for a certain natural elegance and freedom in her bearing, she looked much as any other woman, except that few women were so beautiful as she.

The man was greatly surprised. He had never seen her in this dress with any conscious recollection of the fact. She had had wit enough to perceive that having chosen a costume she must stick to it, and she had never after worn her civilized clothes, never even alluded to them, and as he had never entered her cave after he had begun to understand and notice things, he had not even suspected her of the possession of them. It seemed a different woman, therefore, who met him on the strand, one that he did not know, that he did not understand. Some of the ways of social life which had been discarded had come back to her with her dress.

On her part she was scarcely less surprised than he. She had often imagined what he might look like in garments common to his sex and period, but her imaginings had not prepared her for what she saw. Convention did not ill become him. If she had loved him in the wild and savage dress they had been compelled to assume, she did not love him less when she saw him measured by his fellows in the garments natural and peculiar to them. He towered above all the party except Whittaker, and even the lieutenant-commander was not the man that her lover was, she thought. Her lover?... She wondered.

Her face, always colorless, was paler than ever. Something of the anguish that she had gone through was seen there by the keen eyes of Whittaker at least, and even the others could notice the strong constraint she put upon herself, and the evidences of self-restraint were painfully apparent.

After a momentary hesitation and a glance at the islander, who, after his first

swift comprehending survey of the woman, stood with averted head — she conscious painfully of his every gesture and movement — the lieutenant-commander performed the necessary introductions. This ceremony over, it was the woman who spoke.

“I sent for you, gentlemen,” she began, “in order that a necessary deposition might be made to enable, if possible, my...” she paused and bowed formally toward the islander “this gentleman, to establish his identity, upon which, as I learn from Mr. Whittaker, much seems to depend. I have here...”

“But could you not do this more conveniently later on the ship, Miss Brenton?” interposed the captain. He had been told that she intended to stay on the island, but he could not believe it. “We shall be very glad indeed to offer you passage home. The ship is fitted for a flag, and the admiral’s quarters are yours to command. We are sailing direct to the United States, with a stop at Honolulu, and will be glad to restore you to your friends.”

“Sir,” said the woman, “I have no friends who care enough about me to welcome me or whom I care enough about to wish to see. My mind is made up. I shall stay on the island, at least for the present.”

“But, my dear young lady,” began the officer.

“Captain Ashby,” said the woman, “you are the commander of that ship?”

“I am.”

To you is committed the ordering of her course?”

“Of course.”

You decide all questions connected with her on your own responsibility?”

“I do, certainly, but...”

“Sir, this is my ship, this island. If I choose to stay here, I cannot think you will endeavor to take me hence by force.”

“By no means.”

“Nor have I any more fondness for having my decisions discussed than you would have for hearing your orders argued or questioned.”

“It is my island,” cried the man roughly, “and if you stay, I stay.”

“We lose time,” said the woman shortly. “I am here to give my testimony; are you prepared to take it?”

“I am,” said the lieutenant-commander, stepping forward, note book in hand.

“Captain, will you conduct the necessary inquiry?”

“Certainly,” said the captain. “Mr. Langford, do you identify this lady?”

“I do, sir,” answered Langford. “She is Miss Katharine Brenton of San Francisco.”

You say this of your own personal knowledge?”

“Yes, sir.”

“You will make affidavit to that fact?”

“With pleasure.”

“I wondered,” said the woman bitterly “why you came back.”

“It was at my wish, madam,” returned Captain Ashby formally.

He was not greatly prepossessed with the imperative manner and demeanor of this young woman, but he did not see exactly how he could resent it, or force any improvement in it. “Will you proceed now with your story,” he continued. “Will you speak slowly so that Mr. Whittaker, who does not write shorthand, can take it down?”

Thereupon the woman told that portion of her tale which related to the evidence which she exhibited, the piece of the boat with the name of the ship upon it, the dog collar, the silver box, the Bible, the two rings. These were marked, set down and sworn to. The affidavit to which she subscribed her name and to which she took oath on the very Bible of the island was brief, though comprehensive, and

the little ceremony was soon over. Mr. Whittaker assumed charge of all the exhibits except the Bible, which the woman expressed a desire to retain until the next morning. The tale having been completed and all these formalities being got through with, the men stood around in awkward silence wondering what was next to be done.

“Miss Brenton,” said the captain, at last breaking the pause, “it seems a shame. For God’s sake, reconsider your decision and come off to the ship!”

“No,” returned the woman quietly, “my mind is made up.”

“Katharine,” exclaimed Langford, extending his hand in one final appeal.

“Not with you, either,” said the woman.

“My dear young lady,” began the old chaplain, “think what it is you do. Has any human being with such powers as you possess a right to bury herself in this lonely island? Is there no call...”

“Sir,” the woman interposed, “your plea might move me if anything could, but indeed ‘tis as useless as the rest.”

“Hear mine then,” said the man abruptly, even harshly.

The woman turned and faced him as unrelenting and as determined as she had faced the others. What could he say? There was but one plea that could move her. Was he about to make that?

“We have loved each other,” he went on brokenly. “It was my dearest wish, my most settled determination, to make you my wife if the opportunity ever presented. That wish I still entertain, that determination has not departed from me. You have refused to marry that man...”

“And would you have me do so?” asked the woman.

“No, a thousand times no. I am sorrier every moment that I look at him that I did not kill him. But having refused him, there is nothing now that you can do but marry me. And as you have refused him, it makes it more incumbent upon me to marry you and to take you away. Your honor demands it.



“My honor!” flamed out the woman indignantly.

“I have said it,” returned the man doggedly.

“Gentlemen, you will forgive our frankness,” said the woman, turning to the little group, who waited, all except Langford, who had walked away out of earshot and who resolutely kept his back toward the party, “but this thing has to be settled. Now,” said the woman, “here is no question of honor, but of love. I ask you, Man, do you love me as you did last night?”

“I...” he began falteringly.

You have never told me a lie,” she continued. You have never known anything but the truth.”

“Until I learned from you,” cried the man, “what you had concealed.”

The woman smiled bitterly, waving aside this cruel stab.

“Tell me the truth. Do you love me as you did last night?”

“If you will have it, no,” said the man, rushing to his doom.

Men have taken a bullet in the breast, a shot in the heart, and for a moment have maintained their erect position. The woman knew in that moment how such things could be.

“But I love you still,” said the man. “And I still want you for my wife.”

“Last night,” went on the woman as if in a dream, “I seemed to you the embodiment of every excellence that humanity can possess short of the divine.”

“Yes,” said the man, “I loved you as...”

“Do I still possess those qualities in your eyes?”

He hesitated. He strove to speak.

“The truth! The truth!” whispered the woman. “Nothing else, so help your God!”

“No,” said the man, “but I love you still, and you ought to marry me, you must.

Can't you understand?"

"Listen," said the woman fiercely. "I did not go to that man yonder although he offered me every thing that honor could dictate and that true affection could suggest, I do believe, because I did not love him, although I have since come to respect him after I have thought it over. It is not duty, but love, which is the compelling motive in this matter. And I won't take you, I would not take an angel from heaven unless he thought me in every particular all that a woman should be to a man, unless he loved me with his whole heart and soul absolutely, unfeignedly, completely. You don't. I don't even think that I love you now. You have been tried and tested, and you have failed. Gentlemen, will you take him away?"

"I stay here," said the man bluntly, drawing apart from the others, "and I will kill with my own hands the man who lays finger upon me."

"Sir," said the captain, "this land, I take it, is the United States. As the ranking officer present, I represent its law. It is under my rule. As to your choice, I have nothing to say, but as far as regards other things, you will have to obey me here as any other citizen of our country."

"And I know nothing of the United States or its laws," answered the man proudly, "I am a law unto myself."

The first lesson that the world will teach you, sir," returned the captain pointedly, "is that that position cannot be maintained; that the whole fabric of civilization depends upon concession by individuals of natural rights, and upon the enforcement of these concessions by other individuals to whom has been delegated that power."

"I don't wish to learn it, and that is why I will not leave this island," persisted the man.

It was the woman who intervened. She stepped close to the man and laid her hand upon his arm.

"You said that in some fashion you loved me," she urged.

"In some fashion I do," he replied.

“It grows late. Captain, can your ship lie by the island until morning?”

“If you wish, certainly,” returned the captain.

“Very well. Man, will you then go aboard the ship with these gentlemen and leave me alone here for the night?”

“Alone, madam!” exclaimed the captain.

“Certainly, sir,” returned the woman. “There is not a harmful thing upon the island. You can come back in the morning and we will discuss then what is best to be done. Really, gentlemen,” she went on with a piteous tremble of her lip, for one moment losing her control, “I have been tried beyond the strength of woman to-day. If I can have a quiet rest, if in the morning...”

“That is reasonable,” said the surgeon. “The lady is in no state for this discussion, nor indeed are you, sir,” he continued, looking hard at the man.

“Very well,” said the captain. “Come, Mr. Charnock, you cannot refuse that request; gentlemen. Madam, good-night.”

He turned away, followed by the others. Charnock for the moment hesitated.

“I give you one more chance,” whispered the woman in his ear. “I think myself fit for the wife of any man; do you think so? Do you love me? Do you care for me as you did last night? Can you think of me as all that is sweet and lovely and noble and pure, and worthy of any man’s affection?”

She bent closer toward him in the intensity of her feelings. The words rushed from her. The man passed his hand over his forehead.

“I can only say what I said before, that I do love you still, that I will marry you, and that you ought to be...”

“That is enough,” interrupted the woman. “Good-by.”

She drew instantly apart from him.

“Mr. Charnock,” rang the captain’s voice imperatively.

Slowly the islander turned and made his way to the sea after the others.

The woman thus left alone upon the island was face to face with a crisis which could only be met in two ways. Either she must go away with the man, or they must both remain on the island. It was possible that the captain might be induced to use force to take the man away, but that was not likely, and if it were attempted, she believed, with much foundation for her belief, that the man who had never been coerced by a human being except by her would fight until he died. She could not go away with him; she could not live with him on the island. A future opened before him. She had learned that afternoon on the sand that if his identity could be established, he would be a man of great wealth, a power, a factor in the world's affairs. She had had her experience in life, her taste of power. It did not matter about her. It mattered greatly about him.

She had given him a final chance. He did not love her as she would be loved. He could not love her. It was evident to her that he never would. She had nothing to live for, nothing to hope for, nothing to dream about. There was one way of cutting the Gordian knot; she could die. And yet somehow the instinct of life was strong in her heart.

