

BARING-GOULD SABINE

IN THE ROAR OF THE SEA

Sabine Baring-Gould
In the Roar of the Sea

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S. Baring-Gould

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CHAPTER I

OVER AND DONE

Sitting in the parsonage garden, in a white frock, with a pale green sash about her waist, leaning back against the red-brick wall, her glowing copper hair lit by the evening sun, was Judith Trevisa.

She was tossing guelder-roses into the air; some dozens were strewn about her feet on the gravel, but one remained of the many she had plucked and thrown and caught, and thrown and caught again for a sunny afternoon hour. As each greenish-white ball of flowers went up into the air it diffused a faint but pleasant fragrance.

“When I have done with you, my beauty, I have done altogether,” said Judith.

“With what?”

Her father spoke. He had come up unperceived by the girl, burdened with a shovel in one hand and a bucket in the other, looking pale, weary, and worn.

“Papa, you nearly spoiled my game. Let me finish, and I will speak.”

“Is it a very serious matter, Judith, and engrossing?”

“Engrossing, but not serious, *Je m’amuse*.”

The old rector seated himself on the bench beside her, and he also leaned back against the red-brick, gold-and-gray-lichen-spotted wall, and looked into the distance before him, waiting till his daughter was ready to speak, not, perhaps, sorry to have a little rest first, for he was overtired. Had Judith not been absorbed in her ball-play with the guelder-rose bunch she would have noticed his haggard appearance, the green hue about his mouth, the sunken eyes, the beaded brow. But she was counting the rebounds of her ball, bent on sustaining her play as long as was possible to her.

She formed a charming picture, fresh and pure, and had the old man not been overtired, he would have thought so with a throb of parental pride.

She was a child in size, slender in build, delicate in bone, with face and hands of porcelain transparency and whiteness, with, moreover, that incomparable complexion only seen in the British Isles, and then only with red-gold hair.

Her bronze-leather shoes were the hue of some large flies that basked and frisked on the warm wall, only slightly disturbed by the girl’s play, to return again and run and preen themselves again, and glitter jewel-like as studs on that sun-baked, lichen-enamelled wall. Her eyes, moreover, were lustrous as the backs of these flies, iridescent with the changing lights of the declining sun, and the changed direction of her glance following the dancing ball of guelder-rose. Her long fingers might have been of china, but that when raised so that the sun struck their backs they were turned to a translucent rose. There was no color in her cheek, only the faintest suffusion of pink on the temples below where the hair was rolled back in waves of luminous molten copper dashing against the brick wall.

“I have done my work,” said the rector.

“And I my play,” responded the girl, letting the ball drop into her lap and rock there from one knee to the other. “Papa, this fellow is the conqueror; I have made him dance thirty-five great leaps, and he has not yet fallen – wilfully. I let him go down and get breath just now. There lie all my dancers dead about me. They failed very speedily.”

“You cannot be forever playing, Ju.”

“That is why I play now, papa. When playtime is over I shall be in earnest indeed.”

“Indeed?” the old man sighed.

Judith looked round, and was shocked to see how ill her father appeared to be.

“Are you very tired, darling papa?”

“Yes – overtired.”

“Have you been at your usual task?”

“Yes, Ju – an unprofitable task.”

“Oh, papa!”

“Yes, unprofitable. The next wind from the sea that blows – one will blow in an hour – and all my work is undone.”

“But, my dear papa!” Judith stooped and looked into the bucket. “Why! – what has made you bring a load of sand up here? We want none in the garden. And such a distance too! – from the church. No wonder you are tired.”

“Have I brought it?” he asked, without looking at the bucket.

“You have, indeed. That, if you please, is unprofitable work, not the digging of the church out of the sand-heaps that swallow it.”

“My dear, I did not know that I had not emptied the pail outside the church-yard gate. I am very tired; perhaps that explains it.”

“No doubt about it, papa. It was work quite as unprofitable but much more exhausting than my ball-play. Now, papa, while you have been digging your church out of the sand, which will blow over it again to-night, you say, I have been pitching and tossing guelder-roses. We have been both wasting time, one as much as the other.”

“One as much as the other,” repeated the old man. “Yes, dear, one as much as the other, and I have been doing it all my time here – morally, spiritually, as well as materially, digging the church out of the smothering sands, and all in vain – all profitless work. You are right, Ju.”

“Papa,” said Judith hastily, seeing his discouragement and knowing his tendency to depression, “papa, do you hear the sea how it roars? I have stood on the bench, more than once, to look out seaward, and find a reason for it; but there is none – all blue, blue as a larkspur; and not a cloud in the sky – all blue, blue there too. No wind either, and that is why I have done well with my ball-play. Do you hear the roar of the sea, papa?” she repeated.

“Yes, Ju. There will be a storm shortly. The sea is thrown into great swells of rollers, a sure token that something is coming. Before night a gale will be on us.”

Then ensued silence. Judith with one finger trifled with the guelder-rose bunch in her lap musingly, not desirous to resume her play with it. Something in her father’s manner was unusual, and made her uneasy.

“My dear!” he began, after a pause, “one must look out to sea – into the vast mysterious sea of the future – and prepare for what is coming from it. Just now the air is still, and we sit in this sweet, sunny garden, and lean our backs against the warm wall, and smell the fragrance of the flowers; but we hear the beating of the sea, and know that a mighty tempest, with clouds and darkness, is coming. So in other matters we must look out and be ready – count the time till it comes. My dear, when I am gone – ”

“Papa!”

“We were looking out to sea and listening. That must come at some time – it may come sooner than you anticipate.” He paused, heaved a sigh, and said, “Oh, Jamie! What are we to do about Jamie?”

“Papa, I will always take care of Jamie.”

“But who will take care of you?”

“Of me? Oh, papa, surely I can take care of myself!”

He shook his head doubtfully.

“Papa, you know how strong I am in will – how firm I can be with Jamie.”

“But all mankind are not Jamies. It is not for you I fear, as much as for you and him together. He is a trouble and a difficulty.”

“Jamie is not so silly and troublesome as you think. All he needs is application. He cannot screw his mind down to his books – to any serious occupation. But that will come. I have heard say that the stupidest children make the sharpest men. Little by little it will come, but it will come certainly. I will set myself as my task to make Jamie apply his mind and become a useful man, and I shall succeed, papa.” She caught her father’s hand between hers, and slapped it joyously, confidently. “How cold your hand is, papa! and yet you look warm.”

“You were always Jamie’s champion,” said her father, not noticing her remark relative to himself.

“He is my twin brother, so of course I am his champion. Who else would be that, were not I?”

“No – no one else. He is mischievous and troublesome – poor, poor fellow. You will always be to Jamie what you are now, Ju – his protector or champion? He is weak and foolish, and if he were to fall into bad hands – I shudder to think what might become of him.”

“Rely on me, dearest father.”

Then he lifted the hand of his daughter, and looked at it with a faint smile. “It is very small, it is very weak, to fight for self alone, let alone yourself encumbered with Jamie.”

“I will do it, papa, do not fear.”

“Judith, I must talk very gravely with you, for the future is very dark to me; and I am unable with hand or brain to provide anything against the evil day. Numbness is on me, and I have been hampered on every side. For one thing, the living has been so poor, and my parishioners so difficult to deal with, that I have been able to lay by but a trifle. I believe I have not a relative in the world – none, at all events, near enough and known to me that I dare ask him to care for you – ”

“Papa, there is Aunt Dionysia.”

“Aunt Dionysia,” he repeated, with a hesitating voice. “Yes; but Aunt Dionysia is – is not herself capable of taking charge of you. She has nothing but what she earns, and then – Aunt Dionysia is – is – well – Aunt Dionysia. I don’t think you could be happy with her, even if, in the event of my departure, she were able to take care of you. Then – and that chiefly – she has chosen, against my express wishes – I may say, in defiance of me – to go as housekeeper into the service of the man, of all others, who has been a thorn in my side, a hinderer of God’s work, a – But I will say no more.”

“What! Cruel Coppinger?”

“Yes, Cruel Coppinger. I might have been the means of doing a little good in this place, God knows! I only *think* I might; but I have been thwarted, defied, insulted by that man. As I have striven to dig my buried church out of the overwhelming sands, so have I striven to lift the souls of my poor parishioners out of the dead engulfing sands of savagery, brutality, very heathenism of their mode of life, and I have been frustrated. The winds have blown the sands back with every gale over my work with spade, and that stormblast Coppinger has devastated every trace of good that I have done, or tried to do, in spiritual matters. The Lord reward him according to his works.”

Judith felt her father’s hand tremble in hers.

“Never mind Coppinger now,” she said, soothingly.

“I must mind him,” said the old man, with severe vehemence. “And – that my own sister should go, go – out of defiance, into his house and serve him! That was too much. I might well say, I have none to whom to look as your protector.” He paused awhile, and wiped his brow. His pale lips were quivering. “I do not mean to say,” said he, “that I acted with judgment, when first I came to S. Enodoc, when I spoke against smuggling. I did not understand it then. I thought with the thoughts of an inlander. Here – the sands sweep over the fields, and agriculture is in a measure impossible. The bays and creeks seem to invite – well – I leave it an open question. But with regard to wrecking – ” His voice, which had quavered in feebleness, according with the feebleness of his judgment relative to smuggling, now gained sonorousness. “Wrecking, deliberate wrecking, is quite another matter. I do not say that our people are not justified in gathering the harvest the sea casts up. There always must be, there will be wrecks on this terrible coast; but there has been – I know there has been, though I

have not been able to prove it – deliberate provocation of wrecks, and that is the sin of Cain. Had I been able to prove – ”

“Never mind that now, dear papa. Neither I nor Jamie are, or will be, wreckers. Talk of something else. You over-excite yourself.”

Judith was accustomed to hear her father talk in an open manner to her. She had been his sole companion for several years, since his wife’s death, and she had become the *confidante* of his inmost thoughts, his vacillations, his discouragements, not of his hopes – for he had none, nor of his schemes – for he formed none.

“I do not think I have been of any use in this world,” said the old parson, relapsing into his tone of discouragement, the temporary flame of anger having died away. “My sowing has produced no harvest. I have brought light, help, strength to none. I have dug all day in the vineyard, and not a vine is the better for it; all cankered and fruitless.”

“Papa – and me! Have you done nothing for me!”

“You!”

He had not thought of his child.

“Papa! Do you think that I have gained naught from you? No strength, no resolution from seeing you toil on in your thankless work, without apparent results? If I have any energy and principle to carry me through I owe it to you.”

He was moved, and raised his trembling hand and laid it on her golden head.

He said no more, and was very still.

Presently she spoke. His hands weighed heavily on her head.

“Papa, you are listening to the roar of the sea?”

He made no reply.

“Papa, I felt a cold breath; and see, the sun has a film over it. Surely the sea is roaring louder!”

His hand slipped from her head and struck her shoulder – roughly, she thought. She turned, startled, and looked at him. His eyes were open, he was leaning back, almost fallen against the wall, and was deadly pale.

“Papa, you are listening to the roar?”

Then a thought struck her like a bullet in the heart.

“Papa! Papa! My papa! – speak – speak!”

She sprang from the bench – was before him. Her left guelder-rose had rolled, had bounded from her lap, and had fallen on the sand the old man had listlessly brought up from the church. His work, her play, were forever over.

CHAPTER II

A PASSAGE OF ARMS

The stillness preceding the storm had yielded. A gale had broken over the coast, raged against the cliffs of Pentyre, and battered the walls of the parsonage, without disturbing the old rector, whom no storm would trouble again, soon to be laid under the sands of his buried church-yard, his very mound to be heaped over in a few years, and obliterated by waves of additional encroaching sand. Judith had not slept all night. She – she, a mere child, had to consider and arrange everything consequent on the death of the master of the house. The servants – cook and house-maid – had been of little, if any, assistance to her. When Jane, the house-maid, had rushed into the kitchen with the tidings that the old parson was dead, cook, in her agitation, upset the kettle and scalded her foot. The gardener's wife had come in on hearing the news, and had volunteered help. Judith had given her the closet-key to fetch from the stores something needed; and Jamie, finding access to the closet, had taken possession of a pot of raspberry jam, carried it to bed with him, and spilled it over the sheets, besides making himself ill. The house-maid, Jane, had forgotten in her distraction to shut the best bedroom casement, and the gale during the night had wrenched it from its hinges, flung it into the garden on the roof of the small conservatory, and smashed both. Moreover, the casement being open, the rain had driven into the room unchecked, had swamped the floor, run through and stained the drawing-room ceiling underneath, the drips had fallen on the mahogany table and blistered the veneer. A messenger was sent to Pentyre Glaze for Miss Dionysia Trevisa, and she would probably arrive in an hour or two.

Mr. Trevisa, as he had told Judith, was solitary, singularly so. He was of a good Cornish family, but it was one that had dwindled till it had ceased to have other representative than himself. Once well estated, at Crockadon, in S. Mellion, all the lands of the family had been lost; once with merchants in the family, all the fortunes of these merchants industriously gathered had been dissipated, and nothing had remained to the Reverend Peter Trevisa but his family name and family coat, a garb or, on a field gules. It really seemed as though the tinctures of the shield had been fixed in the crown of splendor that covered the head of Judith. But she did not derive this wealth of red-gold hair from her Cornish ancestors, but from a Scottish mother, a poor governess whom Mr. Peter Trevisa had married, thereby exciting the wrath of his only sister and relative, Miss Dionysia, who had hitherto kept house for him, and vexed his soul with her high-handed proceedings. It was owing to some insolent words used by her to Mrs. Trevisa that Peter had quarrelled with his sister at first. Then when his wife died, she had forced herself on him as housekeeper, but again her presence in the house had become irksome to him, and when she treated his children – his delicate and dearly loved Judith – with roughness, and his timid, silly Jamie with harshness, amounting in his view to cruelty – harsh words had passed between them; sharp is, however, hardly the expression to use for the carefully worded remonstrances of the mild rector, though appropriate enough to her rejoinders. Then she had taken herself off and had become housekeeper to Curll Coppinger, Cruel Coppinger, as he was usually called, who occupied Pentyre Glaze, and was a fairly well-to-do single man.

Mr. Trevisa had not been a person of energy, but one of culture and refinement; a dispirited, timid man. Finding no neighbors of the same mental texture, nor sympathetic, he had been driven to make of Judith, though a child, his companion, and he had poured into her ear all his troubles, which largely concerned the future of his children. In his feebleness he took comfort from her sanguine confidence, though he was well aware that it was bred of ignorance, and he derived a weak satisfaction from the thought that he had prepared her morally, at all events, if in no other fashion, for the crisis that must come when he was withdrawn.

Mr. Peter Trevisa – Peter was a family Christian name – was for twenty-five years rector of S. Enodoc, on the north coast of Cornwall at the mouth of the Camel. The sand dunes had encroached on the church of S. Enodoc, and had enveloped the sacred structure. A hole was broken through a window, through which the interior could be reached, where divine service was performed occasionally in the presence of the church-wardens, so as to establish the right of the rectors, and through this same hole bridal parties entered to be coupled, with their feet ankle-deep in sand that filled the interior to above the pew-tops.

But Mr. Trevisa was not the man to endure such a condition of affairs without a protest and an effort to remedy it. He had endeavored to stimulate the farmers and land-owners of the parish to excavate the buried church, but his endeavors had proved futile. There were several reasons for this. In the first place, and certainly foremost, stood this reason: as long as the church was choked with sand and could not be employed for regular divine service, the tithe-payers could make a grievance of it, and excuse themselves from paying their tithes in full, because, as they argued, “Parson don’t give us sarvice, so us ain’t obliged to pay’n.” They knew their man, that he was tender-conscienced, and would not bring the law to bear upon them; he would see that there was a certain measure of justness in the argument, and would therefore not demand of them a tithe for which he did not give them the *quid pro quo*. But they had sufficient shrewdness to pay a portion of their tithes, so as not to drive him to extremities and exhaust his patience. It will be seen, therefore, that in the interests of their pockets the tithe-payers did not want to have their parish church excavated. Excavation meant weekly service regularly performed, and weekly service regularly performed would be followed by exaction of the full amount of rent-charge. Then, again, in the second place, should divine service be resumed in the church of S. Enodoc, the parishioners would feel a certain uneasiness in their consciences if they disregarded the summons of the bell; it might not be a very lively uneasiness, but just such an irritation as might be caused by a fly crawling over the face. So long as there was no service they could soothe their consciences with the thought that there was no call to make an effort to pull on Sunday breeches and assume a Sunday hat, and trudge to the church. Therefore, secondly, for the ease of their own consciences, it was undesirable that S. Enodoc should be dug out of the sand.

Then lastly, and thirdly, the engulfment of the church gave them a cherished opportunity for being nasty to the rector, and retailing upon him for his incaution in condemning smuggling and launching out into anathema against wrecking. As he had made matters disagreeable to them – tried, as they put it, to take bread out of their mouths, they saw no reason why they should spend money to please him.

Mr. Trevisa had made very little provision for his children, principally, if not wholly, because he could not. He had received from the farmers and land-owners a portion of tithe, and had been contented with that rather than raise angry feelings by demanding the whole. Out of that portion he was able to put aside but little.

Aunt Dionysia arrived, a tall, bony woman, with hair turning gray, light eyes and an aquiline nose, a hard, self-seeking woman, who congratulated herself that she did not give way to feelings.

“I feel,” said she, “as do others, but I don’t show my feelings as beggars expose their bad legs.”

She went into the kitchen. “Hoity-toity!” she said to the cook, “fine story this – scalding yourself. Mind this, you cook meals or no wage for you.” To Jane, “The mischief you have done shall be valued and deducted from any little trifle my brother may have left you in his will. Where is Jamie? Give me that joint of fishing-rod; I’ll beat him for stealing raspberry jam.”

Jamie, however, on catching a glimpse of his aunt had escaped into the garden and concealed himself. The cook, offended, began to clatter the saucepans.

“Now, then,” said Mrs. Trevisa – she bore the brevet-rank – “in a house of mourning what do you mean by making this noise, it is impertinent to me.”

The house-maid swung out of the kitchen, muttering.

Mrs. Trevisa now betook herself up-stairs in quest of her niece, and found her with red eyes.

“I call it rank *felo-de-se*,” said Aunt Dionysia. “Every one knew — *he* knew, that he had a feeble heart, and ought not to be digging and delving in the old church. Who sent the sand upon it? Why, Providence, I presume. Not man. Then it was a flying in the face of Providence to try to dig it out. Who wanted the church? He might have waited till the parishioners asked for it. But there — where is Jamie? I shall teach him a lesson for stealing raspberry jam.”

“Oh, aunt, not now — not now!”

Mrs. Trevisa considered a moment, then laid aside the fishing-rod.

“Perhaps you are right. I am not up to it after my walk from Pentyre Glaze. Now, then, what about mourning? I do not suppose Jamie can be measured by guesswork. You must bring him here. Tell him the whipping is put off till another day. Of course you have seen to black things for yourself. Not? Why, gracious heavens! is everything to be thrown on my shoulders? Am I to be made a beast of burden of? Now, no mewling and pewking. There is no time for that. Whatever *your* time may be, *mine* is valuable. I can’t be here forever. Of course every responsibility has been put on me. Just like Peter — no consideration. And what can I do with a set of babies? I have to work hard enough to keep myself. Peter did not want my services at one time; now I am put upon. Have you sent for the undertaker? What about clothing again? I suppose you know that you must have mourning? Bless my heart! what a lot of trouble you give me.”

