

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns in a dark brown color, framing the central text. The border is composed of four corner pieces and four side pieces, each featuring elegant, symmetrical designs of leaves and scrolls.

# Valhalla

VALHALLA

A NOVEL

BY GEORGE LONG

AUTHOR OF "FORTUNE'S WHEEL"

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR TO HIS GOD-DAUGHTER  
MISS EDITH PEARL LAVINGTON

For me kind nature wakes her genial pow'r,  
Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;  
Annual for me the grape, the rose renew  
The juice nectarious, and the balmy dew;  
For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;  
For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;  
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;  
My foot-stool earth, my canopy the skies.  
But errs not nature from this gracious end,  
From burning suns when livid deaths descend,  
When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep  
Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?  
No ('tis reply'd), the first almighty cause  
Acts not by partial, but by general laws;  
Th' exceptions few, some change since all began;

And what created perfect? — why then man?

—\_Pope's Essay on Man. First Epistle.\_

VALHALLA

## CHAPTER I

IT was in the year 19— that there came upon the world a great and vast upheaval of nature, so terrible and far-reaching in its consequences, that it made all the survivors on the earth fear and tremble. It came suddenly, as such events always do. The powers of the earth were shaken, though the sun and moon continued to give their light, nevertheless men's hearts failed them for fear. Something had gone wrong in the world — they knew not what. Subterranean thunder rolled beneath men's feet as they rushed out into the streets, the fields, the highways, anywhere rather than remain beneath a roof. Throughout the land houses trembled to their foundations, as immense thunder-laden clouds crashed into each other overhead with a dull, reverberating, awful shock. The sea had swept up on the lowlands like a tidal wave, driving men inland panic-stricken.

Once recovered from the terrible shock which had been felt by all in Great Britain, it was gradually realized what had happened. Cables were used to all parts of the world, but no replies came. Those ships that came in reported nothing but a vast expanse of water everywhere, all the old landmarks had gone. Steamers were sent out to explore as far as they could manage without fresh coaling, and all returned, save one, with the same tale, no old landmarks. Even Ireland and the Channel Islands had disappeared. Could it be possible that Great Britain was the only land that had not been submerged? Yet everything pointed to that as a fact. Still God's great covenant with man had not been broken, and His bow remained in the clouds. The whole world had not been drowned; but were not the survivors face to face with starvation? What had brought such a great calamity upon the earth? Man could not say, it was beyond him.

At first all were calm, but it was only that deep hush that comes before a storm. Here on this island were millions of people with food enough to last them only about a month. The thought bred madness. The wise men of the country strove, and organized, and planned, like the occupants of a besieged city, to make the available rations last until more could, in the ordinary course of events, be obtained, but it was no use. As well might they have tried to stem the tide of some angry sea, or stop the flow of water from some swollen river, which had risen above its banks. Lawlessness and anarchy prevailed, the strong took from the weak, and thousands fell from starvation in a short time. The dead went unburied, and bred a pestilence in the land, so that old and young, rich and poor,

high and low, went down before the great reaper Death, until apparently not a soul remained on the earth. Yet two lives were spared even in Britain.

Then the land was turned into a Valhalla, a home for the spirits of the dead. Everywhere, on all sides, the spirits worked for the good of the two surviving human beings. Whatever they wanted was done for them by invisible hands.

Henry Lear was one of the survivors. He was a young man now five-and-twenty; of medium height, with dark curling hair, grey eyes, and an open countenance a little marked with care, and world-worn. He had in early youth led a wild life, but afterwards had become a recluse; and when the dire calamity came upon the world he was living in a remote farmhouse almost alone; he was soon left entirely so. He knew of this upheaval of the world's foundations, but laughed for the consequences. He cared nothing for this life, and he feared not death. No one gave him a thought, so why should he go out into the world to trouble about others?

“To every man upon this earth

Death cometh soon or late.”

And he had no wish to live. So as long as he was alone he was indifferent, but when all others had died, he was by himself no longer, and he knew it — the kingdom of Valhalla had begun; but he was not afraid, for his nature had changed to meet the new order of things in the world around him.

The spirits began to work for him. So soon as he came down in the morning he found food set out for him by invisible hands. If he wanted his horse, he had only to walk out to the stable and there it was ready with saddle and bridle on, while all animals seemed entirely under his control.

He now wished to see what had come to the country, to the world, and at once an unseen force urged him on.

In the early morning, he mounted his horse and rode slowly to the town. He crossed the downs wrapped in mist, and saw the sun rise in all his glory, and as he gained the hard road, the dew on the grass by the highway sparkled like diamonds as he trotted along. All in the town was loneliness and desolation, so after leaving his horse at the usual stables he made his way to the railway-station. No sound or sign of human life anywhere, but he took his seat in the

train with a wish to travel to the great city of London, and punctually at the appointed time the shrill whistle of the engine burst out, and he began to move slowly out of the station. Henry Lear did not feel strange or uncomfortable in the least, he realized exactly what had happened, and was going to happen, and he was gradually finding out his power.

As the train rushed by station after station without stopping, he passed them all without notice. As he ran through towns uninhabited by a single being he did not think of the desolation, it was completely indifferent to him. When once London was reached the train drew up with a jerk. He could see no cabs, no people, no sign of man at all.

At first he doubted what to do, then it occurred to him to try the Metropolitan train, and he entered one, and made a tour of the city. He walked out into the streets, but all was the same, man had passed away, so far as he knew, for ever. Here and there sights met his eye which were enough to appal, but he took no notice of the dead. The greatest city in the world had been turned into “an abomination of desolation,” but what was that to him? He was fortified by some strength beyond human will or power; yet he wished that all the dead in the land might be put away out of his sight.

He became hungry and entered a restaurant, but nothing remained but empty plates and glasses. He hurried out again.

Then a longing came over him to be alone no more, and he was led to the railway-station, not to the same whence he came, but to one by which he could quickly get away miles to the north.

A spirit moved him to say “Liverpool,” and again the engine whistled and moved on slowly until he found himself gradually increasing in speed, when he simply flew through the country toward the north.

Nature was too much for him and, tired out, he fell asleep as he was whirled along.

## CHAPTER II

WHAT of the other who survived? She was a tall girl of twenty-two, fair, with a good figure— not altogether pretty or handsome; but with a nice sweet face, which gave one the impression that she was firm and true. She had been living alone at Oban, where she had fled when the plague had devastated the land, after the great upheaval; but she too had failed to feel her loneliness until all in the land had died, except Henry Lear, then she felt that she was not alone, and at once had the desire to go back to the world, and see for herself what had happened. She walked into Oban, and found all much the same as Henry had done in London; she was not afraid, but she wished no longer to be alone, and in a moment she was attracted to the railway-station, just as the man had been, and found a train waiting for her.

Something prompted her to say “Liverpool,” and the train at once moved off.

They were both led by a spirit to realize that they were seeking each other, and it was almost at the same moment that each wished to go to Liverpool. Then began a race against time by the trains, and though no record can be given, it must have beaten any that went before. Henry Lear was the first to arrive, but the steam had scarcely slackened on his engine when the other train drew up into the station. Henry found its lonely occupant, and opened the carriage door. Flora Malcolm started at the sound of a human voice.

“We have met at last,” said Henry Lear; “I have dreamed of this.”

“So have I,” said Flora, as she descended to the platform.

And looking at each other they laughed at their own words and at the situation. It seemed so curious to be thus brought together. But their laughter sounded hollow in that great place, all by themselves.

“Let us go,” said Henry.

“But where?” said Flora. “Oh, I wish we knew where to find other people.”

She had scarcely expressed the wish when she was led away as before by some unknown power. Henry followed her. They reached the docks. There they found

a large Atlantic liner waiting for them with steam up. They stepped on board and immediately the electric bells rang, the engines began to throb, and “The Queen of the Waters” moved slowly out to sea. Henry led Flora to the saloon, where they found a capital luncheon put out for them. The ship was being worked by invisible hands.

“Rather good quarters,” said Henry.

“Excellent,” answered Flora; “but the best of it is, we are going to find other people.”

“How do you know?”

“I feel it,” said Flora, “just as I did that I should meet you.”

“So do I,” said Henry.

The good vessel bounded through the waves, and both remembered now that they were leaving the land of the dead behind them.

Flora was quite at her ease; somehow it seemed as though the ship were full of people, though they saw them not. After an excellent dinner Flora went over to the piano and touched the keys. As her fingers played over them she seemed inspired, so glorious was the music that rang out in that saloon. It seemed to speak to Henry of a new land and a life and love to come of which he had never dreamed.

“Play that again,” he said, “if you don’t mind. You have put fresh feeling into this old heart of mine.”

“Really, have I?” said Flora. “Old heart indeed! But I scarcely know what I played, or if I can do it again, but to please you, I will try.”

During the pause they could hear the engines work, and the lash of the waves along the vessel’s sides; but as Flora’s fingers touched the instrument again, the music seemed to bring Henry a promise of healing to a wound which he had thought would for ever remain open and sore.

“Thank you,” he murmured, as the last notes died away; “you have eased me of a pain that has long lain in my breast — I never heard such music before.”



“That may well be,” she said; “I certainly have never played like it.” Flora struck the notes once more, and the sound awakened fresh aspirations in Henry’s heart, and he felt prepared to brave all for the woman before him. “Thank you,” he said, “I shall not forget that music.”

“I am so sleepy,” said Flora, “I think I will find my cabin and go to bed.”

“Yes, you must be tired out after all the events of the day.” Then he added, half shyly, “You will not be nervous all alone with me on this great ship, will you?”

“Oh no; besides, we are not alone you know. Good night.”

“Good night and good rest,” returned Henry, as he held the saloon door open for her to pass out, and watched her till she had reached her cabin and closed the door.

## CHAPTER III

THERE was one steamer that did not return. It was the "Albatross," commanded by Captain Sinclair. When ordered out on a tour of inspection to see what had happened, this officer had yielded to the prayers of his wife and daughter and taken them with him. The ship was manned as usual, and he had on board Sir Philip Stewart, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and the Reverend Charles Robertson as chaplain.

Sir Philip was a good-hearted man with a clear and practical mind, slightly retiring in disposition. His wife had been away in America with her own people at the crisis, and he was afraid he had lost her. Mr. Robertson was a young man, unmarried, conscientious, and true to the life he had chosen.

The ship was well coaled and provisioned, and Captain Sinclair meant to have a good look round; in fact, he was in no hurry to get back to his own country, realizing as he did the too awful consequences in store for it. At first he took an eastward course, and steamed slowly across the world where Europe had been; then, turning, he crossed the sea which now rolled over Africa, and was proceeding to go over what was formerly the Atlantic Ocean to make investigations with regard to America, when suddenly he was startled nearly out of his senses by the cry of "Land ahead!"

"Half speed ahead" was at once the order; but they had not gone much farther when there was a grinding noise combined with a vibration of the vessel which told those on board unmistakably that the "Albatross" had grounded.

"Reverse engines, full speed astern," cried the captain; but the ship was fast and moved not.

To make things worse a heavy storm came up behind them, and a panic ensued.

Heavy seas struck the ship with great force, sending over the decks a drenching spray, and as the wind increased the vessel began to heel over ominously to one side.

"Lower the boats," cried Captain Sinclair, "and let me ask you to take care of the passengers, and, before all, the ladies. My wife and daughter I commend to your

care; myself, I remain on the ship.”

At this moment Lilian Sinclair came on the deck supporting her mother, she had heard her father’s words.

“I shall not leave father,” she said firmly, as she held the rail with her left hand and with the right she supported her mother.

“Be of good courage,” said the Rev. Charles Robertson, “‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ I also will keep you company.”

Lilian noted his remark, but did not answer. Lieutenant Miles came forward at that moment.

“Come, if you would be saved,” he said, “the boats are ready.”

“Leave us,” said Lilian, “I stay with my father.”

“In that case I take my chance too,” said Miles, and he waved to the crew to save themselves if they could. Mrs. Sinclair trembled with fear, but she made no attempt to move. The boats got clear away, but they had little chance of living in that sea, or their occupants of reaching that land, which, as it now occurred to all left on board for the first time, had probably never yet been touched by the foot of man.

The storm increased and the boats disappeared from their view, and all gave themselves up for lost, when suddenly the vessel moved slightly, and rolled as if floating again.

“HI only had my crew I believe I could right her now,” said Captain Sinclair.

“Oh, how I wish we were back in England,” said Lilian.

No sooner had she spoken than the ship seemed full of men; the engines were reversed and set working to their full power, the wheel turned, and gradually the ship swung round and pushed slowly in the teeth of the wind out to sea. Like the “Queen of the Waters” she was being worked by invisible hands.

The three men and two women looked at each other, but even as Henry Lear and Flora Malcolm, they were not afraid.

The ship toiled on through those heavy seas, gradually working away from that newborn coast, for in place of the Atlantic Ocean had sprung up a large continent, which at present was nothing but barren rocks and sand.

“I begin to see now what has happened,” said Captain Sinclair; “the old levels are altered, and what was sea has become land, and vice versa.”

“That does indeed seem to be so,” said Mr. Robertson; “but how comes it that our own country, Great Britain, has not been swallowed up by the seas?”

“I can only account for that by supposing that the whole land has been raised higher by volcanic action, in the same way that this new world has sprung out of the ocean,” said Captain Sinclair.

“But surely,” said Mr. Robertson, “in that case we should have felt more of the shock than we did, besides, it would be very remarkable if the whole land, just as it was, had been moved up without any addition or subtraction.”

“Would not a depression on the seabottom around our shores come to the same thing?” inquired Miles.

“I cannot understand it,” said Captain Sinclair. “The fact remains that with all this great upheaval the sea has found her level without submerging Britain.”

Meantime the storm had ceased, and the ship now made good way on her course towards the old country, for the captain, on making observations, found they were running straight for England.

They got all they required in just the same way that the passengers on the “Queen of the Waters” did, and, with plenty to eat and drink, they managed to amuse themselves and keep up their spirits, for they did not know or care what was before them.

As the day advanced a strange thing happened. Another steamer came in sight and, after a time, passed them at full speed in the opposite direction. It was the “Queen of the Waters,” but neither party had wished to stop, so they sped on and were each soon lost to view.

The “Albatross” continued her course until she duly arrived in the Liverpool docks, and the party landed. All was emptiness and desolation. They entered an

hotel, but no food of any kind was found that could be eaten.

“We shall have to make the ‘ Albatross ‘ our head-quarters for the present, I can see,” said Captain Sinclair.

“And we had better make the most of the provisions on board it strikes me,” said Mr. Robertson.

“Evidently we are expected to find our own food even under the new arrangements,” said Lilian.

“We shall have to formulate some plan for doing that,” said Lieutenant Miles, “or we too may be starved.”

So they had a look round before they returned to the ship, but go where they would no sign of human life met their eye, and even the dead had been removed.

“I wonder where the other steamer is, and if she has many on board?” said Mrs. Sinclair.

“I only saw two,” said Lilian; “I wish they would come back, and that we could meet them.”

At once she was led to the “Albatross “by an unseen power, and the others followed her.

No sooner were they all aboard than the ship steamed out of the harbour.

## CHAPTER IV

WHEN the boats left the “Albatross ” they were quickly driven towards the new rocky coast. It was not long before they were swamped, and all hands were lost except Sir Philip Stewart, who swam ashore.

For three days he managed to keep himself alive on the shellfish by the sea, and on the fourth he was overjoyed to see a large steamer approaching. It was the “Queen of the Waters.” Henry Lear thought every moment that she must ground, but she swung round before she had gone too far. It was then that Flora observed something moving on shore.

“I will fetch some glasses from the saloon,” said Henry, and he came back on deck to make better observations.

“Yes, it is a man,” said he; “I wish we could save him.”

Immediately one of the boats began to be lowered, and when Henry and Flora had got in, it was let down and propelled towards the shore, so they were able to pick up Sir Philip.

“Have you been here long?” asked Henry, c 25

“Only three whole days. I had only just wished to see a ship when you came in sight,” he said.

“I hope we shall get back safely,” said Henry.

“We saw another steamer going towards England,” said Flora, “I wish we could join her.”

The boat was taken back to the steamer, and as soon as they were on board she moved away.

“I should like to land at Southampton,” said Henry, “it is near my house, and I would like to take you there.”

“Perhaps we shall,” said Flora, and they held on their course.

“I wonder if I shall ever visit that newborn land again,” said Sir Philip; “some day I should like to do so.”

“What is it like?” asked Flora.

“I could not tell much about it, but I should say it will be nothing but a barren waste for years,” said Sir Philip.

Flora had taken Sir Philip to the saloon, where he was glad to appease his thirst and hunger.

“It all seems very wonderful what you tell me,” said he. “Are all my countrymen dead except you?”

“Yes, all except those we saw on the other steamer, but I can’t say how many they are or where they were going,” answered Henry.

“It must, I think, have been the ‘Albatross/ but how she got away unharmed is a mystery.”

“The ‘Albatross’?” said Flora.

“Yes, the steamer we came out on to see if we could meet with more land, and when we did find any it was quite unexpected you know. We ran on the rocks. I left in the boats, but we had not gone far before they were capsized, and all except myself were lost. Three times I tried to land, but was dragged back by the waves; but I wished to save my life and see the new land, and by some chance, as I thought, I was washed in by the sea and found myself lying high up on the shore, but I now see there was some supernatural assistance about it.”

“The spirits were helping; but what is your opinion about it all?” asked Henry.

“I think that all the old land, except Great Britain, is gone, but that new continents have risen up to take the place of the others. As for the spirits, I have not thought much about them, but it seems wonderful that they should manifest so much power in the world,” said Sir Philip. “Don’t stay with me if you wish to go on deck,” he added to the young couple considerately. “I can look after myself you know.”

“We will leave you to rest for a while then,” said Henry. “Will you come,

Flora?”

“Yes,” she answered. “I am sure Sir Philip must be worn out.” And they left Sir Philip in the saloon.

As they leaned over the rail and watched the waters rush by, there was no word of love spoken, but —

“Soft eyes looked love to eyes that spake again.”

And these two seemed to know without need of words that they were meant for man and wife in the new order of things.

“I wonder if the unseen world will continue to help us always,” said Flora.

“I wonder,” said Henry; “but I hope it will, for what could you and I have done alone and unassisted in so vast a space?”

“True,” said Flora, “we should have been quite powerless.”

“You will come to the old farmhouse, will you not?”

“Yes, I hope I shall always be with you now.”

“If we could only get that piano, you would play to me sometimes.”

“At any time you liked,” answered Flora.

“And when you are with me we can ride out together. I have many horses.”

“Yes, of course, I shall like that.”

“I left one horse when I came out into the world to seek company, I wonder if the spirits have looked after him.”

“I expect so,” said Flora; “they seem to take an interest in our affairs — these invisible beings.”

“They do,” said Henry, “and know what they are about too, more than any human hand could do.”



“How strange it seems,” said Flora, “to think of our land as being the home of the spirits of the dead. I hope it is only the souls of heroes who are there, and that they will work for our good alone.”

“They brought you to me,” said Henry; “I could forgive much after that, whatever they do.”

“You prize me too highly, it was Hobson’s choice you know, they could bring no one else.”

“If they had the chance to select from thousands they would never find one more worthy of acceptance,” Henry replied.

“That is true also of you,” said Flora. And so they talked on until they came in sight of the white cliffs of southern England, and in due time ran up the Southampton Water and into the docks.

Here they found the “Albatross” already waiting for them, and at length all the living people of the earth, so far as they knew, were united, with one exception.

As they landed Captain Sinclair came forward to greet them, and was astounded to see Sir Philip Stewart there.

“Ah, old friend,” said Sir Philip, “it is as I guessed, you returned in the ‘Albatross’/ you lucky ones who had the sense to remain.”

“I did not expect to see you again,” said Lilian Sinclair and Miles almost in a breath.

“I owe my life to these young people,” said Sir Philip; “let me introduce you.”

“Not to us,” said Henry after they had shaken hands, “but to the unseen power that has helped us.”

“I like to give you the credit, anyhow,” said Sir Philip.

“And are we the only living people, do you think?” inquired Henry.

“So it appears,” Sir Philip replied.

“Eight persons — five men and three women,” said Lieutenant Miles.

“How strange,” said Sir Philip; “if only my wife were here I could put up with anything; but living or dead I wish I could go to her.”

As soon as he had spoken he was drawn back to the “Queen of the Waters,” and once more that good ship put out to sea. Sir Philip waved his hand to those behind and was quickly gone from sight.

“He will find her,” said Henry; “you’ll see, he will find her.”

“Lady Stewart was on the sea when the calamity came upon us?” asked Flora.

“Yes,” said Henry, “I heard him say she was expected home from America.”

“Will you all come to the farm with me now?” said Henry.

They all willingly consented. So they took their seats in a train within the station, and as soon as Henry wished to go to Dunston they started away.

## CHAPTER V

SIR PHILIP STEWART went forth alone into the great world of waters. He knew not where the spirits would lead him, but he was not dismayed. He felt certain now that he would find his wife somewhere, dead or alive.

He had not long to wait before he knew more. Going down to the saloon, he partook of a meal set out for him and then went off in a deep sleep. When he awoke it was early morning, and his ship was lying-to by the Scilly Islands. As he reached the deck a boat was lowered, and he got into it and was taken towards the land. He looked about and saw some one seated on a bench waving to him to come. As he got nearer he saw that it was his wife, and he rushed forward. Before he could reach her she had fainted, and he found her lying death-like on the seat.

“She is dead!” he cried in agony as he took her in his arms, “she is dead!”

Staggering along with his burden, he succeeded in reaching the boat and was pulled back again to the steamer.

All the time Lady Stewart lay in her husband’s arms, cold and pale as death, while the cool sea air played on her cheeks. Sir Philip dipped his handkerchief in the sea and chafed her temples — there was a slight movement of the heart, a little flutter of the closed lids. The shock of the cold water roused her, and by the time they reached the ship she had somewhat revived.

“Do you know me, dear?” said Sir Philip, “you must have fainted.”

“Yes, I saw you coming, and the relief was too much for me, I remember no more.”

It was with great difficulty that Sir Philip got his wife on board, but he wished to get her there and the unseen powers assisted him.

Once more they proceeded back to the Southampton docks.

“How came you on those islands?” asked Sir Philip.

“We were wrecked in the most awful sea imaginable, but I was carried by the waves on to some rocks and saved together with three others, but they have since died.”

“What a marvellous escape,” said Sir Philip.

“I thought I should have died like the rest, but when they were gone I awoke one morning with the feeling that I was not alone, and a fresh strength came to me. I walked to the houses near and found a little food which I could scarcely eat, but it served to keep me alive until you came.”

“Do you feel better now you have had refreshment here?”

“Yes, much.”

“We are lucky to have it. There are only seven other persons besides ourselves saved on the earth, and of food there is scarcely any left anywhere, from what I hear.”

“Who are the people?” asked Lady Stewart.

“Altogether we are five men and four women — two married couples and two more young couples who look like making matches of it, and the odd man is the Rev. C. Robertson, who was chaplain on our boat.”

“How lucky! he will do for the marriages.”

“Oh yes, but a formal marriage service will be scarcely required now. If a man accepts a woman as his wife and she consents before witnesses that should be sufficient, somewhat after the Scottish marriage laws.”

“Yes, that should be quite enough. Tell me more about these other men and women.”

“Well, there is Captain Sinclair and his wife, a woman about your own age; then there is his daughter, Lilian Sinclair; and another girl, Flora Malcolm, who is I think attached to Henry Lear; and lastly there is Lieutenant Miles, who should take Lilian Sinclair for a wife.”

“You are becoming quite a match-maker, Philip.”

“No, it is no matter to me at all except that I take an interest in Lear and Flora, because it was through them I was saved and brought back from the new world.”

“How?”

Sir Philip here told his wife his own adventures, and of the work which the spirits were doing.

“How wonderful it all seems.”

“It does,” said Sir Philip.

“What a strange people we shall be, and I wonder how we shall get on?”

“I wonder, too,” said Sir Philip; “I feel that a great responsibility has fallen on us, we shall have to carry on and repopulate the world, and if possible preserve all knowledge for the benefit of the future race, so that nothing may be lost.”

“How strange,” answered Lady Stewart.

“I thought I knew something, but now I feel like a child again; what I do know is not much good at present. Henry Lear will be master of the most useful art: agriculture will be of more consequence than anything at present, and Henry is just the man to organize for us and lead us.”

“Is he a good man?”

“Yes, I have every confidence in him; he is clever and strong, and seems exactly fitted to start the new order of things which this great change in the universe has brought about.”

“Where are they now?”

“That I can’t say; I left them at Southampton, but Henry was going to take every one to his farm. No doubt we shall find them there just in the same way that we have all been able to meet. It is done by the unseen, the spirits of the dead, who are working to help us.”

Thus by the time they got back to Southampton Lady Stewart knew as much of the present state of things as the rest.

They searched about, but found no trace of or message from the others; so they got into a train, and as usual were taken on out of the station. As they went they saw a curious sight, and Sir Philip wished the train would stop so that they might get a better view of what was passing before them. The train slowly drew up and they were able to see a pack of hounds pass in full cry, followed by horses mounted by invisible horsemen. The hounds stuck to the line as they do on the keenest scent; some horses rushed madly at the fences, drunk with excitement; some took them steadily, and made clean jumps; some fell, but were up again instantly, and resumed the chase.

Sir Philip and his wife watched until all had passed out of sight; then they wished to renew the journey, and instantly they started on again, and in due time arrived at Dunston.

Seeing a motor-car outside the station, they got in, and wished to be drawn to Henry's farm. They were taken there without mishap of any kind.

## CHAPTER VI

HENRY LEAR came out to welcome Sir Philip and Lady Stewart to his home. He had taken a great fancy to this man, and he knew that he was to be of great assistance to him in the carrying on of the work of the world.

“I have found her, you see,” said Sir Philip, introducing his wife.

“I am so glad,” said Henry; “but I knew you would.”

“But whatever is all this?” asked Sir Philip, pointing to the drive, which was strewn with gold. “Have you had a shower of sovereigns?”

“Oh no, I simply wished to have some here instead of gravel, I thought they would look well, you know; and now loads on loads are arriving. Listen,” he said, “they are just going to shoot down a cart-full.”

Shing! shing! went the gold coins as they fell out, making that ring which is peculiar to gold as a metal.

“Ah, I see,” said Sir Philip; “what is wealth now, when there is so much among so few?”

“That is just it,” said Henry; “we are not likely to be short of money for many years to come, but of what use will it be? Credit will be lost to us, and we shall have to work on other lines.”

“Wealth will no longer be anything,” said Lady Stewart; “let us hope we may all have health and happiness.”

“My friend Lear here will look after us for that; so long as he sees to the production of food, it seems to me invisible hands will do the rest.”

The other ladies now joined them and took Lady Stewart into the house.

“How goes the farm?” asked Sir Philip.

“Very well; I have only to arrange everything and the unseen do the work. See,” he said, pointing to a field, “those teams are all being worked and driven by the

invisible.”

“Just as I expected,” said Sir Philip. “Well, you young men will have nothing else to do but make love, and we old ones “

“Must do the same,” put in Henry.

“How is Miss Flora Malcolm?”

“Very well indeed; she has nothing to do except ride, walk, and pick the flowers.”

“Is the ladies’ work done in the same way?”

“Precisely,” said Henry; “the cows are milked, the butter made, and all that kind of thing, by invisible hands.”

“What a strange world it will seem; but I expect there will be plenty of work for our brains by-and-by, when we find out just what we have to do.”

“Yes, and trouble too for some of us,” said Henry, looking darkly.

“How do you mean?” asked Sir Philip.

“Well, our wills and wishes may clash before long, and then what will happen? Whose part will the unseen take?”

“Whatever happens will be for the best,” answered Sir Philip, for he noticed that Henry had something in his mind, but did not press him further.

“You must excuse me now,” said Henry, “I have promised to ride with Flora Malcolm; make yourself at home, and remember that so far as this world’s goods go you can help yourself to everything.”

“Thank you,” said Sir Philip, and went into the house.

Henry and Flora went for a gallop on the downs, as they did nearly every day.

“I am glad the Stewarts have come, I like them,” said Henry.

“So do I,” said Flora; “in fact, I can say I like all the world except one, and that



is Miles, he does not look trustworthy.”

“No!”

“Lilian is in love with him, but he does not care for her.”

“How have you made that discovery?”

“Never mind how, I have.”

Henry thought he could guess, but said nothing.

“I am alarmed at times,” Flora went on. “When one comes to think of it, what power for evil might be used through the help of the unseen.”

“That remains to be proved. Would any one get help for an evil purpose?” said Henry.

“I see; that is doubtful, you mean?”

“Hitherto the power has been used to help us for good, has it not?”

“Yes,” answered Flora; but she was not satisfied.

They rode on and came back round the farm. All the crops looked well. Everything that Henry could think of to be done on the farm was carried out at once. It was now spring, and the winter corn was grown and covered the ground, while that lately sown was just shooting forth. The cry from the mellow throat of the cuckoo came to them through the woodlands, and everywhere in the woods and hedges the birds sent out a joyous chorus.

“Does that fellow, Miles, care for you?” Henry asked suddenly.

“I can’t say exactly; but I don’t like the way he looks and speaks to me. He says that he agrees with Sir Philip Stewart that if two persons accept each other as man and wife before witnesses, it should be a valid marriage.”

“I should prefer keeping to the old orthodox way in a church,” said Henry. “I don’t like the man, do you?”

“No, I care for no one but you, Henry.”

“And you will be my wife soon?”

“Yes, whenever you like.”

“I will ask Mr. Robertson about it, and arrange for us to be married as he advises.”

“I think that will be wise,” said Flora.

Thus these two were perfectly happy and trustful, and all seemed going well with the little colony.

But all the time Lieutenant Miles was hatching a dark scheme in his brain. He wanted Flora for his wife, and not Lilian, and he was going to use the powers to gain his purpose. He thought of what the Stewarts had related on their arrival about the hunt they had seen, and he conceived a plan which he thought would place Flora in his hands.