She crossed the island to her side, where she was hidden from the ship, and went down to the edge of the water. She even slipped off the garments of civilization and stood forth a primitive Eve and waded out a little way into the lagoon. The night had fallen and she was calm in the screen of the darkness. She could easily swim out to the barrier reef, clamber upon it, and then plunge into the blue Pacific and swim on and on, and fight and fight until the last vestige of her strength was gone, and then sink down, leaving him free and settling the question. And yet the waters lapping about her feet retarded her in her advance, held her back, drove her back.

Could she do it? Should she do it? At least she would not give up the idea for want of trying. She resolutely set herself to wade into the deeper sea. That she waded was evidence of her indecision. Under other circumstances, or had she been clear in her mind as to her course, a quick run, a spring, a splash, and she would have been in the midst of the lagoon. She went slowly, and as the water grew deeper, she went more slowly. It was warm and pleasant in the lagoon. The slight difference of temperature between the water and the air ordinarily was only stimulating. And yet the sea had never seemed so cold to her as it was in that hour.

She was young, strong, splendidly dowered with health and bodily vigor. The mere animal clinging to life was intense in her. It does not minimize her heartbreak or her resolution to settle the question that she found it hard to go on. By and by she stopped, the waters now up to her breast. The wind blew gently toward the land and the land waves struck her softly and beat her back. She stopped dead still and thought and thought, wrestling with her problem, full of passionate disappointment, vain regret, despair, conscious that life held nothing for her, and yet clinging to it, unknowing what would be the outcome of the Titanic struggle raging in her breast between primal passions, love of life, and love of man!

## Chapter XX

For the first time in his life, the man of the island played the coward. He was afraid to be alone. The others, the officers of the ship, that is, not Langford — he had gone back to his own yacht, declining the captain's invitation to dinner — would have respected the islander's mood and have left him to himself, but it was evident that he craved their society. Whittaker and the old chaplain suspected how it would be with him, but they knew that sooner or later he would have to retire to rest and sooner or later he would be alone.

Their sympathies were entirely on the woman's side. If the man had been an ordinary, normal man, they would not have tolerated his conduct for an instant, although any interference on the part of strangers would in truth have been a very delicate matter in such an affair of the heart. But they realized instinctively that he could not be judged as other men; that whatever his training and teaching had been, he had not had the advantages that the world would give, which not the most beautiful and devoted of women could impart unaided, and that he was to be pitied rather than condemned and blamed.

And then his grief was so obvious that in accordance with a natural and commendable tendency they strove to cheer him up. They encouraged him to ask questions. They told him many things in reply that the woman could not have told him ; that he had half dimly suspected, but had not known. They cleared up to him many things which had seemed mysteries and strange to him.

And on their part they marveled at the things he did know, at the thoroughness with which he had been taught, and at the wonderful acuteness of perception which he displayed. The woman had marveled at it, too, but she had become used to it in three years of intimacy. They saw it immediately with greater surprise.

In such engrossing conversation the long hours passed until the striking couplets of the bell forward tolled eight and it was midnight. No one had any desire to sleep in view of the unusual and stimulating experience which both parties to the interchange of thought in the play of question and answer were enjoying. But it was the captain, hard-headed and practical, who gave the signal for retiring. The men were not accustomed to disregard even the suggestions of the autocrat of the ship.

A spare cabin in the ward-room had been arranged for the islander, and there, provided with the unwonted luxury of night wear, after a hearty "Good night" from the lieutenant-commander and a fervent "God bless you" from the old chaplain, he was left to his own devices. The strangeness of his situation, the soft bed, the snowy linen, the silk pajamas, the confining walls of the small cabin, the sudden introduction to the luxuries of civilization, would in itself have kept him awake had he been as heart-whole and as care-free as when the woman had landed upon the island. But indeed the strangeness of these things aroused no emotions in his mind at all, for the moment he was alone his thoughts, which he had been fighting desperately to keep upon other things, reverted to her. What was she doing for the first time alone upon that island? What was she thinking? He realized that no more than he could she be sleeping.

These were the first moments that he could give to reflection, the first quiet hours that he could spend in considering the situation and in getting back his rudely disturbed balance. There had been method in his training, and he had been taught the value of considering a series of events logically and in their proper relationships. Lying in the comfortable berth, he reviewed at length and deliberately the history of his life from the day that he had been born, when he first bent over her sleeping upon the sand until that great glad hour when, the earthquake enlightening him, he tore the rocks asunder, clasped her in his arms and pressed the first kiss that he had ever given anyone upon her lips.

Unflinchingly he reviewed with what calmness he could muster the scenes of the morning and the day. He forced himself to consider in all its lights and bearings the information that had been given to him. He tortured himself by the deliberate slow recalling of every detail, and then, quivering as if under the stimulus of some blow upon a raw and open wound, he reviewed his own conduct. Enlightenment came to him in that dark and silent hour. He discovered first of all that he loved her; that the check and counter-check and variation and alteration in his emotions had been swept away in a great development of a more transcending feeling. If she should ask him that question on the morrow as to whether he loved her as he had on that never-to-be-forgotten night, he would still answer no, but now because he loved her more!

And then he discovered that he wanted her more than he had ever desired her before; that she was more necessary to him than ever he had dreamed she would be; that here was no question of honor or duty, indeed, but of love, overwhelming, obsessing. And then he admitted that she was purity, even

holiness itself; that he had behaved to her like a cur; that he had been neither grateful, nor kind, nor tender, nor loving. He began to wonder fearfully if, after having failed so egregiously and terribly, there was any possible chance that she could ever care for him again. Fate had brought her into intimate contact, he realized, with two men. One had treated her outrageously in the beginning and had nobly made amends. He hated Langford, and yet his sense of justice forced him to admit that he had played the man at last, while he, the islander, had also treated her outrageously and in the end had played the fool. Was there a chance that she would forgive him?

Before the advent of the ship, he would have said instantly, yes. But now that he had got even in remote and ineffective touch with the world through a small section of it, he was not so sure. The other man had outraged her bodily and she had not forgiven him, although he had abased himself to the dust. He had outraged her mentally and spiritually, would she forgive him, even if he abased himself to the dust? He was quite ready to do it. He had never been so desperately lonely in all his life. He had passed many wakeful hours on that island with the breadth of the hill between them, he in his lair and she in hers; he had passed many hours in longing for her, for the sound of her voice, the look of her eye, but there had always been a binding tie between them. They were there together on that island alone, each necessary to the other, at least so he fondly believed. It was a tie that linked them together in their very isolation.

Now, sleeping in the midst of his fellows, separated from them by the thin partitions of the ward-room, able to summon half a thousand men by a single call, able to bring an attendant to him by the touch of a button, able to flood the darkness with light by the touch of another these things he had learned during the day he was never so much alone. He wanted her. The rest of the world amounted to nothing and counted for nothing. He realized then what it would mean for him to go out among strangers without her.

The man was in many respects still a child. His heart in those sad and dreary hours yearned toward her as the weaned babe yearns toward its mother. And yet there was nothing weak or childish in his feelings. He recognized his own powers, his own capacities. He knew then that she had taught him more things than are learned in books. She had taught him manhood as she had tried to teach him honor and dignity, and if he had failed once, if he had derogated from her high standard, he remembered that it was through failure that men achieved. He tried to comfort himself with these thoughts, but with little success.



But by and by all these considerations faded away or merged in a great longing for her. He had never disturbed her in the still watches of the night, although he had often been tempted to do so. But now the desire to see her, to plead with her, to beg her forgiveness not a low desire or a base one, he thanked God was so great that he could no longer sustain it. He rose to his feet and looked out of the open porthole. The dawn was graying the east. Attired as he was in the loose shirt and trousers in which he had lain down, which were not unlike the tunic that he habitually wore, save that they were of soft and luxurious silk, he opened the door of the cabin, slipped noiselessly out through the silent ward room he had the natural savage art of treading without a sound ran lightly up the companion ladder and stepped upon the deck. The officer of the watch and his midshipman did not notice him. Their eyes were elsewhere. He ran swiftly across the deck and stopped at the gangway. A marine stood there and started forward as he approached.

“That’s my island,” said the man. “I’m going to swim off to it, and I don’t wish to be followed.”

“It’s a long swim, sir,” ventured the marine, scarcely knowing what to do. He stepped fairly in the gangway as if to bar the exit.

“It is nothing to me,” said the man. “Stand aside.”

“Mr. Hopkins!” called the marine, turning to ward the officer of the watch.

“Aye, aye,” came from Mr. Hopkins as he turned and started forward to the gangway.

The next moment the man had seized the marine in a grip which left him helpless, lifted him gently out of the gangway, dropped him carelessly upon the deck, and had flashed through the air into the water.

By the time Mr. Hopkins reached the gangway, the half-dazed marine had risen to his feet.

“What is it?”

“Why, it’s the castaway, sir, the wild man that we brought ashore to-day.”

“Well?”

“He said he wanted to swim to the shore and did not want to be followed.”

“Why didn’t you stop him?”

“I did try, sir, but he picked me up as if I had been a baby and threw me aside and went over board.”

The officer was in a quandary. He had received no orders to prevent the man from leaving the ship. He was not quite sure what his duty was. At any rate, he turned to the boatswain’s mate and bade him call away a crew for the cutter swinging astern. He directed the coxswain to bring the boat to the gangway, and then sent the midshipman of the watch below to report the matter to the captain and ask his orders.

Captain Ashby, as it happened, was awake. He came on deck immediately in his pajamas and received confirmation of the midshipman’s extraordinary story from the watch officer. It was light enough now for the waters and the shore clearly to be seen. The captain stared over the side. He could make out the man’s head swimming through the opening in the barrier. He could see the splash that he made in his rapid progress through the quiet seas.

“Mr. Hopkins,” he said after a moment’s thought, “tell Mr. Cady” — the midshipman of the watch — “to take the boat and follow after. If the man gets safely to the shore, they are not to disturb him, but to come back and report to me. If, on the contrary, he needs help, they are to take him aboard and bring him back to the ship.”

So much time was lost in these various maneuvers, however, that when the order was carried out, the boat had scarcely reached the entrance to the barrier when they saw the islander stepping through the shallow waters to the beach. There was, therefore, nothing for Mr. Cady to do but come back and report the matter to the captain. When he reached the deck of the cruiser he found the executive officer, with the chaplain and the surgeon, who had been summoned from their berths, in consultation with the captain. By Mr. Whittaker’s advice, he and the chaplain were immediately sent ashore to see what had happened and to determine what was to be done.

There was considerable anxiety in the minds of the quartette which had been dealing with the affair heretofore as to what conditions might be. They did not know the man. They did not know what he might be doing, or to what danger the

woman, whom they all pitied most profoundly, might be exposed. Of all with whom he had come in contact, the lieutenant-commander and the chaplain were those who would have the most influence over the man of the island, hence they were dispatched to the island.

