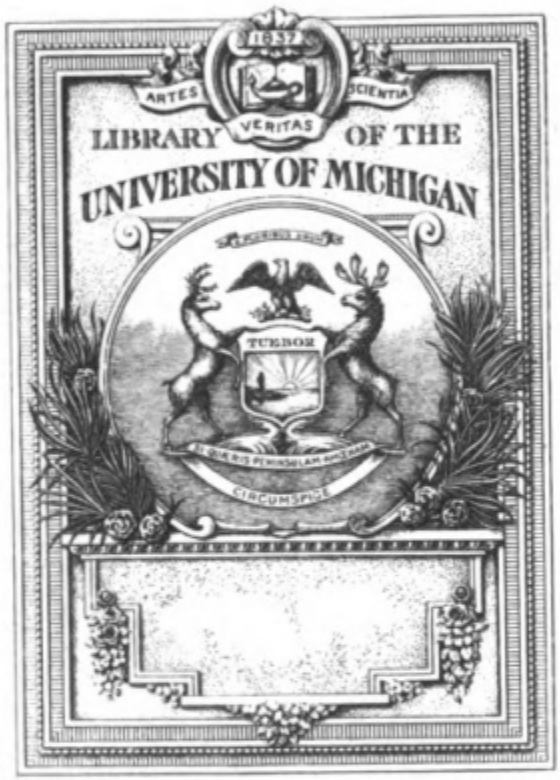
Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

828
M6°2c:
c:1 2

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

CONSTANCE TRESCOT

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

UNIV OF MICH.

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

UNIV.
OF
MICH.

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"'I THINK WE HAVE FINISHED,' HE SAID."

Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

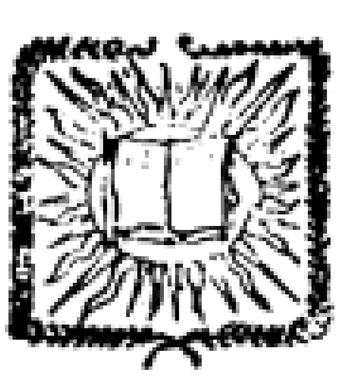
Author's Definitive Edition

CONSTANCE TRESCOT

A Novel

BY

S. WEIR MITCHELL, M.D., LL.D.



NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.
1905

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

John
Friedman
12-9-27
15628

Copyright, 1905, by
THE CENTURY CO.

Published March, 1905

THE DE VINNE PRESS

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

CONSTANCE TRESCOT

I

"MR. HOOD will see you in the library, sir."

George Trescot followed the servant, and when left alone began to wander about a large room which looked out on the north coast of Massachusetts Bay. Why it was called a library might well have puzzled the young man. There were few books except those of reference, but on chair and table were mill and railway reports, and newspapers in superabundance.

As the clock struck the hour of noon a woman of some twenty-seven years entered the room. Hearing the door open, Trescot turned from a brief and hopeless effort to comprehend the genealogical tree of the Hood family, which hung on the wall in much splendor of heraldic blazonry.

Miss Hood came in smiling, as if she had just been amused and was enjoying the remembrance. Her face had—what is more often found in plain women than in those to whom nature has been more bountiful—great power of expressing both kindliness and mirth. She was slight, but of admirable

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

figure, and possessed the mysterious gift of grace. For the rest, she was unselfish, seriously religious, and perplexed at times by the comic aspect of things, hardly realizing the fact that a ready sense of humor had often been as useful in helping her to endure the lesser trials of existence as the religious faith which she held to with the simple trust of a child. Life presented itself to her in relentless simplicity, and consisted of things right and things wrong, with over-sensitive self-reproach when either seemed too amusing. She was, socially speaking, fearless, and occasionally outspoken to a degree which embarrassed others, but never Susan Hood.

"Good morning, major," she said. "I am glad to see you. I consider myself neglected of late."

"I shall be the best of brothers-in-law, Miss Susan."

"Oh, that is all very well. The future does not always pay the debts of the present. You will be as good as my sister will let you be; but I am easily satisfied."

"I ought to be," he said. "And, by the way, I am only Mr. Trescot, not Major. These labels should have gone when the war ended; but I suppose men like titles. I shed mine long ago."

"You are quite right," she returned, smiling with the aid of a large and expressive mouth and show of rather irregular, very white teeth. "I see that I am just in time to save you a fall from the genealogical tree of the Hoods. I incline to think some of the limbs a trifle insecure. My uncle climbs it at least once a week, and believes in its fabulous

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

fruit as he does in nothing else. I told him last night that it was more genial than logical. If he had understood me, I do not know what would have happened."

Trescot laughed. "Mr. Hood explained it to me last week. I nearly fell asleep on the top branch."

"Did you? You would never have been forgiven. It is still growing; the mustard-seed was nothing to it." Then the further temptations offered by the comparison presented themselves to her as irreverent, and she said:

"By the way, I am sent by my uncle to entertain you, as he is just now engaged. As a matter of fact, he is engaged in settling what he will say to you. He is enjoying it, too. Sit down; you will have to put up with me for as long as he chooses to remain agreeably perplexed."

"Perplexed?" said the young man, as he seated himself. "What is there to perplex? It seems to me very simple."

"And to me. You have asked my sister to marry you. She desires to do so. My uncle says he is old, and that he has entitled himself to our society until he dies. I have told him that if he would kindly set a time for that event we should know what to do, and that he was pretty secure as to me. He did not like it. Nothing is simple to my uncle."

"I suppose not," said Trescot, laughing. "The asking him seemed to me a mere formal matter. Constance is old enough to know her own mind, and, I fancy, to have her own way. I did not ask of him any favors."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"They should not need to be asked; but he will be sure to think you expect him to provide for Constance,—as, in fact, he ought to do."

"I expect nothing of the kind, nor does Constance. We are prepared to wait until I can offer her a home. That may be in a year, or even two years. There is no need to discuss it."

"Indeed! Wait until you know my uncle better. He discusses everything. He would discuss whether two and two make four. He constructs theories, as he calls them, and when it is needful to act does not always abide by them, which, I assure you, is, on the whole, rather fortunate, as I hope you may discover."

"Well, on this subject, Miss Hood, I have also my theory, and an abiding faith in it."

She laughed merrily and said: "Wait a bit. You have as yet seen only one side of my uncle. He can be, as you know, a pleasant, rather cynical old gentleman. Now you present yourself to him under a novel aspect, and he will be sure to construct what he calls a theory for himself and you, to fit the occasion. It will be something like this—I may as well prepare you: 'My theory, sir, is that people never change. These young women have always had all the money they wanted; *therefore*, they will always want it. It must be clear to you that we shall need to discuss the matter at length—at length, sir. Money in my—sir, in my opinion, is developmental; without money,' etc. He will be delightfully irrelevant. I wish I could overhear the interview. He really does not care about money; but

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

he likes to talk about it. It may be he will light on something else. You will have to be patient."

"I can be that. But as concerns money, I do not want it—or, rather, I want it very much, but not from him. I mean in time to get it myself. Confound it! Pardon me, but really—"

"Oh, that is a very mild expletive; if it applies to Uncle Rufus, it is quite unnecessary: he is just now sufficiently confounded. And, after all, if you were an old man like my uncle, would you willingly part with so delightful an inmate as my sister?"

"No," laughed Trescot; "no, indeed."

"Well, that is honest. You may be surprised to learn that he would object quite as much to part with me as to part with my sister. I am not malicious enough to ask you to explain that."

Trescot was relieved from need to reply when, awaiting no answer, she continued:

"The fact is, he likes me because we disagree radically about everything, from religion to politics, and Constance because they agree about most things, except politics. There they are far apart. His opinions about the war have been to both of us a matter of real unhappiness. Had he lived in the South he would have been bitter against secession. He is always in the opposition, but he despises people who yield."

"Then he will certainly fall in love with me. Thank you for the hint."

"Oh, I did not mean it for that, and I suspect it was not needed. After all, it is not that you have no money that troubles my uncle; it is really far

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

more the idea that Constance is ungrateful, and shows great lack of taste in being willing to desert him for you, or for any one. I think I hear his voice. I must go; but when you are through with uncle my sister wants to see you in the garden. If you make yourself very disagreeable you will find that Uncle Rufus will find some ingenious excuse for being reasonable. He will think it proper, after he has posed a little as a shrewd man of business, to pose as the good uncle."

Trescot stood with her in the window recess while they talked, and now, turning, glanced at the shrewd, kind face, with its readiness of humorous comment, and said: "I should like to hear what might be the character of George Trescot you would present to Mr. Hood."

"Would you, indeed?" she returned, looking up. It was a strong face she saw, and more serious just now than the quality of the question suggested. Yet it smiled in pleased fellowship of mirth as she answered, laughing:

"Ah, there is my uncle! I have half a mind not to tell you."

"Perhaps I had better not insist. You are sure to be painfully honest, and I may have cause to regret."

"But I will. I should say—well, I should say—'Uncle Rufus, I like him.'"

"Thank you. I shall put that with what Sheridan once said to me."

"What did he say? Do tell me."

"Oh, he said, 'That was well done, Major Trescot; very well done.' I blushed like a girl."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"What had you done?"

"What had I done? Ah," he laughed, "you must ask Sheridan."

"But I may never see him." She was curious about large things, rarely about little ones or mere social trivialities. "Of course you will tell me."

"Perhaps if, some day, on trial, you prove to be a quite perfect sister-in-law."

"Am I not good enough now? I said I liked you. Is n't that a form of goodness? I assure you that there are no better judges of men than old maids and sisters-in-law."

"Indeed! But you are only a sort of brevet sister-in-law. And why—shall I dare to say—are old maids good judges of men?"

"Oh, they look down from a heaven of neutrality where there is no giving in marriage. Goodness! what am I saying?"

Hearing her uncle's step on the stair, she turned to leave. Trescot saw with approval her trim, neat figure, and said, laughing, "The basis of opinion is not altogether secure."

"Nonsense!" she exclaimed. "I am already on the family tree, my destiny predetermined,—'Susan Hood, spinster.' But here is Uncle Rufus. If he does not first indulge in vain genealogies I shall be surprised. Good-by! I wonder what St. Paul meant by vain genealogies?"

As she spoke, a small, very thin man of some seventy years entered, with a too obvious affectation of youthful briskness.

"I leave Mr. Trescot to your tender mercies, uncle."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Ah, good morning. Fine day. Sit down," said Mr. Hood, as she left them. "Pray, sit down." He began at once, with an air of decision, "I suppose this matter of which my niece has spoken to me appears to you very simple."

"It did not at one time. It does now. I have asked Miss Constance to be my wife. She has done me the honor to say yes. What else is there?"

"Everything, sir; everything. I do not propose that my niece shall leave me. She owes to me the affection of a child. I am old and cannot live long. Her sense of duty should forbid her to desert me. If it does not, I must act for her, and prevent what is both criminal and foolish. I must create for her a virtue which she has not."

"But, Mr. Hood—" said Trescot, raising a hand in appeal.

"No, sir; do not interrupt me. I object to it altogether. You have no money, and she has none. You know nothing of each other—nothing. As to waiting a year—two years—until you can provide for her, it is nonsense. When she mentioned this highly absurd proposition I told her as much. Now, sir, you have my decision, and my niece has already had it."

"May I ask what was Miss Constance's reply?"

"She said she meant to marry you if she had to sew for a living. By George! she can't sew on a button. I was quite prepared for her reply. She has the obstinacy of my people."

"Then, Mr. Hood, you may rest assured that I shall marry her. I can wait."

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"But I cannot wait. Do you suppose I mean to have a love-sick girl maundering about my house for two years? No, sir; you do not know her. From a child she has been obstinate when she wanted anything; I should have no peace."

"I am sorry for you," said Trescot, much amused; "but I can only repeat what I have said already. Unless Miss Constance changes her mind—"

"She never changes her mind; we never do—it is a family trait."

"I hope not; and in that case I trust you will see this matter in a more favorable light. But in any case, to be frank, I mean to marry her."

"I suppose, then, there is no help for it," said the elder man, with a curious collapse of resolution. "I am old and feeble"—which was true. "The girl is ungrateful. I rely upon her for everything. Susan is wrapped up in her poor and her parson—she calls him her rector, I believe. I find it inconsistent with my sense of duty to let you go on in blind ignorance. You will discover Constance to be efficient, obstinate; and as I am told by Susan that you are what is called religious, you ought also to know that my niece and I agree in the entire absence of that adjective."

"That," said Trescot, coldly, "is a matter I prefer not to discuss." He knew very well by this time that the woman he loved had, unlike himself, no distinct creed.

"Well, I desire that you should understand her. She is very like me."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Indeed!" he returned, much amused. "Then I shall be sure to end by liking you, Mr. Hood. I presume that I may consider it as settled."

"No, sir; I may yield, but I will never consent; and I consider it my duty to warn you. I have said as much. This girl, this woman, is a creature of instincts. As a child her temper was terrible; under my wise rule it has been tamed. She loves and hates with animal fidelity; and once she is set on doing anything, neither saint nor devil can change her."

"That is rather gratifying," said Trescot, between suppressed mirth and annoyance. Certainly this was an extraordinary old man.

"She was an unreasoning Union woman, and I am of opinion that the South was altogether in the right. But neither reason nor respect for me has ever altered what she calls her views."

"You will pardon me if I say that I am very glad to hear it."

"Ah, well, well, that is as you please. A pity you agree. It is a theory of mine that difference of opinion is a basis of true happiness in married life; otherwise it becomes monotonous."

Trescot sat still, studying the self-pleased face, and amused himself with thought of the mirth with which Susan would have heard her uncle giving Constance a character for her new place. He kept a respectful silence as the old man wandered on; but by what paths he reached an expression of opinion as to the constitutional rights of States and cities to secede, Trescot never could remember. At

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

last he was given to understand that the right of States to secede was based on the undoubted right of individuals to secede from States. Here, as the old man's voice rose to political levels of emphasis, it recalled Trescot from the dreaming mood which was taking him somewhere into the fairyland of love.

He recovered power to listen, but at last, disappointed by the absence of exhilarating difference of opinion, Mr. Hood said: "We seem to have strayed. I was about to add that my niece and I have always agreed, except as regards one subject; and, I regret to say, as concerns that matter, even the unfortunate closure of the war has in no degree abated her feeling—a child, sir, instinctive and, as I observed, obstinate. I think I have already dwelt on that peculiarity."

"Yes, I so understood you. And now, Mr. Hood, that you have sufficiently warned and informed me, and have decided to consent—I beg pardon, yield—"

"I did nothing of the kind. I sometimes give way, but I never yield. I do not like this marriage. But I do not propose that you shall cause my niece to quarrel with me. She cannot stay here and make me uncomfortable; she cannot marry you and starve; I won't permit it."

"Then may I ask what you propose to do?"

"Well, first I desire to state that, although I am said to be a rich man, I do not intend to leave to my nieces more than a very small competence. I have a theory on this subject. It is interesting. At another time I shall be happy to set it before you—at length."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Trescot rose. "I assure you, sir, that I should have been glad to feel that in case of anything going wrong with my power to provide for my wife, —such as my death, or what not,—she would be at ease. I should be a fool if I told you I do not care what you do with your money; but if you imagine, as you seem to take for granted, that it is influencing me in my relation to Miss Constance, we had better drop the matter of money altogether."

"But," said Hood, testily, "I am not going to be bullied into dropping it. I mean to have my own way."

Trescot was a man not merely good-tempered, but of a certain gay sweetness of disposition which captured men and women. He began, however, to be a little impatient, and in reply said:

"I have been for a half-hour endeavoring, sir, to find out what it is you want. That I am to marry appears to be settled."

"I suppose so. I know Constance too well to oppose it. I am told by my niece that you cannot marry at present. But if you choose to accept the position of my agent in St. Ann, Missouri, I will insure my niece an income for five years—say, two thousand dollars. You would be called upon to manage my property, and I should expect that you would eject squatters, bring suits, and otherwise care for my interests." He fell back in his chair with an air of having settled the matter.

For a moment Trescot was silent, and regarded the feeble, shrunken old man, who sat watching

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

him and pulling nervously at his thin gray side-whiskers. With some sense of the niece being sold to him for a consideration, he returned quietly:

"No; I do not wish to leave Boston. I am not a land agent, and, to be plain, Mr. Hood, I cannot accept your offer."

"But you will."

"No, I think not; I cannot. What you please to give your niece or not to give her must have no relation to any business interests you may choose to confide to me, in the very doubtful case of my considering your offer."

"You had better talk first to Constance. I think she must know you already, for she declared that you would not accept my offer, and then she made me another."

"Indeed!" Trescot did not like this any better.

"She says that if I give her two thousand a year, and put my affairs at St. Ann in your hands on a pure business basis, you will, perhaps, think of it."

Trescot would have much preferred to have had the offer made directly to himself. He said he would speak to Constance about it. It was not a thing to settle without time and thought.

"But it is settled," said the old man. "You will find that out. Constance usually knows her own mind."

"But not mine," returned Trescot, rising. He had had by this time as much of the uncle's indecisions and feeble display of business sharpness as a nearly perfect temper would bear. He had learned that his own tender and respectful love had been

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

met by a passion of affection which had seemed to take as small thought of the future as a bird might do, and yet here was a certain competence in her dealings with her uncle for which he was unprepared.

As he went away to meet her he said to himself, "It seems reasonable," but felt again that he should have preferred to be left to arrange matters involving business and so complete a change of residence.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

II

GEORGE TRESCOT was, like Constance, an orphan, and of the same old New England breed as the woman he loved. With slender means, he had made his way in college, unassisted, by aiding duller men as a tutor, and had passed through the law school with unusual distinction. Then the war broke out, and, enlisting in the ranks, he rose rapidly, as death cleared the way, until in the final struggle he was so wounded as partially to disable his right shoulder, which he commonly eased by carrying his hand caught in his waistcoat. Although five years had gone by, at times it gave him pain, and he felt this as he passed through the drawing-room and out into the garden. Constance's appearance of being tall struck him as she passed across the path and disappeared behind a row of shrubs which sheltered the garden from the rough sport of the east winds. In reality, admirable symmetry was responsible, for she was not of more than full middle height.

