see these pages read these words with sympathy, as the idle ravings of a man well nigh gone mad over woman's false beauty. I never told the story even to you, my dear mother. I dare say you guessed much of it. You know how Helen Rankine came down from London to our quiet country home. You know how beautiful and gracious she was. How kind and loving to you, how apparently frank and friendly with me. She was the first woman I ever saw to whom I gave a second thought, save you, dear mother. We rode and drove and chatted together. She drew my very heart from me. I told her all my plans and hopes and aspirations; of my love of the art to which I had devoted my life; that I hoped to go to London and study, and then to Rome; that I wanted to become a great painter. She was so full of hearty sympathy, so kind, so womanly, that before I knew it she had me enslaved. For all the graciousness and frankness and sympathy were but the means she used in her heartlessness to enslave me. Then came a day—a day to be remembered; a day like that, when beguiled by another beautiful fiend in woman form, our first father, poor, foolish man, ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and so lost his paradise. I told Helen of my love, and how I did love that woman. And she put on an appearance of surprise, and squeezed a cold tear or two from her beautiful eyes, and said that she thought I knew and understood. And when half dazed I asked her what she meant, what it was that I was thought to have known, she had to blush and said that she had long been engaged to her cousin John Bruce, who was now with his regiment in India, and that when he came home they were to be married. And then she said something about my being so young and having a great career before me, and that she should always be my friend, and would pray for my success. And she stretched out her hand toward me. I think she must have seen the hate in my face, for my great love turned to great hate even while she spoke, and all the wholesome currents of my being seemed poisoned by the supreme passion, and she turned pale, and her hand dropped, and I cursed her.

March 10—A call from Uncle John interrupted me the other day, and I have had no heart to write since. My moods shame me. I wrote those words with burning cheek and throbbing heart. I have just read them without emotion. Why can't I be a man, and not a silly, raving boy? Not that the hate that burns in my heart is abating. It can never abate. It will grow and grow, and keep me true to my purpose. No more mooning over art and the hope of a great name; but hard work and money making. Uncle John promises us both fortunes. He feels confident that his explosive will work such wonders in Australian mines that within ten years we can go back to England rich beyond the dreams of avarice. But I shall never see England again. No matter what I may have written here. Never shall I set foot on the land that rears such women as the one I hate. Captain Raymond was almost angry when he learned that in Uncle John's innocent-looking boxes was a compound powerful enough to blow us all out of the water. But he was somewhat reassured when Uncle insisted that as long as the Albatross floated she and we were safe; for he says that the explosive is only an explosive when wet. Captain Raymond said that he'd try and keep it dry then, and he sent men into the hold where the boxes were stored, and had them placed carefully in an unused cabin. We are the only passengers. I made sure that no woman was to be on board during the long voyage. I came near being disappointed in this, for Captain Raymond tells me that his wife was to sail with him, and had made all preparations, even to sending some boxes of clothing aboard, when the sudden death of her father prevented her from going. I'm sure I'm sorry that Mrs. Raymond's father is dead, but I'm very glad that Mrs. Raymond is not on this ship. I don't want to look on woman's face, nor hear woman's voice. There's but one woman to me in the wide world and, dear mother, forgive me if sometimes I cannot thank her for bringing me into the world. You understand me, mother. You know what I have suffered. You can sympathize with me when I say that I exult at the thought that leagues of ocean lie between me and that other woman, who—

March 12.—A strange thing has happened since I last wrote in this book. As I was writing I heard quite a commotion on deck; cries of the sailors, sharp orders from officers, and the trampling of feet. I rushed on deck. Uncle John and the Captain were standing on the poop, looking intently across the water; the first mate was shouting orders that I couldn't understand, and the crew were lowering the long boat.

"What's the matter?" I asked, joining uncle and the Captain.

"There's a little boat adrift out yonder," answered Uncle John, pointing, "and the lookout says that there are a couple of bodies lying in it. There, do you see it, on the top of that wave?"

I saw it; a mere shell it seemed, poised for a moment on the top of a swell, and then sliding down into the trough of the sea, quite out of sight. The long boat was soon lowered, and, guided by the cries of the lookout, made straight for the little boat. It seemed very long before it was reached, and then we saw the sailors make it fast to the long boat and begin to pull slowly back toward the Albatross. It was slow and hard work, towing that boat, small as it seemed, through the rather heavy sea. There was no sign of life in her. What was behind those low gunwales? Were the men bringing to us? At length they came alongside, and then we saw that there were two bodies lying there.

"A man and a woman, sir," called up the mate. "There's life in 'em both, but precious little."

It was nice work getting the two boats alongside and the bodies out of them and up to the deck; but it was done by the aid of slings, the woman being brought up first. Uncle John by virtue of his profession gave directions as to placing her on the deck, and then knelt by her side. I stood aloof. Why had that woman come to us in midocean? What was it? Fate?

"She is alive," cried Uncle John. "Captain, we must get her below at once."