Mrs. Trevisa was in a very bad temper, which even the knowledge that it was seemly that she should veil it could not make her restrain. She was, no doubt, to a certain extent fond of her brother — not much, because he had not been of any advantage to her; and no doubt she was shocked at his death, but chiefly because it entailed on herself responsibilities and trouble that she grudged. She would be obliged to do something for her nephew and niece; she would have to provide a home for them somewhere. She could not take them with her to Coppinger’s house, as she was there as a salaried servant, and not entitled to invite thither her young relatives. Moreover, she did not want to have them near her. She disliked young people; they gave trouble, they had to be looked after, they entailed expenses. What was she to do with them? Where was she to put them? What would they have to live upon? Would they call on her to part-maintain them? Miss Dionysia had a small sum put away, and she had no intention of breaking into it for them. It was a nest-egg, and was laid by against an evil day that might come on herself. She had put the money away for herself, in her old age, not for the children of her feeble brother and his lack-penny wife to consume as moth and rust. As these thoughts and questions passed through her mind, Aunt Dionysia pulled open drawers, examined cupboards, pried open closets, and searched chests and wardrobes.

“I wonder now what he has put by for them,” she said aloud.

“Do you mean my dear papa?” asked Judith, whose troubled heart and shaken spirits were becoming angry and restless under the behavior of the hard, unfeeling woman.

“Yes, I do,” answered Mrs. Trevisa, facing round, and glaring malevolently at her niece. “It is early days to talk of this, but it must be done sooner or later, and if so, the sooner the better. There is money in the house, I suppose?”

“I do not know.”

“I must know. You will want it — bills must be paid. You will eat and drink, I suppose? You must be clothed. I’ll tell you what: I’ll put the whole case into the hands of Lawyer Jenkyns, and he shall demand arrears of tithes. I know what quixotish conduct Peter — ”

“Aunt, I will not allow this.” A light flush came into the girl’s cheek.

“It is all very well talking,” said Aunt Dionysia; “but black is not white, and no power on earth can make me say that it is so. Money must be found. Money must be paid for expenses, and it is hard that I should have to find it; so I think. What money is there in the house for present necessities? I must know.”

Suddenly a loud voice was heard shouting through the house —

“Mother Dunes! old Dunes! I want you.”

Judith turned cold and white. Who was this that dared to bellow in the house of death, when her dear, dear father lay up-stairs with the blinds down, asleep? It was an insult, an outrage. Her nerves had already been thrilled, and her heart roused into angry revolt by the cold, unfeeling conduct of the woman who was her sole relative in the world. And now, as she was thus quivering, there came this boisterous shout.

“It is the master!” said Mrs. Trevisa, in an awestruck voice, lowered as much as was possible to her.

To Coppinger alone she was submissive, cringing, obsequious.

“What does he mean by this – this conduct?” asked Judith, trembling with wrath.

“He wants me.”

Again a shout. “Dunes! old fool! the keys!”

Then Judith started forward, and went through the door to the head of the staircase. At the foot stood a middle-sized, strongly built, firmly knit man, in a dress half belonging to the land and half to the sea, with high boots on his legs, and slouched hat on his head. His complexion was olive, his hair abundant and black, covering cheeks and chin and upper lip. His eyes were hard and dark. He had one brown hand on the banister, and a foot on the first step, as though about to ascend, when arrested by seeing the girl at the head of the stairs before him. The house was low, and the steps led without a break directly from the hall to the landing which gave communication to the bedrooms. There was a skylight in the roof over the staircase, through which a brilliant flood of pure white light fell over Judith, whereas every window had been darkened by drawn blinds. The girl had found no sombre dress suitable to wear, and had been forced to assume the same white gown as the day before, but she had discarded the green sash and had bound a black ribbon about her waist, and another about her abundant hair. A black lace kerchief was drawn over her shoulders across her breast and tied at her back. She wore long, black mittens.

Judith stood motionless, her bosom rising and falling quickly, her lips set, the breath racing through her nostrils, and one hand resting on the banister at the stair-head.

In a moment her eyes met those of Coppinger, and it was at once as though a thrill of electric force had passed between them.

He desisted from his attempt to ascend, and said, without moving his eyes from hers, in a subdued tone, “She has taken the keys,” but he said no more. He drew his foot from the step hesitatingly, and loosened his hand from the banister, down which went a thrill from Judith’s quivering nerves, and he stepped back.

At the same moment she descended a step, still looking steadily into the dark, threatening pupils, without blinking or lowering her orbs. Emboldened by her boiling indignation, she stood on the step she had reached with both feet firmly planted there, and finding that the banister rattled under her hand she withdrew it, and folded her arms. Coppinger raised his hand to his head and took off his hat. He had a profusion of dark, curly, flowing hair, that fell and encircled his saturnine face.

Then Judith descended another step, and as she did so he retreated a step backwards. Behind him was the hall door, open; the light lay wan and white there on the gravel, for no sunshine had succeeded the gale. At every step that Judith took down the stair Coppinger retreated. Neither spoke; the hall was still, save for the sound of their breath, and his came as fast as hers. When Judith had reached the bottom she turned – Coppinger stood in the doorway now – and signed to her aunt to come down with the keys.

“Take them to him – Do not give them here – outside.”

Mrs. Trevisa, surprised, confounded, descended the stair, went by her, and out through the door. Then Judith stepped after her, shut the door to exclude both Aunt Dionysia and that man Coppinger, who had dared, uninvited, on such a day to invade the house.

She turned now to remount the stairs, but her strength failed her, her knees yielded, and she sank upon a step, and burst into a flood of tears and convulsive sobs.

CHAPTER III

CAPTAIN CRUEL

Captain Coppinger occupied an old farmhouse, roomy, low-built, granite quoined and mullioned, called Pentyre Glaze, in a slight dip of the hills near the cliffs above the thundering Atlantic. One ash shivered at the end of the house – that was the only tree to be seen near Pentyre Glaze. And – who was Coppinger? That is more than can be told. He had come – no one knew whence. His arrival on the north coast of Cornwall was mysterious. There had been haze over the sea for three days. When it lifted, a strange vessel of foreign rig was seen lying off the coast. Had she got there in the fog, not knowing her course; or had she come there knowingly, and was making for the mouth of the Camel? A boat was seen to leave the ship, and in it a man came ashore; the boat returned to the vessel, that thereupon spread sail and disappeared in the fog that re-descended over the water. The man gave his name as Coppinger – his Christian name, he said, was Curll, and he was a Dane; but though his intonation was not that of the Cornish, it was not foreign. He took up his residence in S. Enodoc at a farm, and suddenly, to the surprise of every one, became by purchase the possessor of Pentyre Glaze, then vacant and for sale. Had he known that the estate was obtainable when he had come suddenly out of the clouds into the place to secure it? Nobody knew, and Coppinger was silent.

Thenceforth Pentyre Glaze became the harbor and den of every lawless character along the coast. All kinds of wild uproar and reckless revelry appalled the neighborhood day and night. It was discovered that an organized band of smugglers, wreckers, and poachers made this house the centre of their operations, and that “Cruel Coppinger” was their captain. There were at that time – just a century ago – no resident magistrates or gentry in the immediate neighborhood. The yeomen were bribed, by kegs of spirits left at their doors, to acquiesce in a traffic in illicit goods, and in the matter of exchange they took their shares. It was said that on one occasion a preventive man named Ewan Wyvill, who had pursued Coppinger in his boat, was taken by him, and his head chopped off by the captain, with his boat axe, on the gunwale. Such was the story. It was never proved. Wyvill had disappeared, and the body was recovered headless on the Doom Bar. That violence had been used was undoubted, but who had committed the crime was not known, though suspicion pointed to Coppinger. Thenceforth none ever called him Curll; by one consent he was named Cruel. In the West of England every one is given his Christian name. An old man is Uncle, and an old woman Aunt, and any one in command is a Captain. So Coppinger was known as Captain Cruel, or as Cruel Coppinger.

Strange vessels were often seen appearing at regular intervals on the coast, and signals were flashed from the one window of Pentyre Glaze that looked out to sea.

Among these vessels, one, a full-rigged schooner, soon became ominously conspicuous. She was for long the terror of the Cornish coast. Her name was *The Black Prince*. Once, with Coppinger on board, she led a revenue cutter into an intricate channel among the rocks, where, from knowledge of the bearings, *The Black Prince* escaped scathless, while the king’s vessel perished with all on board.

Immunity increased Coppinger’s daring. There were certain bridle-roads along the fields over which he exercised exclusive control. He issued orders that no man should pass over them by night, and accordingly from that hour none ever did.¹

Moreover, if report spoke true – and reports do not arise without cause – Coppinger was not averse from taking advantage, and that unlawful advantage, of a wreck. By “lawful” and “unlawful” two categories of acts are distinguished, not by the laws of the land but by common consent of the Cornish conscience. That same Cornish conscience distinguished wrecking into two classes, as it

¹ Many stories of Cruel Coppinger may be found in Hawker’s *Footprints of Former Men in Cornwall*. I have also told them in my *Vicar of Morwenstow*. I have ventured to translate the scene of Coppinger’s activity further west, from Wellcombe to S. Enodoc. But, indeed, he is told of in many places on this coast.

distinguished then, and distinguishes still, witchcraft into two classes. The one, white witchcraft, is legitimate and profitable, and to be upheld; the other, black witchcraft, is reprehensible, unlawful, and to be put down. So with wrecking. The Bristol Channel teemed with shipping, flights of white sails passed in the offing, and these vessels were, when inward bound, laden with sugars and spices from the Indies, or with spirits and wines from France. If outward bound they were deep in the water with a cargo of the riches of England.

Now, should a gale spring up suddenly and catch any of these vessels, and should the gale be – as it usually is, and to the Cornish folk, favorably is – from the northwest, then there was no harbor of refuge along that rock-bound coast, and a ship that could not make for the open was bound inevitably to be pounded to pieces against the precipitous walls of the peninsula. If such were the case, it was perfectly legitimate for every householder in the district to come down on the wreck and strip it of everything it contained.

But, on the other hand, there was wrecking that was disapproved of, though practised by a few, so rumor said, and that consisted in luring a vessel that was in doubt as to her course, by false signals, upon a reef or bar, and then, having made a wreck of her, to pillage her. When on a morning after a night in which there had been no gale, a ship was found on the rocks, and picked as clean as the carcase of a camel in the desert, it was open to suspicion that this ship had not been driven there by wind or current; and when the survivors, if they reached the shore, told that they had been led to steer in the direction where they had been cast away by certain lights that had wholly deceived them, then it was also open to suspicion that these lights had been purposely exhibited for the sake of bringing that vessel to destruction; and when, further, it was proved that a certain set or gang of men had garnered all the profits, or almost all the profits, that accrued from a wreck, before the countryside was aware that a wreck had occurred, then it was certainly no very random conjecture that the wreck had been contrived in some fashion by those who profited by it. There were atrocious tales of murder of shipwrecked men circulating, but these were probably wholly, or at all events in part, untrue. If when a vessel ran upon the rocks she was deserted by her crew, if they took to the boats and made for shore, then there remained no impediment to the wreckers taking possession; it was only in the event of their finding a skipper on board to maintain right over the grounded vessel, or the mariners still on her engaged in getting her off, that any temptation to violence could arise. But it was improbable that a crew would cling to a ship on such a coast when once she was on the breakers. It was a moral certainty that they would desert her, and leave the wreck to be pillaged by the rats from shore, without offer of resistance. The character of the coast-wreckers was known to seamen, or rather a legend full of horror circulated relative to their remorseless savagery. The fear of wreckers added to the fear of the sea would combine to drive a crew, to the last man, into the boats. Consequently, though it is possible that in some cases murder of castaway men may have occurred, such cases must have been most exceptional. The wreckers were only too glad to build a golden bridge by which the wrecked might escape. Morally, without a question, those who lured a hapless merchantman upon the rocks were guilty of the deaths of those sailors who were upset in their boats in escaping from the vessel, or were dashed against the cliffs in their attempts to land, but there was no direct blood-guiltiness felt in such cases; and those who had reaped a harvest from the sea counted their gains individually, and made no estimate of the misery accruing thereby to others.

CHAPTER IV

HOP-O'-MY-THUMB

"Listen to me," said Judith.

"Yes, Ju!"

The orphans were together in the room that had been their father's, the room in which for some days he had lain with the blinds down, the atmosphere heavy with the perfume of flowers, and that indescribable, unmistakable scent of death. Often, every day, almost every hour, had Judith stolen into the room while he lay there, to wonder with infinite reverence and admiration at the purity and dignity of the dead face. It was that of the dear, dear father, but sublimed beyond her imagination. All the old vacillation was gone, the expression of distress and discouragement had passed away, and in their place had come a fixity and a calm, such as one sees in the busts of the ancient Roman Cæsars, but with a superadded ethereality, if such a word can be used, that a piece of pagan statuary never reached. Marvellous, past finding out, it is that death, which takes from man the spiritual element, should give to the mere clay a look of angelic spirituality, yet so it is – so it was with the dead Peter Trevisa; and Judith, with eyes filling as fast as dried, stood, her hands folded, looking into his face, felt that she had never loved, never admired him half enough when he was alive. Life had been the simmer in which all the scum of trivialities, of infirmities, of sordidness had come to and shown itself on the surface. Now Death had cleared these all away, and in the peaceful face of the dead was seen the *real* man, the nobility, sanctity, delicacy that formed the texture of his soul, and which had impressed the very clay wrapped about that volatile essence.

As long as the dear father's body lay in the house Judith had not realized her utter desolation. But now the funeral was over, and she had returned with her brother to the parsonage, to draw up the blinds, and let the light once more enter, and search out, and revivify the dead rooms.

She was very pale, with reddened eyes, and looking more fragile and transparent than ever she did before, worn and exhausted by tearful, wakeful nights, and by days of alternating gusts of sorrow and busy preparation for the funeral, of painful recollections of joyous days that were past, and of doubtful searchings into a future that was full of cloud.

Her black frock served to enhance her pallor, and to make her look thinner, smaller than when in white or in color.

She had taken her place in her father's high-backed leather chair, studded thick with brass nails, the leather dulled and fretted by constant use, but the nail-heads burnished by the same treatment.

Her brother was in the same chair with her; both his arms were round her neck, and his head was on her shoulder. She had her right arm about his waist, her left was bowed, the elbow leaning on the chair arm, her hand folded inward, and her weary head rested on its back.

The fine weather broken in upon by the gale had returned; the sun shone in unhindered at the window, and blazed on the children's hair; the brass nails, polished by friction, twinkled as little suns, but were naught in lustre to the gorgeous red of the hair of the twins, for the first were but brass, and the other of living gold.

Two more lonely beings could hardly be discovered on the face of the earth – at all events in the peninsula of Cornwall – but the sense of this loneliness was summed in the heart of Judith, and was there articulate; Jamie was but dimly conscious of discomfort and bereavement. She knew what her father's death entailed on her, or knew in part, and conjectured more. Had she been left absolutely alone in the world her condition would have been less difficult than it was actually, encumbered with her helpless brother. Swimming alone in the tossing sea, she might have struck out with confidence that she could keep her head above water, but it was quite otherwise when clinging to her was a poor, half-witted boy, incapable of doing anything to save himself, and all whose movements tended only

to embarrass her. Not that she regretted for an instant having to care for Jamie, for she loved him with sisterly and motherly love combined, intensified in force by fusion; if to her a future seemed inconceivable without Jamie, a future without him would be one without ambition, pleasure, or interest.

The twin brother was very like her, with the same beautiful and abundant hair, delicate in build, and with the same refined face, but without the flashes of alternating mood that lightened and darkened her face. His had a searching, bewildered, distressed expression on it – the only expression it ever bore except when he was out of temper, and then it mirrored on its surface his inward ill-humor. His was an appealing face, a face that told of a spirit infantile, innocent, and ignorant, that would never grow stronger, but which could deteriorate by loss of innocence – the only charge of which it was capable. The boy had no inherent naughtiness in him, but was constantly falling into mischief through thoughtlessness, and he was difficult to manage because incapable of reasoning.

What every one saw – that he never would be other than what he was – Judith would not admit. She acknowledged his inaptitude at his books, his frivolity, his restlessness, but believed that these were infirmities to be overcome, and that when overcome the boy would be as other boys are.

Now these children – they were aged eighteen, but Jamie looked four years younger – sat in their father's chair, clinging to each other, all in all to one another, for they had no one else to love and who loved them.

“Listen to me, Jamie.”

“Yes, Ju, I be – ”

“Don't say ‘I be’ – say ‘I am.’”

“Yes, Ju.”

“Jamie, dear!” she drew her arm tighter about him; her heart was bounding, and every beat caused her pain. “Jamie, dear, you know that, now dear papa is gone, and you will never see him in this world again, that – ”

“Yes, Ju.”

“That I have to look to you, my brother, to stand up for me like a man, to think and do for me as well as for yourself – a brave, stout, industrious fellow.”

“Yes, Ju.”

“I am a girl, and you will soon be a man, and must work for both of us. You must earn the money, and I will spend it frugally as we both require it. Then we shall be happy again, and dear papa in Paradise will be glad and smile on us. You will make an effort, will you not, Jamie? Hitherto you have been able to run about and play and squander your time, but now serious days have come upon us, and you must fix your mind on work and determine – Jamie – mind, screw your heart to a strong determination to put away childish things and be a man, and a strength and a comfort to me.”

He put up his lips to kiss her cheek, but could not reach it, as her head was leaning on her hand away from him.

“What are you fidgeting at, my dear?” she asked, without stirring, feeling his body restless under her arm.

“A nail is coming out,” he answered.

It was so; whilst she had been speaking to him he was working at one of the brass studs, and had loosened its bite in the chair.

“Oh, Jamie! you are making work by thus drawing out a nail. Can you not help me a little, and reduce the amount one has to think of and do? You have not been attending to what I said, and I was so much in earnest.” She spoke in a tone of discouragement, and the tone, more than the words, impressed the susceptible heart of the boy. He began to cry.

“You are cross.”

“I am not cross, my pet; I am never cross with you, I love you too dearly; but you try my patience sometimes, and just now I am overstrained – and then I did want to make you understand.”

“Now papa’s dead I’ll do no more lessons, shall I?” asked Jamie, coaxingly.

“You must, indeed, and with me instead of papa.”

“Not *rosa, rosæ*?”

“Yes, *rosa, rosæ*.”

Then he sulked.

“I don’t love you a bit. It is not fair. Papa is dead, so I ought not to have any more lessons. I hate *rosa, rosæ*!” He kicked the legs of the chair peevishly with his heels. As his sister said nothing, seemed to be inattentive – for she was weary and dispirited – he slapped her cheek by raising his hand over his head.

“What, Jamie, strike me, your only friend?”

Then he threw his arms round her again, and kissed her. “I’ll love you; only, Ju, say I am not to do *rosa, rosæ*!”

“How long have you been working at the first declension in the Latin grammar, Jamie?”

He tried for an instant to think, gave up the effort, laid his head on her shoulder, and said:

“I don’t know and don’t care. Say I am not to do *rosa, rosæ*!”

“What! not if papa wished it?”

“I hate the Latin grammar!”

For a while both remained silent. Judith felt the tension to which her mind and nerves had been subjected, and lapsed momentarily into a condition of something like unconsciousness, in which she was dimly sensible of a certain satisfaction rising out of the pause in thought and effort. The boy lay quiet, with his head on her shoulder, for a while, then withdrew his arms, folded his hands on his lap, and began to make a noise by compressing the air between the palms.

“There’s a finch out there going ‘chink! chink!’ and listen, Ju, I can make ‘chink! chink!’ too.”

Judith recovered herself from her distraction, and said:

“Never mind the finch now. Think of what I say. We shall have to leave this house.”

“Why?”

“Of course we must, sooner or later, and the sooner the better. It is no more ours.”

“Yes, it is ours. I have my rabbits here.”

“Now that papa is dead it is no longer ours.”