As he turned to meet her she was joyously flushed, a glad welcome in her eyes. In a moment she was in his arms. "A whole week!" she cried.

Conscious that the embrace was as much hers as his, he cast an uneasy glance about him, fearful of

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

profane eyes, of which she was, to appearance, heedless.

The moment was expressive. He loved her with some sense that she was a thing apart from other women. A great respect went with it—a delicate, shy tenderness which passed into delicious wonder at the deep passion which he had awakened. They had met first at a dance, where, as he crossed the room, an awkward partner in the waltz had brought her roughly against his wounded shoulder. In extreme pain he had dropped into a chair. She caught sight of his face. "Who is he?" she said. Her partner replied, "He is George Trescot, my old major in the Sixth. I must have hurt his wounded arm. Excuse me a moment."

"No, take me to him."

"Trescot," said his friend, "I am sorry; I was awkward."

"May I, too, apologize?" said she.

As they spoke, Trescot, pale with pain, looked up and tried to rise. He met a pair of violet eyes and a face of anxious interest he was never to forget.

"Pardon me," he said; "I shall be all right in a little while. It was worth some pain to know Miss Hood."

"Thank you. That is a great deal to say."

He asked for a glass of wine, and, as his friend went for it, she sat down beside him.

"I am more sorry," she said, "than I can tell you. Were you hurt in the war? I think Mr. Ware said so."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Yes; but pardon me, I cannot talk—not now, not just yet. But do not go."

She had no such intention. She was silent, watching his set face, sensitively aware of some eager wish to help him.

His friend returned. Trescot took the wine and said at last, as they rose, "I am better, but I think I must go."

She said, "My sister and I shall be glad to see you; we are always at home on Monday afternoons."

"Thank you," he returned; "I shall hope to be better company when we meet again."

There was no indecision about this love-affair. In two weeks they were engaged. She had often said to herself that she would be hard to please, and that only a long acquaintance would justify a woman in giving herself to a man. She asked herself no questions as to the unreasoning passion which made easy for Trescot what so many had found hard. Their mutual attraction had the inevitability of the physical forces. From the moment of their first meeting, Constance Hood was the realization of his dream of the most stately womanhood. The impression he made on her was as sudden. He was not over her own height, slightly made, and, just then, even delicate in appearance. The look of intellect and power which a few faces show with features of great refinement gave added charm to manners which were gently formal, with some flavor of a more leisurely day when men had time to be courteous.

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The contrast between his frail look and the stories men told of his fearlessness in the great war had its influence on the woman who had broken into a passion of anger and grief when the news of Sumter revealed the power of sentiment to stir her, as it stirred and energized the manhood of a great nation, presumed by those who thus challenged it to be given over to the ledger and day-book.

Susan Hood watched with surprise, anxiety, and a little amusement the progress of a love-affair which did not explain itself to one who considered marriage as a matter not to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly, and who had had no personal experience to shock her with the discovery of passions in herself or another. To the very humorous, love comes with difficulty.

Very soon Constance talked to her with strange unreserve. This abandonment to love, so profound, so abrupt, shocked Susan. A man might thus exhibit affection, not a woman. Needless to say that it was for a time only the sister who thus saw and heard and wondered, dismayed at a passion as wild as that of Juliet.

WHEN Trescot, having left her uncle, found Constance, the lovers sat down beyond the garden, before them the quiet of an unruffled sea and the eastward glow of the setting sun. The woman's hand sought his and held it. "Has uncle told you?" she said.

"Your uncle is an amazing person, but I learned at last that you and he had settled the matter."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

She was aware at once that he was not entirely satisfied, and said:

"Oh, of course, George, it rests with you. If you accept we can be married soon, and if you say no we must wait a year, or even two years. How can I be without you so long? My uncle remains here in the country all the year, as you know; and now that I have disturbed his theory as to what my life was to be, I shall be made to suffer."

"But we would be near, and I should see you often—very often."

"Yes, I know; but it would be hard—oh, harder than you can know; and my uncle is never done with a subject; my life would be made intolerable. And then, after all, we should not be there—I mean at St. Ann—always; you would succeed, and some day we should come home." She made it all seem clear, definite, and certain. Indeed, it so appeared to her.

It seemed much more vague to the young man, but the bribe she offered was too much for him to resist.

"We should go among a strange and hostile people, Constance—I a Northern officer, you with your strong feeling about the South."

"I should learn to hold my tongue, and you would be sure to make friends."

"Perhaps." He remained silent a moment, and then went on. "I have rarely had doubts as to any future, dear, except as concerned whether I could make you love me. But this future of a life at St.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Ann seems to me a very doubtful matter. I am to displace the present agent and—"

"But Mr. Averill—my uncle calls him, with respect, major-general—Mr. Averill desires to give up the care of uncle's lands. He did not tell you that, I am sure."

"No, he did not. Of course that somewhat simplifies the matter. But to act for a man like Mr. Hood may well have its difficulties."

"I do not think so. He always backs down before a resolute man, or even an obstinate woman. You will have your own way, and we shall be so happy, George."

"Of that I am sure, there or anywhere; and yet I am in reason, and above all because I love you, bound to think of the future. I am naturally sanguine, Constance. Even in the darkest hours of the war I was that; but in this matter I am not sanguine, and if you were to ask me why, I could not tell you. I have a feeling—" and here he paused.

"A feeling, George?"

"Yes, like that I had once on South Mountain. I was about to ride on to a hillock for a better view of the enemy's line, when I felt for a moment a curious reluctance. I pulled up my horse, half surprised at myself—and then, with a sense of the absurdity of the thing, I rode on. As my horse moved across the space between, a shell exploded on the hillock."

"Oh, George! But it is n't like that—was not that a pure superstition?"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Yes, very absurd, utterly ridiculous in its application here; I ought not to have said it."

"It does not in the least trouble me, although, like my uncle, I have my own little thrills about thirteen at table, and all such nonsense. My uncle says—" and she stopped.

"Well, dear?"

"Oh, he says that a person may reason himself out of religious beliefs, but can never quite get rid of these little half-beliefs."

"I think," he returned, "that people who are really and thoughtfully religious have least of these remnants of a more ignorant day."

"And yet, George," she returned, laughingly, "you obeyed an impulse quite without reason; I should hardly call it a superstition."

"No; you are right. But to go back to what is for you and me a very serious question. I believe now that I may accept your uncle's offer. But I must think it over when those dear eyes are not looking into mine, those lips saying, 'Come, let us go away and be all of life to each other.' Let us drop it now and talk of other things. I have to go back to Boston by the late train. Within a day I shall write to you and to your uncle. I must talk it over with an older lawyer."

She was satisfied, and saw, or thought she saw, that he would be of her opinion. She had her own reasons for desiring to have no such delay as he would have tranquilly accepted. He had all through life been denying himself this or that to-day in

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

order that he might be more secure of to-morrow's wants. Such a passion as possessed her with the power of a primal instinct was not yet in him victorious over all rational considerations. He knew little of women, and nothing of the woman who desires to absorb, so to speak, all of the thoughts and feelings of the one man, and who, as time goes on, becomes jealous of his friends, and even of his work, and, at last, of every hour not given to her. Such women are happily rare, but are now and then to be found. From the hour she first saw him, frail and pallid from suffering, a vast protecting eagerness arose in her mind. As her kinship of pity blossomed into love, the desire to be with him and watch over what seemed to her in her new anxiety a more delicate life than it really was, supplied her with a reason for early marriage. She had never asked herself why she had been so suddenly captured; but as time went on she knew that she had drawn a prize in the uncertain lottery of love, and felt that his charm of manner, his distinction, the delicacy and refinement with which he had pleaded for her love, had fully justified her choice.

After further talk he left her at twilight, and at the last moment, in haste to catch his train. She watched him as he walked swiftly away, noting the arm caught for relieving support in his waistcoat, the upright, soldierly carriage of figure, well built, but lacking flesh. She said:

"Ah! but I love you well; how well, you do not yet know, George Trescot,—but you will—you shall."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

As he turned at the garden gate to look back, she cried, as she ran toward him, "You forgot, George."

"What?" he said.

"To kiss me again."

Late in the afternoon of the next day she received a letter, with which she fled to the rocks above the sea. She tore it open and read:

"DEAREST CONSTANCE:

"I wonder how you got that pleasantly prophetic name. You must tell me.

" Yes, I have made up my mind; my friend has urgently advised me to accept your uncle's offer. He thinks the position affords chances I ought not to decline, and with your ever dear self thrown in—you remember the Scotch song:

" 'I 'll gie ye my bonny black hen
If ye 'll but advise me to marry
The lad I love dearly, Tam Glenn'—

I gladly conclude to say yes. With what joy I am filled, you, I trust, know. I am not very strong as yet, but I come of a vigorous breed, and no tonic has ever helped me like the bounty of love. You have given me yourself—how can I ask more?

"Between us there lies one large gulf of difference—and only one. That some day we shall bridge it over, I hope and believe. Meanwhile, we shall trust each other's honesty in this, life's largest matter, and, so trusting, wait with the patience of love—"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"No," she said, looking up, "it is not for me life's largest matter. This human love is for me the larger. His religion, or any faith, is, compared to that, dim, misty, unsatisfying. But love! ah, that is near and sweet and real."

"Well, well," she mused, as she sat with the letter in her lap. "He would have me to believe as he believes. Would I wish him to change? No. He is my religion. That would shock him. To please him I could almost make believe to think as he does. To be separated in anything from him seems terrible."

She was facing a hard question, made the more difficult by pure ignorance. Since childhood she had been in her uncle's care. He had his own very peculiar views, and the delight in opposition which is fed by self-esteem and accounts in some degree for the ways and opinions of men who in the conduct of life depart radically from the common-sense standards of the world at large. His theories found a fair field in Constance. She was never to be punished; reasoning would do everything. How could a child accept a creed? She must be kept with a neutral mind. She had never been allowed to set foot in a church. When she grew up she might choose for herself. It shocked the elder sister, who, until the death of an aunt with whom she lived, saw Constance rarely, as they were separated by a hundred miles. When later she herself was left without a home, she gladly accepted her uncle's invitation to live with them.

The new abode was far more luxurious than the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

one she had lost upon her aunt's death. It was also very different. As time ran on, and she became more familiar with what she felt to be a rather singular household, she had an eager desire to help her young sister to escape from what seemed to Susan a bondage of the spirit. She became watchful and observant of her uncle and Constance, and saw, with something like dismay, the completeness of her sister's isolation from all knowledge of that which seemed to her an essential part of the higher life. She was by temperament and sense of duty made unwilling to accept a neutral attitude; a growing affection added a strong motive, and she was resolute not to go on endlessly without protest. Some feeble attempts to approach the subject on which the elder sister felt so deeply were met by Constance either with indifference or mild amusement, as a thing long since disposed of, or as beneath the consideration of the larger mind. Rather than by persistence risk the loss of a growing affection, Susan ceased to speak of that which she held with such reverent faith, and could only pray that time and circumstances would afford more prosperous opportunities. With her uncle she was still less fortunate, but as he at least rested content with the situation he had created, she felt forced at last to secure for herself an opportunity to make the protest to which she felt driven by motives which left no escape possible.

He had soon become accustomed to use her for many of the little tasks which Constance disliked. She was seated with her uncle in his library after

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

breakfast, engaged in cutting the leaves of a report on the census. He was minutely noting in his diary the state of the barometer and such reflections of his own as he considered worth preserving, and as to this he was generous.

He was not too busy to observe that, true to the habit of the born reader, she was now and then caught by some fact of interest, and ceased using the paper-cutter.

"Ah," she exclaimed, laughing, "the census of this State embraces three millions of women—poor Mr. Census."

"Yes, yes," he returned, "quite remarkable,—an old joke, I believe. But I wish you would finish. I need the book. Constance has been trained to do one thing at a time." The niece thus characterized had declined the task, and gone out to sail.

"I shall finish it, sir, in a few minutes."

There was again silence, until at last she said: "The method of securing the number of people in the different religious sects seems to me quite absurd—just listen, Uncle Rufus."

"I have no interest in it. It ought to be left out. The multitudinous opinions of irrelevant minds are disgraceful to the human intelligence. Negation is the proper attitude. Constance represents it to my satisfaction."

Susan's chance had come. She laid the book down and said earnestly: "You must pardon me if I say that I think you are wrong."

"Well, I am always ready to hear honest opinions,—go on."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Do not you think that to leave a young girl without any sense of relation to God must result in her never acquiring any when grown up?"

"No, I do not. I have my views. When she is a woman and mature, she will choose."

"But will she? She will have no interest in the matter."

"Well, what then? Suppose that she never has."

Susan was shocked; but after a moment replied: "Well, why not let her choose her morals? Why insist on her being, as a child, truthful, and charitable? Why insist on good manners? Let her choose her morals and her manners when she is what you call mature."

"Nonsense; you are sophistical, and you are too clever not to know it."

Susan was well enough aware of the difficulty in defending her statement, but she was too vexed to be logical, and said: "You have taken away from a young life one of the most imperative motives to be all that a woman ought to be."

"I think I am a better judge of that than you. I have never missed what you call religion, nor will Constance. I have my views, and I insist that you are not to bother the girl with your superstitions."

"I am sorry, uncle, but I can make no promise."

"I suppose not. You are as obstinate in your folly as I am resolute in my common sense."

"That is fine," murmured Susan, as she returned to her work, making him no reply, and inclined for the time to abandon a useless purpose. Presently she laid the book beside him, saying:

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Is there anything else?"

"No, nothing."

She left him and went out to the company of the flowers and the wholesomeness of a perfect day, troubled that she had made no impression, and asking herself if, after all, her argument was sophistical.

As she sat looking at the white sail of Constance's cat-boat, rocking over an unquiet sea, she began to sum up her slowly acquired knowledge of the younger woman.

Yes, she was intelligent,—clever, accomplished, as Susan was not; an admirable musician, singularly ignorant of the great literature, but, like her uncle, unusually well informed on the history of her country. How she had come to have political opinions the reverse of her uncle's puzzled Susan. It might be that she too loved to be in opposition, but certainly she held to her views with such passion as he was incapable of. And surely the girl was beautiful. As yet Susan could go no further in her interested analysis. Yes, she had the virtues of her caste, and great capacity for affection.

The woman concerning whom it was thus needful to digress went back to her letter.

"We will put this question aside for the time. You will let me try to help you. Your uncle made me understand that his affairs would suffer by delay, and now that I am clear in mind I see no cause to prevent us from being married whenever you can set a time. No time will be too soon for me. I have

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

been alone in the world these many years. All that friendship could give in the army and at home I have had, but neither love of mother nor of sister, nor of any other woman has been mine. You have it all—the all that might have been others is yours, to-day and always."

Again she paused, with the thought that to take him away even from his friends gave her a sense of such completeness of possession as filled her with joy. The rest of what he wrote was as delightful. She put the letter in her bosom and felt it move with her breathing; now and again she took it out and kissed it.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

III

A MONTH had gone by. A savage north-east wind was rocking the pines and hurling a thunderous surf on the rock-guarded coast. It was the third of March, the night before the day set for the marriage. Their uncle having as usual gone to bed early, the two sisters sat alone by a bright wood fire in the sitting-room they shared.

Susan rose and went to the window. "What a wild night!" she said, as the rain, wind driven, crashed against the panes, and the casement rattled. "The gardener said this afternoon a ship had gone ashore on Carlton's Reef. I hope no lives were lost."

"Yes, Uncle Rufus told me of it, and was gracious enough to observe that going to sea was like getting married—a very uncertain business."

Susan, as she returned to the fire, remarked: "He has an unequaled capacity for saying unpleasant things, but I really believe that he does not mean to be malicious. The trouble is, he values the product of his own mind too highly to be willing to suppress any of it. I might have had the fancy that the ocean and marriage are uncertain. I should not have thought it fit or worth while to say so."

"I do not see, Susan, how George has stood it for

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

this last month. What with Uncle Rufus's endless indirectness and perpetual indecision, I cannot wonder that George is puzzled to understand what he wants. I shall be more than glad to have done with it, and get half a continent between us and uncle."

"You will never be done with it while he lives," returned Susan; "and you may be pretty sure that he will some day appear at St. Ann and still further bother George."

"Well, George is as obstinate as—I ought to say more resolute than—Uncle Rufus."

"George asked me," said Susan, "how uncle had been so fortunate in his affairs. I told him what you of course know, that uncle's fortune was largely inherited, and that as the mills in which most of it was invested are managed by wiser men, and he is almost morbidly cautious, it is easy to see how he became rich. Those lands in and about St. Ann were one of his father's ventures. They have been the source of constant trouble. I suspect that General Averill could not agree to do as uncle desired, and that when he gave up no one else would accept the agency."

No sooner had she spoken than she knew that she had been unwise. Constance rose with a quick movement, and turning to her sister, said:

"Uncle said nothing like that to me or to George. Do you mean that he is using George because he could get no one else? I shall go and ask him if he has dared to do that." As she spoke she moved quickly to the door. Susan was just in time.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Stop, dear," she said; "I have no authority for what I said."

"Then you should not have spoken. You make me unhappy—and now, to-night of all nights. If your suspicion be correct, it is a thing I will not stand. Let me go."

"No." Susan set her back to the door. "Listen, dear. Uncle is asleep."

"I do not care. He must wake up."

"But you must care; and if I have been foolish or imprudent, it is too late for you to act wildly on a mere fancy of mine. Forget it, dear, and be sure that no matter what may be uncle's little schemes, George Trescot will succeed where others have failed."