Another boat crew was therefore called away and the two gentlemen were rowed ashore. It was not yet sunrise, but still sufficiently light to enable them to proceed. They were at a loss at first what to do, for they had not yet had opportunity for exploring the island. They had learned that the cave in which the woman dwelt was upon the other side, and that hills rose between the landing place and her abode. They knew, of course, that they could get to it by following the shores of the island, but they had a reasonably accurate idea of its size, and they knew that that would take a great deal of time. Time was precious. They were becoming more and more fearful with every moment.

They decided, therefore, to chance a direct march over the hill and across the island. By great good fortune they stumbled into the path, which was now sufficiently defined in the growing light to enable them to follow it. They climbed the hill as rapidly as was consistent with the strength of the chaplain, who was a rather old man, and then, having reached the top, went down the other side almost at a run.

As they broke out from under the palm trees they saw a dark object in the gray of the dawn lying upon the sands at the water's edge. It was a human being undoubtedly. As they ran toward it with quickening heartbeats, they recognized it as the man. He was lying motionless as if he had been struck dead. In a brief space they reached him. The lieutenant-commander knelt down by his side and turned him over upon his back. He was as senseless as if he had been smitten with a thunder bolt.

"Is he alive?" asked the chaplain, bending over him.

Mr. Whittaker's hand searched his heart.

"It beats feebly," he said. "He seems to have fainted, collapsed in some strange way. I wish we had brought the surgeon. I wonder what can be the cause of it."

"Look!" said the chaplain.

He pointed to a little heap of something dark on the sands a foot or two away.

“What is it?” asked the officer.

The chaplain stepped over to it.

“It is the clothes of the woman,” he said in an awestruck voice, “and that Bible we were to take away with us with the other things, but which she said she would give us in the morning.”

“Great heavens!” exclaimed Mr. Whittaker, “you don’t think...”

At the same instant the same thought had come to both men.

“It looks like it,” said the chaplain with bated breath. “Poor woman, may God help her!”

“That is what is the matter with him,” returned the lieutenant-commander. “He has sought her in her cave and has not found her. He has discovered these things and he knows that she is gone. The shock has almost killed him.”

“What is to be done now?”

Here the man of action interposed.

“Do you watch by him, chaplain,” said Mr. Whittaker, rising as he spoke. “I will go back to the landing upon the other side and send for the doctor. Then we will bring a party ashore and search every foot of the island. It is a bad business. To think of that woman offering herself to this man in vain. The fool!”

“Don’t,” said the chaplain. “He is not much more than a child in spite of all that he has learned. We must make allowances for him. He did love her evidently. Look to what her loss has brought him. Perhaps, stricken by the hand of God, his soul is going out to meet hers, poor woman.”

“Well, we must fight for his life any way. Do you stay here. I will be back in a short time.”

The lieutenant-commander rose to his feet and started back across the island without another word.

The chaplain composed the members of the stricken man, putting him in a

comfortable position on the warm sand, then knelt down and began to pray. It seemed a long time to the waiting priest before his shipmate returned, and yet but a short time had elapsed. He came up panting from the violence of his exertions.

“I have sent the cutter back for the surgeon. I told the men to row for their lives. I gave the midshipman in charge an account of what we had found, and begged the captain to send parties ashore to search the island. What of the man?”

“He breathes still,” said the chaplain. “I should think he was in some kind of syncope. His heart evidently was affected. He has had no preparation for such violent strains. The things which are usual and ordinary with us and which, I take it, indurate us to the greater things of life, have been conspicuous by their absence in his case, and he has not been able to bear up under the sudden shock.”

“Those clothes, have you examined them?”

“No,” said the chaplain, “it has been too dark in the first place, and...”

“I will look at them,” said Mr. Whittaker. “Perhaps we may find some clew in them.”

The lieutenant-commander stooped over the pathetic little heap of worn garments. There were the blouse, the skirt, the stockings, and the worn and torn white shoes. The Bible lay upon them as if to weigh them down, and they had been placed well above the reach of the highest tide. The tide was then just coming in to the island. The Bible had been opened and laid face downward on the clothes. Mr. Whittaker lifted it up reverently. He observed as he did so that his own pencil, which he had left, he now remembered, with the woman, lay beneath the open book. On the blank leaves between the Old and New Testaments something was written. No mention of any writing had been made in the affidavit of the night before. He lifted it, turned his back toward the east, where the sun was just on the verge of rising, and scanned it attentively.

“Do you find anything?” asked the chaplain.

“There is writing on this page,” said the younger man. “I can just make it out.”

“Man,” he read slowly, studying each word in the dim light, “I loved you. In one sense, in your sense, I was unworthy of you, perhaps, but not in mine. You alone

had my heart. The past was a frightful mistake for which I should not be blamed, but for which I must suffer. I tried you with the world by your side. The world was kind, but you were not. You broke my soul and killed something within me which I had thought dead but which you had revived. No power could revive it again. I can not marry Langford, for I do not love him. I will not marry you, for you do not love me. I will not go back to the world now. I have no desire to do so, and I can not live alone with you upon the island. You will not go without me, and so I will go first, by myself, alone. You will think of me, I know, in the great world. Perhaps you will judge yourself harshly, but I do not judge you at all. You did not know, you did not understand. It came too suddenly upon you. You cannot forget me, but do not repine over me, and remember to the very last I loved you. Good-by. May God bless you, and may He pity me!”

Underneath she had written the impersonal name which he had loved to call her, “Woman.”

So characteristic was the letter that that subscription was supererogatory, thought Mr. Whittaker. Only a woman could have written it. She had gone out of his life, because with her in it there was no solution of it for him, because how pitiful it sounded there in the gray of that morning on that lone island to those two men! because he did not love her. And she had gone out of it with excuses for him on her lips and love for him in her heart. No wonder that, divining this which he had not seen, realizing only that she was gone, he had been stricken as he was.

The doctor arrived presently. He ordered the man, still unconscious, to be taken back to the ship where he would do what he could toward reviving him and pulling him through this great and terrible crisis that had come upon him. The chaplain went with him, conceiving his duty to be in attendance upon the living rather than in searching for the dead.

The captain, with the other officers, brought a hundred men to the shore. The island was systematically searched. It was all open. There was no place of concealment, but not a foot of it was left unvisited. Again and again the men traversed the island. They found nothing, absolutely nothing. The woman had vanished and left no trace except the grass tunic in her cave, the remains of her toilet articles, her scissors, knife, watch, and Bible, and the little heap of clothing on the sand. All these they carefully gathered up and took back to the cruiser for the man.

In the search, and made quite frantic by the necessity for it, Langford joined. Indeed, he would not be persuaded that the woman he had treated so badly, whom he had hunted so determinedly, whom he had loved so truly, who had rejected him finally, was dead, but even he gave up at last.

Taking with them the evidences to substantiate the woman's affidavit and to establish, if so be it were possible, the man's claim, and taking with them also the bones of his mother, not forgetting what remained of the faithful dog, which the captain caused to be exhumed from the ruined boat, as night fell the Cheyenne steamed away to the northeast, followed not long after by the Southern Cross. The two vessels went slowly, as if the souls that animated them were reluctant to leave the gemlike island where they had chanced upon so much that was idyllic, so much that was romantic; and where they had seen so great a tragedy of misfortune and despair.

Below in the cabin, under the care of the surgeon and chaplain, lay the islander in the frightful throes of a racking fever of the brain. He babbled of the woman and knew not whither he was being borne.

# BOOK V - ABANDONED

## Chapter XXI

The little island lay quiet and still in the brilliant morning. No footfall pressed its bosky glades; beneath the shadows of its spreading palms no human being sought shelter from the sun's fierce rays; no human voices were echoed back from its jutting crags; no human figures flashed across its shining sands. Soundless it lay save for the cry of the bird and the rustle of the gentle wind across its hills. For well-nigh thirty years it had not been so abandoned. Two days past it had resounded with the cries of men scaling its heights, crashing through its coppices, calling a name, beseeching an answer. Two days before great ships had drifted idly under its lee. It had been the center and focus of great events. Now it lay desolate, alone.

On that morning the tide, which had drawn away from it through the long night, had turned and was coming back. The onrush of the water spent itself upon the barrier. Within the lagoon it lay placid, rising gently inch by inch in mighty overflow. A watcher, had there been one, would have seen at sunrise the still waters of the lagoon broken by a ripple; a keen eye might have noticed at the base of the cliff where it ran sheer down into the blue a dark object moving beneath the surface. The eye could scarcely have become aware of its presence before the waters parted. A little splash, and a head rose, dark-crowned, white-faced. There was a sidewise wave and shake of the head and a pair of eyes opened. The blue of the water was lightened by flashes of white arms. As the body rose higher under the impetus of strokes vigorous yet graceful, it could be seen that it was that of a woman.

With ease and grace the figure swam along the base of the cliff until it was joined by a jutting spit of sand which widened and widened into the great strip of beach that ran around the island. Upon this sand presently the shallowing of the water gave the swimmer a foothold. Progress ceased. With eyes haggard, yet keenly alert, the sea, the shore, the beach, the cliffs, the trees were eagerly searched. The long glances revealed no other person. Then the head was turned, and the ear listened for sounds, and heard no human call. The look of apprehension faded into one of dull relief.



Walking now, the woman in the water made her way toward the sand. Very white she gleamed in the full warm light streaming from the risen sun against the background of the dark, black rock. The water dripping from her exquisitely graceful limbs, she looked a very nymph of the sea as she stepped out of the shallows at last and stood above the high tide line, poised as if for flight upon the hard and solid shore. Again she threw about her that quick, apprehensive look. Again she paused to listen. Reassured in that she heard and saw nothing but the bird's song, the wind's sigh, the wave's splash, she ran swiftly toward a blacker opening in the dark rock. She gleamed whiter still in the entrance for a moment and then disappeared. She came forth presently, still unclothed, a look of dismay on her face.

She had many things to do, much to occupy her mind, but the first duty that lay to her hand and the first instinct which she followed was that her nakedness should be covered.

Still warily watchful, still keenly alert, still fearful apparently of interruption or observation, she ran across the beach, her movement as free, as graceful, as rapid as she had been Atalanta herself, and disappeared under the trees. The whirr of birds disturbed might have marked her passage.

After some time she appeared on the top of the high, bare hill that crowned the island. She had improvised for herself a covering out of three or four great fern leaves, soft and pliable, which she fastened with palm fibres from shoulder to knee on either side, her bare shoulders rising from the rich greenness like a white corolla from its verdant calyx. She went more assuredly now, partly because of the fact that she was clothed and partly because her first rapid survey of the horizon revealed the fact that the ships were gone.