“It’s a wicked shame.”

“Not at all, Jamie. This house was given to papa for his life only; now it will go to a new rector, and Aunt Dunes² is going to fetch us away to another house.”

“When?”

“To-day.”

“I won’t go,” said the boy. “I swear I won’t.”

“Hush, hush, Jamie! Don’t use such expressions. I do not know where you have picked them up. We must go.”

“And my rabbits, are they to go too?”

“The rabbits? We’ll see about them. Aunt – ”

“I hate Aunt Dunes!”

“You really must not call her that; if she hears you she will be very angry. And consider, she has been taking a great deal of trouble about us.”

“I don’t care.”

“My dear, she is dear papa’s sister.”

“Why didn’t papa get a nicer sister – like you?”

“Because he had to take what God gave him.”

The boy pouted, and began to kick his heels against the chair-legs once more.

² Dunes is the short for Dionysia.

“Jamie, we must leave this house to-day. Aunt is coming to take us both away.”

“I won’t go.”

“But, Jamie, I am going, and the cook is going, and so is Jane.”

“Are cook and Jane coming with us?”

“No, dear.”

“Why not?”

“We shall not want them. We cannot afford to keep them any more, to pay their wages; and then we shall not go into a house of our own. You must come with me, and be a joy and rest to me, dear Jamie.”

She turned her head over, and leaned it on his head. The sun glowed in their mingled hair – all of one tinge and lustre. It sparkled in the tears on her cheek.

“Ju, may I have these buttons?”

“What buttons?”

“Look!”

He shook himself free from his sister, slid his feet to the ground, went to a bureau, and brought to his sister a large open basket that had been standing on the top of the bureau. It had been turned out of a closet by Aunt Dionysia, and contained an accumulation of those most profitless of collected remnants – odd buttons, coat buttons, brass, smoked mother-of-pearl, shirt buttons, steel clasps – buttons of all kinds, the gathering together made during twenty-five years. Why the basket, after having been turned out of a lumber closet, had been left in the room of death, or why, if turned out elsewhere, it had been brought there, is more than even the novelist can tell. Suffice it that there it was, and by whom put there could not be said.

“Oh! what a store of pretty buttons!” exclaimed the boy. “Do look, Ju, these great big ones are just like those on Cheap Jack’s red waistcoat. Here is a brass one with a horse on it. Do see! Oh, Ju, please get your needle and thread and sew this one on to my black dress.”

Judith sighed. It was in vain for her to impress the realities of the situation on his wandering mind.

“Hark!” she exclaimed. “There is Aunt Dunes. I hear her voice – how loud she speaks! She has come to fetch us away.”

“Where is she going to take us to?”

“I do not know, Jamie.”

“She will take us into the forest and lose us, like as did Hop-o’-my-Thumb’s father.”

“There are no forests here – hardly any trees.”

“She will leave us in the forest and run away.”

“Nonsense, Jamie!”

“I am sure she will. She doesn’t like us. She wants to get rid of us. I don’t care. May I have the basket of buttons?”

“Yes, Jamie.”

“Then I’ll be Hop-o’-my-Thumb.”

CHAPTER V

THE BUTTONS

It was as Judith surmised. Mrs. Dionysia Trevisa had come to remove her nephew and niece from the rectory. She was a woman decided in character, especially in all that concerned her interests. She had made up her mind that the children could not be left unprotected in the parsonage, and she could not be with them. Therefore they must go. The servants must leave; they would be paid their month's wage, but by dismissing them their keep would be economized. There was a factotum living in a cottage near, who did the gardening, the cinder-sifting, and boot-cleaning for the rectory inmates, he would look after the empty house, and wait on in hopes of being engaged to garden, sift cinders, and clean boots for the new rector.

As it was settled that the children must leave the house, the next thing to consider was where they were to be placed. The aunt could not take them to Pentyre Glaze; that was not to be thought of. They must be disposed of in some other way.

Mrs. Trevisa had determined on a sale of her brother's effects: his furniture, bedding, curtains, carpets, books, plate, and old sermons. She was anxious to realize as soon as possible, so as to know for certain what she could calculate upon as being left her for the support of Judith and her brother. To herself the rector had left only a ring and five guineas. She had not expected more. His decease was not likely to be a benefit, but, on the contrary, an embarrassment to her. He had left about a thousand pounds, but then Mrs. Trevisa did not yet know how large a bite out of this thousand pounds would be taken by the dilapidations on rectory, glebe, and chancel. The chancel of the church was in that condition that it afforded a wide margin for the adjudication of dilapidations. They might be set down at ten shillings or a thousand pounds, and no one could say which was the fairest sum, as the chancel was deep in sand and invisible. The imagination of the valuer might declare it to be sound or to be rotten, and till dug out no one could impeach his judgment.

In those days, when an incumbent died, the widow and orphans of the deceased appointed a valuer, and the incoming rector nominated his valuer, and these two cormorants looked each other in the eyes – said to each other, “Brother, what pickings?” And as less resistance to being lacerated and cleaned to the bone was to be anticipated from a broken-hearted widow and helpless children than from a robust, red-faced rector, the cormorants contrived to rob the widow and the fatherless. Then that cormorant who had been paid to look after the interest of the widow and children and had not done it said to the other cormorant, “Brother, I've done you a turn this time; do me the like when the chance falls to you.” Now, although nominally the money picked off the sufferers was to go to the account of the incomer, it was not allowed to pass till the cormorants had taken toll of it. Moreover, these cormorants were architects, builders, solicitors, or contractors of some sort, and looked to get something further out of the incoming man they favored, whereas they knew they could get nothing at all out of the departed man who was buried. Now we have pretended to change all this; let us persuade ourselves we have made the conduct of these matters more honest and just.

Aunt Dionysia did not know by experience what valuers for dilapidations were, but she had always heard that valuation for dilapidations materially diminished the property of a deceased incumbent. She was consequently uneasy, and anxious to know the worst, and make the best of the circumstances that she could. She saw clearly enough that the sum that would remain when debts and valuation were paid would be insufficient to support the orphans, and she saw also with painful clearness that there would be a necessity for her to supplement their reduced income from her own earnings. This conviction did not sweeten her temper and increase the cordiality with which she treated her nephew and niece.

“Now, hoity-toity!” said Aunt Dionysia; “I’m not one of your mewlers and pewkers. I have my work to do, and can’t afford to waste time in the luxury of tears. You children shall come with me. I will see you settled in, and then Balhachet shall wheel over your boxes and whatever we want for the night. I have been away from my duties longer than I ought, and the maids are running wild, are after every one who comes near the place like horse-flies round the cattle on a sultry day. I will see you to your quarters, and then you must shift for yourselves. Balhachet can come and go between the rectory and Zachie Menaida as much as you want.”

“Are we going to Mr. Menaida’s, aunt?” asked Judith.

“Did I not say Zachie Menaida! If I said Zachie Menaida I suppose I meant what I said, or are you hard of hearing? Come – time to *me* is precious. Bustle – bustle – don’t keep me waiting while you gape.”

After a while Mrs. Trevisa succeeded in getting her nephew and niece to start. Judith, indeed, was ready at the first suggestion to go with her aunt, glad to get over the pang of leaving the house as quickly as might be. It was to be the rupture of one thread of the tie that bound her to the past, but an important thread. She was to leave the house as a home, though she would return to it again and again to carry away from it such of her possessions as she required and could find a place for at Zachary Menaida’s. But with Jamie it was otherwise. He had run away, and had to be sought, and when found coaxed and cajoled into following his aunt and sister.

Judith had found him, for she knew his nooks and dens. He was seated in a laurel bush playing with the buttons.

“Look, Ju! there is some broken mirror among the buttons. Stand still, and I will make the sun jump into your eyes. Open your mouth, and I will send him down your throat. Won’t it be fun; I’ll tease old Dunes with it.”

“Then come along with me.”

He obeyed.

The distance to Zachary Menaida’s cottage was about a mile and a quarter, partly through parish roads, partly through lanes, the way in parts walled and hedged up against the winds, in others completely exposed to every breath of air where it traversed a down.

Judith walked forward with her aunt, and Jamie lagged. Occasionally his sister turned her head to reassure herself that he had not given them the slip; otherwise she attended as closely as she was able to the instructions and exhortations of her aunt. She and her brother were to be lodged temporarily at Uncle Zachie’s, that is to say, with Mr. Menaida, an elderly, somewhat eccentric man, who occupied a double cottage at the little hamlet of Polzeath. No final arrangement as to the destination of the orphans could be made till Aunt Dunes knew the result of the sale, and how much remained to the children after the father’s trifling debts had been paid, and the considerable slice had been cut out of it by the valuers for dilapidations. Mrs. Trevisa talked fast in her harsh tones, and in a loud voice, without undulation or softness in it, and expected her niece to hear and give account for everything she told her, goading her to attention with a sharp reminder when she deemed that her mind was relaxed, and whipping her thoughts together when she found them wandering. But, indeed, it was not possible to forget for one moment the presence and personality of Dionysia, though the subject of her discourse might be unnoticed.

Every fibre of Judith’s heart was strung and strained to the uttermost, to acutest feeling, and a sympathetic hand drawn across them would have produced a soft, thrilling, musical wail. Her bosom was so full to overflow that a single word of kindness, a look even that told of love, would have sufficed to make the child cast herself in a convulsion of grief into her aunt’s arms, bury her face in her bosom, and weep out her pent-up tears. Then, after perhaps half an hour, she would have looked up through the rain into her aunt’s face, and have smiled, and have loved that aunt passionately, self-sacrificingly, to her dying day. She was disposed to love her – for was not Dionysia the only relative she had; and was she not the very sister of that father who had been to her so much? But Mrs. Trevisa

was not the woman to touch the taught cords with a light hand, or to speak or look in love. She was hard, angular, unsympathetic; and her manner, the intonations of her voice, her mode of address, the very movements of her body, acted on the strained nerves as a rasping file, that would fret till it had torn them through.

Suddenly round a corner, where the narrow road turned, two hundred yards ahead, dashed a rider on a black steed, and Judith immediately recognized Coppinger on his famous mare Black Bess; a mare much talked of, named after the horse ridden by Dick Turpin. The recognition was mutual. He knew her instantly; with a jerk of the rein and a set of the brow he showed that he was not indifferent.

Coppinger wore his slouched hat, tied under his chin and beard, a necessary precaution in that gale-swept country; on his feet to his knees were high boots. He wore a blue knitted jersey, and a red kerchief about his throat.

Captain Cruel slightly slackened his pace, as the lane was narrow; and as he rode past his dark brow was knit, and his eyes flashed angrily at Judith. He deigned neither a glance nor a word to his housekeeper, who courtesied and assumed a fawning expression.

When he had passed the two women he dug his spurs into Black Bess and muttered some words they did not hear.

Judith, who had stood aside, now came forward into the midst of the roadway and rejoined her aunt, who began to say something, when her words and Judith's attention was arrested by shouts, oaths, and cries in their rear.

Judith and her aunt turned to discover the occasion of this disturbance, and saw that Coppinger was off his horse, on his feet, dragging the brute by the rein, and was hurling his crop, or hunting-whip, as he pursued Jamie flying from him with cries of terror. But that he held the horse and could not keep up with the boy, Jamie would have suffered severely, for Coppinger was in a livid fury.

Jamie flew to his sister.

"Save me, Ju! he wants to kill me."

"What have you done?"

"It is only the buttons."

"Buttons, dear?"

But the boy was too frightened to explain.

Then Judith drew her brother behind her, took from him the basket he was carrying, and stepped to encounter the angry man, who came on, now struggling with his horse, cursing Bess because she drew back, then plunging forward with his whip above his head brandished menacingly, and by this conduct further alarmed Black Bess.

Judith met Coppinger, and he was forced to stay his forward course.

"What has he done?" asked the girl. "Why do you threaten?"

"The cursed idiot has strewn bits of glass and buttons along the road," answered the Captain, angrily. "Stand aside that I may lash him, and teach him to frighten horses and endanger men's lives."

"I am sorry for what Jamie has done. I will pick up the things he has thrown down."

Cruel Coppinger's eyes glistened with wrath. He gathered the lash of his whip into his palm along with the handle, and gripped them passionately.

"Curse the fool! My Bess was frightened, dashed up the bank, and all but rolled over. Do you know he might have killed me?"

"You must excuse him; he is a very child."

"I will not excuse him. I will cut the flesh off his back if I catch him."

He put the end of the crop handle into his mouth, and, putting his right hand behind him, gathered the reins up shorter and wound them more securely about his left hand.

Judith walked backward, facing him, and he turned with his horse and went after her. She stooped and gathered up a splinter of glass. The sun striking through the gaps in the hedge had flashed on these scraps of broken mirror and of white bone, or burnished brass buttons, and the horse had

been frightened at them. As Judith stooped and took up now a buckle, then a button, and then some other shining trifle, she hardly for an instant withdrew her eyes from Coppinger; they had in them the same dauntless defiance as when she encountered him on the stairs of the rectory. But now it was she who retreated, step by step, and he who advanced, and yet he could not flatter himself that he was repelling her. She maintained her strength and mastery unbroken as she retreated.

“Why do you look at me so? Why do you walk backward?”

“Because I mistrust you. I do not know what you might do were I not to confront you.”

“What I might do? What do you think I would do?”

“I cannot tell. I mistrust you.”

“Do you think me capable of lashing at you with my crop?”

“I think you capable of anything.”

“Flattering that!” he shouted, angrily.

“You would have lashed at Jamie.”

“And why not? He might have killed me.”

“He might have killed you, but you should not have touched him – not have thought of touching him.”

“Indeed! Why not?”

“Why not?” She raised herself upright and looked straight into his eyes, in which fire flickered, flared, then decayed, then flared again.

“You are no Dane, or you would not have asked ‘Why not?’ twice. Nay, you would not have asked it once.”

“Not a Dane?” His beard and mustache were quivering, and he snorted with anger.

“A Dane, I have read in history, is too noble and brave to threaten women and to strike children.” He uttered an oath and ground his teeth.

“No; a Dane would never have thought of asking why not? – why not lash a poor little silly boy?”

“You insult me! You dare to do it?”

Her blood was surging in her heart. As she looked into this man’s dark and evil face she thought of all the distress he had caused her father, and a wave of loathing swept over her, nerved her to defy him to the uttermost, and to proclaim all the counts she had against him.

“I dare do it,” she said, “because you made my own dear papa’s life full of bitterness and pain –”

“I! I never touched him, hardly spoke to him. I don’t care to have to do with parsons.”

“You made his life one of sorrow through your godless, lawless ways, leading his poor flock astray, and bidding them mock at his warnings and despise his teachings. Almost with his last breath he spoke of you, and the wretchedness of heart you had caused him. And then you dared – yes – you dared – you dared to burst into our house where he lay dead, with shameful insolence to disturb its peace. And now –” she gasped, “and now, ah! you lie when you say you are a Dane, and talk of cutting and lashing the dead father’s little boy on his father’s burial day. You are but one thing I can name – a coward!”

Did he mean it? No! But blinded, stung to madness by her words, especially that last, he raised his right arm with the crop.

Did she mean it? No! But in the instinct of self-preservation, thinking he was about to strike her, she dashed the basket of buttons in his face, and they flew right and left over him, against the head of Black Bess, a rain of fragments of mirror, brass, steel, mother-of-pearl, and bone.

The effect was instantaneous. The mare plunged, reared, threw Coppinger backward from off his feet, dashed him to the ground, dragged him this way, that way, bounded, still drawing him about by the twisted reins, into the hedge, then back, with her hoofs upon him, near, if not on, his head, his chest – then, released by the snap of the rein, or through its becoming disengaged, Bess darted down the lane, was again brought to a standstill by the glittering fragments on the ground, turned, rushed back in the direction whence she had come, and disappeared.

Judith stood panting, paralyzed with fear and dismay. Was he dead, broken to pieces, pounded by those strong hoofs?

He was not dead. He was rolling himself on the ground, struggling clumsily to his knees.

“Are you satisfied?” he shouted, glaring at her like a wild beast through his tangled black hair that had fallen over his face. “I cannot strike you nor your brother now. My arm and the Lord knows what other bones are broken. You have done that – and I owe you something for it.”

CHAPTER VI

UNCLE ZACHIE

The astonishment, the consternation of Mrs. Trevisa at what had occurred, which she could not fully comprehend, took from her the power to speak. She had seen her niece in conversation with Cruel Coppinger, and had caught snatches of what had passed between them. All his words had reached her, and some of Judith's. When, suddenly, she saw the girl dash the basket of buttons in the face of the Captain, saw him thrown to the ground, drawn about by his frantic horse, and left, as she thought, half dead, her dismay was unbounded. It might have been that Coppinger threatened Judith with his whip, but nothing could excuse her temerity in resisting him, in resisting him and protecting herself in the way she did. The consequences of that resistance she could not measure. Coppinger was bruised, bones were broken, and Aunt Dionysia knew the nature of the man too well not to expect his deadly animosity, and to feel sure of implacable revenge against the girl who had injured him – a revenge that would envelop all who belonged to her, and would therefore strike herself.

The elderly spinster had naturally plenty of strength and hardness that would bear her through most shocks without discomposure, but such an incident as that which had just taken place before her eyes entirely unnerved and dismayed her.

Coppinger was conveyed home by men called to the spot, and Mrs. Trevisa walked on with her niece and nephew in silence to the house of Mr. Zachary Menaida. Jamie had escaped over the hedge, to put a stone-and-earth barrier between himself and his assailant directly Judith interposed between him and Coppinger. Now that the latter was gone, he came, laughing, over the hedge again. To him what had occurred was fun.

At Menaida's the aunt departed, leaving her nephew and niece with the old man, that she might hurry to Pentyre Glaze and provide what was needed for Coppinger. She took no leave of Judith. In the haze of apprehension that enveloped her mind glowed anger against the girl for having increased her difficulties and jeopardized her position with Coppinger.

Mr. Zachary Menaida was an old man, or rather a man who had passed middle age, with grizzled hair that stood up above his brow, projecting like the beak of a ship or the horn of an unicorn. He had a big nose inclined to redness, and kindly, watery eyes, was close shaven, and had lips that, whenever he was in perplexity, or worried with work or thought, he thrust forward and curled. He was a middle-statured man, inclined to stoop.

Uncle Zachie, as he was commonly called behind his back, was a gentleman by birth. In the Roman Catholic Church there is a religious order called that of Minims. In England we have, perhaps, the most widely-diffused of orders, not confined to religion – it is that of Crotchets. To this order Mr. Menaida certainly belonged. He was made up of hobbies and prejudices that might bore, but never hurt others.

Probably the most difficult achievement one can conceive for a man to execute is to stand in his own light; yet Mr. Menaida had succeeded in doing this all through his life. In the first place, he had been bred up for the law, but had never applied himself to the duties of the profession to which he had been articled. As he had manifested as a boy a love of music, his mother and sister had endeavored to make him learn to play on an instrument; but, because so urged, he had refused to qualify himself to play on pianoforte, violin, or flute, till his fingers had stiffened, whereupon he set to work zealously to practise, when it was no longer possible for him to acquire even tolerable proficiency.

As he had been set by his father to work on skins of parchment, he turned his mind to skins of another sort, and became an eager naturalist and taxidermist.

That he had genius, or rather a few scattered sparks of talent in his muddled brain, was certain. Every one who knew him said he was clever, but pitied his inability to turn his cleverness to purpose.

But one must take into consideration, before accepting the general verdict that he was clever, the intellectual abilities of those who formed this judgment. When we do this, we doubt much whether their opinion is worth much. Mr. Menaida was not clever. He had flashes of wit, no steady light of understanding. Above all, he had no application, a little of which might have made him a useful member of society.