The tall girl, still flushed, angry, and only half convinced, moved away and stood beside the fire, silent for a moment. Then, as Susan took her hand, she said:

"You are right; but, indeed, if he has put George in a false position I shall never forgive him. I shall not tell George."

"I should not, dear. Sit down. It is really of no moment, but I was as indiscreetly anxious in George's interest as you can be. Let us drop it. This is our last talk. What a mad storm, Conny!"

"Yes. Listen to the wind."

"But you love storms, dear."

"Yes, but not to-night. Oh, not to-night!"

"I hope you will have sunshine to-morrow."

"Oh, sister, I do hope so."

"It does not look like it, Conny; but there is

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

sunshine enough in George Trescot. No one could help liking him; I am half in love with him myself."

Constance laughed. "I can't have that. I want him all to myself."

"That you will not have," said Susan, quietly. "I am so glad that you concluded to be married in church."

"He wanted it, and I really did not care."

"But you will some day, dear. You cannot live with that man year after year and fail to feel the value of the influences which guide and guard his life—and, dear, it was not your fault. I think it was cruel, wicked."

Constance looked up. "Do you think he is really —I mean because of that—better than I am? Oh, I mean—you know what I mean."

"I think you know, dear," said Susan, "or ought to know. He has had a life of trial, you one of ease. Both of you are what nature and the chances of life have made you. I think you were unfairly dealt with. Before I came, and ever since, uncle has had his way."

"Yes, I know; but, truly, Susan, I am neither religious nor non-religious; I am open-minded."

"Are you, my dear sister? Has not your open-mindedness left you with the door of the mind very hard to open wide? Time will show. You have never yet found yourself; you have simply the conventional morals and opinions of our own social world. How they will serve you in days of strain and trouble God alone knows."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"I think you are severe, Susan. I suppose I shall laugh or cry, and grieve or be merry, like others."

"You are not like others. You are very unlike others."

"Am I not?"

"No; you are too natural."

"Too natural. Upon my word, Susan, you are quite too enigmatical for my powers of comprehension."

"Well, dear, we won't talk any more. I did not want to trouble you. And how am I to do without you?"

"Oh, you must come to see us after a while, when we are settled."

"Oh, shall I not? Now to bed, to bed, dear, for a beauty sleep."

She kissed her, and Constance went away. The elder woman remained long in thought by the fire, reflecting upon her own imprudent frankness. The younger lay awake for a time, wondering a little what Susan meant by calling her too natural. She awoke early to hear the surf and the constant rain, and the wail of the wind among the pines.

TRESCOT had never been his former vigorous self since he was wounded, and now, a resolute doctor insisting upon a long holiday, five happy weeks went by, much to the betterment of his health and looks. As they got out of the train at St. Ann early in April, on a Saturday afternoon, a gentleman approached them, and in the soft Southern tongue said:

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Mrs. Trescot, I believe. I am General Averill. Allow me to make you welcome to St. Ann."

As Trescot gave him his left hand he added in a cordial way:

"Have you met with an accident? Nothing very bad, I hope." He seemed really distressed. "And in your honeymoon, too."

"You are very kind," said Trescot. "I am afraid that you are in a way responsible; it was a Confederate bullet."

"Oh, indeed? It is too late for apologies, but not for regret. So you were a soldier. Well, I am glad of that. It is not the men who fought who are making mischief now. My carriage is here. This way, madam. Here, boy," to an aged black, and he gave some directions concerning their baggage.

"But we are going to the hotel," said Trescot. "I wrote and arranged for rooms."

The general laughed. "You are going to your own house, sir. My wife has been busy there, or she would have met Mrs. Trescot."

"But we have no house," said Constance.

"A little surprise, madam—as I understand, a wedding-gift from Mr. Hood. Mrs. Averill wrote and wished to be allowed to put it in order. Then Miss Hood came to St. Ann. Your uncle and I are old friends, as you know; and now that I see you, Mrs. Trescot, it is more than a pleasure—it is a privilege—to have been thus allowed to be of use. Ah! here is the carriage. Permit me."

Trescot could only express formal thanks, and

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

they chatted as they drove through the old Creole settlement, with its ill-kept gardens and new wooden houses.

Trescot was much amazed by the uncle's sudden and secret liberality. They had been five weeks away from home, and except that Susan had written, soon after they left, that St. Ann would surprise them, they had been unprepared for what now they heard.

Unable, for the time, to discuss matters, they drove on for a half-mile through the dust of the main street; and when a little way out of the fast-growing southwestern town the general said, "This is what we call Raeburn's addition." Where the road began to slope to the broad river a too sanguine speculator had put up a half-dozen scattered cottages.

"This is your home, Mrs. Trescot. No, I shall leave you to enjoy it alone. Mrs. Averill has gone away, and hopes you will be pleased. You will find supper ready in an hour."

They stood a moment on the roadside. A neat old black woman in a gay bandana head-kerchief stood at the open door; the general, hat in hand, kind, genial, courteous, a little profuse in talk. The two young people thanked him, and they were left alone.

Constance had misgivings as to what she might expect in this new home. She said nothing of the feeling she had that she should have been consulted as to the furniture. But much of what was needed had been chosen by Susan, and some simple but

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

refined taste had presided over the rest. As she looked about her, she cried: "Oh, George, when I heard I was afraid; but it is really so very pretty and so simple; and was it not considerate to leave us alone? And was n't it like Susan just to go away and leave us to ourselves, and Mrs. Averill too?"

"You do not yet know the best of these Southern people, Constance. It will be both pleasant and desirable that you and I learn to like them. I am sure you will. Imagine the kindness of it, and the trouble!"

They went from room to room in the little house, looking out on the roses already in bloom, the grass slopes, and the river beyond. At last they found their way into the dining-room, and then into an apartment where were shelves and a businesslike table; but here the cases sent on by Trescot and Constance had been left unopened. Again husband and wife recognized the feeling which had left their personal belongings untouched.

One of the servants, an old woman once a slave of the Averills, conducted Constance over the kitchen, and up-stairs and down again, and was delighted when, after supper, the cooking was praised.

Then, as the shadows came, and they sat on the back porch among clustering Cherokee roses, she brought him a match, and as his pipe glowed or darkened they talked of the new life before them; she recognizing with fresh happiness the man's gain in health and vigor; he, at moments, in thought with certain reasonable fears. Would this distin-

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

guished-looking woman, with her music, her social ties, her unchecked expenditures, her familiar Boston circle—would she be contented here in this simpler life? Would every one be as kind as Mrs. Averill? He became more and more silent as they sat in the twilight. She, too, had her less distinct doubts, but heretofore they had said little of the life which lay before them. Now she spoke, touching his brown hair as he sat on the step below her. She was strangely intuitive as concerned George Trescot.

"I know what you are thinking of, my dear, dear George."

"Oh! What, love?"

"You are wondering whether I shall be satisfied here in this new life amid the people you fought and I hated."

"I was; but you will not hate them. I never did."

"And I shall not if they are good to you."

"Oh, whether or not; and you won't miss the ease of home, the varied life, your carriage and riding-horse?"

"I—I have you."

"But you will not have me always as you have had for these happy weeks."

"But you will be always thinking of me."

"Even that may not be possible. I sometimes fancy it would have been better—"

"No, no; we did wisely, and love is my only answer."

"Then, once and for all let us put away the past, and accept our new life with thankfulness."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Yes. Ah, letters! Thank you," she said to the maid. "Let us go in, George, and read them." As they sat down, she cried: "Gracious! oh, do listen to this, George. It is from uncle."

"My dear Constance:

"Major-General Averill will give you the title-deeds of the house. It will, I hope, make you less discontented, for you will have to economize as you never did here. I trust also that my generosity will be an inducement to that obstinate young man to give the fullest attention to my affairs.

"Susan will, no doubt, tell you that she made me give you the house; but her religion is too vague a thing to have taught her accuracy. What she calls faith, I am happy to say I am without; it is too vague for intellectual assimilation.

"Yours affectionately,

"Rufus Hood."

"Of which has he none—faith or intellectual assimilation?" laughed Trescot. "Upon my word, Constance, what about the blind belief we call love? No one knows everything of any one. The rest we call trust, faith; and without the mystery of the unknowable in man, woman, and God, the half of the charm of life and love were gone."

She did not answer him directly, but said: "Uncle Rufus is plain enough, and I know you, and you me."

"No, not altogether; what you would do or be in certain contingencies of this changeful life, I do not know."

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Am I not simple?"

"You? No, no," he laughed. "But what does Susan say?"

She read:

"DEAR CONNY:

"As soon as you were engaged I set to work to make Uncle Rufus behave decently. He is not mean or ungenerous, but you were to be punished for preferring George to him, and to have a narrow income as a reminder of your iniquity. We had it about and about. He enjoyed the row and, as usual, backed down. I made him groan when the bills came in; but he had to pay, and now he tells every one about the pleasure he had in surprising you with the house. I send a few books of reference for George—the cyclopedia he wanted, and a few other books."

She said nothing of what further she had done.

Constance looked up. "But I meant to give you that cyclopedia myself. I told her so."

She had a childlike disappointment because of having been thus anticipated. He saw and understood.

"But I want far more—the new biographical dictionary, and how many other books I dare not tell you. To-morrow we shall see when we unpack the boxes. What else is there in your sister's letter?"

"Nothing of moment. She wishes to know if the house, *our* house—is n't that delightful—needs any other furniture."

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"I should think not," said Trescot, faintly jealous of the liberality which had provided what in time he had hoped to give. He said, however: "I confess, dear, to being very glad that you are to be so pleasantly nested. I feared a little the long stay at an inn or in lodgings, where you would have all manner of unavoidable contacts."

"Yes," she said, "that would have been dreadful. To have been able all one's life to choose or avoid, to say 'At home' or not, and then to be obliged to meet, all the time, the chance acquaintances of a boarding-house! I did not expect to have a house for a year at least."

George Trescot reflected anew upon the sacrifices she had made, and on how less than little she knew of what she was saved by Susan's persistency and self-sacrifice.

"We owe Susan a great debt," he said; "and I am as grateful as a man ought to be; but I wish I had been able to do all this for you myself. I have been so anxious that you should be satisfied."

Constance slipped down on to the step beside him, cast an arm around him, and laid her head on his shoulder. "You need not have been afraid, George. Life can ask nothing of me, large or small, which I would not give or be or do for you." The voice became low and measured as she went on. "I could beg, or do anything. You will see how I shall help you. I shall make all these St. Ann people our friends—oh, whether I like them or not; but, George, I am scared sometimes when I think of how all other love has shrunk to nothing, as if it had all

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

gone to make up one great love for you. If any one—man or woman—loves you, I shall be jealous; if any one does not, I shall hate him. Oh, I am a fine fool of love! I am half jealous of the company you find in your pipe."

He said, "Are you, indeed?"

"Yes, I am, really. Oh, you may laugh, but I am."

The stress of passion in her words was broken by this half-humorous reflection, and a little to the man's relief, even if he hardly knew it. The quality of his affection was governed by temperament, and, never reaching the instinctive freedom of her passion, was nobler, in that it looked forward to being always the true lover, and also the friend who guides and counsels; for already he saw that both guidance and counsel might be needed. He smiled as he kissed her.

"Well, shall I give up my friend of many camp-fires, of sad days, of long night-rides?"

"What a pretty defense! No, indeed; I like it because it can comfort and cannot love."

She rose as she spoke, and standing before him, threw up her hands with a gesture of emphatic abandonment and cried: "Oh, George, I am so happy! Come, let us walk in the garden. Is n't it little?—but do look at the roses."

He went with her, and they talked more quietly of the kindness of the general and his wife; of their own plans, and of his work. To his surprise, she said no word of Susan. At last he said, "It is early, but you must be tired."

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Oh, I am never tired; but I have to unpack, and what the colored women can do I have yet to learn."

"To-morrow will be Sunday, Constance."

"I am going to church with you. You will have to find the places for me in your prayer-book; but I am going because—because you are going."

"Thank you! You are very good to me, my love! Good night."

She left him, and he lighted his pipe, and for an hour moved about in thought.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

IV

AS they went up the slight ascent of West Street toward the Episcopal church, Constance said to her husband: "Since we left home you have gone to church alone. I mean that you shall never do that again. But, George, do you know that this will be the first time I have ever been present at a church service?"

"It will interest you," he said, realizing with regret how complete had been the denial of the highest opportunities to the woman he loved. Careful to show no surprise, he went on to speak of the service, and of how it had been formed and molded, until, arriving at the church, they sat down near to the door. After church they slipped away, unnoticed, except casually by General Averill. On the way homeward, Constance was silent for a time, and seeming to her husband thus inclined, he made no effort to disturb her mood.

Presently, however, she began to speak of the impression this amazing novelty of a great ritual had left with her. The congregation had been large and very devoted. She confessed to interest and something like awe—a certain wonder at it, a trained disbelief in its verities. She spoke with care, and he, on his side, listened without criticism. Certainly

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

to her it was so strange that he found it hard to put himself in her attitude of mind, and preferred, with the patience which was part of his character, to do no more than wait for such better chances as time might bring.

The music she found good and simple. Caught by its charm, her full soprano rose in the hymns he knew so well, and added to the satisfaction he felt when she expressed her surprise at the refined faces she saw about her. He explained that the older settlers had been Virginians, and many of them gentlefolk. She was sure she would like them; and the elderly woman she saw as they came out must be Mrs. Averill. She smiled at them as the general raised his hat—a handsome couple. There was even a kind of distinction in the old-fashioned gowns and bonnets.

"I think they were all curious about us," she added.

"There may be other reasons," he laughed, "for looking at you, my dear. I sometimes enjoy that privilege myself."

Sunday passed quietly in their new home, and they fully recognized the thoughtful kindness which left them thus undisturbed. In the afternoon they decided to see the little city and their neighborhood. They were about a half-mile from the court-house green, beyond which, on an upper rise, were a dozen houses, not very well cared for, but set pleasantly among trees and well-tended gardens. On the level land above the river bluff were the straggling houses and shops which, in their fresh shingles and paint,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

gave evidence here and there of the new material growth which had begun since the war. Below the bluff, on the shore of the great curve of the turbid river, were warehouses, cotton-presses, and rudely built piers where steamers lay. Much of the nearer water-front was occupied, and as they stood Trescot pointed out where, at the bend of the river, lay the long stretch of frontage which was in litigation, and was claimed by Mr. Hood. Descending to the water's edge, they found a rough road which passed through low growths and the rude clearings of the squatters who had refused to vacate their lands. Beyond, the road wound along the river bank, and over the land which Trescot had pointed out as valuable on account of the deep water in front of it.

When on their homeward way they came near to their own house, the path so narrowed in front of an ill-kept garden that Trescot fell behind. A gentleman in gray clothes, and wearing an undress army-cap with Confederate buttons, moved aside into the road to make room for Mrs. Trescot to pass. He lifted his cap and showed some attentive surprise as Trescot touched his straw hat and they passed on.

"By George!" he murmured, "who can that be? What a beautiful woman!" He stared after her well-clad figure, noting the ease and grace of her walk, and then the slighter form of the man. Seeing them turn in at their own gate, he said aloud: "That must be old Hood's new agent. He is very young."

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Meanwhile Mrs. Trescot said: "George, did you notice that gentleman?"

"Yes."

"He looks like an Indian chief, and very unlike the people I saw to-day. He is handsome, but how dark he is!"

"Oh, there is some old Creole blood here—of French descent, very likely—a fine, big man, probably a Confederate soldier."

THE Monday morning of their first week at St. Ann found them after breakfast on the back porch of their new home. The man was gravely happy; the young wife a little excited as they began to consider what they were to do on this the first morning of their new life. Past the little garden, the grassy slopes and green maize-fields were bounded below by a fringe of oaks, beyond which the brown current of the mighty river swept onward in its march to the gulf. The Cherokee rose was all about them in red clusters, the humming-birds were busy on quivering wing, and the warmth and moisture of the Southland—April already—invited to repose and idleness.

"It is very pleasant here," said Trescot, "but there will be many things to do, and I suppose one must begin." As he spoke he rose. The temptations to linger were very great. But at last he compromised with sense of duty by resolving, as many a man has done, to go as soon as his pipe had gone out. Nevertheless he economically nursed the failing pipe. As he lingered Constance asked:

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"What have you to do, George? I mean at once."

"Oh, many things. I must see the general and learn all I can of your uncle's affairs. There are unpaid rents, mortgages in arrears, taxes, and what not,—a sad tangle, I fear. Then, if I am to appear in the courts I must qualify by an examination to practise in this State."

She was at once eager to know why.

"I could appear," he returned, "in a United States court, but not before local tribunals. But that is all simple." And, in fact, after a fortnight he was enabled thus to qualify for practice at St. Ann.

When at last the pipe refused to furnish excuses for delay, he left his wife to her new household duties. She found herself amply occupied, and while her husband spent a busy morning with Averill, she went about the house with the two black servants, arranging her husband's books, and giving to the rooms that look of having been lived in, which is one of the mysterious accomplishments of certain women. Trescot heard snatches of song as he came in at midday, to meet her eager questions, and to note with satisfaction what she had done to change the house into a home.

"How hard you must have worked!" he said, seeing all of his many books in order.

"I did not unpack your law books, George."

"No, you were right; I must have them with me. I am to have a bit of an office next to the general's. I find that he has come into some property of late, and wants to give up part of his work—I mean

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

chiefly your uncle's affairs. There are, I fancy, other reasons. He was somewhat reticent. From what I gathered I fear that your uncle's business is going to be difficult; and he has been so hard to deal with that people here say it is impossible to settle anything. However, we shall see. I suspect that the general has been indisposed to push matters, and that your uncle has been unyieldingly opposed to any compromises."

"Very likely," said Constance; "but if the general had been firm uncle would have given way. He always does. But for that he should be here. He is always most obstinate in his letters."

"That is hardly consoling," said Trescot. "And oh, Constance, I would not hang my sword here. Put it in your room."