Determined to make sure, she descended the hill rapidly to the landing place of the day before. Still searching, she found nothing. She was glad that this was so, and yet, when the full and final realization came upon her, she knelt down on the shining sand, hid her face in her arms, clenched her hands and gave way to voiceless agony. Sometimes there is nothing so terrible, she realized, as prayer granted, as desire accomplished, as undertaking brought to conclusion. The awfulness of success was upon her in that hour. Her ruse had worked. Her object had been attained, yet the achievement gave her no pleasure, on the contrary!

Her own acts had parted her irrevocably forever from the world and the one man

in it who was the world for her. He was gone. She who had made him had sent him forth among his fellows. She had sacrificed herself, buried herself alive for him. She felt as a mother might who experiences birth pangs and knows that with every throb of tearing anguish her own life ebbs away, passes into the new life which she ushers into the world and gives to men.

She had sacrificed herself, buried herself alive for him.

She had had long hours for thought in those two days in that cave whose mouth the waters hid. She had schooled herself to face light and life without him when she emerged from her cunning hiding place. She had waited the long period in order to make absolutely certain that they all would be gone. And yet, despite herself, a little gleam of hope, a bare possibility that he might still be there, had lingered in her soul and leavened the awfulness of her grief. Now that hope was gone. It had disappeared even as the ships had disappeared.

She had been bitter against him. Her soul had revolted because he had failed. She had told herself that he was not worthy of her. She forgot these things in that profound and desolate moment. She knew only that she loved him. When she could think of other things than of him the mere bodily presence of the man, the look of him, the sound of his voice, the pressure of his lips, the clasp of his arms she began to realize that as he grew older, unless she was so absolutely mistaken in him as to make all estimate of him a mockery, he would realize the falsity of his view, the littleness of his action; and if he were in truth the man whom she could rightly love, his years would be one long regret that he had failed. What would happen when he understood that, when he came to the knowledge that she was indeed all that she had seemed, and that he had been nothing that he should? She knew, as she had written, that the man would never, could never, forget her; that wherever he went and whatever he did, she would be present with him; that she had stamped herself too indelibly upon his heart for any attrition with humanity, how ever close and persistent, to erase the image. He would come back, perhaps.

“O God!” she knelt down and lifted up her arms toward heaven, “bring him back,” she prayed — a few short, broken words, lacking the eloquence of long and studied petition, the appeal of the heart every throb of which is a prayer — “bring him back to me!”

She thought that she would have had him back on any terms. She said that she

had been mad, a fool, not to have taken him, not to have gone to him, not to have married him in any way, with any conditions, under any circumstances. All her thoughts were merged in one great passionate longing to be with him.

For the first time in her life the pangs of jealousy tore her breast. She thought of him in the world with other men, with other women, young, handsome, a perfect godlike form and face of man, rich, the wildest romance with its charm and mystery to attract. His story could not be hid, neither could hers. The man would be courted, sought after, made much over, beloved. It would be enough to turn the head of a saint. How would he stand it? Would the recollection of her make him strong? Would that God in whom he and she both had trusted until this crisis came, lead him in the straight path? Would her purity, her sweetness — stop! would he think her thus dowered and possessed? Not now, certainly, but every hour that took him farther from her would add to his knowledge and would tell him the truth, and these would help him.

Another thought came into her mind. His story would be known, and hers as well. The world was filled with adventurous men. Would not some of them come in search of her island? The officers of those two ships could determine accurately the situation of that island. It would be as easy for a navigator to find it as for a denizen of a city to go to any given street corner. People might come back to that island; not to seek her, for the world would believe her dead, but simply to see the place. Idle yachtsmen might find that an object for long cruising, and she would have to hide and hide. But would she hide? Would she go back to that world? Never, she said, unless he came to fetch her.

And then her thoughts turned again. Why had he gone away? Had she been he they could as soon have uprooted the island itself as torn her from it under similar circumstances. Had he been gone, she would have lingered and died on the spots that were sacred because there he had walked. If she had known that at that moment her Man lay fighting for life and reason in the cabin of the swift-moving ship, she would have understood better his absence. That he could be so stricken never occurred to her.

She had been mistaken in him doubly, mistaken when she thought he would rise to the test, and again mistaken when she thought that, having once fallen, he would not rise again. She did not know that he had come ashore in the gray of the dawn to seek her, to throw himself at her feet, to declare that all he had thought of her was as nothing to what he thought of her then; that she was the

sweetest, the noblest, the truest, the purest woman upon earth; that he could not live without her; that she must take him back into her heart, give him the place which so briefly he had enjoyed, if she did not wish to see him wither and die under her displeasure like an uprooted palm, a torn-down tree.

She did not know that when he had called her name at the mouth of her cave and had at last entered and not found her, how terrible the shock had been to him. She had not seen, she had not heard, she could not know, how he had been stricken down when he caught sight of the little heap of clothes which she had laid out upon the beach to make the searchers think that she had gone.

And it was well for her that these things were hidden from her, for had she believed him suffering, dying, and she not there, the separation would have been more unendurable than it was. She pictured him, not happy away from her, overwhelmed by her death surely, saddened beyond present comfort it must be, yet so occupied that insensibly his grief would be lightened by the only thing after all that makes life bearable in certain contingencies, and that is work. Work! She, too, had work to do.

She rose to her feet doggedly as she thought of that, and considered what she could do. She climbed the hill again. It was in part aimless, restless wandering, but it gave her occupation. Her eyes fell upon the ashes of the signal fire. She contemplated it as the spectre of some Hindu woman whose body had been burned upon such an affair might look upon her pyre. It was she who had lighted the beacon. Her hand had called the world to her side. She thought how he had begged her not to do it, how he had declared himself content and happy to live with her alone the world forgetting, by the world forgot! For the second time she broke down completely. She buried her face in her hands, her body reeled and shook with sobs, the tears trickled through her fingers. Was she to be forever unequal to the separation? she asked herself at last.

She must make another beacon, she decided at last; that would give her something to do. And then it came to her that they had taken away the flint and steel. She had no means of lighting it. That realization developed other thoughts. Her Bible was gone; her clothes were gone; her toilet articles, her scissors, her watch, her knife. They had taken everything. They had left her nothing, absolutely nothing. What did it matter? She could dress herself with fern leaves and make shift to bind them about her with cords that she could plait of the grass which she could tear with her sweet strong hands. And what did it matter what

she wore? There was no one there to see. But for the age long habit of modesty, she would have torn away and thrown aside the makeshifts that fell from her shoulders.

She saw herself reduced to the life of the mere animal. She had nothing but her hands, no tool or implement of any sort. Who had defined man as a tool-using animal, she wondered. She wished that she had buried or hidden some of the things before she took that determination to retreat to that cave which she had discovered on the day that she had discovered that he loved her and that she loved him. She had stood there in the water hesitating as to whether to go out or to come back. She had utterly forgotten the cave until, the tide being out, a backward glance from the low level at which she stood had disclosed the black and narrow opening. And then without a thought she had decided on her course. She had gone back and written in the Bible with the lieutenant-commander's pencil, which unwittingly she had retained, and then she had plunged into the cave with enough food to last her for the two days.

She rehearsed it all and came to the conclusion that she must eat unless she would really die. To eat, to sleep, to dream — these were all that were left her. She wondered if she would lose the power of speech. She wondered if she would descend in the long years to that low level from which she had up lifted him. She felt that perhaps she would go mad. She threw herself down upon her knees again and prayed once more, this time that God would enable her to keep her reason, so that if the man did come back she would be ready for him.

Quieter after a while, and a little comforted, she rose and made a circuit of the island. She must make sure that no one really was ashore. She went last of all to the cave that had been his. She would choose it for her own now. It was reminiscent of him. In her thoughts it would be like having him near her. She kissed the sand where he had lain so long.

So the dreary day dragged on until the night fell and sleep came to her wearied body and soul with its benediction of oblivion.

## Chapter XXII

She slept late the next morning. In the first place, being upon the western side of the island, there was no flooding burst of sunlight through the open door to disturb her quiet slumber. In the second place, she was so worn out and exhausted, she had had so little sleep in the past three days, that imperative nature forced her into rest. She might have slept longer indeed but that she was awakened by a great cry, a human voice calling her name. She opened her eyes and saw within the dimness of the cave a human figure, vaguely white in the darkness. For one fleeting instant she imagined that it might be he, but that hope was dispelled as quickly as it had been born. She recognized the voice. It was Langford's.

“Kate,” he said, approaching her more nearly and bending over her, “are you alive, then?”

He reached down and touched her hand where it lay across the fern leaves on her breast. His touch summoned her bewildered faculties to action. Brushing his hand aside, she sat up.

“Mr. Langford, Valentine!” she exclaimed in a daze of surprise.

“You are alive and well?”

“Yes,” she answered.

“Thank God!” cried the man. “We thought you dead. We searched the island. Where had you hidden? Why have you done it?”

She rose slowly to her feet and confronted him.

“You!” she said bitterly. “Why have you come back?”

“I don't know,” answered Langford. “I can't tell what moved me. I was here on the island with the others. I searched with the rest. I know that no foot of it was left unvisited. Every crag and cranny, every thicket and coppice, every tree, every cave and rift in the rocks was examined over and over again. We knew that you were gone, and yet I could not believe it. Yesterday afternoon I parted from

the cruiser. I did not bear away for this island until it was too dark and they were too far away to see what I would be about, and then I came back here at full speed.”

“Why did you come?”

“I don’t know. I was not satisfied. It seemed to me that I must come back and search again. I could not believe it possible that you were dead, really dead. Something in my heart at any rate brought me once more to see the place where you had lived, if no more than that. We made the island early in the morning. The yacht lies yonder. I came ashore alone a moment since and some kind Providence led me first of all to this spot. I entered the cave. I saw you lying there in the cool darkness. I thought you dead at first. Then I cried to you and you moved. And then I touched your hand. O Kate, thank God I have found you!”

“Where is he?” said the woman. “Why didn’t he come back?”

It was a cruel thing to say, but she could not more have helped it than she could have helped her breathing. Not to have said it would have killed her, for if Langford’s love could turn him back, what could be said then of Charnock’s. Langford was pale and haggard. He, too, had suffered. He was paying for his sins. He was expiating them and feeling it, although the expiation was not helping her.

“What of him?” she asked insistently.

“What matters about him?” he said bitterly. “He had his chance. He failed to grasp it. He’s gone.”

The man did not tell her that Charnock had been carried away a senseless log, bereft of power to think, or speak, or move, or feel by the shock of her departure.

“Once,” said the woman, “you had your chance in the cabin of that very yacht out yonder, and you failed to grasp it, and we separated.”

“Yes,” said the man, “I know that, I realize that now, and I came back, I have come back now to take my chance again.”

“And so he may come back,” said the woman. “You sank lower than he.”

