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BLOOMSBURG, PA., FRIDAY, JULY 1, 1887.

THE COLUMBIAN, VOL. XXI, NO 26
COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT, VOL. LI, NO 15

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By H. RIDER HAGGARD.

CHAPTER XII.
DEEPER YET.

While Ernest was wooing and Eva doubting, time, whose interest in earthly affairs is that of the sickle in the growing crop, went on his way as usual.

The end of August came, as it has come so many thousand times since this globe gave its first turn in space, as it will come for many thousand times more, till at last, its appointed course run out, the world darkens, quivers and grows still; and, behold, Ernest was still wooing, Eva still doubting.

One evening—it was a very beautiful evening—this pair were walking together on the seashore. Whether they met by appointment or by accident does not matter; they did meet, and there they were, strolling along together, as fully charged with intense feeling as a thunder cloud with electricity, and almost as quiet. The storm had not yet burst.

To listen to the talk of these two, they might have met for the first time yesterday. It was chiefly about the weather.

Presently, in the course of their wanderings, they came to a little sailing boat drawn up upon the beach—not far up, however, just out of the reach of the waves. By this boat, in an attitude of intense contemplation, there stood an ancient mariner. His hands were in his pockets, his pipe was in his mouth, his eyes were fixed upon the deep. Apparently he did not notice their approach till they were within two yards of him. Then he turned, "lashed" himself and asked the lady, with a pull of his grizzled forelock, if she would not take a sail.

Ernest looked surprised.

"How's the wind?" he asked.

"Straight off shore, sir; will turn with the turn of the tide, sir, and bring you back."

"Will you come for a bit of a sail, Eva?"

"Oh, no, thank you. I must be getting home; it is 7 o'clock."

"There's no hurry for you to get home. Your aunt and Florence have gone to tea with the Smythes."

"Indeed, I cannot come; I could not think of such a thing."

Her words were unequivocal, but the ancient mariner put a strange interpretation upon them. First, he hauled up the little sail, and then, placing his brown hands against the stern of the boat, he rested his weight upon them, and caused her to travel far enough into the waves to float her bow."

"Now, miss."

"I am not coming, indeed."

"Now, miss."

"I will not come, Ernest."

"Come," said Ernest, quietly holding out his hand to help her in.

She took it and got in. Ernest and the mariner gave a strong shove, and as the light boat took the water the former leaped in, and at the same second a puff of wind caught the sail and took them ten yards out or more.

"Why, the sailor is left behind!" said Eva.

Ernest gave a twist to the tiller to get the boat's head straight off shore, and then leisurely looked round. The mariner was standing as they had found him, his hands in his pockets, his pipe in his mouth, his eyes fixed upon the deep.

"He doesn't seem to mind it," he said, meditatively.

"Yes, but I do; you must go back and fetch him."

Thus appealed to, Ernest went through some violent maneuvers with the tiller, without producing any marked effect on the course of the boat, which by this time had got out of the shelter of the cliff and was bowling along merrily.

"Wait till we get clear from the draught of the cliff, and I will bring her round."

But when at last they were clear from the draught of the cliff, and he slowly got her head round, lo and behold, the mariner had vanished!

"How unfortunate!" said Ernest, getting her head toward the open sea again; "he has probably gone to his tea."

Eva tried hard to get angry, but somehow she could not, she only succeeded in laughing.

"If I thought that you had done this on purpose, I would never come out with you again."

Ernest looked horrified. "On purpose!" he said, and the subject dropped.

They were sitting side by side in the stern sheets of the boat, and the sun was just dipping, all red hot, into the ocean. Under the lee of the cliff there were cool shadows, before them was a path of glory that led to a golden gate. The air was very sweet, and for those two all the world was lovely; there was no sorrow on the earth, there were no storms upon the sea.

Eva took off her hat and let the sweet breeze play upon her brow. Then she leaned over the side, and dipping her hand into the cool water watched the little track it made.

"Eva."

"Yes, Ernest."

"Do you know I am going away?"

The hand was withdrawn with a start.

"Going away! when?"