"I should like that," she said, at once understanding him. "I see that you do not wear your Loyal Legion button—I suppose we are to forget?"

"Yes, and forgive, as they, too, will in time. I lost a brother and many friends in the war, but, dear, I learn that our old general lost his two sons,—his only children, Constance,—his all. They are childless."

"Oh, George! That mother! She was here today, and such kindness I never could have hoped for. Now I understand her

"'sad eyes
Wherein no expectation lies.'

Who said that, George? I forget. I wondered what gave her that look; I noticed it when I first

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

saw her. I think Susan quoted it once. And, my dear George, she heard me singing in that absurd way in church, and would I join the choir, and they would expect us to use their pew, and there are sewing-circles, and what not. I had to say several noes; I did it sweetly, and said I must think about it. Imagine me in a sewing-circle!"

"I am sure you said just the right thing. As for the general, he, too, was more than kind. He begged me to be careful about war talk. People were still sensitive. And I ought to be made aware that your uncle, whom no one here has seen, is detested, and supposed to hinder the growth of the town by refusals to sell or improve. He wants me to see people socially, and it seems there is a little club which he thinks I had better join. I said it would be as well to wait. I do not want any needless expenses—even the smallest."

"Oh, I shall manage, George. I have talked to Mrs. Averill. We shall have enough. It might be better to join the club."

"I shall think of it," he said. "But my best club is elsewhere."

"Yes; but you would see these people there. Only, I shall be jealous of the hours I do not own."

"You own all my hours, Constance. And, by the way, talking of jealousy, the dark gentleman you admired yesterday has some Indian and some Creole blood. I guessed well. But his name, I take it, is English—Greyhurst. He is the lawyer who has been engaged in the suit to dispossess your uncle of the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

water-front. I hear, also, that he is pretty deeply and personally interested in lands along the water."

She determined to know more of this man when she saw the general. She had some vague feeling that here was a man who would be hostile; and she had not liked the smiling face with the dark, attentive eyes.

The next day being Tuesday, while Trescot was again busy with the old general, Constance dressed with care and set out to visit his wife. The sun was warm, and as she walked along the road to the town she was full of plans for a social campaign which should be of use to the man she loved. There was enough to interest in the negro huts and children, the wayside flowers, the straggling town, its blooming gardens, and the houses which war and its attendant poverty had left long uncared for. As she gained the main street, she began to see that she was the object of notice; but to this she was not unaccustomed, and did not find it unpleasing. Her looks and her power to be agreeable were a part of George's capital. She noted the men on horseback —now and then a man in a battle-worn suit of Confederate gray; twice she observed the "C. S." branded on the flanks of mules—and felt the nearness of that vast struggle which had left the South wrecked and impoverished.

A question or two brought her to the general's house. It stood on a rise to the eastward and above the town—an ample brick dwelling of more pretension than those near by. The garden around it on all sides was admirably cared for, but the fence

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

was broken and the gate lay on the ground. The hall door was open, but she looked in vain for a bell, and used the brass knocker without effect. At last she entered, and saw through the back door of the hall the gray head of Mrs. Averill in the garden, moving between tall rows of Osage orange. For a moment some inbred regard for conventional usages stayed the visitor's steps, and then, seeing no other way, she walked through the house and down the garden path.

Mrs. Averill turned, setting down a basket of roses, and with both hands welcomed her visitor.

"Come in," she said; "come in out of the sun."

Her looks approved the proudly carried head, the rich red of the cheeks, the large blue eyes, and that indescribable air of caste and good-breeding which the day before, as they came out of church, had been at once and easily recognized.

Constance, too, saw that here was an older woman of her own world—a woman, as she wrote to Susan, who seemed suited to the old-fashioned garden and its familiar flowers—a delicately provincial dame, with an assured way of saying gently very positive things, and with hands and feet thin, delicate, and marvelously small.

The Southland tongue as Mrs. Averill used it, with its half-lost *r*'s and a certain precision in her choice of words, delighted the critical taste of Constance.

As they entered the large parlor, Mrs. Averill said: "Sit down, my dear; it is very warm. I must find my servants—nowadays they are never to be found. You shall have a glass of lemonade."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Constance said she should be glad to have it, and was left alone. She looked after her hostess with increasing satisfaction. Mrs. Averill was exquisitely neat, from the little cap, over abundant gray hair, and wide white kerchief to the white gown and the long garden gloves. The room offered an unpleasing contrast. The wall-paper was worn and spotted, the seats of the chairs showed signs of wear. Some of them were of Colonial respectability, some with the black hair-cloth covers of a day of worse taste. The matting was much mended, and a thin-legged piano, not too free from dust, suggested indifference, or, more probably, the housekeeping troubles of which as yet Constance was happily ignorant.

On the walls were two or three portraits in the thin manner of the elder Peale, and an admirable Copley of a husband and wife. Over the fireplace hung a pair of crossed swords suspended by broad black ribbons. Below were ill-colored photographs of two young officers in Confederate uniform. "Poor mother!" said Constance. Over all, caught up in folds, hung a torn battle-flag of the rebel States, and below it the flag of a Maine regiment, also tattered and battle-scarred, evidently a captured trophy.

For a moment the young faces of the dead sons troubled her, and then the two flags sent a rush of angry blood to her face—a return of the passionate feelings the great war had so often caused her. Here before her was the record of battle and of death, of the pathos and the courage and endurance of a struggle which should have left, and did leave for the best of those who fought and won, only ad-

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

miration, pity, and magnanimity. Constance had little of that greatness of soul which is the noblest factor in the large gospel of forgiveness. The personal feeling which entered so largely into her life during the war was supported by an unusually intelligent knowledge of our history, and kept angrily alive by her uncle's attitude when, rejoicing over Confederate victories, he thus kept her irritated and on edge throughout the years of that sad struggle—ever glorious for those who won and those who lost.

Hearing Mrs. Averill's step at the doorway, she turned quickly from the mantel to meet her, composing her face with the habitual ease of a caste accustomed to hide emotion. The little old lady, so gray, so worn, became of a sudden grave.

"Sit down here beside me," she said. "You were looking at the flags and—the faces of my dead. Of course it troubled you—I saw that—the flags and—the rest. I won't have you excuse yourself; it was natural. One boy fell dead on the flag he had captured; they sent it home to me. The other, a prisoner, died in the North, after having been cared for as we could not have cared for him in those terrible days. You see, I am explaining to you because we are to be friends; but some day, when you are a mother, you—"

"Please don't," said Constance, taking her thin hand. Both women's eyes were full of tears.

For a moment they were silent. Then Constance said, "How did you live through it?"

"God helped me, as some day he may need to help you. It is less hard to forgive a nation than if it

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

had been a man, and John Averill was spared to sorrow with me. Some day I shall see my boys. There, my dear, we must not talk of it any more; but we are very sore in the South, and the state of things in the Carolinas makes it impossible to forget defeat in the face of continual humiliation."

"I know," said Constance. "It is shameful, and no one—not even you—can feel it more than my husband. He tries to put aside the war. He never speaks of it, although his crippled arm is a sad reminder. He will not let me hang his sword where it can be seen in—" She paused, feeling that she had made one of those social slips which even the best-trained do not altogether escape. She went on quickly: "We want to make friends with the people here. You will tell us how. You know it is to be our home."

"My dear, you will easily make friends; but sometimes you will have to be forbearing and keep silent. It may be hard, but for those who won it should not be." Constance thought of George, and assented. "Mr. Trescot will find it less easy; but his having been in your army will help him with all but the women; we are unreasonably venomous—a few of us, not all."

"Well, that will save me some jealousies," said Constance, smiling.

"Ah, here is the lemonade," said her hostess. "I was picking these flowers for you; will you care to carry the basket, or shall I send them? I was about to call again this afternoon. I thought I might help you. It must all be so strange to you."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Constance, thanking her, rose, saying: "You will let me come again?"

"Oh, often, I hope,—often."

She walked away through the sun and down the dusty street, carrying the roses. The men looked after her erect figure, the women made comments on gown and bonnet.

She was lost to her surroundings, thinking of the flags and the dead boys, and wondering at the peace of soul which had come to the childless mother. She could not comprehend it, and thought that such a calamity falling on herself would have left her with an undying hatred. Presently, feeling the heat, she was reminded that she had promised not to tempt its consequences through the summer months. The idea of leaving George troubled her, and she quickened her pace in order the sooner to see him.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

V

THE Trescots by degrees settled into a routine of life which, while it left Constance alone in the mornings, usually permitted of their being together the rest of the day, and in the evening.

A few friends or relatives of the Averills called upon them; but these visits were evidently formal or made to oblige the general's wife, and they were left much alone.

If Trescot soon felt the social atmosphere to be cold, he excused it, and trusted to time and chance for better things. Except that Constance saw in their reception difficulties for her husband, she had small regret on account of the conditions which relieved her from being constantly on guard, and made her secure of a larger share of the society she preferred to all other.

The women she met and tried to find pleasant were chiefly interested in their households, in the difficulties caused by the emancipation of the slaves, and in the awkward subject of the misgovernment of the South. There were but few subjects which were free from peril, and such intellectual sympathies as Constance possessed awakened little interest among overburdened women whom many forms of

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

disaster had left with too constant thought of the morrow.

What help and advice Constance required she found in the Averill house, where now and then they ate a meal and were at all times welcome guests. The older woman discovered, to her husband's joy, a novel pleasure in Constance Trescot's music; and it became common for the old general and his wife to appear of an evening, and while the men smoked their pipes on the porch the piano, Susan's wedding-gift, was opened, and song after song, or the tones of the greater music, soothed and pleased the pale little lady who sat a silent listener, or pleaded for "just one more, my dear."

Then, too, Susan sent the new books and the magazines, and these were passed on to the Averills, who formed, by degrees, an increasing attachment to the young man and his wife, and became thoughtfully busy in the difficult task of bringing them into cordial relations with what was best in the town. As far as was possible to a woman like Constance, the regard was returned. She had all her life had a singular incapacity for generous division or sharing of her affection. Once it had been wholly Susan's. It was now George Trescot's, and this predisposition was reinforced by a passion deep, jealous, and exacting. The man so long lonely sunned himself in the warmth of all that an intelligent and beautiful woman brought to help and glorify his life, with no mind to criticize the quality of the woman's love.

And so the latter days of April passed, and the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

warmth of May and June came, while, with the all-sufficient company of books, music, and talk, time moved onward. In the evening he read to her or told her of his work, and she of what she had seen and done. Of the keen sense he had of hostility in the very air of the place he said but little. She was but too anxiously aware of it, and said as little.

On an evening early in June the general came in, and leaving Constance alone with her open piano, the two men went out on to the porch.

"I came in, Mr. Trescot, because I want to talk of the squatters. I heard to-day that there may be trouble. I wish my friend Mr. Hood were more reasonable."

"He is not, and never will be, and there is nothing to do but to serve the usual notices on them."

"It has already excited a good deal of feeling. The squatters will resist, or at least two of them will. The fact is that I have been unable to make up my mind in the past to turn out three old soldiers of my own regiment. One of these is a lame man, crippled in the war. Cannot you wait until the suit for the water-front has been tried?"

"It is low down on the docket, and it will be October before it can come up. But what would be gained by that—by waiting?"

The general was unprepared to reply. He was merely inclined, like most old men, to put off the disagreeable, having that faith in the helpfulness of time which is a part of the business creed of the aged.

He said at last that he was of opinion that Grey-

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

hurst was stirring them up. The eviction of a lot of old soldiers, one of them eighteen years on the ground, father and son, would further prejudice an already hostile public opinion, and make it the harder to secure a just verdict in regard to the question of title to the lands beyond them on the river.

"What I disliked to do about these men, Mr. Trescot," he said, "will be dangerous for you to attempt. I think it right to tell you that. Their land is not valuable for steamboat landings, and for any other purpose it is useless, because the squatters never can sell it; but they won't give up, and are utterly indifferent to law, and quite well aware that the community is on their side. Best let them alone just now. Wait a little."

"No, I must go on."

"It will be at the risk of your life."

He could have said nothing better fitted to add vigor to Trescot's resolute intention. He replied, laughing: "I presume that we have both been shot at pretty often."

"But this is different, Trescot."

"Yes, I know that. But am I to believe, general, that an opponent lawyer deliberately advises an assassination?"

"Oh, no, I beg you not to misunderstand me; I spoke rather too positively. Greyhurst would never do that; and, upon my word, he never did anything deliberate in his life. The man is impulsive and quick to resent, and very imprudent in talk. He is in debt, and if he can win this suit he will prob-

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ably receive a large contingent fee. These men, especially that fellow named Coffin, have been to see him,—I pointed the man out to you on the street yesterday. Mr. Greyhurst has told them that you surely mean to evict them. I do not think he can have gone further."

"If he said only that I mean to evict, that is true. I would tell them that myself. Was there anything else?"

"No; but there are ways of saying things. It was none of his business. They did not consult him as a lawyer, and he was merely making mischief. These mountain-men who are now squatted on the flats come to me like children. They were, some of them, in my company when I first went out, and they look to me for protection. It is a damned disagreeable business, sir; and none the easier for John Greyhurst's interference and Mr. Hood's stupid obstinacy."

"I presume, general, that you really could not make up your mind to act on Mr. Hood's determination to evict."

"I must confess, Mr. Trescot, that I would not. I think I said as much. The legal right no one can dispute; but I could not come down on these poor devils with the law without being looked upon as an oppressor, and, what is worse just now, as the instrument of a Northern man. Even for me, my dear Trescot, to evict mercilessly men who have lived there five, ten, even eighteen years unmolested—even for me, sir, there might be risk."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"And for me," queried Trescot, smiling, "much more risk?"

"That is my belief, sir. I do not think Mr. Hood has ever taken in the situation."

"No; it is his land. The men must go. For him it is simple,—but for me and you there are the human ties to land men have cleared and plowed, the sense of the home, and all manner of associations. Mr. Hood prides himself on being exact in business. Out of it he is generous, even lavish. He has not imagination enough to be largely charitable. I never saw a man like him."

"Then, sir," said the old general, grimly humorous, "he had better lavish on you a good revolver or a first-class rifle. What I could not or would not do, you will surely risk your life if you try to do. I may as well say to you that my chief reason for giving up Hood's agency was his infernal obstinacy about these squatters. Did he tell you that I had said so, and that no reputable gentleman in St. Ann would accept the position?"

"No, he did not," returned Trescot, somewhat surprised at this revelation of Mr. Hood's methods.

"Well, no one here would take it on his terms, and, as I see it, he has placed you in what is a position of real danger. Even now, before you have moved legally, these men are sure they will be turned out. They are not men to wait, and the whole town is on their side. Think it over. A very little money would settle the business."

"You are no doubt right; but what can I do? I must give up the agency or act on Mr. Hood's or-

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ders. I came here to do so, and I mean to move in the matter. How can I hope to convince him if you failed?"

The general laid a hand on Trescot's knee, and said very earnestly:

"Wait until I write to him again. I have known lives lost in this country for far less things, and if you are set on taking legal action I beg that you will go about armed."

Trescot laughed. "Why, my dear general, I am half crippled, and it would be simply useless. Do you all carry revolvers?"

"I do not; but if I were bent on following out Mr. Hood's orders I most assuredly should do so, and, too, I should be rather careful how I went out at night."

Trescot thanked him and said: "You will do nothing with Hood; but could not we do something with these men if you and I saw them together?"

"It is worth trying. I shall go with you with pleasure. Before I leave let me say a word more about that land suit. It was first brought the year after the big flood in sixty-three. Who suggested to the Baptiste people to dispute Hood's title I do not know. Two lawyers have had it; one died and one threw up the case. Then it came into Greyhurst's hands, and has hung on. I had too slight evidence in Mr. Hood's favor to want to try it, and Greyhurst evidently took it with the hope of forcing a compromise. I can't think he believes their claim just."

"Well, I shall urge it, and we can make him come

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

to time. It is very much like a sort of legally disguised blackmail. What kind of man is he? I ought to know. You said he was impulsive."

"Yes, it is as well that you should. A rather unusual person. He has had a wild life, but is not uncultivated. He certainly has a high opinion of John Greyhurst, and the most damned insecure temper I ever met with. Halloa! Talk of him another time. Listen to that!"

There was a low, mellow roll of murmurous thunder. The general rose. "We are in for one of our big thunder-storms. It will cool the air. Say good-by to Mrs. Trescot. I must hurry." He went away around the house in haste.

As Trescot stood looking at the darkening sky a blinding splendor of violet light made bright the distant river and the march of dark masses of cloud across the star-lighted sky. "Come out," he called to his wife. "The general has gone, Constance; come out on the porch."

She rejoiced in a great storm, as she did in any display of the might of nature, such as the wild sea drama of a gale on her own rock-bound coast. She came out at once and they walked into the garden. The herald wind of the coming storm shook the house and brought a cool breath of freshness.

"How delicious the air is, George, and how magnificent, how glorious!"

Swift javelins of light flashed incessant, with crashes of thunder, and soon the sudden downfall of rain drove them to the shelter of the porch.

"No, I can't go in, George. I never before saw

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

such a storm. I love it. I should like to be once in an earthquake."

"Not I," he returned, laughing. "I saw one in New Mexico. I prefer to face again the worst fire I was ever under. I got out of a window on to a shed, and the house went down behind me."

Again a vast flare of lightning made every drop of rain in the air a moment's jewel.

"The rain blows in here; get your rain-cloak," he said. "Wait, I shall get it—or better to go in."

"Oh, no; I must see it. You could not find the cloak."

She left him where he stood enjoying the storm. As the quick-coming flashes lighted the hill slope he saw a man moving, very slowly as it seemed to him for one storm-caught, some thirty feet beyond the garden fence. He called out, "Halloa! come in here."