“And I rose higher the other day upon the sand.”

“You did, but not high enough. I believe in him. He will realize it, too,” she went on, all the confidence of her hopes springing into life again and giving force and power to her voice and bearing.

“And you condemn me for that one mistake?” said the man.

“No,” returned the woman, “neither will I condemn him for that one mistake.”

“But he is gone, I tell you.”

“And he will come back, I know.”

“He thinks you dead.”

“So did you.”

“But I came back, not he.”

“You were your own master,” said the woman swiftly. “You could go where you pleased. He was subject to the decision of others. I trust him still.”

“And you don’t trust me.”

“I trust you enough, but I don’t love you.”

“O Kate, think! There must be something in what I feel for you to move you. I did not know what it was. I did not realize it. I came back in the first place as much because I had been a blackguard and a coward and wanted to set myself right in your eyes as because I cared for you, but every hour of search made me know my own heart, and since I have seen you, since I see you now, there is nothing I would not do for you, nothing I would not suffer for you. This isn’t any expiation or amendment or anything now, but because I am a man, and love you, I want you. I want to make you happy. And I am the one man in the world that ought to want you and want to make you happy. It is for that I have come back to you.”

“How terrible are the arrangements of blind fate,” said the woman. “I must believe what you say. You awaken my pity, my tenderness, my consideration, but



these are all. He is not by to hear, and therefore I will tell you unreservedly, for you deserve the truth, that just as you say you love me, nay, then, just as you do and more a thousand times, I love that man. It would be a crime, a sin, a bodily profanation, a mental and spiritual degradation to which the other” — he knew to what she alluded as she paused — “were nothing, if I should come to you with my whole heart and soul given to the man,” she threw her hand out in a great sweeping gesture, “yonder out at sea.”

“But he doesn’t love you.”

“O yes, he does. Not as I would be loved, I admit, not as, please God, I shall be loved by him, but he loves me. He doesn’t know; he doesn’t understand. Wisdom will come to him and he will come back.”

“It might be so,” admitted the man reluctantly. “I came back. But he believes you dead.”

“And did not you when you searched for me during those three years?”

“No,” answered Langford, “I had a confident hope that somewhere you were alive.”

“And will he not have that hope, too?”

“I cannot believe it.”

There was a long, frightful pause. The woman sighed deeply.

“It may be as you say. It may be that we are separated forever. It may be that I shall never look upon him again, or he upon me, but that makes no difference. I do not love you. I cannot love you. If he is dead, I shall love his memory until I meet him, if so be I may be found worthy of that, and I will keep myself for him. No other man shall have what belongs to him.”

They had stepped nearer the entrance of the cave, which was a spacious one, as they spoke. The beauty of the woman in that soft light was so intense that it cast over Langford a spell. He heard the sound of her voice, but did not heed what she said. Suddenly he caught her in his arms.

“Kate,” he cried, “we are alone here, and I am master. That is my ship yonder. I

can have you bound hand and foot and take you aboard of her. I will say that you are mad, that I am taking you back to the United States to your friends. You must come back with me. I can't let you go."

"Valentine," said the woman quietly, "if you do not instantly release me, I will kill you where you stand. You don't realize how strong I am. See!"

With a quick, sudden movement she caught his arms with her free hands and literally tore them apart. To her lithe and vigorous body she added spirit and determination which made her indeed more than a match for the slender, somewhat broken man before her.

You see!" she cried. She stood between him and the doorway, one hand outstretched, the fingers open. "I could kill you before you left this cave. You told me that you had sent your men back to the ship and that you were alone upon the island, and I could hide where I hid before and they would find your dead body here upon the sands. That would be all."

"Kill me if you wish," said the man recklessly. "I don't care. Perhaps that would be the better way."

"No," said the woman, "I respect you too much for that."

"Respect me?"

"Yes. You have shown me what you are by what you have done, all but this mad action of a moment since, and I can understand that, my friend, for I too love, and it seems to me that I would brook anything, everything, for one moment like that you fain would have enjoyed. But we are not children, neither are we savages to act like beasts of prey. I forgive you, I trust you." She came close to him and laid her hand upon his arm. "I respect you, I admire you!"

"Everything," said the man, "but love me."

"Everything but that," assented the woman quietly.

"I shan't offend again," returned Langford. "Neither by force nor persuasion can I effect anything. Kate," he said after another pause, "come back to the United States or to some civilized land. The world is before you. I will land you where you please and give you or lend you money enough to enable you to go where

you like. You shall be on the yacht to me as my sister.”

“It can’t be,” said the woman. “Don’t you see that I can accept no favors from you?”

“But no one need ever know. I will discharge the crew of the yacht in some South African port. They will scatter...”

“God would know and I would know, and when I see the Man, my Man, again I would have to tell him. It would make it harder for him, harder for me. And I don’t want to go back. I will wait here for him.”

“Kate,” said the man impulsively, “it was ungenerous of me not to have told you before. They took him away from the island senseless, raving with brain fever. He collapsed, stricken as if dead, on the sand by that little heap of clothes and the Bible which bore your message. He thought you dead. He left the ship in the early morning to seek you. The shock was too much for him.”

“He loved me, then,” said the woman.

“Yes,” said Langford, wringing the admission from his lips, “he loved you enough almost to die for you.”

“But he is not dead. He was not when you left the cruiser?” she cried in bitter appeal, her hand on her heart.

“No, they signaled to me at noontime in answer to my inquiry that the doctor thought he would finally pull through, although it would be a long, terrible siege; but if he dies, Kate, if I go back and find that he is dead and come here...”

“Don’t come back,” said the woman. “Don’t tell anyone that I am here. Let no one ever come back unless the promptings of his heart and the leading of God should bring him to me.”

“Is this your final, absolute decision?”

“My final and absolute decision. Nothing can alter it, nothing, absolutely nothing.”

“O Kate!”

“Don’t,” said the woman. “It is useless and only breaks your heart and wrings mine. Now, you must go. No one has seen you from the yacht. This cave is sheltered from where she lies. No one need know that you have found me. Indeed, I want you to give me your word of honor, to swear it by all that you hold sacred, that you will never tell anyone, much less him, that you came back and found me alive.”

“You set me a hard task,” faltered the man.

“But I am sure,” continued the woman, “it is not too hard for you to accomplish. Come, you have said you wanted to make amends. That is all past now, forgotten and forgiven, but if you really would make me happy, you will promise what I say.”

“And what is that, again?”

“On your word of honor as a gentleman, by all that you hold sacred, you will never mention to a human soul that you found me here alive.”

“On my word, by all that I do hold sacred, by my love for you, Kate, I will not speak unless in some way you give me leave.”

“So help you God!” said the woman solemnly.

“So help me God!” replied the man with equal gravity.

“And now you must go.”

“I have one request to make of you, Kate, before I go,” said Langford.

“If I can grant it, you may be assured I will.”

“It is very easy. Will you stay in this cave for two hours?”

“I have no watch,” said the woman, “but I will guess at the time as best I can.”

“Then,” said the man, “go down to the beach. The yacht will be gone.”

“Valentine,” said the woman, “you don’t mean to stay here on the island?”

“I would stay gladly,” returned the other, “if I thought that I would be welcome,

but I know that cannot be.”

“I will wait,” said the woman. “Good-by!”

She extended her hand to him. He seized it in his own trembling grasp and kissed it. He remained a moment with his lips pressed to her hand, and she laid her other hand upon his bended head. He heard her lips murmuring words of prayer. He released her hand, stooped lower, laid something at her feet, turned and resolutely marched out into the sunlight.

The woman lifted her hand, the hand that he had kissed. It was wet with tears. The man had left her with a breaking heart. She sat down upon the sand to think her thoughts during her two hours wait. Her bare foot touched something metallic. She bent over and picked it up. It was his watch.

He had placed it there. The simple kindness, the spontaneous generosity of the little action, moved her as had not all his pleas, and she mingled her own tears with his upon her hand.

It was a long wait, and yet he had given her much to occupy her mind. His visit had saddened her, but, more than that, it had gladdened her. There was comfort, and any woman would have taken it, in the thought that Langford had come back to her. There was comfort, mingled with apprehension, in the thought that in the still hours of the morning her companion had come ashore, she divined, to sue for her forgiveness. There was more comfort in the thought that he had not left her voluntarily, but had been taken away helpless, ill. There was most comfort in the thought that his belief that he had lost her had almost killed him.

There was dismay and sick apprehension in the thought that he was ill and she was not there. And yet despite herself a little gleam of hope sprang up in her heart. He could not die, having been so preserved for, lo, these many years. Some fate had been marked out for him, some Providence would watch over him, and some day he would come back over the sea her Man!

She had guarded against any outside influence. She had Langford's word, his solemn oath, that under no circumstances would he tell anyone that she was alive, least of all the man of all others she would fain have know it. But he would come back. He could not live without once more visiting the island, and when he came back, he would find her waiting for him.

She looked at the watch after a while and found that more than two hours had elapsed, nearly three. The latter part of the time had fled swiftly in thoughts of him. She was hungry and thirsty, too. It was noon. She went out on the sands. The yacht was nowhere to be seen. She could not yet have got below the horizon. She divined that he had sailed around the island and away in that direction.

There was a pile of boxes and things on the sand above the high water mark. She stepped toward it and opened one of the sea chests. It was filled with books and papers, a strange collection. He had ransacked the yacht for her. Another chest contained provisions with which she had long been unfamiliar. There were toilet articles, pieces of cloth, writing paper, pencils, a heaping profusion of all that he fancied she might need, that might afford solace and companionship to her and alleviate the loneliness of those hours. In her heart she thanked him, and lifting up her hands, she blessed him again. He had made life possible and tolerable to her. She could write, she could read, she could sew. And all this while she could hope and dream.

## BOOK VI - THE NEW LIFE

### Chapter XXIII

Late springtime in old Virginia. The climate was not unlike that of the island during the cooler portions of the year, thought the man standing on the porch of the high-pillared old brick house set upon a hill overlooking the pale-green waters of Hampton Roads which stretched far eastward past Newport News and Old Point Comfort to the blue of the Chesapeake, and far beyond that to the deeper blue of the ocean. Back of him a thousand leagues of land, and more than a thousand leagues of sea, intervened between him and the object of his thoughts. Not for a day, not for an hour, scarcely for a moment even, was that island out of his mind. There was pleasure and pain in the recollection of it. Upon the man's face a stern melancholy had settled. Not the melancholy of ineptitude and indifference, not the melancholy that made him do nothing unmindful of the large issues of life in which he had been suddenly plunged, not the melancholy that paralyzed his activities, but the melancholy that comes from the presence in the heart of an abiding sorrow that neither time nor change nor occupation could uproot; a melancholy that came from the sense of bereavement ever growing more keen and more poignant as the period of bereavement lengthened, and which sprang from a consciousness of imperfections and failures for which no after achievement could atone.