"The day after to-morrow, to France."

"And when are you coming back again?"

"I think that depends on you, Eva."

The hand went back into the water. They were a mile or more from the shore now, Ernest manipulated the sail and tiller so as to sail slowly parallel with the coast line. Then he spoke again.

"Eva."

No answer.

"Eva, for God's sake, look at me!"

There was something in his voice that forced her to obey. She took her hand out of the water and turned her eyes on his face. It was pale, and the lips were quivering.

"I love you," he said, in a low, choked voice.

She grew angry. "Why did you bring me here? I will go home. This is nonsense; you are nothing but a boy!"

There are moments in life when the human face is capable of conveying a more intense and vivid impression than any words, when it seems to speak to the very soul in a language of its own. And so it was with Ernest now; he made no answer to her reproaches, but if that were possible, his features grew paler yet, and his eyes, shining like stars, fixed themselves upon her and drew her to him. And what they said she and he knew alone, nor could any words convey it, for the tongue in which they talked is not spoken in this world.

A moment still she wavered, fighting against the sweet mastery of his will with all her woman's strength, and then—O heaven! it was done, and his arms were round about her, her head upon his breast, and her voice was lost in sobs and broken words of love.

Oh, radiant winged hour of more than mortal joy, the hearts where thou hast lit will know when their time comes that they have not beat quite in vain!

And so they sat, those two, quite silent, for there seemed to be no need for speech; words could not convey half they had to say, and, indeed, to tell the honest truth, their lips were for the most part otherwise employed.

Meanwhile the sun went down, and the golden moon arose over the quiet sea and turned their little ship to silver. Eva gently disengaged herself from his arms, and half rose to look at it; she had never thought it half so beautiful before. Ernest looked at it, too. It is a way that lovers have.

"Do you know the lines?" he said; "I think I can say them:

"With a swifter motion,
Out upon the ocean,
Heaven above and round us, and you alone with me;
Heaven around and o'er us,
The Infinite before us,
Floating on forever, upon the flowing sea."

"Go on," she said, softly.

"What time is it, dear, now?
We are in the year now
Of the new creation, one million, two or three,
But where are we now, love?
We are, as I trow, love,
In the heaven of heavens, upon the crystal sea."

"That is how I hope it may be with us, dear," she said, taking his hand as the last words passed his lips.

"Are you happy now?" he asked her.

"Yes, Ernest, I am happy indeed. I do not think that I shall ever be so happy again; certainly I never was so happy before. Do you know, dear, I wish to tell you so, that you may see how mean I have been; I have fought so hard against my love for you."

He looked pained. "Why?" he asked.

"I will tell you quite truly, Ernest—because you are so young. I was ashamed to fall in love with a boy, and yet, you see, dear, you have been too strong for me."

"Why, there is no difference in our ages."

"Ah, Ernest, but I am a woman, and ever so much older than you. We age so much quicker, you know. I feel about old enough to be your mother," she said, with a pretty assumption of dignity.

"And I feel quite old enough to be your lover," he replied, impertinently.

"So it seems. But, Ernest, if three months ago anybody had told me that I should be in love to-day with a boy of 21, I would not have believed them. Dear, I have given you all my heart; you will not betray it, will you? You know very young men are apt to change their minds."

He flushed a little as he answered, feeling that it was tiresome to have the unlucky fact that he was only 21 so persistently thrust before him.

"Then they are young men who have not had the honor of winning your affections. A man who had once loved you could never forget you. Indeed, it is more likely that you will forget me; you will have plenty of temptation to do so."

She saw that she had vexed him. "Don't be angry, dear; but you see the position is a very difficult one, and, if I could not be quite sure of you, it would be intolerable."

"My darling, you may be as sure of me as woman can be of man; but don't begin your doubts over again. They are settled now. Let us be quite happy just this one evening. No doubt there are plenty coming when we shall not be able to."

And so they kissed each other and sailed on, homeward, alas! for it was getting late, and were perfectly happy.