I glanced at the woman. Thick locks of matted black hair lay around a face on which the sun and wind and the salt sea water had done fearful work. And yet those blackened and blistered features somehow had a familiar look. Where had I seen them? I could not tell. Four sailors carried her below and I turned to look at her companion, who had been laid on the deck. Uncle John just took time to grasp his wrist, and said: "He's alive, too," then he dropped the limp hand and hurried below. Always the way. Women first. This dying man might get what attention he could.

March 13.—The sailor whom we rescued grows strength fast. He was able to talk a little today. Briefly told, his story, as far as I got it, is that he was one of the crew of the Vulture, bound from England to India with army stores and arms, including a large consignment of powder. One day, he cannot say how many days ago, the ship caught fire in the hold. There were frantic and unavailable efforts made to get at the flames and extinguish them; and then the order was given to flood the hold, but before it could be executed there was a tremendous roar, and the sailor knew nothing else until he found himself in the water clinging to a fragment of the wreckage that strewed the sea. The ship had been blown up and had sunk at once. Not far from him floated one of the quarter boats apparently uninjured. He managed to swim to it and clambered in. There he was able to stand up and look around him. At first he could see no sign of life, but in another moment he heard a faint cry behind him, and turning saw a woman clinging to a broken spar. With a bit of broken board he paddled to her and got her into the boat. Like himself, she was unharmed, save by the awful shock and fright. He paddled around and around, but saw no further sign of life. Once a man's body rose near the boat; rose slowly; turned and sank again, and that was the last that they saw of the two score men that but a little moment before had been full of life and vigor.

March 14.—The sailor, whose name is Richard Jones, was able to crawl out on deck this morning. He completed his story. The young woman, he said, was the only passenger on the Vulture. He did not know her name. It had been talked among the crew that she was going out to her lover, an officer in the Indian army who had been wounded; that she would not wait for the regular East Indiaman, but had managed to secure passage on the Vulture. When she realized that she and the sailor Jones were the only ones alive of all those that had been on the vanished ship; and that they were quite alone on the ocean, in a small boat without oars or sails, or food or drink, she cried a little and wrung her hands and then became very quiet. She took her place in the bow, and there she sat. Jones sat in the stern and paddled clear of the wreckage, and then using the piece of board for a rudder, kept the boat before the wind. Luckily there was very little sea. He thought that they were in the track of Indiamen, and so kept good hope. He tried to encourage the young woman, but she seemed to prefer silence, and so he kept still. Thus they drifted. The sun beat down upon their unprotected heads. Then they began to want for water. They did not think so much of food as of water. Jones doesn't know how long they were adrift. He doesn't know when the girl lost consciousness. He remembers that one day she moaned a little and in the night he thought that he heard her whispering to herself. He thought that she was praying perhaps. Then he began to lose consciousness. He remembers seeing a beautiful green field, with trees and a brook running through it. He says that men suffering from thirst on the ocean often have such visions. He remembered nothing else until he opened his eyes and saw me bending over him.

April 2. It is more than two weeks since I wrote in my journal. I have been ill, a sort of low fever that kept me in my cabin. Nothing serious, Uncle John said, and so it has proved, except that I am very weak. Uncle has been kind, but most of his time has been devoted to that woman. He says that it is a very interesting case. She became conscious a few days ago, and has gained strength since. She will be on deck in a day or two, he thinks. I'm anxious to see her. I want to see if there really is anything familiar in her face. It's fortunate for her that clothing of Mrs. Raymond's is on board. She'd be in a plight, else. I asked Uncle John what her name was. He looked queer and said that he didn't know. Strange that he hasn't asked her. The sailor, Jones, seems quite recovered, and has taken his place among the crew. We were rather short-handed and the captain was glad enough to have him. He can be of service. But the woman can be nothing but a trouble, to me at least, for I must see her daily, I suppose. And yet I'm anxious to see her, too. This fever has left me rather childish as well as weak.

April 3. Thank God for these pages to which I can talk, else I should go mad, I think. Could you read these words as they flow from my pen, mother, you might well wonder whether I had not indeed gone mad. But I will be quite calm while I tell of what Fate, or Satan, or whatever evil power it is, has done for me. I was sitting on the deck this morning, still very weak, when I heard footsteps behind me, and Uncle John's voice saying "Good morning, Arthur." I turned and saw him standing near me, and leaning on his arm, Helen Rankine! I write these words calmly enough now. Can you imagine what I felt when I saw her? I staggered to my feet, muttered some incoherent words, and would have fallen had not Uncle John sprang to my side and caught me. "Why, what's the matter, Arthur? Calm yourself, my boy. Is it possible that you know this young lady?"

By a supreme effort of will, aided by the memory of that day when we last parted, I drew myself up and bowed and said that I had had the great honor of once knowing Miss Helen Rankine, and that I had had no idea that it was she we were fortunate enough to have rescued.

Uncle looked at me in wonder as I said these words with sneering politeness. The girl looked at me questioningly, but there was no shadow of recognition on her face.