Surprised to receive no reply, he called again. A moment after, amid still more vivid light, Trescot was aware of a flash lower down on the hillside, and of the sound, once familiar, of a rifle-shot. The broken glass of the window just to the left jangled. As the instant lightning flared, Trescot, seeing the man moving down the hill, ran through the garden and out of the gate in hot pursuit, thinking quickly as he caught sight of him at moments, "It was the old-fashioned rifle; he can't reload. By George! he is lame; I shall have him."

He was not twenty feet away when Trescot's foot caught in a tangle of briers and he fell. He rolled over on his lame shoulder, and in some pain got up

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

to find he had lost his man in the wood at the foot of the hill. He stood still a moment in the rain, and then walked back up the rise of ground.

His wife was on the porch. "Where have you been? What was that, George? I heard glass break."

Concealment was impossible. "I am all right. A man shot at me; one of those squatters, I suppose. I saw him plainly; he was lame. Come in, dear. I should have had him in a moment if I had not fallen."

"You are not hurt?" she asked anxiously.

"No; but come in. The shot went quite wide and broke the glass. Do not mention it to those blacks. It must appear to have been an accident while I was closing the shutters."

When they were in the lighted room and the house shut up, he saw how pale she was. He put his arm around her. "Constance, love," he said, "this will not occur again." He was by no means sure. "Do not be worried; I am to see these men with Averill in a day or two. We shall settle with them in some way."

"But what will you do? and how can I live here with the chance of having you brought home to me dead? Oh, this barbarous country! And I made you come—and my uncle, I shall never forgive him."

At last he persuaded her to go to bed. She passed a restless night, almost without sleep—perhaps for the first time in her life of vigorous health.

When, next day, she insisted on his not leaving

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

her, he said at last: "We shall walk to the Averills', and I shall call for you after I have gone over some of the old French deeds. I shall not be long." Her very visible anxiety troubled him, and the more because it was reasonable. She was not easily answered.

"But what will you do, George?" she went on. "Can't you arrest him? Something must be done, and without delay. I shall write to uncle."

"No, you must not do that; it would be of no use. Before he could reply I shall have consulted with the general and done something." He had no clear idea of what he should do, except that he still meant to visit the squatters with Averill. He said as much.

"But I cannot sit still and wait," she returned. "I simply cannot."

Such reassurance as he was able to give quite failed to satisfy her. She went slowly up-stairs, step by step, deep in thought, and then, making a sudden decision, dressed herself with unusual care and came down to join him. Although she commonly talked much when with her husband, as they walked on she barely answered him, and finally left him at Mrs. Averill's gate.

During the night, as Constance lay awake, she had reproached herself again and again for having urged her husband to accept her uncle's offer. What now he would do had not satisfied her. As she walked by his side she kept on perplexing herself about a situation in which, as a woman, she felt herself powerless. After an uneasy half-hour with Mrs. Averill, to whom she said nothing of what had hap-

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

pened, she took her leave, and with a sudden and well-defined resolution in her mind went down the steep road from the bluff, and leaving the busy cotton-marts and -presses behind her, followed the river bank. The path led through scrubby undergrowth on to rudely cultivated clearings. Here were two well-built log cabins. In front of the nearer one a man well beyond middle age was seated on a stump engaged in oiling the lock of a rifle. As she came upon him he stood up in wonder at the loveliness of the wandering stranger.

She said: "Will you kindly give me a drink of water, and may I sit down? I am tired."

"Would you come in, ma'am, out of the sun?"

She followed him, and took the chair he offered, and the tin cup.

"What good water you have! Thank you."

As he moved she observed his lameness, and sharply observant, saw about her no evidence of a woman's care. This was the man she sought.

"Yes, ma'am; it 's a spring below the bluff."

"What a handsome bearskin! Did you shoot him?"

"Yes; last winter, up in the Virginia hills."

"Are you a good shot?"

"I reckon I am."

"But you missed my husband last night."

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, "who told you that?"

"He saw you. It is useless to deny it, and the fact is, Mr.—what is your name?"

"I 'm Tom Coffin, and I just want—"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Wait a little. If you had killed him you would have killed your best friend."

"Well, now, that 's pretty good. My friend! 'T ain't a matter to talk over with women. He 's got to let me alone. My father, that 's dead, and me, we have been here eighteen years, and now comes your man and says git out."

"Is the land so good?"

"No, it is n't; but it 's mine, and it 's all I have."

"Suppose my husband were to offer to do one of two things?"

"Well," he said, "he ain't offered nothing."

"If he wins our suit about the bounds of the land below you on the river, and would give you a deed for five acres on the bluff,—good land, too,—would you take it in exchange for what does not belong to you?"

"I would; but he has n't got it. Mr. Greyhurst says he won't git it."

Then the man became of a sudden suspicious.

"Look here, ma'am; I ain't used to dealing with ladies. Did Mr. Trescot send you? He need n't have been afraid."

"Afraid!" she said proudly, rising as she spoke. "George Trescot, my husband, afraid! It was not he who ran last night. Who was it ran from an unarmed man?"

Then in a moment she was back in a well-played part.

"Mr. Coffin, I came here just because I am a woman and a young wife. My husband does not know, or I never should have been allowed to come.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

I want to make sure that you will not kill an unarmed, crippled man. I can't stand by and wait to see what will happen. I will not go until you promise me that you will agree, if we win, to exchange your clearing for the better land below; or if you will not do that, tell me now what you will take to move if we—I mean my uncle—does not win his suit."

Coffin weakened. This gracious woman with her soft voice and eyes full of tears captured the man.

"Who 's going to make sure of the pay?"

"I shall pay. Come, now, let us be friends. I am really on your side. You can't fight the law. Some day you will have to go and get nothing for all you have done. Come, now, what will you take?"

"Would you say three hundred, ma'am?"

"No; four hundred," she said quickly. It was the half of her little personal savings.

"I 'll take it," he said.

She put out her hand. He took it shyly, as she said:

"Are you busy all day?"

"No, I 'm not."

"Could you come up in the afternoons and help me in my garden, for three dollars a week?"

"I will if your man wants me; he won't want me."

"Yes, he will. You should have come at first and talked to him. You are both old soldiers; and, Mr. Coffin, you must be a Northern man—you have a good old New England name."

"No; my father was. He came from Massachusetts." Then he was silent.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

She saw that he was still unsatisfied. "Ah, my own State. Is there anything else? I want it all clear."

"Well, it is n't, and I want to know. The fact is, ma'am, Mr. Greyhurst told me you folks would n't do anything, but just drive me out. Father and I have been here eighteen years, and my sister has the cabin just below here. Her man 's sick, and there 's two children, and go was the word, just like we were dogs."

"If Mr. Greyhurst told you that, he said what was not true. He knew nothing about it, or what Mr. Trescot would do. My husband was coming here with General Averill to-morrow."

"Was he?—he and my old captain?"

"Yes, and you come like a coward and shoot at an unarmed man, who is ready to help you."

"O Lord, drop that! I was just fooled by that man Greyhurst. I 'll get even with him. I was thinking—me and another man—that we 'd go and see Mr. Trescot. Greyhurst he said it was no good. You can tell your husband, if he 's minded not to be hard on us, I can help him about those bounds down below. I won't say no more till we talk—me and him."

Constance, surprised, returned: "I 'll leave you to settle that with him, but don't go and what you call get even with Mr. Greyhurst." She saw mischief in this. "Keep it all to yourself; do not let him know that you are on our side. Promise me; you know I trust you."

"I can hold my tongue, ma'am. Darn that lawyer chap!"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Well," she said, "here is your first week's wages."

"No; I don't take money I have n't earned."

"Yes, you must," and she left the notes in his great rough hand.

"Of course Mr. Greyhurst will see you in my garden."

"Well, it ain't none of his business. Guess I 'll be the fooler this time. When will I come? I don't half like it."

"But you will. Come to-day at six. It is too late for work, but I want Mr. Trescot to talk to you."

"Well, I 'll come. I 've said it, and I 'll come."

"Good-by."

Well pleased, she went away across the clearing and up the bluff, determined that her uncle should agree to pay, or that she herself must do so. "I have bought a man and saved a man's life," she said joyously. She was glad, elate, and at ease.

She had been so long with Coffin that her husband had gone home. She hurried her steps and entered the house just after him. A great joy was in her heart. She would tell him in this way—no, it should be in that way. The adventure delighted her, and the feeling that she had been able to help her husband and make him secure.

"I missed you," he said, as they sat down in the little library; "what made you so late?"

"I went for a walk. I went down to the river and then through the woods to where your squatters live."

"Constance, you must not do that again. God

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

knows what might happen among those lawless men. This fellow Coffin—I know him now—is one of the worst of them. Promise me, love."

"I can—I do. But I saw your lame scoundrel."

"Saw him! You saw him!"

"Yes." And she poured out the whole story, while he listened amazed, and not too well pleased. She saw the gravity of his look, the slight frown as she finished.

"Was I wrong, George?" she said anxiously.

He hesitated and then replied:

"Yes; this is not a woman's business. You have pledged me without thought to what your uncle will never agree to do; and the money—where is it to come from?"

"I have it, George, and more than enough. I will not,—oh, I cannot let this state of things go on. My uncle must give you freedom to act as seems best. It is he who put you in peril. I won't stand it."

"And still, Constance, this must not occur again. It was thoughtless and unwise."

"Thoughtless! Oh, George," she cried, with a sudden passion of tears, "it was anything but thoughtless. I scarcely closed my eyes last night. I have been in an agony of apprehension. I could not wait to see what would happen. If I had been a man, and loved you as no man can love—oh, I should have killed him! Do you think this kind of thing will go on? And I brought you here, I made you come, I bribed you with my love, myself. Now I can sleep, you are safe. I have found an enemy

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

and made him a friend. Oh, this horrible town! Let us go. Let us give up."

She went on with broken phrases and disconnected words, and was soothed only when, at last, as she lay sobbing on his breast, he said: "Try, dear, to control yourself; we must talk this over quietly. Now, wait a little; do not speak."

By degrees she steadied herself, and at last, wiping her eyes, said: "There, it is over; but I must finish, and I won't be so weak again. I do think you must see, George, that this was not with me a matter of choice. I had to do it. You are the one thing in life for me. There is no other. Oh, you have your work and your enlarging future, your religion. I have *you*. That is my sole excuse. To-morrow I would do it again. That is all. And if I have done what my love made me do, at least you must see that out of it comes some good."

He had been amazed and annoyed by her abrupt interference, but as she talked he quieted himself, and while in wonder at the abandonment of a passion so all-possessing, began to feel that her pledges must be kept to the letter. He said so, to her joy, and added, as he kissed her tears away: "I am sorry you went, but I love you the more for the courage that carried you through."

She smiled. "Ah, George, it was the courage of selfishness; it was the courage of love. And I am forgiven? I want you to say it."

"Hush! We shall never need the word—never. And so I am to see that scamp to-day at six. He must be a pretty cool fellow." The humor of it

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

struck him. "Do you expect to be present?" he asked, laughing. "To be shot at overnight by a man who proposes to attend to your garden the day after is something delightfully unusual."

There was no laugh in it for Constance. The man was back again in his every-day calm. The woman remained excited, restless, and even exhausted by the strain of the morning and the talk with her husband. Her mind was still on the matter.

"You must write to Uncle Rufus and simply say you mean to have your way."

"I will think it over. Probably I shall do so, but you, in the meantime, must not do what I alone ought to do."

"No," she returned, somewhat meekly; "I am out of the business now. But, George, don't tell that man he is a scoundrel. He is the captive of my bow and spear."

"No, I think I shall manage it; but I hardly think I can apologize for not being hit."

"Please don't," she said, and went up to her room, glad then, and again after lunch, to lie down and rest with a mind at ease. The rather grim humor of the situation did not strike her as it would have done her sister.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

VI

A LITTLE before six Coffin stood hesitating at the gate in front of the house. He, too, had some reasonable sense of embarrassment. As Trescot walked across the front room he saw him, and, understanding, went out at once, and said, "Come in; glad to see you." Coffin advanced, with his halting gait, until they met at the door. "No, Mr. Trescot; I don't go in till I 've said my word. I was told you were a hard man and meant to kick me out. I was bred up in the Tennessee mountains, and I 've seen men shot for less things than that. I 've been on that ground, me and father, eighteen years; and I just want to say right here that, believing what that cuss told me, I was justified."

"I see," said Trescot; "but were you not a little hasty?"

"I don't say I might n't of been, and I 'm not a man that crawls easy; but I 'm that damn glad to-day I did n't git you that if I was a prayin' cuss I 'd down on my knees and thank the Lord. That there woman of yours, she 's a wonder." Then Trescot understood, and liked it.

"Mr. Coffin," he said, "I have a Confederate's bullet in my shoulder, and bear no malice. I cer-

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

tainly have none for the many who missed me. I want to say that I stand by my wife's bargain."

"Then I 'll come in."

The two men shook hands and passed into the library. When they were seated, Trescot said: "Do you want it now in black and white?"

"No; if I trust a man, I trust him. I 've got something to say to you about those lands, and just you listen. You 've got a good title to the land I 'm on; we all know that. A little money will clear off the other squatters if I give up and go. I can settle them. I understand from General Averill that it 's the big deep-water front below that 's the trouble."

"Yes, that is so. You will do me a great service if you can help us."

"I can. The bounds were set by blazing trees. My father helped run that line before ever we settled here. The blazed trees on the west was washed away nigh ten years ago, clean gone down the river. Now, about the ones back on the bluff that mark the bound to eastward—"

Trescot broke in: "No one can find the blazed trees where they ought to be. There are no end of big ones, but no blaze on any of them."

"Well, there 's ways of looking. Fact is, those blazes is growed over. Why, it 's near on to forty years. The blazes leave a hollow like. The bark grows over and hides them. I can find the trees; they 're oaks. Cut them down and saw them up, and you have your blaze plain as day. One is a walnut."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"If you can do that when I 'm ready, Mr. Coffin, you will get a bigger farm than my wife promised; but, meanwhile, you must hold your tongue, and tell no one, and not quarrel with Greyhurst. Did you tell him of this?"

"No, I did n't. It was n't any concern of mine, and I don't like him none too well. I 'm your man, sir; and if you don't mind a poor chap like me saying it, I 'm her man, too. I never saw no woman like her."

"Nor I," said Trescot, pleasantly. "And now she wants you here to-morrow, about four o'clock, for her garden work."

"I 'll come."

Trescot knew the habits of the place too well to fail to say:

"Have a little bourbon, Mr. Coffin?"

"Don't mind if I do."

"Your health," said Trescot.

"And yours, too."

His host laughed.

"I see," said Coffin, grinning; "I was n't wishing you much health last night; but if you can afford to lay that to one side, I guess I can. And I don't want you to think I can't shoot better than that. It was the lightning bothered me."

Much amused at this odd form of vanity, Trescot made a light reply, laughed, and the woodsman went away, leaving him doubly at ease, and astonished at the luck which had brought him the evidence so long desired.

When it became plain to Constance that she had

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

not only turned a foe into a friend, but had also been the means of adding valuably to the proof needed to insure her uncle's title, she was overjoyed, and began to make more sure the adhesion of her garden helper.

She explained to him with patience the work she required, helped with such luxuries as were needed by the brother-in-law who was slowly dying, and soon bound to her a man who had been unlucky, and had at last fallen into a state of despondency and become reckless and vindictive.

One warm evening early in July, Trescot said to her, "I shall become jealous of the general, Constance. He says you are capturing all these old rebels."

She laughed gaily. "Yes, men are easy game, but not their womankind. But I did have my little triumph this afternoon. I walked in quite by chance on their society meeting. It was at Mrs. Averill's —something for the orphans of Confederate soldiers. They were pretty cool, and I was all sweetness At last I got up and apologized for my intrusion, and said I must go. But then the dear old lady asked me if I would not sing for them while they sewed. One or two of them were civil enough to say they would be glad to hear me. I sat down at that queer old piano, and what do you think I did?"

"Heaven knows!"

"You could never guess."

"I admit it as hopeless."

"I sang 'Dixie' for them. Oh, George, I sang

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

it as they never, never heard it before. They quit sewing and just sat and listened. When I turned half round on the stool some of them were crying. One old lady came and kissed me, and they crowded around the piano thanking me. Then another, a shy little old maid, said, 'Would you mind playing "My Maryland"?' I had to say I did not know it—and then, George, I had an inspiration. I turned to the piano, and broke out into that really fine rebel song you like, and I sang—oh, I sang it well—'Stonewall Jackson's Way.' That time they really gave up. They clapped and praised me, and were so surprised when I said you liked it.

"As I finished I saw the old general standing in the doorway. He, too, thanked me with his fine, old-mannered way; and, George, I felt what an awful hypocrite I was."

"Oh, but you are not. You were not. Think what these people have suffered, and what now have they left, except splendid memories and a song? Think of their deaths, their poverty, the humiliation of defeat! I have shared that feeling with a well-whipped army. Imagine it for a whole people."

"I know—I know; but they hate us. I have heard enough to know what is said of you here. Coffin told me."

"Oh, hang the fellow! We are doing better than I ever expected to do. If your uncle had any sense we should have no trouble at all. I wrote to him last night after you went to bed."

"And you were positive?"

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"I was; but this is my second letter to the same effect, and the first was unanswered."

"How like Uncle Rufus! That reminds me I have a letter from Susan. You must hear it. There is a message for you; I will get it."

While she was gone he reflected, not altogether pleasantly, upon the strong feeling of dislike with which Constance still regarded the people among whom they had chosen to live. He did not comprehend that it rested very largely on her belief that they were hostile to him. Feeling as he supposed her to feel, he did not quite like that for him or in his interest she should do as she had done. In his own intercourse with the men he met he had been simple and natural; and as most of them had been soldiers, they met on a ground of common self-respect, avoiding political discussions. That some of them, and all who had not fought, were still embittered, he knew too well, and knowing, was careful, kindly, and magnanimous.

Susan's letter was laughingly discussed as they sat in the library.