Presently they drew near the shore, and there, at the identical spot where they had left him, stood the ancient mariner. His hands were in his pockets, his pipe was in his mouth, his eyes were fixed upon the deep.

Ernest grounded the little boat skillfully enough, and jumping over the bow he and the mariner pulled it up. Then Eva got out, and as she did so she thought in the moonlight she noticed something resembling a twinkle in the latter's ancient eye. She felt confused—there is nothing so confusing as a guilty conscience—and to cover her confusion plunged into conversation—while Ernest was finding some money to pay for the boat.

"Do you often let boats?" she asked.

"No, miss, only to Mr. Ernest in a general way"—so that wicked Ernest had set a trap to catch her.

"Oh, then, I suppose you go out fishing?"

"No, miss, only for rikkration, like."

"Then what do you do?" she was getting curious on the point.

"Times I does nothing; times I stands on the beach and sees things; times I runs cheeses, miss."

"Run cheeses!"

"Yes, miss, Dutch ones."

"He means that he brings cargoes of Dutch cheeses to Harwich."

"Oh!" said Eva.

Ernest paid the man, and they turned to go. She had not got many yards when she felt a heavy hand laid upon her shoulder. Turning round in astonishment, she perceived the mariner.

"I say, miss," he said in a hoarse whisper.

"Well, what?"

"Niver you eat the rind of a Dutch cheese. I says it as knows."

Eva never forgot his advice.

CHAPTER XIII.
MR. CARDUS UNFOLDS HIS PLANS.

"Ernest," said Mr. Cardus, on the morning following the events described in the previous chapter, "I want to speak to you in my office—and you, too, Jeremy."

They both followed him into his room, wondering what was up. He sat down, and so did they, and then, as was his habit, letting his eyes stray over every part of their persons except their faces, he began:

"It is time that you two fellows took to doing something for yourselves. You must not learn to be idle men, not that most young men require much teaching in that way. What do you propose to do?"

Jeremy and Ernest stared at one another rather blankly, but apparently Mr. Cardus did not expect an answer; at any rate, he went on before either of them could frame one.

"You don't seem to know, never gave the matter any consideration probably; quite content to obey the Bible literally, and take no thought for the morrow. Well, it is lucky that you have somebody to think for you. Now I will tell what I propose for you both. I want you, Ernest, to go to the bar. It is a foolish profession for most young men to take to, but it will not be so in your case, because, as it happens, if you show yourself capable, I shall by degrees be able to put a good deal of business in your hands—chancery business—for I have little to do with any other. I dare say you will wonder where the business is to come from. I don't seem to do very much here, do I? with a mad old hunting man as a clerk, and Dorothy to copy my private letters; but I do, for all that. I may as well tell you both in confidence that this place is only the head center of my business. I have another office in London, another at Ipswich, and another at Norwich, though they all carry on business under different names; besides which I have other agencies of a different nature. But all this is neither here nor there. I have communicated with Aster, the great chancery man, and he will have a vacancy in his chambers next term. Let me see—term begins on Nov. 2; I propose, Ernest, to write to-day to enter you at the Lincoln's inn. I shall make you an allowance of three hundred a year, which you must clearly understand you must not exceed. I think that is all I have to say about the matter."

"I am sure I am very much obliged to you, uncle," began Ernest, fervently, for since the previous evening he had clearly realized that it was necessary for him to make a beginning of doing something.

But his uncle cut him short.

"All right, Ernest, we will understand all that. Now, Jeremy, for you. I propose that you shall be articled to me, and if you work well and prove useful it is my intention in time to admit you to a share of the business. In order that you may not feel entirely dependent it is my further intention to make you an allowance also, on the amount of which I have not yet settled."

Jeremy groaned in spirit at the thought of becoming a lawyer, even with a "share of the business," but he remembered his conversation with Dorothy and thanked Mr. Cardus with the best grace that he could muster.

"All right, then; I will have the articles prepared at once, and you can take to your stool in the office next week. I think that is all I have to say."

Acting on this hint, the pair were departing, Jeremy in the deepest state of depression, induced by the near prospect of that stool, when Mr. Cardus called Ernest back.