In some circumstances there is comfort in a deathless memory, in the recollection of a presence that has passed. There is solace in the dream touch of the vanished hand, in the heart echo of the voice that is stilled, if when the hand was warm and the voice thrilled in the hollow of the ear, nothing was done which could impair the sweetness and the purity of the remembrance afterward. But this man had slain the thing he loved. Guilt, as of a murderer, was upon his soul. He could not throw it off.

Had he been less a man, he would have sought oblivion by following the path to death upon which he fancied she had shown the way. When he came to his senses in the cabin of the ship, weak, worn, wasted as one who had gone through the very valley and shadow of death itself, and they had told him, in answer to his eager questions, the truth which he had divined ere he had been stricken down, his first conscious resolution was to live worthy of her remembrance. He

had failed awfully once, and before he could make amends she had vanished, but somewhere beyond the stars he believed she knew his present purpose. Unless men's hopes for the future were all a dream, unless their desires and aspirations were like the baseless fabric of every other vision, he knew that she would know. He would show to her and for her memory's sake that he could be a man. To die would have been far better for him, but he would live on, live on for her. He would do things in the world, and couple her name with them. Men should know what she had been through him, he would cause her to be remembered, and some day, when he had worked out his punishment, howsoever long it should please God to require it of him, he would be worthy of her in that high place to which she had gone.

It was that, and that alone, which enabled him to endure the consciousness that he had killed her, the good being he loved, the sweet being he adored, the pure being whom he would fain have cherished — too late! He lashed himself with that thought as the devotees of old scourged their bodies until the blood ran, in some futile effort thus to purify their souls. As it were he wore next to his skin the hair shirt of the ancient martyr, allowing it to chafe his very vitals. And yet he lived to accomplish his purpose.

It had not been difficult to establish his rights. Whittaker and the chaplain, armed with the depositions, had taken the man across the continent when the ship had been put out of commission at San Francisco, and presented him to his uncle, the Charnock in residence in that great house on the Nansemond shore overlooking that estuary of the James by Hampton Roads. The old man, childless and alone, had welcomed him gladly. The newcomer was of the Charnock blood. It was a strange moment for the islander when they took him into the great drawing-room and showed him the pictures of his father and of his mother. He was the living image of the man, tempered with some of the woman's sweetness. This remarkable likeness — indeed he was not unlike his uncle as well — coupled with the material proofs, the ring, the Bible, the evidence of the ship, together with what was known, removed every lingering doubt from the minds of those most concerned.

The family was reduced to those two, the uncle and the nephew. The old man formally and legally recognized the relationship and offered to transfer the property rightfully his, which since the discovery of coal had increased enormously in value, to the newcomer, but Charnock would have none of it then. He recognized his unfitness to deal with such things. If the older man would



retain it, he could give it to him at his death. Meanwhile he could teach and train him how to use it. Bereft of his one guide, his one inspiration in life, he would need wise counsel and careful leading indeed.

In addition to the formal recognition, the older man legally adopted the younger and constituted him the heir to his own property, which was almost as extensive and as valuable as that which rightly belonged to the nephew. And then, these formalities being completed, the lieutenant-commander and the chaplain, summoned elsewhere by their duties, bade the two farewell and left them.

Charnock could not have fallen into better hands. Education was his first requirement, and he applied himself to it with a fierce energy and a grim determination which presently, from the splendid foundation which had been laid by the woman, enabled him to progress sufficiently to take his place and hold his own with men and women. It was impossible to keep secret forever the details of such a story as his, especially when it was linked with a name once so famous and still remembered as that of Katharine Brenton, and it had been decided by Captain Ashby and Whittaker and the man himself that such portions of it as would suffice to explain his own presence and her fate should be given to the world. Upon the foundation thus afforded, romance builded. Charnock immediately became a marked man. He would have been a marked man in any event from the financial power that he possessed. His uncle's management had been wise and prudent, he had spent little and had saved much, so that Charnock found himself the possessor of vast riches in the form of available capital.

Among the first things that he learned was the power of money. Had he not been steadied by the memory of the woman, he would probably have learned it to his sorrow. As it was, he was almost miserly. He spent little upon himself. His wants were astonishingly few, and contact with the world did not develop extravagant ideas. Those were things which he was too old to learn, against which he had been anchored. He was saving what he had and what he could get for some great purpose, a purpose of help, of assistance in which he could commemorate her name, for which future generations should rise up and call her blessed.

He had long talks with his uncle about it. The old man would fain have had his nephew marry and carry on the ancient line. Delicately, tenderly, he broached the subject after a time, but the suggestion met with absolute refusal. Women interested Charnock as men did. Indeed, his interest in his kind was intense. The intellectual stimulus of conversations with bright, intelligent people was the

most entrancing result of his contact with the world. But none of them touched his heart. That was buried on that gemlike island in the far-off sea.

He was a man of unusual force of character, prompt and unyielding decision. His uncle had not lived his long life without being able to estimate men. He recognized very early in the undertaking the futility of argument, and though he tried finesse in the presence of the wittiest, the cleverest, and most beautiful women of Virginia and elsewhere, for the two traveled throughout the United States, welcomed everywhere, his efforts were all unavailing. There was more than one woman who would gladly have accepted the man's suit; whom, if he had wooed her ever so slightly, he could have won, but he was friendly with everyone and in love with none.

At the end of two years society gave him up as confirmed in his isolation and loneliness. He was not the less welcome, but he was no longer a matrimonial possibility, nor was he any more the wonder that he had been. New things engrossed public attention. The world presently took Charnock as he would fain have it take him, as a matter of course.

He did things slowly, not because that was his nature, but from an invincible determination to do things right. He made his plans deliberately, and had formulated an enterprise so comprehensive in its scope, so vast in its outlay, and with such infinite possibilities of help to the poor, the wretched, the down-trodden classes of society, that, when the fore-shadowings of it were announced, people stood amazed. An undertaking so great was not within the power even of Charnock. His resources were utterly unequal to it, but he had enough to make a magnificent beginning, and by devoting to it the whole revenue of his estate, and the estate itself after he died, gradually the enterprise would be achieved.

There was no necessity for secrecy about it. Indeed, with that simplicity and candor so unusual and so unconventional, which touch with the world had never been able to alter, he had spoken of his plans without reserve, and he had declared with equal frankness that what he was doing was in memory of the noblest and the truest of women to whom he owed it that he was a human being and not an animal.

Whittaker, of whose judgment he thought highly and with desert, was called from the naval service to be executive head of the great undertaking. The spiritual work was to be placed in the hands of the chaplain who had so endeared

himself to the promoter and deviser of it all. Charnock realized that these men who had known Katharine Brenton would enter more sympathetically into his views and could be depended upon to carry them out in case anything happened to him. He and his uncle and one or two others of excellent judgment whom he had met, were associated with the two mentioned to carry out all the founder's plans.

Now, this thing was not done in a corner. The news of it was carried over the United States and spread even to foreign lands. The world read it and marveled again. A newspaper carrying an account of it fell under the eye of a lonely man in San Francisco who had just returned from a long voyage in northern seas. The name "Charnock" caught his eye first, and then Langford saw the name of the woman he loved. He read with avidity, appreciating as none could better do than he from his trained business acumen the scope and yet the feasibility of the undertaking. He had wondered cynically what would be the career of the man in the United States. He knew the value, as did every business man, especially every man with large transportation interests like his, of the Charnock estate. He would have wagered that Charnock would lose his head as ninety-nine men out of a hundred would have done, and that, intoxicated by the sudden touch of the material world which was at his feet, he would have gone the usual pace; and he would have won his wager had it not been for the immortal memory of the woman they both loved, he felt bitterly enough. He had not followed Charnock's career. Committing his own large business interests to those upon whose judgment and integrity he could rely, he had gone restlessly about the world in the Southern Cross, seeking by change to drown his own sorrow, which was as deep as, even deeper than, Charnock's, because he knew that the woman he loved lived. He had to face the possibility that at any time others might discover that fact, and that Charnock among the rest would learn it, and then... It was that thought that drove him on, it was that thought that broke him down. He was a sick man, almost a dying man, as he steamed through the Golden Gate and landed from the yacht that spring morning. He did not care, he had nothing for which to live. His love for the woman had grown and grown until it had possessed him and transformed him. His expiation was indeed a fearful one, for there was no end to it but his death, and he felt that would be welcome.

He had to set his affairs in order, or he would have stayed at sea and let his life go out there, directing that his body should be sunk in the great waters which washed the distant shores where her foot trod. Indeed, when he was on the Pacific he seemed somehow to be in touch with her. A hundred times the order to

steer southward to that gemlike island had trembled upon his lips, but he had held it back. He knew what that woman was; that her “Yea, yea” and her “Nay, nay” could not be changed by any power that he could wield, and so he had stayed away. And now he came back to San Francisco, a sick man and about to die.

He sat alone in his office in the great building and pondered over the account in the paper. He had been mistaken in the man. He was really worth while. He had amounted to something. He was worthy of the woman. If he had not sworn an oath, given his word.... He hesitated, smiling bitterly. The woman alone could release him. Should he sail down to the island with that paper and tell that story. He knew that he could not do it. He had not the strength. There was not time. He had waited too long. The army surgeons in Alaska had told him the brutal truth; that he had but a few months to live, and that if he had anything to do before he went out into the beyond, he would better do it quickly. No, he could not go down there and tell her and get released from his promise.

Yet how Charnock would revel in such news as he, and he alone, could give him! He loved the woman and he hated the man. He could not bear to think that the man should have what was denied him. He could not bear to think of the woman he loved in another's arms. And yet he loved the woman. As he pictured Charnock happy, so he pictured Kate sad, fretting out her life on that island as he had fretted out his on the ship. And he could make her happy by a word if he broke his oath and was false to the promise he had given her. Should he do it for her sake? Would she forgive him? He would be past forgiveness when she knew.

Which was the stronger, his love for the woman or his hatred for the man? If he spoke at all, it would be for her sake, naught else. Would the man understand that, would she? Whatever happened, he had possessed her; she had been his for brief hours. Did he have the strength now to give her to someone else, even though he were dead? Being dead, would he know?

The struggle racked and tore him in his heart. He could come to no decision, at least not then. What he would do later would depend upon circumstances. One thing he could do, and that was to go and find the man. Attending to such matters as were most pressing and taking the precaution to make his will, a strange will, at which his attorney ventured to remonstrate unavailingly, at last he started on that journey across the continent in his private car. He had left the car at Suffolk, Virginia, and with a motor which had been transported with him

he ran up the west side of the inlet until he came to the manor house which a local guide, picked up by the way, pointed out to him.

## Chapter XXIV

It was that same late spring morning when John Charnock sat on the porch overlooking the pale waters of Hampton Roads past Newport News and Old Point Comfort and the blue waters of the Chesapeake and the bluer ocean beyond. The motor car was stopped outside the great gate at the end of the long avenue of trees which led to the river road. It could have been driven in, but as he approached the house more nearly, with his mind still in a state of indecision, in order further to collect his thoughts and because he was tired from the long ride and because he would not trespass on Charnock more than was absolutely necessary, Langford decided to walk.

Now the sight of a passing automobile was not unusual, and Charnock glanced at it indifferently enough until it stopped at the gate. That was out of the common, for most of those who came to visit him in such fashion turned in the drive and stopped before the long flight of steps that led down from the porch to the terrace and from the terrace to the lower level of the lawn. He did not recognize the tall, slender figure which came slowly up the path by the side of the drive under the great arch of trees. Still, as the man drew nearer, he arose and with true Virginian hospitality, a hospitality he had easily learned since it was in his blood, he descended the steps to the terrace and would have descended farther to the roadway but that he suddenly recognized the visitor. He stopped dead still, surprised, amazed. Langford started, hesitated, threw back his head and came resolutely on. He mounted the first flight of steps and, as he did so, Charnock turned, drew back a little to make way for him, and the two men faced each other upon the terrace.

“Great God!” cried the Virginian at last, “you of all men. What are you doing here?”

His brow was dark, his hands were clenched.

“Why not I?” answered Langford coolly, a bitter smile on his lips.

“You say that to me after all that you have done?”

“Man,” said the other, “didn’t I do everything under heaven that man could do to undo it. She forgave me. Can’t you?”

“No!” answered Charnock, moving toward him.

“Stop!” cried Langford. “Is your own record so clear? Have you nothing with which to reproach yourself? I ruined her life; yes, I grant it; but you drove her to suicide. Why have I not the right to fault you even as you seem to claim the right to fault me? We have both sinned against that woman, but at least in those final hours I did my best for her. Did you?”

Charnock hesitated. No one had ever spoken to him like that. He had said these things to himself many times, but no one else had ever assumed or presumed to do so, and had anyone but this man ventured upon such words, he would have met with short shift indeed. But there was so much justice and so much truth in what Langford said that, resentful though he was, hating the man as he did, he could not be blind to it.

“You are right,” he admitted at last, but with great reluctance. “There is more guilt on my soul than yours, but no other man under heaven should have told me so.”

“Nor should I have told it to any other man,” returned Langford.

“But that doesn’t explain why you come here.”

“Why!” exclaimed the other. “I don’t really know.”

In that instant the tension under which he held himself gave way. He reeled slightly, put his hand to his heart. For the first time Charnock noticed how white he was, how sick and wretched he looked. Although he could not bear to touch the man, there was unconscious appeal in his weakness which the stronger man could not resist. He sprang instantly to his side. He caught him by the arm.

“What’s the matter?” he asked almost roughly. “You look ill, weak, suffering.”

“It is nothing,” answered Langford, struggling manfully to control himself and to fight back the ever tightening pain about his heart. “My time’s about up. If I could sit down somewhere..!”

“Here,” cried Charnock.

He half led, half carried the man, supporting him with his powerful arms to a

seat on the terrace, across which the shadow of the house fell in the morning.

“Thank you,” said Langford. “Now,” he fumbled in his pocket and pulled out a little phial with shaking fingers, “if you will be kind enough to open that and give me one of these,” he gasped, “I am hardly up to it.”

Quickly, deftly, Charnock took the phial, opened it, placed one of the tablets in the other’s hand and waited anxiously. Above on the porch a servant appeared and him Charnock bade bring water, wine, restoratives. Presently Langford recovered himself, the powerful medicine acted, the tearing pain at his heart abated. It left him fearfully weak and broken, but his own master.

“Well,” he said with cynical bitterness, “you see.”

“Yes,” answered Charnock gravely, “I see.”

“I am going in one of those some day, and mighty soon now, and it is because of that that I came to see you. I wanted to talk to you about her.”

“No man speaks to me about her.”

“But you can’t refuse the dying, you know. You can’t go away and leave me here. You can’t stop me by force. When I am weak, I am strong,” he quoted almost sardonically.

“I shall not leave you,” said Charnock. “You are paying for what you did. My God, I could envy you your going. Do you think life is sweet and pleasant to me with the memory of what I did rankling?”

“No, I suppose not,” said Langford, “but I didn’t really come so much to talk about her as to talk about you.”

“I can’t conceive that I am a proper subject for your conversation.”

He said it firmly but not unkindly. Langford was too pitiable a spectacle for that.

“It’s about your project,” went on the other. “Will you tell me about it?”

“Haven’t you read the papers?”



“Yes, but I want to hear from your own lips what you propose to do. I am a business man accustomed to large affairs. I want to hear with my own ears all about it.”

Charnock hesitated. After all, why not? Standing before the other, he outlined all his plans. Rapidly, dramatically, concisely, he builded before the other’s eyes the castle of his dreams.

“It is to be for her, a memorial to her, you see, so that her name shall be remembered and prayers and blessings called down upon her head by generations yet unborn.”

“It is a practicable scheme,” said Langford, “and a great one. Who has it in charge?”

“Men you know,” answered Charnock, rapidly naming them.

“They can make it go if anybody can. I congratulate you upon it. It is a great idea. As usual,” he laughed bitterly, “you have got ahead of me. While you have been working and living these two years, I have been idling and dying. But I can make some amends at least. You will see presently. Now, I must go.”

He rose unsteadily to his feet.

“Wait!” said Charnock. “I never thought to do this. I never thought to speak to you again. But you can’t go now. You are in no state to travel, even in an automobile. You must come to the house until you recover yourself, get a rest over night, let me send for a physician. I don’t mean that there can be friendship between us. There is too much in the past that keeps us apart. I have never before been glad that I didn’t break you when I held you in my arms upon the sand. But I don’t know, if she forgave you, I can do it. Maybe by that I can earn some forgiveness myself. We were both fools, and you were knave, but you were man at last. I wasn’t. Stay here. I won’t disturb you.”

“By heavens!” said Langford, flushing, “you are man now. No, I won’t stay, but I thank you for your offer, and I will pay you for it.”

Charnock put up his hand.

“I want no pay.”

“Nevertheless, you shall have it,” insisted the other. “I will give you a word of advice although to do it damns me!”

He paused, laid his hand upon his heart again, clenched the clothing about his breast as if he would fain tear it off. He was white once more, the sudden flush had gone, but his lips were set determinedly.

“Listen well to what I tell you,” he said slowly. “I break my word to do it. I am false to my oath in what I say. Nevertheless I say it. Go back to the island!”

“What?” cried Charnock.

“Didn’t you hear me?” asked the man, intense bitterness in his voice. Now that he had made the plunge, he realized more keenly than ever what it meant to him even in the very articles of death to think of Charnock and the woman. “Do I have to say it again?” he went on. “Go back to the island.”

His voice rose until he almost cried the five words in Charnock’s face. The Virginian stood absolutely appalled. Langford looked at him a moment, laughed bitterly, turned, and went slowly down the steps. More than ever he hated him. In one bound Charnock was by his side.

“You have said too much or too little,” he cried, laying his hand upon the other. “What do you mean? Why should I go back to the island? Is she there?”

In his agitation, he even shook the frailer, slighter, feebler form of the man who had just uttered those words.

“Unless,” said Langford coolly, “you want me to die on your threshold, you would better take off your hand. The doctors told me that the least physical violence or exertion would be fatal to me.”

Releasing him, Charnock spoke again.

“But won’t you tell me what you mean? Great God, man, think what your words convey!”

“I will tell you nothing, nothing further. This is my last will and testament to you. Though I die here, I have nothing further to say to you than this: Go back to the island.... Damn you!”

He turned away again and went down the steps, leaving Charnock standing staring after him. He reeled slightly as he went, but he caught himself and marched on with as great a resolution as ever any soldier manifested in the point of danger. He had displayed weakness once in the presence of his enemy. He would not do it again. And while Charnock stared at him, he stepped out through the gate from under the trees, entered the big car and was whirled away.

Left to himself, Charnock sat down upon the bench and pressed his head in his hands, his thoughts in a wild whirl. Go back to the island? Why had he said that? Who was there? Did some fantastic spirit of revenge send him half way round the world on some fool's errand? Hatred spoke in the man's voice. He had coupled his injunction with a curse, which was a sufficient attest to the bitterness of his feelings. And yet truth spoke there, too. Go back to the island! What could it mean?

A long time he sat resolving in his mind his course, although he knew what it would be from the very moment that the words had fallen from Langford's lips. He must go back, if for no other reason than to settle the doubt, to answer the question, to satisfy the wild clamor of his soul, to kill the hope that flashed into his breast at the other's words.

His reverie was interrupted by the arrival of a strange negro. Langford had stopped at a village tavern, it appeared, where he had procured writing materials. He had paid the boy liberally to bring the note to Charnock. The envelope was sealed. Beneath his name was written these words:

“As you are a gentleman and respect the request of a dead man, you will not open the envelope until you stand upon the island.”

Never was there such a prohibition. Never was there such a consuming desire in the man's heart to defy it and disregard it. Yet that vague, intangible thing we call honor, backed by a flimsy bit of paper and paste, held Charnock with fetters of steel. The envelope decided him. He rose to his feet, entered the house, sent for his uncle, told him the story and bade him get ready to start for San Francisco that night. Whittaker and the chaplain, summoned temporarily from the great undertaking, joined them at Washington, and the little party went rushing westward in a private car on a special train as fast as steam and steel could take them. And yet to the heart of the man their progress was so slow that every hour he became more frantic with impatience.

Back in the little village inn by the roadway Langford, alone, lay dying. A strange lawyer wrote a few letters for him confirming a will made in San Francisco leaving every dollar he possessed to Charnock's great undertaking on condition that his name be not mentioned in it and that those who cared for him might regard it as the end of a great expiation. And so ministered unto by a strange clergyman, he passes out of sight, having made what amendment he could. He loved much in the end, surely in the end much would be forgiven him! Poor Langford!

## Chapter XXV

How awful had been those two years upon that island! They would have been completely insupportable had it not been for the forethought and kindness of Langford. The books were not such as she would have chosen, but they were books at any rate, and she knew them by heart. Of the cloth that he had left, she had fashioned for herself such simple garments as were suitable to her situation, rejoicing that she was no longer compelled to wear the rough, coarse, chafing grass tunics of the past. The greatest blessing, however, of all that had been left to her was the writing paper, the note books, and pencils. They had given her occupation after all other things had failed her, for she had written down the story of her life. Not imagining that they would ever be seen by human eyes, she had poured her whole soul out on the pages. Every incident had been gone over. Not Rousseau himself had been franker in his "Confessions," but here was only sweetness and light. She had restricted her writing to a certain number of moments daily in order to prolong the occupation as much as possible, and she had carefully considered everything ere she put it down.