It was this. He wished for a number of horses ridden by invisible troopers to hold themselves in readiness on the downs to assist him in carrying Flora off the first time she should ride alone.

He could think of no other way to force her to go with him and at the same time protect himself if he were followed. He might have to wait some time, as he knew that Flora seldom ventured out on horseback alone; but he was willing to do that, and he watched day after day. At last his chance came.

## CHAPTER VII

FLORA MALCOLM rode forth on the downs by herself, suspecting nothing. She had cantered some distance away from home, and was about to return when she saw a troop of horses advancing towards her. As they came near she recognized Lieutenant Miles in front, and noticed that he was followed by a large troop of horses, mounted as she had no doubt by invisible horsemen. Her heart sank, but she kept up her courage as well as possible.

“What do you want?” said Flora, as they came up.

“I wish you to come with me,” said Miles, “and as I thought you might possibly object, I have got assistance, as you may see.”

“I will not go with you. How dare you molest me in this manner?” said Flora.

“It’s no use to waste words, as you will find,” said Miles. At the same moment two of the invisible troopers passed up on each side of her, and, in spite of her efforts to resist, her horse was led away.

“I will throw myself off if you go another step.”

“You will be trodden to death if you do,” said Miles, turning round in his saddle, for he was in front, leading the way.

Flora glanced round and saw that she was followed closely by the whole troop.

“We are going to trot,” said Miles, and they set off.

Poor Flora held on as well as she could, and was almost giving up in despair when, as luck would have it, they passed Captain Sinclair and Mr. Robertson, walking. Flora signalled her distress to them, but they were powerless to stop the troop.

“My wife,” said Miles as he passed; “we are going on our honeymoon.”

Before Flora could protest they had passed out of earshot.

Walking, trotting, and occasionally, when a good stretch of down permitted,

galloping on, they soon left miles of country behind them, and just before evening they reached the Thames between Maidenhead and Cookham.

Here Miles dismounted and asked Flora to do the same. She refused, but he dragged her from her horse. More dead than alive, Flora stood by the river-side. The invisible troopers retired to a distance and formed a cordon around her.

“Now,” said Miles, “you are at last in my power; you are my wife; consent to my wishes and all shall be well with you.”

“I cannot,” said Flora; “you know that I love another, and I — well, how can I care for a man who would treat a helpless girl as you have done? Don’t touch me! I hate you! I shall never be your wife!”

“Be reasonable,” said Miles, “I love you madly! I cannot live without you, and you are already mine, for I have said so before witnesses, and you did not dissent.”

“Love me!” said Flora. “You love me and put me to this torture? By behaving in this manner you did not give me the chance to gainsay your wicked statement; but you cannot force me to become your wife in such a way.”

“I will not let you go,” said Miles, advancing towards her; “and you cannot escape, for the unseen are helping me on every side.”

“Oh, what shall I do?” cried Flora; “what shall I do? Oh, have you no mercy?”

“Come to my arms,” he said, drawing nearer, “and I will protect you with my life.” ❖❖ Flora stepped back.

“If you come a single step nearer,” she said, “I will throw myself into the river.”

“Hold!” said Miles, as he thought she was going to carry out her threat.

“By heaven, I mean it; and if you don’t leave me at once I go,” said Flora.

The river was in flood, and as the yellow waters went rushing by with whirling eddies, his craven heart sank as he thought of seeing her thus carried out of his clutches.

“I will leave you to think it over, maybe you will become reconciled to your fate. Why,” he added, “is not one man as good as another?”

“You a man, you!” she said in scorn. “Ah, leave me. I will think. Only leave me.”

Miles turned away; he was appalled at the vehemence of her manner. The evening sun was setting and threw a rose light over the sky, which was reflected in the muddy water. Poor Flora almost longed for its cold embrace. Then a thought struck her: would not the unseen help her still? She immediately wished for a boat to come and take her across the river away from Miles — to at least comparative safety. She waited silently and anxiously, and presently, propelled and steered by unseen hands, a skiff shot into sight and was quietly brought to the bank and held there against the swift current, while Flora, holding her riding-habit tightly round her, sprang in. “The other bank,” she said, and at once the boat shot out across the river and ran in under Clevedon Woods.

The sun had gone down; overhead the stars came out as Miles crept up to make another attempt. He stole stealthily up, thinking to come between the girl and the river, taking her unawares, and then — but when he got to the bank Flora had gone. With a curse he turned away. Had she then saved herself in death? Had he done all in vain? He raved like a madman through the night, and then at daybreak he said, “Let me go to her, dead or alive.” He mounted and, followed by his troop of horses, was at once taken along the road at a brisk pace towards Cookham.

Meantime Flora had been afraid to leave the river-side. She thought that with the aid of the unseen her enemy might discover her whereabouts at any time; but she had fully made up her mind to perish in the water rather than fall into his power. She had wished fervently for Henry Lear to come to her rescue; but even then, what would happen? Would he gain the victory? Whose part would the unseen take? She wandered on towards the little town of Cookham and reached the bridge. Here she waited until morning light, weary but alert, watching for the approach of friend or enemy, she knew not which would first come. How long was this to go on? What terrible powers for good or evil might not men have when assisted by the unknown world beyond. She called aloud to the spirits of light to save her, and her prayers were answered.

## CHAPTER VIII

WHEN Captain Sinclair and Mr. Robertson hastened back in alarm to tell Henry Lear what they had seen and heard, the latter was paralysed with grief for Flora and doubt as to how to proceed. The danger which they had spoken of had actually come, and must be faced. Of fear for himself he had none, it was foreign to his nature; but he recognized what a serious part he would have to play if the unseen powers were going to work against him as well as for him.

“A troop of horses, you say, he had surrounding him and Flora? Oh, what will she do? What can I do?” said Henry. Then all at once, springing up, he added, “I will go to her rescue yet.”

He went out and found his horse ready. “I come, Flora, I come,” he said, “and by the time I reach you may I have as good a troop as Miles.”

As he dashed away over the downs he was joined by other horses, and whether on road or turf, up hill or down, he continued to make hot haste, and as the horses' hoofs struck the ground, they sent the echoes flying back far into the night.

It was past break of day when, reeking with sweat and sobbing with distress, the troop of horses drew up around the bridge at Cookham where Flora stood.

“Thank God I have found you! Is all well?” exclaimed Henry.

“All is well so far,” said Flora; “but oh, Henry, it has been a dreadful time.”

He threw himself from the saddle and took her tenderly in his arms, then, drawing a flask from his pocket, bade her try to drink a little.

Strengthened somewhat by the stimulant, she asked Henry what he intended to do.

“Let a horse be found for her,” cried Henry, looking towards his troop, and immediately one was led forward by invisible hands.

“Now let me help you to mount,” he said, and having put the bridle in her hands,

he got on his own horse, and they rode steadily back again on the road which they had come. Slowly they went, for the horses were dead tired.

When they reached the edge of the Berkshire downs they were overtaken by Miles and his troop, who came up at a gallop.

“Let my troop protect Flora, but not interfere; I will deal with Miles as man to man, and may God defend the right,” said Henry. Then, turning on Miles, he continued —

“How dare you outrage the laws of God and man by forcing an innocent girl away with you? You shall answer to me for it.”

“By what right do you assist my wife to leave me?” retorted Miles.

“Wife! she will never be wife of yours. You shall pay for this with your life.”

Henry dismounted and advanced; Miles did the same, but he drew a sword from its scabbard as it hung by a horse’s saddle.

Henry at once grasped another, and they faced each other. It was to be a fight to the death. With a curse Miles rushed on his antagonist, but Henry stood calm and still, and warded off every blow, until his opportunity came; then he made a cut and the sword dropped from Miles’ nerveless fingers — his wrist was severed. Henry raised his arm.

“Your life is in my hands; have you anything to say why I should not take it?”

“Take it,” said Miles; “you have all the luck and I have no wish to live.”

“I cannot,” said Henry. “Take another sword and try again; I too will use my left hand.”

“I will not,” said Miles sullenly.

“Then go, and never let me see your face again.”

Miles sprang to his horse. “You should have killed me,” he said. “You will regret your magnanimous folly one day,” and with an evil look he rode away at a gallop.

Henry went and fetched Flora's own horse, which was being led.

"I am thankful," he said, "for the help received, let all now disperse."

The horses went their ways with the unknown and unseen riders, and Flora and Henry pursued their road alone.

"Oh, it's a wicked thing, I suppose," said Flora, "but I wish you had not let that demon escape."

"Perhaps you are right," Henry replied; "but somehow I could not bring myself to kill him."

"You have a noble mind," said Flora. "No doubt it was for the best not to shed his blood, but I fear him."

"We may be thankful you escaped from him as you did," said Henry; "but it must have been awful for you to so near being in his power."

"I thought of you and longed to see you again, or I believe I should have been lost in the river," said Flora.

"We must be married at once, my dear," said Henry. "I have arranged for Captain Sinclair and his wife to have a house to themselves, and also the Stewarts; Mr. Robertson can remain with us for the present, but I hope he will marry Lilian."

"I hope so too. I should not imagine she can still care for Miles after what has happened."

"I think Robertson is attached to her, and he may have a better chance now, as you say."

"Are we to be married in a church?" asked Flora.

"Yes," said Henry. "I wish the marriage laws to remain the same, though I know that Sir Philip expressed different views; but he will not go against my desires, especially as of course Mr. Robertson sides with me. That is what Miles had in his mind when he said you were his wife."

"Yes, he shouted out to Captain Sinclair and Mr. Robertson that we were going



on our honeymoon. Oh, the insult of it,” said Flora.

“Never mind,” said Henry, “he has been checkmated, not mated, you know, dear.”

Flora laughed.

“Do you suppose we shall ever see him again?” she asked.

“I hope not,” said Henry. “He will not be allowed to remain near us if he does return.”

“I am so glad,” said Flora; “I could never rest with him about.”

“Another time, if anything happens, you must wish for me to come to you at once.”

“I will,” said Flora.

“I think I must have started to help you about the time you called for me, from what you say.”

“Yes,” said Flora.

“If he ever interferes with us again I shall not let him go a second time.”

But these two did not know how the powers were going to work for them. It all seemed so simple just to wish for this, that, or the other, and have it at once; but they found after a time that the help afforded by the spirits was intermitted at will.

“Do you feel very tired?” asked Henry.

“Yes, rather j but why?”

“I thought you must after all you have been through. Tonight you should take a good rest, and try to forget all about it. I will always be with you now as much as I can; but, remember, if you are in danger again wish for me at once.”

“I will not forget,” said Flora.

## CHAPTER IX

FLORA LEAR had been married nearly three years, and a boy and a girl had already arrived: little Henry Malcolm, now two years old, and Flora Malcolm, aged one.

Mr. Robertson had persuaded Lilian Sinclair to change her mind and her name at the same time, and they too had a little son and heir — Charles Sinclair.

Henry Lear had portioned out houses and lands for each family, and then crops had been abundant, and flocks and herds had increased.

All had gone well, when an event happened which shook the little colony to its foundations.

Flora one morning missed her little boy, and then, searching for him, she met Mrs. Sinclair, who had seen what she called a wild beast walking away with the little fellow.

“That’s Miles,” said Flora. “Oh, let me overtake him” — the last words uttered without thinking. She was at once drawn by an irresistible force to the railway-station, where she found a train waiting. As soon as she entered it left the station, and did not slacken speed until Maidenhead was reached. As she was led on towards the river she remembered her old danger.

“Oh, Henry, come and help me,” she said, and pushed on. Standing by the river on precisely the same spot where she had stood three years before was Miles, now more like a wild beast than a man, holding little Henry in his arms and threatening to throw him into the water.

“Stay, oh stay your hand!” cried Flora.

“Ah, I thought I should bring you to reason,” said Miles.

“Yes, only spare my boy, I will do anything.”

“Very well, you know the price,” said Miles, and he put his arm around her and stooped to kiss; but at that moment Flora, in a frenzy of anxiety, plunged a small

stiletto which she carried into his breast, and he fell dead at her feet. "So perish such demons," she said, and spurned him with her foot. She rolled him over and pushed his body into the river, which swiftly carried him away out of her sight.

Her joy at saving her boy removed the revulsion of feeling for a span, but she felt the loneliness of her position, and, to make it worse, it came on to snow hard.

Going back to the station, she took her place in the train; but for no desires or prayers would the unseen move it again. At last she gave up in despair and walked with little Henry to the bridge, and as the storm increased she sought shelter in a house by the river. Here she found coal and wood, and made a good fire, by which she was able to warm herself and her boy. All, however, was damp, and she was obliged to lie on the bare floor for rest. No food was placed before her, and she had to seek it herself. Little Henry was crying with cold and hunger, and at last she was rewarded by finding some rice, and this she boiled. The days flew by and she wished for her husband, but he came not. The same thing had happened to him as to Flora. At the moment that she killed Miles, Henry was travelling after her in a train by the assistance of the unseen, but all at once the train stopped, and thenceforward Henry had to help himself. The snow came on and blinded him, and he too had to seek shelter three days until the storm abated. Then he laboured on through the snow up the line until he came to the train standing still at Maidenhead. Here, thought Henry, they must be somewhere, and he searched the town, but in vain.

He was about to return to the station when he met Flora coming from the goods-shed with a r small bag of coal. Oh, the joy at that meeting, and to find his wife and little one safe!

"The unseen will help us no more," said Henry. "Why is it?"

"I can tell you," said Flora. "I hope you will not be angry, but I had to do it," and she related what had taken place.

"Ah, I see," said Henry; "he is the first of us to die, and he has put a stop to the assistance which we received from the dead."

"Was this his revenge?" said Flora.

"No matter," said Henry, "we have had ours."

“It was his just fate.”

“I would not have spared his life if I had known it would fall to your lot to spill his blood.”

“Never mind, I was justified in the sight of God and man. It was in defence of life and honour.”

“You were quite justified. No jury in the world would ever have found you guilty of anything more than justifiable homicide.”

“Or demoncide,” said Flora.

“But come to my new home,” said Flora; “you want rest.”

And she led Henry to her house, where she had gradually arranged the furniture and made things quite comfortable, and by the aid of the groceries she had been able to manage to keep life in existence.

Henry found an old gun and some ammunition, and went out and got a young sheep, which he dressed, and had mutton chops and rice bread. Wine too they found in the cellars, and made themselves quite cheerful and comfortable.

“How shall we get back to Dunston?” said Flora.

“I will manage that,” said Henry, “as soon as the weather improves. We have only to get down to Cookham, and take the route we did three years ago, and I shall make out the way all right.”

Henry busied himself by making preparations for the journey, and got all the food he could find packed ready.

“We shall be able to go in peace this time,” said Henry.

“I wonder how they are getting on at Dunston now that they have to do all for themselves,” said Flora.

“I wonder,” said Henry. “It will quite alter our mode of life; we shall have to go back to the old order of things.”

“I am glad,” said Flora; “that experience with Miles was enough for me.”

“It is enough that we have come out of it safely. Remember, dear,” said Henry, “but for the assistance which we received we should all have been isolated and forlorn, in fact, lost, and you with the rest, so I hope the spirits have not left us altogether.”

“I see it all was for the best,” said Flora; “and under any circumstances —

‘Whatever is, is right.’”

In a few days Henry and Flora were able to start on their journey, and they arrived home safely, when they set to work to start the world afresh on the old lines. But they found that the spirits had not wholly departed from them; for though they did not for a time attend to the personal wishes or desires of man, yet they continued to help look after some things and keep them in order.

## CHAPTER X

ANOTHER twenty years had now passed, during which time all in the little colony on earth had worked hard to carry on the world. Sir Philip Stewart had become quite an expert engine-driver and motorist, and he spent a considerable amount of his time in teaching the younger generation, of which there was now a goodly number, the arts and sciences as far as lay in his power. Mr. Robertson and Captain Sinclair were also occupied in educating the young, while Henry Lear did his utmost to keep the agricultural world progressing favourably. The farms now reached for miles around, and though they were mostly pastoral it took a lot of time to see to all the flocks and herds. Flora might still occasionally be seen riding out with her husband, although she could now boast of ten children, all of whom, except Flora, were boys.

Mrs. Robertson had also ten, and hers, with the exception of Charles, were all girls, so that it had come right for every Jack to find a Jill.

Henry Lear's son, whom they had called Malcolm to distinguish him from his father, was now a fine young fellow of twenty-two, and naturally he looked to Lilian Robertson as a mate. But there were other brothers who had the same ideas, and it looked as if the old story that true love affairs never run smoothly was still to be verified.

Malcolm had become a student of Sir Philip's, and learnt how to make and use all kinds of machinery, and frequently they made long excursions in a motor to collect books and so on. Sir Philip had made it his business to look up all the most useful things possible.

Clare Lear, the second son, now nearly twenty years old, was his father's right-hand man, and there was nothing on the farm which he could not do as well as he. From the first he taught them all not to waste anything that was likely to be the least use later on. They even saved the oil from the joints of animals for lubricating purposes, and stored up seed and all kinds of things.

Mrs. Robertson brought her girls up in the same way, and there was not one but what was learning to become useful in the world in some way or another. The time might come when they would have to make all their own clothes as well as many other things.

Sir Philip would like to have gone farther out into the world, but the spirits declined to run the trains for the present. Motors and horses were the only sources of locomotion, though Sir Philip and Malcolm had fished up from somewhere two traction engines which they used for agricultural purposes, and Malcolm and his brothers were even instructed in using the telegraph, in order that the knowledge might not be lost.

What surprised them all more than anything was that though the young grew up with surprising rapidity, none of the elderly people seemed to grow old. Even Sir Philip Stewart and Captain Sinclair had been blessed with a son and daughter respectively, and these had as good as been made a match of when in their cradles; but they too were now reaching years of discretion, and the little world now numbered some thirty souls.

As Henry Lear sat under the shade taking things easy after the work of a hot summer's day, he called Malcolm to him and said —

“I hope you will soon find a wife now, Malcolm. There is Lilian Robertson, you know, quite willing to take you at any time.”

“I don't think so, father.”

“But have you spoken to her?”

“No, but she likes my brother Clare. They are always together, and I know by the way they speak and look at each other that they are in love.”

“Is that so? Well, what do you think of it?”

“I think they had better marry, for the world was made for love.”

“What do you mean?”

“The birds choose their own mates,” said Malcolm.

“Ah, I see how the land lies; you do care for Lilian, but she prefers another. I am sorry, but time will heal the wound. Men, they say, get over love affairs, but —

‘It is women's whole existence.’ “

“Don’t say any more, father, it pains me. Let Clare take her, and that settles it.”

Here a little blue-eyed girl of about four years ran across the turf.

“Hullo, Mally!” she said.

It was his little sister, and he picked her up and carried her to her father.

This was the youngest girl, and her name was Helen. She was a favourite with Henry Lear.

“Mally promise take me on gee-gee,” she said.

“You go and see Sir Philip and get him to look you out a wife, Malcolm; it won’t do to be despondent, and the more we get in the world the merrier, you know. There is enough for all, isn’t there?”

“Yes,” said Malcolm, “but I would rather wait a year or two unless “

“Unless what?”

“Unless you think Lilian’s sister Maud would take me.”

“Well, upon my word, do you expect me to go and do your lovemaking for you? Be off, sir, and try your fortune.”

Malcolm strolled off and took his gun to see if he could get a wild duck for dinner, but when he got down in the meadows he found Clare and Lilian with her sister Maud there before him.

“Have you seen any wild duck come over?” he asked.

“No,” said Maud, “they have seen nothing but their own eyes j I never saw such a pair of turtle-doves.”

“Will you pair off with Malcolm?” said Clare, and walked on down by the river.

“Come on,” said Maud to Malcolm, “let’s go for a duck.”

And they went, but not a word of love could Malcolm get out. His thoughts were all with Lilian.



## CHAPTER XI

FATE played at cross-purposes with Malcolm Lear. Maud Robertson was a nice girl, and much more suited to Malcolm, but he would not see it. As they walked by the river-side they were more like brother and sister than lovers.

“You had better be on the look out,” said Maud. “Why, you would not even see a duck if one flew up.”

“I don’t think I could shoot one anyhow,” said Malcolm, thus recalled to himself.

They strolled on along the bank, and at last a duck rose from the tall reeds and swirled round across the river. Bang! and the bird dropped on the other side.

“What a nuisance!” said Maud. “Now I must go and get the boat, or our duck will be lost.”

“Let me go,” said Malcolm.

“No, you go on with the shooting, and I will row across.” And suiting the action to the word, she hurried back to a boat and pushed off into the river.

Malcolm walked slowly forward, looking out for more ducks. He had not gone far before he was startled by a scream, and looking round quickly he was just in time to see Maud fall into the water.

Throwing down his gun, he rushed back along the bank, and with a bound was halfway across the river. He seized Maud and attempted to drag her out, but he felt himself going down and down, then up again, and once more each came above the water and drew a long breath, then down again, and Malcolm could remember no more.

Coming to himself, he found he was lying on the bank with Maud by his side, looking wistfully into his face.

“You have saved me,” she said.

“I?” said Malcolm. “Why, I sank.”

“Well, I can’t swim,” said Maud. “And I found myself here by your side. There is no one about.”

“It must have been the spirits I have heard mother speak about,” said Malcolm.

And it was. With the death of Miles they ceased to help in such matters, but now to save an innocent couple they had deigned to assist again.

“Tell me about them,” said Maud.

And Malcolm told all he knew.

Maud pondered for a time, then she thought, “I wish these spirits would make Malcolm love me,” and immediately he put his arm around her waist and kissed her.

“Malcolm!” she said.

“Yes, Maud, I love you. I don’t know how it is, but I have never felt like this for you before; I thought I loved Lilian, but nothing like I care for you now.”

“Oh, how glad I am,” said Maud.

“This will not do,” said Malcolm; “we must get home and change our wet clothes.”

He went for his gun. It was a lovely autumn evening, and they went slowly up the hill homewards.

“When I was a little boy,” said Malcolm, “I was stolen away, and should have been lost but for the unknown world.”

“And we should both have been drowned to-day,” replied Maud, “but for the same help.”

“It seems very strange,” said Malcolm. “This is the first time I have ever known anything of the sort to happen.”

“Will the spirits always help us again now?” asked Maud.

“I cannot tell,” he replied j “perhaps they may. It will be very nice if they do, but

it might not always be in our favour as it was tonight, from what I have heard about them.”

So they reached home, and Malcolm went in to tell his father what had taken place.

“I shall soon be married after all, father,” he said. And he told all about the accident and of his sudden love for Maud Robertson.

“Was it really the spirits, do you think?” said his father.

“It must have been,” answered Malcolm.

“It will be of great consequence to us if it was. There are many things which I wanted to do with this aid,” said Henry Lear.

“What things?” asked Malcolm.

“I want some of the old ruins in the town pulled down, and the railways repaired so that we could bring coal and goods here again.”

“I see,” said Malcolm. “And you think the spirits would be able to do this?”

“They did before the time when you were taken away and recovered,” said his father.

“May we get married at the same time as Clare and Lilian?” asked Malcolm.

“I do not see any reason why you should not; but Mr. Robertson is the proper person to ask that question of, you know.”

Malcolm was saved the trouble, for at that moment Maud and her father walked on to the lawn.

“I am so pleased to hear that you are going to take Maud,” he said, and gave his hand to Malcolm.

“V’ You must think it very sudden and strange.”

“No, Maud has explained to me, and I think I understand. I only hope now that you have brought the spirit-world back, they will be obliging and help us out of

some of our difficulties,” said Mr. Robertson.

“That’s just what I have been thinking,” said Henry Lear.

Just then Clare and Lilian came back.

“We have been rather frightened,” said the latter, “for we found the boat floating bottom upwards in the river.”

Maud told them of the accident, and Henry Lear of the new engagement.

Lilian looked surprised; then she said —

“I am so glad, Maud; now we shall be all happy together,” and she kissed her sister.

“Leave that to Malcolm now,” said Clare; “Maud won’t thank you for kisses any longer.”

“Indeed I shall. Be quiet, please, Clare, or I shall have to give you a lesson,” said Maud.

“Not in rescuing the drowning, I hope,” said Clare.

“No, you might not be so fortunate as Malcolm has been.”

“You had better leave Mr. Robertson to settle with me about the weddings,” said Henry Lear.

And the two couples went off to have a game of lawn tennis.

## CHAPTER XII

WHILE Robertson and Lear were discussing matters Sir Philip joined them, and they told him about the aid of the spirits again.

“I am glad to hear that,” said Sir Philip, “as I have long had the idea that somewhere, far away on the globe, there is some people who were, in spite of being cut off from the rest of the world, able to support themselves.”

“What has that to do with us?” asked Henry Lear.

“This much,” said Sir Philip, “that I am bent on finding them if there is such a people, and if the unknown will help me I shall invoke aid.”

“I have always asked them to repair the railways, and we shall see shortly if there is any move being made,” said Henry Lear.

“Yes, and I hope they will get a steamer ready for us. I am off to see Sinclair about it,” said Sir Philip.

On his way he met Malcolm and Maud, who had finished tennis, and were returning to hear what had been settled about them.

Sir Philip told them what he had in his mind.

“Take us with you,” said Maud.

“Well, come along, and let us hear what the Sinclairs say.”

They found Captain Sinclair very enthusiastic, and as Mrs. Sinclair agreed to go too, it was arranged that Maud and Malcolm should join the party.

They had not many days to wait before they found that the preparations were being made on the railway, and, having arranged for stores, they were able to start for Southampton, where they found a steamer all ready for them. They wished first of all to find where the new land lay, and forthwith the steamer took them to where the Atlantic had formerly been, and then crossed over to the site of the Indian Ocean.

Captain Sinclair was of opinion that land stretched from north to south right down the world, both where the Atlantic and Indian Oceans used to be.

They now wished to find if another people existed, and were taken into a sort of natural harbour in the new land which they approached.

Sir Philip was the first to see a flag waving on the heights above them, and he went nearly mad with excitement.

“Man,” he said, “must have been there recently.”

It was arranged that he and Malcolm should land and make further investigations, while Captain Sinclair and the ladies remained on the steamer.

A boat was lowered, and Sir Philip and Malcolm made for land. They toiled up the rough ascent and had nearly reached the flag, when, looking round, they saw the steamer in full retreat out to sea.

Sir Philip waved and signalled, but it was no use; the steamer kept on her course, and those two stood alone in the new world.

Far away in England Henry Lear, getting fidgety, had chanced to wish for the steamer’s return, hence the situation.

Malcolm lost his head and rushed down the cliff. Sir Philip shouted to him to stop. Malcolm came back, the tears in his eyes.

“Will they not return?” said he.

“I fear not,” said Sir Philip; “but we must hope for the best. These are some new vagaries on the part of the spirit-world; but we have done no wrong, and they may yet help us in an unforeseen manner. Let us reach the flag.”

By this time the steamer was a mere speck on the horizon, and was soon to be lost to sight. At last they stood beside the flag, and, looking over the crest of rocks, they beheld another vessel waiting with steam up.

Sir Philip pulled down the flag and began to wave it. He did not understand the method of semaphore, but he managed to attract attention, and soon a boat was put off and a party landed.

With their legs trembling beneath them Sir Philip and Malcolm made their way down the slope.

As they neared them a cheer broke out from the approaching party, and as hand shook hand, heart went out to heart in expectancy and hope.

Sir Philip explained to the leader.

“We have come from England to try to find some other land still peopled. In the old country are left only thirty souls. What have you to tell us?”

“We have come,” said the leader, who was Captain Le Strange, “from New Zealand, and that as far as we can ascertain is the only old land left in this part of the world.”

“How strange,” said Sir Philip, “just the Antipodes has survivors. England is as of old, but the people are gone — lost by hunger, war, and disease. How fares it with you?”

“All is well,” said Captain Le Strange. “You see we have scarcely two million inhabitants at the present time, and we have found it possible to support the population without any grave difficulty, but we were face to face with what would happen in time with a growing people in such an island.”

“It will be better now if we can find a way for re peopling the old country, but curiously enough we have been assisted by the unknown powers in some ways. Have you experienced anything of this sort?”

“No,” said Captain Le Strange, after having all fully explained.

“Even now,” said Sir Philip, “our steamer has apparently returned home, and but for you we should have been left here to perish.”

“I suppose it was known we were here, you see,” said Le Strange.

“Yes, that was it, no doubt; but it will be many weeks before our vessel can return now, so we had better go with you to New Zealand.”

Sir Philip was rather pleased at the turn events were taking, but Malcolm was in great distress, and insisted on going on the cliff again to see if the steamer could

be seen. There was no sign of it, however, and at last he consented to be led away.

He thought he should never see Maud again.



## CHAPTER XIII

AS the steamer ploughed through the waves and swiftly left the land, Maud collapsed. She thought she was leaving her lover to die, and all the way home she was a source of great anxiety to the Sinclairs. Between life and death she lay when at last Southampton was reached, and they carried her to the train and went home.

Henry Lear was overcome with grief when he found that he had been the innocent cause of the disaster.

Clare Lear had married Lilian Robertson and settled down at a farmhouse in the Vale of White Horse, where they lived very happily together.

Now Edwin Lear, the third son, took upon himself to act as comforter to Maud, and in a short time he began to make love to her, but Maud would not listen to him.

“We may yet find Malcolm,” said Maud. “I don’t believe he is really dead, and I shall get Captain Sinclair to take me back to seek him.”

But Edwin was before her, and he wished that no steamer would ever go back to look for Malcolm; and then, when too late, he desired that Maud should forget and love him instead.

◆◆◆:The unknown granted his first wish, but they would not grant a second to the same person, so Edwin was as far off as ever.

“Why don’t you take one of my young sisters,” said Maud. “I shall never marry unless Malcolm is found.”

“You may think differently in time,” said Edwin, and if not he thought to himself that he would find a way to make her.

Frequently Henry Lear and Captain Sinclair tried to go forth and find the missing men, but they could not get any steamer to depart.

Edwin approached his mother about his love affairs, and asked her to speak to

Maud for him.

“But you say she does not want to marry you,” said Flora Lear.

“No, she does not, and says I should court one of her sisters; but it is she I want.”

“Well, I should give her time,” said Flora Lear. “When she forgets Malcolm she may listen to you.”

“She will never forget; but she shall not have him if I can help it.”

“You can help it! What have you to do with it?”

“I could fetch him back if he’s alive.”

“How?”

“It was I who wished that no ship would ever go forth to rescue him. If I were to cancel that perhaps the unknown would assist us to find him.”

“Oh, Edwin, then do that at once and return my son to me.”

“Yes, and to Maud her lover — never!”

“I must speak to your father about this.”

“I don’t care; I will never alter the wish until Maud has consented to my wishes.”

Flora spoke to her husband on the matter.

“It is of no use, dear, poor Malcolm must have died long ago; at least, that is the conclusion that Captain Sinclair and I have come to.”

“But what a wicked thing of Edwin to think of preventing you going to their aid.”

“Yes, but it’s too late now, and the fates will deal out justice in the end.”

Henry Lear little knew how near the truth he was speaking.

Meantime Edwin became more and more pressing with his attentions.

“Come for a walk with me, Maud,” he said; “I wish to tell you something of great importance.”

“What is it?” Maud said when they had set out.

“If you will be mine I can get Malcolm back,” he said.

“How?”

“It was I who wished that no ship should go forth to rescue him.”

“You! Have you no compassion then?”

“No, why should I? You have none.”

“What do you mean?”

“You know how I love you, and you will have nothing to do with me.”

“I can’t help that; it is because I care for Malcolm only.”

“You shall care for me,” said Edwin, seizing her.

Maud screamed. A struggle ensued, and Edwin slipped into the river.

He made frantic efforts to get out, but only drifted farther across the stream.

Maud ran for the boat, but before she could get it out and row to the place Edwin had disappeared. He was drowned.

Maud could not help it, she had done her best; but would they believe her? She went sorrowfully home and told her people.

Henry Lear and the brothers sought for the body a long time, and at length it was brought in.

They soon discovered that the spirits refused to help again.

## CHAPTER XIV

SIR PHILIP STEWART was a kind-hearted man, and he comforted Malcolm as well as he could.

“You see,” he said, “they will not be able to come here; but there is no saying but that we may return to England in a few years.”

“How can that be?” asked Malcolm.

“It will be quite possible to cut a canal through the rocks we crossed,” said Sir Philip. “It would be nothing like cutting through the Isthmus of Corinth.”

“But Maud, she will not wait for me,” said Malcolm.

“Maud will wait, if I know anything. The question is, will Malcolm wait for Maud?”

“Don’t say that,” said Malcolm.

“Well, we shall see; but I am sure that is the most doubtful. I don’t mean to tease you in the least.”

Malcolm was silent. Could he ever forget his love? No.

For one thing, Malcolm was still under the spell of the love inspired by the spiritual world. Take that away, and his love for Maud would quickly depart and go back to Lilian, or be transferred to some one else.

Yet this artificial love was deadly in its power.

From the moment that Malcolm saw that a separation with Maud was inevitable, all the manliness of which he was possessed was taken from him, and physically and mentally he became totally inert.

Captain Le Strange noticed the despair depicted in his face, and he called Sir Philip Stewart to him.

“Take the young man down to my cabin,” he said; “I will be there in an instant;

but I am for making all speed back to Wellington.”

Sir Philip obeyed; but he had to almost carry Malcolm down.

In a few moments Le Strange joined them.

“Give him this,” said he, and handed Sir Philip a glass of cordial.

Malcolm drank it off as if he had been a child.

“Now let him lie down and try to get some rest, or we shall have him ill,” said the captain.

Sir Philip saw him to his cabin and made him comfortable, then he returned to Le Strange.

“I don’t like the look of your young friend at all,” said Le Strange. “It is scarcely a case for the doctor, or I would send for him to come here. At the same time, it would be well to have him watched, or he is as likely as not to jump overboard.”

“I think you take an exaggerated view of the case.”

“I don’t. Let us have the doctor down, and you tell him the facts as near as you can.”

“Very well,” said Sir Philip.

Captain Le Strange touched a bell. It was answered by an officer from the lower deck.

“Tell Dr. Owen to come here as soon as he can,” said the captain, “and you keep an eye on Sir Philip’s young friend for the present; another can take your duty.”

“Very good,” said the officer, and went on his errand.

Dr. Owen came down.

“I have grave doubts, Doctor, about Sir Philip’s young friend, Malcolm Lear,” said the captain to Dr. Owen. “I fancy he will lose his mind if we don’t take care.”

“What makes you think so?” asked the doctor.

“I don’t like the look of him at all. Sir Philip here will tell you all about him.”

“Hitherto,” said Sir Philip, “he has been a most courageous and intelligent young man, but he is very impressionable, and he is the victim of a peculiar attachment.”

“Why peculiar?” asked the doctor and captain in the same breath.

“You won’t think I am bereft of senses if I tell you?”

“No, of course not,” both said.

“But you accept as truth the supernatural assistance we received in the old country?”

“Yes,” they replied.

“Well, his love is the result of supernatural inspiration;’ said Philip, “for he was deeply attached to another girl, but transferred his affections almost in a moment.”

“This may be more serious than we know then,” said Dr. Owen; “for if the unknown powers have brought you all these miles over the sea to meet us, what may they not be able to work with a single human mind?”

“That’s just what I have been thinking,” said Le Strange.

“There may be something in what you say,” said Sir Philip. “Anyhow, my friend Lear is greatly altered; I should have thought that his mind was powerful enough to renounce anything at will.”

“At will, you say,” said the doctor. “But that’s just it, he must have lost his will power to give himself over to a woman in this way; it sounds like hypnotism.”

“What can we do, Doctor?” asked Sir Philip.

“You must have him constantly watched until we land, perhaps then the attractions of fresh society, and so on, may divert his mind,” answered Dr. Owen.

“I will look to him as much as possible. Already I have tried to encourage him in the hope of returning to his own land in a few years,” answered Sir Philip.

Meanwhile the good ship dashed through the waves in her onward course to the land where her arrival was to cause so much excitement. Sir Philip seldom left his young companion. It seemed as if all the life had gone out of Malcolm, and the depression which overshadowed him would not pass away.

“Cheer up, Malcolm,” Sir Philip constantly said to him, “and remember that we shall soon be amongst what will be for us quite a large people, whose knowledge and enterprise was never behind the rest of the world. On them now will entirely depend its future.”

“Yes, I know,” said Malcolm. “These will work a great change, but I shall not be one of the workers now; I wish I could have been.”

“Well, but you can help work. When we get to New Zealand and Sir Chandos Shadwell knows all, he will at once organize a scheme to cut through the isthmus which we crossed, and so make a passage back to England. Think of all the wealth there which can be proportioned out between the population,” said Sir Philip.

“Yes, I have thought of all that,” said Malcolm. “Any way, father will be glad to see the land repeopled, no matter how sparsely; but I shall not live to see the day.”

“Nonsense,” argued Sir Philip; “you will live to go back and marry Maud Robertson after all.”

“I shall not,” said Malcolm. “Something tells me that Maud will die of love the same as I shall do.”

“Captain Le Strange says you have not seen the girls in New Zealand yet. He prides himself on having a very beautiful and charming daughter; but she is engaged already, so you will stand no chance there,” said Sir Philip.

Malcolm did not notice these remarks, he only said, “If I cannot return to England my fate is sealed.”

“You can return, as I have told you, but you must wait.”

“I cannot wait,” said Malcolm.

Sir Philip gave up all hope of bringing Malcolm back to himself, and in fact all his well-made efforts were vain.

And so it came about that when at last they arrived at Wellington to be welcomed and lionized, as two wealthy survivors of the old country, Malcolm stood before them handsome and adroit it was true, but quite devoid of all the mental power which he had once possessed.



## CHAPTER XV

AS soon as Captain Le Strange had his ship safely steamed into Wellington harbour, and was able to get away, he drove with Sir Philip Stewart and Malcolm Lear to call on Sir Chandos Shadwell, the Governor, at Government House.

Lady Shadwell was holding a reception, but Sir Chandos came to them at once, and was told by Captain Le Strange what important introductions he had to make to him. Sir Chandos received his visitors with much welcome and with evident signs of relief.

The sudden cutting-off of his country from the world with which it had been freely trading had brought about a situation which had threatened to become serious.

For just as the mothercountry had depended on imports for subsistence, so had the colony relied on exports for finding employment for the people.

With the stoppage of export thousands of hands had been thrown out of work; but thanks to the food-supply being largely in excess of requirements, Sir Chandos had been able so far to avert any serious consequences. Now he foresaw great possibilities if only he could open up a way to the old country once more and join hands with Henry Lear.

From what he had already learned from his own people, and what now Sir Philip had to tell, he was quite persuaded that there were no other countries left, and that all the new land was at present barren and uninhabited. He hoped some day to rule all the world.

“I suppose the spirits would not help us cut through the isthmus, would they, do you think?” asked Sir Chandos.

“I can’t say,” said Sir Philip. “In fact I quite expected you all to suggest that I and my young friend at once be despatched to your lunatic asylum, as soon as I told one of these supernatural powers.”

“No, indeed, not after what has happened all over this world. Most of us here are quite ready to accept the truth of what you say. Look, for instance, at our

volcanoes; they are all now quite dormant, and there has not been a shock of earthquake here ever since the great upheaval,” said Sir Chandos.

“And you look upon that as a miracle, in a sense, of course,” said Sir Philip.

“Not altogether; but it shows what a great change has taken place,” replied Sir Chandos. “But come, gentlemen,” he said,

“I am not giving you a fitting welcome. Just excuse me while I explain to the company we are entertaining, and when they have dispersed I hope you will partake of my hospitality, such as I can off-hand offer you.”

“We will do that gladly; but pray do not let our sudden appearance here put you to inconvenience. We shall be quite at your service until you find us a way back to the old country,” said Sir Philip, looking hard at Malcolm.

But Malcolm did not respond; he heard all with complete indifference.

“If you will allow me, I will now go home and look up my family for a short time,” said Captain Le Strange; “and if Lear will come with me I shall be glad to take him; and you, Sir Philip, may wish to prolong your interview and come later. I will make all preparations.”

“No, we must not encroach on your kindness; an hotel “

“Nothing of the sort, you’ll both stay with me, if it’s till we get through those rocks,” said Le Strange.

“You are very kind,” said Sir Philip. “Will you go then, Malcolm?”

The latter nodded, and left with Captain Le Strange.

“I will just go now then,” said Sir Chandos, “and return in a few minutes. May I say that you will give an address in a day or two to explain the present situation?”

“I will do my best, certainly,” said Sir Philip; “but I have never been a great speaker.”

Sir Chandos went and made his excuses to the assembly, and then returned to Sir

Philip.

Meantime Captain Le Strange made his way to his home accompanied by Malcolm.

His house was on the outskirts of the town, at the foot of a high range, which protected it from the south-west.

The garden was now all ablaze with flowers, and as they entered Lettice was busy picking some of them. As they approached she turned and, surprised, said, "Father!" Then advancing to meet them, threw herself into the arms of Captain Le Strange.

"We did not expect you," she explained.

"Much less my companion here; but let me introduce him," her father added.

For the first time Lettice Le Strange looked at Malcolm.

"This is a young man from England, who has come here somewhat against his will; he is not well, and I want you to take care of him during his stay here, and see if you can't help him to throw off his depression."

"From England," said Lettice; "then you will be welcome not only here, but to the whole country," and she put out her hand.

Malcolm took it, and said, "Thank you."

"His father, Henry Lear, was the last man left alive in the old country, and is now Governor there. This is his eldest son, Malcolm, and he has inadvertently been separated from his lover; but come, Malcolm, tell your own story, you may be sure Lettice will do what she can to comfort you," said Captain Le Strange. "Is your mother in the house?" he asked. "Yes," Lettice answered.

"I must go to her, as I want Malcolm and his friend, Sir Philip Stewart, to remain with us during their stay here. Make this your home," he added, turning to Malcolm.

He then went on into the house, and Lettice and Malcolm were alone.

Lettice was truly a beautiful girl, tall and dark, and yet possessed of such grace as well that her charms were equal to any living woman.

Malcolm had never seen such a girl before, yet her beauty did not strike him at all.

She did her best to draw Malcolm out of himself and make him feel at home.

“Come,” she said, “and let me introduce you to a friend of mine; he is a great engineer, and we are engaged to be married.”

Turning the corner of the house, they found him walking in the fruit garden.

“Here, Charlie,” she called, “here is a friend from England — from England,” she repeated. “What fresh wonders will be showered upon us?”

“Mr. Malcolm Lear, let me introduce you to Mr. Charles Adey, c.e., etc.,” said Lettice.

The two men shook hands warmly.

“Are you really from England?” asked Adey, almost aghast.

“Yes, I am,” said Malcolm. “My father and mother were the only people left in the land at one time,” and he told them just how matters now stood.

“No wonder you wish to return home,” said Lettice.

“And that isthmus you spoke of — your friend thinks that a canal could be cut through,” said Adey.

“He thinks that it could be done,” Malcolm replied.

“I’m off to see the Governor, Sir Chandos Shadwell, to see if I can’t get the job,” said Adey.

“My friend, Sir Philip Stewart, is now with him, and will tell you what he thinks,” said Malcolm.

“That’s just like Charlie,” said Lettice as he rushed off, “he never lets the grass grow under his feet.”

“I hope he will be able to make that canal,” said Malcolm.

“He will manage it somehow, you’ll see,” said Lettice confidently.

“But it will take a long time, and even if I go back to England it will be too late,” said Malcolm despairingly.

Lettice looked at him with pitying eyes. How handsome he looked, and yet how sad.

“You must keep your heart up, no doubt it will take some time; but a few years soon pass,” said Lettice.

“They do indeed,” said Malcolm; “but they will long since have despaired of ever seeing me again.”

“I should not worry,” said Lettice, “all will come right in the end.”

“Yes, in the end,” said Malcolm; “everything does in the end.”

“You must not talk like that, I did not mean it in that way,” said Lettice.

Mrs. Le Strange now came out with her husband and gave Malcolm a kindly welcome. They had tea on the lawn, and were presently joined by Sir Philip and Charles Adey.

“I think I shall have the job,” said the latter excitedly.

“What job?” asked Captain Le Strange.

“Cutting a canal to make a way through to England. I was to ask you from Sir Xhandos if you would take a party out at once to survey the place and make a report,” said Charles Adey.

“I will start any time,” said Captain Le Strange. “Will you come back with us?” he asked Sir Philip.

“Certainly,” replied Sir Philip. “I have promised to address a large open-air meeting in the park to-morrow, after that I’m at your service.”

“Shall you come, Malcolm?”

“No, I would rather not.”

“I will look after Mr. Lear,” said Lettice; “he will wish to go perhaps when the work begins.”

“That’s all right, Lettice, we will leave him in your hands,” said Captain Le Strange.

And even Charles Adey did not in the least object, he was thinking more of his engineering scheme than of his love.

## CHAPTER XVI

WHEN Sir Philip found himself the next day face to face with a great multitude he felt somewhat nonplussed.

A platform had been erected, and on it sat, besides Sir Chandos Shadwell, many other distinguished men.

Sir Chandos rose amidst cheers to introduce his friend, Sir Philip, “who,” he said, “would be able to throw a great deal of light on what had happened to the world. In England at the present time there were only about thirty souls. The land was ruled by the father of a young man who sat there with them. They would be anxious to hear what Sir Philip had to say to them, so he would now call upon him to come forward.”

As Sir Philip rose he could not help wishing that the spirits would help him through his task. He was at once conscious of a power which he had not before possessed.

He began by saying, “My friends, Providence has sent me and my companion amongst you, and I must first of all thank you for the kind manner in which you have received us.

Sir Chandos has told you how few remain in the old country, and how it was that even those few survived. You here have been more fortunate, and though you have been face to face with many and grave dangers, yet you have now pulled through, and are now within reasonable measure of being able to open up communication with your mothercountry once again. There in the old land lies an amount of stock and wealth which can be fairly divided amongst us. But let us from the first exercise a mutual forbearance. I am sure that my friend, Henry Lear, who should by right be Governor in the old country, will be willing and anxious to deal fairly with all. His son here will tell you what his views are when I have done. (Cheers.) There will be the question of the proper division of money. Now I am not an expert in such a matter, but it seems to me that we shall have a currency for somewhere about two millions of people, which formerly sufficed for over forty millions. That makes it evident that we shall have more than is required for currency, and a vast amount of the wealth must necessarily be stored up, and whether that should be in the hands of the Governor or of

individuals I must leave the future to determine. One thing is certain, we shall all have more capital; but we must not give up work, we must all work, and work hard, for the good of the community.

We are going, with God's assistance, to cut a canal through a narrow isthmus and to open a way to England. If you will allow me, for the sake of example as much as anything, I propose to take in hand a pick and shovel and assist my friend, Mr. Charles Adey, who is about to make a survey of the canal, with the works. (Loud cheers.) When all is accomplished, some of you will I know be willing to return to England and repeople the old country, and some for equally good reasons will elect to remain here; but, whatever we do, let us work together for the good of the world and agree to start in a fair way. Let us remember that to the English-speaking people alone has been given the honour to remain on the earth (cheers); but don't let us on that account be puffed up with pride, or think that because other countries have been taken and we left, that we are in any sense better than they, or more deserving of the mercies of Providence. (Loud and prolonged cheers.) Let us remember that 'righteousness exalteth a nation'; and, above all, in spite of the terrible thing which has come upon the earth, let us remain staunch and true to the old principle, and continue to be a Christian people. (Cheers.) You have heard from Sir Chandos Shadwell of the aid which from time to time has been received from the unknown. And speaking of this, I would like to say that it appears to me that there are only the souls of the righteous working for us, and it is only they who invoke their aid for good who will in the end gain anything from them. In any case this has had its advantages and disadvantages, and I shall not be sorry when we shall have to depend on our own, as it were, once more, though I hope that the powers to which I refer will help me to finish my speech. (Laughter and cheers.) I am not joking in the least when I say that I believe that such poor eloquence as I have been able to command is the outcome of such help at the present moment. But I do believe that now we are in a fair way to get along by ourselves without it, that the aid which I have spoken of will shortly cease. Knowing what I do of the matter, I think that would be for the best. We do not want anything which would permanently remove our self-reliance. (Cheers.) After what has happened in our old country, it must ever be part of our worldly wisdom to have in reserve a good supply of food for the people. We must remember that money is really of no value in itself, but is only useful for what it will buy. The miser who was accidentally shut up in his cellar with his bags of gold is an example of what occurred to the people of England. I hope that never again in the history of the world will such an awful thing befall any country. Putting on one side we who are the few survivors, better it would



appear for all to have been swept beneath the deep, along with other nations, than to have perished as they did.

“I must now conclude by saying that I hope every one will realize their great responsibility in being left to start the world anew, and do their utmost to carry out the work which lies before them.” (Loud cheers.)

Sir Philip sat down amid renewed cheers and waving of handkerchiefs, calling upon Malcolm to say in a few words how glad his father would be to know that such a people existed.

Malcolm rose and said, “What Sir Philip has told you is quite true; my father will be glad beyond measure to know that the old country will be repopulated by her own sons. He will endorse such a policy as Sir Philip has laid before you. He is in favour of every one working in some way, he does not want any drones in the hive (cheers); but he will, I am sure, be anxious to co-operate in dividing the wealth of the country fairly between all.” (Loud cheers.)

Malcolm sat down, and saw by this short speech he had made a good impression.

Some more cheers were given for the speakers, and then the crowd began to quickly disperse.

Sir Chandos scarcely liked the burst of enthusiasm with which they had been received; but he was obliged to accept the situation, and he returned to Government House and drew up a committee of experts to go with Charles Adey.

“You will make your survey and return with the plans as soon as possible,” he said, “as I shall find it my duty to lay the whole matter before the Government before proceeding any further.”

Charles promised to get the work done with all speed.

“Do you go with the party, Stewart?” asked Sir Chandos.

“Yes, I have settled to go, but my young friend will remain with the Le Stranges; his health is very indifferent.”

“Very well, I hope a satisfactory plan will be settled on, and that you will be

soon able to return, so that we may get to work.”

“I hope so,” said Sir Philip.

## CHAPTER XVII

WHEN the expedition had left to make the great engineering survey, Malcolm Lear grew more and more depressed.

Lettice did everything in her power to cheer and rouse him, and in her sprang up such a great pity for his unconsolated love that she was getting to care for the man herself more than she would like to have allowed. She watched his every look, and was able to fathom the sadness of his heart.

Almost daily they roamed about, or rode out together.

“Do you like my country as well as your own?” asked Lettice.

“Yes, I think I do quite,” said Malcolm; “but it all seems so different you know here in Wellington to the strange quiet of my native land.”

“Yes, I can understand you must find a great difference in that respect,” answered Lettice.

“Here you have no winter, that is one advantage,” said Malcolm, “for I don’t like the cold.”

“No, and yet my people always used to envy you the orthodox Christmas weather.”

“Really,” said Malcolm.

“How strange it seems for the spirits to have made you love Maud. If they ceased to use their influence should you still care for her?”

“I can’t say, but I think not. I really loved Lilian, you know.”

“Who was Lilian?”

“Maud’s sister.”

“Should you love her still?”

“No, she is married to my brother Clare long ago, I expect.”

“Should you not care for any one then?” said Lettice.

“I am unable to say. You see, I am not myself, and have not been the same ever since the time when I fell suddenly in love.”

“It all seems very strange to me,” said Lettice. “I think I would sooner have the world go on in the old-fashioned way.”

“So would I,” said Malcolm; “it has been cruel to me, this love, I don’t think I can stand it much longer.”

“Be patient, it may come right in time, as I told you at first.”

“I’m afraid it never will,” Malcolm answered.

“Do try and give up this yearning for Maud. Couldn’t you love any one else?” asked Lettice, with a sigh.

“No.”

“I do wish the spirits would take their departure, we should see then.”

“It is no use for you to wish that.”

“So it seems,” said Lettice, “or they would have left you alone long ago.”

Every day Lettice did all she could short of confessing her own love for him to try and draw Malcolm from his unnatural affection, but it was all in vain.

The expedition had gone out and returned, only to find Malcolm in the same despondent state.

Charles Adey thought he noticed a coolness on the part of Lettice when he came back, but he scarcely troubled, as he was too much taken up with his work.

A little beyond where Sir Philip had crossed the isthmus he had found a depression in the rocks which sloped down on each side almost to the sea level, and he planned for the canal to be cut in the shape of a half-moon so as to avoid going sheer through the high rocks.

All who went out with him agreed with the plan, but it was found that it would take infinite labour to accomplish the work.

Sir Chandos Shadwell gave orders for a large body of men to begin the works, and this was duly sanctioned by the Government. Stores were opened up and provisions got ready. Meanwhile the mental condition of Malcolm got worse, until it almost culminated in a tragedy.

Lettice, thinking to do him good, took him for a long walk on the cliffs which overhung the sea.

They picked the wild flowers and talked of love, when suddenly Malcolm became very strange and made for the edge of the cliffs.

“Come back, Malcolm,” said Lettice, growing alarmed and taking him by the arm. “What are you going to do?”

“Let me go,” he said. “I can bear it no longer,” and struggled to be free.

But Lettice was strong, and she held on with all her might, still pleading with Malcolm to come away.

It was no use, however, for weakened as he was, Malcolm was capable of considerable exertion, and he dragged Lettice nearer and nearer to the edge.

It never occurred to Lettice to wish for help.

“Let me go or I shall drag you with me; do not force me to that.”

“Oh, Malcolm, don’t, don’t! I love you as never man was loved. Oh, stay with me and hear my words. Together we can exorcise the spirits which have been tormenting you so long,” she cried.

Taking him by surprise when he paused at her last words, she threw him off his balance and he fell to the ground. Before he could regain his feet Lettice drew him back several paces. Then he struggled to his legs, and the same thing went on over again, Lettice rapidly losing her strength, when, strange to say, Malcolm relaxed his hold and fell down in a faint.

Lettice caught her breath.

How long Malcolm would have lain there is not known, but she took the precaution to drag him away from the edge of the cliff.

The jolting over the ground aroused him, and he called to her to stop.

Lettice looked at him in fear.

“Where am I?” he said.

“Never mind, come away,” Lettice answered.

“Where am I?” he repeated. “Oh, I know now; I was trying to drag you over the cliff. Thank God, I no longer have the same feeling about Maud or the desire to kill myself. The spirit power must have left me.”

“Is this true? Then I thank God too, Malcolm, for in a little while we should both have been over the cliff.”

“Should you have gone with me?”

“Yes, I could not have parted from you.”

“Do you love me? Did I hear aright?”

“Yes, oh so much.”

“So do I you; but this will not do,” said Malcolm, “for you belong to another,” and again an expression of agony crossed his face.

“No matter, you must be mine. Let us go together,” said Lettice, “and tell Charles the truth. I could not marry him now I have grown to care for you as I have.”

“Is that really so?”

“Yes.”

“Come then,” he said, as he took her in his arms and kissed her passionately. “Come, let’s go and do as you said. Each time I kiss you seems like treachery now.”

“Yes, I will come,” said Lettice, “but oh, Malcolm, you frightened me so when I thought I should lose you for ever.”

“I wonder I have been so suddenly released from the power of the spirits. It was just as suddenly as it came. Maud must be dead,” he added. “I always said one of us would die, and I thought I should have been the first. As it was, we should be dead together, I expect, if it had not been for you.”

But they neither of them knew the truth. It was this, that Maud far away in England had pushed Edwin accidentally so that he fell into the river and was drowned.

With that act the power of the unseen was restricted in the world again, and those in Valhalla once more withdrew their aid.

“It does not matter now,” said Lettice. “I hope Charlie won’t mind much, and we shall be so happy then.”

“We shall, but supposing he loves you as I do, he will never give you up.”

“But he does not,” said Lettice. “He could not love as you do.”

“How can you tell?”

“Because Charlie is such a matter-of-fact man in every way; he won’t mind, you’ll see, and as soon as his great work which he is so keen about is finished he’ll get engaged again.”

“Well, you take a happy view of the situation. I only hope you are right,” said Malcolm.

Together they walked on, Lettice leaning on his arm.

“Shall you always care for me thus?”

“Yes, always,” answered Malcolm.

“And some day you will rule in old England in your father’s stead.”

“Perhaps, but it is a matter of indifference to me so long as I am with you.”

“And would you remain here?”

“Yes, if you wished.”

“It is nice to have you say that, but of course we must go where duty calls, only you must always take me with you.”

“Very well, with one exception I will promise.”

“What do you mean?”

“I wish to go and work with Sir Philip and help cut out the canal.”

“Oh, I don’t mind that if you will come back and see me when you can,” said Lettice.

“Of course I shall not lose an opportunity of doing that,” Malcolm answered.

“About three years, they say, it may take to get ships through,” said Malcolm.

“Yes, that is what Charlie told me,” Lettice answered.

“It seems hard not to be able to send word to my father all that time.”

“Yes, it does,” said Lettice; “and only to think that a short time ago you were so near gone from me for ever.”

“Don’t mention that again,” said Malcolm, “I could not help it.”

“No, I quite believe you,” said Lettice, “you seemed quite mad.”

They had now got home, and somehow both shrank from the task before them.

Charles Adey was in the summer-house smoking and maturing his plans.

“We have come to make a confession,” said Lettice. “We’ve fallen in love with each other.”

“Is this true?” said Charles.

“Yes, it is,” Malcolm answered.



“This then is your pretended illness, this your simulated love.”

“No,” answered Malcolm, “you wrong me. The love you speak of left me as suddenly as it came: though I have been with Miss Le Strange — with Lettice — all this time, until to-day not a word of love has passed between us, that I swear.”

“Is this so, Lettice?”

“It is, but gradually I have grown to love Malcolm as I could never have loved you, Charlie. Say you forgive us; it could not be helped.”

“I see it all now,” said Charlie. “It is hard on me, though neither of you intended any wrong. I must be the sufferer.”

“You will forget in time,” said Lettice.

“Yes, you do me justice there. I’ve no time for such matters as love.”

“I’m sorry if I have done you a great wrong,” said Malcolm, “but it all came so suddenly; as soon as I was released from the power of the spirits, the scales fell from my eyes, and I was desperately in love with Lettice before I could draw back.”

“I was angry at first, for I thought you had both played me false, but I see now. Here, give me your hands,” he said, “I wish you happiness.”

“You’re a man,” said Malcolm. “I hope you will find your own some day.”

“Yes, I must do the best I can in that respect.”

“May I ask a favour?” said Malcolm.

“Yet another! Well?”

“May I help at the work with the canal?”

I don’t like to spend all my time on lovemaking while the rest of you toil.”

“Very well, come by all means; but you might have done that before,” said Charles Adey sadly.

“It was all the spirits,” said Lettice. “He’s a different man now.”

“No wonder,” said Charles, and he went out and left them. It was hard on him, but he was a man, and bore all nobly.

## CHAPTER XVIII

WITH the death of Edwin Lear, as we have already seen, the manifestations of the power of the spirit world once more vanished for a time. Suddenly released from the bondage which held him, Malcolm was again free to love according to the dictates of his own nature.

With a settled conviction in his mind that Lilian had long since married his brother Clare, his love thoughts were not likely to revert to her. What more probable, then, than that looking into the love-lorn eyes of Lettice Le Strange, he should once and for all read in them the message of love which now came from this world, and not from the one beyond.

And Lettice looking back got her answer, and in that one single glance was assured that at last her love had triumphed over the supernatural affection against which she had despairingly contended. She began by a great pity for Malcolm, and in trying to console him, she gradually became aware of a great love for this man which she had never felt for any other. Though she had not meant to show it, the crisis in Malcolm's life had brought it out, and these two who apparently were nothing to each other had in a moment had their souls bared, and they knew that they would love each other for all time. And with the hot kisses on their lips which sealed their love they felt no remorse. Why should they? From no fault of theirs fate had so thrown them together, that unguarded as they were they never suspected such a result. In honour they had felt bound to go to Charles Adey and confess the whole truth. This done they felt secure; but were they?

Charles Adey had accepted the explanation and made the best of it, but in cooler moments he vowed that he would not give up Lettice without a contest. He would not waste his life in vain regret for what had occurred, but he was determined, while doing what work there was in hand for him to do, to see if he could not win Lettice back to him again.

It was with these thoughts in his mind that he took his way to a meeting where Sir Chandos Shadwell was about to explain the action of the Government in taking steps to open up a way to England.

A large concourse of people had come together to hear Sir Chandos speak.

Side by side in the great hall sat Lettice Le Strange and Malcolm Lear, and when Sir Chandos rose to address them they gave enthusiastic cheers.

He began by saying —

“I must first of all tell you that the survey for cutting a canal through the opposing rocks has been completed, and a committee of engineers, of whom my friend, Charles Adey, will act as head, are quite sanguine of being able to complete the work. It will of course mean time and money, but when we think of all the wealth which lies away in England there is every chance of our labours being amply rewarded. As you know, stores and other requirements are already being forwarded as fast as possible to the scene of action, and we shall not want for willing workers. At the same time it will not do to drain the country entirely of labour, for we must take means to produce food and other things for our requirements as before. (Cheers.) You know now how the neglect of their food-supply had at the great crisis in the world’s history brought destruction to all the inhabitants in the old land save a few favoured ones, two of whom are now amongst us. I may say two, though only one of them was actually living at the time of the catastrophe. As Sir Philip has told us, the father of this man was the last left alive in the country, and Providence has marked him for ruler there, while I shall hope to continue to serve you here so long as it is your wish that I should do so. (Loud cheers.) Later on, when communication has once more been established between this and our mothercountry, we shall be able to decide what to do; but I am quite sure that Henry Lear will welcome us, and facilitate in every possible way a fair subdivision of all wealth, and assist me in forming a satisfactory government for the two and only two countries now left on the globe that are at present capable of being inhabited. (Cheers.) I need not point out that we on this side have the advantage, for though in the old country there is great wealth, yet there are no men there who can protect it if we be arbitrary and choose to take possession of everything.”

At these words Malcolm Lear clutched the back of the seat in front of him and almost rose to his feet, but Lettice dragged him back. Sir Chandos was quick to notice his action, and resumed.

“My young friend need have no fears, there will be enough for all, and his father will not be deprived of the dictatorship which is his by right, if he will only listen to reason and meet us in a fair way. As I say, we have the advantage, but let us be slow to profit by it, and remember that but for Sir Philip and his friend

coming out here to seek us we might never have known of the old country being in existence still, and so have been brought in time face to face with a most unsolvable problem. I hope that these two and their children after them will ever be leaders among men.” (Loud cheers.)

Lettice looked full at the speaker, and then turned her eyes with pride on Malcolm, who looked indeed worthy of the allusion which Sir Chandos had made to him.

“I want every man to do the best he can, to make the most just now of the strength and faculties which God has given to him, and in a short time we shall have the world going well again.”

This concluded Sir Chandos’ s address, and with loud cheers again and again resumed for him and Lady Shadwell the company dispersed.

## CHAPTER XIX

THE great meeting over, Lettice and Malcolm returned home and sat together in the garden, which was full of English and antipodean flowers and shrubs.

The slight breeze wafted their perfume towards the lovers, and ever and anon came the sound of breakers on the distant shore. It was an ideal place for them to pass the first days of their happiness.

“And you love me well enough to leave this lovely place, the land of your birth, and go with me to old England, where her changing moods of climate are enough to shame her if only she knew what it is like here?” said Malcolm.

“I would face any climate to be with you, any danger, anything rather than be parted; like Ruth, I can say, ‘Whither thou goest, I will go.’”

“You gladden my heart with those words,” said Malcolm, “and after all, our climate is not so very bad; it is cold in winter, and at times we have a lot of rain where my friends are.”

“Yes, and I expect your trees have often been —

‘Dewy with Nature’s tear-drops as they pass,

Grieving-, if aught inanimate ere grieves

Over the unreturning brave, alas!’”

“Ah, if you mean that for me I’m afraid I’m not brave,” said Malcolm; “but it is true I expect that my people have long since mourned me as dead.”

“How strange it will seem to join them once more; and I wonder what your people will say of your choice of a wife?”

“Say?” said Malcolm, “how can they do otherwise than approve? When they look on you, they will see the choicest flower ever plucked from the garden of love, the best and bravest girl that ever stepped on God’s earth.”

“Ah, and you really mean and feel this, Malcolm? Oh, what happiness to listen

to your voice, to look into your eyes, and feel your breath on my face; but," she cried more lightly, "your praise is too high, sir, I do not deserve it."

"You deserve all that I can say and more; but for you my body would have been floating away on the blue-green waters, and my spirit would now have gone back to the old land, or somewhere far away. What strength and courage you showed in that desperate struggle; it was you who saved me, my queen."

"Queen, you say? And I shall really be that some day when you rule in England?"

"Yes, you will always be my queen, but not in the sense you mean, for there will be no more earthly kings and queens," Malcolm replied.

"But you will be ruler some day in the old country. Did you not hear what Sir Chandos said to-day?"

"Yes, I heard, and it strikes me there may be more difficulty about this than appears on the surface."

"What do you mean, Malcolm? You don't suspect Sir Chandos of bad faith, surely?"

"No, not that, but with the best intentions I fancy a settlement of the question raised will be from the first beset with grave difficulties." ' You will let me help you if I can?"

"Yes; but how can you do that?"

"I don't know. I have a presentiment that I shall be able to assist you, but cannot say how. Girls have done such things, you know, many times before now."

"Yes, and I'm sure that if goodness and courage will help, I shall have that in you."

"Must you really leave me to go to the canal works, and to-morrow? It seems so soon, when our happiness has only just begun."

"Ah, I hate to part from you, dear love, but duty calls me there. It may not be for long, you know, and I must bear my part in the work. When that is complete

there will be some chance of our being united never to part again as long as this life lasts.”

“How sweet to hear you say that, Malcolm. Yes, I must let you go; but I may come sometimes to see you in my father’s ship? He says that he will be going to and fro to the works constantly.”

“Yes, do come whenever you can. Just a look on you will be enough to cheer me on with work.”

“Let us go for a ride once more,” said Lettice. “Will you come, Malcolm?”

“I am always ready to obey your requests, but I am loath to leave this pleasant spot.”

“Don’t let’s go then; we’ll remain here if you like it best, it’s all the same to me.”

“No, we will go,” said Malcolm, rising. “I will go to see about the horses while you get ready; but here comes Sir Philip.”

At the moment the latter came out of the house followed by Mrs. and Captain Le Strange.

“What, did I not tell you how it would be?” said Sir Philip. “Malcolm has, it seems, forgotten Maud.”

“Yes, but for a good reason; it was not a natural affection which he had for her, was it, Malcolm?” said Lettice.

“What about that of a certain young lady for Charles Adey then?” asked Captain Le Strange. “Has the power of the unseen been applied to you too?”

“No, I do not attribute anything to that,” replied Lettice.

“No occasion to do so with such a ladykiller as Malcolm to deal with, is there, Miss Le Strange?” said Sir Philip. “But you will have to be careful, you may have many rivals.”

“I’m afraid of none. Let ‘em all come!” cried Lettice gaily.



“Well, you will be ready to start to-morrow I hope,” said Sir Philip to Malcolm.  
“I am anxious to get this work through and to see the old folks once more.”

“Yes, he’ll be ready,” answered Lettice for him; and turning to Mrs. Le Strange she added, “we have just arranged to take our last ride together, mother.”

“Do I hear that you are going out to the works with your father?” asked her mother.

“Not to-morrow; later on I shall get father to take me, if he will.”

“All right,” said the captain, “we won’t let Lettice languish too much.”

“How about me then?” said Mrs. Le Strange. “I shall be left all alone.”

“We’ll take you too, mother, if you wish,” said Lettice, laughing, and running off to get into her riding-habit.

## CHAPTER XX

MALCOLM and Lettice rode away together up the long winding road until they gained the tableland beyond. Here they were able to set their horses into a good gallop, and did not pull rein until they had covered a couple of miles.

Lettice was an excellent horsewoman, and as her mount bounded along on the turf she dropped her hands, and had him under perfect control as she sat back in the saddle with an easy grace.

Malcolm's eyes expressed his admiration for the manner in which she sat the horse and controlled his movements. As they turned home the sun was rapidly approaching the horizon, and already threw a red haze over the shimmering water, which in a vista stretched out before them.

"Our last evening together for some time to come," said Lettice sadly.

"Yes, dear one, and when next we ride together I hope it will be far away in old England. My father has some good horses, and we have splendid downs to gallop on," answered Malcolm.

"So I have heard. You will have to take me out often, mind, sir, when we are married."

"Your slightest wish will always be my law, sweetheart."

"Oh no, you must not give in to me like that; men, who have the work of the world to do, must choose about such matters."

"I shall not be so busy or hard-worked, I hope, but that I shall find time to ride with you when you wish it."

"It will be nice to watch for your coming, Malcolm; I wish the time were not so far off."

"It will soon pass; no matter about having to wait a few years if we retain our love for each other."

"You do not doubt me?"

“No, I do not; but I can’t understand your giving up Adey for me.”

“Not understand, Malcolm? But that is just what I want you to do; it does not matter what any one else thinks or says about it. You see I never loved Charlie; I had always known him, and we were brought up together. To please father I consented to the engagement, but I must confess I did not know what love meant until I met you.”

“I wish I had come sooner,” said Malcolm.

“Do you still doubt me?”

“No, it is not that; but Adey seems a good fellow, and it is a little hard on him.”

“It is like you to think of that; but for happiness we must have mutual love. I am sorry for him too; but in the end I feel an easy conscience, for it is a case of being cruel perhaps, but only to be kind.”

They had now reached the steep descent into the town, and the setting sun shed a glow over Wellington as it lay beneath them.

In the harbour were many ships, one of which was to bear Malcolm away on the morrow.

He looked, and the scene before him brought to his mind the lines —

“A king sate on the rocky brow  
Which looks o’er sea-born Salamis;  
And ships, by thousands lay below — “

But they had no time for much further reflection, and hurried down the road to reach home before nightfall.

Once on the level road, they broke into a brisk trot, and were soon able to hand their horses over to the stable-man and find their way to the house.

Having changed their riding attire, they joined the others on the veranda, where they sat inhaling the cool evening air, and listening to the busy hum of the insects, already abroad for the night.

Captain Le Strange handed Malcolm a choice cheroot, and Lettice busied herself

by striking a match which she held up in the still air for him to light it. Hardly had he done so when Charles Adey was announced.

“I have ventured to come,” he said, “to say good-bye, as it will be a rather long time before I set foot here again.”

“How long do you reckon the work will take?” they asked.

“Two years, perhaps three, I cannot say.”

“So long?” asked Sir Philip Stewart.

“Yes, we shall have on every available hand at the work; but it will be lucky if we get it through in less time than I have indicated.”

“Well, we must all put our shoulder to the wheel and get on as fast as we can,” said Sir Philip.

Captain Le Strange offered Charles a smoke.

“No, thanks,” he said, “I’m sorry I can’t stay a moment, as I have many to see tonight. May I have one word with you, Lettice, before I go?” he added, and rose as he spoke.

Lettice looked at Malcolm.

“Go,” he said while Adey was taking leave of the others, and Lettice followed him down the garden path.

“I did not want to say farewell to you before the others,” he said j “you will understand my feelings. I love you still, Lettice; but I know what love is, it is not a thing that will come or go at our bidding, and if you love another better I cannot complain. Certainly there are excuses for you, but I shall never give you up while there is a chance.”

“I scarcely know what you mean,” said Lettice, looking down.

“You need not fear my taking any unfair advantages; but we don’t know what may happen, and some day you may be glad to accept such love as I can offer you.”

“You must not console yourself with any such thought,” Lettice replied.

“Whatever happens, my love is given to one and one only. I cannot take it back.”

“You have been candid with me, and I thank you for that; but you can’t tell how you may feel in years to come. I must go now, and it will be three years or more before I return; a great deal may happen in that time. Good-bye.”

“Good-bye,” answered Lettice.

And without another word Charles Adey opened the garden gate and stepped out into the road, and was gone.

Lettice returned slowly to her seat on the veranda, her mind full of thoughts.

## CHAPTER XXI

CHARLES ADEY went on to Government House to meet Sir Chandos Shadwell and others, in order to make final arrangements for beginning the artificial strait which was to open a sea-road for all the vessels to pass through to England again.

“I have arranged to let you have a thousand men to start with,” said Sir Chandos.

“That will do for the present; but I hope you will draft us on more from time to time, as soon as we can get fresh water laid on,” said Charles.

“You think it will cost five million pounds sterling to do the work?” “Yes, as far as we can calculate now. With the carriage of fresh water from here, and all the stores, it will amount to more; but we hope to soon get a supply of good water on the spot.”

“Will that include all the work?”

“No, it will be necessary to erect two breakwaters to protect the mouths of the canal.”

“Well, we have the assurance of Sir Philip Stewart and Malcolm Lear that the whole of the expense will be forthcoming from England; and not only that, but that all the wealth of the old country will be fairly divided amongst our inhabitants.”

“That is assuming, of course, that no other living people are subsequently discovered on the globe?”

“Yes. Of course measures will be taken to make sure on that head,” returned Sir Chandos.

“And with regard to myself; what will be my position,” asked Charles, “supposing I am successful in completing the work in the time I have specified?”

“I can promise you that you will be well recompensed, and you should have no difficulty in taking a share in the future government either here or in England,”

said Sir Chandos. "You may depend on my doing all I can for you, and I am sure the people will support me."

"Well, I am ready then," said Charles. "To-morrow I take on the task, and, God willing, I will not leave it until it is finished."

"Hear, hear!" from those present.

Having settled further details the meeting broke up, and Charles Adey went to dine with the Governor and his wife.

Lady Shadwell welcomed him effusively.

"You will prove yourself the man of the time by making this way to England, which should prove a veritable El Dorado for us," she said.

"Yes, it will be an epoch-marking work," said Sir Chandos, "in the new history of the world."

"What scheme have you got for the future government of the world?" asked Charles.

"That I can hardly tell you yet; but, as I have already indicated publicly, I propose that Henry Lear should be Governor of England on certain terms, while I remain here."

"Suppose Lear does not agree to your terms?"

"He must agree to them if I have the support of my people."

"Yes; but, as I understand, you propose to allow half the population to return to England, dividing the wealth equally between those who go and remain."

"You have my idea exactly."

"But how are you to settle who is to go to the old country?"

"In case of there being too many desirous of going, by lot or ballot."

"I see," said Charles; "but you must remember that when once they are domiciled in the old land you may lose your control."

“To a certain extent, yes; but I hope that the proposals which I shall make will be good enough to keep all on my side.”

“I am not sure that I grasp the situation rightly,” said Charles; “but it seems to me that if you allow half your people to go to England you will make the balance of power equal, if not one-sided; for you must remember great wealth, so to speak, is there, and it will be to the interest of the inhabitants of the old country to keep it there.”

“Quite right,” said Sir Chandos, “so far; but if the people are not divided how can I expect the wealth to be?”

“Well, I must not presume to argue with a wiser head than my own, and I must leave you to settle the matter as you think best; I have merely given my opinion.”

“And I accept it in the spirit in which you have given it,” said Sir Chandos. “Two heads, you know, are better than one.”

“At present you are master of the situation, as you yourself have said, and I should take good care to keep the game in my own hands.”

“Yet it won’t do to go against the interest of the people. No ruler can stand on such an unsound foundation as to ignore the interest of a strong democracy.”

“Just so, and if you allow a state to grow up in opposition to us you may create a child which may quickly become stronger than the parent.”

“I follow your meaning,” said Sir Chandos; “but you forget that they must depend on us, at any rate for a few years, for their very existence.”

“For the first year, yes; but after that a people in England might well be as self-supporting as ourselves.”

“By that time we shall have made our terms,” said Sir Chandos, with self-complacency. “You will report to me how you are getting on with the work from time to time,” he added.

“Oh yes; and I hope you will bring Lady Shadwell out to see the canal before it is opened.”



“I should like to come out immensely,” said her ladyship.

“There is quite a natural harbour on both sides at the entrance to the canal, and you could bring your steamer into safety and make that your quarters,” said Charles.

” I shall have to go through to England as soon as you can get a way open; or perhaps a better plan would be to send for Lear to come out here,” said Sir Chandos.

“We shall have ample time to make up our minds about that,” said Lady Shadwell. “Three years is a long time to look forward.”

“And yet it will soon be gone,” said Sir Chandos. “Come into the smoking-room, Adey, and we can talk the matter over further.”

So the Governor and his chief engineer finally settled their plans.

## CHAPTER XXII

THE narrow neck of land which cut off the connexion with England was gradually being divided.

A good spring of fresh water had been found some four miles away, and it was now pumped direct to the works.

The picks and shovels of over three thousand labourers were daily at work, except on Sundays.

Ships kept flying to and fro laden with provisions, and from early to late engines and cranes were kept going unceasingly.

The isthmus had been named after Sir Philip, and they already began to talk of Stewart's Canal. Quite a little town was growing up on the coast, and the workers included some Maories and even a few Chinamen.

All day long Sir Philip himself drove one of the engines, and the hot sun had already tanned his face, neck, and arms as brown as any nut.

Malcolm Lear sometimes worked in the canal; at other times he helped Sir Philip.

He had got a young Maori whom he called "Jim," though for what reason none knew, and the native acted as his servant, cooked his food, and so on.

Malcolm was much interested in him, and often after the day's work was done he would sit down by the sea and question the native, or together they would ramble on the rocks and look as far as they could over the ocean.

The young Maori believed in the transmigration of souls, and he was never tired of asking Malcolm about the doings of the spirits when they had made a Valhalla of England.

In common with the rest of his race, he quite believed that the souls of the departed were constantly returning to the earth in a new shape either to punish or assist the living, and who knows but that in some unknown and unseen way this

is perfectly true.

“Then you think that the spirits of the dead may be still influencing us for good or ill, even though they don’t openly manifest their powers?” asked Malcolm.

“Yes, I do, Massa,” replied Jim. “You go this way, or you go that way, and you tell not why, but it makes great difference sometime.”

“No doubt, Jim, we are often in greater danger than we know, and are prevented by what is called the merest chance from running into it, and we may be even near to doing things which would be our ruin, but we are restrained by a greater power than you imagine. It is the spirit of the great God Himself that does all this.”

“Yes, Massa, I know of Him too. No doubt He send spirits back.”

“Nothing can happen but with His knowledge and by His will,” Malcolm answered; “but how far our own actions may be influenced by the spirit world I am unable to say, though very likely they are often present with us, only we don’t know it.”

“But you have told me yourself, Massa, what hold the spirits had over you.”

“Yes, that was so for a time, and in a particular way, as regards myself, but they seem to have left us again now, so far as I can judge, though I don’t know what is going on in my own land, or when they may return.”

“They will never leave us entirely, Massa, you will find.”

Malcolm did not answer this. So far as his own experience went, he had a rooted objection to the interference of the souls of departed ones. He was expecting Lettice Le Strange to come out to the works, and he was too happy in his love affairs now to wish them suddenly upset again.

“I think I will go for a walk on the rocks while you get the dinner cooked. Run and ask Sir Philip if he will come with me,” said Malcolm.

It was Sunday and all were having a rest.

“Massa says no, he smoke quiet,” said Jim.

“Very well, Jim, don’t you go too quiet and spoil the dinner mind, or “

“No, Massa, I take care: good dinner, Massa.” 6

It was very hot, and in his shirt-sleeves, with a large sombrero on his head, Malcolm began to climb the rocks.

When he arrived on the summit he descended into a sort of dyke, which led him to the other side of the isthmus.

With considerable toil he made his way along until he reached the end, and looked out over the rocks, which dropped sheer beneath him some hundreds of feet. On each side of him they rose abruptly still higher, and along the sort of trough in which he stood came a cool and refreshing breeze.

For some time he waited, looking with longing eyes across the sea, and wondering when the time would come for him to set foot once more in the old land.

As he remained deep in thought, another figure was slowly approaching him from behind. It was Charles Adey.

A sudden temptation seized him.

He knew the spot where Malcolm stood, and all the time that he crept stealthily on he thought how easy it would be to give a push and thus remove his rival from his path.

Step by step he came, pausing now and again for breath; his eyes glared like some tiger about to spring upon his prey. Why should this man have come across his path and taken his love from him? Was this a chance to be thrown aside?

Once more he paused. Could he do this thing? He must. He seemed quite full of lust for Malcolm’s life.

He was unperceived, and almost within striking distance; yet once more he paused, and this time a different feeling came over him. He seemed to hear voices calling to him to stay his hand. It was true this man could not help what had occurred, he was the victim of circumstances he began to think, and with better thoughts the animal propensities within were subdued. In that moment of

doubt he stood trembling, the perspiration ran from him like rain, and in a weird and unnatural voice he spoke to Malcolm Lear.

Malcolm turned swiftly; surprised, his foot slipped, and in a second he was hanging over the rocks, having seized the ragged edge with both hands.

Without hesitation Adey threw himself flat, and held Malcolm firmly.

“Now then,” he said, “steady, draw yourself up — that’s right,” and putting forth almost superhuman strength he hauled Malcolm up into safety.

Adey drew a long breath. “Touch and go,” he said; “one more second and we should both have gone over.”

“You startled me,” Malcolm replied, holding his ankle, “and I missed my footing on the edge; but for your presence of mind I should have been launched into eternity.”

“It was you who showed the presence of mind, you held on splendidly,” said Adey; “but what’s amiss, you look pale, are you hurt?”

“My ankle — I twisted it when I slipped.”

“Give me your hand,” said Adey. “Let’s get away from this accursed place, it makes me dizzy to look over there now.”

Malcolm tried to rise, but he was unable to put his foot to the ground.

Adey took the situation in at a glance, but he was mad to get away from the place. What if his temptation should reassail him? Taking Malcolm in his arms, he staggered several paces away from the edge of the precipice.

“You will never be able to carry me down to the shore; better fetch Sir Philip and Jim.”

“And yet another,” said Adey. “It will take four good men to get you back to your tent.”

“Be off then, there’s a good fellow,” said Malcolm; “but stay, would you mind binding my handkerchief tightly round my foot first? Thanks, that’s better,” he

added, as Adey bound it up carefully as a surgeon.

“You’re a good plucked un,” said Adey. “Now rest quietly here; I will come back with help as soon as possible.”

A strange expression came over Adey’s face, but with these words he turned and made his way as quickly as he could along the broken rocks.

Malcolm had noticed his strange look. What if — but no, he must mean to stand by him in his hour of need, else surely he would have let him go over the rocks just now; no one would ever have known.

And then he thought how manly Adey had been, how good to assist him. He thanked his stars that Lettice had not been there; one scream from her would have unnerved him, and he would have gone into the abyss.

He had thought to bring Lettice to that place, but he doubted if she would ever come now.

As hour after hour went by and the pain in the ankle increased, Malcolm began to suffer with intense thirst.

The sun began to sink down and down, and the shadow of the rock above grew longer and longer.

Yet no sign of any one.

What if Adey meant to leave him after all?

He might take his way back to the camp and say no word to any one, knowing that in his present plight he must soon perish.

But Malcolm put the thought out of his head again and again; he would not harbour such unworthy suspicions. Yet the shadow continued to lengthen, and no one came to his rescue. At last he could not stand inaction any longer, and he attempted to crawl along the rocks; but the pain was so intense that, clenching his hands in despair, he was obliged to desist.

He wondered if Lettice would ever know; and whether, if Adey had really left him to perish, if his soul would be sent back into this world to punish him. What

if Jim were right? He tried shouting, but nothing but the echoes of his own voice reverberated along the rocks.

## CHAPTER XXIII

WHEN Adey left Malcolm to go for help he hurried quickly along, and as he went the same temptation came to him. What if he went on his way and said nothing. It was very hot, but he knew that before morning there would be a sharp frost, and even one night of exposure would be fatal to Malcolm Lear in his present condition.

Yet when he reached the edge of the rocks, where they began to descend in a long slope to the camp below, he paused and sat down on a large boulder. Putting his arms on his knees, and leaning his face forwards between his two hands — those hands which so short a time ago had nobly rescued his rival from certain death — he tried to think.

It seemed hard that he, who was still quite a young man, who had already risen to the top of the tree in his profession, should have his love affairs so suddenly go wrong.

He was not a demonstrative man, and did not show so much of his love as some would have done, yet it was strong.

As he thought the matter out, it became quite clear to him that if he did his obvious duty, and went on for help, he must renounce for ever his chance of regaining Lettice Le Strange.

Strong in mind and good in courage he was, but for the moment his love for the girl proved stronger, and try as he would he could not bring himself to go on down the rocky slope.

If only some one would come to awaken him from his indecision! The sun sank, and still in the same position he sat there, his face covered with his hands. It was a wrestle for the life of his soul, but he did not realize it.

Then the question occurred to him: “What good will your love be to you if you do this thing, and always have such remorse as must follow, constantly on your mind?”

It was enough. He jumped up on the instant and began to rush madly down the



slope. Malcolm should not die thus if he could help it.

He had not gone far, however, before once more fate intervened, for missing his footing, he fell headlong, striking his head against the sharp edge of a rock, and blood began to flow freely from the wound.

How long he had lain thus he knew not, but was awakened to consciousness by the Maori, Jim, who had pulled him into a sitting posture and tied his handkerchief round his head.

Charles Adey continued for some time in a dazed condition, but, collecting his thoughts with an effort, he sent Jim back to the camp to Sir Philip, and himself returned to Malcolm with a bottle of water which the Maori had carried with him.

“I’m sorry,” said Adey, “but I too have had an accident, and we might both of us have perished on these rocks tonight but for your faithful servant Jim, who found me and brought me round. I have sent him on to Sir Philip, and come back myself with water which the Maori had with him.”

Malcolm seized the bottle and drank; but at the first draught he remembered.

“Have you had none?” he asked.

“Only what Jim forced between my lips to revive me; but never mind, go on.”

“Not until you have had some too.”

Adey took a drink. “Now finish it,” he said.

Malcolm obeyed and seemed much refreshed.

“How did you get hurt?” he said.

“My foot slipped as I was descending the rocks, and I ran my head against them.”

“A good thing Jim came,” said Malcolm.

“Yes.”

“Will they be long?”

“I expect they are on their way to assist us by now.” Adey sat down. “You could not limp along a bit if I were to help you?”

“Better not try, for I can’t step on my foot, and it would only exhaust you further.”

The two men waited in silence.

Adey had a mind to tell Malcolm the real reason of the delay, but he knew that his better nature had prevailed, and he was satisfied.

“You are a lucky beggar,” he said at last.

“I fail to see how.”

“Come now, can’t you see that you will have no need to stay here and be cooked any longer? That ankle will give you a respite which many would be glad to get.”

“Ah, I see,” said Malcolm slowly; “it will be of no use for me to remain here for the present.”

Adey paled visibly. “No,” he said, “you will return to the flowers, the breezes, and the smiles.”

“And you; will not a rest be ordered for you?”

“If it is I shall not take it,” said Adey firmly. “I have work here to finish, and then “

“What then?” put in Malcolm.

“I must find other work elsewhere,” he replied.

Malcolm turned away with a sigh. ‘ Why is there nothing in this world so sweet, but that there is always some admixture of bitter,’ he thought; but aloud he only said, “I hope Sir Philip will soon be here, the day is fast closing in.”

“Yes, they have no time to spare,” Adey replied, “if we are to reach camp

without further mishap.”

At this moment four men appeared on the ledge above them, silhouetted against the sky.

“Here they come,” cried Malcolm, “and,” he added excitedly, “I believe one of them is Captain Le Strange.”

He proved to be right, for Sir Philip and the captain were advancing as fast as the rough track would allow, accompanied by the Maori and a doctor.

“No time to lose here,” they said, “or we shall get benighted”; and taking Malcolm in their arms, arm-chair fashion, they carried him over the rocks, Charles Adey following somewhat unsteadily in the rear.

## CHAPTER XXIV

GOING slowly along and frequently changing positions so as to rest their arms, they managed to carry Malcolm back to his tent, and Charles Adey walked without being badly off.

The doctor found that Malcolm had got a very bad sprain, and would require a long period of rest to set it right; while Adey, he said, would be all right again in a few days. But as a matter of fact, he was up and about his work the next morning, though he did not venture out in the sun, as the doctor had strictly forbidden that.

“I know some one who will not be sorry for this,” said Captain Le Strange when Adey and the doctor had left them.

“Who do you mean?” asked Malcolm.

“Can’t you guess?” said Sir Philip.

“Not Lettice? She is not here!”

“She is on board the ‘Relief,’ and her mother too came out on purpose to see you; and they were going all round the works with you to-morrow, but they will have to find another escort now,” said Le Strange.

“She will have to escort me back to New Zealand,” Malcolm laughed. “I can do no good here for a time.”

“So you think you can do more good in attending to your love affairs, eh?” said Sir Philip. “You are in luck’s way to get out of work like this.”

“I nearly finished my work in this world when I met with the accident.”

“How?”

Malcolm told of his very narrow escape.

Sir Philip and Le Strange looked at each other.

“A very good thing you did not go over the rocks,” said the latter, “for more reasons than one.”

Malcolm misunderstood, and did not make a remark.

“Shall I see Lettice to-morrow?” he asked presently.

“I should guess you will,” said Le Strange. “What message am I to take to your ladylove? She will be expecting you to return to the ship with me tonight.”

“You will tell her how sorry I am that this accident has prevented my coming, won’t you?”

“Yet you don’t look very unhappy over it.”

“No, and I may look less so to-morrow if you will bring her here to see me,” said Malcolm, laughing.

“May I say that you contemplate returning with us in a few days?”

“I must take Jim to look after me if I do; and how will Sir Philip get on?”

“Never mind about me,” said he. “I am just getting used to this camp life; I shall manage right enough.”

“It’s very good of you to say so,” said Malcolm. “We’ll settle it like that then,” he added. “But who will show Lettice round first?”

“Suppose we depute Adey to do it?” said Le Strange slyly.

“Just as you like,” Malcolm answered. “I should not mind at all.”

“I was only having you on a little,” said Captain Le Strange. “I will undertake to show my girl round myself.”

His ship was brought up and anchored in the creek, which led up to the canal, and as the evening was now drawing in, he went back to tell Lettice what had happened.

“Take care of yourself till to-morrow, Lettice shall be landed early to see you; and now good night.”

“Good night,” Malcolm replied. “Don’t make much of my accident; say I shall soon be all right.”

“Yes; by the time you get back to the old quarters you will be ready to return here.”

“No, I didn’t mean that. Say it’s not a serious sprain, you know, but that it will take a long time to get well.”

“Oh, oh! I see.”

“I’m afraid I shall have to finish the canal alone, from what I can hear,” said Sir Philip.

“No, I’ll come back and have a second innings right enough,” replied the invalid.

“Well, I must go, or my wife will wonder what is up. Once more, good night.”

Captain Le Strange shook hands with both men and hurried out of the tent.

“There goes as good and kind a man as ever lived, though a bit hot-tempered,” said Sir Philip, looking after him.

“Yes, I’m a lucky man to have such a good sort of prospective mother-and-father-in-law, am I not?” said Malcolm.

“I think you are lucky in every respect. Just think what it will be for you and your old country, our coming out here and finding all these living people.”

“And all yours,” returned Malcolm. “By rights the whole country ought to be yours.”

“No, your father will ever be first in England as long as my right arm can support him. No man has better rights; no man was ever more fitted to be a ruler and leader of men; and you, Malcolm, in due time, will make a worthy successor.”

“I’m afraid you greatly overrate me.”

“I’m sure I do not. And you have chosen well in Lettice Le Strange; she will

make you a good wife. Things could not have fallen out better.”

“Of course, I quite agree with you,” said Malcolm, “on the latter subject.”

“You don’t seem in any great hurry to return to England now. I wish the spirits would assist us again.”

“Indeed I am. Remember, I’m not to marry until we reach the old country once more; besides, I long to see them all again.”

“Oh, I did you an injustice. Of course, you are happy in your love, and that is everything,” said Sir Philip.

“Yes, I’m happy and ought to be,” said Malcolm. “But I am sorry for Adey; no one can guess better than I what he must feel. It was noble of him to do what he did to-day.”

“Yes, it was,” said Sir Philip; “but it would have been awkward for him if you had been killed.”

“How?” asked Malcolm.

“A wrong construction might have been put on the matter if you two were alone, and you had gone over the rocks.”

“I see what you mean,” said Malcolm; “but no, Adey would not do anything like that.”

“No j and yet I don’t quite understand him. He has sworn, you know, that somehow he will win Lettice Le Strange yet, but he is not the man to do anything which would touch his honour.”

“You have most likely hit the nail on the head,” said Malcolm. “‘All’s fair in love and war,’ they say, but I don’t think he would do an underhand or wrong thing.”

“Let us hope not,” said Sir Philip. “All the same, you must look to yourself, my lad. I’m not altogether satisfied with the way Adey bears himself at times, though I suppose the blow on his head would make him queer today.”

“Yes. Well, I shall be able to have all the running to myself for a bit now,” said Malcolm.

“And you’ll make the most of it, I’ve no doubt. I will just call Jim to get your supper, and you had better have him sleep in your tent tonight.”

“I should be glad of him,” Malcolm answered.



## CHAPTER XXV

MALCOLM was in considerable pain through the night, but he bore it with stoical fortitude, and, acting on the doctor's advice, got Jim to bathe his foot constantly.

The good fellow waited on him assiduously, and at the same time distracted his thoughts with conversation.

"You see, Massa," he said, "spirits not yet done with us, else why came I go up rocks, seek for you? If I hadn't gone, you and Massa Adey die ere now."

"You may be quite right, Jim," said Malcolm. "Perhaps you were led by the unseen to find and rescue us. Another thing I have been thinking, who knows but that they led Charles Adey to find such a splendid place for cutting the canal?"

"True, Massa; and they are protecting him now, for his 'scape yes' day was simple marbellous."

"And mine too."

"Yours, Massa? You only hurt your foot."

"Yet it might have been a great deal worse, Jim," said Malcolm; but he did not tell him any more.

Sometimes, when his foot became easier, Malcolm was able to snatch a little sleep; but all night long Jim sat there watching over him, never closing his eyes, and he already felt something more than ordinary solicitude for his master's safety and welfare. He felt as if he must defend him even with his life, but he said not a word of this to Malcolm.

When he woke up, Jim at once attended to the foot. Really, he made a capital nurse.

"There seems some truth in your idea about the spirits," said Malcolm. "I have just had a strange dream. I was back in my own land, and once more they were helping us as before."

“P’raps spirits make you dream, Massa.”

“Yes, but I hope, Jim, that they won’t upset what they have already done for me.”

“They watch over you for good, Massa.”

“I hope that is so, Jim.”

“And they make me watch over you, Massa. Me see no harm come near you.”

“You are very good, Jim. Now to-day I want you to leave me for a time. Miss Le Strange is coming here to look over the canal works, and I want you to take her to the place where you found me yesterday, and show her where I look across the sea towards my own land; but don’t let her go near the edge of the precipice, Jim.”

“No, Massa, me understand,” said Jim.

“And you will look after her well for me?”

“Yes, Massa; me keep eyes open, me see danger, if any.”

“Thank you, Jim, I’m sure you will be on the look out.”

“But who wait on you, Massa, if I go ‘way?” asked Jim.

“I shall be all right. Mrs. Le Strange is coming too, and will probably accompany you round the works; but she may not care to go on the rocks, so I shall ask her to stay with me.”

“P’raps Sir Philip come stay wid you, Massa.”

“No, he has to get on with his work; I shall be quite well alone.”

“Velly well, Massa.”

“I shall be going home with the Le Stranges when they return. I suppose you will come with me?”

“Massa, I always go with you now, eberywhere.”

Thus Malcolm managed to pass the night fairly well, though his foot was still very painful at times.

At daybreak Sir Philip entered the tent.

“How now, Malcolm?” he asked.

“Going on well. Jim has been talking to me all night, except when I managed to doze off. He is now seeing about breakfast. Will you have some with me?”

“I won’t say no to that, but I must look sharp. I see the men are already going down to the works.”

“It is as well to get on betimes before the sun gets too hot,” said Malcolm. “I suppose Captain Le Strange will bring the ladies out early.”

“Yes; I advised him to do that, as I knew you would be impatient to see Lettice.”

“We are all impatient under like conditions. You, Sir Philip, have never known an hour’s rest by day since the work began here, and why is this except that you are urged on to make a way to England?”

“That is true,” said Sir Philip. “I feel as if I must go on with it in a most unaccountable way. I suppose it is the influence of the spirits still at work.”

“That’s what I think; we have not done with them and their vagaries yet by any means. You don’t think that they will make Lettice give me up again?”

“No; you must not torment yourself with such ideas. Leave them to themselves; they have not done so badly for us hitherto, now have they, come?”

“No,” said Malcolm, “except when they gave Maud her wish. That was awkward for me, wasn’t it?”

“Yes, at the time; yet things look like coming right in the long run. Perhaps in the end they will find some one for Maud who will make her perfectly happy.”

“I hope they will. I will forgive them a great deal if they set such matters as that right.”

Malcolm looked at Sir Philip, and he thought of all the hard work he had done in that hot place; yet perfect health glowed through his bronzed skin, and, if anything, he looked younger. His example for hard work had been most inspiring, and Malcolm could not help thinking how wonderful it all was, though in his mind he felt certain that the aid of the unseen had a great deal to do with it. And then he thought of himself. What if his foot should get all right in some miraculous way? He was ever afraid that the happy time which was promised to him might at any moment be delayed or deleted altogether.

Yet, as Sir Philip said, on the whole he had reason to be satisfied. He must hope for the best, think for the worst, and bear manfully whatever was to happen.

“Well,” said Sir Philip, looking at him, “are you prepared to take my advice?”

“Yes,” Malcolm replied. “I think the spirits know what they are about, or, as Jim puts it, they have their orders from the great God Himself, so whatever happens we ought to make the best of it.”

“Quite the right way to look at the matter, my boy,” said Sir Philip, as he washed his breakfast down with some smoked tea which Jim had just brought them. “Do the best you can, and ever leave the rest to the unseen powers. Now I must be off, but I’ll pop in and see how you are getting on at meal time.” And he hurried down to go on with the work of excavating, while Malcolm was left to make the best of it with Jim and his own thoughts for company.

## CHAPTER XXVI

CHARLES ADEY had passed a restless night, but he was in his office at the usual early hour with his head bound with a bandage soaked in a cooling lotion which the doctor had given him, and had already been busy giving directions and making calculations for carrying on the work.

He felt the effect of yesterday's accident severely, but he, being a man of iron will, was determined not to give in.

He had scarcely settled to his work when Sir Philip looked in to see him.

"As well as you can expect after your knocking about, I hope?" he said.

"Yes, I am not badly off, considering."

"I came to tell you that Mrs. Le Strange and her daughter are coming to have a look round this morning. I thought you would like to know."

"Thank you for telling me," said Adey simply. "I suppose they will require some one to escort them?"

"Yes."

"I can't get out in the sun myself, but I will arrange for some one to go with them who will explain everything. I suppose the captain will be with them?"

"Yes, I think so."

Adey turned to one of his clerks.

"Go and ask Mr. Chalmers to come here."

The clerk left the office to go on his errand, but hardly had he done so when Chalmers, who was one of the chief engineers, ran breathlessly into the room.

"Some one, or rather I should say a great many hands, have been at work all night in the canal. Enormous progress has been made," he said.

Charles Adey stared at him. "You had better go and see the doctor," he said.

"Oh, I know you think that I've gone wrong in the head, but I haven't; any one who goes down to the works can see that the men have been on all night. But what surprises me is that they have done double the work they get through in a day."

"Man alive, don't talk such nonsense. What is the matter with you this morning?"

"I think I know," interposed Sir Philip. "There is nothing the matter with him; he is perfectly sane, but the spirits are at work here. I'll go and have a look."

Sir Philip hurried off, and in a few minutes came back and corroborated Chalmers' story.

"Can this be possible?" said Adey, sinking into a chair.

"It's a fact," said Sir Philip.

"What had we better do?"

"Keep on work just the same. If the unknown help us, so much the better."

"It all seems very strange, but I'll take your advice, Sir Philip. Please set all the men on to work for me; I will give Chalmers his instructions."

Sir Philip went on his way wondering. He explained briefly to the men what it all meant and set them to work again.

"Captain Le Strange, with his wife and daughter, are coming to look round," Adey told Mr. Chalmers. "Please go down to Malcolm Lear's tent and meet them, and as soon as they are ready accompany them and explain anything they may wish to know."

"Very well," said Chalmers, "I will do as you desire," and left the office.

Meantime Lettice, with her mother and father, had made her way to shore and went straight to Malcolm's tent.

Jim came running in to him to announce their arrival.

“Show them in here,” said Malcolm; “but first help me to sit up.”

“There be strange news from the works, Massa,” said Jim as he did so. “Not a man has been in the canal since Saturday night, and yet two days’ new work has been done.”

“You don’t say so, Jim. Then you and I were right; the spirits are at work here.”

“That must be the case, Massa.”

For the moment Malcolm’s heart sank within him. What if Maud should invoke their aid, or Adey? But he quickly regained his self-possession.

“Let nothing take my love for Lettice from her, or hers from me,” said Malcolm, and at once he became certain that danger on that point was past.

Captain Le Strange entered the tent.

“Good morning,” he said. “May I bring the ladies in to see you? I hope your foot is no worse,” he added.

“No, come in all of you, please,” Malcolm answered.

“Poor lad,” said Mrs. Le Strange, when they had exchanged greetings. “Are you in much pain?”

“I’m not likely to notice pain with you and Lettice near me,” he replied. “Come and give me a kiss, Lettice,” he added; “I’ve just had a great fright.”

“Why, darling?” she asked.

“The spirit world is at work here now, and they have done a lot of work at the canal, so Jim tells me.”

“Well, that will be a good thing, won’t it?” said Mrs. Le Strange.

“Yes, I suppose it will; but I was afraid for Lettice, supposing my love or hers was to be alienated.”

“Oh, you don’t think it possible that “

“No, love,” said Malcolm. “I have been first in the field, I think, and have asked the unseen to guard against that.”

“You don’t feel any different?” asked Lettice.

“No, unless it is to be fonder than ever of you.”

“And I feel no diminution of love,” said Lettice. “But where are mother and father gone? Oh, I see,” she added, as she peeped out of the tent. “They are just outside talking to a tall man.”

“Some one come to escort you round the works, I expect.”

“I wish you could come with us.”

“Never mind, Lettice dear, I shall soon be well again, and my enforced idleness will give me more time with you.”

“You are coming home with us?”

“If you will have me.”

“If! Oh, it will be lovely; I shall enjoy the voyage back with you.”

“And I with you, dear love. While you are here I want you to go over the rocks and see the other side of the narrow range. You can go with Jim and your father after you have seen the works, and if Mrs. Le Strange is tired she can return here and rest.”

“I should like to go awfully.”

“Jim will show you where I met with my accident, and where I am very fond of standing to look out to sea on the other side; and I have much to tell you later about this.”

“Very well,” said Lettice. “But what a good thing it was they found you, or you might have died, father says.”

“Yes, it was Jim who thought to come and search for me. He has been very good



and thoughtful; I don't know what I should do without him. But I must not keep you here chatting; you had better go over the works before it gets too hot."

"And will you be here all alone?"

"Yes, I don't mind that. You'll soon be back again."

"Can I get you anything before we go?"

"Nothing, thank you, dear. Be sure you bring your mother back here; it will be too much for her to climb the rocks."

"Very well, one little kiss and I'm off."

## CHAPTER XXVII

WHEN left to his own thoughts, Malcolm remembered how only the night before Sir Philip had wished for the spirit world to help them with the canal, so that they might get on further; but he had little thought at the time that there would be any supernatural interference again.

He had made sure of his love for Lettice, that was one thing, but he felt that very unpleasant contingencies might yet arise.

As he lay in his tent resting his injured foot, he was surprised by Charles Adey suddenly bursting in upon him.

“I couldn’t help it,” said Charles, as he stood before him. “I was obliged to come to you, Lear, and ask you, for I can’t get on with my work or anything.”

“Ask me! What is it you wish to know?”

“Why, just this, these spirits are at work again. Have they resumed their power over you? Are you going back to your old love you told me about, or are you still free to love Lettice?”

“I am still free,” Malcolm answered.

“I don’t understand then, for as soon as it came into my mind about the spirits granting one their wishes — I could not help it — I wished that Lettice might give up her love for you and come back to me.”

“Ah, you don’t quite understand,” said Malcolm. “It is a case of first come first served, and I have been before you. The spirits will not interfere about that now, you must try some other wish.”

“Then I wish they would take away my love for Lettice altogether, so that it may never return to her, and leave me free to choose again for myself, for I cannot bear this any longer. I shall lose control of myself entirely if it goes on.”

Hardly had he spoken when he became quite calm again, and he was conscious of a sudden change in his feelings.

Malcolm looked at him and noticed a difference.

“I’m glad you gave me that advice, Lear, I feel differently already. I no longer envy you Lettice’s love, and feel quite free again; you can’t tell what a relief it is, man. God knows what would have happened if I had gone on loving Lettice as I did this morning.”

“Perhaps in some way the power of the spirits increased your love until you made your wish,” said Malcolm.

“I think that must have been the case, for I came to you in desperation, and in the hope that your love for Lettice had cooled. If I had gone out again with the same feelings, I don’t know what might have happened.”

“Do you feel any affection for another girl now?” asked Malcolm.

“No. Only in a vague sort of way I feel that some day I shall meet a girl whom I can love as well as I did Lettice. The worst of it is, I don’t feel the same interest in my work now, for do what I will the spirits will have all the credit.”

“Indeed they won’t,” said Malcolm. “Of course, you can’t be expected to do the same wonderful things, and in the same time; but every one knows that you did all that a man could do.”

“But I feel as if they had put my light out.”

“Don’t look at it in that way. With the help which you can obtain immense possibilities lie before you, and remember that some day the interference of the dead will no doubt be finally withdrawn, so that the world may go on as before; but that, in my opinion, won’t be until everything has been settled on a sound basis.”

“I see what you mean. I am only flesh and blood after all; but I must help the spirits as well as I can, and in time all will come right.”

“Yes, that is what I think you should do.”

“Thank you, Lear; I’m precious glad I came to see you, for you have put new life into me. I must get back to my work. Going on as we are now, it will be completed in a year’s time, about.”

“In a year,” said Malcolm. “That will soon pass, but we must take care not to drive the spirits away again.”

“Yes, I have got a partner now that I must take care not to offend. But,” he said, “when the spirits do finally leave us — what then? Shall I love Lettice again as before? If so, I shall be as badly off as ever.”

“Ah, but you must get some one to fall in love with you, as I did, and be constantly with her, then all will come right. I was in love with another girl, not Maud you know, at one time, but when the spirits left me to love as I pleased, I thought no more of her with Lettice by my side.”

“Yes, I can understand that,” said Adey; “but where am I to find one like Lettice?”

“I can’t say. She may come to you in time, though I must admit there are not many girls like her.”

“No, indeed; and yet I can talk calmly to you in this way. It’s curious being thus under such power. No wonder you were nearly mad with love when the spirits were forcing your love instead of restraining it.”

“Yes; but beware, the same thing may come to you now you have wished for it.”

“Well, I don’t mind if my love affairs turn out as well as yours in the end.”

“I sincerely hope they will.”

“Thank you, Lear. I must go now, I’ve a lot to do. How is your foot this morning? I’m afraid I haven’t even asked after it before.”

“Less painful than it was, thank you,” Malcolm replied.

Charles Adey went back to his work much relieved. He had forgotten what the doctor told him about going out in the sun; in fact, he was hardly himself when he went to Malcolm’s tent. He found the doctor waiting to see him.

“I thought I told you to keep quiet, and not expose yourself to the heat,” he said. “This is against orders altogether.”

“You would have thought me quite mad if you had come half an hour ago.”

“Why?”

“These spirits upset me; in a moment they change one’s life into quite a new thing.”

“Yes,” said the doctor, “it does seem strange. I have not yet tried their power, but I understand any wish of mine will be carried out, and I have come to prove it; for I now wish that you will feel no further ill effects from the blow you got yesterday.”

Charles Adey immediately experienced an improvement, the pain in his head ceased, and he regained his usual health.

“What’s the result, do you feel better?” queried the doctor.

“I’m quite cured,” said Adey wonderingly. “I feel perfectly fit.”

“How extraordinary! I shall hardly be able to charge you any fee for that operation,” said the doctor, laughing.

“I should charge extra for curing in doublequick time, if I were you.”

“Yes, but it was not I who did it, you see.”

“Never mind. It’s not I who am cutting the canal, but I don’t see why I should not be paid all the same. We ought to reap the benefit of such assistance as we can get from the unseen, you know.”

“Well, that is one way of looking at it, I must say.”

“You have only got to get people to fall ill, and you will have a paying game on.”

“Ah, there’s Malcolm Lear. I must try the power on him now.”

“He won’t thank you if you cure him.”

“Not thank me, why?”

“He is glad of an excuse to run back to New Zealand.”

“I wish him to be cured all the same.”

“You had better go down and see if you find him walking about. You won’t meet with a very pleasant reception if you let out what you have done though.”

“I will go down and see, any way,” said the doctor; and he started off for Malcolm’s tent. He was surprised to find him still lying down, resting his foot.

“Come, come, this won’t do! How is it you’re not up and about?” cried he.

“Why, it’s impossible,” returned Malcolm, surprised; “you know that.”

“I’ve tried the spirits on Charles Adey, and he recovered at once; so I wished for you to get well, and expected to find you quite fit and on your legs again.”

“Ah, you don’t know the unseen yet. They will only grant you one request at a time; you cannot cure a lot of people.”

“Is that the way of it?” said the doctor. “And perhaps that is as well.”

“It is in my case at any rate. I don’t want to be cured all at once, or I should have wished it on my own account, which would have done quite as well, you know.”

At this moment Mrs. Le Strange came back to stay with Malcolm, while Jim took the captain and Lettice on the rocks.

“May I introduce you to Dr. Dale,” said Malcolm, presenting him to Mrs. Le Strange.

“How do you do? Is your patient getting on well?” she asked.

“Yes, very well indeed; but he is a *rara avis*, for he is suffering from a painful sprain, and yet is impatient at the thought of being cured.”

“Ah, we know all about that, don’t we, Malcolm?” said Mrs. Le Strange, laughing slyly-

“We cannot blame him,” said the doctor. “But I must be off to look after those who are more anxious to see me. Good-bye.”

## CHAPTER XXVIII

LETTICE and her father climbed the rocks attended by Jim as a guide, and when they reached the summit they turned to look around. East and west the two oceans stretched away — an unlimited waste of waters. Below them, slightly to the north, were the workers in the canal, which was gradually winding its way through the declivity in the rocks.

It was as if they stood at the apexes of two letters V, inverted towards each other, and as the coast-lines ran from them, north and south, they gradually encroached on the sea.

Descending into the defile in which Malcolm had lain so long, they worked their way to the spot where he had so nearly lost his life.

“Here is the place where Massa love to look back towards his home,” said Jim.

Together they looked out over the beautiful seascape, where the sun shone on deep blue waters, dappled by the white foam which, on the crest of the waves, from time to time rolled over its undulating surface. Along the bottom of that ever-restless sea, for all they knew to the contrary, might lie the remains of what was not many years since a thickly populated town or a living country. On each side of them the hot sandy rocks glistened in the sunshine, a fitting contrast to the picture which they had imagined as lying beneath the waters.

What a vast and unlimited power in the universe to have thus in a moment changed land for water and water for land!

Lettice found herself quoting —

“Roll on, then, dark and deep blue ocean, roll.”

“How many years,” she thought, “will come and go before the face of nature is again thus changed.

“Roll on,” she said, “between me and the land of my love, but the powers that be will soon enable us to cross you in safety, and then I shall see his home and his friends; or perhaps they may come here first, some of them. I wish they would.”

It was not long before the unknown powers far away in England set about a way to gratify this wish, but Lettice never gave that a thought.

“Come,” said her father, “let us be going back, the sun is getting high, and we shall be baked here presently.”

“We certainly shall if we remain here,” said Lettice. “Let us return, as you say, I don’t like the place somehow. I am glad it was not here that Malcolm was seized with madness, or he would have gone over, perhaps, in spite of my efforts to prevent him.”

She turned from the spot, and passed down by the place where Charles Adey had left his blood, now caked and dried on the sand.

Jim drew attention to it.

“Be careful, missy,” he said, “these stones loose and vebbly dangerous.”

She took her father’s arm for safety, and together they descended the rocks.

“How wonderfully they have got on with the canal,” she said; “and if the spirits are going to help nightly they will soon be through. Another year, Mr. Chalmers told me, at the rate they are now going would do it.”

“Yes, and they were making good speed as it was. I could not help noticing how well they had got on since I came out last time,” said her father.

“How well Sir Philip sticks to the work.”

“Yes, he is a fine man in every way,” said Captain Le Strange.

“I admire him very much, and Malcolm is fond of him, I think.”

“He could hardly help being so, for Sir Philip has always shown great solicitude for him.”

“When do we start for home?”

“I hope to get steam up and be away by to-morrow evening, if they get the stores unloaded.”



“Those Chinamen were going to work with a will this morning, I should think they will soon clear everything out of the ship.”

“And so Malcolm is to come too, is he?”

“Yes; it will be so nice to have him with us again.”

“Supposing the unknown make a cure of his foot, what then?”

“I hope they will do nothing of the sort, unless Malcolm wishes it, and he says he would much rather put up with the pain and be with me than get well and be separated again.”

“Ah me! such love in young hearts. Now I would rather be separated from your mother than have my little finger ache.”

“I don’t believe you one bit, father,” said Lettice. “Look how pleased you were when you had to spend that time at home on account of the injury to your knee.”

“Yes, that was because I was totally disabled, and got compensation from the insurance office. It was a treat, you know, for me to be paid to do nothing. I’ve not enjoyed much of the dolce far niente in my time.”

“No, father, you have always been busy, have you not? But never mind, come with us to old England, and you shall crown

‘A youth of labour with an age of ease.’ “

“Yes, I should like to settle down near you some day,” said Captain Le Strange; “but I agree with Malcolm, that things may not be decided quite so peaceably as we might desire, especially at first. Sir Chandos Shadwell is an ambitious man — a very ambitious man.”

“Yes, I know. Malcolm thinks the same as you do, and he says his father is very firm, and not likely to give way to him much.”

They reached Malcolm’s tent, and were glad to get in out of the sun to rest.

## CHAPTER XXIX

THE next day Sir Philip and Charles Adey saw the Le Stranges off on their return journey, accompanied by Malcolm Lear.

Charles had quite accepted the situation, and no longer felt any pain at the thought of Malcolm and Lettice departing together.

“If the spirits keep on as they are doing,” he said to them, as he bade them farewell, “you will not find much left to do here by the time you return.”

“No; but if anything goes wrong they may leave you in the lurch at any time,” answered Malcolm. “I hope nothing will happen to withdraw their aid until all the work is completed.”

“We must chance all that, and continue to do the best we can,” said Sir Philip, as they were all rowed away.

When all were safely on board, Captain Le Strange steamed out of the creek and away for Wellington at high speed.

The pain in Malcolm’s foot decreased, and he bore the moving well.

He sat in a deck-chair, while Lettice stood beside him, leaning over the rail.

“I’m glad we’re going home, Malcolm,” she said; “you look worn out with the work in this horrid place, I don’t like it for you at all.”

“It is not exactly an ideal place to reside in,” said Malcolm; “but I have not stood it badly, considering that I have never before been in the same latitude for any length of time.”

“No, that just is it; and then the pain occasioned by your accident has kept you without rest. By-the-by, you have not yet told me how it occurred.”

“It was a simple thing in a way,” said Malcolm. “I was standing on the edge of the rocks — you know the place — looking out to sea, thinking, when Charles Adey came up from behind, and spoke to me so strangely and suddenly that I turned quickly, and slipped in doing so; but for Adey’s assistance I must have

gone over the precipice, I was only holding on by my hands.”

“What an escape, Malcolm! I wonder why Charlie did that, he must have known how dangerous it was to startle you in such a place. I cannot understand his being so thoughtless.”

“Nor can I quite; but he was most kind and attentive to me afterwards, and he showed great presence of mind at the time.”

“One would think that the unseen world must have had something to do with it.”

“That’s what Jim persists in telling me; but I think it was Adey saving my life that brought them back. It was just the same when I tried to save Maud from drowning. They began to help me while I was endeavouring to get her out of the water, and I remembered no more till I found myself by her side on the river bank.”

“It was the unknown then that saved you now, I’m sure,” said Lettice.

“Yes, this time I suppose I am indebted to the spirits, so we are quits now. If it had not been for you, Lettice, they would have been the means of my destruction.”

“Yes, and yet they must have helped me even then, I think, and I can’t understand why. If I saved you as you say I did, that did not bring them back to us.”

“Perhaps it did; but no one made any use of them, so they departed again.”

“In that case we must keep them well employed, or they will leave us again.”

“They will have plenty to do on the canal for some time.”

“Yes, but I hope they won’t be allowed to depart then; we might find them very useful later on in bringing matters to a settlement, though, even if we invoke their aid, one never knows quite how it will all turn out.”

“No, that is true,” said Malcolm; “but if we can get them on our side there is no doubt about the power.”

“I hope they will find a way to settle matters in a wiser way than man could ever do,” Lettice replied.

“You think they were wise in sending me out here to meet you?”

“They will never do anything better for me than that, Malcolm, provided they don’t take you away again.”

“Nothing but death shall ever separate us, sweetheart,” said Malcolm.

“Say that again, my love, you could not think of anything to make me more happy than that assurance. Not parted till death, and then only for a time.”

“For a time, you say; what time? That’s the question.

‘Old Ocean rolls like time, each billow passing

Into another melts, and is no more;

While the indwelling - spirit moves on, massing

The great whole as before.’

When we pass to the great spirit world, who can say when we shall meet again? Men and women come and go, and from one existence to another; but all goes on much as before.”

“True,” said Lettice, “and yet in the world to come there are places prepared for you and me, and should they not be side by side?”

“They should and would be so if we could ourselves choose in such matters, my queen; but we cannot tell how it will be in the unknown world.”

“No, and yet I like to think that it will be so. This life is so short for love such as ours, it is scarcely awakened before it is time for it to fall asleep again.”

“It is at the best comparatively short, this life of ours; and yet with you, dear heart, it will be very sweet.”

“But such love as ours will never die, and surely those who desire to meet again will do so; nothing seems out of the power of spirits.”

“Yes; but we can’t tell what will be for the best in another world. As Sir Philip would say, we can only do what we can in this life, and make the most of it while it lasts; we must leave all else to the indwelling spirit of God Himself.”

“Well, that is enough. If we are happy here, we shall surely be so hereafter, I think.”

“That is just as I feel about it,” said Malcolm.

“I don’t mean that those who are unhappy here may not find relief in the world to come, especially if they bear their sorrows with courage and resignation.”

“That should be so,” said Malcolm.

Thus, while the good ship ploughed swiftly through the waves on her way back to Wellington, the two lovers continued to enjoy a happy time, and by such conversation to hallow their love and cement their friendship.

## CHAPTER XXX

FAR away in England they found before long that the spirits were actively amongst them again. As we know, Clare and Lilian had gone to live at a farm in the Vale of White Horse, below the Berkshire downs, where, with the help of some of the younger ones, they were preparing to raise large crops and graze large herds.

At Dunston Henry Lear continued to improve the country round him, keeping large flocks of sheep and raising heavy crops of corn.

Flora Lear was the first to set the unseen to work again. She had great trouble with the foxes, which had become so numerous and bold that they carried away her poultry at all times of the day, and it was only by keeping her chickens shut up in wire runs that she was able to get any for the table; and inadvertently she wished that the spirits would come back and kill the foxes. Henry Lear had no time for much hunting; besides, he said that foxes would keep down the rabbits and other vermin.

Flora's wish, however, had effect, and Clare one day rode up to Dunston to say that he had seen a pack of hounds in full cry followed by horses guided by invisible horsemen.

"What a good thing," said Henry Lear; "I foresee immense possibilities now the unseen have come back to help us again, and this time I hope we shall not be confined to one wish, but that they will go on helping us." He said this quite unconsciously, but his wish was to be granted.

"I will put that to the test," said Flora. "I wish a pack of hounds would come here this morning, so that we might go out and kill some foxes."

She had scarcely spoken before hounds began coming from all directions, and they were joined by three horses ready for the chase, and as they conjectured mounted by an invisible huntsman and whips.

Flora Lear got on her riding-habit quickly and joined her husband, who found the horses already saddled for them by invisible hands.

Going back to the pack Henry said, "Let them now find a fox and hunt it."

Immediately one of the horses turned and trotted down the drive followed by the others, and the hounds, across the meadows to the woodland on the side of the hill.

The hounds dashed into the covert, and the invisible horsemen galloped round to the further side of the wood followed by the others and Maud Robertson, who had been out riding and had now come up with them.

As the hounds spread hither and thither, the dead leaves rustled beneath their feet, and it was not long before an old hound threw up his head and gave tongue with a deep-toned note, which resounded through the wood, the others joining in chorus. An old fox heard the sound, and jumped up from his lair. He paused for a moment to take in the situation, and noted which way the hounds were coming and the direction of the wind. He then sat on his haunches and licked his white chest, which showed up as clean and conspicuous as a white shirt-front between the lapels of a dress waistcoat. As he turned and crept away through the bushes, taking in each sound as it came to him, his sides showed red as sand, and his back was flecked with grey, while on the end of his brush was a large white tag.

Trotting to the side of the wood, he made down wind, and broke from a corner close to where the horsemen stood.

A loud view-halloa from the little party soon brought the hounds to the spot. With their noses to the ground they soon picked up the warm scent, and sped away over the open down at a great speed, scarcely a whimper now breaking from them.

"Keep your mounts well together, and let the invisible horsemen lead," said Henry, as they followed in their wake.

To Maud Robertson, who, ever since she had returned, leaving Malcolm behind on those barren rocks as she thought to die of starvation, had been ill and depressed, the excitement came as a welcome stimulant to her inert feelings.

As her horse bounded forward over the undulating country, she sat back in the saddle and watched the subtle working of the hounds, her face aglow with pleasure.

She had no time to think now, or with the power of the spirits working before she would have turned her thoughts to the possibility of seeking Malcolm once more.

The fox before them was a good one, and far away in the vale, close by where Clare lived, he had a home where he would be safe from his pursuers. But would he reach it? He began to be hard pressed, and he had not yet gained the country where the many fences would deter the hounds and horsemen in their hot pursuit.

In front of him, on the hill which sloped down to the vale beneath, were some thick clumps of gorse. Quickly through these he threaded his way in the hope that the thick undergrowth would impede his ruthless foes.

Emerging on the other side, he lay down in a deep pit which was overshadowed by thick gorse, and it was not long before he could hear the quick respiration of the hounds as they stood around, tongues hanging from their mouths, and the breath coming in quick successive gasps. They were glad of a brief respite themselves, and as they cast one way and the other idly in picking up the scent anew, the fox crept from his hiding-place and, under the shelter of a brow, made his way into the vale below.

The invisible horsemen were, however, soon on his tracks, and calling to the hounds, the chase went on as merry as before.

They had now entered a difficult country, where stiff double ox fences lay across their track but Flora Lear showed the way over them, followed by Maud and the two men, their horses jumping in faultless style.

One of the whip's horses had fallen at a ditch, but he was up in half a minute and away again.

"He is making for the little covert by Shrivenham Station, and there are some earths there; we shall not get him now," said Henry Lear.

"I don't know," said Clare; "we have some wire netting round the next field to keep some sheep in, and he may not reckon on that."

"I hope he won't be killed," said Maud.



“But he must be,” said Flora, “for I have wished it first, and the spirits won’t let him escape.”

As they jumped into the enclosure Clare had spoken of, the fox was seen vainly endeavouring to get through the wire on the opposite side, and the hounds were now halfway across. What could he do? His end looked to be near, but he faced it boldly. He looked up and down, but saw that neither way meant salvation to him. But in that moment he made a desperate resolution, and as the pack neared him he stood at bay resolute. Then, as the foremost hounds hesitated, he charged right through the centre of the pack, and ran with all his might back on his own tracks, over the fence they had just passed, away up the ditch on the further side, until he gained the field beyond and, avoiding the wire, arrived safely in the covert, and was soon safe out of sight and reach as well.

Meantime the hounds and horses doubled back also.

“I told you he would not be killed,” said Maud.

“We don’t know yet,” said Henry Lear. “But be careful,” he added as Maud rode swiftly at the fence.

Maud did not heed, and her horse failing to take off properly, slipped on the high bank and fell into the next field. Struggling up, he struck her in the back, and she lay motionless.

The others jumped over and hastened to her assistance.

“Are you hurt much, dear?” said Flora.

“I can’t move,” said Maud; “it is my back.”

At this moment Charles Lear, one of Clare’s younger brothers, came up, as he was walking round the farm.

“Go back and bring a cart, Charles,” said his father; “we must take Maud to Clare’s house, she is badly hurt, I’m afraid.”

Charles ran off as fast as possible.

Henry helped Flora to dismount, and she made Maud as comfortable as she

could.

“Where is the pain, dear?”

“Just here between the shoulders,” said Maud; but she could not move to show them.

Meantime the hounds and the invisible horsemen went on.

“Go and see if they kill the poor fox or not,” said Maud.

“Go, Clare,” said Henry.

So Clare cantered to the edge of the cover, and, leading his horse, he went to the place where the hounds were baying loudly; but he found that the fox had reached his quarters in safety.

Driving the hounds back to the invisible horsemen on the side of the little wood, Clare made his way out, and as he went he put up another fox, which ran on and was caught by the hounds and killed before he had made up his mind which way to go.

The death took place before them all, so that Flora and Maud each had their wish in a way, though, as Clare explained, it was not the same fox.

Henry Lear then thanked the invisible riders for the sport, and desired them to go their ways until another day. They quickly departed.

All turned their attention to Maud, who was badly off.

“I hope the cart will soon be here. We must get her to bed at your house, Clare.”

“Yes, I will go on and tell Lilian to get everything ready.”

“No, you had better wait and help get her into the cart, and then you can ride on quickly,” said Henry.

After a time the cart came, and they lifted her into it.

“I wish the spirits would cure you, dear,” said Flora; but they did not. It seemed as though even now that they would or could not do all that was asked of them.

“I don’t think I shall be cured, and I don’t want to be. Do you know since I have been lying here something has told me that Malcolm is still alive; but he does not care for me now, he loves another.”

“Do you mean that he has returned to his love for Lilian?”

“No, not Lilian, but a beautiful girl in a land far away. The spirits have told me this.”

“How strange,” said Flora. “Can this really be so?”

“Whether I live or die you will try to find Malcolm,” she said.

“Yes,” replied Henry Lear. “If the spirits continue to help us, I will go and seek him with Captain Sinclair.”

“Go on now,” said Maud, “I think I can bear it.”

Leading the horse very slowly, they made their way to Clare’s house, while the latter rode on to apprise Lilian of their coming.

By the time they arrived Lilian had a bed ready, and Maud was gently laid in it; but it was evident that she was quite paralysed, and could not move hand or foot. She complained of pain in the chest, but she was able to speak still and take a little nourishment.

“I will go back and send your father and mother to see you,” said Henry. “You must try and get better. I shall not go for a few days, till I see how you are getting on.”

“If I get any better you will take me with you?”

“Yes,” said Henry.

“I want to see the girl Malcolm loves before I die.”

“Let us hope you will not die, dear,” said Flora.

“Perhaps the unseen may help to get you well in time.”

“They may; but I shall never have Malcolm now,” she said.

“You must not worry about it, try and get a little rest,” said Flora; “you may yet be happier than you think.”

“Are you coming home with me?” asked Henry of Flora.

“No, I will remain and assist Lilian tonight.”

“Very well, I will get back and tell the Robertsons, and see you again tomorrow.”

It was a sorrowful end to the day’s hunting, and Henry Lear rode back to Dunston with a sad heart.

He sought Mr. and Mrs. Robertson, and broke the bad news to them as easily as he could.

They were much distressed by what they heard.

“So the spirits are helping us again?” they asked of Henry.

“Yes.”

“Then we will try the motor-car”; and, having got in, they wished to be taken to Clare’s house, and were forthwith started on the journey.

Henry Lear went to see Captain Sinclair.

## CHAPTER XXXI

“I CAN guess what you have in your mind,” said Captain Sinclair. “You find the spirits are willing to help again, and you wish me to go on another voyage of discovery.”

“You are quite right,” answered Henry Lear j “but I am going myself, and I would like you to make one of the party.”

“I suppose I must,” said Sinclair, “though after past experience I am loath to meddle with the doings of the spirits.”

“And I can as confidently trust them,” said Henry. “I shall go if I have to go alone.”

“That is sufficient answer,” said Sinclair. “You know me well enough to understand that I shall not allow you to do that.”

“Forgive my impetuosity,” said Henry; “but Maud Robertson says the spirits have told her that Malcolm is alive, and I quite believe her to be correct.”

“Naturally you wish that it may be so, and the wish may be father to the thought; but I fail to see how any one could possibly have kept alive all this time on those barren rocks.”

“You forget the power which the unseen have already exhibited.”

“Yes, but that has been intermittent here, and probably the same elsewhere, so that at times Sir Philip and your son would have had to depend on their own resources.”

“But the flag; you say you saw a flag on the heights. Who placed it there but man? And, if man, may not Malcolm and Sir Philip have found him?”

“Yes, if it were indeed the work of man; but, on the other hand, it may have been a ruse on the part of the spirits to lead them to their doom.”

“You have no faith, man, none! Upon my word, if it were not for Maud’s condition I would start at once, so eager am I to know the truth.”

“You are a wonderful fellow, Lear. You have never been on an ‘ untravelled sea,’ in fact, have never been to sea at all, and yet you would tempt fate; while I, who have seen all God’s works in the great waters, stand hesitating to do so.”

“Oh, but it must have been a shock to you, who have been used to controlling your vessel’s movements, to have all taken out of your hands, and to have to return here nolens voleus, and leave your friends behind.”

“You have correctly stated the case,” said Sinclair.

“But this time we are going to be more successful, something tells me so.”

“God grant we may be if we go. When do you propose to start?”

“In three days, if possible. To-morrow I propose that you run down to Southampton and see if the spirits have carried out my wishes, and got the ‘ Queen of the Waters ‘ ready. Meantime, I will go over and see if Maud will be able to come with us. Do you take your wife with you again?”

“She will not allow me to go without her.”

“So much the better, and I hope Maud will recover sufficiently to be able to accompany her.”

“Will Mrs. Lear go?”

“No, I think not; some one must remain to keep the young folks in order.”

While they were yet talking they heard a noise without, and Mr. Robertson burst into the room.

“We’ve seen Maud,” he said, “and she is much better; she can move her arms, and shows other signs of improvement.”

“It is the work of the spirits then,” said Henry; “this is no ordinary recovery.”

“I quite agree with you. But she could not rest until I came back to make quite sure that you do not go away to seek Malcolm without her.” fl I see, ,, said Henry; “I promise her I will not do that.”

“She has seen a vision, and declares that Sir Philip and Malcolm are both alive.”

“Yes, she persisted in that immediately after the accident. It seems as though the spirits have opened her eyes to see what is afar off.”

“It does indeed,” said Mr. Robertson.

“Can you spare the motor now?” asked Henry.

“Yes; but what are you going to do?”

“Going down to Southampton at once to see if they have got the ship ready for us,” said Henry Lear, getting up. “If Maud is better, bring her on here to-morrow. Good night.” And with these words he went out, stepped into the motor-car, and was whirled away.

Arrived at the station, he found a train waiting, and before many minutes had elapsed he was on his way. Tucking a rug around him, he lay down on the cushions and was soon asleep. When he awoke it was quite dark, but the train had stopped, so he lay down again and waited for morning light.

Cramped and cold, he awoke just as the grey dawn broke over the town, and going down to the dock he found the “Queen of the Waters” fitted out as well as ever, coaled and provisioned, ready for a long sea trip.

Taking the train, again he was carried back to Dunston at a reckless pace; the spirits were working with a will.

“I wonder,” he thought as he was whirled along, “whether all the wealth of this land will yet be for man, and if I shall be destined to apportion it.”

Looking out, he watched the ever-changing landscape as he flew along, until the train drew up once more.

Entering the motor again, he was soon at the farm, where he found all in readiness for a start.

Maud had in this quick time so far recovered as to be able to sit up; but her legs were still powerless, and it was necessary to carry her from couch to couch.

“I shall recover when I know all,” she said.

Even Captain Sinclair, now that everything was quite settled, was as enthusiastic as any one; but poor Flora Lear was in great distress at being left by Henry.

“I thought we were never to part,” she said to him.

“I know, darling, but it is for the best. We cannot both go, and something tells me that I must, that it is my duty to go. At any rate, an unseen force seems dragging me on; it is the wish of the spirits, and I feel sure it is for good.”

“But you will come back. Oh, Henry, you will come back! And you must, for I have prayed the spirits to keep you safe, and return you to me; and they will,” she said more calmly.

“Never fear,” said Henry, “I should not be taken away but for some good purpose, and we shall know in due time what that is. Maybe I shall be back in six months, and bring Malcolm with me.”

“Is there anything you would like done while you are gone?” asked Flora.

“Yes, there is a good deal I wish done. I want all London pulled down, except the better churches and the houses of parliament and so on, and only enough dwellings left for whatever may be future requirement; all the other ground should be laid out in parks and recreation gardens. I should like all the money stored in our cellars, so that in time I may divide it fairly for the world. But the spirits will see to all this.”

“What can I do then?” asked Flora.

“Just do the best you can, and see to the children till I return.”

With these wishes Henry Lear went away, hoping to be brought to Sir Philip and Malcolm.

Maud was carried on board, and as soon as all was ready the “Queen of the Waters ” steamed away down Southampton Water, and was soon making straight for Stewart’s Canal.



## CHAPTER XXXII

BY the time that Captain Le Strange ran his ship into Wellington harbour, Malcolm's foot was much better, and, with the aid of a stick, he was able to walk a little.

He had scarcely been a day with Captain Le Strange before Sir Chandos called to see him.

Now Sir Chandos had got a project in his mind. He was quite willing, so soon as the canal was ready for navigation, to allow half the people to depart, but he wanted half the wealth in England returned to New Zealand; and, moreover, he had this scheme in view, that he would make all who took their departure swear fealty to him. And so he thought he might put Henry Lear on one side, and weld the two countries into one nation, over which he himself might rule.

From the first he had intended that Lear should be at his mercy, but he forgot that the unseen world would have something to do with the settlement of affairs.

"I was sorry to hear of your accident," ' he said to Malcolm. "I hear the works are in full swing, and I suppose it will not be long before you are back at them again."

"As soon as my foot will allow of it I shall return," Malcolm answered.

"This is my private secretary, Mr. Samuel Munro," Sir Chandos said, introducing him to Malcolm.

The two men shook hands.

"You have been busy lately," Malcolm said.

"Yes, it has taken us all our time to keep supplies going to the works, and at the same time look after matters at home," answered Munro.

"I suppose there is no chance of getting stores to England until the canal has been opened?" asked Sir Chandos.

"I don't see how it could be done at present," said Malcolm.

“But you say those spirits are helping on with the work, and if by their aid ships can be got to come out from England, I do not see why it should not be done. Anyhow, I have wished for one to come, just to see.”

“You want to begin sending supplies over at once?”

“Yes. You see it would be no use to ship a lot of people off without having food in readiness. What would your father do with them in that case? It would be starvation over again.”

“I expect by this time my father has a great deal more food-stuff in the country than would be required for a few weeks, anyhow.”

“The devil he has!” thought Sir Chandos. Then he went on aloud: “But it would be as well to have a good supply of food in hand.”

“Quite so; but I suppose you will see my father before any immigration takes place?”

“Yes, yes, of course,” replied Sir Chandos hurriedly. “And you say the canal will be open now within a year.”

“So Charles Adey assured me.”

“He is not likely to make any mistake,” said Munro.

“Captain Le Strange returns to the works with stores at once, I understand,” said Sir Chandos.

“Yes, as soon as ever his ship is reloaded.”

“And you won’t return just yet?”

“No,” said Malcolm.

“Well, we shall be pleased to see you at any time at Government House, remember, during your enforced idleness,” with a slight inflection on the last two words.

“Thank you,” Malcolm replied shortly.

“But I expect you will not feel inclined to leave this pleasant villa, with such an attraction as Miss Le Strange. By the by, I must congratulate you, but your fiancée never ought to leave New Zealand. I can’t think what the young men have been thinking about to allow you to make such a capture.”

Malcolm did not quite know what to reply.

“I have been more than fortunate,” he said at last.

“Bring Miss Le Strange with you when you come to see us, Lady Shadwell will be delighted,” said Sir Chandos.

“She would like to come, I’m sure.”

Sir Chandos rose to go, and he and Munro went out, once again reminding him to come to Government House at the first opportunity.

Somehow Malcolm did not like Sir Chandos or his secretary, and he was glad when they took their departure and Lettice came in.

“You have finished your state business then,” said she, smiling.

“Sir Chandos had very little to say really,” Malcolm replied.

“Then why did he come here? I don’t like him at all,” said Lettice. “And he did not even inquire for father and mother?”

“No, I thought it very remiss of him; he merely asked if Captain Le Strange was returning to the works at once.”

“And as he went down the garden path I saw him turn and wink at his companion in a most sinister way.”

“He had the impudence to tell me I ought not to take you out of New Zealand.”

“What business is it of his, I should like to know?” said Lettice.

“None at all; but he likes to have his own way in everything.”

“But he won’t get it!” cried Lettice decisively.

“Not in everything, no.”

“Well, he won’t keep me in New Zealand.”

“I hope not, if I have to leave,” said Malcolm. “What could I do without you, my love?”

“Or I without you,” Lettice answered. “No one shall part us, shall they?”

“No, dear one, no, rest assured of that.”

But they did not know Sir Chandos, or what he had in his mind.

“Could you spare me while I go for a gallop? I miss my ride rather.”

“Why of course, love; you must think me a selfish brute if I can’t spare you an hour or two in the day. Go by all means, but do be careful. Are you going alone?”

“Yes, I shall go up on the hill and take a gallop, and come straight back to you; I shall not be long away.”

“That’s right; I hope my foot will soon be well enough for me to go and take care of you myself.”

“I hope so, too,” said Lettice and with a parting kiss she left him to go for the ride.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

LIKE all who had not had actual experience of the powers of the spirit world, Sir Chandos was somewhat sceptical; nevertheless, he determined to try their aid, for he realized that he might be out of the running without it.

He was most anxious, if possible, to prevent a marriage between Malcolm and Lettice, for he knew that the latter was a popular favourite in his part of the world, and where beauty reigns it has considerable power.

He wished, therefore, as he walked along that Samuel Munro should fall desperately in love with Lettice, and try to win her love from Malcolm. He did not know that Malcolm had already asked the spirits to allow nothing to take the love of Lettice from him.

He found, however, that the first part of his wish was gratified, for before they had gone many steps Munro made an excuse to turn back.

“You want to see Le Strange?” said Sir Chandos. “It is odd you did not think of that just now; I believe it is Miss Le Strange you are after.”

“Indeed, I had not thought of her until a few moments ago.”

“Then you have been thinking of her now.”

“And if I have, what harm? She is a very beautiful and charming girl, and why should a stranger be allowed to take her out of our land?”

“My views entirely,” said Sir Chandos. “Don’t waste time, but turn back at once and try your luck. I will find some one else to assist me with the secretarial work if your lovemaking takes up too much of your time; only win this girl, and I promise you your position later on shall be no mean one.”

But Munro required no further spur, for the power of the spirits was upon him and he was madly in love. At Sir Chandos’ last words he turned on his heel and abruptly left him.

“Remember the spirits; if you would be successful you must invoke their aid,”

Sir Chandos shouted after him as he hurried off in the direction of Captain Le Strange's house.

He was just in time to meet Lettice coming out of the gates.

Munro raised his hat. "Is your father in? I forgot to ask when here with Sir Chandos just now."

"No, he is down at the harbour, I believe," Lettice replied.

"You are going for a ride, and alone?"

"Yes, I am going on the range hills," and she bowed, at the same time touching her horse with her riding-whip and riding away.

Munro rushed back to his own stables and, in a state of great excitement, ordered his horse.

Leaping into the saddle, he set off at a breakneck pace to the hills where Lettice had preceded him. To give him one good qualification, he was a bold and fearless horseman, and he was going to make the most of his powers, combined with what assistance he might be able to get from the spirits.

His plan was to post himself on the level ground above those rocks where Malcolm had endeavoured to throw himself down, and he wished that the unseen would make Lettice's horse run madly away towards the same spot, and allow him at the right moment to stop it, thus preventing horse and rider from dashing over the precipice.

He wished all this as he galloped up the hill, and when he arrived on the top he was in time to see Lettice taking a canter straight in front of him.

Turning quickly to the left, he rode some distance and placed himself between Lettice and the sea. There he waited, his horse breathing hard after his strong exertion.

Meantime Lettice sent her horse bounding along, while the fresh breeze from the cliffs caught her face, and brought a rich colour to her lips and cheeks. Happy in her love she smiled, and hers were

“The smiles that win, the tints that glow,

But tell of days in goodness spent,

A mind at peace with all below,

A heart whose love is innocent.”

She pulled her horse into a walk, and went on in a reverie until she reached the end of the turf; then, remembering that Malcolm was alone, she pulled him round. She set him into a canter again, touching him with the spur. To this he was quite unaccustomed, and he resented it by giving three high bucks in the air, nearly unseating his rider, and then dashing madly off across the broad level expanse before him, straight for the sea.

Lettice was no mean horsewoman, and she tried all the arts with which she was conversant to stop him, but it was no use. Nearer and nearer he drew to what must inevitably be destruction for both, unless her horse saw the danger in time and ceased his mad career.

Lettice had given up pulling at the bridle, and sat almost unconscious of all around her; she did not even notice a motionless figure on horseback as she shot past.

But now Munro’s chance had come. Leaning forward in the saddle, he dashed spurs into his horse’s sides and set off on that wild race for a life — a life that meant so much to him and to many others.

For a few strides he did not gain much on the other, but Lettice’s horse began to flag and his had got his wind. As they galloped on, he crept up inch by inch until he was quite level with Lettice on the off side; then, stooping forward, he seized her bridle-rein and gradually turned the horse from his dangerous course, finally succeeding in stopping him when they were all scarcely ten yards from death.

He dismounted, and Lettice, nearly fainting, almost fell from the saddle.

Munro was just in time to catch her and support her with his left arm, while with the right he held the bridle of the two horses.

“I have saved you,” he cried, and as her head lay against his shoulder in a semi-

conscious condition he showered kisses on cheeks and lips.

Lettice came to herself suddenly, with the hot kisses burning on her face, and she tore herself away from his embrace.

“How dare you!” she cried; “how dare you!” Then, recognizing Munro, she went on, “This can be no mistake; why you know me, you know I am another’s, and yet you take this advantage of my unconsciousness to insult me.”

“I saved your life,” he said .

“Saved my life, you say! Could you not then have saved me this insult? What good are kisses stolen in such a way? Why, I loathe you, and would sooner have gone over the cliffs than be subject to such an indignity.”

“Loathe me! Indignity! You might be more grateful, I think. But no matter, Lettice, you will grow to love me yet; you are in my power, for I have asked the spirits to help me, and see what they have already done.”

“Oh, that is the explanation, is it, and you have put me to all this terror and shame so that you might stand well in my sight. But beware, the unknown world will help others beside you, and they have a way of giving preference to the brave and true. Give me my horse,” Lettice added, gaining courage, and taking the reins she started to lead him back towards the road down the hills.

“May I help you to mount?” asked Munro.

Lettice walked on without answering.

“Have you no word of thanks to give me? “

“Thanks, indeed, and for what, I would know? Can they who deal the wound expect thanks for healing it?”

“Yes, and demand them too sometimes. Be careful, Miss Le Strange, and beware of making an enemy of one who might have been your best friend. You are in my power, we have been alone on these hills, and I can compromise you. Will you not listen to reason?”

“I will listen to nothing more from you,” said Lettice. “You would compromise



me. What can that mean? Are you so bad that you would breathe calumny on an innocent girl for your own wicked ends? Oh, you must be bad indeed!”

“For your own sake, hear what I have to say. You think to marry Malcolm Lear, but it will never be allowed, and Charles Adey you have driven from you. What can you do better than take me? Sir Chandos has promised me a high position.”

“What care I for your high position?” said Lettice, with spirit. “You are nothing to me, nor Sir Chandos either.”

“Am I to tell him this?”

“Just as you wish; you can tell what you like, so long as you confine yourself to the truth.”

“You are saying some hard things to me, Miss Le Strange.”

“Yes, but it is you who have made me.”

They had now reached the road on the top of the hill, and met a wagoner with his horses.

“Would you be so kind as to help me to mount my horse?” said Lettice to him.

The wagoner took in the situation, and quickly helped Lettice into the saddle. She gave him some coins from her purse, and rode steadily down the hill, followed by Munro.

“Then you reject my love,” said he.

“Your love,” Lettice said contemptuously. “Do you think I cannot distinguish between the pure gold of real love and such base metal as you have to offer? Talk to me of love, forsooth, and act as you have done to-day. Do you reasonably expect me to accept it?”

“Then if you won’t, I will take care that no one else loves you,” said he, and giving spur to his horse as they reached the foot of the hill, he rode off at a gallop along the dusty road.

“There goes a thoroughly bad man,” thought Lettice. “I wonder what devilry he

will be up to now?”

She rode on slowly, feeling weak and ill after what she had been through, and when at length she reached home she gave her horse to the groom and went to change her riding things without seeing Malcolm.

She felt better after a rest, and went to seek Malcolm in the garden. As she strolled down to the lovers' favourite haunt she heard voices raised in angry altercation, and paused. She could not help hearing now, and it was the voice of Munro that said —

“Yes, sir, you think you have in Miss Le Strange a girl that deserves your confidence, but she is an arrant flirt, who is always chucking up one fellow for another. Only to-day she has been out for a ride with me, and just because I happened to save her from a serious accident, she fell on my neck and covered my face with kisses.”

Lettice stood trembling, concealed by some evergreen bushes.

“Say that again, you liar,” said Malcolm, “and I will knock your lies and your teeth together down your throat!”

Munro had not expected this, but he was not wanting in physical courage. He forgot himself for the moment and struck Malcolm a sudden blow on the face, which in his lame condition felled him to the ground.

Lettice screamed and rushed forward into the garden, but before she could reach them Malcolm, lame as he was, had sprung to his feet and landed a right and left on Munro's jaw that sent him flying into a flower bed, where he lay groaning.

“Take that, you coward,” said Malcolm. “You might have given me time to put my hands up in defence; but what can be expected of one who would by his glozing lies compromise the character of an innocent girl? Get out of my sight before I knock the life out of you.”

“Don't touch him again, Malcolm,” said Lettice, clinging to her lover, “he is not worth it.”

“Worth it, no; I should like to know what he is worth!” said Malcolm, trembling with passion. He was a dangerous man to face just then, as Munro could see, and

he prepared to back out like a cur who has made an attempt to bully a little dog, and met more than his match.

“You will both regret this before long,” he said, as he pulled himself together and walked away down the garden.

“There goes an unmitigated scoundrel,” said Malcolm.

“It was good of you not to believe him,” Lettice answered.

“What, believe ill of you, my queen! never.”

“Come to the summer-house,” she said, putting her arm through his and leading him away; “I will tell you what really happened now.”

“So they are seeking the aid of the spirits against us,” said Malcolm, when he had heard all; “but in this they have been checkmated on the first attempt.”

“But you don’t think they will get the better of us?”

“We have difficulties before us,” Malcolm replied thoughtfully; “but I have no doubt we shall win in the end.”

“I hope we shall, my love,” said Lettice, as she nestled her head on his shoulder.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

THE "Queen of the Waters" held on her course and was never for a moment in danger, for she was well worked by invisible hands, and they knew just where to guide her. Night and day the engines continued to throb, and her screws turned with such velocity that she seemed to fly through the seething, churning waters.

Henry Lear walked the decks in pleasant chat with Captain Sinclair, while his wife looked after Maud, whose health now rapidly improved; but she was still unable to walk.

It was growing late one night when the good ship drew into the harbour, on the opposite side of the isthmus where they were cutting the canal. Captain Sinclair said it was very nearly the same place where Malcolm and Sir Philip had landed.

There was great discussion as to who should go ashore, but Henry Lear wished to first go alone. So with the morning light a boat was lowered and he was put ashore.

"Let me find Malcolm and Sir Philip if they are here," he said, "dead or alive."

Immediately he was led along the rocks until he made the bend in the declivity, and then in the distance he saw the men already at work.

Going on he passed many on the banks of the cutting, who stared at him and wondered whence he came, until he reached Sir Philip busy with his engines. Unkempt and bronzed as he was Henry did not know him, but Sir Philip, chancing to turn as he was passing by, recognized him on the instant.

"Lear!" he cried, "you here! Then the spirits have been with you again."

Henry knew the voice, and stood still with astonishment.

"Sir Philip!" he cried in joy, putting out his hand, "it is you; and Malcolm, is he alive?"

"Yes, and well; that is to say, except for a little accident to his foot. He is at present in New Zealand with his ladylove."

“I thank God you are both alive. But Malcolm,” he said, “has he forgotten Maud?”

“As far as not loving her means forgetting — yes. For some time we were in great doubt about him. His mind seemed to give way under the tension, but all at once the power of the spirits departed from him, and he no longer cared for Maud. He has made a fresh choice, and I think you will like his fiancée.”

“It really is wonderful,” said Henry; “but that is just as Maud said it would be.”

“Have you come out alone?” asked Sir Philip.

“No, I came on the same old steamer, and Captain Sinclair, his wife, and Maud are with me; they are now on board in a little harbour on the other side. Will you come to them?”

“Yes, in a moment,” said Sir Philip; and calling for one of the men he sent for Mr. Chalmers, who soon arrived on the scene.

“This is Henry Lear, from England,” he explained, introducing him to Chalmers; “the father of Malcolm, you know.”

Chalmers shook hands. “You see what we are doing,” said he.

“Making a way through to England,” said Sir Philip; “but I must try and tell my friend all about it. Meantime, can you spare a man to take my place for a bit? I want to get away.”

“Certainly,” said Chalmers, and went to send an engineer at once.

When he arrived, Sir Philip gave one or two instructions about the engine, and then went off with Henry Lear along the rocks.

“We found New Zealand to be the only other old country left in the world, and it is peopled as before, except that the population is much increased. Sir Chandos Shadwell is still Governor there.”

“And you are cutting through to make a sea-road to England?”

“Yes, I have acted as best I could on your behalf. I thought you would be glad to

get the old country reseeded, and it is proposed to send half the inhabitants back to England to be under your rule.”

“Why under mine?” said Henry.

“Because we have all looked on you as our ruler from the first, and rightly so. Some day we hope Malcolm will take your place.”

“Well, if it must be so, I shall do my best for all,” said Henry.

“We must be careful how we proceed, for we don’t know where this aid of the unseen is going to end, and Sir Chandos is scarcely to be implicitly trusted, I fear.”

“Are the spirits helping you too?”

“Yes, to a very great extent; they have done more than half the work on the canal now.”

“Is Sir Chandos here?”

“No, he has not been out at all as yet, but he is most anxious to meet you, I know.”

“And who is it that Malcolm is now engaged to?”

“Lettice Le Strange, the only daughter of Captain Le Strange, who found us when we were left on these very rocks.”

“And a nice girl, you say?”

“Yes, she is something more than nice; she is firm, and good, and true, and, for a girl, particularly brave. She reminds me very much at times of your wife, Malcolm’s mother.”

“If she is like her I shall not complain ” said Henry.

They had now reached the sea on the other side of the isthmus. They found the boat waiting, and, getting into it, they were quickly taken back to the “Queen of the Waters.”

“How shall I get to see Malcolm?” ‘Captain Le Strange is here now, and would take you back with him. But I will bring him over this side, and then you can arrange everything.’”

The little party on board were astonished beyond measure to see Sir Philip return with Henry, and they welcomed him warmly listening eagerly to all he had to tell them! Maud did not seem to mind about Malcolm she said the spirits had told her it would be so, and that she was prepared.

Sir Philip was deeply grieved to find Maud so badly injured. She had much improved m looks since he last saw her, and was now growing into a fine woman.

She questioned him about Lettice Le Strange, and seemed pleased when Sir Philip sang her praises so loudly.

“I have come out on purpose to see her,” she said. “When shall I be able to go to New Zealand?”

“I am going to see Captain Le Strange to-day, when I get back to the works,” said Sir Philip, “and get him to come out here.”

“We shall not be afraid to leave the old steamer now,” said Captain Sinclair to his wife; “we are a little more independent than we were last time.”

“No, I should like to go with Maud. It will seem strange to see a town, such as you tell me of, again, full of real beings.”

“Yes, it seemed odd to Malcolm and me at first; but we are hoping now to run the world in the old-fashioned way before very long,” said Sir Philip.

“I shall be glad when we can do without the aid of the unseen. I never quite know how I stand with them,” said Captain Sinclair, “and the feeling is uncanny.”

“It certainly is; but we must not forget what they have done for us in the past, and it strikes me we shall require their assistance more than ever before the game’s over,” said Henry Lear.

## CHAPTER XXXV

CHAGRINED at what he considered the indignities which had been put on him, Samuel Munro returned to Government House to confess his failure.

The help which he had received from the spirit world had been, he considered, far from satisfactory, and he told Sir Chandos so, suppressing that part of the story which seemed to be to his discredit.

“We must try again,” said Sir Chandos. “By hook or by crook the young lady must be got away from that fellow, Malcolm Lear; she is evidently very much in love with him.”

“But how is it to be done?” asked Munro.

“Come with me to Lady Shadwell, she will think of a way; women are often much more resourceful than men.”

Munro had at first jumped at the part which he was selected to play in the little drama, but already he had been taught a severe lesson, and he would now gladly have backed out of it had he seen a chance, but he had gone too far to retreat. p 217

“You had better leave the matter in my hands,” said her ladyship, when the case had been put before her. “You see,” she added, “it is not very likely Miss Le Strange is going to give up her lover unless made to by main force, or for some good reason. If I could only get her in my power here, I might be able to persuade her to alter her mind.”

“Well, you take what steps you think best,” said her husband.

“You give me carte blanche to do as I like?”

“Hardly that. You might detain her here and use persuasive arguments, but there must be no foul play, remember, nothing done which I could not openly own to my people. She is a great public favourite, bear that in mind, and anything of the sort would be the worst possible policy.”



“I quite understand,” said her ladyship, “you may trust me not to go too far.”

“You must be careful, too, how you invoke the aid of the unseen; they are not always a success, as Munro and I have found.”

They went out and left Lady Shadwell to consider her plans.

She thought for some time, then she got up and wrote a note to Lettice, asking her to come to her that afternoon on a matter of great importance.

Then she dispatched it by a trustworthy messenger, with instructions to give the note to Lettice when alone, and, if possible, unobserved by any one.

She then wished that Lettice would come without telling any one of her visit, and that Malcolm Lear would leave the country without rinding her. “Let the spirits only grant me these boons and I shall succeed,” she said to herself.

The scheme was carefully laid and as cleverly carried out, for, as Lettice was walking in the garden, the note was put into her hands, and she read it and put it in her pocket without telling any one about it.

“Of great importance, and from Lady Shadwell. I will go at once,” and she stepped out into the road and walked down to Government House, and quickly found herself in her ladyship’s private room, overlooking the gardens at the back of the house.

“So kind of you to come at once, dear,” said Lady Shadwell. “As I said in my note, I have a question of great moment to discuss with you; but you will remain to tea with me, will you not?”

“I am afraid I can scarcely do that,” said Lettice, “as I did not expect a long interview, and came away without telling any one where I was going.”

This was just what her ladyship wished to ascertain.

“And you have my note with you that might tell them?”

“Yes, I have it here,” said Lettice, drawing it from her pocket.

“So far, so good,” thought Lady Shadwell. “You will wonder what I have

brought you here for," she said aloud. "Forgive me if the business seems unpleasant to you, but I am taking a great interest in your welfare, and I have leave from Sir Chandos to take steps to prevent your marriage with Malcolm Lear. Stay, hear what I have to say," she interpolated as Lettice tried to interrupt; "it is my business to warn you that the Lears will be nothing as soon as the government of England is settled. Sir Chandos means to take the chief position for himself, and Samuel Munro will be his deputy as it were. Let me plead for him, do not throw yourself away on a man with no prospects in the world, though he be a man of good parts, I admit."

Lettice sat bolt upright in her chair, pale and motionless, her eyes fixed on Lady Shadwell's face with a half-credulous look, as if doubting whether she heard aright.

"You will consider what I say?" asked her ladyship.

"I will do nothing of the sort," said Lettice, at last waking up to the situation. "Allow me to tell you that if you mean what you say, both you and Sir Chandos are playing a very dangerous game, and may find that it is you who are the nobodies when it is played out; in other words, I think you are reckoning without your host. You don't know the Lears, or the power of the unknown who have helped them, and will help them to the end."

Lettice paused, and she saw that her little speech was not without effect.

"Brave words, my dear, but what can one man do against thousands?"

"Quite so," replied Lettice; "and what n bir Chandos be that man? What if he finds himself opposed by all the powers of this world and the one beyond? Take my advice, Lady Shadwell, treat the Lears in good faith, and all may yet go well; go on with your intrigue, and you are ruined for certain."

"I did not send for you to give me advice, arid I think it highly impertinent for a chit of a girl like you to give it; but it is no matter, in the end you will have to listen to me."

"I don't understand you, Lady Shadwell and it seems to me I had better go  
❖❖❖ we're only wasting words."

Lady Shadwell walked to the door, turned the key in the lock, and put it in her

pocket. Not so fast," she said; "you are right you don't understand. Whatever may happen in the future, we have the power now, and we mean to use it. You are my prisoner, and will not be allowed to leave until you come to our terms, or Malcolm Lear has left the country."

For a moment Lettice did not answer, then she turned and faced Lady Shadwell.

"You'll regret this step, for you will gain nothing by keeping me here, and it may lead to your losing all. Malcolm Lear is a man, and whatever happens I shall stand by him to the last."

"So you think now, but you will change your mind before I have done with you."

"You dare not force me to anything."

"I shall take no further advantage of you, of that you may be quite sure, but your captivity will continue until one of the two things happens which I have named."

"That will never be, then, for Malcolm will not leave until he has found me, and I shall not consent to your wishes."

"We shall see," said Lady Shadwell, knocking three times on the table.

Two tall women entered from the anteroom, and Lady Shadwell turned to them.

"You will take charge of Miss Le Strange, and get her anything she may require. Let me recommend you not to give any trouble to your keepers," she said, turning to Lettice; "they are to treat you with all deference, and do anything short of conniving at your escape."

"What are your terms for this?" asked Lettice; "not that it is any use asking, I suppose."

"That you consent to give up Malcolm Lear and take Munro for a husband."

"Never!" said Lettice emphatically; "if I have to die in this room first."

"Very well, I must leave you for the present; but, remember, anything you may require for your own comfort you can have for the asking."

“Comfort! what is comfort to me in this place? Have you no heart, Lady Shadwell, that you can torment an innocent girl in this way for nothing?”

“Cannot you understand that it will be all for your own good? You will thank me some day for what I have done for you.”

“Leave me, all of you, if you really intend to keep me here — I want to think,” said Lettice.

Lady Shadwell and the attendants went out, locking the door behind them.

Lettice examined the rooms; they were airy and comfortable. The windows were securely fastened, but the prospect from them was gay and pleasing.

“How long shall I have to remain here?” thought Lettice; “I shall be found— I must be found in time.”

But it never occurred to her that no one would be likely to suspect Sir Chandos or Lady Shadwell of such a course of action, and she might have been quite sure that the attendants would be well paid to hold their tongues.

And so day after day and week after week flew by, without a sign from the outer world. It was no wonder that Lettice began to despair of ever seeing her lover again.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

CAPTAIN LE STRANGE came over to visit those on board the “Queen of the Waters,” and arranged to take them on to New Zealand at once.

He took to Henry Lear, as to Sir Philip, as being a man after his own heart.

“So my son has succumbed to the charms of your daughter,” Henry had said to him.

“Yes, and they are deeply attached to each other, that is the great thing.”

“Yes; but he was very much in love with Maud here at one time, as you know, and for what reason.”

“Oh yes, we know all about that.”

“I am most anxious to see my rival,” said Maud, as she sat in a chair on the deck.

“She will be very pleased to welcome you to our shores, but I hope you and the spirits will not steal Malcolm away from her.”

“No fear of that,” said Maud. “I should make a sorry lover in my present plight for anyone.”

“Let us hope we shall be able to do something for you,” said Captain Le Strange. “I know a doctor in Wellington who has cured one or two similar cases.”

“Really, I should like to consult him.”

“You shall as soon as ever we can get you there.”

And so it was arranged for all to be transported across the rocks the next day, and put on board Captain Le Strange’s ship.

Maud bore the moving well when the time came, and Charles Adey himself assisted in carrying her from boat to boat.

For some reason, probably because of his wish that he might love some one else

than Lettice, he was much attracted to her, and Maud, on the other hand, was quite pleased by the attention shown to her.

“And it was you who made the survey for the canal, they tell me,” said Maud to him.

“Yes, I had the honour.”

“And you will come to England when a way is made for ships?”

“Probably, some day,” said Charles; “but I don’t know if I should care to settle there.”

“I understand, you would not like to make your home there.”

“Well, I can’t tell, you know, at present; that would depend on circumstances.”

“What kind of circumstances?”

“A great many. I wonder if the spirits will always make their home in your land; they are more in evidence there than here, I understand, and I would rather not live amongst them, I fancy.”

“I see, you don’t like the interference of the spirits; and yet father says he could not have got on without them.”

“No; but then it was rather different for him, and you, for the matter of that. Now there will be plenty of people to carry on the world’s work without the aid of the unknown.”

“Yes, that is true,” said Maud; “and there will be lots of work to do in the old country, as father calls it, especially for engineers, so many of the towns and works of all kinds are going to ruin.”

“You are holding up a good prospect of work before me.”

“Yes, and I hope you will come and give directions how to put things in order; I’m sure we shall want some one clever about such matters.”

“Which means to say that I am. Well, I acknowledge the compliment, but I have

no pretensions to compete with the spirits, which have done so well for you, and who, in fact, are doing for us at the present moment.”

“Ah, but we may not always have them with us,” said Maud. “Father thinks they will finally take their departure when we can manage without them.”

“I hope they will consent to cure you before that then,” said Charles; “that would be one of their best pieces of work.”

“Thank you,” said Maud; “but somehow for some reason they won’t. Captain Le Strange is going to consult a man in Wellington who, he thinks, will be able to cure me.”

“Do you suffer any pain?”

“No, not much now, thank you, and I can move my legs just a little. I hope that in time I shall be able to walk again.”

“I hope so,” said Charles. “It seems strange that you and I should meet, and that I should care so much for you; I wonder if you do a little for me?”

“Do you then love me?” said Maud.

“I never cared so much for any girl before,” Charles answered. “◆◆◆ Ever since I wished that I might love some one instead of Lettice, I have seen just such a face as yours, and in my dreams heard the same voice.”

“Oh, why is it my fate to be loved through the power of the unseen only? No doubt, as soon as I have got to love you, as I once did Malcolm, your love will be taken away. I cannot bear to think of it.”

“But, you see, you need not be afraid of that, for I shall not be falling in love with some other girl all the time, as Malcolm was doing.”

“And you really think you will always love me — even when the spirits leave us?”

“I feel sure I shall always love you now,” Charles answered.

“It does seem strange that you should love me and Lettice should love Malcolm,

but the spirits have their own way of bringing things about.”

“I am beginning to think better of them than I did before I met you.”

“I’m so glad to hear you say that,” said Maud. “I hope when I return to England that you will soon be able to follow.”

“But why return at all? Could you not remain here with me?”

“I could if you wish.”

“Well, I should like to visit England and see your home; we can decide about the rest afterwards.”

“That will be the better way,” Maud answered.

Here Henry Lear came up and asked Charles if it would be possible to take back goods in the “Queen of the Waters.”

“Quite possible, I think,” said Charles; “and if Sir Chandos will push in plenty of good supplies, we might spare you a cargo from time to time as we could get carriers to take them across and put on board your ship.”

“I will ask him about it,” said Henry. “You see, I have a considerable quantity of spare food in England now, as we have grown a lot more than was needed for our own consumption; for one reason, because Sir Philip always would have it that we should find other people in time.”

“I see what you mean,” said Charles; “you would augment the supply so that emigrants may return to England immediately the canal is open.”

“Yes, that is just what I had in my mind.”

“A good idea too, for it will be essential to have enough food in the country to keep the people when they land, though of course supplies would follow from New Zealand as fast as possible.”

Sir Philip came up. “I’m afraid we must bid you good-bye,” he said, “Captain Le Strange is about to put out to sea.”



Charles took an affectionate farewell of Maud, and, shaking hands with the others, he and Sir Philip took the boat for the shore, and Captain Le Strange steamed away for Wellington.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

MAUD was happier than she had been before, and it seemed that she had really got a lover now whom she could trust. His regard for her seemed different to what Malcolm's had been, less sudden, but likely to be more lasting.

It was only right, for fate had been none too kind to her, and it was her turn for a share of happiness.

But it was to be marred in a great measure by the state in which she found Malcolm when they arrived at Wellington.

The loss of Lettice had been a terrible trial for him. He waited patiently the first afternoon of her disappearance, but when night came, and Lettice did not return, Mrs. Le Strange feared for his reason again. For three whole days and nights he refused to rest, and when everything possible had been done to trace her, and yet no clue to her whereabouts could be obtained, he gave up almost in despair. He called repeatedly on the spirits to help him, but Lady Shadwell had been before him and he could get no help.

He guessed rightly that the spirits were working in the matter, and blamed Munro for it, but he could gather no information of the slightest use from any one.

Mrs. Le Strange was stricken with grief, and thought her daughter dead; but Malcolm had more faith in the spirit world, and believed that whatever had happened he should see Lettice again. His only fear was that she might all the while be in great trouble, and he was mad to go to her assistance.

If he had known the truth it would have been a bad look out for Sir Chandos and his wife.

But they simulated complete ignorance of Lettice's whereabouts, and pretended to take steps to trace her by all the means that lay in their power. And who would have thought of suspecting them of all people?

Lady Shadwell continued to woo Lettice on behalf of Munro, and to make all the promises she could think of, but they were all rejected with disdain.

When, therefore, the little party arrived at Wellington, consternation was thrown over all by Lettice's continued absence.

Captain Le Strange and Henry Lear joined in the search with the others, and for several days they declined to trouble about anything else. But when all appeared to be in vain they gave in for the time, Henry expressing the same opinion as Malcolm, that the spirits had led her away somewhere and that they would bring her back again.

But amidst all the trouble Maud had not been neglected. The doctor prescribed remedies which he thought would in time put her completely right.

Sir Chandos treated Henry Lear with the greatest deference, and agreed to all his proposals. But to draw him as far as possible, Sir Chandos proposed that Henry should address a public meeting in the same way that Sir Philip had done.

Like him, he was no great speaker, but he wished that the spirits would assist him to say just what would be best for the world at large; and when he arose to address the multitude that had gathered together to meet him, he was received with great enthusiasm.

"I must thank you," he began, "for the kind manner in which you have received me and those who came before me. You have heard how I was the last man left alive on English soil, how the spirits have helped me from time to time, and still continue to do so. How long that will last I cannot tell, but I do not wish to usurp any rights which the people of the world are not ready to give me. (Loud cheers.) If you ask me to take the reins of government, supported by a representative assembly, I am willing to do so; but I am not ambitious to become a leader, even in the old country, if a better can be found. (Cheers.) I quite agree with Sir Chandos that it will be a good plan to divide the population as equally as possible between the two countries, but I do not think that the wealth should be equally divided. To begin with, you already have considerable wealth and possessions here which will, so to speak, be doubled if you draw away half the present population. This ought to count for something. Then, again, there is no place like home, and I'm afraid there may not be so much of a rush for the old country after all, unless some decided benefits and advantages accrue to those who leave their present surroundings and go to what will be to those who have lived all their lives in this country, if not a foreign, at least an unknown land. (Cheers.) I propose, therefore, that the wealth of the country be divided into

three parts, two-thirds to remain in England for fair division there, and one-third to be returned here for the same purpose. I understand that Sir Chandos says I am not in a position to make any such propositions, being one man against thousands. I may not be able to enforce them, but surely I have the right to make them! (Loud cheers.) As I have already intimated, I have no wish to use force if I can help it. No one can guess how great the power of the spirit world is, or how great things might be done to support me if driven to extremities, but I hope it will not come to that. Let us not quarrel, gentlemen. Let us not place the powers of this world against the one beyond; no one can tell what may happen if it comes to that. I cannot say what I should do in such a case, but I can promise one thing, and that is, that I will not be responsible for anything of the sort unless I receive freely the support of a large section of people now left on the earth. (Prolonged cheers.)

“Those of you who elect to come to old England’s shores will receive a hearty welcome. The wealth — as I have indicated — the houses and lands, are for fair division between you, all I ask is that the property which I have made my own for myself and family, which now amounts to several thousand acres, shall remain mine and my heirs’ for ever. I would also ask the same for the other dwellers in the old country, with perhaps a house each in London. This is all we want, the rest will be parted among you. (Loud and prolonged cheers.) Those who wish to live in town will find London a remodelled place. All the old and bad buildings have been pulled down by the spirits, large open spaces made. The best buildings and churches only remain. At least, that is a task I have set the spirits, and I hope they will carry it out as they have my wishes in other ways.” (Cheers.)

Then Henry went on, “I now come to a point in which you may not agree with me, but I ask you to give me credit for thinking the thing out well, and for the public welfare of the community. That is, the question of how to divide the wealth. A great many may wish to divide it equally, and I believe that Sir Chandos Shadwell thinks that the better way (Sir Chandos assented); but I must say I do not agree with him, for if all is equally divided, it cannot happen that all will remain equally wealthy. If so, the incentive to gain wealth and money would be lost, and the world could not be worked on such lines. (Cheers.) The population of the world is so diminished, that if all were equally divided, each would be some forty times richer than before; that is, speaking of the wealth here and in England alone, and assuming that some of that now lying in the seabottom can ever be recovered from those countries which have become

submerged.

“What I propose is, that to those who have no wealth to speak of, something should be given to place them on a footing with the poorest, and give them a good start; and to those that have wealth I would add to that wealth in the proportion of forty times whatever they may now possess. Of course, for some time to come the money would be of no use to you; it would not be required for currency, or anything like as much. This is Sir Philip Stewart’s view, which I think he has explained to you; but I can’t help thinking that if all the money be divided in this way, the value of the coinage will sink and rise again according to circumstances and the increase of population as the world goes on.”

Sir Chandos asked how he proposed to divide the wealth.

“I was coming to that,” said Henry. “I propose that a commission be found of reliable men to count and divide all money and land as I have indicated. I will conclude by urging you all, every man and woman who is left upon the earth, not to shirk the great responsibilities which have been thrown upon you, but to work hard to carry on the world, so that once more it may go well again.” (Loud cheers, which were again and again renewed.)

This was the substance of what Henry Lear said to the people of New Zealand, and the speech was printed and spread throughout the length and breadth of the land. On the whole it was well received, but Sir Chandos was not well pleased, and he worked hard surreptitiously to upset the good effect which it had made in Henry’s favour.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

HENRY LEAR was not anxious to prolong his stay in New Zealand. He had promised Flora to return as soon as possible, and as it was time for Captain Le Strange to go back with his ship, he decided to accompany him.

For some time Malcolm refused to go, though all the rest of the party were willing.

Maud had much improved under the treatment she had tried, and it was hoped that she would soon be able to walk without assistance.

Malcolm was half persuaded that perhaps Lettice had gone in a ship by herself to the canal works, but inquiries made could not bring to light the departure of a boat of any kind.

“You can do no good here,” said his father, “and you may feel all the better for a run out to the canal and back; by the time you return something may have transpired.”

“If I’m not expected to return to England, I don’t mind,” said Malcolm; “but I shall not remain at the canal, although my foot is nearly well, till I have found out where Lettice is.”

So when Captain Le Strange steamed out of the harbour, Malcolm was on board with the rest, and he still kept up his heart well.

Arrived at the canal, they waited while a cargo was loaded on the “Queen of the Waters.”

Meantime Lady Shadwell, utterly failing to make any impression on Lettice, and finding that the imprisonment was visibly affecting her health, agreed to release her now that Malcolm had gone and the coast was clear.

“All I want is your word of honour that you will tell no one in Wellington where you have been or anything about it,” she said.

To this Lettice readily agreed, and was set at liberty.

On going home she found that the whole party, including Malcolm, had gone to the canal, and she at once decided to try and follow them.

Going down to the harbour she gave one of the sailors a handsome tip to row her out to the most likely steamer she could see, and then, wishing that she might find the others at the canal, she soon discovered that invisible hands were working the ship, and that she was being rapidly taken out to sea.

Before any one realized what had happened she was gone too far to be caught.

As she looked back across the waters she saw the white coast-line, and wondered if ever again she would set foot on her native shore.

But night was coming on, and she was all alone on the wide ocean; but she feared not, for she knew that she was going to Malcolm, and that probably she would never again return to those seas.

When night came she shut herself in a cabin and wrapped her cloak around her; but for some time she was unable to sleep. She thought of Sir Chandos Shadwell and his ambitions, and whither they were likely to lead him. Lady Shadwell had made no secret of the fact that the Lears would stand a bad chance if they did fall into his power, and Lettice could not but rejoice to think that Henry Lear and his son had got safely away.

Tired out, at last she fell asleep and did not awake until it was broad daylight.

Breakfasting on some food which she found in the ship, she then took a walk on the decks, and watched the froth of the seas as they churned against the bows of the vessel as she made her way through the waves. Then, retiring to the stern, she saw a horrid shark in the water as she went along. The dull monotony of her lonely voyage weighed heavily on her, but all the time the steamer flew through the waters, and it was not many days before it took her into the creek, and drew up by the side of Captain Le Strange's ship.

It was evening, and they had all returned to the ship to dine, accompanied by Sir Philip and Charles Adey. When the new-comer was recognized she was hailed with delight, and Captain Le Strange set to work to get his daughter on board.

Malcolm could scarcely believe his eyes, and was not satisfied that it was really Lettice until he held her in his arms.

“How did you get here all alone?” he said.

“By the aid of your friendly spirits,” she answered.

“And where have you been all the while?” all asked at once.

“To tell you that will be a long story, but if you will give me a cup of tea and something to eat I will tell you all about it.”

Her mother got the tea with willing hands, and when Lettice had partaken of it she began by telling them of her being detained at the Governor’s house by Lady Shad well.

“And with the knowledge of Sir Chandos?” they asked.

“Undoubtedly,” said Lettice, “it was his doing, and, moreover, it was he who set that fellow Munro to make love to me.”

“This is too much,” said Captain Le Strange. “I have done with Sir Chandos, and will serve him no more.”

“Nor I after the canal is finished,” said Adey. “I will throw in my lot with you if you will allow me,” addressing Henry Lear.

“You are welcome,” said Henry. “I shall want many followers, I see, as it has already come to this, and I will take care you do not regret the step.”

“Sir Chandos must be a fool to take such a course after the way we have dealt with him, but I see what he means to do if he can.”

“Fool or no fool, he is a knave as well,” said Le Strange.

Things looked awkward; but the little party were not dismayed, for they were all good men and true.

They sat down to dinner in confidence, leaving the issue of the future in the same hands which had held them up in the past.

And while they dined they settled their plans.

Henry Lear and Malcolm, together with Captain Sinclair and the ladies, were to



return to England at once in the “Queen of the Waters,” and Sir Philip and Charles Adey were to come on with Le Strange as soon as his ship could be got through the canal. Meantime, if the spirits continued to help, Captain Sinclair was to go out to the canal for all the food supplies available up to that time.

“When they land in our country, he who has the food will have the power,” said Henry Lear.

“Yes, if you can keep it,” said Charles Adey. “But how is such a handful of men to do that?”

“It will be all right, you’ll see,” said Lear. “I am confident we shall win in the end. You have been the first from New Zealand to join me, but I believe there are thousands who will do so eventually.”

“I will take care to let all who come to your country know how Sir Chandos treated me,” said Lettice.

“Come on deck,” said Malcolm, “I want to hear more about it.”

Lettice put her arm through his and walked on to the deck with him. The moon and stars shone out and threw their subdued shadows on the planks beneath their feet as they walked to and fro.

“And were you ill-treated and annoyed in any way, my love?”

“No, I must not complain,” said Lettice; “but I was very anxious about you, I was so afraid you might do something mad or rash.”

“No, I was determined to try and find you; but I judged the spirits were at work, and that perhaps do what we would we should be foiled.”

“Well, we are united once again,” said Lettice, kissing him, “and just in time to go to your country with you.”

“Yes,” said Malcolm, “and it is time we left these parts; but even now, before we can settle down in peace, I feel that something great must happen.”

“That’s just what I think,” said Lettice.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

LETTICE was sorry to part from her father, but she could not bring herself to leave Malcolm again. As for Maud, she was obliged to say good-bye to Charles Adey, but his promise to come to her as soon as the canal could be passed by shipping reassured her.

The cargo loaded, all were ready to start, and, getting the partings over, they went on board the "Queen of the Waters," and Henry Lear wishing to go back to Southampton, the good ship steamed out of the creek and away to sea.

The three men watched her away for some distance, then turned back to their work. The ship sped on her way, and during the voyage Maud and Lettice became firm friends.

When they arrived at Southampton Henry Lear wished to have the cargo unloaded and taken to Dunston, while they all got in a train and were taken on at once.

No one can tell the gladness with which Flora welcomed Henry back again, or the joy she felt at seeing Malcolm safe, and to Lettice she soon became much attached.

Lady Stewart, too, was told the good news, and it eased her heart to hear that Sir Philip was alive and well when they left him. She admired him for sticking to his post, for she knew that all in good time he would come back to her now.

Henry found that the spirits had been carrying out his wishes. The money had been got together from far and near, and even the coins which had been shot down on the drive had been taken up and placed with the rest.

Taking the train to London, he found them making good progress. All the old and bad houses were being pulled down, and only the best remained, and these were being rapidly put into good repair.

He now wished that all the arms and ammunition in the country might be brought to Dunston and stored up in his place. And his desire was soon fulfilled.

“If only we can get the men we shall not want for arms now,” said Malcolm, “and it will take a good army to defeat us.”

“Do you think it will come to a battle?” asked Lettice.

“That depends,” answered Henry Lear. “If I find I have enough followers to justify me in risking one, there will be, I fear; but if they all support Sir Chandos I shall recommend giving in to him and take the best terms offered us.”

“But you will have a great number come over to you when they get to England,” said Lettice.

“Sir Chandos is not popular, really, and when once they see what you have been doing here by the aid of the spirits I think there will be a great many on our side.”

“I hope so,” said Henry, “and enough to make Sir Chandos see the futility of a battle. We can scarcely call it war, for I expect it will be as in the old days, one good fight and over one way or another.”

“I hope there will not be any fighting,” said Flora; “with the few men that are left in the world we ought to do without that.”

“True, dear,” Henry answered; “but if Sir Chandos has his way, sooner or later there will be bloodshed. On the other hand, if I can do as I have planned and keep society in its proper relations it may be avoided; but perhaps I shall not get my way without fighting, that’s what I mean.”

“I’m afraid from what I heard at Lady Shadwell’s that we shall have no choice in the matter,” said Lettice.

“They think of snuffing us out altogether, Lettice, don’t they? But, as you say, we shall see who supports them,” said Henry Lear.

“I told her ladyship she was reckoning without the host,” Lettice replied.

“I must look after the commissariat,” said Henry, “and I am going to see Captain Sinclair about going out with the ‘Queen of the Waters’ again. We must get all we can here.”

“Let me go out again,” said Maud, “it might do me good, another voyage, especially now that I can walk.”

“And what about a young man in the canal?” said Henry, laughing.

“Never mind,” said Maud, “I don’t mind being teased.”

“Well, go and see if Mrs. Sinclair is going, and if so you might join her again. You will be getting quite a sailor, Maud.”

She ran off, and came-back half an hour later looking very pleased, and said they were both going.

So as soon as the “Queen of the Waters ” was ready, the three adventurous spirits set off again.

Henry Lear and Clare saw to the crops and stock, while Malcolm took things somewhat easily.

Almost every day he took Lettice for a ride on the downs, where they could gallop for miles at a time.

“Yours is a lovely country for riding,” Lettice said.

“Yes, I thought you would like it for that, and the hunting foxes here is good sport; but I shall be nervous about you after Maud’s accident.”

“I don’t believe in being nervous,” said Lettice, that’s just the way to have an accident “; and, suiting her action to the words she put her horse at some posts and rails which lay in front of them and made a clean jump of them.

“Well done!” said Malcolm, following her over “Your nerve is all right, certainly, but aon t be too venturesome.”

Lettice laughed. “I shall have to face more danger than that before the game’s played out; you promised to let me help you remember that, sir, and I shall. By-the-by I want you to get me a good revolver and some cartridges so that I may practise shooting.”

“You are a wonderful girl,” said Malcolm “but I suppose I must do as you ask.”

So they continued to pass a happy time together.

## CHAPTER XL

SIR CHANDOS SHADWELL'S ambition was likely to carry him too far. So soon as he had got rid of the Lears he held meetings all over the country. He began by saying —

“You have heard what Henry Lear, from England, laid before you, and you must now judge for yourselves whether he is right or not. Myself I think it a specious argument to say that it will not do to divide all the wealth equally, because it cannot remain equal. Surely, that may be true, but it is no reason why all should not start equal and so have the same chances.”

The loud applause which followed these remarks showed that he had a considerable number of supporters.

“I propose,” went on Sir Chandos, “to issue ballot papers on which the head of each family will be asked to state the following particulars: firstly, if desirous of going to England or not; secondly, the number of his family; thirdly, whether in favour of my scheme and government or that of Henry Lear. I may say that the last information may be fearlessly given, because finally if the number of people who wish to return to England exceeds half the population, there must be a drawing to see who shall go. Those who draw right tickets will be allowed to go, whatever their opinion might be.”

This was intended to give Sir Chandos a clue as to how many supporters he would have in the old country, but he did not allow for the fact that a great many who were anxious to return to England would scarcely be honest enough to declare against him for fear of being deprived of going, in spite of what he had just said.

The consequence was that when the papers were all filled up, scheduled, and examined, he found he had a considerable number in majority in his favour.

This was the pith of what he had to say at all his meetings, and there was one advantage in what Sir Chandos did: the people all knew long before the canal was open, and a sea-road made to England, exactly what families were to go. Those who were to remain therefore made arrangements to take over the property which was to be given up by the emigrants, and the latter made due

preparations for their departure.

After all the drawing was over, Sir Chandos said to Samuel Munro —

“I think we may be quite satisfied that we may find a good majority on our side when we come to England.”

“It looks like it on paper,” said Munro; “but you cannot tell what they may do when they get to England and have settled down as Lear wishes them to do. Of course, all those who have most property will reap a decided advantage by following him.”

“Quite true,” said Sir Chandos; “but you forget that there are a great many more who will have reason to be dissatisfied than otherwise with his proposals.”

“Then, again, there are the spirits; whose side will they take?”

“We can invoke their aid as well as the others, and they may help us.”

“They may, but if they do not I don’t know what to say about it,” replied Munro. “Lear is sure to depend mainly on them in any big thing, otherwise he would have no chance, as you have ascertained in a very clever way.”

“Well, if we are beaten it will be by the aid of the spirits to the other side, that’s certain, and I am none too sure of them, so far as my present experience goes, but it is worth trying.”

“When do you propose to put the thing to the test?”

“Not until every one has settled down say for a year in the country, and there is food enough to spare to keep an army in the field.”

“But what about the subdivision of wealth there; must that be put off?”

“No, let Lear carry out his plan; he will make plenty of disaffection in the land, and then we can step in and help the poor take from the rich.”

“I’m afraid that those who once gain possession of the money will have considerable power with it. What is to prevent Lear from raising an army of militia at once? Good pay will make good soldiers.”

“Nonsense,” Sir Chandos replied, “he would not pay them enough to make it worth while; besides, if it comes to that, we can raise the same this side of the water and ship them to England.”

“Very good, but all who go would want a share of the spoils, and that might prejudice you in the eyes of the residents in England.”

M I think not. To gain such wealth as lies before them they could afford to pay for a little help.”

Munro had really suggested some useful hints to Sir Chandos, but he was too proud to take them.

He went on: “But yet another thing I would point out. All the higher classes will be on Lear’s side, and such men, as officers and tacticians, who would be valuable for carrying on a war, will not join your camp.”

“Am I to take it that I shall lose your valuable services?” asked Sir Chandos.

“No, I do not mean to leave you — we understand each other; but you cannot make many exceptions to your rules, or you will scarcely know where to draw the line, and equal subdivision of wealth will not suit the class of men I have named.”

“You foresee danger when there is none,” said Sir Chandos. “I pay not the least attention to any of the objections you have raised except one.”

“And that one is?”

“The spirits,” said Sir Chandos. “But it is no use to allow them to dominate us, or we might never do anything.”

“Yet somehow I think they will have their way,” said Munro.

“And how do you know that their way will not be our way?”

“I don’t; we have got that to learn though.”



## CHAPTER XLI

SIR CHANDOS and Lady Shadwell had been out to the works, and expressing their wonder and approval at what had been done, but they soon returned to New Zealand; and while Sir Chandos had been carrying out his propaganda, Captain Sinclair had been transporting stores to England in the "Queen of the Waters," assisted by the spirit world.

Maud Robertson persuaded Mrs. Sinclair to accompany him, and so she saw Charles Adey at times in the canal works, which were now nearing completion.

One Sunday Sir Philip proposed a walk along the rocks, as he wished to examine the state of the new land.

So Captain Sinclair, his wife, and Maud set out with Sir Philip and Charles and took a long walk some six miles to the south of the works.

They found the country very barren; but in a creek, from which issued a rivulet, the grass was growing up quite green, and Sir Philip thought that goats would be able to get a livelihood there, and asked Sinclair to bring some out.

They came upon the skeleton of a huge whale, with fifty-six vertebrae and fourteen pairs of ribs, but Sir Philip said it was not a very large variety, as it did not reach more than fifty feet in length. They also found the remains of many other fishes and shells, which, however, were beginning to crumble away.

Maud and Charles walked behind the others, and were glad to get a short time to themselves.

"Captain Le Strange gives a poor account of what is going on in my country," said Charles; "he is stirring up the people against Henry Lear by all the means in his power."

"Yes, we thought at home that he meant to do that, but Henry Lear thinks that he will have all the best class of men for followers."

"Yes, I know; but you see it will be the labour section of the community who will go against him, and they predominate in numbers and power."

“Yes, they do,” said Maud; “but Henry Lear says that of course each party will seek to use the help of the spirits, but that in the end the spirits will help those only who are in the right, and he will stand or fall on that.”

“I hope they will always help us,” said Charles, “especially to keep our love; but as you say, if they depart and leave us there is no danger so far as I am concerned, for I have no one else to love.”

“Do you mean that you are afraid of me then?”

“No, not really, though you loved Malcolm once.”

“Yes, but that is all over. He really never cared for me at all, you know, and was all the while falling in love with — with Lettice.”

“And a good thing too for me,” said Charles, kissing her, “or I might never have had you for my wife.”

“And I shall be that some day, soon?” she asked.

“Yes, as soon as ever the matter with Sir Chandos is settled; until that is over there is no saying who will be here to marry.”

“Ah, you mean there will be fighting; and must you join in it?”

“Yes, I must be amongst it, Maud, but I hope for your sake my life will be spared. It is a matter that must be settled once and for all, and I don’t see now how it can be without a great battle.”

“I’m glad girls are not expected to fight,” said Maud; “but I suppose it will be our duty to act as nurses, at least Lettice says we must help in that way.”

“No, you must remain safely at home and await the issue of it all; you are not strong enough to bear such sights as you would have to do after the battle.”

“I’m afraid I should not be much use,” Maud owned.

“Let us talk of something more pleasant,” said Charles, as they walked on along the rocks, while far away on each side of them waves broke on the shore and danced like white fairies in the sun.

“The spirits are doing such a lot in the old country,” said Maud; “they are pulling down houses and levelling the ruins, while the most important railways are being kept in repair.”

“That does not look like there being much for me to do in the engineering line; but never mind, there will be all the more time for lovemaking.”

“Yes, that will be nice,” Maud replied; “but Henry Lear will expect us all to work at something, particularly at providing food for the people. He has a horror of running short of that; I suppose it is because of the great calamity which came upon the people in England through the want of it.”

“Yes, that is it, no doubt. You see, he was a living man at the time, and saw it all with his own eyes, which is more impressive than hearsay.”

“Well, you have had a good afternoon to yourselves,” said Sir Philip, as they turned back and met the couple.

“Yes, we have enjoyed the walk very much,” said Maud. “What a delightful view of the sea one gets from here.”

“Yes,” said Sir Philip as he walked on, “but I begin to wish to cross to England once more. I have had a good spell on these rocks.”

“You have indeed, Sir Philip,” said Maud.

“Won’t you return with us this time?”

“No, I did not mean to grumble,” said Sir Philip. “I have promised to wait for Charles here and Le Strange. I will bring him over to you safe enough, you’ll see.”

“I don’t think he’ll want any bringing, from what I can see,” said Mrs. Sinclair, turning back and laughing.

“Quite right, Mrs. Sinclair, Maud will be quite a strong enough attraction.”

They walked on and left the lovers alone again.

“How Sir Philip must long to see his wife and child,” said Maud, “and yet he

hardly ever complains.”

“No, he is a great man,” said Charles, “and he will prove himself so to the end.”

So they found their way back to the “Queen of the Waters,” which next day was to return to England once more.

## CHAPTER XLII

THE canal had at last been finished, and all except Sir Philip, Charles Adey, and Captain Le Strange, who had got a crew who were willing to proceed at once to England, had returned to New Zealand.

The breakwaters prevented the swell of the sea from entering the canal, and the green waves now ran evenly from one ocean to the other, lapping the sides of the rocks, and laving their hot surface.

Though the spirits had helped immensely, yet the men might be justly proud of the work. But Sir Philip and Charles turned their faces and their thoughts for England, where they were ready to take up fresh tasks.

Captain Le Strange was the first to run a steamer through the canal, and he made straight for Southampton.

“We have come,” said Sir Philip, “at last,” when he reached home. “But our work is not yet done,” he added. “That old traitor, who pretended to be so smooth about everything at first, is working mischief in New Zealand, and it will come to a struggle if we do not give in, and you will not counsel that,” he said to Lear.

“No, I would not jeopardize a single life for my own ambition,” said Henry; “but I feel that I have been chosen to deal with the crisis, and it is only by being firm and strong that any satisfactory government can be formed.”

“Well, we are prepared to assist you as far as lies in our power, are we not?” asked Sir Philip of Le Strange and Charles Adey.

“In every way, yes,” they answered.

“There will be a rush for London, I understand, first, and when they have appropriated what they can find there they will turn attention to the country,” said Sir Philip.

“All are welcome on the terms I have indicated,” said Henry; “I shall not depart from them. They will find all the dead stock in town, and of that they can take

possession; but they will not find the money there.”

“Where is it?” they asked.

“Here,” said Henry. “The spirits have done it for me, and they have kept everything from being spoiled; the furniture and all goods in the town are almost as good as ever.”

“There will be plenty of the world’s goods for every one then,” said Sir Philip. “But what of the money, how are you going to deal with that?”

“That is work I want to put into your hands — yours, Le Strange’s, and Charles Adey’s here — to do for me. I want you to form of yourselves and other reliable men who come from New Zealand a commission to count and divide the wealth.”

“We will undertake anything that you ask,” said Sir Philip, speaking for himself and the others; “to the best of our ability we will do it.”

“I know you will,” said Henry. “Now for the present take a rest and wait, we can do nothing more than that until the people arrive.”

They were all glad of the opportunity to rest. Sir Philip was glad after his long absence to get back to his home. Charles Adey was glad to be once more with Maud, and Captain Le Strange to join his wife and daughter.

But Henry Lear was busy with his mind. To those who had come with Le Strange in his ship he gave houses and land and bid them welcome; to each of the colony he apportioned out his own property, which included a house in London for himself and his friends; the rest was for division in the terms he had set forth when in New Zealand.

For the next few weeks all went in for sport and enjoyment, while the spirits worked hard to get things in order for the people that were coming to the land. Whatever Henry Lear wished for was done.

It was springtime when they began to arrive, and as ship after ship reached the London docks and discharged their loads of passengers, the city once more began to show signs of life.

Henry Lear himself met the people as they came and bid them welcome, and when at length the last ship arrived and his people were complete, he called a large meeting in Hyde Park.

There the turf was green and well kept, the flowers were ablaze with glory in the beds. Hyacinths and jonquils, daffodils and polyanthus, all vied with each other in keeping up the old traditions of the place.

A large concourse of people came together, at least what seemed large considering the reduced population, and Henry thus addressed them.

He began by repeating his welcome to the land, reiterating his plans for the division of wealth and the government of the people and said —

“I’m told that Sir Chandos Shadwell, who has sent you here, will follow and seek to take upon himself the government. If that is so I shall dispute his rights, and of course you can follow him or me, which you like; but I feel bound to point out, that if you don’t accept me as your ruler on the terms I have indicated, sooner or later you will have to take one of my followers as such. It is my policy that will triumph, and I will tell you why, because Providence so intends; else why was I the last man left alive here? Why have the spirits helped me as they have? By God’s will they have worked not for me only, but for you, every one who has come here, and will do to the end now; but it is only those who are in the right who will receive their aid. (Loud cheers.) It is only by being in the right that you can hope eventually to receive help from the spirits. At first they may offer to help you, but in the end you will fail if you take the side of oppression or wrong. On that assumption do I and my house stand, and by that we stand or fall. When the time comes, as I have said, you can choose whom you will follow; but I warn all those that take arms against me that I believe the spirits will assist me to carry out my plans, and if they do, no matter how many are against me, I shall triumph.”

Hearty cheers greeted Henry again as he paused. He went on —

“I had deputed Sir Philip Stewart and others to select from among you a number of men to form a commission for counting and dividing the wealth amongst the world. But Sir Philip has made the useful suggestion, namely, that you yourselves choose twenty reliable men to go on the commission and act with Sir Philip and my other friends in making a fair division. Two-thirds of the money

will be divided here, and one-third handed over for the inhabitants left in New Zealand. It will by my wish be given out in proportion to the wealth each now possesses. If you wish this to be altered you must send for Sir Chandos to come and alter it for you, if he can; and I will end now by saying that whether I succeed or fail, I have nothing at heart but the good, peace, and contentment of the people.” (Loud cheers.)

Sir Philip then rose and asked that the names of the men selected to act with him on the commission be sent within a week. He then went on to remind his hearers “that Henry Lear was really the man selected by Providence to rule over them. How he had already shown great wisdom in dealing with difficult problems, how he had stored up food for them on their arrival, without which they must have been starved, and all this he hoped they would bear in mind when making their final choice of a leader.”

The words had good effect, and many who had come over as avowed supporters of Sir Chandos Shadwell were now induced to break their allegiance. Let Sir Chandos come when he would, it was now certain that Henry would have a considerable force to oppose him; but he knew that in any case he would not win unless the spirits were on his side. He was never really in doubt, however, and his wife, Flora, spoke up and comforted him.

“Remember,” she said, “how dark things looked for you and me, but the spirits helped us safely through all.”

“They did and will again, I feel quite confident,” her husband replied as they prepared to leave the park.

Henry now returned home, but the people were not slow to choose their representatives on the commission, and they at once proceeded to come down to Dunston and count all the wealth stored up there.

It was a tremendous task, but it was got through and every family received its proper share.

Henry now arranged for the organization of a police force to keep proper law and order according to the old code, but he deferred the question of government until he should see if he or Sir Chandos were to gain the ascendancy. It was astonishing how well the people settled down, and how each took to his own trade and carried on the work of the world. It seemed a pity that any one should



come upon the scene and upset it all, yet so it was to be.

Meantime those who sailed back to New Zealand for further supplies took word to Sir Chandos of all that was going on, and he embarked the militia which he had trained and steamed away to England, landing in Southampton some few months after the country had settled down peaceably, and just as Henry was going to be busy with the harvest.

“Never mind, dear,” said Henry to his wife when he heard the news, “it will soon be all over one way or the other. Keep up your heart, and please send and call all together, I have something to say to them.”

In a short time men and women thronged around Henry Lear to hear his words.

“Sir Chandos Shadwell has landed in Southampton,” he said, “and has brought an army with him. I want you all to remain here at present and keep calm. I go to London to issue a proclamation; when I return or send, let all the men be prepared to join us.”

All were present except Lettice Le Strange. No one missed her for the moment. Charles Adey was the first to notice her absence, and called Malcolm’s attention to it.

“Where is Lettice?” he asked , but no one knew.

“How do you go to London?” asked Sir Philip,

“I shall ride,” said Henry. “Who will accompany me?”

“I will,” said Charles Adey.

So these two mounted their horses, and set out without delay on the road for London; but Lettice Le Strange had been before them.

## CHAPTER XLIII

LETTICE LE STRANGE had been the first to hear the news of Sir Chandos's invasion, and she acted at once as she had long prepared to act.

Dressed all in white, with a pretty straw hat on her head, and her waving dark hair peeping from beneath it, she took a white flag which she herself had made, with the red cross of St. George on it, and rolling it up she rode down to the station, desired the spirits to box her horse and then proceed at full speed to London.

The spirits detrained her horse for her, and mounting him, a fine dark chestnut with a white face and four white legs, she unfurled her flag, and desired that she might be escorted by a troop of invisible horsemen.

She made a perfect picture as she rode through the city.

Thus, scarcely before Henry Lear could call his people together, she was in the midst of the populace calling on all who were for him to follow her. She told of how Sir Chandos had treated her, and wished the spirits to bring troopers, when lo, horses on all sides arrived. On these all the riding men mounted and the others followed on foot. Thus they filed out of the city, led by Lettice herself.

Whether inspired by the spirits she knew not, but she meant to brave all for the cause of Malcolm and his father.

She took the road for Reading, and ere Henry Lear and Charles Adey had paused there half an hour for rest —

“The horsemen and the footmen Are pouring in amain “; and as Henry and his companion advanced to meet them, Lettice still rode at their head.

“A second Joan of Arc,” said Henry; “you are a trustworthy lieutenant, I see.”

“Where is Malcolm?” she asked.

“Looking for you at home, otherwise he would have been here beside his father, I expect, instead of me,” said Charles.

“He is looking in the wrong place,” said Lettice. “But I must tell him he will have to put love out of his thoughts for the present.”

“What are you going to do now?” asked Henry.

“Going back to Dunston by train,” Lettice replied, “to send on the arms and ammunition. Please halt with your troops on the downs behind Newbury, and wait there till we come.”

“I’ve got something like a general,” said Henry.

But Lettice did not wait for a reply, she and her horse were soon being taken back in a special train driven by the spirits to Dunston. Here she begged them to be quick, and all that night they worked hard loading wagons with arms, ammunition, and supplies, and with morning light they were on their way to the Newbury Downs.

Lettice had snatched a short sleep during the proceedings, and now fresh and well, she rode in front of her baggage wagons, accompanied by Sir Philip and all the other men from the place.

They found Henry with his army waiting for them on the slopes, and a good breakfast was served out to all.

Then they took their arms and waited on the Newbury road. Soon the dust began to rise, and as the hostile army advanced to meet them the flash of steel could be seen in the sunlight. The spirits were leading Sir Chandos to the spot.

When they reached the crest of the hills which overlooked the downs stretching away before them, the army halted and deployed into line.

In number it considerably exceeded Henry Lear’s, for the transported men had been joined on the route by all the disaffected from London.

Henry Lear took the initiative, and, raising a white flag, he advanced into the valley to meet Sir Chandos for a personal parley, accompanied by Sir Philip as his aide-de-camp.

Sir Chandos rode out to meet them.

“Why have you come to disturb the peace of this country?” asked Henry. “False traitor that you are, you pretended to agree to my terms, while all the while you have been plotting to set the people against me. There are not so many that we can afford to sacrifice their lives; let not one follower fight, but let you and I settle this dispute in a personal conflict. You can choose your arms, and whoever is the victor, let him rule the people.”

“I shall agree to nothing of the sort,” said Sir Chandos. “Such proposals have been made before; but who is to know that with your death or mine the conflict will end there?”

“Coward,” said Henry, “you think to save your own skin while others fall dead around you. On you be all the responsibility of slaughter.”

“I thought you came to offer terms for surrender,” said Sir Chandos.

“Pshaw!” said Henry. “Surrender to you, never! Go back and begin to fight, but be careful —

‘Heroes have trod this spot —

Tis on their dust ye tread.’ “

Each now returned to his own army to give directions.

Eager for the fray, Sir Chandos ordered his men to advance down the slope; but Henry called on his to lie down on the ridge. And already they could see little puffs of smoke as the rifles were fired, but the bullets either flew over their heads or entered the hillside, raising small clouds of dust as they did so.

From a far-off mound Lettice watched the fight, and thought of the ashes of dead warriors who lay reposing beneath her. Nor was it an idle fancy, for she was on the site of the battle fought at Newbury in 1643.

Many of Sir Chandos’s men fell as they descended the slope; but they had now reached the hollow, and if they succeeded in storming the ridge it would cause a hand-to-hand fight, and then .... Lettice watched, and she saw Malcolm ride forth here and there with his father’s orders, and she feared for his fate. In that moment she wished that the spirits would help those in the right.

Now the battle was no longer in doubt, for on all sides the dull thunder of galloping hoofs came over the downs, and multitudes of invisible horsemen swept down the hollow, going completely over Sir Chandos's force. He and Munro were killed at the first charge, trampled to death beneath the iron-shod hoofs. Those who remained fled in dismay, and no second charge of that countless host was necessary.

Henry ordered his cavalry to follow the fugitives, and throwing away their arms they fled back along the road they had come, broken and panic-stricken.

Many prisoners were taken, but to those who escaped Henry granted a free pardon if they would come in and surrender on his conditions.

Having ordered them to bury the dead he returned to Dunston, having gained through the aid of the spirits a bloodless victory.

To those who had supported him Henry gave the best lands, and under his direction and government the country soon settled down peacefully.

Sir Philip Stewart took up his residence in London, and looked after the affairs of the city; while Henry Lear and Malcolm saw to the settlement of the people who wished to live out in the country.

Captain Le Strange took the money intended for them out to the New Zealanders, and on Henry Lear's behalf appointed a governor in the place of Sir Chandos, who was to be the choice of the people themselves.

And so through the assistance of the spirits Henry Lear had been enabled to set the world going well again.

To all who had assisted him he said, "Before the battle, which has been such a signal success for us, I would fain have addressed you in the words of a far greater orator — 'Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears,' but there was no occasion to ask you, for you stood there before me staunch and true, ready to fight. Now I would say: Friends, Englishmen, countrymen, lend me, or rather give me, your hearts. Work with me in settling the government of the world, as it now stands, on solid foundations.

"You have now all seen with your own eyes the power of the spirit world, and you will realize the fact that it is no use to try and overthrow a dynasty or power

which is aided and abetted by it.

“It is quite possible that with the death of Sir Chandos and so many of his followers that the spirits may depart again; but I have no doubt that if anything momentous should turn up they would come back to our assistance. But let us try now to do without them. Let me see, day after day, week after week, and year after year, ‘ Man go forth to his labour until the evening.’ Let us not quarrel any more, but all work for the good of each other and the whole community.”

A burst of hearty cheering greeted him as he finished, and afterwards all went their ways to their work, and a spirit of peace settled over the land.

## CHAPTER XLIV

AND when at last all had settled down in order under Henry's rule, and Captain Le Strange had returned from New Zealand to say that all was satisfactory there, two weddings took place in the quiet country, at the village church.

Mr. Robertson officiated, and Malcolm Lear was first married to Lettice Le Strange, and then Charles Adey to his daughter Maud.

The church bells rang out a merry peal, which resounded across the valley with stirring modulation, which told of hearts which had been united by holy bonds of affection and love.

Henry and Flora Lear entertained the two couples and all their friends after the ceremony at a sumptuous repast.

Before they left Henry rose and wished them long life and happiness. "I hope," he went on, "they may live to see their children's children, and the country still in peace. As soon as it can be got ready, Malcolm and Charles are going to superintend the laying of a cable to New Zealand, so that we can communicate with our friends across the seas. It is good of their wives to spare them so soon, but they have never held them back from duty before marriage, and I am sure they will not do so after."

These sentiments were roundly applauded, and the young people had a good old-fashioned send off as they left in two motor-cars for London, where they had decided to reside for the present.

"I suppose I must let you go," said Lettice, as they flew along; "but I really thought I had got you all to myself now, and with all due deference to you, sir, I don't know what you have to do with laying cables."

"I shall have very little to do with it, but father wishes me to go out for the prestige of the thing. We shall still be dependent for a time on New Zealand for a supply of food, and I want to find out how much they will be able to send us; the failure of such an adequate supply is not yet passed."

"And yet I suppose in a year or so each country will be selfsupporting," said

Lettice.

“Yes, that is the general idea. But England must necessarily become a manufacturing country again, with the plant and machinery for such industry as she possesses; but it will not do to neglect agriculture at home any more.”

Rather matter-of-fact conversation for a newly married pair, but Malcolm felt bound to carry out his father’s wishes, and he could not withhold his explanation.

As for Charles Adey, he was not at all sorry that there was still some work for him to do.

“How long do you expect to be laying the cable?” asked Maud.

“With luck, not more than six months.”

“Six months without you, that will be a long time,” said Maud. “I’ve a good mind to seek the aid of the spirits once more so as to get it over quicker.”

“Don’t do that; no doubt, as Henry Lear says, they are amongst us still, ready to help if occasion requires; but it wouldn’t do to always use their aid. Besides, I want to get some credit out of this, the spirits have been having it all their own way.”

“And you go and leave me all that time just for the kudos you can get; I don’t believe you mind a bit.”

“You know I do,” said Charles, kissing her cheek; “besides, what if I take you with me?”

“Ah, that would be lovely, and perhaps Lettice would come too; her father is going out on one of the steamers in command, you know.”

“Yes, and Captain Sinclair on another.”

“Perhaps Mrs. Sinclair would go again, she likes the sea.”

“I might go on his ship if she would, and you would have your old companion with you.”



“I should like that very much,” said Maud. “Slow down, and let us hear what Lettice thinks.”

They waited for the other motor to come up, and explained the proposal.

“No, I do not wish to return to my old land again,” said Lettice; “besides, my mother is coming to stay with me until Malcolm returns.”

“Oh, very well,” said Maud, laughing; “you have become a stay-at-home, I shall get Mrs. Sinclair to go out with me,” and the motor shot on ahead again.

“But would you like me to go with you, Malcolm? Of course, if you would I will put my own inclination on one side.”

“I should like to have you with me awfully,” said he, “but I think it would be best for you to remain at home.”

“That’s what I thought, you would have your work to do, and will get it over and return to me, when I hope we shall not be parted again.”

So it was decided, and for several weeks the two couples rode together in the park and visited places of amusement, until the time came for them to set out for New Zealand.

The cable was duly laid, but it took much longer before all was completed and in order than Charles had anticipated.

When Malcolm returned with Captain Le Strange he had been away more than a year, and he found a little stranger awaiting him in the shape of a son and heir; and curiously enough the first cablegram to come across the water was to say that Maud had given birth to a daughter in New Zealand.

There was great rejoicing over this, and when it was found that the little boy had been named Malcolm and the girl Maud, Lettice was heard to say: “It will be strange if a Malcolm should marry a Maud, some day, after all.”

THE END