"I want to speak to you about something else," he said, thoughtfully. "Shut the door."

Ernest turned cold down his back, and wondered if his uncle could have heard anything about Eva. He had the full intention of speaking to him about the matter, but it would be awkward to be boarded himself before he had made up his mind what to say. He shut the door, and then, walking to the glass entrance to the orchid blooming house, stood looking at the flowers and waiting for Mr. Cardus to begin. But he did not begin; he seemed to be lost in thought.

"Well, uncle?" he said at last.

"It is a delicate business, Ernest, but I may as well get it over. I am going to make a request of you, a request to which I beg you will give me no immediate answer, for from its nature it will require the most anxious and careful consideration. I want you to listen, and say nothing. You can give me your answer when you come back from abroad. At the same time, I must tell you that it is a matter that I trust you will not disappoint me in; indeed, I do not think that you could be so cruel as to do so. I must also tell you that if you do, you must prepare to be a great loser, financially speaking."

"I have not the faintest idea what you are driving at, uncle," said Ernest, turning from the glass door to speak.

"I know you have not. I will tell you. Listen; I will tell you a little story. Many years ago a great misfortune overtook me, a misfortune so great that it struck me as lightning sometimes does a tree; it left the bark sound, but turned the heart to ashes. Never mind what the details were, they were nothing out of the common; such things sometimes happen to men and women. The blow was so severe that it almost turned my brain, so from that day I gave myself to revenge. It sounds melodramatic, but there was nothing of the sort about it. I had been cruelly wronged and I determined that those who had wronged me should taste some of their own medicine. With the exception of one man they have done so. He has escaped me for a time, but he is doomed. To pass on. The woman who caused the trouble—for wherever there is trouble, there is generally a woman who causes it—had children. Those children are Dorothy and her brother. I adopted them. As time went on I grew to love the girl for her likeness to her mother. The boy I never loved; to this hour I cannot like him, though he is a gentleman, which his father never was. I can, however, honestly say that I have done my duty by him. I have told you all this in order that you may understand the request which I am going to make. I trust to you never to speak of it, and, if you can, to forget it. And now for the request itself."

Ernest looked up wonderingly.

"It is my most earnest desire that you should marry Dorothy."

His listener started violently, turned quite pale, and opened his lips to speak. Mr. Cardus lifted his hand and went on:

"Remember what I asked you. Pray say nothing; only listen. Of course I cannot force you into this or any other marriage. I can only beg you to give heed to my wishes, knowing that they will in every way prove to your advantage. That girl has a heart of gold; and if you marry her you shall inherit nearly all my fortune, which is now very large. I have observed that you have lately been about a great deal with Eva Ceswick. She is a handsome woman, and very likely she has taken some hold upon your fancy. I warn you that any entanglement in that direction would be most disagreeable to me, and would to a great extent destroy your prospects so far as I am concerned."

Again Ernest was about to speak, and again his uncle stopped him.

"I want no confidences, Ernest, and had much rather that no words passed between us that we might afterward regret. And now I understand that you are going abroad with your friend Batty for a couple of months. When you return you shall give me your answer about Dorothy. In the meanwhile here is a check for your expenses; what is over you can spend as you like. Perhaps you have some bills to pay."

He gave him a folded check, and then went on:

"Now leave me, as I am busy."

Ernest walked out of the room in a perfect maze. In the yard he mechanically unfolded the check. It was for a large sum—£250. He put it in his pocket and began to reflect upon his position, which was about as painful as a position can well be. Truly he was on the horns of a dilemma; probably before he was much older one of them would have pierced him. For a moment he was about to return to his uncle and tell him all the truth, but on reflection he could not see what was to be gained by such a course. At any rate, it seemed to him that he must first consult Eva, whom he had arranged to meet on the beach at 3 o'clock; there was nobody else whom he could consult, for he was shy of talking about Eva to Jeremy or Dolly.

The rest of that morning went very ill for Ernest, but 3 o'clock came at last and found him at the trysting place.

About a mile on the further side of Kesterwick, that is, two miles or so from Titheburg Abbey, the cliff jutted out into the sea in a way that corresponded very curiously with the little promontory known as Dum's Ness, the reason of its resistance to the action of the waves being that it was at this spot composed of an up crop of rock of a more durable nature than the sandstone and pebbles of the remainder of the line of cliff. Just at the point of this promontory the waves had worn a hollow in the rock that was locally dignified by the name of the cave. For two hours or more at high tide this hollow was under water, and it was, therefore, impossible to pass the headland except by boat; but during the rest of the day it formed a convenient grotto or trysting place, the more so as anybody sitting in it was quite invisible either from the beach, the cliff above, or, indeed, unless the boat was quite close in shore, the sea in front.

Here it was that Ernest had arranged to meet Eva, and on turning the rocky corner of the cave he found her sitting on a mass of fallen rock waiting for him. At the sight of her beautiful form he forgot all his troubles, and when rising to greet him, blushing like dawn, she lifted her pure face for him to kiss, there was not a happier lad in England. Then she made room for him beside her—the rock was just wide enough for two—and he placed his arm round her waist, and for a minute or two she laid her head upon his shoulder, and they were very happy.

"You are early," he said at last.

"Yes; I wanted to get away from Florence and have a good think. You have no idea how unpleasant she is; she seems to know everything. For instance, she knew that we went out sailing together last evening, for this morning at breakfast she said in the most cheerful way that she hoped that I enjoyed my moonlight sail last night."

"The deuce she did! and what did you say?"

"I said that I enjoyed it very much, and luckily my aunt did not take any notice."

"Why did you not say at once that we were engaged? We are engaged, you know."

"Yes—that is, I suppose so."

"Suppose so! There is no supposition about it. At least, if we are not engaged, what are we?"

"Well, you see, Ernest, it sounds so absurd to say that one is engaged to a boy! I love you, Ernest, love you dearly, but how can I say that I am engaged to you?"

Ernest rose in great wrath. "I tell you what it is, Eva, if I am not good enough to acknowledge, I am not good enough to have anything to do with. A boy, indeed! I am one-and-twenty; that is full age. Confound it all, you are always talking about my being so young, just as though I could not get old fast enough. Can't you wait for me a year or two?" he asked, with tears of mortification in his eyes.

"O Ernest, Ernest, do be reasonable, there's a dear; what is the good of getting angry and making me wretched? Come and sit down here, dear, and tell me, am I not worth a little patience? There is not the slightest possibility, so far as I can see, of our getting married at present; so the question is, if it is of any use to trumpet an engagement that will only make us the object of a great deal of gossip, and which, perhaps, your uncle would not like."

"Oh, by Jove!" he said, "that reminds me," and sitting down beside her again he told her the story of the interview with his uncle. She listened in silence.

"This is all very bad," she said when he had finished.

"Yes, it is bad enough; but what is to be done?"

"There is nothing to be done at present."

"Shall I make a clean breast of it to him?"

"No, no, not now; it will only make matters worse. We must wait, dear. You must go abroad for a couple of months, as you had arranged, and then when you come back we must see what can be arranged."

"But, my dearest, I cannot bear to leave you; it makes my heart ache to think of it."

"Dear, I know that it is hard; but it must be done. You could not stop here now very well without speaking about our—our engagement, and to do that would only be to bring your uncle's anger on you. No, you had better go away, Ernest, and meanwhile I will try to get into Mr. Cardus' good graces, and if I fail then, when you come back, we must agree upon some plan. Perhaps by that time you will take your uncle's view of the matter and want to marry Dorothy. She would make you a better wife than I shall, Ernest, my dear."

"Eva, how can you say such things—it is not kind of you."

"Oh, why not? It is true. Oh, yes, I know that I am better looking, and that is what you men always think of, but she has more brains, more fixity of mind, and, perhaps, for all I know, more heart than I have, though, for the matter of that, I feel as if I was all heart just now. Really, Ernest, you had better transfer you allegiance. Give me up, and forget me, dear; it will save you much trouble. I know that there is trouble coming; it is in the air. Better marry Dorothy, and leave me to fight my sorrow out alone. I will release you, Ernest," and she began to cry at the bare idea.

"I shall wait to give you up until you have given me up," said Ernest, when he had found means to stop her tears; "and, as for forgetting you, I can never do that. Please, dear, don't talk so any more; it pains me."

"Very well, Ernest; then let us vow eternal fidelity instead; but, my dear, I know that I shall bring you trouble."

"It is the price that men have always paid for the smiles of women like you," he answered. "Trouble may come—so be it, let it come; at any rate, I have the consciousness of your love. When I have lost that, then and then only shall I think that I have bought you too dear."

In the course of his after life these words often came back to Ernest's mind.

CHAPTER XIV.
GOOD BY.

There are some scenes, trivial enough very likely in themselves, that yet retain a peculiar power of standing out in sharp relief, as we cast our mind's eye down the long vista of our past. The group of events with which these particular scenes were connected may have long ago vanished from our mental sight, or faded into a dim and misty uniformity, and be as difficult to distinguish one from the other as the trees of a forest viewed from a height. But here and there an event, a sensation, or a face will stand out as perfectly clear as if it had been that moment experienced, felt or seen. Perhaps it is only some scene of our childhood, such as a fish darting beneath a rustic bridge, and the ripple which its motion left upon the water. We have seen many larger fish dart in many fine rivers since then, and have forgotten them, but somehow that one little fish has kept awake in the storehouse of our brain, where most things sleep, though none are really obliterated.

It was in this clear and brilliant fashion that every little detail of the scene was indelibly photographed on Ernest's mind when, on the morning following their meeting in the cave, he said good by to Eva before they went abroad. It was a public good by, for, as it happened, there was no opportunity for the lovers to meet alone. They were all gathered in the little drawing room at the Cottage; Miss Ceswick seated on a straight back chair in the bay window; Ernest on one side of the round table, looking intensely uncomfortable; Eva on the other, a scrap book in her hand, which she studiously kept before her face; and in the background, leaning carelessly over the back of a chair in such a way that her own face could not be seen, though she could survey everybody else's, was Florence. Ernest, from where he sat, could just make out the outline of her olive face and the quick glance of her brown eyes.

And so they sat for a long time; but what was said he could not remember, it was only the scene that imprinted itself upon his memory.

And then at last the fatal moment came—he knew that it was time to go, and said good by to Miss Ceswick, who made some remark about his good fortune in going to France and Italy, and warned him to be careful not to lose his heart to a foreign girl. Then he crossed the room and shook hands with Florence, who smiled coolly in his face, and read him through with her piercing eyes; and last of all came to Eva, who dropped her album and a pockethandkerchief in her confusion as she rose to give him her hand. He stooped and picked them up—the album he placed on the table, the little lace edged handkerchief he crumpled up in the palm of his left hand and kept; it was almost the only souvenir he had of her. Then he took her hand, and for a moment looked into her face. It wore a smile, but beneath it the features were wan and troubled. It was so hard to go.

"Well, Ernest," said Miss Ceswick, "you two are taking leave of each other as solemnly as though you were never going to meet again."

"Perhaps they never will," said Florence, in her clear voice; and at that moment Ernest felt as though he hated her.

"You should not croak, Florence; it is unlucky," said Miss Ceswick.

Florence smiled.

Then Ernest dropped the cold hand, and turning, left the room. Florence followed him, and snatching a hat from the pegs, passed into the garden before him. When he was half way down the garden walk he found her ostensibly picking some carnations.

"I want to speak to you for a minute, Ernest," she said; "turn this way with me," and she led him past the bay window, down a small shrubbery walk about twenty paces long. "I must offer you my congratulations," she went on. "I hope that you two will be happy. Such a handsome pair ought to be happy, you know."

"Why, Florence, who told you?"

"Told me! nobody told me. I have seen it all along. Let me see, you first took a fancy to one another on the night of the Smythe dance, when she gave you a rose, and the next day you saved her life quite in the romantic and orthodox way. Well, and then events took their natural course, till one evening you went out sailing together in a boat. Shall I go on?"

"I don't think it is necessary, Florence. I am sure I don't know how you know all these things."

She had stopped, and was standing slowly picking a carnation to pieces leaf by leaf.

"Don't you?" she answered with a laugh. "Lovers are blind; but it does not follow that other people are. I have been thinking, Ernest, that it is very fortunate that I found out my little mistake before you discovered yours. Supposing I really had cared for you, the position would have been awkward now, would it not?"

Ernest was forced to admit that it would.

"But luckily, you see, I do not. I am only your true friend now, Ernest; and it is as a friend that I wish to say a word to you about Eva—a word of warning."

"Go on."

"You love Eva, and Eva loves you, Ernest, but remember this, she is weak as water. She always was so from a child; those beautiful women often are; nature does not give them everything, you see."

"What do you mean?"

"What I say, nothing more. She is very weak and you must not be surprised if she throw you over."

"Good heavens, Florence! why, she loves me with all her heart!"

"Yes, but women often think of other things besides their hearts. But there, I don't want to frighten you, only I would not quite pin all my faith to Eva's constancy, however dearly you may think she loves you. Don't look so distressed, Ernest; I did not wish to pain you. And remember that, if any difficulty should arise between Eva and you, you will always have me on your side. You will always think of me as your true friend, won't you, Ernest?" and she held out her hand.

He took it. "Indeed I will," he said.

They had turned now, and again reached the bay window, one of the divisions of which stood open. Florence touched his arm and pointed into the room. He looked in through the open window. Miss Ceswick had gone, but Eva was still at her old place by the table. Her head was down upon the table, resting on the album he had picked up, and he could see from the motion of her shoulders that she was sobbing bitterly. Presently she lifted her face—it was all stained with tears—only, however, to drop it again. Ernest made a motion as though he would enter the house, but Florence stopped him.

"Best leave her alone," she whispered; and then when they were well past the window, added aloud: "I am sorry that you saw her like that; if you should never meet again, or be separated for a very long time, it will leave a painful recollection in your mind. Well, good by. I hope you will enjoy yourself."

Ernest shook hands in silence—there was a lump in his throat that prevented him from speaking—and then went on his way feeling utterly miserable. As for Florence, she put up her hand to shade her keen eyes from the sun, and watched him until he turned the corner with a look of intense love and longing which slowly changed into one of bitter hate. When he was out of sight she turned, and making her way to her bedroom flung herself upon the bed, and burying her face in the pillow to stifle the sound of her sobbing, gave way to an outburst of jealous rage that was almost awful in its intensity.

Ernest had only just time to go back to Dum's Ness and go through the form of eating some luncheon before he was obliged to start to catch his train. Dorothy had packed his things and made all those little preparations for his journey that women think of, so, after going to the office to bid good by to his uncle, who shook him heartily by the hand and bade him not forget the subject of their conversation, he had nothing to do but jump into the cart and start. In the sitting room he found Dorothy waiting for him with his coat and gloves; also, Jeremy, who was going to drive to the station with him. He put on his coat in silence; they were all quite silent; indeed, he might have been going for a long sojourn in a deadly climate instead of a two months' pleasure tour, so depressed was everybody.

"Good by, Doll, dear, he said, stooping to kiss her, but she shrunk away from him. In another minute he was gone.

At the station a word or two about Eva passed between Jeremy and himself.

"Well, Ernest," asked the former nervously, "have you pulled it off?"

"With her?"

"Of course; who else?"

"Yes, I have. But, Jeremy"——

"Well?"

"I don't want you to say anything about it to anybody at present."

"Very good."

"I say, old fellow," Ernest went on, after a pause, "I hope you don't mind very much."

"If I said I did not mind, Ernest," he answered slowly, turning his honest eyes full on to his friend's face, "I should be telling a lie. But I do say this. As I could not win her myself, I am glad that you have, because next to her I think I love you better than anybody in the world. You always had the luck, and I wish you joy. Here's the train."