When his articleship was over he set up as a solicitor, but what business was offered him he neglected or mismanaged, till business ceased to be offered. He would have starved had not a small annuity of fifty pounds been left him to keep the wolf from the door, and that he was able to supplement this small income with money made by the sale of his stuffed specimens of sea-fowl. Taxidermy was the only art in which he was able to do anything profitable. He loved to observe the birds, to wander on the cliffs listening to their cries, watching their flight, their positions when at rest, the undulations in their feathers under the movement of the muscles as they turned their heads or raised their feet; and when he set himself to stuff the skins he was able to imitate the postures and appearance of living birds with rare fidelity. Consequently his specimens were in request, and ornithologists and country gentlemen whose game-keepers had shot rare birds desired to have the skins dealt with, and set in cases, by the dexterous fingers of Mr. Zachary Menaida. He might have done more work of the same kind, but that his ingrained inactivity and distaste for work limited his output. In certain cases Mr. Menaida would not do what was desired of him till coaxed and flattered, and then he did it grumblingly and with sighs at being subjected to killing toil.

Mr. Menaida was a widower; his married life had not been long; he had been left with a son, now grown to manhood, who was no longer at home. He was abroad, in Portugal, in the service of a Bristol merchant, an importer of wines.

As already said, Uncle Zachie did not begin the drudgery of music till it was too late for him to acquire skill on any instrument. His passion for music grew with his inability to give himself pleasure from it. He occupied a double cottage at Polzeath, and a hole knocked through the wall that had separated the lower rooms enabled him to keep his piano in one room and his bird-stuffing apparatus in the other, and to run from one to the other in his favorite desultory way, that never permitted him to stick to one thing at a time.

Into this house Judith and her brother were introduced. Mr. Menaida had been attached to the late rector, the only other gentleman in culture, as in birth, that lived in the place, and when he was told by Miss – or, as she was usually called, Mrs. – Trevisa that the children must leave the parsonage and be put temporarily with some one suitable, and that no other suitable house was available, he consented without making much objection to receive them into his cottage. He was a kindly man, gentle at heart, and he was touched at the bereavement of the children whom he had known since they were infants.

After the first salutation Mr. Menaida led Judith and the boy into his parlor, the room opening out of his workshop.

“Look here,” said he, “what is that?” He pointed to his piano.

“A piano, sir,” answered Judith.

“Yes – and mind you, I hate strumming, though I love music. When I am in, engaged at my labors, no strumming. I come in here now and then as relaxation, and run over this and that; then, refreshed, go back to my work, but, if there is any strumming, I shall be put out. I shall run my knife or needle into my hand, and it will upset me for the day. You understand – no strumming. When I am out, then you may touch the keys, but only when I am out. You understand clearly? Say the words after me: ‘I allow no strumming.’”

Judith did as required. The same was exacted of Jamie. Then Mr. Menaida said —

“Very well; now we shall have a dish of tea. I daresay you are tired. Dear me, you look so. Goodness bless me! indeed you do. What has tired you has been the trial you have gone through.

Poor things, poor things! There, go to your rooms; my maid, Jump, will show you where they are, and I will see about making tea. It will do you good. You want it. I see it.”

The kind-hearted man ran about.

“Bless my soul! where have I put the key of the caddy? And – really – my fingers are all over arsenical soap. I think I will leave Jump to make the tea. Jump, have you seen where I put the key? Bless my soul! where did I have it last? Never mind; I will break open the caddy.”

“Please, Mr. Menaida, do not do that for us. We can very well wait till the key is found.”

“Oh! I don’t know when that will be. I shall have forgotten about it if I do not find the key at once, or break open the caddy. But, if you prefer it, I have some cherry-brandy, or I would give you some milk-punch.”

“No – no, indeed, Mr. Menaida.”

“But Jamie – I am sure he looks tired. A little cherry-brandy to draw the threads in him together. And suffer me, though not a doctor, to recommend it to you. Bless my soul! my fingers are all over arsenical soap. If I don’t have some cherry-brandy myself I shall have the arsenic get into my system. I hope you have no cuts or scratches on your hand. I forgot the arsenic when I shook hands with you. Now, look here, Jump, bring in the saffron cake, and I will cut them each a good hunch. It will do you good, on my word it will. I have not spared either figs or saffron, and then – I will help you, as I love you. Come and see my birds. That is a cormorant – a splendid fellow – looks as if run out of metal, all his plumage, you know, and in the attitude as if swallowing a fish. Do you see! – the morsel is going down his throat. And – how much luggage have you? Jump! show the young lady where she can put away her gowns and all that sort of thing. Oh, not come yet? All right – a lady and her dresses are not long parted. They will be here soon. Now, then. What will you have? – some cold beef – and cider? Upon my soul! – you must excuse me. I was just wiring that kittiwake. Excuse me – I shall be ready in a moment. In the meantime there are books – Rollin’s ‘Ancient History,’ a very reliable book. No – upon my word, my mind is distracted. I cannot get that kittiwake right without a glass of port. I have some good port. Oliver guarantees it – from Portugal, you know. He is there – first-rate business, and will make his fortune, which is more than his father ever did.”

Mr. Menaida went to a closet, and produced a bottle.

“Come here, Jamie. I know what is good for you.”

“No – please, Mr. Menaida, do not. He has not been accustomed to anything of the sort. Please not, sir.”

“Fudge!” said Uncle Zachie, holding up a glass and pouring cherry-brandy into it. “What is your age? – seventeen or eighteen, and I am fifty-two. I have over thirty years’ more experience of the world than you. Jamie, don’t be tied to your sister’s apron-string. I know what is best for you. Girls drink water, men something better. Come here, Jamie!”

“No, sir – I beseech you.”

“Bless my soul! I know what is good for him. Come to me, Jamie. Look the other way, Judith, if I cannot persuade you.”

Judith sighed, and covered her face with her hands. There was to be no help, no support in Uncle Zachie. On the contrary, he would break down her power over Jamie.

“Jamie,” she said, “if you love me, go up-stairs.”

“Presently, Ju. I want that first.” And he took it, ran to his sister, and said:

“It is good, Ju!”

“You have disobeyed me, Jamie – that is bad.”

She stood on the threshold of further trouble, and she knew it.

CHAPTER VII

A VISIT

No sleep visited Judith's eyes that night till the first streaks of dawn appeared, though she was weary, and her frail body and over-exerted brain needed the refreshment of sleep. But sleep she could not, for cares were gathering upon her.

She had often heard her father, when speaking of Mr. Menaida, lament that he was not a little more self-controlled in his drinking. It was not that the old fellow ever became inebriated, but that he hankered after the bottle, and was wont to take a nip continually to strengthen his nerves, steady his hand, or clear his brain. There was ever ready some excuse satisfactory to his own conscience; and it was due to these incessant applications to the bottle that his hand shook, his eyes became watery, and his nose red. It was a danger Judith must guard against, lest this trick should be picked up by the childish Jamie, always apt to imitate what he should not, and acquire habits easily gained, hardly broken, that were harmful to himself. Uncle Zachie, in his good-nature, would lead the boy after him into the same habits that marred his own life.

This was one thought that worked like a mole all night in Judith's brain; but she had other troubles as well to keep her awake. She was alarmed at the consequences of her conduct in the lane. She wondered whether Coppinger were more seriously hurt than had at first appeared. She asked herself whether she had not acted wrongly when she acted inconsiderately, whether in her precipitation to protect herself she had not misjudged Coppinger, whether, if he had attempted to strike her, it would not have been a lesser evil to receive the blow, than to ward it off in such a manner as to break his bones. Knowing by report the character of the man, she feared that she had incurred his deadly animosity. He could not, that she could see, hurt herself in the execution of his resentment, but he might turn her aunt out of his house. That she had affronted her aunt she was aware; Mrs. Trevisa's manner in parting with her had shown that with sufficient plainness.

A strange jumble of sounds on the piano startled Judith. Her first thought and fear were that her brother had gone to the instrument, and was amusing himself on the keys. But on listening attentively she was aware that there was sufficient sequence in the notes to make it certain that the performer was a musician, though lacking in facility of execution. She descended the stairs and entered the little sitting-room. Uncle Zachie was seated on the music-stool, and was endeavoring to play a sonata of Beethoven that was vastly beyond the capacity of his stiff-jointed fingers. Whenever he made a false note he uttered a little grunt and screwed up his eyes, endeavored to play the bar again, and perhaps accomplish it only to break down in the next.

Judith did not venture to interrupt him. She took up some knitting, and seated herself near the piano, where he might see her without her disturbing him. He raised his brows, grunted, floundered into false harmony, and exclaimed, "Bless me! how badly they do print music nowadays. Who, without the miraculous powers of a prophet, could tell that B should be natural?" Then, turning his head over his shoulder, addressed Judith, "Good-morning, missie. Are you fond of music?"

"Yes, sir, very."

"So you think. Everyone says he or she is fond of music, because that person can hammer out a psalm tune or play the 'Rogue's March.' I hate to hear those who call themselves musical strum on a piano. They can't feel, they only execute."

"But they can play their notes correctly," said Judith, and then flushed with vexation at having made this pointed and cutting remark. But it did not cause Mr. Menaida to wince.

"What of that? I give not a thank-you for mere literal music-reading. Call Jump, set 'Shakespeare' before her, and she will hammer out a scene – correctly as to words; but where is the sense? Where the life? You must play with the spirit and play with the understanding also, as you

must read with the spirit and read with the understanding also. It is the same thing with bird-stuffing. Any fool can ram tow into a skin and thrust wires into the neck, but what is the result? You must stuff birds with the spirit and stuff with the understanding also – or it is naught.”

“I suppose it is the same with everything one does – one must do it heartily and intelligently.”

“Exactly! Now you should see my boy, Oliver. Have you ever met him?”

“I think I have; but, to be truthful, I do not recollect him, sir.”

“I will bring you his likeness – in miniature. It is in the next room.” Up jumped Mr. Menaida, and ran through the opening in the wall, and returned in another moment with the portrait, and gave it into Judith’s hands.

“A fine fellow is Oliver! Look at his nose how straight it is. Not like mine – that is a pump-handle. He got his good looks from his mother, not from me. Ah!” He reseated himself at the piano, and ran – incorrectly – over a scale. “It is all the pleasure I have in life, to think of my boy, and to look at his picture, and read his letters, and drink the port he sends me – first-rate stuff. He writes admirable letters, and never a month passes but I receive one. It would come expensive if he wrote direct, so his letter is enclosed in the business papers sent to the house at Bristol, and they forward it to me. You shall read his last – out loud. It will give me a pleasure to hear it read by you.”

“If I read properly, Mr. Menaida – with the spirit and with the understanding.”

“Exactly! But you could not fail to do that looking at the cheerful face in the miniature, and reading his words – pleasant and bright as himself. Pity you have not seen him; well, that makes something to live for. He has dark hair and blue eyes – not often met together, and when associated, very refreshing. Wait! I’ll go after the letter: only, bless my soul! where is it? What coat did I have on when I read it? I’ll call Jump. She may remember. Wait! do you recall this?”

He stumbled over something on the keys which might have been anything.

“It is Haydn. I will tell you what I think: Mozart I delight in as a companion; Beethoven I revere as a master; but Haydn I love as a friend. You were about to say something?”

Judith had set an elbow on the piano and put her hand to her head, her fingers through the hair, and was looking into Uncle Zachie’s face with an earnestness he could not mistake. She did desire to say something to him; but if she waited till he gave her an opportunity she might wait a long time. He jumped from one subject to another with alacrity, and with rapid forgetfulness of what he was last speaking about.

“Oh, sir, I am so very, very grateful to you for having received us into your snug little house – ”

“You like it? Well, I only pay seven pounds for it. Cheap, is it not? Two cottages – laborers’ cottages – thrown together. Well, I might go farther and fare worse.”

“And, Mr. Menaida, I venture to ask you another favor, which, if you will grant me, you will lay me under an eternal obligation.”

“You may command me, my dear.”

“It is only this: not to let Jamie have anything stronger than a glass of cider. I do not mind his having that; but a boy like him does not need what is, no doubt, wanted by you who are getting old. I am so afraid of the habit growing on him of looking for and liking what is too strong for him. He is such a child, so easily led, and so unable to control himself. It may be a fancy, a prejudice of mine” – she passed her nervous hand over her face – “I do hope I am not offending you, dear Mr. Menaida; but I know Jamie so well, and I know how carefully he must be watched and checked. If it be a silly fancy of mine – and perhaps it is only a silly fancy – yet,” she put on a pleading tone, “you will humor me in this, will you not, Mr. Menaida?”

“Bless my soul! you have only to express a wish and I will fulfil it. For myself, you must know, I am a little weak; I feel a chill when the wind turns north or east, and am always relaxed when it is in the south or west; that forces me to take something just to save me from serious inconvenience, you understand.”

“Oh quite, sir.”

“And then – confound it! – I am goaded on to work when disinclined. Why, there’s a letter come to me now from Plymouth – a naturalist there, asking for more birds; and what can I do? I slave, I am at it all day, half the night; I have no time to eat or sleep. I was not born to stuff birds. I take it as an amusement, a pastime, and it is converted into a toil. I must brace up my exhausted frame; it is necessary to my health, you understand!”

“Oh, yes, Mr. Menaida. And you really will humor my childish whim?”

“Certainly, you may rely on me.”

“That is one thing I wanted to say. You see, sir, we have but just come into your house, and already, last night, Jamie was tempted to disobey me, and take what I thought inadvisable, so – I have been turning it over and over in my head – I thought I would like to come to a clear understanding with you, Mr. Menaida. It seems ungracious in me, but you must pity me. I have now all responsibility for Jamie on my head, and I have to do what my conscience tells me I should do; only, I pray you, do not take offence at what I have said.”

“Fudge! my dear; you are right, I dare say.”

“And now that I have your promise – I have that, have I not?”

“Yes, certainly.”

“Now I want your opinion, if you will kindly give it me. I have no father, no mother, to go to for advice; and so I venture to appeal to you – it is about Captain Coppinger.”

“Captain Coppinger!” repeated Uncle Zachie, screwing up his brows and mouth. “Umph! He is a bold man who can give help against Captain Coppinger, and a strong man as well as bold. How has he wronged you?”

“Oh! he has not wronged me. It is I who have hurt him.”

“You – you!” Uncle Zachie laughed. “A little creature such as you could not hurt Captain Cruel!”

“But, indeed, I have; I have thrown him down and broken his arms and some of his bones.”

“You – you?” Uncle Zachie’s face of astonishment and dismay was so comical that Judith, in spite of her anxiety and exhaustion, smiled; but the smile was without brightness.

“And pray, how in the name of wonder did you do that? Upon my word, you will deserve the thanks of the Preventive men. They have no love for him; they have old scores they would gladly wipe off with a broken arm, or, better still, a cracked skull. And pray how did you do this? With the flour-roller?”

“No, sir, I will tell you the whole story.”

Then, in its true sequence, with great clearness, she related the entire narrative of events. She told how her father, even with his last breath, had spoken of Coppinger as the man who had troubled his life by marring his work; how that the Captain had entered the parsonage without ceremony when her dear father was lying dead up-stairs, and how he had called there boisterously for Aunt Dionysia because he wanted something of her. She told the old man how that her own feelings had been wrought, by this affront, into anger against Coppinger. Then she related the incident in the lane, and how that, when he raised his arm against her, she had dashed the buttons into his face, frightened his horse, and so produced an accident that might have cost the Captain his life.

“Bless my soul!” exclaimed Mr. Menaida, “and what do you want? Is it an assault? I will run to my law-books and find out; I don’t know that it can quite be made out a case of misadventure.”

“It is not that, sir.”

“Then what do you want?”

“I have been racking my head to think what I ought to do under the circumstances. There can be no doubt that I aggravated him. I was very angry, both because he had been a trouble to my darling papa, and then because he had been so insolent as to enter our house and shout for Aunt Dunes; but there was something more – he had tried to beat Jamie, and it was my father’s day of burial. All that roused a bad spirit in me, and I did say very bad words to him – words a man of metal would not

bear from even a child, and I suppose I really did lash him to madness, and he would have struck me – but perhaps not, he might have thought better of it. I provoked him, and then I brought about what happened. I have been considering what I ought to do. If I remain here and take no notice, then he will think me very unfeeling, and that I do not care that I have hurt him in mind and body. It came into my head last night that I would ask aunt to apologize to him for what I had done, or, better still, should aunt not come here to-day, which is very likely, that I might walk with Jamie to Pentyre and inquire how Captain Coppinger is, and send in word by my aunt that I am sorry – very sorry.”

“Upon my soul, I don’t know what to say. I could not have done this to Coppinger myself for a good deal of money. I think if I had, I would get out of the place as quickly as possible, while he was crippled by his broken bones. But then, you are a girl, and he may take it better from you than from me. Well – yes; I think it would be advisable to allay his anger if you can. Upon my word, you have put yourself into a difficult position. I’ll go and look at my law-books, just for my own satisfaction.”

A heavy blow on the door, and without waiting for a response and invitation to enter, it was thrown open, and there entered Cruel Coppinger, his arm bandaged, tied in splints, and bound to his body, with his heavy walking-stick brandished by the uninjured hand. He stood for a moment glowering in, searching the room with his keen eyes till they rested on Judith. Then he made an attempt to raise his hand to his head, but ineffectually.

“Curse it!” said he, “I cannot do it; don’t tear it off my head with your eyes, girl. Here, you Menaida, come here and take my hat off. Come instantly, or she – she will do – the devil knows what she will not do to me.”

He turned, and with his stick beat the door back, that it slammed behind him.

CHAPTER VIII

A PATCHED PEACE

“Look at her!” cried Coppinger, with his back against the house door, and pointing to Judith with his stick.

She was standing near the piano, with one hand on it, and was half turned toward him. She was in black, but had a white kerchief about her neck. The absence of all color in her dress heightened the lustre of her abundant and glowing hair.

Coppinger remained for a moment, pointing with a half sneer on his dark face. Mr. Menaida had nervously complied with his demand, and had removed the hat from the smuggler, and his dark hair fell about his face. That face was livid and pale; he had evidently suffered much, and now every movement was attended with pain. Not only had some of his bones been broken, but he was bruised and strained.

“Look at her!” he shouted again, in his deep commanding tones, and he fixed his fierce eyes on her and knitted his brows. She remained immovable, awaiting what he had to say. Though there was a flutter in her bosom, her hand on the piano did not shake.

“I am very sorry, Captain Coppinger,” said Judith, in a low, sweet voice, in which there was but a slight tremulousness. “I profess that I believe I acted wrongly yesterday, and I repeat that I am sorry – very sorry, Captain Coppinger.”

He made no reply. He lowered the stick that had been pointed at her, and leaned on it. His hand shook because he was in pain.

“I acted wrongly yesterday,” continued Judith, “but I acted under provocation that, if it does not justify what I did, palliates the wrong. I can say no more – that is the exact truth.”

“Is that all?”

“I am sorry for what was wrong in my conduct – frankly sorry that you are hurt.”

“You hear her?” laughed Coppinger, bitterly. “A little chit like that to speak to me thus” – then, turning sharply on her, “Are you not afraid?”

“No, I am not afraid; why should I be?”

“Why? Ask any one in S. Enodoc – any one in Cornwall – who has heard my name.”

“I beg your pardon. I do not want to ask any one else in S. Enodoc, any one else in Cornwall. I ask you.”

“Me? You ask me why you should be afraid of me?” He paused, drew his thick brows together till they formed a band across his forehead. “I tell you that none has ever wronged me by a blade of grass or a flock of wool but has paid for it a thousand-fold. And none has ever hurt me as you have done – none has ever dared to attempt it.”

“I have said that I am sorry.”

“You talk like one cold as a mermaid. I do not believe in your fearlessness. Why do you lean on the piano. There, touch the wires with the very tips of your fingers, and let me hear if they give a sound – and sound they will if you tremble.”

Judith exposed some of the wires by raising the top of the piano. Then she smiled, and stood with the tips of her delicate fingers just touching the chords. Coppinger listened, so did Uncle Zachie, and not a vibration could they detect.

Presently she withdrew her hand, and said, “Is not that enough? When a girl says, ‘I am sorry,’ I supposed the chapter was done and the book closed.”

“You have strange ideas.”

“I have those in which I was brought up by the best of fathers.”

Coppinger thrust his stick along the floor.

“Is it due to the ideas in which you have been brought up that you are not afraid – when you have reduced me to a wreck?”

“And you? – are you afraid of the wreck that you have made?”

The dark blood sprang into and suffused his whole face. Uncle Zachie drew back against the wall and made signs to Judith not to provoke their self-invited visitor; but she was looking steadily at the Captain, and did not observe the signals. In Coppinger’s presence she felt nerved to stand on the defensive, and more, to attack. A threat in his whole bearing, in his manner of addressing her, roused every energy she possessed.

“I tell you,” said he, harshly, “if any man had used the word you threw at me yesterday, I would have murdered him; I would have split his skull with the handle of my crop.”

“You raised your hand to do it to me,” said Judith.

“No!” he exclaimed, violently. “It is false; come here, and let me see if you have the courage, the fearlessness you affect. You women are past-masters of dissembling. Come here; kneel before me and let me raise my stick over you. See; there is lead in the handle, and with one blow I can split your skull and dash the brains over the floor.”

Judith remained immovable.

“I thought it – you are afraid.”

She shook her head.

He let himself, with some pain, slowly into a chair.

“You are afraid. You know what to expect. Ah! I could fell you and trample on you and break your bones, as I was cast down, trampled on, and broken in my bones yesterday – by you, or through you. Are you afraid?”

She took a step toward him. Then Uncle Zachie waved her back, in great alarm. He caught Judith’s attention, and she answered him, “I am not afraid. I gave him a word I should not have given him yesterday. I will show him that I retract it fully.” Then she stepped up to Coppinger and sank on her knees before him. He raised his whip, with the loaded handle, brandishing it over her.

“Now I am here,” she said, “I again ask your forgiveness, but I protest an apology is due to me.”

He threw his stick away. “By heaven, it is!” Then in an altered tone, “Take it so, that I ask your forgiveness. Get up; do not kneel to me. I could not have struck you down had I willed, my arm is stiff. Perhaps you knew it.”

He rose with effort to his feet again. Judith drew back to her former position by the piano, two hectic spots of flame were in her cheek, and her eyes were preternaturally bright.

Coppinger looked steadily at her for a while, then he said, “Are you ill? You look as if you were.”

“I have had much to go through of late.”

“True.”

He remained looking at her, brooding over something in his mind. She perplexed him; he wondered at her. He could not comprehend the spirit that was in her, that sustained a delicate little frame, and made her defy him.

His eyes wandered round the room, and he signed to Uncle Zachie to give him his stick again.

“What is that?” said he, pointing to the miniature on the stand for music, where Mr. Menaida had put it, over a sheet of the music he had been playing, or attempting to play.

“It is my son, Oliver,” said Uncle Zachie.

“Why is it there? Has she been looking at it? Let me see it.”

Mr. Menaida hesitated, but presently handed it to the redoubted Captain, with nervous twitches in his face. “I value it highly – my only child.”

Coppinger looked at it, with a curl of his lips; then handed it back to Mr. Menaida.

“Why is it here?”

“I brought it here to show it her. I am very proud of my son,” said Uncle Zachie.

Coppinger was in an irritable mood, captious about trifles. Why did he ask questions about this little picture? Why look suspiciously at Judith as he did so – suspiciously and threateningly?

“Do you play on the piano?” asked Coppinger. “When the evil spirit was on Saul, David struck the harp and sent the spirit away. Let me hear how you can touch the notes. It may do me good. Heaven knows it is not often I have the leisure, or the occasion, or am in the humor for music. I would hear what you can do.”

Judith looked at Uncle Zachie.

“I cannot play,” she said; “that is to say, I can play, but not now, and on this piano.”

But Mr. Menaida interfered and urged her to play. He was afraid of Coppinger.

She seated herself on the music-stool and considered for a moment. The miniature was again on the stand. Coppinger put out his stick and thrust it off, and it would have fallen had not Judith caught it. She gave it to Mr. Menaida, who hastily carried it into the adjoining room, where the sight of it might no longer irritate the Captain.

“What shall I play? I mean, strum?” asked Judith, looking at Uncle Zachie. “Beethoven! No – Haydn. Here are his ‘Seasons.’ I can play ‘Spring.’”

She had a light, but firm touch. Her father had been a man of great musical taste, and he had instructed her. But she had, moreover, the musical faculty in her, and she played with the spirit and with the understanding also. Wondrous is the power of music, passing that of fabled necromancy. It takes a man up out of his most sordid surroundings, and sets him in heavenly places. It touches fibres of the inner nature, lost, forgotten, ignored, and makes them thrill with a new life. It seals the eyes to outward sights, and unfurls new vistas full of transcendental beauty; it breathes over hot wounds and heals them; it calls to the surface springs of pure delight, and bids them gush forth in an arid desert.

It was so now, as, under the sympathetic fingers of Judith, Haydn’s song of the “Spring” was sung. A May world arose in that little dingy room; the walls fell back and disclosed green woods thick with red robin and bursting bluebells, fields golden with buttercups, hawthorns clothed in flower, from which sang the blackbird, thrush, the finch, and the ouzel. The low ceiling rose and overarched as the speed-well blue vault of heaven, the close atmosphere was dispelled by a waft of crisp, pure air; shepherds piped, Boy Blue blew his horn, and milkmaids rattled their pails and danced a ballet on the turf; and over all, down into every corner of the soul, streamed the glorious, golden sun, filling the heart with gladness.

Uncle Zachie had been standing at the door leading into his workshop, hesitating whether to remain, with a pish! and a pshaw! or to fly away beyond hearing. But he was arrested, then drawn lightly, irresistibly, step by step, toward the piano, and he noiselessly sank upon a chair, with his eyes fixed on Judith’s fingers as they danced over the keys. His features assumed a more refined character as he listened; the water rose into his eyes, his lips quivered, and when, before reaching the end of the piece, Judith faltered and stopped, he laid his hand on her wrist and said: “My dear – you play, you do not strum. Play when you will – never can it be too long, too much for me. It may steady my hand, it may dispel the chill and the damp better than – but never mind – never mind.”

Why had Judith failed to accomplish the piece? Whilst engaged on the notes she had felt that the searching, beaming eyes of the smuggler were on her, fixed with fierce intensity. She could meet them, looking straight at him, without shrinking, and without confusion, but to be searched by them whilst off her guard, her attention engaged on her music, was what she could not endure.

Coppinger made no remark on what he had heard, but his face gave token that the music had not swept across him without stirring and softening his hard nature.

“How long is she to be here with you?” he asked, turning to Uncle Zachie.

“Captain, I cannot tell. She and her brother had to leave the rectory. They could not remain in that house alone. Mrs. Trevisa asked me to lodge them here, and I consented. I knew their father.”

“She did not ask me. I would have taken them in.”

“Perhaps she was diffident of doing that,” said Uncle Zachie. “But really, on my word, it is no inconvenience to me. I have room in this house, and my maid, Jump, has not enough to do to attend on me.”

“When you are tired of them send them to me.”

“I am not likely to be tired of Judith, now that I have heard her play.”

“Judith – is that her name?”

“Yes – Judith.”

“Judith!” he repeated, and thrust his stick along the floor, meditatively. “Judith!” Then, after a pause, with his eyes on the ground, “Why did not your aunt speak to me! Why does she not love you? – she does not, I know. Why did she not go to see you when your father was alive! Why did you not come to the Glaze?”

“My dear papa did not wish me to go to your house,” said Judith, answering one of his many questions, the last, and perhaps the easiest to reply to.

“Why not?” he glanced up at her, then down on the floor again.

“Papa was not very pleased with Aunt Dunes – it was no fault on either side, only a misunderstanding,” said Judith.

“Why did he not let you come to my house to salute your aunt?”

Judith hesitated. He again looked up at her searchingly.

“If you really must know the truth, Captain Coppinger, papa thought your house was hardly one to which to send two children – it was said to harbor such wild folk.”

“And he did not know how fiercely and successfully you could defend yourself against wild folk,” said Coppinger, with a harsh laugh. “It is we wild men that must fear you, for you dash us about and bruise and break us when displeased with our ways. We are not so bad at the Glaze as we are painted, not by a half – here is my hand on it.”

Judith was still seated on the music-stool, her hands resting in her lap. Coppinger came toward her, walking stiffly, and extending his palm.

She looked down in her lap. What did this fierce, strange man, mean?

“Will you give me your hand?” he asked. “Is there peace between us?”

She was doubtful what to say. He remained, awaiting her answer.

“I really do not know what reply to make,” she said, after awhile. “Of course, so far as I’m concerned, it is peace. I have myself no quarrel with you, and you are good enough to say that you forgive me.”

“Then why not peace?”

Again she let him wait before answering. She was uneasy and unhappy. She wanted neither his goodwill nor his hostility.

“In all that affects me, I bear you no ill-will,” she said, in a low, tremulous voice; “but in that you were a grief to my dear, dear father, discouraging his heart, I cannot be forgetful, and so full of charity as to blot it out as though it had not been.”

“Then let it be a patched peace – a peace with evasions and reservations. Better that than none. Give me your hand.”

“On that understanding,” said Judith, and laid her hand in his. His iron fingers closed round it, and he drew her up from the stool on which she sat, drew her forward near the window, and thrust her in front of him. Then he raised her hand, held it by the wrist, and looked at it.

“It is very small, very weak,” he said, musingly.

Then there rushed over her mind the recollection of her last conversation with her father. He, too, had taken and looked at her hand, and had made the same remark.

Coppinger lowered her hand and his, and, looking at her, said:

“You are very wonderful to me.”

“I – why so?”

He did not answer, but let go his hold of her, and turned away to the door.

Judith saw that he was leaving, and she hastened to bring him his stick, and she opened the door for him.

“I thank you,” he said, turned, pointed his stick at her, and added, “It is peace – though a patched one.”

CHAPTER IX

C. C

Days ensued, not of rest to body, but of relaxation to mind. Judith's overstrained nerves had now given them a period of numbness, a sleep of sensibility with occasional turnings and wakenings, in which they recovered their strength. She and Jamie were settled into their rooms at Mr. Menaida's, and the hours were spent in going to and from the rectory removing their little treasures to the new home – if a temporary place of lodging could be called a home – and in arranging them there.

There were a good many farewells to be taken, and Judith marvelled sometimes at the insensibility with which she said them – farewells to a thousand nooks and corners of the house and garden, the shrubbery, and the glebe farm, all endeared by happy recollections, now having their brightness dashed with rain.

To Judith this was a first revelation of the mutability of things on earth. Hitherto, as a child, with a child's eyes and a child's confidence, she had regarded the rectory, the glebe, the contents of the house, the flowers in the garden, as belonging inalienably to her father and brother and herself. They belonged to them together. There was nothing that was her father's that did not belong to Jamie and to her, nothing of her brother's or her own that was not likewise the property of papa. There was no mine or thine in that little family of love – save only a few birthday presents given from one to the other, and these only special property by a playful concession. But now the dear father was gone, and every right seemed to dissolve. From the moment that he leaned back against the brick, lichen-stained wall, and sighed – and was dead, house and land had been snatched from them. And though the contents of the rectory, the books, and the furniture, and the china belonged to them, it was but for a little while; these things must be parted with also, turned into silver.

Not because the money was needed, but because Judith had no settled home, and no prospect of one. Therefore she must not encumber herself with many belongings. For a little while she would lodge with Mr. Menaida, but she could not live there forever; she must remove elsewhere, and she must consider, in the first place, that there was not room in Uncle Zachie's cottage for accumulations of furniture, and that, in the next place, she would probably have to part with them on her next remove, even if she did retain them for a while.

If these things were to be parted with, it would be advisable to part with them at once. But to this determination Judith could not bring herself at first. Though she had put aside, to be kept, things too sacred to her, too much part of her past life, to be allowed to go into the sale, after a few days she relinquished even these. Those six delightful old colored prints, in frames, of a fox-hunt – how Jamie had laughed at them, and followed the incidents in them, and never wearied of them – must they go – perhaps for a song? It must be so. That work-table of her mother's, of dark rosewood, with a crimson bag beneath it to contain wools and silks, one of the few remembrances she had of that mother whom she but dimly recalled – must that go? – what, and all those skeins in it of colored floss silk, and the piece of embroidery half finished? the work of her mother, broken off by death – that also? It must be so. And that rusty leather chair in which papa had sat, with one golden-headed child on each knee cuddled into his breast, with the flaps of his coat drawn over their heads, which listened to the tick-tick of his great watch, and to the tale of Little Snowflake, or Gracieuse and Percinet? – must that go also? It must be so.

Every day showed to Judith some fresh link that had to be broken. She could not bear to think that the mother's work-table should be contended for at a vulgar auction, and struck down to a blousy farmer's wife; that her father's chair should go to some village inn to be occupied by sots. She would rather have seen them destroyed; but to destroy them would not be right.

After a while she longed for the sale; she desired to have it over, that an entirely new page of life might be opened, and her thoughts might not be carried back to the past by everything she saw.

Of Coppinger nothing further was seen. Nor did Aunt Dionysia appear at the rectory to superintend the assortment of the furniture, nor at Mr. Menaida's to inquire into the welfare of her nephew and niece. To Judith it was a relief not to have her aunt in the parsonage while she was there; that hard voice and unsympathetic manner would have kept her nerves on the quiver. It was best as it was, that she should have time, by herself, with no interference from any one, to select what was to be kept and put away what was to be sold; to put away gently, with her own trembling hand, and with eyes full of tears, the old black gown and the Oxford hood that papa had worn in church, and to burn his old sermons and bundles of letters, unread and uncommented on by Aunt Dunes.

In these days Judith did not think much of Coppinger. Uncle Zachie informed her that he was worse, he was confined to his bed, he had done himself harm by coming over to Polzeath the day after his accident, and the doctor had ordered him not to stir from Pentyre Glaze for some time – not till his bones were set. Nothing was known of the occasion of Coppinger's injuries, so Uncle Zachie said; it was reported in the place that he had been thrown from his horse. Judith entreated the old man not to enlighten the ignorance of the public; she was convinced that naught would transpire through Jamie, who could not tell a story intelligibly; and Miss Dionysia Trevisa was not likely to publish what she knew.

Judith had a pleasant little chamber at Mr. Menaida's; it was small, low, plastered against the roof, the rafters showing, and whitewashed like the walls and ceiling. The light entered from a dormer in the roof, a low window glazed with diamond quarries set in lead that clicked incessantly in the wind. It faced the south, and let the sun flow in. A scrap of carpet was on the floor, and white curtains to the window. In this chamber Judith ranged such of her goods as she had resolved on retaining, either as indispensable, or as being too dear to her to part with unnecessarily, and which, as being of small size, she might keep without difficulty.

Her father's old travelling trunk, covered with hide with the hair on, and his initials in brass nails – a trunk he had taken with him to college – was there, thrust against the wall; it contained her clothes. Suspended above it was her little bookcase, with the shelves laden with "The Travels of Rolando," Dr. Aitkin's "Evenings at Home," Magnal's "Questions," a French Dictionary, "Paul and Virginia," and a few other works such as were the delight of children from ninety to a hundred years ago.

Books for children were rare in those days, and such as were produced were read and re-read till they were woven into the very fibre of the mind, never more to be extricated and cast aside. Now it is otherwise. A child reads a story-book every week, and each new story-book effaces the impression produced by the book that went before. The result of much reading is the same as the result of no reading – the production of a blank.

How Judith and Jamie had sat together perched up in a sycamore, in what they called their nest, and had revelled in the adventures of Rolando, she reading aloud, he listening a little, then lapsing into observation of the birds that flew and hopped about, or the insects that spun and crept, or dropped on silky lines, or fluttered humming about the nest, then returned to attention to the book again! Rolando would remain through life the friend and companion of Judith. She could not part with the four-volumed, red-leather-backed book.

For the first day or two Jamie had accompanied his sister to the rectory, and had somewhat incommoded her by his restlessness and his mischief, but on the third day, and thenceforth, he no longer attended her. He had made fast friends with Uncle Zachie. He was amused with watching the process of bird-stuffing, and the old man made use of the boy by giving him tow to pick to pieces and wires to straighten.

Mr. Menaida was pleased to have some one by him in his workshop to whom he could talk. It was unimportant to him whether the listener followed the thread of his conversation or not, so long as he was a listener. Mr. Menaida, in his solitude, had been wont to talk to himself, to grumble to

himself at the impatience of his customers, to lament to himself the excess of work that pressed upon him and deprived him of time for relaxation. He was wont to criticise, to himself, his success or want of success in the setting-up of a bird. It was far more satisfactory to him to be able to address all these remarks to a second party.

He was, moreover, surprised to find how keen and just had been Jamie's observation of birds, their ways, their attitudes. Judith was delighted to think that Jamie had discovered talent of some sort, and he had, so Uncle Zachie assured her, that imitative ability which is often found to exist alongside with low intellectual power, and this enabled him to assist Mr. Menaida in giving a natural posture to his birds.

It flattered the boy to find that he was appreciated, that he was consulted, and asked to assist in a kind of work that exacted nothing of his mind.

When Uncle Zachie was tired of his task, which was every ten minutes or quarter of an hour, and that was the extreme limit to which he could continue regular work, he lit his pipe, left his bench, and sat in his arm-chair. Then Jamie also left his tow-picking or wire-punching, and listened, or seemed to listen, to Mr. Menaida's talk. When the old man had finished his pipe, and, with a sigh, went back to his task, Jamie was tired of hearing him talk, and was glad to resume his work. Thus the two desultory creatures suited each other admirably, and became attached friends.

"Jamie! what is the meaning of this?" asked Judith, with a start and a rush of blood to her heart.

She had returned in the twilight from the parsonage. There was something in the look of her brother, something in his manner that was unusual.

"Jamie! What have you been taking? Who gave it you?"

She caught the boy by the arm. Distress and shame were in her face, in the tones of her voice. Mr. Menaida grunted.

"I'm sorry, but it can't be helped – really it can't," said he, apologetically. "But Captain Coppinger has sent me down a present of a keg of cognac – real cognac, splendid, amber-like – and, you know, it was uncommonly kind. He never did it before. So there was no avoidance; we had to tap it and taste it, and give a sup to the fellow who brought us the keg, and drink the health of the Captain. One could not be churlish; and, naturally, I could not abstain from letting Jamie try the spirit. Perfectly pure – quite wholesome – first-rate quality. Upon my word, he had not more than a fly could dip his legs in and feel the bottom; but he is unaccustomed to anything stronger than cider, and this is stronger than I supposed."

"Mr. Menaida, you promised me – "

"Bless me! There are contingencies, you know. I never for a moment thought that Captain Coppinger would show me such a favor, would have such courtesy. But, upon my honor, I think it is your doing, my dear! You shook hands and made peace with him, and he has sent this in token of the cessation of hostilities and the ratification of the agreement."

"Mr. Menaida, I trusted you. I did believe, when you passed your word to me, that you would hold to it."

"Now – there, don't take it in that way. Jamie, you rascal, hop off to bed. He'll be right as a trivet to-morrow morning, I stake my reputation on that. There, there, I will help him up-stairs."

Judith suffered Mr. Menaida to do as he proposed. When he had left the room with Jamie, who was reluctant to go, and struggled to remain, she seated herself on the sofa, and covering her face with her hands burst into tears. Whom could she trust? No one.

Had she been alone in the world she would have been more confident of the future, been able to look forward with a good courage; but she had to carry Jamie with her, who must be defended from himself, and from the weak good-nature of those he was with.

When Uncle Zachie came down-stairs he slunk into his workroom and was very quiet. No lamp or candle was lighted, and it was too dark for him to continue his employment on the birds. What was he doing? Nothing. He was ashamed of himself, and keeping out of Judith's way.

But Judith would not let him escape so easily; she went to him, as he avoided her, and found him seated in a corner turning his pipe about. He had been afraid of striking a light, lest he should call her attention to his presence.

“Oh, my dear, come in here into the workshop to me! This is an honor, an unexpected pleasure. Jamie and I have been drudging like slaves all day, and we’re fagged – fagged to the ends of our fingers and toes.”

“Mr. Menaida, I am sorry to say it, but if such a thing happens again as has taken place this evening, Jamie and I must leave your house. I thank you with an overflowing heart for your goodness to us; but I must consider Jamie above everything else, and I must see that he be not exposed to temptation.”

“Where will you take him?”

“I cannot tell; but I must shield him.”

“There, there, not a word! It shall never happen again. Now let by-gones be by-gones, and play me something of Beethoven, while I sit here and listen in the twilight.”

“No, Mr. Menaida, I cannot. I have not the spirit to do it. I can think only of Jamie.”

“So you punish me!”

“Take it so. I am sorry; but I cannot do otherwise.”

“Now, look here! Bless my soul! I had almost forgotten it. Here is a note for you, from the Captain, I believe.” He went to the chimney-piece and took down a scrap of paper, folded and sealed.

Judith looked at it and went to the window, broke the seal, and opened the paper. She read —

“Why do you not come and see me? You do not care for what you have done.
They call me cruel; but you are that. – C. C.”

CHAPTER X

EGO ET REGINA MEA

The strange, curt note from Cruel Coppinger served in a measure to divert the current of Judith's thoughts from her trouble about Jamie. It was, perhaps, as well, or she would have fretted over that throughout the night, not only because of Jamie, but because she felt that her father had left his solemn injunction on her to protect and guide her twin-brother, and she knew that whatsoever harm, physical or moral, came to him, argued a lack of attention to her duty. Her father had not been dead many days, and already Jamie had been led from the path she had undertaken to keep him in.

But when she began to worry herself about Jamie, the bold characters, "C. C.," with which the letter was signed, rose before her, and glowed in the dark as characters of fire.

She had gone to her bedroom, and had retired for the night, but could not sleep. The moon shone through the lattice into her chamber, and on the stool by the window lay the letter, where she had cast it. Her mind turned to it.

Why did Coppinger call her cruel? Was she cruel? Not intentionally so. She had not wilfully injured him. He did not suppose that. He meant that she was heartless and indifferent in letting him suffer without making any inquiry concerning him.

He had injured himself by coming to Polzeath to see her the day following his accident. Uncle Zachie had assured her of that.

She went on in her busy mind to ask why he had come to see her? Surely there had been no need for him to do so! His motive – the only motive she could imagine – was a desire to relieve her from anxiety and distress of mind; a desire to show her that he bore no ill-will toward her for what she had done. That was generous and considerate of him. Had he not come she certainly would have been unhappy and in unrest, would have imagined all kinds of evil as likely to ensue through his hostility – for one thing, her aunt's dismissal from her post might have been expected.

But Coppinger, though in pain, and at a risk to his health, had walked to where she was lodging to disabuse her of any such impression. She was grateful to him for so doing. She felt that such a man could not be utterly abandoned by God, entirely void of good qualities, as she had supposed, viewing him only through the representations of his character and the tales circulating relative to his conduct that had reached her.

A child divides mankind into two classes – the good and the bad, and supposes that there is no debatable land between them, where light and shade are blended into neutral tint; certainly not that there are blots on the white leaf of the lives of the good, and luminous glimpses in the darkness of the histories of the bad. As they grow older they rectify their judgments, and such a rectification Judith had now to make.

She was assisted in this by compassion for Coppinger, who was in suffering, and by self-reproach, because she was the occasion of this suffering.

What were the exact words Captain Cruel had employed? She was not certain; she turned the letter over and over in her mind, and could not recall every expression, and she could not sleep till she was satisfied.

Therefore she rose from bed, stole to the window, took up the letter, seated herself on the stool, and conned it in the moonlight. "Why do you not come and see me? You do not care for what you have done." That was not true; she was greatly troubled at what she had done. She was sick at heart when she thought of that scene in the lane, when the black mare was leaping and pounding with her hoofs, and Coppinger lay on the ground. One kick of the hoof on his head, and he would have been dead. His blood would have rested on her conscience, never to be wiped off. Horrible was the recollection now, in the stillness of the night. It was marvellous that life had not been beaten out of the prostrate

man, that, dragged about by the arm, he had not been torn to pieces, that every bone had not been shattered, that his face had not been battered out of recognition. Judith felt the perspiration stand on her brow at the thought. God had been very good to her in sending His angel to save Coppinger from death and her from blood-guiltiness. She slid to her knees at the window, and held up her hands, the moonlight illuminating her white upturned face, as she gave thanks to Heaven that no greater evil had ensued from her inconsidered act with the button-basket than a couple of broken bones.

Oh! it was very far indeed from true that she did not care for what she had done. Coppinger must have been blind indeed not to have seen how she felt her conduct. His letter concluded: "They call me cruel; but you are that." He meant that she was cruel in not coming to the Glaze to inquire after him. He had thought of her trouble of mind, and had gone to Polzeath to relieve her of anxiety, and she had shown no consideration for him – or not in like manner.

She had been very busy at the rectory. Her mind had been concerned with her own affairs, that was her excuse. Cruel she was not. She took no pleasure in his pain. But she hesitated about going to see him. That was more than was to be expected of a young girl. She would go on the morrow to Coppinger's house, and ask to speak to her aunt; that she might do, and from Aunt Dionysia she would learn in what condition Captain Cruel was, and might send him her respects and wishes for his speedy recovery.

As she still knelt in her window, looking up through the diamond panes into the clear, gray-blue sky, she heard a sound without, and, looking down, saw a convoy of horses pass, laden with bales and kegs, and followed or accompanied by men wearing slouched hats. So little noise did the beasts make in traversing the road, that Judith was convinced their hoofs must be muffled in felt. She had heard that this was done by the smugglers. It was said that all Coppinger's horses had their boots drawn on when engaged in conveying run goods from the place where stored to their destination.

These were Coppinger's men, this his convoy, doubtless. Judith thrust the letter from her. He was a bad man, a very bad man; and if he had met with an accident, it was his due, a judgment on his sins. She rose from her knees, turned away, and went back to her bed.

Next day, after a morning spent at the rectory, in the hopes that her aunt might arrive and obviate the need of her going in quest of her, Judith, disappointed in this hope, prepared to walk to Pentyre. Mrs. Dionysia had not acted with kindness toward her. Judith felt this, without allowing herself to give to the feeling articulate expression. She made what excuses she could for Aunt Dunes: she was hindered by duties that had crowded upon her, she had been forbidden going by Captain Cruel; but none of these excuses satisfied Judith.

Judith must go herself to the Glaze, and she had reasons of her own for wishing to see her aunt, independent of the sense of obligation on her, more or less acknowledged, that she must obey the summons of C. C. There were matters connected with the rectory, with the furniture there, the cow, and the china, that Mrs. Trevisa must give her judgment upon. There were bills that had come in, which Mrs. Trevisa must pay, as Judith had been left without any money in her pocket.

As the girl walked through the lanes she turned over in her mind the stories she had heard of the smuggler Captain, the wild tales of his wrecking ships, of his contests with the Preventive men, and the ghastly tragedy of Wyvill, who had been washed up headless on Doombur. In former days she had accepted all these stories as true, had not thought of questioning them; but now that she had looked Coppinger in the face, had spoken with him, experienced his consideration, she could not believe that they were to be accepted without question. That story of Wyvill – that Captain Cruel had hacked off his head on the gunwale with his axe – seemed to her now utterly incredible. But if true! She shuddered to think that her hand had been held in that stained with so hideous a crime.

Thus musing, Judith arrived at Pentyre Glaze, and entering the porch, turned from the sea, knocked at the door.

A loud voice bade her enter. She knew that the voice proceeded from Coppinger, and her heart fluttered with fear and uncertainty. She halted, with her hand on the door, inclined to retreat without

entering; but again the voice summoned her to come in, and gathering up her courage she opened the door, and, still holding the latch, took a few steps forward into the hall or kitchen, into which it opened.

A fire was smouldering in the great open fireplace, and beside it, in a carved oak arm-chair, sat Cruel Coppinger, with a small table at his side, on which were a bottle and glass, a canister of tobacco and a pipe. His arm was strapped across his breast as she had seen it a few days before. Entering from the brilliant light of day, Judith could not at first observe his face, but, as her eyes became accustomed to the twilight of the smoke-blackened and gloomy hall, she saw that he looked more worn and pale than he had seemed the day after the accident. Nor could she understand the expression on his countenance when he was aware who was his visitor.

"I beg your pardon," said Judith; "I am sorry to have intruded; but I wished to speak to my aunt."

"Your aunt? Old mother Dunes? Come in. Let go your hold of the door and shut it. Your aunt started a quarter of an hour ago for the rectory."

"And I came along the lane from Polzeath."

"Then no wonder you did not meet her. She went by the church path, of course, and over the down."

"I am sorry to have missed her. Thank you, Captain Coppinger, for telling me."

"Stay!" he roared, as he observed her draw back into the porch. "You are not going yet!"

"I cannot stay for more than a moment in which to ask how you do, and whether you are somewhat better? I was sorry to hear you had been worse."

"I have been worse, yes. Come in. You shall not go. I am mewed in as a prisoner, and have none to speak to, and no one to look at but old Dunes. Come in, and take that stool by the fire, and let me hear you speak, and let me rest my eyes a while on your golden hair – gold more golden than that of the Indies."

"I hope you are better, sir," said Judith, ignoring the compliment.

"I am better now I have seen you. I shall be worse if you do not come in."

She refused to do this by a light shake of the head.

"I suppose you are afraid. We are wild and lawless men here, ogres that eat children! Come, child, I have something to show you."

"Thank you for your kindness; but I must run to the parsonage; I really *must* see my aunt."

"Then I will send her to Polzeath to you when she returns. She will keep; she's stale enough."

"I would spare her the trouble."

"Pshaw! She shall do what I will. Now see – I am wearied to death with solitude and sickness. Come, amuse yourself, if you will, with insulting me – calling me what you like; I do not mind, so long as you remain."

"I have no desire whatever, Captain Coppinger, to insult you and call you names."

"You insult me by standing there holding the latch – standing on one foot, as if afraid to sully the soles by treading my tainted floor. Is it not an insult that you refuse to come in? Is it not so much as saying to me, 'You are false, cruel, not to be trusted; you are not worthy that I should be under the same roof with you, and breathe the same air?'"

"Oh, Captain Coppinger, I do not mean that!"

"Then let go the latch and come in. Stand, if you will not sit, opposite me. How can I see you there, in the doorway?"

"There is not much to see when I am visible," said Judith, laughing.

"Oh, no! not much! Only a little creature who has more daring than any man in Cornwall – who will stand up to, and cast at her feet, Cruel Coppinger, at whose name men tremble."

Judith let go her hold on the door, and moved timidly into the hall; but she let the door remain half open that the light and air flowed in.

“And now,” said Captain Coppinger, “here is a key on this table by me. Do you see a small door by the clock-case? Unlock that door with the key.”

“You want something from thence!”

“I want you to unlock the door. There are beautiful and costly things within that you shall see.”

“Thank you; but I would rather look at them some other day, when my aunt is here, and I have more time.”

“Will you refuse me even the pleasure of letting you see what is there?”

“If you particularly desire it, Captain Coppinger, I will peep in – but only peep.”

She took the key from his table, and crossed the hall to the door. The lock was large and clumsy, but she turned the key by putting both hands to it. Then, swinging open the door, she looked inside. The door opened into an apartment crowded with a collection of sundry articles of value: bales of silk from Italy, Genoa laces, Spanish silver-inlaid weapons, Chinese porcelain, bronzes from Japan, gold and silver ornaments, bracelets, brooches, watches, inlaid mother-of-pearl cabinets – an amazing congeries of valuables heaped together.

“Well, now!” shouted Cruel Coppinger. “What say you to the gay things there? Choose – take what you will. I care not for them one rush. What do you most admire, most covet? Put out both hands and take – take all you would have; fill your lap, carry off all you can. It is yours.”

Judith drew hastily back and relocked the door.

“What have you taken?”

“Nothing.”

“Nothing? Take what you will; I give it freely.”

“I cannot take anything, though I thank you, Captain Coppinger, for your kind and generous offer.”

“You will accept nothing?”

She shook her head.

“That is like you. You do it to anger me. As you throw hard words at me – coward, wrecker, robber – and as you dash broken glass, buttons, buckles, in my face, so do you throw back my offers.”

“It is not through ingratitude – ”

“I care not through what it is! You seek to anger, and not to please me. Why will you take nothing? There are beautiful things there to charm a woman.”

“I am not a woman; I am a little girl.”

“Why do you refuse me!”

“For one thing, because I want none of the things there, beautiful and costly though they be.”

“And for the other thing – ?”

“For the other thing – excuse my plain speaking – I do not think they have been honestly got.”

“By heavens!” shouted Coppinger. “There you attack and stab at me again. I like your plainness of speech. You do not spare me. I would not have you false and double like old Dunes.”

“Oh, Captain Coppinger! I give you thanks from the depths of my heart. It is kindly intended, and it is so good and noble of you, I feel that; for I have hurt you and reduced you to the state in which you now are, and yet you offer me the best things in your house – things of priceless value. I acknowledge your goodness; but just because I know I do not deserve this goodness I must decline what you offer.”

“Then come here and give me the key.”

She stepped lightly over the floor to him and handed him the great iron key to his store chamber. As she did so he caught her hand, bowed his dark head, and kissed her fingers.

“Captain Coppinger!” She started back, trembling, and snatched her hand from him.

“What! have I offended you again? Why not? A subject kisses the hand of his queen; and I am a subject, and you – you my queen.”

CHAPTER XI

JESSAMINE

"How are you, old man?"

"Middlin', thank'; and how be you, gov'nor?"

"Middlin' also; and your missus?"

"Only sadly. I fear she's goin' slow but sure the way of all flesh."

"Bless us! 'Tis a trouble and expense them sort o' things. Now to work, shall we? What do you figure up?"

"And you?"

"Oh, well, I'm not here on reg'lar business. Huntin' on my own score to-day."

"Oh, ay! Nice port this."

"Best the old fellow had in his cellar. I told the executrix I should like the taste of it, and advise thereon."

The valuers for dilapidations, vulgarly termed dilapidators, were met in the dining-room of the deserted parsonage. Mr. Scantlebray was on one side, Mr. Cargreen on the other. Mr. Scantlebray was on that of the "orphings," as he termed his clients, and Mr. Cargreen on that of the Rev. Mr. Mules, the recently nominated rector to S. Enodoc.

Mr. Scantlebray was a tall, lean man, with light gray eyes, a red face, and legs and arms that he shook every now and then as though they were encumbrances to his trunk and he was going to shake them off, as a poodle issuing from a bath shakes the water out of his locks. Mr. Cargreen was a bullet-headed man, with a white neckcloth, gray whiskers, a solemn face, and a sort of perpetual "Let-us-pray" expression on his lips and in his eyes – a composing of his interior faculties and abstraction from worldly concerns.

"I am here," said Mr. Scantlebray, "as adviser and friend – you understand, old man – of the orphings and their haunt."

"And I," said Mr. Cargreen, "am ditto to the incoming rector."

"And what do you get out of this visit!" asked Mr. Scantlebray, who was a frank man.

"Only three guineas as a fee," said Mr. Cargreen. "And you?"

"Ditto, old man – three guineas. You understand, I am not here as valuer to-day."

"Nor I – only as adviser."

"Exactly! Taste this port. 'Taint bad – out of the cellar of the old chap. Told auntie I must have it, to taste and give opinion on."

"And what are you going to do to-day?"

"I'm going to have one or two little things pulled down, and other little things put to rights."

"Humph! I'm here to see nothing is pulled down."

"We won't quarrel. There's the conservatory, and the linney in Willa Park."

"I don't know," said Cargreen, shaking his head.

"Now look here, old man," said Mr. Scantlebray. "You let me tear the linney down, and I'll let the conservatory stand."

"The conservatory – "

"I know; the casement of the best bedroom went through the roof of it. I'll mend the roof and repaint it. You can try the timber, and find it rotten, and lay on dilapidations enough to cover a new conservatory. Pass the linney; I want to make pickings out of that."

It may perhaps be well to let the reader understand the exact situation of the two men engaged in sipping port. Directly it was known that a rector had been nominated to S. Enodoc, Mr. Cargreen, a Bodmin valuer, agent, and auctioneer, had written to the happy nominee, Mr. Mules, of Birmingham,

inclosing his card in the letter, to state that he was a member of an old-established firm, enjoying the confidence, not to say the esteem of the principal county families in the north of Cornwall, that he was a sincere Churchman, that deploring, as a true son of the Church, the prevalence of Dissent, he felt it his duty to call the attention of the reverend gentleman to certain facts that concerned him, but especially the **Church**, and facts that he himself, as a devoted son of the Church, on conviction, after mature study of its tenets, felt called upon, in the interest of that Church he so had at heart, to notice. He had heard, said Mr. Cargreen, that the outgoing parties from S. Enodoc were removing, or causing to be removed, or were proposing to remove, certain fixtures in the parsonage, and certain out-buildings, barns, tenements, sheds, and linneys on the glebe and parsonage premises, to the detriment of its value, inasmuch as that such removal would be prejudicial to the letting of the land, and render it impossible for the incoming rector to farm it himself without re-erecting the very buildings now in course of destruction, or which were purposed to be destroyed: to wit, certain out-buildings, barns, cattle-sheds, and linneys, together with other tenements that need not be specified. Mr. Cargreen added that, roughly speaking, the dilapidations of these buildings, if allowed to stand, might be assessed at £300; but that, if pulled down, it would cost the new rector about £700 to re-erect them, and their re-erection would be an imperative necessity. Mr. Cargreen had himself, personally, no interest in the matter; but, as a true son of the Church, etc., etc.

By return of post Mr. Cargreen received an urgent request from the Rev. Mr. Mules to act as his agent, and to act with precipitation in the protection of his interests.

In the meantime Mr. Scantlebray had not been neglectful of other people's interest. He had written to Miss Dionysia Trevisa to inform her that, though he did not enjoy a present acquaintance, it was the solace and joy of his heart to remember that some years ago, before that infelicitous marriage of Mr. Trevisa, which had led to Miss Dionysia's leaving the rectory, it had been his happiness to meet her at the house of a mutual acquaintance, Mrs. Scaddon, where he had respectfully, and, at this distance of time, he ventured to add, humbly and hopelessly admired her; that, as he was riding past the rectory he had chanced to observe the condition of dilapidation certain tenements, pig-sties, cattle-sheds, and other out-buildings were in, and that, though it in no way concerned him, yet, for auld lang syne's sake, and a desire to assist one whom he had always venerated, and, at this distance of time might add, had admired, he ventured to offer a suggestion: to wit, That a number of unnecessary out-buildings should be torn down and utterly effaced before a new rector was nominated, and had appointed a valuer; also that certain obvious repairs should be undertaken and done at once, so as to give to the parsonage the appearance of being in excellent order, and cut away all excuse for piling up dilapidations. Mr. Scantlebray ventured humbly to state that he had had a good deal of experience with those gentlemen who acted as valuers for dilapidations, and with pain he was obliged to add that a more unscrupulous set of men it had never been his bad fortune to come into contact with. He ventured to assert that, were he to tell all he knew, or only half of what he knew, as to their proceedings in valuing for dilapidations, he would make both of Miss Trevisa's ears tingle.

At once Miss Dionysia entreated Mr. Scantlebray to superintend and carry out with expedition such repairs and such demolitions as he deemed expedient, so as to forestall the other party.

"Chicken!" said Mr. Cargreen. "That's what I've brought for my lunch."

"And 'am is what I've got," said Mr. Scantlebray. "They'll go lovely together." Then, in a loud tone – "Come in!"

The door opened, and a carpenter entered with a piece of deal board in his hand.

"You won't mind looking out of the winder, Mr. Cargreen?" said Mr. Scantlebray. "Some business that's partick'ler my own. You'll find the jessamine – the white jessamine – smells beautiful."

Mr. Cargreen rose, and went to the dining-room window that was embowered in white jessamine, then in full flower and fragrance.

"What is it, Davy?"

“Well, sir, I ain’t got no dry old board for the floor where it be rotten, nor for the panelling of the doors where broken through.”

“No board at all?”

“No, sir – all is green. Only cut last winter.”

“Won’t it take paint?”

“Well, sir, not well. I’ve dried this piece by the kitchen fire, and I find it’ll take the paint for a time.”

“Run, dry all the panels at the kitchen fire, and then paint ’em.”

“Thanky’, sir; but, how about the boarding of the floor? The boards’ll warp and start.”

“Look here, Davy, that gentleman who’s at the winder a-smelling to the jessamine is the surveyor and valuer to t’other party. I fancy you’d best go round outside and have a word with him and coax him to pass the boards.”

“Come in!” in a loud voice. Then there entered a man in a cloth coat, with very bushy whiskers. “How d’y’ do, Spargo? What do you want?”

“Well, Mr. Scantlebray, I understand the linney and cow-shed is to be pulled down.”

“So it is, Spargo.”

“Well, sir!” Mr. Spargo drew his sleeve across his mouth. “There’s a lot of very fine oak timber in it – beams, and such like – that I don’t mind buying. As a timber merchant I could find a use for it.”

“Say ten pound.”

“Ten pun’! That’s a long figure!”

“Not a pound too much; but come – we’ll say eight.”

“I reckon I’d thought five.”

“Five! pshaw! It’s dirt cheap to *you* at eight.”

“Why to me, sir?”

“Why, because the new rector will want to rebuild both cattle-shed and linney, and he’ll have to go to you for timber.”

“But suppose he don’t, and cuts down some on the glebe?”

“No, Spargo – not a bit. There at the winder, smelling to the jessamine, is the new rector’s adviser and agent. Go round by the front door into the garding, and say a word to him – you understand, and – ” Mr. Scantlebray tapped his palm. “Do now go round and have a sniff of the jessamine, Mr. Spargo, and I don’t fancy Mr. Cargreen will advise the rector to use home-grown timber. He’ll tell him it sleeps away, gets the rot, comes more expensive in the long run.”

The valuer took a wing of chicken and a little ham, and then shouted, with his mouth full – “Come in!”

The door opened and admitted a farmer.

“How do, Mr. Joshua? middlin’?”

“Middlin’, sir, thanky’.”

“And what have you come about, sir?”

“Well – Mr. Scantlebray, sir! I fancy you ha’n’t offered me quite enough for carting away of all the rummage from them buildings as is coming down. ’Tis a terrible lot of stone, and I’m to take ’em so far away.”

“Why not?”

“Well, sir, it’s such a lot of work for the bosses, and the pay so poor.”

“Not a morsel, Joshua – not a morsel.”

“Well, sir, I can’t do it at the price.”

“Oh, Joshua! Joshua! I thought you’d a better eye to the future. Don’t you see that the new rector will have to build up all these out-buildings again, and where else is he to get stone except out of your quarry, or some of the old stone you have carted away, which you will have the labor of carting back?”

“Well, sir, I don’t know.”

“But I do, Joshua.”

“The new rector might go elsewhere for stone.”

“Not he. Look there, at the winder is Mr. Cargreen, and he’s in with the new parson, like a brother – knows his very soul. The new parson comes from Birmingham. What can he tell about building-stone here? Mr. Cargreen will tell him yours is the only stuff that ain’t powder.”

“But, sir, he may not rebuild.”

“He must. Mr. Cargreen will tell him that he can’t let the glebe without buildings; and he can’t build without your quarry stone: and if he has your quarry stone – why, you will be given the carting also. Are you satisfied?”

“Yes – if Mr. Cargreen would be sure – ”

“He’s there at the winder, a-smelling to the jessamine. You go round and have a talk to him, and make him understand – you know. He’s a little hard o’ hearing; but the drum o’ his ear is here,” said Scantlebray, tapping his palm.

Mr. Scantlebray was now left to himself to discuss the chicken wing – the liver wing he had taken – and sip the port; a conversation was going on in an undertone at the window; but that concerned Mr. Cargreen and not himself, so he paid no attention to it.

After a while, however, when this hum ceased, he turned his head, and called out:

“Old man! how about your lunch?”

“I’m coming.”

“And you found the jessamine very sweet?”

“Beautiful! beautiful!”

“Taste this port. It is not what it should be: some the old fellow laid in when he could afford it – before he married. It is passed, and going back; should have been drunk five years ago.”

Mr. Cargreen came to the table, and seated himself. Then Mr. Scantlebray flapped his arms, shook out his legs, and settled himself to the enjoyment of the lunch, in the society of Mr. Cargreen.

“The merry-thought! Pull with me, old man?”

“Certainly!”

Mr. Scantlebray and Mr. Cargreen were engaged on the merry-thought, each endeavoring to steal an advantage on the other, by working the fingers up the bone unduly, when the window was darkened.

Without desisting from pulling at the merry-thought each turned his head, and Scantlebray at once let go his end of the bone. At the window stood Captain Coppinger looking in at the couple, with his elbow resting on the window-sill.

Mr. Scantlebray flattered himself that he was on good terms with all the world, and he at once with hilarity saluted the Captain by raising the fingers greased by the bone to his brow.

“Didn’t reckon on seeing you here, Cap’n.”

“I suppose not.”

“Come and pick a bone with us?”

Coppinger laughed a short snort through his nostrils.

“I have a bone to pick with you already.”

“Never! no, never!”

“You have forced yourself on Miss Trevisa to act as her agent and valuer in the matter of dilapidations.”

“Not forced, Captain. She asked me to give her friendly counsel. We are old acquaintances.”

“I will not waste words. Give me her letter. She no longer requires your advice and counsel. I am going to act for her.”

“You, Cap’n! Lor’ bless me! You don’t mean to say so!”

“Yes. I will protect her against being pillaged. She is my housekeeper.”

“But see! she is only executrix. She gets nothing out of the property.”

“No – but her niece and nephew do. Take it that I act for them. Give me up her letter.”

Mr. Scantlebray hesitated.

“But, Cap’n, I’ve been to vast expense. I’ve entered into agreements – ”

“With whom?”

“With carpenter and mason about the repairs.”

“Give me the agreements.”

“Not agreements exactly. They sent me in their estimates, and I accepted them, and set them to work.”

“Give me the estimates.”

Mr. Scantlebray flapped all his limbs, and shook his head.

“You don’t suppose I carry these sort of things about with me?”

“I have no doubt whatever they are in your pocket.” Scantlebray fidgeted.

“Cap’n, try this port – a little going back, but not to be sneezed at.”

Coppinger leaned forward through the window.

“Who is that man with you?”

“Mr. Cargreen.”

“What is he here for?”

“I am agent for the Reverend Mules, the newly appointed rector,” said Mr. Cargreen, with some dignity.

“Then I request you both to step to the window to me.”

The two men looked at each other. Scantlebray jumped up, and Cargreen followed. They stood in the window-bay at a respectful distance from Cruel Coppinger.

“I suppose you know who I am?” said the latter, fixing his eyes on Cargreen.

“I believe I can form a guess.”

“And your duty to your client is to make out as bad a case as you can against the two children. They have had just one thousand pounds left them. You are going to get as much of that away from them as you are permitted.”

“My good sir – allow me to explain – ”

“There is no need,” said Coppinger. “Suffice it that you are one side. I – Cruel Coppinger – on the other. Do you understand what that means?”

Mr. Cargreen became alarmed, his face became very blank.

“I am not a man to waste words. I am not a man that many in Cornwall would care to have as an adversary. Do you ever travel at night, Mr. Cargreen?”

“Yes, sir, sometimes.”

“Through the lanes and along the lonely roads?”

“Perhaps, sir – now and then.”

“So do I,” said Coppinger. He drew a pistol from his pocket, and played with it. The two “dilapidators” shrank back. “So do I,” said Coppinger; “but I never go unarmed. I would advise you to do the same – if you are my adversary.”

“I hope, Captain, that – that – ”

“If those children suffer through you more than what I allow” – Coppinger drew up his one shoulder that he could move – “I should advise you to consider what Mrs. Cargreen will have to live on when a widow.” Then he turned to Scantlebray, who was sneaking behind the window-curtain.

“Miss Trevisa’s letter, authorizing you to act for her?”

Scantlebray, with shaking hand, groped for his pocket-book.

“And the two agreements or estimates you signed.”

Scantlebray gave him the letter.

“The agreements also.”

Nervously the surveyor groped again, and reluctantly produced them. Captain Coppinger opened them with his available hand.

“What is this? Five pounds in pencil added to each, and then summed up in the total? What is the meaning of that, pray?”

Mr. Scantlebray again endeavored to disappear behind the curtain.

“Come forward!” shouted Captain Cruel, striking the window-sill with the pistol.

Scantlebray jumped out of his retreat at once.

“What is the meaning of these two five pounds?”

“Well, sir – Captain – it is usual; every one does it. It is my – what d’y’ call it! – consideration for accepting the estimates.”

“And added to each, and then charged to the orphans, who pay you to act in their interest – so they pay wittingly, directly, and unwittingly, indirectly. Well for you and for Mrs. Scantlebray that I release you of your obligation to act for Mother Dunes – I mean Miss Trevisa.”

“Sir,” said Cargreen, “under the circumstances, under intimidation, I decline to sully my fingers with the business. I shall withdraw.”

“No, you shall not,” said Cruel Coppinger, resolutely. “You shall act, and act as I approve; and in the end it shall not be to your disadvantage.”

Then, without a word of farewell, he stood up, slipped the pistol back into his pocket, and strode away.

Mr. Cargreen had become white, or rather, the color of dough. After a moment he recovered himself somewhat, and, turning to Scantlebray, with a sarcastic air, said —

“I hope *you* enjoy the jessamine. They don’t smell particularly sweet to me.”

“Orful!” groaned Scantlebray. He shook himself – almost shaking off all his limbs in the convulsion – “Old man – them jessamines is orful!”

CHAPTER XII

THE CAVE

Some weeks slipped by without bringing to Judith any accession of anxiety. She did not go again to Pentyre Glaze, but her aunt came once or twice in the week to Polzeath to see her. Moreover, Miss Dionysia's manner toward her was somewhat less contrary and vexatious, and she seemed to put on a conciliatory manner, as far as was possible for one so angular and crabbed. Gracious she could not be; nature had made it as impossible for her to be gracious in manner as to be lovely in face and graceful in movement.

Moreover, Judith observed that her aunt looked at her with an expression of perplexity, as though seeking in her to find an answer to a riddle that vexed her brain. And so it was. Aunt Dunes could not understand the conduct of Coppinger toward Judith and her brother. Nor could she understand how a child like her niece could have faced and defied a man of whom she herself stood in abject fear. Judith had behaved to the smuggler in a way that no man in the whole countryside would have ventured to behave. She had thrown him at her feet, half killed him, and yet Cruel Coppinger did not resent what had been done; on the contrary, he went out of his way to interfere in the interest of the orphans. He was not the man to concern himself in other people's affairs; why should he take trouble on behalf of Judith and her brother? That he did it out of consideration for herself, Miss Trevisa had not the assurance to believe.

Aunt Dunes put a few searching questions to Judith, but drew from her nothing that explained the mystery. The girl frankly told her of her visit to the Glaze and interview with the crippled smuggler, of his offer to her of some of his spoil, and of her refusal to receive a present from him. Miss Trevisa approved of her niece's conduct in this respect. It would not have befitted her to accept anything. Judith, however, did not communicate to her aunt the closing scene in that interview. She did not tell her that Coppinger had kissed her hand, nor his excuse for having done so, that he was offering homage to a queen.

For one thing, Judith did not attach any importance to this incident. She had always heard that Coppinger was a wild and insolent man, wild and insolent in his dealings with his fellow-men, therefore doubtless still more so in his treatment of defenceless women. He had behaved to her in the rude manner in which he would behave to any peasant girl or sailor's daughter who caught his fancy, and she resented his act as an indignity, and his excuse for it as a prevarication. And, precisely, because he had offended her maidenly dignity, she blushed to mention it, even to her aunt, resolving in her own mind not to subject herself to the like again.

Miss Trevisa, on several occasions, invited Judith to come and see her at Pentyre Glaze, but the girl always declined the invitation.

Judith's estimate of Cruel Coppinger was modified. He could not be the utter reprobate she had always held him to be. She fully acknowledged that there was an element of good in the man, otherwise he would not have forgiven the injury done him, nor would he have interfered to protect her and Jamie from the fraud and extortion of the "dilapidators." She trusted that the stories she had heard of Coppinger's wild and savage acts were false, or overcolored. Her dear father had been misled by reports, as she had been, and it was possible that Coppinger had not really been the impediment in her father's way that the late rector had supposed.

Jamie was happy. He was even, in a fashion, making himself useful. He helped Mr. Menaida in his bird-stuffing on rainy days; he did more, he ran about the cliffs, learned the haunts of the wild-fowl, ascertained where they nested, made friends with Preventive men, and some of those fellows living on shore, without any very fixed business, who rambled over the country with their guns, and from these he was able to obtain birds that he believed Mr. Menaida wanted. Judith was glad that the

boy should be content, and enjoy the fresh air and some freedom. She would have been less pleased had she seen the companions Jamie made. But the men had rough good-humor, and were willing to oblige the half-witted boy, and they encouraged him to go with them shooting, or to sit with them in their huts.

Jamie manifested so strong a distaste for books, and lesson time being one of resistance, pouting, tears, and failures, that Judith thought it not amiss to put off the resumption of these irksome tasks for a little while, and to let the boy have his run of holidays. She fancied that the loss of his father and of his old home preyed on him more than was actually the case; and believed that by giving him freedom till the first pangs were over, he might not suffer in the way that she had done.

For a fortnight or three weeks Judith's time had been so fully engaged at the parsonage, that she could not have devoted much of it to Jamie, even had she thought it desirable to keep him to his lessons; nor could she be with him much. She did not press him to accompany her to the rectory, there to spend the time that she was engaged sorting her father's letters and memoranda, his account-books and collection of extracts made from volumes he had borrowed, as not only would it be tedious to him, but he would distract her mind. She must see that he was amused, and must also provide that he was not at mischief. She did take him with her on one or two occasions, and found that he had occupied himself in disarranging much that she had put together for the sale.

But she would not allow him wholly to get out of the way of looking to her as his companion, and she abandoned an afternoon to him now and then, as her work became less arduous, to walk with him on the cliffs or in the lanes, to listen to his childish prattle, and throw herself into his new pursuits. The link between them must not be allowed to become relaxed, and, so far as in her lay, she did her utmost to maintain it in its former security. But, with his father's death, and his removal to Mr. Menaida's cottage, a new world had opened to Jamie; he was brought into association with men and boys whom he had hardly known by sight previously, and without any wish to disengage himself from his sister's authority, he was led to look to others as comrades, and to listen to and follow their promptings.

"Come, Jamie," said Judith, one day. "Now I really have some hours free, and I will go a stroll with you on the downs."

The boy jumped with pleasure, and caught her hand.

"I may take Tib with me?"

"Oh yes, certainly, dear."

Tib was a puppy that had been given to Jamie by one of his new acquaintances.

The day was fresh. Clouds driving before the wind, now obscuring the sun and threatening rain, then clearing and allowing the sun to turn the sea green and gild the land. Owing to the breeze the sea was ruffled and strewn with breakers shaking their white foam.

"I am going to show you something I have found, Ju," said the boy. "You will follow, will you not?"

"Lead the way. What is it?"

"Come and see. I found it by myself. I shan't tell any one but you."

He conducted his sister down the cliffs to the beach of a cove. Judith halted a moment to look along the coast with its mighty, sombre cliffs, and the sea glancing with sun or dulled by shadow to Tintagel Head standing up at the extreme point to the northeast, with the white surf lashing and heaving around it. Then she drew her skirts together, and descended by the narrow path along which, with the lightness and confidence of a kid, Jamie was skipping.

"Jamie!" she said. "Have you seen? – there is a ship standing in the offing."

"Yes; she has been there all the morning."

Then she went further.

The cove was small, with precipitous cliffs rising from the sand to the height of two to three hundred feet. The seagulls screamed and flashed to and fro, and the waves foamed and threw up their

waters lashed into froth as white and light as the feathers on the gulls. In the concave bay the roar of the plunging tide reverberated from every side. Neither the voice of Jamie, when he shouted to his sister from some feet below, nor the barking of his little dog that ran with him, could be distinguished by her.

The descent was rapid and rugged, yet not so precipitous but that it could be gone over by asses or mules. Evidence that these creatures had passed that way remained in the impression of their hoofs in the soil, wherever a soft stratum intervened between the harder shelves of the rock, and had crumbled on the path into clay.

Judith observed that several paths – not all mule-paths – converged lower down at intervals in the way by which she descended, so that it would be possible, apparently, to reach the sand from various points in the down, as well as by the main track by which she was stepping to the beach.

“Jamie!” called Judith, as she stood on the last shoulder of rock before reaching the beach over a wave-washed and smoothed surface. “Jamie! I can see that same ship from here.”

But her brother could not hear her. He was throwing stones for the dog to run after, and meet a wave as it rushed in.

The tide was going out: it had marked its highest elevation by a bow of foam and strips of dark seaweed and broken shells. Judith stepped along this line, and picked out the largest ribbon of weed she could find. She would hang it in her bedroom to tell her the weather. The piece that had been wont to act as barometer was old, and, besides, it had been lost in the recent shift and confusion.

Jamie came up to her.

“Now, Ju, mind and watch me, or you will lose me altogether.”

Then he ran forward, with Tib dancing and yelping round him. Presently he scrambled up a shelf of rock inclined from the sea, and up after him, yelping, scrambled Tib. In a moment both disappeared over the crest.

Judith went up to the ridge and called to her brother.

“I cannot climb this, Jamie.”

But in another moment, a hundred yards to her right, round the extremity of the reef, came Tib and his master, the boy dancing and laughing, the dog ducking his head, shaking his ears, and, all but laughing also, evidently enjoying the fun as much as Jamie.

“This way, Ju!” shouted the boy, and signed to his sister. She could not hear his voice, but obeyed his gestures. The reef ran athwart the top of the bay, like the dorsal, jagged ridge of a crocodile half buried in the sand.

Judith drew her skirts higher and closer, as the sand was wet, and there were pools by the rock. Then, holding her ribbon of seaweed by the harsh, knotted root, torn up along with the leaf, and trailing it behind her, she followed her brother, reached the end of the rock, turned and went in the traces of Jamie and Tib in the sand parallel to her former course.

Suddenly, and quite unexpectedly, on the right hand there opened before her, in the face of the cliff, a cave, the entrance to which was completely masked by the ridge she had turned. Into this cave went Jamie with his dog.

“I am not obliged to follow you there!” protested Judith; but he made such vehement signs to her to follow him that she good-humoredly obeyed.

The cave ran in a long way, at first at no great incline, then it became low overhead, and immediately after the floor inclined rapidly upward, and the vault took a like direction. Moreover, light appeared in front. Here, to Judith’s surprise, she saw a large boat, painted gray, furnished with oars and boat-hook. She was attached by a chain to a staple in the rock. Judith examined her with a little uneasiness. No name was on her.

The sides of the cave at this point formed shelves, not altogether natural, and that these were made use of was evident, because on them lay staves of broken casks, a four-flanged boat-anchor, and some oars. Out of the main trunk cave branched another that was quite dark, and smaller; in

this, Judith, whose eyes were becoming accustomed to the twilight, thought she saw the bows of a smaller boat, also painted gray.

“Jamie!” said Judith, now in serious alarm; “we ought not to be here. It is not safe. Do – do come away at once.”

“Why, what is there to harm us?”

“My dear, do come away.” She turned to retrace her steps, but Jamie stopped her.

“Not that way, Ju! I have another by which to get out. Follow me still.”

He led the way up the steep rubble slope, and the light fell fuller from above. The cave was one of those into which when the sea rolls and chokes the entrance, the compressed air is driven out by a second orifice.

They reached a sort of well or shaft, at the bottom of which they stood, but it did not open vertically but bent over somewhat, so that from below the sky could not be seen, though the light entered. A narrow path was traced in the side, and up this Jamie and the dog scrambled, followed by Judith, who was most anxious to escape from a place which she had no doubt was one of the shelter caves of the smugglers – perhaps of Cruel Coppinger, whose house was not a mile distant.

The ascent was steep, the path slippery in places, and therefore dangerous. Jamie made nothing of it, nor did the little dog, but Judith picked her way with care; she had a good steady head, and did not feel giddy, but she was not sure that her feet might not slide in the clay where wet with water that dripped from the sides. As she neared the entrance she saw that hartstongue and maidenhair fern had rooted themselves in the sheltered nooks of this tunnel.

After a climb of a hundred feet she came out on a ledge in the face of the cliff above the bay, to see, with a gasp of dismay, her brother in the hand of Cruel Coppinger, the boy paralyzed with fear so that he could neither stir nor cry out.

“What!” exclaimed the Captain, “you here?” as he saw Judith stand before him.

The puppy was barking and snapping at his boots. Coppinger let go Jamie, stooped and caught the dog by the neck. “Look at me,” said the smuggler sternly, addressing the frightened boy. Then he swung the dog above his head and dashed it down the cliffs; it caught, then rolled, and fell out of sight – certainly with the life beaten out of it.

“This will be done to you,” said he; “I do not say that I would do it. She” – he waved his hand toward Judith – “stands between us. But if any of the fifteen to twenty men who know this place and come here should chance to meet you as I have met you, he would treat you without compunction as I have treated that dog. And if he were to catch you below – you have heard of Wyvill, the Preventive man? – you would fare as did he. Thank your sister that you are alive now. Go on – that way – up the cliff.” He pointed with a telescope he held.

Jamie fled up the steep path like the wind.

“Judith,” said Coppinger, “will you stand surety that he does not tell tales?”

“I do not believe he will say anything.”

“I do not ask you to be silent. I know you will not speak. But if you mistrust his power to hold his tongue, send him away – send him out of the country – as you love him.”

“He shall never come here again,” said Judith, earnestly.

“That is well; he owes his life to you.”

Judith noticed that Cruel Coppinger’s left arm was no more in a sling, nor in bands.

He saw that she observed this, and smiled grimly. “I have my freedom with this arm once more – for the first time to-day.”

CHAPTER XIII IN THE DUSK

“Kicking along, Mr. Menaida, old man?” asked Mr. Scantlebray, in his loud, harsh voice, as he shook himself inside the door of Uncle Zachie’s workshop. “And the little ’uns? Late in life to become nurse and keep the bottle and pap-bowl going, eh, old man? How’s the orphings? Eating their own weight of victuals at twopence-ha’penny a head, eh? My experience of orphings isn’t such as would make a man hilarious, and feel that he was filling his pockets.”

“Sit you down, sir; you’ll find a chair. Not that one, there’s a dab of arsenical paste got on to that. Sit you down, sir, over against me. Glad to see you and have some one to talk to. Here am I slaving all day, worn to fiddlestrings. There’s Squire Rashleigh, of Menabilly, must have a glaucous gull stuffed at once that he has shot; and there’s Sir John St. Aubyn, of Clowance, must have a case of kittiwakes by a certain day; and an institution in London wants a genuine specimen of a Cornish chough. Do they think I’m a tradesman to be ordered about? That I’ve not an income of my own, and that I am dependent on my customers? I’ll do no more. I’ll smoke and play the piano. I’ve no time to exchange a word with any one. Come, sit down. What’s the news?”

“It’s a bad world,” said Mr. Scantlebray, setting himself into a chair. “That’s to say, the world is well enough if it warn’t for there being too many rascals in it. I consider it’s a duty on all right-thinking men to clear them off.”

“Well, the world would be better if we had the making of it,” acquiesced Mr. Menaida. “Bless you! I’ve no time for anything. I like to do a bit of bird-stuffing just as a sort of relaxation after smoking, but to be forced to work more than one cares – I won’t do it! Besides, it is not wholesome. I shall be poisoned with arsenic. I must have some antidote. So will you, sir – eh? A drop of real first-rate cognac?”

“Thank you, sir – old man – I don’t mind dipping a feather and drawing it across my lips.”

Jamie had been so frightened by the encounter with Cruel Coppinger that he was thoroughly upset. He was a timid, nervous child, and Judith had persuaded him to go to bed. She sat by him, holding his hand, comforting him as best she might, when he sobbed over the loss of his pup, and cheering him when he clung to her in terror at the reminiscence of the threats of the Captain to deal with him as he had with Tib. Judith was under no apprehension of his revisiting the cave; he had been too thoroughly frightened ever to venture there again. She said nothing to impress this on him; all her efforts were directed toward allaying his alarms.

Just as she hoped that he was dropping off into unconsciousness, he suddenly opened his eyes, and said, “Ju.”

“Yes, dear.”

“I’ve lost the chain.”

“What chain, my pretty?”

“Tib’s chain.”

The pup had been a trouble when Jamie went with the creature through the village or through a farm-yard. He would run after and nip the throats of chickens. Tib and his master had got into trouble on this account; accordingly Judith had turned out a light steel chain, somewhat rusty, and a dog collar from among the sundries that encumbered the drawers and closets of the rectory. This she had given to her brother, and whenever the little dog was near civilization he was obliged to submit to the chain.

Judith, to console Jamie for his loss, had told him that in all probability another little dog might be procured to be his companion. Alas! the collar was on poor Tib, but she represented to him that if another dog were obtained it would be possible to buy or beg a collar for him, supposing a collar

to be needful. This had satisfied Jamie, and he was about to doze off, when suddenly he woke to say that the chain was lost.

“Where did you lose the chain, Jamie?”

“I threw it down.”

“Why did you do that?”

“I thought I shouldn’t want it when Tib was gone.”

“And where did you throw it? Perhaps it may be found again.”

“I won’t go and look for it – indeed I won’t.” He shivered and clung to his sister.

“Where was it? Perhaps I can find it.”

“I dropped it at the top – on the down when I came up the steps from – from that man, when he had killed Tib.”

“You did not throw it over the cliff?”

“No – I threw it down. I did not think I wanted it any more.”

“I dare say it may be found. I will go and see.”

“No – no! Don’t, Ju. You might meet that man.”

Judith smiled. She felt that she was not afraid of that man – he would not hurt her.

As soon as the boy was asleep, Judith descended the stairs, leaving the door ajar, that she might hear should he wake in a fright, and entering the little sitting-room, took up her needles and wool, and seated herself quietly by the window, where the last glimmer of twilight shone, to continue her work at a jersey she was knitting for Jamie’s use in the winter.

The atmosphere was charged with tobacco-smoke, almost as much as that of the adjoining workshop. There was no door between the rooms; none had been needed formerly, and Mr. Menaida did not think of supplying one now. It was questionable whether one would have been an advantage, as Jamie ran to and fro, and would be certain either to leave the door open or to slam it, should one be erected. Moreover, a door meant payment to a carpenter for timber and labor. There was no carpenter in the village, and Mr. Menaida spent no more money than he was absolutely obliged to spend, and how could he on an annuity of fifty pounds.

Judith dropped her woolwork in her lap and fell into meditation. She reviewed what had just taken place: she saw before her again Coppinger, strongly built, with his dark face, and eyes that glared into the soul to its lowest depths, illumining all, not as the sun, but as the lightning, and suffering not a thought, not a feeling to remain obscure.

A second time had Jamie done what angered him, but on this occasion he had curbed his passion and had contented himself with a threat – nay, not even that – with a caution. He had expressly told Jamie, that he himself would not hurt him, but that he ran into danger from others.

She was again looking at Coppinger as he spoke; she saw the changes in his face, the alterations of expression in his eyes, in his intonation. She recalled the stern, menacing tone in which he had spoken to Jamie, and then the inflexion of voice as he referred to her. A dim surmise – a surmise she was ashamed to allow could be true – rose in her mind and thrilled her with alarm. Was it possible that he *liked* her – liked – she could, she would give even in thought no other term to describe that feeling which she feared might possibly have sprung up in his breast. That he liked her – after all she had done? Was that why he had come to the cottage the day after his accident? Was that what had prompted the strange note sent to her along with the keg of spirits to Uncle Zachie? Was that the meaning of the offer of the choice of all his treasures? – of the vehemence with which he had seized her hand and had kissed it? Was that the interpretation of those words of excuse in which he had declared her his queen? If this were so, then much that had been enigmatical in his conduct was explained – his interference with the valuers for dilapidations, the strange manner in which he came across her path almost whenever she went to the rectory. And this was the signification of the glow in his eyes, the quaver in his voice, when he addressed her.

Was it so? – could it be so? – that he liked her? – he – Cruel Coppinger —*Cruel Coppinger* – the terror of the country round – liked *her*, the weakest creature that could be found?

The thought of such a possibility frightened her. That the wild smuggler-captain should hate her she could have borne with better than that he should like her. That she was conscious of a sense of pleased surprise, intermixed with fear, was inevitable, for Judith was a woman, and there was something calculated to gratify feminine pride in the presumption that the most lawless and headstrong man on the Cornish coast should have meant what he said when he declared himself her subject.

These thoughts, flushing and paling her cheek, quickening and staying her pulse, so engrossed Judith that, though she heard the voices in the adjoining apartment, she paid no heed to what was said.

The wind, which had been fresh all day, was blowing stronger. It battered at the window where Judith sat, as though a hand struck and brushed over the panes.

“Hot or cold?” asked Uncle Zachie.

“Thanky’, neither. Water can be got everywhere, but such brandy as this, old man – only here.”

“You are good to say so. It is Coppinger’s present to me.”

“Coppinger! – his very good health, and may he lie in clover to-morrow night. He’s had one arm bound, I’ve seen; perhaps he may have two before the night grows much older.”

Mr. Menaida raised his brows.

“I do not understand you.”

“I daresay not,” said Scantlebray. “It’s the duty of all right-minded men to clear the world of rascals. I will do my duty, please the pigs. Would you mind – just another drop?”

After his glass had been refilled, Mr. Scantlebray leaned back in his chair and said:

“It’s a wicked world, and, between you and me and the sugar dissolving at the bottom of my glass, you won’t find more rascality anywhere than in my profession, and one of the biggest rascals in it is Mr. Cargreen. He’s on the side against the orphings. If you’ve the faculty of pity in you, pity them – first, because they’ve him agin’ ’em, and, secondly, because they’ve lost me as their protector. You know whom they got in place of me? I wish them joy of him. But they won’t have his wing over them long, I can tell you.”

“You think not?”

“Sure of it.”

“You think he’ll throw it up?”

“I rather suspect he won’t be at liberty to attend to it. He’ll want his full attention to his own consarns.”

Mr. Scantlebray tipped off his glass.

“It’s going to be a dirty night,” said he. “You won’t mind my spending an hour or two with you, will you?”

“I shall be delighted. Have you any business in the place?”

“Business – no. A little pleasure, maybe.” After a pause, he said, “But, old man, I don’t mind telling you what it is. You are mum, I know. It is this – the trap will shut to-night. Snap it goes, and the rats are fast. You haven’t been out on the cliffs to-day, have you?”

“No – bless me! – no, I have not.”

“The Black Prince is in the offing.”

“The Black Prince?”

“Ay, and she will run her cargo ashore to-night. Now, I’m one who knows a little more than most. I’m one o’ your straightfor’ard ’uns, always ready to give a neighbor a lift in my buggy, and a helping hand to the man that is down, and a frank, outspoken fellow am I to every one I meet – so that, knocking about as I do, I come to know and to hear more than do most, and I happen to have learnt into what cove the Black Prince will run her goods. I’ve a bone to pick with Captain Cruel, so I’ve let the Preventive men have the contents of my information-pottle, and they will be ready to-

night for Coppinger and the whole party of them. The cutter will slip in between them and the sea, and a party will be prepared to give them the kindest welcome by land. That is the long and short of it – and, old man, I shall dearly love to be there and see the sport. That is why I wish to be with you for an hour or two. Will you come as well?”

“Bless me!” exclaimed Mr. Menaida, “not I! You don’t suppose Coppinger and his men will allow themselves to be taken easily? There’ll be a fight.”

“And pistols go off,” said Scantlebray. “I shall not be surprised or sorry if Captain Cruel be washed up one of these next tides with a bullet through his head. Ebenezer Wyvill is one of the guards, and he has his brother’s death to avenge.”

“Do you really believe that Coppinger killed him?”

Mr. Scantlebray shrugged his shoulders. “It don’t matter much what *I* think, to-night, but what the impression is that Ebenezer Wyvill carries about with him. I imagine that if Ebenezer comes across the Captain he won’t speak to him by word of mouth, nor trouble himself to feel for a pair of handcuffs. So – fill my glass again, old man, and we’ll drink to a cold bed and an indigestible lump – somewhere – in his head or in his gizzard – to Cruel Coppinger, and the wiping off of old scores – always a satisfaction to honest men.” Scantlebray rubbed his hands. “It is a satisfaction to the conscience – to ferret out the rats sometimes.”

CHAPTER XIV

WARNING OF DANGER

Judith, lost for awhile in her dreams, had been brought to a sense of what was the subject of conversation in the adjoining room by the mention of Coppinger's name more than once. She heard the desultory talk for awhile without giving it much attention, but Scantlebray's voice was of that harsh and penetrating nature that to exclude it the ears must be treated as Ulysses treated the ears of his mariners as he passed the rock of the Sirens.

Presently she became alive to the danger in which Coppinger stood. Scantlebray spoke plainly, and she understood. There could be no doubt about it. The Black Prince belonged to the Captain, and his dealings with and through that vessel were betrayed. Not only was Coppinger, as the head of a gang of smugglers, an object worth capture to the Preventive men, but the belief that he had caused the death of at least one of their number had embittered them against him to such an extent that, when the opportunity presented itself to them of capturing him red-handed engaged in his smuggling transactions, they were certain to deal with him in a way much more summary than the processes of a court of a justice. The brother of the man who had been murdered was among the coast-guard, and he would not willingly let slip a chance of avenging the death of Jonas Wyvill. Coppinger was not in a condition to defend himself effectively. On that day for the first time, had he left off his bandages, and his muscles were stiff and the newly set bones still weak.

What was to be done? Could Judith go to bed and let Coppinger run into the net prepared for his feet – go to his death?

No sooner, however, had Judith realized the danger that menaced Coppinger than she resolved on doing her utmost to avert it. She, and she alone, could deliver him from the disgrace, if not the death, that menaced him.

She stole lightly from the room and got her cloak, drew the hood over her head, and sallied forth into the night. Heavy clouds rolled over the sky, driven before a strong gale. Now and then they opened and disclosed the twilight sky, in which faintly twinkled a few stars, and at such times a dim light fell over the road, but in another moment lumbering masses of vapor were carried forward, blotting out the clear tract of sky, and at the same time blurring all objects on earth with one enveloping shadow.

Judith's heart beat furiously, and timidity came over her spirit as she left the cottage, for she was unaccustomed to be outside the house at such an hour; but the purpose she had before her eyes gave her strength and courage. It seemed to her that Providence had suddenly constituted her the guardian angel of Coppinger, and she flattered herself that, were she to be the means of delivering him from the threatened danger, she might try to exact of him a promise to discontinue so dangerous and so questionable a business. If this night she were able to give him warning in time, it would be some return made for his kindness to her, and some reparation made for the injury she had done him. When for an instant there was a rift in the clouds, and she could look up and see the pure stars, it seemed to her that they shone down on her like angels' eyes, watching, encouraging, and promising her protection. She thought of her father – of how his mind had been set against Coppinger; now, she felt convinced, he saw that his judgment had been warped, and that he would bless her for doing that which she had set her mind to accomplish. Her father had been ever ready frankly to acknowledge himself in the wrong when he had been convinced that he was mistaken, and now in the light of eternity, with eyes undarkened by prejudice, he must know that he was in error in his condemnation of Coppinger, and be glad that his daughter was doing something to save that man from an untimely and bloody death.

Not a soul did Judith meet or pass on her way. She had determined in the first case to go to Pentyre Glaze. She would see if Captain Cruel were there. She trusted he was at his house. If so, her

course was simple; she would warn him and return to Mr. Menaida's cottage as quickly as her feet would bear her. The wind caught her cloak, and she turned in alarm, fancying that it was plucked by a human hand. No one, however, was behind her.

In Pentyre lane it was dark, very dark. The rude half-walls, half-hedges stood up high, walled toward the lane hedged with earth and planted with thorns toward the field. The wind hissed through the bushes; there was an ash tree by a gate. One branch sawed against another, producing a weird, even shrill sound like a cry.

The way led past a farm, and she stole along before it with the utmost fear as she heard the dog in the yard begin to bark furiously, and as she believed that it was not chained up, might rush forth at her. It might fall upon her, and hold her there till the farmer came forth and found her, and inquired into the reason of her being there at night. If found and recognized, what excuse could she give? What explanation could satisfy the inquisitive?

She did not breathe freely till she had come out on the down; the dog was still barking, but, as he had not pursued her, she was satisfied that he was not at large. Her way now lay for a while over open common, and then again entered a lane between the hedges that enclosed the fields and meadows of the Glaze.

A dense darkness fell over the down, and Judith for a while was uncertain of her way, the track being undistinguishable from the short turf on either side. Suddenly she saw some flashes of light that ran along the ground and then disappeared.

"This is the road," said a voice.

Judith's heart stood still, and her blood curdled in her veins. If the cloud were to roll away – and she could see far off its silvery fringe, she would become visible. The voice was that of a man, but whether that of a smuggler or of a coast-guard she could not guess. By neither did she care to be discovered. By the dim, uncertain light she stole off the path, and sank upon the ground among some masses of gorse that stood on the common. Between the prickly tufts she might lie, and in her dark cloak be mistaken for a patch of furze. She drew her feet under the skirt, that the white stockings might not betray her, and plucked the hood of her cloak closely round her face. The gorse was sharp, and the spikes entered her hands and feet, and pricked her as she turned herself about between the bushes to bring herself deeper among them.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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