"DEAR CONNY:

"Come soon and restore decent peace to this household. Imagine my combination of mirth and satisfaction when uncle told me that General Averill had written him he had seen you in church last Sunday and thought you looking well. He was in one of his mild rages. You can imagine a box-turtle angry. I advised him to write to you and complain. He went away declaring he would alter

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

his will. As he has made three wills in a year, this need not alarm you. If there be a disease of indecision, he has it.

"About George's last letter I really had to fight. 'There!' he said; 'read that. He wants me to pay squatters to leave; he thinks the suit about my title ought to be compromised; he talks about the bad feeling in the town because I will not spend money or improve my property.'

"Then, as our old cook says, I just spoke up. I said George was right, and that uncle ought to want to help his unlucky rebel friends who had lost everything. This quite upset him. 'Rebels! I presume you to mean Confederates.' I was advised to study the constitutional history of the United States of America. You know his full phrases. I advised him to read what George Washington wrote about State feeling. I had not the most foggy idea what G. W. wrote, but it stopped him and he went off again on my good brother-in-law. He declared that George's want of tact, and your opinions, and the general's weak ways, and George's despotic management had been responsible for making him, Rufus Hood, unpopular in that strange town of which you write such amusing accounts. He had received the 'St. Ann Herald' with an article on absentee owners. Oh, my dear Conny, he was at his loveliest worst. You were to blame, and if you had not gone to church you would not have lost the little common sense you had, and would have conciliated these people. Of course you had been exasperating, and then it was George, George, etc., etc. At last

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

I told him he was like Aunt Nancy, who, as you may recall, fell ill of a plum-cake she had made, and never could settle in her mind whether it was the raisins, the currants, or the citrons. Uncle Rufus has a long-buried fraction of a talent for seeing a joke, and, dear, he really laughed till he looked five years younger, and until he remembered that his mirth was suicidal, and began to go over it all again. At last I said, 'But you must do something.' He said he would think it over and write to George, and perhaps he had better go to St. Ann when you return. He had been misunderstood. Some one named Greyhurst (is n't he one of the claimants?) had written to him about a compromise."

"What a muddle!" said George. "Confound Greyhurst! Imagine Mr. Hood in an attitude of conciliation! Well, what else?"

She read on:

"I really pity George Trescot. If I were he, I should do what seems best, and take the chance of a back-down, or of my uncle yielding, as he is pretty sure to do. Come soon, Conny; you must need our seaside freshening. The roses say come, and so do I.

"Yours always,
"SUSAN HOOD."

"Constance," said Trescot, "Susan is right; soon or late, I must have my way or give up a hopeless task."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Well, I have always said so; but don't be in a hurry, George. I feel as if now it will be all easy. The squatters you can manage with Coffin's help. You cannot try the land case until October. Then in August, when you go home with me, together we can bring Uncle Rufus to some decent sense of what is needed."

"I hate to tell you, Constance; but I cannot go East this summer. The general and Mrs. Averill are going to New York on the third of August and will take care of you. He has asked me to remain in charge of his own work, and on the tenth to go to New Orleans about a claim for damaged cotton sent here last year. It is a great compliment and involves the sharing of a large fee if I can settle the matter. I am sorry."

"Oh, George, how can I leave you?"

"I know, dear; I hesitated to tell you, but it is really a turning-point in my career. If I win I shall oblige several people of importance and make friends; and, Constance, I am sure that we need them, or that I do. Right or wrong, the way people feel has much to do with the settlement of land cases. Juries are human, and here, I fancy, they are far too readily affected by public opinion. This is why I welcome every chance of making friends."

"I see; but I don't like it. Could not you join us later?"

"No. On my return I must give myself up entirely to the land case. The general will, of course, act as my senior, but he looks to me to collect evidence. The man who surveyed the land is dead,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

and I have to go to Indiana to see his widow and secure her evidence and his books. There is really no more time than I require, and you would not wish me to fail."

"I see perfectly," she said. "I must go and you must stay. I am feeling this moist heat, and you are, too."

"No, even my wicked arm is less ill behaved. I really think the heat suits it, and I never was better."

Her intelligence was convinced, but not her heart. And with some people it requires a good deal of head to keep the heart from revolt. That for every reason it was best for him to remain was the one thing that aided her to submit. Before she finally yielded, the increasing heat of July made excuses difficult, and she began to feel, for the first time in her life, a sense of languor which she had to acknowledge as a cry of the body for her native air.

She had made up her mind that the summer plans, which for a time would separate them, were such as to serve her husband's interests. Had they been able to do without what his profession began to bring in, her real desire would have been to cut off his work entirely, and to leave him no relations to life except those of a love which on her side she felt to be boundlessly sufficient. She had been trained to certain habits which passed for duties; but being without any ultimate beliefs by which to test her actions when called upon by the unusual, the instincts of a too natural creature were apt to be seen in what she did or felt. She would

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

possibly have denied even to herself that she had no interests in life which did not consider George Trescot, and would have smiled at the idea that her jealousy of whatever took him from her side might in the end injure the man she loved, and would in time become selfishly exacting.

As Trescot expected to act only as junior counsel, he had, of course, many consultations with Averill. On one of these occasions the general said to him: "When I leave, you may have occasion to see and talk with Greyhurst. He tells me that he has called on you."

"Yes, but we were out. I returned his visit, but I have seen very little of him. I suppose we shall try the case in October."

"Yes, unless he contrives to put it off as he has done before. I think he is doubtful—as, in fact, he ought to be. Is he waiting for some offer from us? I think that likely."

"He will not get it; but he would if I had my way."

"Well, he will call on you about it. He said as much. Be a little careful. He is like some of the rest of the bar, a trifle indifferent as to the right or the wrong of his client's case; but he did not suggest this suit, and he is a better fellow outside of his profession than in it."

"Do you think he believes that Mr. Hood does not own that land?"

"Certainly not; but he is willing to make Mr. Hood pay for what the river did when it ate away the Baptiste water-frontage. It is not a highly

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

moral attitude, and yet there is something to be said for it."

"Yes, as to that I entirely agree with you," said Trescot. "Considering what we know and he does not, he ought to lose the suit. If Mr. Hood were reasonable, I should like to put all our evidence before Greyhurst, and then offer some form of compromise. As it is, we must try it, and take the risk of failure."

"Yes; but I do not feel quite so secure as you do. Well, that is all. You will take care of our case this summer, while I am away, and you will, of course, write to me if you need advice. And, my dear fellow, be a little careful of our noon sun, and of the evening coolness."

"Thanks, general. I have every reason to want both health and life."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

VII

TRESCOT felt more than was convenient Constance's too steady call upon his time during the three weeks which passed before she left him. With both will and wish to gratify her, it was not always easy or even possible. The general had become attached to him, won by his considerate ways and the charm of a kindliness interpreted by manners which were winning and gracious. He was industrious, and possessed of that form of legal intellect which reaches conclusions with a swiftness due to unusual rapidity of thought, but which to slower minds appears to have the quality of intuition. The older lawyer, who reasoned slowly, began more and more to admire and to trust him, and spoke of the possibility of a partnership in the near future.

As the days went by, Trescot, seeing his wife's languor and her increasing sense of disappointment at his absence during the hours of business, gave her all the time he could spare from wearisome study of the old French titles, and the other work in which the general asked his aid, and for which he was fairly paid.

Whatever absence the daylight hours exacted, the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

evening belonged to Constance, and he resisted every increasing temptation to carry home for completion the unfinished work of the day, unless it was of a nature to interest her. While to the tired man at evening her music was restful, and to the mind that which change of climate may be to the body, he also enjoyed when with her an ever widening satisfaction in awakening to larger appreciation a nature long shut up within too limited intellectual bounds. Under the thoughtful guidance of a man whom war and a keen sense of responsibility had helped to mature, the mind of the woman was slowly unfolding. On one of these cherished evenings, shortly before her departure, she was perched on the arm of Trescot's chair and sharing the delightful fun of "Milkanwatha," that best of all parodies. They were laughing, merry as two children, when the black maid appeared and said there was a gentleman in the parlor waiting to see Mr. Trescot.

"This is too bad, George," said Constance; "can we never be left alone?"

In fact, they were rarely disturbed in the evening; but of this he did not remind her, and said merely: "Take to your piano, dear; I shall not be long." She smiled, and he went into the parlor, where he found Greyhurst moving about or pausing to look at the engravings hung on the walls.

"Good evening," he said, as Trescot welcomed him. "It is pleasant to hear people with a talent for laughter."

"Oh, you heard us? We laugh a good deal in this house. Sit down. I am glad to see you. Or

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

will you come into the library and see Mrs. Trescot?"

"With pleasure; but first may I ask for a few minutes' talk over the business of those lands? The general is soon going away and I thought it well to ask you to consider the matter again."

"Certainly; if you want to say anything I shall be most ready to hear. We have already discussed it pretty fully. You must, of course, be aware that I am not acting altogether as I should desire to do, but am more or less hampered by the owner's instructions." As he looked at his guest there was something about him which put Trescot suspiciously on guard. He added: "But pray go on," and said to himself, "The man is anxious."

Greyhurst said: "I want first to say to you once more that the case you propose to try in October you will lose. Even a man like Mr. Hood may be brought to reason. The deeds were lost in the war. There are no records; the office was burned, and you have to fall back on surveys of which there is no evidence except brief memoranda, if even these are to be had."

Trescot knew well the value of silence. He made no sign of dissent, and, as he meant to try the case, had no idea of enlightening a man who might profit by what Trescot, the general, and Coffin alone knew.

"There is another consideration. You have not been here long, Mr. Trescot, and perhaps are not fully aware of the dangerous hostility provoked by Mr. Hood's foreclosures, and the cruelty of his

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

intention to drive out those old Confederate soldiers from their homes."

And still Trescot held his tongue; but, as Greyhurst seemed to pause for a reply, he said:

"Well, Mr. Greyhurst, what else?"

The persistent, entirely courteous listening began to embarrass the older man, who was some ten years the senior of his host. He hesitated a moment, and then, setting his large, dark eyes on Trescot, went on:

"You will pardon me, I am sure, if I repeat that you are a stranger to our ways and feelings, and that you are a young man put by Mr. Hood in a false position."

And still the cooler man failed to speak.

"I have already said to the general that we are open to settle this matter by some equitable division of the lands at the bend. I now come to you, and, sir, I represent the public sentiment of this community. These lands are now useless, and will be till this matter is settled."

"Mr. Greyhurst," said Trescot, "I am greatly obliged by your friendly visit, and am sorry to be unable to meet you on a common ground. My client refuses to compromise or to surrender any part of his land on deep water at the bend. The courts must decide, and we are instructed to try the case in October."

"You will be sure to lose it."

"So much the better for you," laughed Trescot. "If winning be so certain, why seek for a compromise? The foreclosures are the only remedy for

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

years of unpaid interest or of absolutely illegal possession. As, however, you are naturally interested in these poor people, I have no hesitation in telling you that some of the mortgages have been amicably arranged, and that time will be given to others. I hope to have no trouble with the squatters.''

He was indisposed to say more.

''Then your man Hood must all of a sudden have become damned amiable.''

''Pardon me,'' said Trescot, rising; ''Mr. Hood is Mrs. Trescot's uncle. Allow me to close the door.'' It had been left on a crack, and the piano had just ceased to be heard. ''One moment,'' he added, as Greyhurst, flushing deeply at the implied reproof, was about to reply. ''One moment. I have listened to you patiently, although I fail to see what the other cases in my charge have to do with the issue we shall try in the fall. I shall, however, again advise my client of your desire to settle our case, and I may say also that if he is willing I shall gladly present to him any offer you may make.''

''Then let him make one.''

''Frankly, Mr. Greyhurst, I do not think he will, nor do I believe that he would accept one. You are an older lawyer than I, and must know that we cannot always make our clients reasonable.''

''Perhaps if he knew the state of feeling here he would understand the gravity of the situation. I am sure that—''

''Excuse me if I interrupt you. Public opinion has nothing to do with the matter; and, as you spoke

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

a little while ago of what I suppose I may call hostility to me, I may add that it will in no way affect the course I shall take."

Greyhurst moved uneasily as he listened, and then said abruptly: "You will find out when you come before a jury of Southern men."

"I shall feel sure they will do what is right, and I am glad to say that, personally, I have met with much kindness in St. Ann, nor do I think political feeling will affect your courts or the course of justice. Let me add that I have not of late been aware of any personal hostility such as you speak of."

"Well, you will see," said Greyhurst; "and soon, too."

"I do not quite understand you."

"Indeed! You will know better when I tell you that you were blackballed last night at the club."

Trescot flushed and returned instantly: "I asked the general not to present my name, and if you or any one presumes to suppose that this annoys me, he is much mistaken, and yet more so if he ventures to believe that it will in any way deter me from doing my duty as a lawyer. I do not see what motive you can possibly have in telling me, unless you really suppose that I am to be moved by fear of—" His voice rose as he spoke, but his speech was suddenly checked by the entrance of Mrs. Trescot.

"Mr. Greyhurst, I believe. Do not let me interrupt you. I came in to get a book. How you men can talk with my piano going I do not understand.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

When you are through, George, perhaps I may have a little visit.''

Greyhurst cooled instantly. He was in the presence of one of the rare women who, for good or ill, attract because of some inexplicable quality of sex. Incapable of analysis, it accounts for divorces and ruined households, even for suicides or murders. It may be faithful to a great passion, and be modified by character and education, and even by religion; but it is felt, whether the woman wishes it or not, and she who has it instinctively knows its power.

As Mrs. Trescot spoke she cast her large blue eyes on the man, and for an instant he was dumb and stood in mute admiration; nor was Trescot sorry for her coming.

''I think we have finished,'' he said, but did not urge Greyhurst to accept the invitation his wife had given.

''I shall hope for the pleasure another time,'' said Greyhurst. He knew that he should like to see her again, and he had said enough to Trescot to make a sudden return to cordiality difficult.

''You won't forget, Mr. Greyhurst.''

He said something pleasant as he stood facing her —a strongly built man of soldierly carriage, dark-skinned, with large, regular features, and the high cheek-bones which told of his remote strain of Indian blood. As he left Trescot at the outer door he turned and said, rather to his host's surprise: ''If I have been abrupt or indiscreet I hope you will pardon me. I sometimes say or do things on

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

the impulse of the moment, and then regret them. You will excuse me."

"Oh, we all do that sort of thing now and then; and as for the club, it is of no moment, although I am sorry you told me. Good-by."

As he went toward the drawing-room he said to himself: "What a strange man! Was he trying to scare me, or was it a game of bluff? And then his apology! Confound the fellow!"

Meanwhile, Greyhurst walked away with as complete dismissal of the lawsuits and all other earthly interests as if he were Adam in the garden alone with the new-born Eve. He was thinking of the woman.

It was the effect she was apt to produce on men, young or old. He felt it, even although it recalled to his mind a woman of quite different type. Then he turned to thought of the suit. "Damn my temper!" he exclaimed. "That confounded Yankee was as cold-blooded as a frog. It has its uses." He felt his defeat.

"Well, Constance," said Trescot, as he reëntered the library, "how much did you hear of that fellow's agreeable talk?"

"A good deal of it—pretty much all."

"I am sorry you heard him. I did not want to be in their club; but it is the civilians, not the soldiers, who are unfriendly, and really it is of no moment."

"None," she said. "But what did the man mean by it all?" And then she added: "But the things

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

he said—oh, George, do you think you are still in any danger here? Since that awful night I cannot get it out of my mind. How am I to go away?"

He comforted her as best he could, not in the least degree sharing her apprehensions.

At last she said: "What do you suppose he wanted?"

"I think, dear, it would be hard to say." He did not choose to admit that it had appeared to him to be an attempt to alarm him. He added that the man had been foolish, and yet was not a fool. "I fancy him to be in debt," he said, "and to depend too anxiously on the issue of this suit."

"I do not like him."

He laughed. "Would you like any one who did not think George Trescot a legal angel?"

"I should not," she cried, and kissed him. "He is very handsome, but he made me uncomfortable."

"Oh, he is quite harmless."

"So is a poor little dead snake on the road, but I jump when I see it."

"Go to bed, Mrs. Eve," he said, laughing.

A moment after she put her charming head through the half-open doorway and cried: "I hate him!"

"Oh, go to bed, you bad child. You don't hate anybody."

"But I do," she murmured, as she went up the stair.

Her weekly letter to Susan went next day. She wrote:

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"DEAR SUSAN:

"In two weeks I shall be at Eastwood, but how I am to live there two months with uncle, and without George, I do not yet see. I am sometimes surprised to recognize how completely he is all of life to me; and then I am glad. I rejoice in my good looks and my voice because they are for him, and because they help him among these strange people who are still sullen and bitter about the war they brought upon us, and about what it cost them. As if we, too, had not had our share! George expects me to be very tender of their feelings, and I am—indeed I am; but when I see George nursing that crippled arm, and evidently in pain of which I am never to speak, I sometimes— But I will say no more to you, my only confessor. When George says that I am to forget and, what I cannot forget, forgive, I can almost do it. Indeed, I go to church because he goes, and sing the hymns—you should hear me. If it would make him more happy I could almost pretend to believe what he believes. It cannot be only a creed which makes him so tender, so entirely true, so thoughtful, and, above all, what I am not, so magnanimous concerning these people. He brings home no stories of his annoyances, but I have heard and seen more than enough to make me cry at times because I urged him to come to this place. He only says: 'Why, all this is natural, and must pass away with time.' But still I feel that we are in a hostile land.

"Knowing what he has to endure, I said to him

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

last week that his religion nowhere orders us to forgive the enemies of those we love. You should have seen his face. I got a proper scolding; and oh, I love him to scold me. Can you understand that?