"Then your name is Helen Rankine?" said Uncle John kindly, turning toward the girl and speaking as though to a little child.

A troubled look passed over her face, and then she said quietly, "I do not know. I cannot remember."

"Do you know this gentleman, Mr. Arthur Hartley?" he asked in the same kindly way.

Again the troubled look, an apparent effort to seize some elusive thought and then again the voice I knew so well, but now so unnaturally calm: "I do not know him."

My uncle gave his arm to Helen, and they walked the deck while I watched them. What did it mean, this failure of Helen to recognize me? Was I right in thinking the girl to be Helen Rankine. Yes; I could not be mistaken. That graceful walk, some of its old time spring and elasticity gone, to be sure, was the walk of Helen; the turn of the lovely neck; the pose of the head were hers. Then the story of the sailor, Jones, the forecastle gossip that she was going out to India to join her soldier lover; how well it tallied with what she had told me on that fatal day when she spurned my proffered love. But I would not dwell more on that. I will not now. I must force myself to forget, just for a little time, the past, that I may solve the mystery of the present. My head throbs; my brain is in a whirl.

April 4. After writing this I threw myself into my berth and tried to think over clearly the strange occurrences of the day. I was aroused by Uncle John asking me if I felt well enough to take a turn with him on deck. I joined him at once, and we paced the deck without speaking. It was a lovely night and the stars filled the heavens. At length Uncle John said: "Arthur, this is a very remarkable case. This poor girl has lost her memory completely and no wonder, after her terrible sufferings. She cannot remember an event that happened before she opened her eyes in the cabin below. She can talk well, reads readily, shows the breeding of a lady, but as far as the past is concerned she might as well be a week-old baby. You say that her name is Helen Rankine. Who is Helen Rankine? Where did you meet her?"

Uncle John had never known why I was so ready to give up my dreams of artist life and join him in his Australia scheme. I told him the whole story of my infatuation for Helen, and her heartless perfidy. He listened intently. When I had finished he said:

"My boy, let me say one thing, first of all. On your own evidence, forming my opinion solely from what you have told me, I think that you have done a good girl injustice. I don't believe that Helen Rankine coquetted with you. Like many a young fellow before you, you thought that the frank friendliness of a young woman who looked upon you as a boy, though perhaps not your senior in years was encouragement to make love to her. She thought that you knew of her engagement, so she said, and she was the victim of a terrible blunder. You are not the first lad that has had such an experience and cursed all women, and vowed that he'd never trust one again. I'll trot your children on my knee yet. Well, so much for the Helen of the past. Now for the Helen of the present, for we may as well call her Helen as anything else."

"But she is Helen; Helen Rankine. I can swear it," I interrupted.

"Well, well. So be it. I confess it looks so. I have taken a physician's liberty, and examined her clothing for marks. I find it marked 'H. R.'"

"Isn't that proof enough?" I asked eagerly.

"Yes; I dare say it is. Still there are other girls whose initials are 'H. R.' You and I have our task. It is to try and lead this girl back to the past. The awful experiences and sufferings of those days in the boat have affected her brain. Whether beyond cure or not I know not. Now remember, Arthur," and Uncle John looked at me seriously, "remember, that even if this girl is the gir. you think has wronged you, in fact she is not the same girl. She knows no more of you than she knows of me, whom she never saw in her life before. Another thing: if she is Helen Rankine she is engaged to John Bruce. Perhaps she wears his ring on her finger. You and I as gentlemen are bound to do what we can to deliver her to him as speedily as possible. And I pray God that we may see her meet him in her right mind, the same free-hearted English girl that he is now dreaming of.

I bowed my head, but could not say a word. Is Uncle John right, and have I been a weak, blind fool of a boy, thinking that the girl who was merely kind was encouraging me to love her? I felt my face burn at the thought, I can't think clearly yet, but I see my duty.

April 10—If I lacked proof of the girl's identity, I have it now. Yesterday we sat together on the deck for hours, I trying gently to lead her back to the past. Helen Rankine used to wear several valuable rings. Now she wears but one. "You have a pretty ring," I said, pointing to her hand. Her hand! How white and dimpled it used to be. How I longed to catch it to my lips, to kiss the pretty rosy-tipped fingers! Her hand! Now brown with wind and sun, but still dimpled and rosy-tipped. Like a child she laid it in mine.

"Yes," she said, "it is a pretty ring."

"Where did you get it, Helen?" I asked.

"I don't remember," she said quietly.

"May I look at it?" I asked.

"Oh, yes;" and she slipped it from her finger and laid it in my hand.

"What are these letters engraved within?" I asked.

"Are there letters there?" she said "I didn't know it. So there are. C. H. R. from J. B. What does that mean?"

"Don't you know?" I asked. Oh, it was hard to see that calm face, to hear that calm voice. Better the blush and silent avowal of love, even for another, than that blank gaze.

"No, I do not know what those letters mean," she answered.

"Perhaps 'H. R.' stands for your own name," said I.