She had dwelt most of all on her three years of life with the man on the island. She told of her hopes, her fears, her trials, her struggles, her ambitions. She neglected nothing. She told of her grief, her disappointment, of her further hope. She burned her longing upon the white page. It was such a revelation as would have thrilled the unresponsive human race if it could have read it. She had a wonderful facility of expression, and writing thus out of her heart, deathless words came upon the smooth leaves. She loved to read it over from time to time, thinking sadly of that other book which had made so much of a stir in her world. And so the work grew and grew under her hand until upon a certain day in early summer it was finished.

She would add no more to it. There were a few blank pages left and a few stubs of pencil. These she would reserve for what might come in the future. If he came back to her, she would write it down. If she stayed there until she died, when she was old and lonely and broken, she would write down her final words again and leave them for whomsoever might chance upon the record in some future hour. But when she had completed it, she was strangely sad. It was as if another great chapter in her life had terminated, and she knew not exactly how she could take it up again and go on the unvarying round.

Twice daily she had gone to the heaven-kissing hill high in the center of the island, where she had laboriously builded another pyre for another beacon. Morning and evening with unvarying routine she had scanned the horizon, this time with an excellent glass that Langford had left her. Not once had she sighted a ship. He never came; no one ever came. Hope gradually died away in her heart. She wished now that she had not insisted that Langford should not say that she was alive. Her longing for a sight of the man she loved grew and grew until each day found the burden of life without him more terrible and unendurable than that of the day before. Would he never come? Would she live and grow old there and die there without him?

If it had not been for the books and for her task, she could not have survived. Her brain would have gone, her voice would have gone. She kept that in use by reading aloud day by day, page after page, from one or the other of the volumes that she had.

One evening she climbed wearily to the top of the hill and listlessly swept the horizon, the bare, vacant, unbroken horizon, which she had surveyed morning and evening all these years. She expected nothing, but suddenly there sprang into the object glass of the telescope a dark blur which she had never seen before. Her hand trembled so that she almost dropped the glass. She strove to pick up that object again, but could not do it in her nervous agitation. Finally she lay down upon the hill and rested her arms upon a little rise of ground, and thus steadying the glass, managed to find it once more. It could be nothing but the smoke of a ship!

The sky was without a cloud; she could not be deceived. It was miles away, of course, yet if the ship was visible to her, the island would be more visible on account of its vast bulk comparatively to those aboard of her. The ship, if it were bound on some trading voyage, would probably pass by. What should she do? She had sworn that she would stay on that island, live and die there, unless he came to fetch her, but the longing to see him, to hear about him, to know what had become of him, had grown so great that her resolution was trembling in the balance, and in the smoke of that passing ship it vanished into thin air.

She had means of striking a light which Langford had left her, which methodically and mechanically she always brought with her when she climbed up the crest of the hill to seek for a sail. She lifted the matches and approached the beacon. She remembered how once before she had lighted that beacon; she

remembered how he had pleaded with her not to do so, how in doing it she had brought the world upon her with such terrible consequences to her. Should she do it again? What would happen if she did? She laid the matches down and lifted the glass once more. Yes, the ship was still there! She was so far away indeed that the short time which had elapsed would have made no change in her apparent position.

She looked back to the westward. The sun was setting. There would be no twilight. Darkness would come swiftly. If she did not light that beacon, the ship would pass in the night. If she did light it, the darkness would lend force and efficiency to it. No ship would disregard such a light in such a quarter. Should she do it?

In one swift moment her resolution was taken. She dropped the glass, turned to the box of matches which she had hoarded for this very purpose, knelt down, struck one of them, watched the blue flame develop and swell out in the still air, paused for a moment hesitant, touched the light to the inflammable mass of dead wood at the base of the pile. In one instant the flames were roaring amid the larger timbers, as they had roared on that morning nearly two years ago. For one instant she would have torn down the pyre and scattered the flame, but it was not within her power. Nothing could stop that raging blaze now.

As the flames crackled up through the wood, leaping and catching, the sun sank and the darkness fell. Her last act ere the curtain of night shut her in had been to fix her glass upon the faint blur of smoke. Now she could see nothing. It was a moonless night, but bright with stars. She moved away from the fire and sat down as she had sat before, sheltered by the peak, to watch the sea. Now that she had done what she had sworn not to do, she was eager for the success of her attempt. Indeed, she thought that if yon ship did not see that fire and did not come to the island and take her off, this time she would really die; she could not stand another disappointment.

And so she waited, wondering, through long hours while the flames exhausted themselves and by and by fell to a heap of glowing ashes. Suddenly there leaped out through the darkness a distant twinkle of light. It was too low for a star. Feeling for the telescope, she found it and with difficulty focussed it on the tiny spark. It was a red light, the light of a ship! The vessel had seen the signal. It was nearer, much nearer now. She knew about how far such a light could be seen. The ship was coming toward her. She almost fainted from the revulsion of

feeling from hope to certainty, from anxiety to assurance.

As she watched it, she suddenly saw a dash of sparks from the smoke stack. Fixing her eyes on the light again, she thought she caught a glimpse of a white blur. For a moment her heart sank at the thought that it might be Langford's yacht, and yet even his vessel would be welcome, any boat, indeed. The light grew larger. The night was very still, the sea entirely calm; sound carried a great way under such circumstances. Presently she heard the throb and beat of a screw. The vessel was coming nearer. There was some faint light from the many stars above her head. She thought she could make out the bulk of the ship.

It was close at hand now. She must go down to the beach to meet it. She rose to her feet and started down the hill. She went slowly, cautiously at first, but finally she broke into a reckless run. She strayed from the path in her excitement, her foot caught in a projecting root. A sharp, excruciating pain shot through her. Something seemed to break in her ankle. She pitched forward on her face and lay still.

When she came to her senses light was shining in her eyes. Men stood about her holding ships lanterns. Someone bent over her as someone had bent over her five years before when she lay senseless on the sand. A voice she knew called to her; arms to whose touch she thrilled gathered her up; she felt a heart beat against her own. He had come back. He was there.

"Woman," said the man, "I have come back to you."

"Man," returned the woman, oblivious of those who stood around, holding the lights, to whom she gave no single thought indeed they were those who knew her well "Man," she asked, true to her resolution, "do you love me as much as on that night?"

"More, a thousand times!"

"And do you think me worthy...?"

"Do not ask! It is I who am unworthy of you."

"I can die now," said the woman softly, lapsing into unconsciousness again.

"Great God!" cried the man, straining her to his breast again, "have I found her



only to lose her.”

“Let me look,” said the surgeon whom by good chance they had picked up at San Francisco. “She didn’t look like a dying woman a moment since. Lay her down, man, and stand back.”

Whittaker and the chaplain pulled Charnock aside. The surgeon took his place by the prostrate figure.

“Lights here!” he cried. He made such rapid examination as he could, seeing in a moment one foot lying inert, out of place, and helpless. “She’s only fainted,” he said. “It’s her ankle. She’s broken it in the darkness coming to meet us. We will take her to the ship.”

“No,” said the man, “she must come of her own free will. Send to the ship for bandages and what ever you require.”

“Very well,” said the surgeon, rising and conferring hastily with Mr. Whittaker. “Meanwhile, your handkerchiefs, gentlemen, and some cold water.”

“There is a spring hereabouts,” said the man, “on the other side of the hill.”

“I will fetch the water,” said the chaplain.

He was wearing a tightly woven straw hat in which he could easily carry it.

Mr. Whittaker turned and ran to the beach, whence he sent the boat off to the ship. The surgeon meanwhile had bound up the woman’s ankle, had bathed it with water and whiskey, and had forced some of the spirit down the woman’s throat, but the man’s touch, his presence, would have sufficed to call her back to life.

“Do you suffer?” he asked tenderly as consciousness returned to her.

“Not since you are here,” she said. “I ran to meet the ship and fell and hurt my ankle.”

“The doctor has fixed it up for you. We have sent to the ship for bandages.”

“Man,” she said, “whose ship is it?”

“Mine.”

“Did you see my signal?”

“Yes, we were glad because it told us that you were alive, but we were coming directly here.”

“And did you come for me?”

“For you only.”

“How did you know that I was here?”

“I didn’t know it.”

“Why did you come, then?”

“I was sent here.”

“Who sent you?”

“Langford.”

“Did he tell you I was here?”

“No, he told me to go back to the island, that was all.”

“Nothing more?”

“He gave me a letter which I was to open when I set foot upon it.”

“Open it now,” said the woman.

She had risen to a sitting position. He knelt beside her, his arm around her supporting her. He carried the letter in his pocket. He had slipped it there as he started for the shore. He took it out and handed it to her.

“You may open it,” he said.

With trembling fingers she tore the envelope. Inside there was nothing for him, but a smaller envelope addressed to her. The chaplain held the light close to

enable them to see.

“It is for me,” she said, “not for you.”

“Yes,” said Charnock gravely, stifling a spasm of jealousy in his heart.

She laid it in his hand.

“You may open it.”

“Not I,” returned the man, touched by this confidence. “It is for you.”

Without more ado she tore open the second envelope. A little slip of paper fell from it. His message was astonishingly brief. While Charnock resolutely averted his head, she read these words:

“I broke my word once to your sorrow; I break it again to your joy. Won’t you try to remember, now that I am gone, that I tried to make amends and that I gave him back to you.”

She stared at the paper a moment, and then she read the simple words aloud.

Charnock understood vaguely that in some way Langford had known that the woman was alive — how he could ascertain later — and that she had made him promise not to tell; that he had broken his promise, and died.

“Now that I am gone! I don’t understand the words,” said the woman.

“They are his last words, I take it,” answered the man. “He looked like a dead man when he came to me at my house in Virginia and told me to go back to the island.”

“Poor Langford!” said the woman.

“May God have mercy on him!” added the old chaplain solemnly. He knew the story, too. “Do you forgive him, my child?” asked the old man as he, too, turned away to leave these two alone.

“With all my heart,” answered the woman.

“And do you forgive me?” asked Charnock softly.

“With all my heart!” again answered the woman, but with a change in the intonation that made all the difference in the world between the two statements.

She turned her face toward him. She reached her arms up to his neck as he bent over her. She forgot everything in the long kiss he pressed upon her trembling lips while he held her close to his heart, in that still and starry night, on that gemlike island of regeneration, in that far Pacific sea.