"Last night we had a visit from a Mr. Greyhurst, who is the lawyer of the people who dispute uncle's land claims. I overheard them talking rather high, and suddenly appeared as peacemaker. The man looked at me and was quiet. It was like a charm; but the way he looked was not quite pleasant. A dark, Spanish-looking person, with overbold eyes, and very handsome, with a strong, uneasy face—a curious contrast to the refinement and intellectual beauty of George, who looked slight and almost frail beside this man's massive figure. Sometimes I am anxious when I look at George and know that he has to remain in this heat. When, in your last letter, you said that I had no resource in me or my beliefs against the sorrows of life, I had a sudden and horrible fear lest you might have been thinking of George, and then I felt it was cruel of you, and as if I never could write to you again; but I ought to have known better. This strained, anxious life is, I suppose, making me morbid, and perhaps something else is having a like effect.

"George has heard from uncle, who either does not or will not realize the state of affairs here among his dear rebels, who hate him, and no wonder. At first I disliked the idea of his coming to St. Ann; but, on the whole, it may be as well. He can be stiff enough in a letter, but not when he is face to face

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

with a resolute man. He will learn a little when he comes.

"Yours always,

"CONSTANCE.

"P. S.—I have been rather depressed of late, but this is largely because of the prospect of leaving George. In truth, we have been making some friends, and just now the town is lovely with flower-gardens.

"C."

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

VIII

MRS. AVERILL had been absent a week, on a visit to friends in the country, before Constance saw her again.

Constance, standing at the gate, watched her for a moment as she moved among her flowers in the front garden. The old lady, turning, smiled a glad welcome for the face on which the joy of youth and love and perfect health were plain to see. "Ah, for shame!" she cried, looking over the box row, "prying at an old lady alone with her flowers. Come in, my dear; I forgive you. If you knew what I was saying to my flowers you would like it; I was really thinking of you. There are flowers which always remind me of certain people. Oh, no; I won't tell you what I was thinking."

"Then," said Constance, gaily, "I shall be equally cruel and not tell you what delightful things were in my mind."

"Let us trust that they were complimentary."

She was so pretty and so sweetly gracious, with her underlying, pathetic expression of abiding sorrow, that Constance felt tempted to say: "What a beautiful old lady you are! I wonder what I shall be like if I live as long." She limited herself to saying: "Yes, they were as—well, as complimentary as you could desire."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Thank you, my dear. That is saying a great deal. I suppose we never outlive our vanity. Come in; it is too hot for you here."

"No, there is shade enough. How is the general?"

"Very well, for him. He is never very strong. Just now he is worried because of what your husband told him of Mr. Greyhurst's visit, and that miserable business of the club. You overheard it, he said. The general blames himself, and, of course, did not mean to say a word about it to Mr. Trescot. He does not think that Mr. Greyhurst did anything to influence the vote."

"Perhaps not; but I don't like and I don't trust that man."

"I do not like him either, my dear. But we do hope that neither of you will think that the old officers here have any other than good-will to your husband. Mr. Greyhurst is a very strange man. He was divorced from his wife, who died eighteen months ago. During the war he put her money into Confederate securities. We have all found them rather insecure"; and she smiled.

"Yes; so I have heard," said Constance.

"At one time he was on General Hill's staff, but he was constantly quarreling, and the general says he was too impulsive and resentful to be a good officer."

"I wish some one else had the case," said Constance.

"Well, my child, no one could quarrel with your husband, and, after all, the general will be the senior counsel."

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Constance bent over and kissed the little old lady, saying: "Thank you; you always comfort me; and then—oh!"

Greyhurst was leaning over the paling fence.

"Good evening," he said. "May I come in? What good luck you have with flowers! I see Mrs. Trescot's every day as I go by. I fancy they grow best for the ladies. I see that you have Coffin working for you. He can hardly know much about flowers."

"Oh, I am teaching him; he wanted work, and I am glad to help him."

"A lazy, worthless vagabond, Mrs. Trescot, I fear; one of the squatters. I am surprised he would work for Mr. Trescot after the way he talks. These squatters are pretty saucy."

"He is my gardener, not Mr. Trescot's; and as yet my husband has made no objection." She was quietly amused at Coffin's diplomacy.

Mrs. Averill, a little puzzled, looked up from the flowers she was pruning.

"Well," returned Greyhurst, "that is a comfortable view of the situation."

"It is very useful," said Mrs. Trescot, "in married life for husband and wife to know how to hold their tongues."

"Quite true, my dear," said Mrs. Averill, still a little in the dark.

"Therefore, when Coffin abuses my husband I shall say: 'Are the geraniums doing well?' 'Best in town, ma'am.' Then I shall say: 'Coffin, I forgive you.'"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Greyhurst was not quite up to the light give and take of mere chat, to which Constance was trained. Mrs. Averill saw in it a tactful effort to reduce a serious question to a harmless level. The man felt himself chaffed, and said: "You will find him out."

"Not in work-hours," she laughed. "Punctuality is my one virtue. That I insist on, even in a husband."

"Will you not come in?" said Mrs. Averill, not liking the man's ill-repressed look of embarrassed annoyance.

"No," he said; "I retreat under fire. I must go. Mrs. Trescot is too sharp for a poor old Confederate; I shall retire before worse comes."

"That was what we did not do in the war, Mr. Greyhurst," said Mrs. Averill, gaily.

"I protest," said Constance, "against considering me as an enemy."

"Oh," he returned, "after all, it is generally the man who retreats. I ask for terms of honorable surrender."

Mrs. Averill said, smiling, "You may march out with colors flying, and here they are," giving him a rose.

"And Mrs. Trescot's?" he asked.

"I never give roses out of other people's gardens, and just now there are none in mine."

He took off his hat, saying: "I am usually too late, or too early. That is the fate of some of us. May I hope to be more fortunate when your roses appear?"

"Perhaps, if you are very, very good," she cried,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

relenting, and disposed against her feelings to send him away in a good humor.

"Thank you," he said, not ill pleased; and setting Mrs. Averill's rose in his buttonhole, left them alone.

"My dear Constance, were you not rather hard on that man?"

"No; he was insolent, and he meant to be; and I know he lied about Coffin. Tom is a man who might kill you, but he would never work for a man and lie about him. Heaven knows what he said to Mr. Greyhurst. He owes him a grudge."

"Yes, my dear; but it is worse than no use to make a man like John Greyhurst angry. It is really a poor kind of triumph. You had better have appeared not to notice what he said."

"I could not help it. The man is unpleasant to me."

"Best not to show it. Come in and let us talk over our plans. Do you want to stop in Washington on your way North?"

As Constance walked homeward she acknowledged to herself that she had been unwise, and knew as by instinct that a very little graciousness to this man would have better served her husband. She smiled, as she went down the dusty street, at her certainty that she could bring the man to her feet like a fawning spaniel. She read with natural readiness the eager eyes of this ungoverned personality. Then she saw in her mind the fine lines of Trescot's face, and thought of the restraint and patience with which he refrained from urging upon her opinions which she felt with intense feeling were their only

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ground of difference. The manners of a man to his wife are a final test of conduct; and again she smiled, as though at some fresh discovery, and the joy of its tender recognition.

She was now a well-known figure in the town. Many persons acknowledged her greeting. She went into two or three shops, helped a little child up some steps, and left with every one a pleasing sense of liberal cheerfulness, and of that charm of manner which made her somewhat startling beauty a contribution to the joys of life.

As she came out of a shop she met Coffin.

"Well," she said, "Tom, how is your brother-in-law?"

"He 's failing, ma'am."

"Is there anything you need for him?"

"Yes, ma'am; I was going to ask you something. He says would you come and read out of the Bible to him? We can't any of us read well."

She hesitated, and then said quickly, "Yes, I will come; but cannot his wife read?"

"Yes; but not like you can; it 's you he wants."

"I will come. Have you seen Mr. Greyhurst lately?"

"Yes; and I reckon I fooled him well."

"You abused my husband," she said merrily.

"Who told you that? I did—I did."

"Mr. Greyhurst."

"Well, he is a fool. He just swallowed it all like them big catfish grabs a bait. Well, you 'll come soon? He ain't going to live long."

"I will come; I shall be there to-morrow."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

As Tom left her, she wondered why she had said she would read to the man. In fact, she had no ready excuse for denying so simple a request.

Not far from her home she was aware of Greyhurst. He met her and turned back, walking beside her.

"Mrs. Trescot," he said quietly, "I was rude to you; I desire to ask your pardon."

"Indeed," she returned sweetly, "we were both, I fear, a little cross."

"Thank you; that is more than a pardon." Pausing a moment, he added gravely: "I have had, madam, a rather sad and disappointing life, and I suppose it has soured me. Are you ever sorry for things you do?"

Constance was less amazed at the odd turn his talk had taken than a man would have been, for men say easily to women things they never could say to those of their own sex.

"Yes, I am sorry every day," she returned.

"I was hasty in what I said to Mr. Trescot the other night. I fear that you overheard us, and I wish now to assure you that I did not blackball him at the club."

"I wonder," thought she, "if that be true." Her temper was rising, but she said coldly: "The whole matter is unimportant—entirely unimportant."

"Not to me, madam, not to me; but Mr. Trescot has a way of being—"

"Stop, Mr. Greyhurst," she said; "you forget yourself. We are going to quarrel again. It seems

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

to me that you have an extraordinary gift of saying disagreeable things."

"That is true. My life is one long story of regrets. I—there is no one I should be less willing to annoy than you."

He turned his dark eyes on her as he spoke, for now they were at her gate, and she had stopped.

"I am sure of that," she said.

Very strange to her was this strong man, big and athletic, with ardent eyes and sudden familiarities, and impulsive speech and childlike regrets.

She gave him her hand, saying good-by, but did not ask him to come in. To her surprise, he bent over it, raised it to his lips and kissed it, and lifting his hat, went on his way.

"Well," she said, "next to Uncle Rufus, that is the most singular man I ever met. I wonder if he is quite sound in mind." She gave a queer little glance at the hand he had kissed. Among the older gentlemen of Creole descent it was not rare to see this pretty usage. But this man she had not seen over a half-dozen times, and it was out of doors. She went in, wisely resolving to say nothing, and much inclined to avoid Greyhurst in future.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

IX

THE increasing heat of the latter days of July, the dust, the dried-up garden, and the mosquitos helped the young wife's faltering will, so that she felt physically convinced that a change was imperative. And there was also another and a powerful motive for care of her health.

She said to her husband next morning at breakfast:

"I have arranged with Mrs. Averill that we leave a week from to-day, on the evening train."

"I am glad it is settled, Constance. I shall be happier when you are breathing the good salt air."

"It had to be, I suppose."

"Yes, it had to be."

She was silent for a moment, and then said:

"George, Thomas Wilson has asked me—it was Coffin who brought the message—if I would go to see him to-day."

"Well, why not? But I do not like you to be in those clearings alone."

"Coffin will be there."

"That will answer, I suppose. What else is there?"

"He wants me to read the Bible to him. His wife cannot read, or reads badly. These people are

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

amazingly uneducated. Why cannot he get a preacher? I was foolish to say yes."

"Well, dear?"

"Surely, George, you must understand me."

He saw her difficulty at once, and said, smiling: "You may trust me always to understand you. You know, dear, my own feeling in regard to freedom of belief and, indeed, of unbelief. You know, too, what I desire and never urge. I see your difficulty, but there is no need for you to pretend anything. He will ask no questions. The Bible is a book—or, rather, many books. We have read much of it together."

It was true. Without any concealed intention on his part, and purely as noble literature, they had read at times, in their evenings alone, much of the great Hebrew poetry, as they had also read much of the best English prose and verse.

"Yes, I know," she returned; "but this is so different, George. What am I to read to a dying man? I went there once. It was horrible—so slovenly and dirty and ill-smelling; and I never before saw a man dying. It was dreadful. It seemed to me so unnatural."

The thought struck him as singular. "That is," he returned, "only because in the ordinary ways of life to see a death is rare for most people. I have seen thousands die. To me, for four years, death was ever near, a sadly common event. It is what may precede death that I dread,—long illness, the loss of competence,—but not death. I hope that, when I die, my twilight may be brief."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Please don't," she said. "But what *am* I to read?"

"Well, then, to settle your mind, dear, read him the fourteenth chapter of John, and take my little Bible with you. I doubt if there be a Bible in the whole settlement."

"Thank you, George."

"Shall I go with you? I should be very glad to go."

"Oh, no, no." She felt that this would have embarrassed her.

"Remember, the fourteenth of John. It is very beautiful. Have you never read it?"

"Never."

The reply shocked him. In spite of what he knew of her life, it also surprised him. For the moment he had been puzzled by her question; but the chapter he named was a favorite of his own, and he would, after all, have been unable to name any other more suitable.

In the afternoon she found Coffin waiting at the foot of the bluff. He walked with her past the busy cotton-presses, and then out of the wood on to the cleared lands with their broken fences and half-burned stumps. "Wait for me here," she said, and went on to Wilson's log cabin. The woman and her children were absent. By the dim light within she saw, as she paused at the door, the broken chairs, the open press with soiled gowns, and the lean chickens picking up the crumbs lying about the dirty floor. The air was heavy with the odors of uncared-for illness. As she approached the rude

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

bed, Wilson said, trying to sit up, "There 's a chair, ma'am. Set down. Not that one; it 's broke."

She took the hot, dry hand, and feeling a keen desire to run away, sat down beside him, saying, as she put her basket on the table, "I brought you some soup. I hope you are better."

"No, ma'am; and I never will be no better. The doctor you sent told my wife I could n't hold out long. She 's awful troubled about the funeral. We talked it over, and I reckon it won't cost much. I told her so. Tom will make the coffin."

She was seeing a new aspect of life—the crude business of death among the poor. It shocked a woman who, in her abounding health and immense vitality, had little more realization of decay and death than has the normal animal.

She murmured softly, "Do not worry; we will take care of all that."

"Thank you," he said; "that 's mighty good of you. I can't talk long; it makes me cough." Then, after a brief pause, he said: "I 've been thinking a heap about things. I ain't been a bad man, but I killed a man in Tennessee. You see, he shot Brother Bill a week before. Seems to me it was—yes, it was Christmas eve, and snowing. I got him comin' out of his barn. Now I want to know. My wife fetched a preacher here. He 's a Methody. He said I 'd got to repent of that man, or I 'd go to hell. I did n't want him any more. I don't repent. If a man was to kill your man, you would n't forgive him, now would you?"

"I would not," she replied.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"I knowed you would say something like that, and it 's a real comfort. The other notion ain't natural."

The woman sat still in thought, while he coughed until he was exhausted. What would George have said? Why did men confess to her? She had been reinforcing a dying man's undying hatred. And yet, how could she lie?

At last he whispered hoarsely: "Sometimes in the night I ain't easy about it. It 's a kind of muddle, life is. You don't ever get things cleared up. Did you fetch the Book? I used to like mother to read the stories in it when I was a little chap. When father was dying she read out of it, and now I 'm going too. Would you read some?"

She opened the Bible where Trescot had left a marker, and read in tones which gathered pathetic sweetness as she went on near to the end of the chapter, when he stopped her. "Seems to me I remember that," he said; "must have heard it once in church up in the hills. What 's that about the Holy Ghost? That 's what bothered me when I was a young fellow. I took religion bad, once; but that about the Holy Ghost used to kind of scare me of nights. What does that mean?"

Constance paused, searching the page for an answer. It was a childlike creature who lay gasping under the soiled sheet, and yet it was a man; and she felt that out of her larger life she owed him an answer. But what to say she knew not.

For a moment she sat still, glad that he was unable to recognize her embarrassment. Then, her eye

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

wandering over the page, she said: "Perhaps this may help you. 'The Holy Ghost, the Comforter.'"

"There can't be no comfort in what a man can't understand. I don't know as that—"

A cruel spell of coughing stopped him; and the agony of vain effort shook the rickety bed until it creaked sharply. For some reason, this strangely affected her. It seemed an inanimate expression of the extent of discomfort and wretchedness. At last, worn out, he groaned, "My God, that 's awful!" as he wiped away the blood on his lips and the gray tangle of his beard; and then, with recurrent reflection: "But there 's a heap of things a man can't understand."

She shared his conviction as she sat with her glove on the open page, penciled here and there by a hand she loved. She murmured, "Yes, yes," and read on. "'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.'"

"Won't you say that again?" he murmured feebly.

The clear tones of a voice often spoken of for its charm repeated the promise. She was close to tears as she continued:

"'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.'"

She was emotionally too much disturbed to go on, and made a brief pause to regain her command of speech, relieved by the strange comments which gave her time.

"That about being afraid, now, that 's curious-

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

like. I 've been troubled pretty often, but I don't know as I ever was afraid.''

She made no reply, but read on, as one may do automatically, with one half-conscious mind on the text, and with one other mind perplexed by thoughts of death and life—the sudden sense of the sweet values of mystery in love and friendship and religion, of which George had spoken. She read on to the end, not taking in the meaning of the three verses which followed.

"Is that all, ma'am?"

"Yes; that is all."

"Thank you." He lay on his back, silent, the sweat on his forehead, his cheeks red, his eyes closed. What were his thoughts? There on the edge of the grave was this rude, half-civilized man of the woods, without education, with his creed of an eye for an eye, and here the woman of another world, with every gift and every chance that wealth had given, and both alike bewildered over the simple words of a promise which neither could comprehend nor yet know how to use.

The flies buzzed in and out and settled on the hot face undisturbed, until she began to fan them away.

"I was n't asleep," he said feebly, opening his eyes: "I was a-thinking." So, too, was she.

"I was thinking," he repeated, "that maybe you would n't mind saying a prayer. You won't need to kneel down, the floor 's that filthy; it 's them chickens, and my wife 's wore out."

The voice was very earnest in its appeal. "I might get some help."

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Constance sat up, in her perplexity fanning him more rapidly. She was helpless, stranded, full of pity. Was this a time for deceit? To whom could she pray? She felt for the man in his hour of doubt and pain, putting forth yearning hands for a sure hold on something. Would such an hour ever come to her?

