

FORD PAUL LEICESTER

THE STORY OF AN
UNTOLD LOVE

Paul Ford

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Содержание

I	5
II	8
III	11
IV	13
V	15
VI	17
VII	21
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	24

Paul Leicester Ford

The Story of an Untold Love

I

February 20, 1890. There is not a moment of my life that you have shared with me which I cannot recall with a distinctness fairly sunlit. My joys and my sorrows, my triumphs and my failures, have faded one by one from emotions into memories, quickening neither pulse nor thought when they recur to me, while you alone can set both throbbing. And though for years I have known that if you enshrined any one in your heart it would be some one worthier of you, yet I have loved you truly, and whatever I have been in all else, in that one thing, at least, I have been strong. Nor would I part with my tenderness for you, even though it has robbed me of contentment; for all the pleasures of which I can dream cannot equal the happiness of loving you. To God I owe life, and you, Maizie, have filled that life with love; and to both I bow my spirit in thanks, striving not to waste his gift lest I be unworthy of the devotion I feel for you.

If I were a stronger man, I should not now be sobbing out my heart's blood through the tip of a pen. Instead of writing of my sorrow, I should have battled for my love despite all obstacles. But I am no Alexander to cut the knot of entanglements which the fates have woven about me, and so, Midas-like, I sit morbidly whispering the hidden grief, too great for me to bear in silence longer.

I can picture my first glimpse of you as vividly as my last. That dull rainy day of indoor imprisonment seems almost to have been arranged as a shadowbox to intensify the image graven so deeply on my memory. The sun came, as you did, towards the end of the afternoon, as if light and warmth were your couriers. When I shyly entered the library in answer to my father's call, you were standing in the full sunlight, and the thought flashed through my mind that here was one of the angels of whom I had read. You were only a child of seven, – to others, I suppose, immature and formless; yet even then your eyes were as large and as serious as they are to-day, and your curling brown hair had already a touch of fire, as if sunshine had crept thereinto, and, liking its abiding-place, had lingered lovingly.

"Don," cried my father, as I stood hesitating in the doorway, "here's a new plaything for you. Give it a welcome and a kiss."

I hung back, half in shyness, and half in fear that you were of heaven, and not of earth, but you came forward and kissed me without the slightest hesitation. The details are so clear that I remember you hardly had to raise your head, though I was three years the older. Your kiss dispelled all my timidity, and from the moment of that caress I loved you. Not that I am so foolish as to believe I then felt for you what now I feel, but by the clear light of retrospect I can see that your coming brought a new element into my life, – an element which I loved from the first, though with steadily deepening intensity, and I cannot even now determine at what point a boy's devotion became a lover's.

To the silent and lonely lad you were an inspiration. What I might have grown to be had you not been my father's ward I do not like to think, for I was not a strong boy, and my shyness and timidity had prompted me to much solitude and few friends, to much reading and to little play. But it was decreed that you were to be the controlling influence of my life, and in the first week you worked a revolution in my habits. I wonder if now, when you see so many men eager to gratify your slightest wish, you ever think of your earliest slave, whom you enticed to the roof to drop pebbles or water on the passers-by, and into the cellar to bury a toy soldier deep in the coal? Does memory ever bring back to you how we started to paint the illustrations in Kingsborough's Mexican Antiquities, or how we built a fire round a doll on the library rug, in imitation of the death of an Inca of Peru as pictured in dear old Garcilasso de la Vega's Royal Commentaries? You were a lazy child about

reading, but when not tempting me into riotous mischief, you would sit by me in the library and let me show you the pictures in the old books, and I smile now to think what my running versions of the texts must have been. Our favorite books were the Nuremberg Chronicle and De Bry's Voyages, for the pictures of which, since the Latin was beyond me, I invented explanations and even whole stories, – stories over which you grew big-eyed and sleepless, and which we both came to believe so firmly that we never dreamed them to be the cause for the occasional outburst of laughter from my father, when he was in the library.

Even in those days you veiled your witchery and mischief-loving nature behind that serious face with its curved but unsmiling mouth. Keen as many of our pleasures were and blithe as were our pranks, I can scarcely remember a smile upon your face. Now and then the merriest of laughs rang out, fairly infectious in its happiness and joy, but of so rare recurrence as to win for you the sobriquet of "Madam Gravity." Your inscrutability allured and charmed me then as I have seen it fascinate others since. I shall never understand you, and yet I think I misunderstand you less than others do, for you cannot hide from me the quick thought and merry nature which you keep so well hidden from them; and often when others think you most abstracted or sedate, I know you are holding high carnival with Puck and Momus. Again and again I have noted your gravity in the most humorous situations or with the most ridiculous of persons, and have smiled in secret with you. Last summer, when my mother won such a laugh by telling, as something that had happened to her personally, the old story from Peele's "Merrie Conceits" which we had read as children, you looked grave, though the incident had twice the humor to you that it had to the others. In my own merriment I could not help glancing at you, and though neither of us laughed, we understood each other's amusement. Evidently you were not used to having your mood comprehended, for after a moment you seemed to realize that I was responding to what you had thought unknown to all. You looked startled and then puzzled, and I suppose that I became even more of a mystery to you than ever. You could not know that my knowledge of you came from those early days when your nature was taking shape. Without my memory of you as a child you would be as great an enigma to me as to the rest of your friends, and so no doubt it is a small thing in which to glory. But it gives me joy to feel that I understand you better, and at this very moment know more of your thoughts than your husband ever will.

I owe to you many dark closetings and whippings that I never deserved. My mother complained that from being a troublesome child I had become a fiend of mischief, but my father laughed and predicted that you would make a man of me. I wonder if you ever think of him, and what your thought is? We both so loved him that I cannot believe he has passed entirely out of your heart. How ready he was to be our comrade! Whether tired or busy he would join us, not as mentor but as playfellow; and now that I know what there was to depress his spirits at that time, I marvel at his cheer and courage. Would that I had one half of the bravery with which he met his troubles!

Perhaps he was right in his assumption that you would have made a man of me. I do not recollect any act of mine which bore the semblance of courage except the rescue of the street dog from those boys. I hated to see the poor beast tortured, but I feared the roughs, and so stood faltering while you charged among them. Not till one of them struck you was I driven to help, but I can still feel the fury which then took possession of me. I was blind with rage, and a great weight seemed pressing on my chest as I rushed among the boys and fought, hardly conscious of the blows I gave or received; indeed, the whole thing was a haze until I found myself sitting on the sidewalk, crying. For days I went about with a bandage over my eye; but my father drank my health that night, and I remember his pat of approval, and hear his "Bravo, Donald, I'm proud of you." It was significant that I received all the praise, and you none; my courage was questionable, yours was not.

Those happy, thoughtless years! The one kill-joy was my mother, and she made your life and mine so grievous with her needless harshness, quick temper, and neglect of our comfort that I think she must have made my father's equally miserable. Dimly I can recollect her sudden gusts of temper, and his instant dismissal of us from the room when they began. Do you remember how he used to

come up to the nursery to smoke, often staying till our bedtime, and then how we could hear him go downstairs and out of the front door? We did not know that he went to his club, nor at what hour he returned; and if we had it would have meant nothing to us. But we both knew he found no pleasure with my mother, and we felt he was right, for in avoiding her he was but doing what was our chief endeavor. I have heard many express admiration for her beauty, for her church and charitable work, for her brilliancy in society, for her executive ability, and for her general public spirit. Her neglect of family duties, her extravagance, her frequent absences, and her fatigued petulance when at home were known only to her household. Our servants rarely remained a month with us, – were changed so often as to destroy all possibility of comfort; but we three were not free to follow their example, and so our misery made us the dearer to one another. I am proud to think that, close as we drew together, my father never uttered in my presence a single word of criticism or complaint against my mother, and I should be the better man if, instead of writing these unfilial words, I left them unsaid. Indeed, I will not spend more of my evening on these old memories, but begin on my work.

Do you remember, Maizie, how my father taught us to give him and each other a parting word? "Good-night, father. Good-night, Maizie. God bless you both," it used to be. He sleeps now in his grave, and three years ago you barred your door to me, but still I can say as of old, "Good-night, Maizie. God bless and keep you, dear."

II

February 21. To put all this on paper is weak and aimless, yet it seems to ease my sadness. I suppose a scribbler unconsciously comes to write out whatever he feels, as a nervous woman plays her emotions away on a piano. If this is so, why should not I salve my grief in any way that lessens it? Those old days had such happiness in them that the mere memory brings some to me, and to sit here at my study table and write of the past is better than idle dwelling on the present.

You were jubilant when first told that we were all to go to Europe for a summer, and laughed at my fears and despondency. Could I have had an intuition of coming evil, or was my alarm due to the engravings of those terrible sea-monsters with which Mercator populated the oceans in his "Atlas sive Cosmographicae," and to the pictures and tales in bloodthirsty old Exquemelin's "Bucaniers of America"? Our notions of what the trip meant were evidently not very clear, for at once we set to storing up provisions, and weeks before the time of sailing we were the proud possessors of a cracker-box full of assorted edibles, a jar of olives we had pilfered, and a small pie you had cajoled the cook into making for us. How we loved and gloated over that pie! Daily we sorted our sea-stores, added new supplies, and ate what clearly could be kept no longer. My mother found us one day deeply engrossed in the occupation, cuffed us both, and sent the olives back to the pantry and the tin box to the ash-barrel. As for the pie, such hot words passed about it between "Madame" and "Monsieur Philippe" that our cook left us without warning. We were again punished for being the cause of his desertion, and that evening father dined at his club.

The different effects my mother's gusts of anger had on you and on me were curiously distinctive. You met them fearlessly and stubbornly, while to me the moments of her fury were moments in which I could scarcely breathe, and of which I felt the terror for hours after. I sometimes wonder if the variance was because I had learned to fear the outbursts even as a baby, whereas your character had partly formed before you encountered them. Who knows but a change of circumstances might have made me the fearless one, and you the timorous? At least I should be glad to think that I might have been like you in courage and spirit, even though it is impossible to imagine that you could ever be like me. It is a singular turn of life's whirligig that when my mother tried to pain you last autumn by her cruel remarks, you were helpless to retort, and owed your escape to my help.

What a delight the ocean voyage was to us! Those were the times of ten-day trips, still dear to all true lovers of the sea; and had our wishes been consulted, thrice ten would have been none too long for our passage. The officers, the crew, the stewards, and the passengers were no more proof against your indefinable spell than was I, and it seemed quite as if the boat were your private yacht, with all on board seeking only to serve you. Our pleasure was so intense that we planned an ideal future, in which I was to become the captain of a steam-ship, and you were to live on the vessel in some equally delightful if impossible capacity.

The last time I was in Paris, I walked several miles merely to look at the outside of our pension, and then went on and sat dreaming in the little park near it in which we passed so many hours of our stay in that city. As of old, the place was full of children and nurses, and I understood what had puzzled me not a little in recollection, – how you and I, without mingling with them, had learned so quickly the language they chattered. Do you remember their friendly advances, met only by rebuffs? My coldness flowed from shyness, and yours from a trait that people to this day call haughtiness, but which I know to be only a fastidious refinement that yields acquaintance to few and friendship to fewer. From the moment you came into my life I craved no other friend, and you seemed equally content. What was there in me that won for me what you gave so rarely? Was there an instinct of natural sympathy, or was it merely pity for me in the loving heart you masked behind that subtle face?

It is indicative of what children we still were that during the whole of our sojourn in Paris neither of us was conscious that our standard of living had changed. We lodged in a cheap pension;

instead of our own carriage we used the omnibus; and a thousand other evidences told the story of real economy; yet not one we observed except the disappearance of our *bonne*, and this was noted, not as a loss, but as a joy to both.

After the nurse was gone my father became more than ever our comrade, and a better one two children never had. Oh, those long excursions to Versailles, Montmartre, and Fontainebleau, our boat trips up and down the Seine, and our shorter jaunts within the city! What happiness it was to us when he came in whistling and cried, "Donald, Maizie, you are horribly bad children, and I'm going to take you on a lark to punish you!" After time spent in filling our lunch-basket with big rolls bought at the *boulangerie*, a few sous' worth of cherries or other fruit lengthily bargained for with the *fruitier*, and a half litre of cheap wine, plus whatever other luxuries our imaginations or our appetites could suggest, away we would go for a long day of pure delight, whether passed under green trees or wandering through galleries and museums. My father was an encyclopædia of information, and had the knack of making knowledge interesting to the child mind. He could re-create a bygone period from a battle-axe or a *martel de fer*, the personality of a queen from her lace ruff or stomacher, and the history of plant growth from a fern or flower. If his mind had been allowed to expand when he was young, instead of being stunted in a broker's office, I believe he might have been one of the world's great writers or critics.

Under such stimulating tutelage our progress in those two years was really wonderful. No subject my father touched upon could remain dull; we were at a receptive age when the mind is fresh and elastic for all that interests it, and Paris was a great picture-book to illustrate what he taught us. We did not know we were studying far deeper into subjects than many educated people ever go. I laugh still at your telling the old German on the train to Sèvres the history of the Faust plot, and at his amazed "Ach, zo!" to hear such erudition pour from your childish lips. I think you were the cleverer and the quicker, but there was no competition, only fellowship about our learning. I suppose you were above rivalry, as you are above all mean things.

And that is your chief glory to me. In those seven years of closest companionship, and in these last three years of lesser intercourse but far keener observation, I have never known you to do a mean thing or to speak a mean thought. I almost feel it treason to couple the word with you, or deny a trait so impossible for you to possess, and of which you have always shown such scorn and hatred. At this moment I know that I should only have to speak to part you forever from – Ah, what foolishness I am writing, tempting me to even greater meanness than his, and so to deserve the greater contempt from you! Thinking me base, you closed your doors to me three years ago, and I love you the better that not even for auld lang syne could you pardon what is so alien to you. If the day ever comes when you again admit me to your friendship, I shall be happy in knowing that you think me above baseness or meanness; for you would not compound with them, Maizie, be the circumstances what they might.

Our Paris life would not have been so happy and careless but for the slight part my mother had in it. So little did we see of her in those years that I think of her scarcely as one of us. I remember dimly a scene of hot anger between her and my father, – he standing passively by the high porcelain stove, while she raged about the room. So great was her fury that once, in passing, as I crouched scared and silent on the sofa, she struck me, – a blow which brought my father to my side, where he stood protectingly while the storm lasted, with his hand resting lovingly on my shoulder. My vague impression is that the outburst was only a protest against the poor lodgings, but it may have occurred when some explanation took place between my parents. I can see my mother now, sitting on the little balcony overlooking the garden of our pension, snarling an ill-natured word at us as you and I tried to play consultation games of chess against my father. He gave us odds at first of the rook and two pawns, but finally only of a knight. Oh, the triumph of those victories! How we gloried in them, and how delighted our antagonist was when we conquered him! Little we minded what my mother did except when we happened to be alone with her, and I think that the dear father played

bad chess with us rather than good at the cafés, and made us his companions wherever he went, to save us from her severity.

I can recall very clearly her constant difficulties with our landlady and the servants, which finally culminated in a request that we should seek lodgings elsewhere. Do you recollect Madame Vanott's clasping us both in her arms and filling our hands with bonbons, when the time of parting came? I do not know where we removed to, my sole remembrance of the next few weeks being of my mother's complaints of lodgings, food, servants, and French life generally. We moved three times within a month, fairly expelled by our landlords because they could not live at peace with "la Madame." Our last exodus began in an angry scene between her and the housewife, in which a gendarme played a part, and from which you and I fled. The next morning we learned that my mother had determined to return to America, and leave us to live our own life. Three days later we said emotionless good-bys, my father going as far as Havre with her.

Her departure set us asking questions, and my father's replies explained many things which, in our childish talks, we had gravely discussed. He told us how his own wealth had been lost in Wall Street, barely enough being left for a competence even in Europe. Of my mother's leaving us he spoke sadly. "She never pretended to care for me," he said, "but I loved her and was willing to marry her. The wrong was mine, and we should not blame her if, when I can no longer give what was her price, she does not choose to continue the one-sided bargain." At the time her absence seemed to you and me only a relief, but now, as I look back, I know that my father never ceased to love her, – all the more, perhaps, because his love had never been requited, – and that separation must have been the final wrecking of his life. Yet from the day she left us I never heard him speak an angry word, and sorrow that would have crushed most men seemed to make him the gentler and sweeter. I wish – Ah! the clock is striking three, and if I am to bring working power to working hours I must stop writing.

Good-night, dear one.

III

February 22. After my mother left us we did not stay in Paris, but went to Ischl, which we made merely the point of departure for walking tours which often lasted for weeks. Several times I have spoken of the region to you, hoping to draw from you some remark proving a recollection of those days, but you always avoid reply. Yet I am sure they are not forgotten, for miles of the Tyrol and Alps are as familiar to me as the garnishings of a breakfast-table. My father had the tact and kindly humor that make a man equally at home and welcome in *Gasthaus* and *Schloss*. Though we traveled with only a knapsack, his breeding and education were so patent to whomsoever we met that we spent many a night inside of doors with armorial coats of many quarterings carved above them, and many a day's shooting and fishing followed. Yet pleasant as was this impromptu and "gentle" hospitality, I think we were all quite as happy when our evenings were spent among the peasants, drinking beer, talking of farming and forestry, singing songs, or listening to the blare of the peripatetic military band.

My father was a fine German scholar, and you and I acquired the language as quickly and as easily as we learned French. We always had books in our pockets, and used to lie for hours under the trees, reading aloud. Long discussions followed over what we had conned, enriched by the thousand side-lights my father could throw on any subject. To most people reading is a resort to save themselves from thinking, but my father knew that pitfall, and made us use books as a basis for thought on our own part. After a volume was finished we would each write a criticism of it, and the comparison of my boyish attempts with his brilliant, comprehensive, and philosophic work taught me more of writing than all the tuition I ever had.

My craving for knowledge, always strong, became inordinate, probably because the acquisition of it was made so fascinating that I learned without real exertion. I began to find limits even to my father's erudition, and chafed under them. He reviewed his Greek that he might impart it to us, as he had long before taught us Latin, and together we all three studied Spanish and Italian. I was not satisfied, for my desire for the one thing my father was unable to teach was not appeased by the twenty which he could. I begged for regular tuition, and, indulgent as he always was, he took us to Heidelberg, where I was enrolled in the gymnasium. Yet the long hours of separation that this entailed made little difference in our relations, since except for these we were inseparable. Whenever my school-work left us time to quit Heidelberg we made walking tours, and we availed ourselves of the summer holiday to see far-away lands. The great libraries were our chief goals, but everything interested us, from the archaic plough we saw in the field to the masterpiece of the gallery. I do not know whether I was dull for my years, but I do know that you were precocious and had no difficulty in keeping up with me in my studies. Indeed, thanks to your own brightness and to the long hours spent with my father while I was reciting, you went ahead of me in many respects. It makes me very happy now to think of what you two were to each other, and to know that you are so largely indebted to him for the depth and brilliance of mind that I hear so often commented upon. And I love you all the better because you made those years so happy to him by your love and companionship.

Last winter Mrs. Blodgett accused me of being a misogynist, and proved her point by asking me to tell the color of Agnes's eyes. You and Agnes only laughed when I miscolored them, but Mrs. Blodgett was really nettled. "There!" she said. "Apparently, Agnes and I are the only women you ever go to see or pretend to care for, and yet you think so little of us that you don't know the color of our eyes." Had she only asked me to describe your eyes in place of Agnes's I should not have erred, but I suppose even then the world would be justified in thinking I do not care for woman's society. Certainly you, of all others, have the right to think so, after my twice refusing your friendship; and yet it is my love of you far more than my studies or shyness that has made me indifferent to other women. And so far from being a misogynist, I care for as few men as women. You perhaps recall how much apart I kept myself from my fellow students, and how my father had to urge me to join

them in the fencing and chess contests? Later, at the university, after you had left us, I entered more eagerly into the two pastimes, and succeeded in making myself a skilled swordsman. As for chess, I learned to play the game you tested last October on the veranda of My Fancy. You looked courteously grave when, after our initial battle, I had to ask from you the odds of a pawn, and never dreamed that I fathomed your secret triumph over your victory. You are so delightfully human and womanly, after all, Maizie, to any one who can read your thoughts. It is a pleasure to see your happiness in the consciousness of your own power, and I grudge you victory over me no more than over other men. Yet while you play better chess, I think you could not conquer me quite as easily if I were not much more interested in studying the player than the play. Perhaps but for you I should have made friends, for later, at Leipzig, despite my shyness and studiousness, I seemed fairly popular; but so long as I had you I cared for no other friend, and after our separation I could form no new tie. Neither in love nor in friendship have you ever had a rival in my heart.

Our happiness ended the day when Johann, the poor factotum of our lodging-place, found us in the castle park and summoned us back to the house, where my father and Mr. Walton were awaiting you. The news that we were to be parted came so suddenly that we could not believe it. I stood in stunned silence, while you declared that you would not go with your uncle; even in that terrible moment speaking more like a queen issuing orders than like a rebel resisting authority. We both appealed to my father, and the tears stood in his eyes as he told us we must be parted. Mr. Walton sat with the cool and slightly bored look that his worldly face wears so constantly, and I presume it was impossible for him to understand our emotion.

Your luggage had been packed while we were being summoned, and I carried your bag down to the carriage, in the endeavor to do you some last little service. We did not even go through the form of a farewell, but, tearless and speechless, held each other's hands till my father gently separated us. To this day the snap of a whip causes me to catch my breath, it brings back so vividly the crack with which Mr. Walton's cabman whipped up his horse. Fate was merciful, for she gave me no glimpse of the future, and so left me the hope that we should not be parted long. I question if the delicate lad of those days could have borne the thought that our separation, enforced by others, would in time be continued by you.

The life was too happy to last; and yet I do not know why I write that, for I do not believe that God's children are born to be wretched, and I would sooner renounce my faith in him than believe him so cruel to his own creations. The sadness and estrangement in my life are all of human origin, and mine, it seems to me, has been a fuller cup of bitterness than most men have to drink. Or am I only magnifying my own sufferings, and diminishing those of my fellow mortals? To the world I am a fortunate man, with promise of even greater success. Do all the people about me, who seem to be equally prosperous, bury away from sight some grief like mine that beggars joy?

Can you, Maizie, in the tide and triumph of your beauty and wealth, hide any such death-wound to all true happiness? Pray God you do not. Good-night, my darling.

IV

February 23. After you were gone I fled to my room, crawling under the window-seat, much as a mortally wounded animal tries to hide itself. Here my father found me many hours later, speechless and shivering. He drew me from my retreat, and I still remember the sting of the brandy as he poured it down my throat. Afterwards the doctor came, to do nothing; but all that night my father sat beside me, and towards morning he broke down my silence, and we talked together over the light which had gone out of our lives, till I fell asleep. He told me that the death of your two aunts had made you a great heiress, and rendered your continuance with us, in our poverty, impossible. "She's gone away out of our class, Donald," my father said sadly, "and in the change of circumstances her mother wouldn't have made me her guardian. It was better for all of us to let her uncle take her back to New York." Even in my own grief I felt his sorrow, and though he did not dodge my questions, I could see how the subject pained him, and avoided it thenceforth. How strangely altered my life would have been if I had insisted on knowing more!

The doctor came several times afterwards, for I did not rally as I should have done, and at last he ordered a year's cessation of studies and plenty of exercise. It was a terrible blow to me at the time, for I was on the point of entering the University of Leipzig; but now I can see it was all for the best, since the time given to our tours through Spain and Italy was well spent, and the delay made me better able to get the full value of the lectures. Moreover, that outdoor life added three inches to the height and seventeen pounds to the weight of the hitherto puny boy. For a time my father made my health his care, and insisted on my walking and fencing daily; but after that long holiday he need not have given it a thought, for I grew steadily to my present height, and while always of slender build, I can outwalk or outwork many a stockier man.

My university career was successful; it could hardly have failed to be, with my training. I fear that I became over-elated with my success, not appreciating how much it was due to my father's aid and to the kindness of two of my instructors. For my Ph. D. I made a study of the great race movements of the world, in which my predilection for philology, ethnology, and history gave me an especial interest. I so delighted my professor of philology by my enthusiasm and tirelessness that he stole long hours from the darling of his heart to aid me. (I need hardly add that I do not allude to Frau Jastrow, but to his *Verb-Roots of Fifty-Two Languages and Dialects of Indo-Germanic Origin*, to be published some day in seventeen volumes, quarto.) He even brought me bundles of his manuscript to read and criticise. Our relations were as intimate as were possible between a professor and a student, and despite his reputation for ill temper the only evidence he ever gave me of it was a certain querulousness over the gaps in human knowledge.

My doctor's thesis on *A Study of the Influence of Religion in the Alienation and Mixture of Races* – which, with a vanity I now laugh over, I submitted not merely in Latin, but as an original work in four other languages – was not only the delight of both my dear professors, but was well considered outside the university. At Jastrow's urging, poor Buchholtz printed editions in all five languages; and as only the German had any sale worth mentioning, he ever after looked gloomy at a mere allusion to the title. But though it earned me no royalties, it won me the Kellermann prize, given every fifth year for the best original work on an historical subject.

On our first arrival in Leipzig my father sought literary employment from the great publishers of that city of books, and soon obtained all the "review" and "hack" writing that he wished. He encouraged me to help him in the work, and in my training probably lay his chief inducement, for he was paid at starvation rates in that land of hungry authors. The labor quickly taught me the technical part of authorship, the rock which has wrecked so many hopes. Our work brought us, too, the acquaintance of many literary men, and thus gave us our pleasantest society, and one peculiarly fitted

to develop me. Furthermore, we secured command of the unlimited books stored on the publishers' shelves, which we used as freely as if they were our own private library.

Very quickly I began to do more than help my father in his work; I myself tried to write. He put many a manuscript in the fire, after going over the faults with me, but finally I wrote something that he let me send to an editor. His admirable judgment must have been warped by his fatherly love, for the article was rejected. A like fate befell many others, but at last one was accepted, and I do not know which of us was the more delighted when it was published in the "Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie." By my father's advice it was signed with a pseudonym; for he pointed out that I was still too young for editors who knew me to give my manuscript a reading, and that a German name would command greater respect from them than an English one.

I received twenty marks for that first article, and spent it in secret the next day. Had you known of my pleasure in the gift, and the hopes that went with it, I think you would have sent a line of acknowledgment to the hungry-hearted fellow who, after four years of separation, still longed for a token from you. Three times had I written, without response, but I thought the beauty of the photograph would so appeal to you that it must bring me back a word from you, and lived in the hope for six months. My father joked me genially about what I had done with that vast wealth, pretending at moments that he believed it had been avariciously hoarded, and at other times that it had been squandered in riotous living, till one day, when all hope of acknowledgment had died, his chaff wrung from me an exclamation of pain, suppressed too late to be concealed from him. So closely attuned had we become that he understood in an instant what it meant, and, laying his hand on my shoulder, he appealed, "Forgive me, my boy! I have been very cruel in my thoughtlessness!"

Nothing more was said then, but later that evening, when we rose from our work, he asked, "She never replied?" and when I shook my head, the saddest look I ever saw in him came upon his face. He seemed about to speak impulsively, faltered, checked himself, and finally entreated, "Bear up, Donald, and try to forget her." I could only shake my head again, but he understood. "She's feminine quicksilver," he groaned, "and I can't get the dear girl out of my blood, either." We gripped each other's hands for a moment, and I said, "Good-night, father," and he replied, "God help you, my boy." How happy we should have been could we have bidden you, "Good-night, Maizie!"

V

February 24. I cannot clearly fix the time when first I decided upon a life of letters, and presume it was my father's influence which determined me. After the publication of my first article, all the time I could spare from my studies was devoted to writing. Most of it was magazine work, but two text-books were more ambitious flights. Undertaken at my father's suggestion, the books were revised by him, till they should have been published with his name, and not my pseudonym, on the title-page. This I urged, but he would not hear of it, insisting that his work was trivial compared with mine. I understand his motive now, and see how wise and loving he was in all his plans. Thanks to his skill in clarifying knowledge and fitting it to the immature mind, both books attained a large sale almost immediately on their publication.

My father's abnegation went further, and occasioned the only quarrel we ever had. After the publication of several of my articles, in reading the *Deutsche Rundschau* I found an interesting critique signed with the name I had adopted as a pseudonym. I laughingly called my father's attention to it, yet really feeling a little sore that the credit of my work should go to another, for the first literary offspring are very dear to an author's heart. From that time I was constantly meeting with the name, but stupidly failed to recognize my father's brilliant, luminous touch till the publication of another article of my writing revealed the truth to me; for at the end of this I found again my pseudonym, though I had signed my own name. On my sending an indignant letter to the editor, he returned me the revised proof of my article, at the bottom of which "Donald Maitland" was struck out, and "Rudolph Hartzmann" substituted. My father had made the change in the last revision, and had returned the sheets without letting me see them.

In a moment the veil was gone from my eyes, and, grieved and angry, I charged him with the deception. I do not like to think of what I said or of the gentleness with which he took it. The next day, when I was cooler, he pleaded with me to let him continue signing the name to his articles; but I insisted that I would not permit the double use, and the only concession he could win from me was that I would still keep the name provided he refrained from using it again. How could I resist his "Don, I never asked anything but this of you. I am an old man with no possibility of a career. You are all I have to love or work for in this world. Let me try to help you gain a name." Oh, father, if I had only understood, I would not have been so cruel as to deny your request, but would have sacrificed my own honesty and allowed the lie rather than have refused what now I know to have been so dear a wish. I even resented what I thought a foolish joke of his, when he registered us constantly at hotels as "Rudolph Hartzmann and father." It is poetic justice that in time I should stoop to so much greater dishonesty than that which I was intolerant of in him.

Owing as much to his articles as to those I subsequently wrote, my pseudonym became a recognized one in the world of letters, and my work soon commanded a good price. Furthermore, considerable interest was excited as to the author. There is a keen delight in anonymous publication, for one does not get the one-sided chatter that acknowledged authors receive, and often I have sat in the midst of a group of *littérateurs* and scholars and heard my articles talked over. I was tempted even to discuss one, – disparaging it, of course, – and can remember the way my father hid his laughter when a member of the party said, "Maitland, you ought to write an article refuting Hartzmann, for you've got the knowledge to do it." It amuses me to think how vain and elated I became over what now I see was only 'prentice work. I am glad you did not know me in those years of petty victory, and that before we met I had been saddened and humbled.

Some one at Mr. Whitely's dinner, this winter, asked what was a sufficient income, and you, Maizie, gravely answered, "A little more than one has," which made us all laugh. If you had not been the quicker and the wittier, and thus forestalled me, I should have said, "Enough to satisfy the few or many wishes each person creates within himself which money can satisfy." Thanks to my prize,

my writings, and the profits of my text-books, I obtained this. In fact, the three so lengthened my purse that I fancy few millionaires have ever felt so truly rich; for I was enabled to gratify my greatest wish. In our visits to Spain, Italy, and Constantinople, I had garnered all that I could find bearing on the two great race movements of the Moors and Turks, which so changed the world's history; but I had discovered that I needed more than the documentary materials to write clearly of them. I longed to go to their source, and then follow the channels along which those racial floods had rushed, till, encountering the steel armor and gunpowder of Europe, they had dashed in scattered spray, never to gather force again. In my eagerness I had been for making the attempt before, but my father had urged our limited means and the shortness of my university vacations as bars to my wishes. My degree removed the one objection, and my earnings and prize the other. Few persons would care to undertake the travel we planned with the pittance we had earned, but it was enough for us. How fortunate it is for me that my student life and travels trained me to absolute self-denial and frugality! Otherwise these last three years of closest economy and niggardliness would have been hard to bear.

By the influence of Professor Humzel, working first through his former pupil, Baron Weiseman, secondly through Giers, and thirdly through I know not whom, we secured permission to join a Russian surveying party, and thus safely and expeditiously reached the mountains of the Altai range. We did not stay with the party after they began their work, but assuming native dress we turned southward; plunging instantly among the medley of peoples and tongues which actually realizes the mythical Babel. Turkish, Hebrew, Arabic, and Sanskrit I had mastered in varying degrees, and they were an "open sesame" to the dialects we encountered, while the hot sun and open-air life soon colored us so deeply that we passed for men of a distant but not alien race. Following nature's routes, once man's only paths, we wandered leisurely: to Tashkend on horseback, to Bokhara on foot, by boat down the Amoo to Khiva, and on to Teheran, then by caravan to Bagdad, up the Euphrates, gradually working through Asia Minor. Stopping at Smyrna for a brief rest, we took boat to Cyprus, from thence crossed to Damascus, and from Jerusalem traveled along the caravan route to Mecca. Passing over the Red Sea to Egypt, we skirted the south coast of the Mediterranean, till we reached the Pillars of Hercules.

You ought to have made that pilgrimage. In speaking of my book you expressed the wish that you might make such a trip, and those years would have been as great a playtime to you as to us. You could have borne the exposure, rough though the life was, and it would have been as compound oxygen to your brave and venturesome nature. I confess I do not like to think of that dazzlingly pure skin burned to any such blackness as I saw in my mirror on reaching the end of our journeyings; for truly no better Arab in verisimilitude strolled about the native quarter of Tangier in May, 1886, than Donald Maitland.

My long study of those older races and three years' life spent among them have not made me accept their dogma of fatalism, yet I must believe that something stronger than chance produced our meeting in that Moorish town. Down streams, over mountains, and across deserts, seas, and oceans, our paths had converged; on foot, mounted, by rail or boat, we came together as if some hidden magnet were drawing us both. A thousand chances were against our meeting, even when we were in the same town; for you were housed in the best hotel, while we lodged in a little Jewish place in the Berber quarter. In another day my father and I should have crossed to Spain, without so much as a visit to the European section. But for that meeting I should have returned to Leipzig, and passed a contented life as a Herr Doctor and Professor; for though my heart was still warm with love of you, it had been denied and starved too long to have the strength to draw me from the path my head had marked out. Yet I would not now accept the unemotional and peaceful career I had planned in lieu of my present life; for if my love is without hope, it is still love, and though you turned me away from your door with far less courtesy than you would shut out a beggar, yet I am near you and see you constantly, and that is worth more to me than peace. Good-night, my love. God bless you.

VI

February 25. It was thought of you which led to our meeting. After the evening meal of dried salt fish, pancakes, dates, and coffee, my father and I wandered out to the Sok, and, as was our wont, sat down among the people. Refusing the hasheesh water and sweetmeats which the venders urged upon us, "to make you dream of your love joyfully," we listened to the story-tellers and the singers. Some one with a fine natural voice sang presently an Arabic love-song: —

"My love, so lovely yet so cruel,
Why came you so to torture me?
Could I but know the being who
Has caused you thus to hate me!
Once I saw and gazed upon your lovely form each hour,
But now you ever shun me.
Yet still each night you come in dreams
For me to ask, Who sent you?
Your answer is, Him whom I love,
And you bid me then forget my passion.
But I reply, If it was not for love, how could the world go on?"

It was a song I had heard and loved in many lands and many dialects, but that night it stirred me deeply, and brought to mind your image, ever dear. I sat and dreamed of you till the farrago about me became unbearable; and whispering a word to my father, I rose and strode away, with a yearning truly mastering. I could have had no thought that you were near, for when we stood far closer I was still unconscious of your presence. But if not an intuition, I ask what could it be?

Wandering through the narrow streets without purpose or goal, I presently saw looming above me the great hill on which stands the Alcassaba. Climbing in the brilliant moonlight up the steep and ill-conditioned road, and passing that jumble of buildings upon which so many races and generations have left their impress, I strolled along the wall to a ruined embrasure at the corner overlooking the sea. How long I stood there leaning upon the parapet I do not know. Not till you were close upon me was I conscious that my solitude was ended.

I heard footsteps, but was too incurious to turn and glance at the intruders. Nay, more, when that harsh, strident, American voice demanded, "There, isn't that great?" I felt so irritated by both tone and words that but for the seeming rudeness I should have moved away at once. You spoke so low I could not hear your reply, and I wonder what you said, — for his "great" applied to such beauty must have rasped much more on your artistic sense than it did on mine.

"And this black fellow in the turban standing here," continued the strident voice, "he fits, too, like the paper on the wall, though probably he's a sentry taking forty winks on the sly. It makes an American mad to see how slack things are run over here."

I heard a gentle "Hush," and then a murmur as you went on speaking.

"None of these black fellows speak English," came the self-assured voice again. Then, though I could have heard his natural tone full fifty feet away, the man called much louder: "Hey! what's the name of that point out there?"

I should have chosen to make no answer; but remembering the courtesy and dignity of the race I was impersonating, I replied without turning, "Cape Spartel."

You must have said something, for a moment later he laughed, saying, "Not a bit of it. Now see me jolly him up." I heard footsteps, and then some one leaned against the parapet, close beside me. "Backsheesh," he intimated, and jingled some coins in his pocket.

I stood silent, so he tapped me on the shoulder and asked, "Are you one of the palace guards?" Unsuppressed by my monosyllabic "No," he persisted by saying, "What's your business, then?" jingling his coins again. "Stop pulling me, Mai," he added, as an aside.

"I am a stranger in Tangier," I answered quietly.

"From whereabouts?" he questioned.

"The East."

"Oh, you're one of the wise men, are you?" he observed jocosely. "Are you a Jew or a Mohammedan?"

"Not the latter, fortunately for you."

"And why fortunately?" he nagged.

"Because a true believer would have taken the question as a deadly insult."

"They'd be welcome," he laughed, "though it is rather irritating to be mistaken for a Jew. I shouldn't like it myself."

I thought of the dignified Jew traders who had made part of our caravan in the journey from Bagdad to Damascus, and answered, "There is little danger of that."

"I guess not," he assented. "But if you aren't a Jew or a Mohammedan, what are you?"

He had spoiled my mood, and since it was gone I thought I would amuse myself with the man. "A seeker of knowledge from the Altai Mountains," I responded.

"Never heard of them," he announced; "or is it your Choctaw for those?" he added, pointing towards the dark masses of the Atlas Mountains.

I smiled and answered, "They are many moons' travel from here."

"Oh!" he exclaimed. "How did you happen to come?"

"To follow after those gone before."

"I see," he said. "Relatives, I suppose? Hope you found them well?"

"No," I replied, carrying on the humor, "dying."

He jingled his coins, and asked, "Anything to be done for them?"

"Nothing."

"What's the complaint?"

"Civilization in the abstract, repeating rifles and rapid-firing guns in the concrete."

"Eh!" he ejaculated.

Then the lowest and sweetest of voices said, "Won't you tell us what you mean?"

Was it my irritation that the man before me, rather than the subtler-passioned people I knew so well, was the dominant type of the moment, or was it the sympathy your voice stirred within me, which made me speak? In a moment I was sketching broadly the inhumanity of this thing we call Christian civilization, which, more grasping than the Inquisition, has overrun the world, tearing the lands from their owners, and, not content with this spoliation, demands of its victims that they shall give up the customs of many centuries' evolution, and conform to habits, governments, and religions which their very instincts make impossible; and because they cannot change, but break out, these believers in the golden rule shoot them down. I protested at the mockery of calling civilized a world held at peace by constant slaughter, or of styling the national Jack Ketches of humanity Christian nations! I protested against the right of one man to hold another barbaric because he will not welcome his master, greet with joy the bands of steel we call railroads, and crush his nature within the walls of vast factories, to make himself the threefold slave of society, government, and employer. And finally, I gloried in the fact that though the white races had found a weapon against the black and yellow ones which enabled them to overrun and subjugate, yet nature had provided nature's people with the defense of climate, – a death-line to the whites; and behind that line the colored races are unconquerable in the sense of conquest being extinction. I knew the other side, that altruistic tenet of political economy defined in brief as "the greatest good of the greatest number," and in my mind held the even balance of the historian between the two; but to this utilitarian, modern, self-satisfied

American I had to urge the rights of races thousands of years our senior, and far in advance of us in the knowledge and amenities that make life worth the most.

You both were silent till I ended; but I had best left unspoken what your companion could not understand, for when I finished he inquired, "What mountains did you say you came from?" And when I told him, he added laughingly, "You must have some pretty good stump speaking in your elections."

"We are very grateful for your explanation," you thanked me gently.

"Never been in America?" he surmised; and except for you I should have told him that I was his countryman, it would have been so adequate a retort to his inference. But your voice and manner had made me so ashamed of my earlier mood that I merely answered, "Yes."

"Humph!" he grunted in surprise; and as if to prove his incorrigibility he continued, "Thought your ideas were too back-number for that."

I could not help laughing, and the moment my laugh became articulate yours too overflowed your lips, as a spring breaks past its edges and falls rippling over pebbles.

That laugh, so well remembered, revealed your presence to me. My heart beat quickly and my head whirled dizzily, and in my bewilderment I took a step backward, quite forgetting the embrasure, till a stone gave way and I felt that I was falling. Then my consciousness went from me, and when thought came surging backward I lay a moment quiet, thinking it must have been a dream.

"He's coming round all right," I heard, and at the sound I opened my eyes. You were leaning over me with the moonlight shining on your face, and I caught my breath, you were so beautiful.

"You've given us a scare," continued the man, on whose knee my head was resting. "You want to keep your wits about you better. Pretty poor business tumbling off walls, but that's what comes of having ruins. You won't be quite so cocky in the future about your run-out races."

I felt his laughter justified, but hardly heeded it, my thoughts were so engaged. You were wetting my forehead with brandy, and I lay there too happy to speak.

"Now let me raise you a bit higher," the man offered kindly, "so you can get your addled senses back." He lifted me, and I groaned at the sudden terrible pain that shot up my leg.

"Hello!" he cried, laying me gently down. "Something wrong, after all? What is it?"

"My leg," I moaned.

"Here, Maizie, hold his head, while I appoint an investigating committee," he ordered, and in another moment I felt your arms about me, and in my joy at your touch I almost forgot my torture.

"Well, you've broken one of your walking-sticks," the man informed me, after a gentler touching of it than I thought possible to his nature. "Now, Maizie, if you'll sit and hold his head, I'll get a litter. You won't mind staying here alone, will you?"

"It is my wish," you acceded calmly.

"O. K.," he said, rising, and even in his kindness he could not help but seize the opportunity to glorify his country. "If this had happened in New York, Mr. Altai, we'd have had an ambulance here five minutes ago! Civilization isn't all bad, I tell you, as you'd find out if you'd give it a chance."

The moment he was gone I tried to speak, and murmured "Maizie;" but you let me get no further, saying "Hush," and putting your hand softly over my lips. I suppose you thought me merely repeating the name he had called you, while I loved your touch too deeply to resist the hand I longed to kiss. Now I am glad I did not speak, for if I had it would have robbed me of my last sweet moment with you.

Long before I thought it possible, and far too soon, indeed, despite my suffering, we heard men approaching. When the torch-bearers came climbing over the rocks, my first desire was to see how much of your beauty was owing to the moonlight, and my heart leaped with exultation to find that you were beautiful even in the livid glare of the torches.

"Now, Mr. Altai," your companion remarked, "where shall we take you?" and I gave him the name of the hotel. A moment later, as they lifted me, I again fainted, but not till I had kissed your hand. You snatched it away, and did not hear my weakly whispered "Good-night, Maizie."

VII

February 26. The setting of my leg, that night, was so long and exhausting an operation that after it was done I was given an opiate. Instead of bringing oblivion the drug produced a dreamy condition, in which I was cognizant of nothing that happened about me, and saw only your face. I knew I ought to sleep, and did my best to think of other things; but try as I might, my thought would return and dwell upon your beauty.

I have often wished I had been born an artist, that I might try to paint your portrait, for words can no more picture you than they can transmit the fragrance of a violet. Indeed, to me the only word which even expresses your charm is "radiant," and that to others, who have never seen you, would suggest little. No real beauty can be described, for it rests in nothing that is tangible. In truth, to speak of your glorious hair, the whiteness of your brow and throat, the brilliant softness of your eyes, or the sweetness yet strength of your tender though unsmiling lips is to make but a travesty of description. I have heard painters talk of your hair and try to convey an idea of its beauty, but I know it too well even to make the attempt. When we were gazing at the rainbow, last autumn, and you said that if its tints could be transferred to a palette you believed it would be possible to paint anything, I could not help correcting, "Except your hair." You laughed, and declared, "I did not know you ever made that kind of a speech!" whereupon Agnes cried, "Didn't I ever tell you, Maizie, the compliment the doctor paid you last winter?" I thought she was alluding to my retort when my mother asserted that your eyes were so large and lustrous that, to her, they were "positively loud." Indignant at such a remark, Agnes had appealed to me to deny it. Not caring to treat the malicious speech seriously, I had answered that I could not agree, though I had sometimes thought your eyes "too dressy for the daytime," – a joke I have heard so often quoted that it is apparently in a measure descriptive, yet one which I should have felt mortified at hearing repeated to you. Fortunately Agnes's reference was to another remark of mine, in which, speaking of your mouth, I had crudely translated a couple of lines from a Persian poem: —

"In vain you strive to speak a bitter word —
It meets the sweetness of your lips ere it is heard."

You were too used to compliments to be embarrassed when the lines were repeated, and only looked at me in a puzzled way. I do not wonder you were surprised at the implied admiration of the two speeches, after my apparent coldness and indifference. My behavior must seem to you as full of contradictions as your beauty is to me. To say your great attraction is the radiance – the verve, spirit, and capacity for enthusiasm – of which one cannot fail to be conscious is to deny the calm dignity with which you bear yourself, yet both these qualities belong to you. The world insists that you are proud and distant, and your face has the clean-cut features which we associate with patrician blood, while your height and figure, and the set and carriage of your head upon that slender throat, suggest a goddess. But I, who understand you so much better than the world, know that your proud face overlies the tenderest of natures, and is not an index, but a mask of feelings you do not care to show. As for the people who criticise you most, they would be the last to do so if they were not conscious of the very superiority they try to lessen. – Ah, how foolish it is to write all this, as if I needed to convince myself of what I know so well! And even if this were for the eye of others, to those who know you not it would be but the extravagant idealism for which a lover is proverbial.

When I awoke from the sleep my dreaming had drifted into, my first request of my father was to find your whereabouts. He told me that a dragoman had come that morning to inquire for me, – and had left what now he showed me, – a great bunch of roses and a basket of fruit, with the card of "Mr. Foster G. Blodgett, 547 Fifth Avenue," on the back of which was written: —

"With sincere regrets that a previously formed plan of leaving Tangier this morning prevents our seeing our courteous instructor of last night, and with hopes that he may have a quick and easy recovery from his accident."

The card was a man's, but the handwriting was feminine, and the moment my father turned his back I kissed it. I was further told that the servant had asked my name and taken it down, giving me the instant hope that when you knew to whom you had been so merciful, you would even disarrange your plans to let me have a moment's glimpse of you. But though I listened all the afternoon hopefully and expectantly, you never came. I felt such shyness about you, I did not speak to my father of your beauty, and he did not question me at all.

Our native hotel, built in Eastern fashion about a court, with only blank outside walls, was no place in which to pass a long invalidism, and three days later my father had me carried to the steamer, and, crossing to Gibraltar, we traveled by easy railroad trips to Leipzig. We had left our belongings with Jastrow, and he begged us, on our arrival, to become members of his household, which we were only too glad to do for a time. His joy over my return was most touching, and he and Humzel both seemed to regard me very much as if I were the creation of their own brains, who was to bring them immortal fame in time. My father had long before counseled me to be a pursuer of knowledge, and not of money; telling me the winning of the latter narrowed the intellect and stunted the finer qualities of one's nature, making all men natural enemies, while the acquisition of the former broadened one's mind, developed the nobility within, and engendered love of one's associates. These two men illustrated his theory, and had my tendency been avaricious I think their unselfish love and example would have made me otherwise. And yet, how dare I claim to be free from sordidness, when all my thoughts and hopes and daily life are now bent on winning money?

My leg was far too troublesome to permit me to sit at a desk, but my father insisted on being my scribe; and thus, lying on a lounge, I began part of the work I had so long planned, taking up for my first book the Turkish irruption, the crusades against the Saracens, and their subsequent history. Thinking so much of you, both as the child who had won my boyish heart and as the beautiful woman whose face had fascinated and moved me so deeply, I do not know how, except for my work, I should have lived through those long and weary months of enforced inaction while my leg so slowly knit.

More as recreation from this serious endeavor than as supplementary labor, I gathered the articles I had written for the *Deutsche Rundschau* and the *Revue des Deux Mondes* from time to time in our travels, and with new material from my journal I worked the whole into a popular account of what we had seen and done. While I still used a walking-stick I was reading proof of the German edition, and my English replica, rather than translation, was under negotiation through my publisher for London and New York editions. My father, who busied himself with a French version, insisted that the book would be a great success, and the articles under my assumed name had been so well noticed that I was myself hopeful of what better work in book form might do for my reputation; for against his advice, I had determined to abandon my pseudonym.

But all these schemes and hopes were forgotten in the illness of my father. Contrary to my wishes, he had overworked himself in the French translation, while his life, for months of my enforced inactivity, had been one long service, impossible for me to avoid or refuse without giving him pain. This double exertion proved too great a strain. The day after he sent the manuscript to Paris, as he sat conning the sheets of the concluding chapter of my history, he laid them down without a word, and, leaning forward, quietly rested his head upon the table. I was by his side and had him on the sofa in an instant, where he lay unconscious till the doctor came. We were told that it was a slight stroke, and by the next day he seemed quite well. But slowly he lost the use of one side, and within a week was helpless. I like to remember that I was well enough to tend him as he had tended me. He lingered for a month, sweet and gentle as always; then, one evening, as I sat beside him, he opened his eyes and said, "Good-night, Don. Good-night, Maizie." And with those words his loving soul went back to its Creator.

I found about his neck a ribbon to which was attached a locket containing the long tress you cut off for him that day in the Bois, one of my mother's curls, and a little tow-colored lock which I suppose was my own hair before it darkened, – a locket I have since worn unchanged, because, sadly discordant though such association has become, I cannot bring myself to separate what he tied together. It seems to symbolize his love for all of us.

The kindness of my friends I can never forget. I was so broken down as really to be unfit for thought, and their generous foresight did everything possible to spare me trouble or pain. Especially to Professor and Frau Jastrow do I owe an unpayable debt, for they made me feel that there was still some one in whose love I stood first; and had I been the child who had never come to them, I question if they could have done more for me than they did.

One thing that I had to do myself was to notify my mother of my father's death. From the time she had quitted us my father and I had avoided mention of her; but during his illness he asked me to write in case of his death, and gave me her New York address, from which I inferred that in some way he had kept himself informed concerning her, though I feel very certain that she had never written him. That I had never tried to learn anything myself was due to the estrangement, but still more to my interest in my studies and work. Now I wrote her, as I had promised, telling her briefly the circumstances of my father's illness and death, and offering to write fuller details if she wished to know them. I would not feign love for her, but I wrote tenderly of him and without coldness to her. She never replied.

Kind as were all my intimates, I craved more than friendship, however loving it might be. One of the two great loves of my life had gone out from it, and, in the gap it left, the other became doubly dear to me. The wish to see you grew and strengthened each day, until at last it shaped my plans, and I announced my intention to visit America; making the specious explanation that, after my long invalidism and grief, the change would be the best specific for me.

At this time I received the offer of appointment as professor extraordinarius of philology and ethnology under Jastrow, another manifestation of his love; but till I had seen you I would not bind myself by accepting, and through his influence I was given three months to consider my answer. I seem doomed never to requite the services of those I love the most, but I am glad that in the nine months which I passed under his roof my knowledge of the Eastern dialects had pushed his work so much nearer completion.

Leaving all my possessions behind except the manuscript of my history, I started on my voyage of love. For two days I tarried in Paris, settling my little property. I had long known that the flotsam of my father's fortune, wrecked in Wall Street, was a few bonds deposited with Paris bankers; and when I called upon the firm it was merely to continue the old arrangement, by which they cut the coupons and placed them to my bank credit. It was in this visit that I searched out our old pension, and sat dreaming in the park. How could I imagine, remembering those days of closest love and sympathy, and knowing too your kindness to one you thought a mere Eastern stroller, that you could have changed so to your former friend?

The most curious fact to me, in looking back upon that time, is that the idea never occurred to me that you were a married woman. It never entered my thoughts that a beauty which fascinated and drew me so far from my natural orbit must be an equally powerful charm to other men. As for Mr. Blodgett, I never gave him a second thought, not even accounting for his relations with you. My foolishness, I suppose, is typical of the scholar's abstraction and impracticality.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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