She smiled like a happy child. "Yes, yes. That must be it. But the 'J. B.,' what do they stand for?"

I hesitated: who would not?

"Perhaps they stand for—for John Bruce," I said slowly, looking her steadily in the eyes. She returned the gaze with the calm confidence of a child.

"Who is John Bruce?" she asked. "I can't remember John Bruce."

My heart gave a great leap, then sank like lead. Am I then such a villain that I rejoice at the thought that Helen Rankine has no memory of her love? Where is the hate that I boasted of? It has gone. I could not live before the calm eyes of the girl by my side. But I had my duty to do.

"John Bruce is in India, Helen," said I. "Don't you remember? And you were going to him, and when you reached him you were to marry him. He loves you dearly, and you loved him dearly. Can't you remember?"

The troubled look came to the dark eyes and ruffled the calm brow. A faint flush passed across the rich, warm cheeks. Then, like a spoiled child, she shook her head and said:

"No, no, no, no," with a little pat of the foot and not at the last "no." I do not know anything about it at all. I do not know John Bruce, and of course I do not love him. How could I? But I know you, Arthur, and I love you," and she laid her hand in mine with a pretty smile.

I wonder if I'm the same man that set sail on the Albatross six short weeks ago: The Arthur Hartley then was a mad, foolish boy. The Arthur Hartley now is a grave, serious man. I feel that years and years have passed, instead of weeks. How much I am changed let this prove. I held Helen's hand in mine and answered gently: "I am very glad you love me, Helen. I hope you will ever love me. I certainly love you dearly. I could not love a sister more."

She smiled at this and patted my hand, and then we sat, hand in hand, without speaking until the shadows deepened on the deck.

May 2. You have been much in my thoughts of late, dear mother: but you will never know it. You will never see these words. I had thought not to write in this book again, for I feel sure that it will never reach you: but I seem to be urged to keep some record of our eventful voyage. We are lying becalmed far in the Southern Atlantic, so Captain Raymond says. An awful storm that drove us at its will, and before which it seemed possible for no ship to live has driven us here, far out of our course. For six days we have been lying here motionless. The storm that raged with such terrible fury seems to have exhausted all the winds of the heavens. I never knew anything more thoroughly depressing than this calm. Even writing seems a task beyond me. But indeed I am not as strong as before the attack of fever. I do not seem to regain my strength. I had in mind to describe the storm. It is beyond my powers. We lost a long boat and a quantity of spars. Two sailors, one of them Richard Jones, saved but to be lost, were washed overboard and never seen again. There is no change in Helen. She is apparently perfectly happy, but it is the happiness of a contented and healthy child. She takes much pleasure in being with me, and sits by the hour with her hand in mine, while I talk of the England that we have left and of the scenes of other days. But nothing awakens the dormant memory. Uncle John has got back to his studies, and talks explosives to anyone who will listen.

May 21. I am sitting alone in the cabin writing. It is very late. I hear the steps of the mate as he paces the deck. The calm still holds us in its fearful clasp. Great God, what is to be the end of it all! There has been a break in the monotony of our existence today. Uncle John got into a hot discussion with Captain Raymond at the dinner table about the efficacy of the wonderful explosive compound. The Captain seemed doubtful. Uncle John was for the instant angry.

"I'll show you then," he said, and he rushed into the cabin where his boxes are stored and came out shortly with two tin cans, each holding something less than a pint. He unscrewed the top of one, disclosing a brownish powder. "Take care," said the Captain, who seemed needlessly cautious and almost fearful.

"Why, I thought you said it was useless," said Uncle John with a laugh, "and yet you are afraid of it. Look here." He lighted a match and held it close to the powder. A dark smoke arose that instantly extinguished the little flame, and floated off leaving a queer smell behind. That was all.

"Perfectly harmless, Captain," continued Uncle, who had now recovered his usual good nature. "Perfectly harmless unless you wet it. Then look out."

The cook made a sort of dumpling for dinner, and a great lot of it remained. Uncle John took a mass of the dough, for it was little else, squeezed it until it was quite dry and molded it into a ball. "Come with me," he said, "and, Arthur, bring a plate of that dough with you." He took the cans and we followed him to the deck. There he carefully covered the ball of dough with the powder, and, going to the rail, threw it as far as he could over the placid sea. As the ball struck the water there was a loud explosion and the spray was thrown high into the air. The crew, who had been hanging over the port rail forward, turned and rushed over to see what was up. Uncle John made another ball and threw it with like result.

"Oh, houty torpeters," growled one of the men, and they turned back to their former places. Uncle John, now evidently anxious to give us thorough proof of the value of his compound, was for throwing more balls, when the boatswain, rolling aft, touched his hat and said to the Captain:

"Please, sur, there's a big shark as has shewed his fin hoff the port bow, and if so be that the doctor 'll wait a bit with his torpeters, we'll show 'im some fun a catchin' of it."

"All right, bo'sun," said the Captain, and we all went over to the port rail.

"There he is," said the Captain, pointing to a sharp black thing, that rising just above the water, was cutting a quiet path through it. "That is his fin, and there's a big shark under it or I'm much mistaken."

The sailors had got a large hook, and had baited it with a piece of salt beef, and made it fast to a stout line, with a chain that the fish couldn't bite off. This tempting morsel was flung overboard and as it fell with a splash into the water we saw the fin cut toward it, and then disappear. The next instant there was a great tug at the rope.

"Hurray! we've got 'um!" yelled the boatswain. "Walk away with 'im now, my hearties."

A dozen sailors had manned the rope, and now started to drag the big fish out of the water. There was a tremendous pull, a great splashing and then the men tumbled in a heap on the deck, and the hook was jerked sharply over the rail.

"Cuss the luck," growled the boatswain. "The 'ook didn't 'old."

The taste of salt beef evidently suited the shark for he was soon right alongside, cruising back and forth, looking for more. We could see him distinctly, and a tremendous fellow he was. Again the men baited the hook and dropped it overboard. We saw the big fish dart forward, turn on his side to get at the bait with a sharp snap of his terrible jaws. Again the hook would not catch and the shark was waiting for more beef. The men were about to make a third attempt when Uncle John started.

"Wait a bit, men," he said. "I've got a hook that will hold. Give me a piece of the meat."

The men fell back and looked eagerly. The cook handed up a big chunk of meat. "Wipe it as dry as you can," said uncle, "and tie it firmly to the rope." When this was done he sprinkled the powder from the can carefully over the meat; then he carried it cautiously to the rail. The shark was cruising back and forth. Uncle lowered the meat slowly into the water right in front of the monster. He saw the bait and darted at it; and then there was a tremendous report and the spray flew into our faces as we leaned over the rail. The next moment we saw the big fish floating motionless on the water.

"Blessed if 'e 'asn't blowed 'is 'ead clean 'boff," said the boatswain.

It was so. That terrible compound of Uncle John's had needed only the impact of the shark's teeth to explode it with deadly effect. Uncle looked perfectly happy. The effect on Helen was strange. For the first time since she had been with us she seemed to be angry.

"I think you are very cruel," she said to Uncle John, "to kill that beautiful shark. He had not harmed you. I shall not love you any more." As she said this she stepped to my side and grasped my hand, as though she feared uncle and wanted my protection. The men heard her words and the effects was marked. They had been in high good humor over the death of the shark, the sailors' most dreaded enemy, but at these strange words they shrank away with gloomy faces, and I could hear muttered curses and the words, "witch" and "she devil." That put an end to the good humor that for the first time in days seemed to pervade the becalmed vessel. Uncle John made one more "torpeter" with the little powder that remained in the open can. The other he carried to his cabin. When I left the deck just before beginning this writing the sailors were huddled together forward and eagerly talking, but very quietly. The sea was like a glass in which the stars of this strange southern sky were all mirrored.

Again impelled by I know not what power, I come to my journal. For what strange eyes am I writing these words. I doubt whether I shall have strength to put down the record that I feel ought to be put down. Perhaps the power that impels me to write at all will give me the needed strength. I have lost the reckoning of the days, but that matters not. After writing the words with which my last entry closed I went to my cabin and was soon asleep. I was awakened by stealthy feet without my door, followed by sounds of a struggle on deck, two or three pistol shots, curses and groans and the trampling of feet. I jumped from my bunk, threw on some clothing and hurried out. The large cabin was in total darkness. I rushed to the companion way. As I stepped upon the deck I saw before me a struggling throng and then there was a crash and I knew no more for a time. I know now that I was struck on the head by one of the crew, who had been watching for me. When I recovered consciousness I was lying bound hand and foot on the deck. It was early daylight. I struggled to rise, but could not stir. I saw the crew carrying bags and casks and clothing and lowering them over the side. Two or three forms lay on the deck, but I could not see who or what they were. I recognized the boatswain's voice giving orders. He asked if there was water enough and food, if the log and chronometer and compasses had been stowed away. It was all confusion and my brain seemed on fire, but I knew that the crew were preparing to quit the ship. Where was Uncle John, where was Captain Raymond, and where was Helen? At this I again struggled and strove to rise, and the noise I made attracted the boatswain and he came to me.

"You're fast enough, my lad," said he, smiling grimly. "Best lie quiet and listen. Th' lads 'ave 'ad enough of this bedeviled ship and the witch that 'as bedeviled 'er. So we're goin' to slip our cable and put hoff. You seen the end o' the witch that we'll leave you with 'er. She'll care for thee, never fear," and he turned on his heel.

I tried to speak but must have fainted with the effort. When I again became conscious I was still lying on the deck, but my bonds had been cut and I managed to stagger to my feet. I looked all around. Not a living being could I see. Just then the sun came up and as his glowing disk showed above the quiet water I caught far away in the South a faint sparkle, and then saw the specks that had been my straining gaze disappeared. I doubt not that what I saw were the boats containing the crew of the Albatross. I turned and looked around the deck. The forms that I had seen were no longer visible, but just aft of the wheel was a piece of canvas covering something. I walked over feebly, for the blow that I had received had shaken me badly, and lifted the canvas. There lay the dead bodies of my dear uncle and Captain Raymond and big First Mate Robinson. Like a man in a dream I covered them again, and again looked about the deck. Where was Helen? Not on the deck. Had the villains taken her with them? I made my feeble way below and went to Helen's cabin. The door was shut; I tried to open it. It was locked. I examined the lock. The key was in it, and on the outside. They had locked her in. I cautiously turned the key, opened the door and entered. There lay Helen, her dark hair streaming back over the pillow. One round cheek rested softly on her brown dimpled hand; the other bore a lovely flush. The half-parted lips were like crimson rosebuds, and over her bosom her white night robe rose and fell gently. She was asleep. As I stood there she opened her eyes. When she saw me she smiled happily, and said in a sweet, sleepy voice: "Is it time to get up, Arthur? Why, how pale you look. Are you ill?" And she rose on one arm, and the smile faded away.

"Yes, Helen," I said, as steadily as I could; "It's time to get up. Come into the cabin as quickly as you can. I am not at all well." And I left the little cabin still like a man in a dream. Helen soon joined me. I asked her if she had slept well. She had. Had she heard no unusual noises in the night? No, she had not awakened once. So it was. Like a tired, healthy child, Helen had slept through all that awful tragedy. I shall not attempt to try and tell of the task I had in making her comprehend our awful situation. She did not comprehend it. She wept bitterly when I told her of the three dead bodies on the deck. She moaned over my "poor bruised head," and with gentle hands bathed and bound it up. Then she said that she was hungry. We found the lockers in great confusion, but the crew had left food enough of one sort or another to satisfy our immediate needs. There was an awful task before us, and I explained it to Helen. We must consign those dead bodies to the sea. She shuddered at the thought, but, like an obedient child, tried to help me. How I managed to encase those silent forms in canvas I hardly know, but I did, and got them to the side of the ship. Then I got my prayer book and read the blessed burial service, while Helen looked on in troubled wonder. Then came the hardest task of all, but it was done, and the bodies, one after the other, fell with a great splash into the still sea. I had thought to bind heavy weights to the feet, and they sank at once, and Helen and I were left quite alone. I am writing this with a great difficulty, for we are dying. Dying of thirst. Why I write I do not know. There is no water on board. The sailors, after filling their casks from the great casks in the hold, left the water running. When we sought to draw, there was not a drop left. There is a change coming over Helen. She sometimes looks at me strangely. She seems almost shy. I wonder what it is. Is memory coming back? Or has she learned that she is a woman and I a man? But she is not for me. There is John Bruce, and I vowed to take her safely to him, and I shall—Mother, good—I can't write more. I see that the end is * * * * * *

Here the writing in the little water-soaked book became entirely illegible. Indeed the last few lines were very indistinct, and showed the failing of mental and physical strength. I sat staring at the yellow page and then looked up at Judson. He was gazing intently at me.

"Well, go on, go on," he said impatiently.

"That's all," said I.

He seized the book from my hands, and turned the leaves feverishly. "Yes, yes. That is all. Why, man, we're not much wiser than we were. We've got something, but we haven't solved the mystery of the headless skeletons."

"No, nor are we likely to," said I.

"Not likely to? We must," said Judson, in a sharp, strained voice. He seemed to be much excited. I looked at my watch.

"It's Sunday morning," said I, "and luckily Sunday," I thought. Judson wouldn't be good for much in a trial after such an evening as this. As for himself, I was tired and hungry and I said so.

"So am I," said Judson, dropping the excited air, but with an effort. "Sit still a moment." He came back soon with a tray, on which were cold meat, and bread and butter, and crackers and Rochefort cheese, and a bottle of Macon Vieux.

"You evidently know what a hungry newspaper man wants in the middle of the night," said I.

"I know what a hungry lawyer wants," and he drew the cork.

"Now," said he, after we had taken the edge off of our appetites and were enjoying the Burgundy, "we must know the rest of that story."

"Easier said than done."

"Why so? Does it seem more difficult to get a message directly from Arthur Hartley than to get that journal from the bottom of the ocean? I do not think so. This unique experience has given me a confidence in the power of will over nature that nothing can shake. There is but one obstacle that stands in the way of our success. The woman whom you call the medium was thoroughly prostrated, as you saw. She seemed badly frightened, too. She said that she had never had such an experience. That she felt that she could not live through another. As she expressed it she felt that she had been the battle ground where two great forces had met and contended. I soothed her as best I could and sent her home. I did not tell her that I thought that she was right. She was the medium, the unconscious medium through which will overcame the forces of nature. This evening she must be the medium through which in obedience to our will the spirit of Arthur Hartley shall speak with us."

"Suppose she refuses?"

"She will obey me, or rather my will," said Judson quietly, as though it were a question of whether it is safe to subject her to the ordeal. But as it will be nothing compared with that she has just been through I shall attempt it, if she is at all able to bear it. I must have that mystery solved."

I slept very late that morning and joined the family at the Sunday afternoon dinner; and then went with Judson to the library to smoke.

"It's all right," he said, as soon as we were seated. "She will come this evening."

"Will all those persons be here?" I asked.

"Oh, no. You and I and the woman only."

It was 10 o'clock that evening when Judson entered the library, where I sat reading before the glowing grate, and said:

"She's here. Come into the parlor."

It was with more than ordinary emotions that I followed him. The medium was the only person in the room. The cabinet still stood where it had stood 24 hours before, but behind the picture of ill health. Great hollows were beneath the tired eyes, and she moved feebly. She bowed gravely to me and entered the cabinet. Judson turned the gas down low.

"If you will remain entirely passive," he said softly, "I think we shall get the communication without trouble." There was a calm confidence in his voice, quite different from the intensity of his manner the night before. We sat quietly for many minutes until I began to grow uneasy. I tried to think of nothing with very poor success, but while I was making the effort strenuously there came from the cabinet a clear, firm voice. Its tones were something like those in which the woman the night before had said: "What do you wish?" but as the voice proceeded it took on a manlier tone, with that indescribable accent that we call "English." These were the words:

"Since you wish it I will finish the story of my life on earth. Listen: When I ceased writing in my book on the Albatross it was because I lost control of my pen, and of my mind as well. I managed to crawl to the deck. Helen was lying motionless in the shadow of the companion hatch. I threw my myself down by her side. She put out her hand and grasped mine, and a flush crossed her face. I was too weak to speak, and thus hand and hand we lay for I don't know how long. Gradually I lost consciousness, perhaps in sleep. At all events my spirit was not free. The frail body still had strength enough to retain it. I was aroused by something dropping on my face. As consciousness came back I saw that the sky had become overcast; that a cool breeze was blowing and that a gentle rain was falling. Helen was sitting erect and with parted lips drinking in the grateful rain-laden air. I tried to rise but could not. She was much stronger than I, and at my direction went below and brought blankets and clothes which she spread on the deck that they might catch the falling drops. She seemed quite vigorous and already I felt my own strength coming back. Soon she was able to squeeze water from a blanket into a small can which stood by the mast. We were in too great agony of thirst to think of small matters of neatness. She offered the can to me.

"Drink yourself, Helen," I said.

"No," she answered, with a smile. "No, you need it most! And kneeling by my side she slipped her arm under my head and with her other hand held the water to my lips.

"I drank eagerly. The draught was life to me. Never had water such strength-giving power. I hardly noticed that it left a queer taste upon my lips. I sat erect. Helen, with her arm still around my neck, drank what remained in the can. Then she looked me full in the face. There was a new expression in the lovely eyes; the old vague calm look had gone. A deep flush was on her brow as she spoke:

"Arthur," she said, and there was a tremor in the rich, deep voice, "Arthur my memory has come back. No, do not speak, but hear me. The past all returned the night after that awful day when we buried those dead bodies in the sea. I now remember and understand all that you and the dear Doctor said to me. I remember our parting in England; I remember John Bruce; I remember why I set out for India so suddenly. I heard that he was wounded. I thought duty called me. For I did not love him, Arthur. How could I? I had not seen him since we were children, and our fathers betrothed us. But, Arthur, a higher power than hate or love has given us to each other, and I can tell you, dear, that I love you. Oh, I love you! My darling, my noble, faithful darling! Oh, Arthur, Arthur!"

"She threw herself upon my breast with burning face and streaming eyes. The blood leaped through my veins. She raised her sweet face, and our lips met for the first time.

"There was an awful crash, and our freed spirits took their happy flight together. We had drank from the can that had contained Uncle John's explosive. A little of the powder had clung to the can, floated on the water and adhered to our lips when we drank. The impact of that first ecstatic kiss had exploded the compound and our heads were blown from our shoulders. That's all. Good-bye."

[THE END.]

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Interpolated in the Prayer.

New Bedford Gazette.]

A little tot, before tumbling into her nest the other night, offered her slumber prayer as follows:

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee Lord my soul to keep,
If I should die before I wake,
(I wouldn't die for a hundred dollars)
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

COURTS OF EUROPE.

A Reign of Domesticity Supplanting the Ancient Splendor.

BONNETS PREFERRED TO CROWNS.

Russia Still Blazes in Her Royal Dignity, the Empress' Attire

DAZZLING ALL WHO BEHOLD HER

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

It is very curious to note what a reign of domesticity seems to be coming over all the courts of Europe. Not the mock dairy style of Marie Antoinette, but the plain bacon-and-eggs-every-day-English which it is now considered so virtuous and proper for a sovereign to assume. It has become positively distasteful to the monarchs themselves to keep up the ancient splendor which has always been a sign and symbol of their power—they no longer talk of the divinity that hedges them and in their desire to be thought "true hearts" lay their coronets on the top shelf of the cupboard. But isn't it a poetic fiction that the two cannot exist together. Is Tennyson to blame for all this?

Mrs. Humphrey Ward complains of the leveling of the mountain tops in the great modern rise of the people, their study of sociology, their desire for general disintegration which seems to have made all men mad. She fears a dreadful dead level of need for the future. It certainly seems as if royalty was bent on bringing itself into the shiny depths. Queen Victoria persistently clings to the rusty old bonnet that would disgrace a char-woman, although it sometimes seems as if it would enrage the long suffering British public into saying: "You can't play queen if you wont wear the crown." The royal grants would come freely if the crown-jewels were brought out occasionally.

The epoch of the working classes is slowly coming—noble ladies opening millinery shops on Bond street and queens preferring bonnets to crowns. What an encouragement to trade!

The mountain peaks shine dimmer and dimmer, only the imperial summits of Russia still blaze in royal dignity. Perhaps if the Empress of Russia had to make her own bonnets when a girl she got enough of the millinery trade then and really prefers crowns.

SHE BEATS THEM ALL.

There is no monarch in Europe who surpasses her in magnificence of attire, which is semi-barbaric in its gorgeousness, and at the state balls she is literally a walking Golconda. The nearest approach to her splendor that has been witnessed in London was the attire of the Indian Princes who attended the Queen's jubilee. The Queen had driven through Piccadilly very pale and stern, expecting every moment a mine to explode beneath her feet or a bomb a la Russe to be hurled from a house top, for there were whispers of socialistic threats, her body guard of princely descendants looked like a river of gold winding through the dark masses of the densely-packed crowd on either side with their uniforms glittering in the sun—but suddenly a great cry of admiration arose from the crowd. It was the carriages of the Indian Princes which had come in sight, and now the river of gold was changed to a river of diamonds, for they were literally covered from head to foot with jewels.

As you approach the state drawing room of the Princess Dagmar, of Denmark, Empress of all the Russias, you perceive that the doors thickly overlaid with gold are also incrusted with jewels, great emeralds uncut, amethysts, topaz and turquoise glitter in the brilliantly lighted corridors. At the door you pause dazzled with the gleam of 30,000 candles set in crystal, and beneath them, before the golden throne, blazes the beautiful woman, sister to the Princess of Wales, who holds her own amidst all these splendors with the simple dignity of the Cinderella princess who made her own bonnet in the little kingdom by the sea. Her robes are stiff with diamonds and the strands of priceless pearls, and with their great pear-shaped pendants fall like a net-work nearly to her feet. Scarcely an inch of textile fabric can be seen, for the entire train is covered with embroidery in gold and pearls and lined with Russian sable.

THE IMPERIAL TREASURES

are beyond calculation, but they are for use and not merely kept as the curiosities of a former age—the great antique crowns with the finest rubies and diamonds in the world, the scepter with the wonderful Orloff diamond in its head are brought out and used for different state ceremonials, the people given a sight of them and at the royal banquets the gold and jeweled plate is taken from the cabinets and spread for the feast. An American politician once proudly showed me a pearl which he dug from his goblet with a penknife when official position gave him entree to one of these scenes of splendor. Even the carriages and harness are covered with jewels.

One room in the palace is entirely lined with amber, walls, ceilings, columns, doors, everything—the frieze, elaborately carved, being Roman arabesques in transparent amber on an opaque ground. The capitals of the pillars are inlaid with topaz. When the Czarina receives here she wears a dress of cloth of gold covered with gold embroidery, topaz and yellow diamonds.

The Russians adore jewels. The court ladies all have the most wonderful parures, while the 25 Grand Dukes with their splendid uniforms and foreign orders make a never to be forgotten spectacle with their splendid forms and blonde mustaches.

The churches are all gold and jewels, in a sort of Græco-Byzantine mosaic. Their sacred portraits are called icons. They are small miniatures of the Virgin and child set in frames of gold or silver so made that only the painted heads show while the outlines of the figures and draperies are traced in the gold and inlaid with jewels.

Some are large and of priceless value, while others are as small as a miniature locket. They descend as heirlooms in the family and are greatly venerated. The oldest having been painted by St. Luke. Their quaintness has of late made them much sought after in Paris as bric-a-brac. I remember turning to a Russian lady at a reception in Paris, and not knowing what they were, not wishing to say something with a Russian flavor, remarked: "I hear icons are becoming very fashionable." "Fashionable!" she cried with horror—"Mon Dieu! What will you desecrate next? Why, they are the sacred images we pray to."

ALL ROYAL STYLE DROPPED.

The Czar and Czarina are now making their annual visit to her old home. There they drop all royal style. The Prince and Princess of Wales, with their sons and daughters, join them. The King and Queen of Greece and their family. The King is brother to the Czarina and the Queen cousin to the Czar. They are just like any other family party, with their little gifts and surprises for each other. The Wales children bring all the new jokes, puzzles and mechanical toys from the