He felt vaguely her hesitation, and with the gentleness of the mountain-man said: "Maybe you ain't used to praying in company."

"No, no," she said, glad of the frailest pretense; "I am not; and the room is close, I must get outside." It was true. She had the keenest sensitiveness to evil odors. Her head swam, and saying, "I will come again; I must get into the air," she stood up and emptied her basket of fruit, lemons, and the bottle of soup. "You must need ice. I will send it to-morrow—no, to-night. Coffin will bring it."

He thanked her, and again she had to touch the hot, dry hand, as he pleaded: "This is n't any kind of place for folks like you, ma'am; but the angels might be like you—I don't ask no better. You will come again, won't you?"

"I will; certainly I will," she said, and went out.

"A sad kind of angel you are, Constance Trescot," she murmured, as she drank in the fresh pine-scented air. She had a pained sense of incompleteness, of incompetence, of failure.

Her uncle's views, which were nourished by the pleasure of being in opposition to his own world, had kept her ignorant of all that Susan knew so well. Constance had felt no need of it for herself

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

or for others. With all her many resources, her education, her acceptance by a man like Trescot on terms of intellectual equality, she had shrunk away defeated, unable to answer helpfully a simple, uneducated woodsman. She moved on into the forest, deep in thought, followed by her doglike guardian. Presently, as she went past the cotton-presses, she was aware of coming steps and met Mr. Greyhurst. He turned and went with her. Seeing whence she had come, he said, with some seriousness: "These clearings are rather lonesome places for ladies, Mrs. Trescot; and, now that the blacks are free, not altogether safe. You must pardon my frankness. Mr. Trescot may not fully comprehend the risks the North has brought on us."

It was said kindly, and as she felt he was not without reason, she replied: "You are no doubt right; but when I come here among these poor people I ask my garden helper, Coffin, to follow me."

"So I see, but he is a wild fellow, like the rest,—oh, I suppose, trustworthy in a way. I should think you would find these people interesting. They are mostly men who have drifted down from the mountain country."

"Yes, I like them. This time I went to take a sick man some luxuries."

"You are very good. These people—and, in fact, most of our people—are too poor to be able to help one another."

"Oh, these are trifles any one can afford."

"Perhaps. I called on you again yesterday, but was unlucky. Will you allow me to say one thing?"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

She laughed. "Being ignorant, I must, I suppose, be generous. What is it?"

He went on, with a manner so timid and unassured as to be in marked contrast with his athletic build and ordinary self-assertive carriage.

"We have been so long accustomed to regard Mr. Hood as a sort of despotic landlord, standing in our way here in St. Ann, that your appearance as representing him rather startled our good ladies."

"I trust they were agreeably startled. Are we so surprising?"

"Oh, I said you, Mrs. Trescot; men are never surprising."

"Indeed! I have often found them so. I think, however, when my uncle comes in the fall for that tiresome trial, you will find one man who will pass as agreeably surprising. I want him to come because we wish him to know St. Ann and all these delightful people. Besides, he is a great friend of the South—what at home we called a Copperhead. He could do a great deal to help this town; and, once here on the spot, he may be brought to see that even in business it is often the best policy to be generous."

"You will pardon me, Mrs. Trescot, if I say that he has hardly been that, or even just."

"Perhaps not; but we trust that in the end St. Ann will not have to regret our coming or our influence with him. In business my uncle loves to be what he calls exact; outside of it he is the prey of everybody who wants help."

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"That is unusual," he returned; "but, unfortunately, this is all business."

"Yes; but, after all, Mr. Greyhurst, it is hard for a man to escape from the tyranny of his own temperament. My uncle is always in the opposition, and for that reason I think he really enjoys a legal battle."

"It is often a costly luxury."

"Yes; but he does not care about that."

"What you say about the difficulty of escape from the despotism of temperament—ah! that is sadly true. No one knows that better than I. I envy Mr. Trescot his entire self-control. I think the bar is scarcely a good education in amiability."

"If," she laughed, "my husband degenerates in St. Ann I shall run away. I think General Averill is a poor illustration of the influence of the practice of the law."

"Oh, the general! No one is like Averill. He has the tenderness of a woman. He is impossible as an example."

"Cannot a man make himself what he really wants to be?"

He glanced at her with interest, and returned gaily, "Can a woman?"

"No," she said; "no."

"Neither can I, Mrs. Trescot, more 's the pity."

He was once more on the point of one of those easy confessions, which, for some occult reason of sex sympathies, men, as I have said, are so apt to confide to the charity of women. Young as she was,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

she was prepared for it, and not liking the too personal turn the talk had taken, she said:

"You have told me what folks think of us in St. Ann, but you have never asked—no one has—what we think of St. Ann."

"Well," he said, "that might be worth while."

"We like it and the people."

She was scarcely accurate, to state it in no worse way.

"That is pleasant; I accept my share."

"I must leave the partition to you," she said lightly. "What a big river-steamer!"

"Yes; the *Stonewall Jackson*, a new boat."

"How warm it is!" She raised her parasol as they came out on the bluff. "Is it always as warm as this in your July weather?"

They went on talking of every-day matters. In the main street she said: "I must leave you here; I have to make a call and do some shopping."

He took it to be a dismissal, and, raising his hat, left her.

He walked on, absorbed in thought. The woman had a calming influence upon his uncertain temper. Most women so affected him. With men his self-esteem was always on the watch for slights. It made his associates uncomfortably careful. He was at times aware of their reserve, and, without fully understanding the cause, resented it. He felt it in his business, and most of all with Trescot, who, although very desirous of keeping on good terms with him, found it increasingly difficult. That morning, in Averill's office, Greyhurst had returned to the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

question of an amicable settlement of Hood's claim to own the water-front at the bend. Trescot had once more made the reply that it lay with Mr. Hood, and that he had himself failed to move him. Greyhurst had lost his temper and made his disbelief so plain that nothing except Averill's very positive interference and indorsement of Trescot's statement had saved an open quarrel. Greyhurst had reluctantly apologized, and Trescot had been exasperatingly good-humored.

As Greyhurst walked on he said, with returning remembrance of his annoyance: "Damn the man! I was a fool to talk of it,—a child,—but his cold-blooded ways are hard to stand." As he murmured his condemnation of Trescot, a big black fellow, much in liquor, hustled him. He struck him savagely and went on. The man gathered himself up, and following him, said meekly: "I did n't go to do it, massa."

"Oh, go to the devil!" exclaimed Greyhurst. "Get out, or you 'll get a bullet through you!"

He had made himself angry about one man, and another had suffered. A minute later he was sorry for his brutal haste. His life was full of such regrets; but this was a minor one, and did not trouble him long.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

X

BY and by, her errands done, Constance called at her husband's office, and they walked homeward together.

He told her that he had heard from her uncle. He had once more declined to yield assent to any of Trescot's proposals. The squatters must go.

Constance laughed. "Wait till I have him here. I know a way."

"Upon my word, dear, I begin to respect your legal resources; but they are, so far, rather costly. You have provided for Coffin. How much it will require to get the rest to leave we do not know. As for the use of the machinery of the law to turn them out to shift for themselves—I will throw up the whole business rather than do that."

"Indeed, I should, George, if it came to that; but it will not; there will be no occasion."

"Well, I trust not. I have had a long talk with Greyhurst this morning in Averill's office. I never knew so peculiar a man. He told me that he, at least, had had no hand in that club business. When I thanked him and said that I had never for a moment supposed the Confederate officers had been in it, he said some of them had, and would have told me who they were if I had not said I did not wish

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

to know their names. He laughed, and remarked that it was as well not to know, because I might feel obliged to call them to account. I said in reply that I had no malice about the blackballing, and that in a case of even graver injury I should not feel justified in avenging myself by shooting a man, and that a bullet in the shoulder was, in my case, a pretty positive peacemaker.

"As he made no reply, I went on to say that I had never desired to be a member of the club, and was therefore quite easy in mind. When Averill asked him at what time in October he thought our case would come up, he said he did not know, and that it never ought to come up at all; and when I said that was my desire, but that it would have to go to trial, he quite suddenly lost his temper, and said that I ought to be able to bring about a settlement. And then there was more of it, and worse."

"What did you say, George?"

"Oh, Averill interfered, and I said I should do everything possible; and indeed I shall. He went away in a curious sullen humor, and, upon my word, he is like some rude, undisciplined boy; but I think he has brains enough to know that he has a bad case. If he knew all I know, he would give it up, although that is not Averill's opinion."

"I met him in the woods as I came from Wilson's. He was pretty sharply critical of Uncle Rufus, and was rather intimate in his talk about himself."

"Was he? I should not have thought him a man to do that."

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"It surprised me less than it does you, for men have a queer way of opening their minds to women."

"I am sure you said what was right. How is poor Wilson?"

"I was wrong to go, George."

Realizing what must have happened, and not altogether sorry, he said: "What was your trouble, my love? Did you read to him?"

"Yes; I read to him, and oh, George, he asked me questions."

"What, dear?"

She hesitated, and then said: "It was dreadful. He asked me what was the Holy Ghost, what kind of a Ghost. It was awful. How did I know? How does any one know? Your Bible is a tangle of mysteries."

"It is answered in the same chapter, Constance."

"Answered?"

"Yes; it is the Comforter."

"I said that."

"It is also called the Spirit of Truth, Constance. That which is as old as the world, as old as He who made it, the Spirit before which science bends in worship, that on which the world of morals rests. Is n't that simple enough?"

"Yes," she said doubtfully.

"Was that all, dear?"

"Oh, no, no; he asked me to pray for him."

He looked at her. She was troubled, tearful; he hardly knew what to say, and at last wisely put the question by. "We will talk of that at another time, not now; it is a large question."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"I did not do it."

"No; you were right."

"Thank you, George."

To know that, thinking, believing as he did, he was able to put himself in her position affected her deeply. She was about to go on and say something of the man's confession and his creed of unforgiveness, but recalling what she too had said in reply, she was silent.

The next week she went away to her old home with the general and Mrs. Averill. The day after her arrival she wrote to Trescot:

"DEAR GEORGE:

"I am sitting on the great rock at sunset, and it seems as though the waves I love are glad of my coming. A mad gale is hurling them on the rocks below me, and far away there is a wild turmoil of waters about Little Misery Islands. The air is sweet and salt, and it wants only the sunshine of the love I miss every hour.

"I found Susan well and utterly unchanged. Why should she not be?—only that I have changed, and am wiser and a larger person than when you first knew me. What your dear love and company have done for me I know full well. The atmosphere of my old home seems to me other than it was. I think I shall understand Susan better. Once I used to think her narrow. Uncle Rufus is thinner than thin, with a wilted autumnal look, and the same delicate features, and the same meek violence in his opinions. I refused to be taken in the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

toils of an invitation to discuss his Western affairs, but it will have to be soon or late, though I shall not be serious with him until we are in St. Ann. Then he may look out. And now I must go. I hear voices in the garden.

"Constantly your constant

"CONSTANCE.

"Is n't that pretty, sir?

"P. S.—Tell me all the news, big and little. How are Wilson and Coffin and my cat? The Averills were most kind, and will be here very soon for a visit.

"P. S.—I am writing a second P. S.,—almost in the dark. Far away to right, Marblehead Light is flashing at intervals over the stormy water. There is another, a lesser one, far to the left. I like it better. It is, sir, if you please, constant, like me."

She wrote daily, and a week later said:

"I can see that dear, grave face when I tell you that I went to church last Sunday with Susan. I am not going to pretend I went for any reason except because I love you, but that is not reason, for my love is all of me—body, soul, and mind. Is that a riddle, sir? I *had* to tell Susan that I went because it would please you. She put on one of her queer looks, and said it was creditable to my sense of the humorous. I did not like that. I do not think that even you can understand the absolute negation from childhood of all thought about this vast matter of religion. Since I came, a little girl, to East-

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

wood, I have been imprisoned within the bounds of my uncle's belief, or unbelief, and only of late years did I slowly apprehend that his attitude was purely due to the joy of standing up against other people's beliefs. But think, dear, what this ignorance, ridicule, and denial did with a childhood like mine. Susan said once you cannot even teach manners without forms, nor make a child religious and reverent without forms. Is that so? I had a wicked little joy when uncle saw me go out to church with Susan. He said, as if it were a tragedy, 'And this is the end,' and, as Susan says, twinkled away. He does not walk like other people, but only from his knees—really an absurd little person, as he appears to me now, with a queer way of suddenly saying unexpected things. He told me once, when I was fifteen, that I was a fine animal. I was furious, but I think I know now what he meant.

"The Averills came and were made much of. Since the general was here uncle has spoken of you to our friends with a newly acquired pride, to the vast amusement of Susan. You are to understand that when, in October, you have the help of a man with some knowledge of business everything will be settled. I said, 'Better, then, uncle, not to discuss things with an ignorant woman'; and with this he was contented for half a day.

"Whenever it is possible I go out in our cat-boat, and oh, to sail with a mad east wind driving the fog in your face! Do you like that? Nature is never too riotous for me—and then these summer evenings by the sea; what a blithe playmate! I

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

used to like best to be alone on the shore or in the woods; but now, ah! to have you, and cry, 'Look at this, George; and see that.'

"You say I am making you vain. I leave you to imagine how much I love you, how emptied is life without you. My uncle concerns himself with everything, from the dairy and the butter to my poor little every-day letters to you. 'Absurd waste of paper,' he says; and then, with his inconsequent felicity, 'What would I do if you were dead?' I said: 'Do? I should kill myself in the hope to find you—oh, somewhere!' Do you know, he laughed, and said: 'Just so, just so. I do not doubt it.' Then he went on: 'Once you had a doll and it fell into the well. You were caught trying to climb down the chain to get it; and then, when you were punished, you said you would starve until some one got that doll.' It was true. At last I scared him so that a man went down and got it. There was not much doll left, but it was my doll. He went on, and I learned more about my obstinate ways, until I fled away, leaving him talking, until, as I presume, he discovered that he was alone.

"Yesterday we had a dense fog. It rolled in from the sea in gray masses. An east wind drove it landward. I went to the shore and lay on the rocks just above the sea. The fog shut out the islands, and at last was like a gray wall about me. You know how the sea of a bright day seems to explain itself, when from far away the waves rise and gather and grow and break on the shore; but now you could not see twenty feet, and the great

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

rollers came as if out of nowhere and tumbled at my feet. Somewhere out at sea a steamer screamed as if lost. Oh, but I wanted you! You would have said things of it all I cannot say. I can only see and enjoy and badly describe.

"C. T."

A few days before she returned to St. Ann one of his replies to her daily letters ran thus:

"Yes, the rooms will be in order for your uncle and our welcome Susan. Mrs. Averill has been sending me a lot of things—I presume owing to your distrust of my capacity to keep house. I have at least laid in a stock of patience for use when your uncle comes, and have got out and dusted my other unused virtues. I received last week a kind note from Colonel La Grange, with a check for my settlement of the damaged cotton. You may guess how much—enough to make it easier to deal with your uncle.

"You ask in your last whom I see, and would like to know what I do all day. You ask if I have made any new friends. I scent the wicked weed jealousy in the garden of love. Fie for shame! More people have been able this year to get away. I see no women except Mrs. Averill, and if you are jealous of any woman it must be of Rosalind or Portia or Lady Macbeth. I have been refreshing myself with the company of these ladies in your absence. Horses are so plenty that I have been able to ride a few

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

times with La Grange, and I begin to think of the joy of some day riding with you.

"Poor Wilson is dead; and, as you desired, I took care of the funeral. The rest may keep. Everything goes well, and there are still flowers,—oh, in abundance! I hear that the rector is not well and has given up. A young man named Kent has taken his place. I had some distant relatives named Kent. I never saw them. You may tell Susan that La Grange, who knows Mr. Kent, says he is young and very good-looking. That is all my news. Do take care of yourself."

"Poor Susan!" thought Constance; "I think she prefers them old. I imagine Susan in a mild clerical flirtation!"

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

XI

ON the evening of the first of October, Constance found herself, to her great joy, again in her own home. They arrived late, and Mr. Hood very tired. He appeared, however, at breakfast next morning, having slept unusually well. After an ample meal, during which he found time to complain of the butter, the eggs, the corn-bread, and his cocoa, he informed Susan that she had better take a rest, and that Constance, at eleven o'clock, would go with him to show him the way to Mr. Greyhurst's office and to the general's. At five in the afternoon George would drive him about the country. He desired to see his lands. In the evening he would be prepared to discuss matters with Trescot.

The family, thus disposed of, rose in revolt. Trescot had affairs which would keep him busy; there would be a buggy and Coffin to drive Mr. Hood about. It was too far for him to walk, and Constance would be occupied. Susan declined to be advised. She had to unpack. He gave up at once.

Trescot said: "It would be as well not to call on Mr. Greyhurst. But if you do, may I ask that you

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

will not commit yourself in any way until the general and I have been able to lay before you more fully what has been done."

"Of course not, Trescot; I have not been a business man all my life without having learned caution." He had a brisk little air of assurance. "I hope to make the acquaintance of some of the Confederate officers. I think you said Mr. Greyhurst was one of them. With my views of the late disastrous war, everything will become easy."

"I trust, sir," said Trescot, as he was about to go out, "that you may enable me, now that you are here, to act as I have not been as yet authorized to do. Unless you can make up your mind to yield a little, you will find difficulties, as we have done."

Mr. Hood waved them away. "Difficulties are not for the resolute."

Constance shook her head at her husband, who, thus advised, quietly gave up; and the little old man went out on the porch to get his morning exercise. He walked up and down, with his hands behind his back, smiling at intervals, and contemplating with satisfaction novel opportunities for the exercise of his adroitness in affairs. Meanwhile, Susan also disappeared.

As Constance left him at the door, Trescot said: "There are limitless capacities for mischief in that old man."

"There are; but he is as timid as a house-fly. The general has already disposed him to yield. He is only making believe to be very bold; and if Mr. Greyhurst represents to him the state of feeling

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN