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YOUNG CARRINGTON'S CAREER BY Beatrice Hanscom

CHAPTER I

THE studio in Numero – rue Boissonade had on its holiday togs: model stand covered with rugs, tea table much in evidence, framed picture on the easel, and lilacs enough in the great brass bowl in the corner to serve as sweetly affirmative witnesses that the heart of Paris and the heart of spring had renewed their yearly alliance.

To judge from the blitheness of Carrington, he, too, had spring in his heart and a festal day in prospect.

Life, already lavish in good gifts, was on the point of giving him the one he most desired to grasp.

At twenty-one he had health, plenty of money, and a talent to which he considered health and money merely subservient – a

talent which lured him to work indefatigably.

The portrait on which he had lavished himself hung on the line in the spring salon; and Velantour, the master for whom he had toiled tirelessly for the last three years – Velantour, the sternest critic in France, most sparing in praise – Velantour, whose painting expeditions in the far East were always solitary save for his trusted courier —*Velantour* had invited Carrington to go with him to the Vale of Cashmere and the Himalayas! To paint with him and by his side for three long, delicious months.

"It is not enough to put people's souls on canvas, *mon cher*, if you can't put nature's heart back of them," he had told him, hand on his shoulder. Velantour, whose caustic criticisms usually confined themselves to technique, and took small account of souls!

Carrington tingled to his finger tips in the desire to be off. Life was good – was "bully," as Carrington phrased it. And he whistled softly, rapturous as a thrush, as he crossed the studio to lift a corner of the rug which covered a trunk masquerading as a seat, a trunk locked and strapped; packed with an infinite forethought for any possible contingency that might arise during the trip; with enough paint tubes and brushes to set up a small dealer; packed, too, with hopes and aspiration, which luckily take up no room, and do not increase the excess baggage rate. Had they weighed the smallest fraction of an ounce apiece, modern hydraulics could not have lifted that trunk a single inch.

"And we start to-night! Jove, it's unbelievable!" he said,

exultantly, as he dropped the rug corner and stood up, straight and slender and tall, a handsome boy with his black hair a trifle long, his blue eyes aglow, his delicate features alight with enthusiasm as he drew in a long breath of satisfaction.

There was a touch of the romantic in his attire – in the loosely hanging, dark gray velveteen suit that was almost black, and the soft cravat that had the color of pigeon's blood.

He was young enough to like that sort of thing, dandy enough to order those dull gray suits by the half dozen, with long, crimson lined cloaks and marvelous soft felt hats; and handsome enough to make Velantour vow he would immortalize him in them. "*Le nouveau* Van Dyck," he whispered to himself, for he loved the boy as much as he believed in his future, and he believed in that with the intensity and concentrated fervor of a man who permits himself few beliefs.

"To have a son like that!" he would murmur – little, squat, short-legged, gray-headed, lonely old, famous Velantour; and the words wrenched his lips into the dry twist of an old grief.

For Velantour's scapegrace son had rested many years in Père-la-Chaise.

* * * * *

Velantour was coming this afternoon to the informal little reunion of the half dozen friends whom Carrington had summoned to wish him God-speed.

With the warning swish of the curtains Carrington turned to see if it was he even now. But he saw instead a young fellow of his own age, a youth whose brown hair curled obstinately, whose mouth was wide and mobile, and who had the kind of snub nose one inevitably associates with jollity.

"My dear Ned, you're most disappointing," the newcomer stated, with burlesque complaint and a gesture that sent his hands far apart. "You ought to be putting the last touch to a tuft of grass in the foreground. It's a poor foreground that won't stand a few extra tufts here and there, and it's an immensely effective proceeding. Or else you ought to be on your knees to the gods. You're neither posing piously to please Providence, nor patently to please Paris. I'm afraid we've overrated your genius. You'll never make a Whistler."

He laughed good-humoredly as he grasped Carrington's outstretched hand. Robert Parker, yclept Bobbins, took life easily.

"I'm so happy, Bobbins," Carrington confided in him, "that I can't even think. Isn't it ripping – going east with Velantour?"

"It is for you, Rising Genius," Bobbins assured him, "but so far as I am concerned, though I might manage to sit under a Kashmirian cedar with a fan, standing on an icy peak with a pot of paint strapped to my waistband, and a fault-finding old gentleman to tell me how badly I was using it, isn't my ideal of bliss. No Himalayas for me."

"Bless you, Bobbins, we're not contracting to paint them by

the yard, the way you do a fence," expostulated Carrington, laughingly. "We're going to make pictures, not advertise breakfast foods."

"What is your sister going to do?" queried Bobbins.

"Elenore is going to Brittany to-morrow with the Waldens," Carrington told him promptly.

"And Hastings, I presume, has always wanted to go to Brittany," Bobbins laughed.

"Well, Hastings has certainly developed a sudden enthusiasm in that direction," Carrington acknowledged.

"Do you suppose Elenore – " Bobbins began mysteriously.

"I know enough to know that I don't know anything about girls," Elenore's brother announced, promptly. "Do you suppose Hastings – "

"I certainly do," said Bobbins, fervently. "And he has a bad case of it. Wouldn't go to the *Bal Bullier* the other night; thinks *cafés chantants* are vulgar; doesn't hear what you are saying half the time, and has taken to humming 'Home-keeping hearts are happiest.' You don't have to take him to the hospital to see what's the matter with him."

"I told him distinctly *by the hour*," a high-pitched, patrician voice floated in from the hall, "and if he doesn't stop swearing he'll have to put his *pourboire* in troches." Coincident with the remark a fluent outburst of Parisian profanity came wafting in the open windows.

"My dear Ned," said Mrs. Van Velt, the owner of the patrician

voice, appearing in the doorway; "would you mind sending some one to chloroform my cabby? The more Carol argues with him, the more vocal he becomes. He seems to think that they also swear who only sit and wait."

Mrs. Van Velt was a dowager unmistakably American.

She appeared to have been poured into her black satin gown at some abnormally high temperature and at a calculation perilously close. Her gray pompadour strained back from her high forehead in an apparent endeavor to oust her bonnet as an insolent trespasser on its private domain, but the bonnet, a black octopus with an intelligent jetty eye, wound two narrow black velvet tentacles firmly beneath Mrs. Van Velt's double chin, and triumphed calmly.

"You go, Bobbins," said Carrington, gayly. "Mrs. Van Velt, may I present Mr. Parker? Chloroforming cabbies is one of his specialties. You may be sure that it will be painless and thorough."

"And bring back my daughter, Mr. Parker," said Mrs. Van Velt, as placidly as though she had said spectacles or handkerchief. The obliging young knight was already half way to the door. "Carol thought she ought to argue it out with him; and as she couldn't understand his French, and he couldn't understand hers, it seemed perfectly safe."

She laughed good-humoredly.

"That's a nice-looking boy, Ned," she said, as the subject of her remark disappeared. "Who is he, and how did he get such a

remarkable name?"

"Bobbins?" said Carrington. "Oh, he's a trump. His father is the inventor – no, his grandfather – of Parker's Peerless Sewing Machine. You know all the advertisements say: 'Observe the bobbin. So simple, a child can work it.' And Robert the Third is such a generous chap, he's an awfully easy mark. So – Bobbins."

His hands turned palms upward in an explanatory gesture.

Mrs. Van Velt laughed again. Then she put a hand on Carrington's shoulder with a touch that was almost motherly.

"Ned," she said, affectionately, "I wish your father could be here to-day to see you before you go east. He'd be so proud of you. How long is it since he has seen you and Elenore?"

"Six years," said Carrington. "Dear old dad! Not since he sent us over here in Aunt Sarah's care, six years ago, when mother died. He's intended to come every year, but there's always been something at the mine to prevent it. Dad loves the struggle of business, you know."

"He loves his children, too," said Mrs. Van Velt, seriously. "It must be lonely for him. And the mine is in such a forlorn little, out-of-the-way place, 'way up there in northern Michigan."

"The mines situated right in the heart of Manhattan are pretty well worked out," Ned expostulated, humorously.

"Yellow Dog! Did you ever hear such a ghastly name?" Mrs. Van Velt went on. "Half the people thought your mother was crazy when she married him and went out there to live. They said he was harnessing Psyche to his mine machinery for motive

power. And the other half said that when he was tired and wanted sympathy she'd write him a sonnet. Everybody agreed that they would be unhappy. And they were the happiest people I ever knew."

"They certainly were," said Carrington, emphatically. "How do you account for it?"

"Modern prophets have a horror of the country," said Mrs. Van Velt, sententiously, "unless it's in easy motoring distance of Sherry's. And they overlooked the vital fact that when you're making two human beings one, duplicate good qualities are quite as useless as duplicate wedding presents.

"It's curious," she continued, "about you twins: that Elenore has all her father's love of adventure and his executive ability, for all her girlishness; and you have your mother's talent and her tastes. You couldn't be more different, and yet you look as much alike as you did when you were tots. I remember the first time your mother brought you east. Your Uncle Dick – well, your Uncle Dick thought rock-and-rye a splendid tonic for other people, but personally he took it without the rock, which he thought might be indigestible – and he looked at you both as you stood there side by side. And he said: 'Bring on your blue ribbons. I can see two of them.'"

"Why, Mrs. Van Velt, and so early in the day, too!" said a gay voice behind her, a voice so like Carrington's that it seemed his echo; and Elenore Carrington came forward to kiss the dowager on both cheeks.

As Mrs. Van Velt had said, the resemblance between the twins *was* remarkable.

They had the same height, the same coloring, the same blue eyes that had a trick of turning violet under emotion; the same delicate arch to the eyebrows; the same wavy line of hair upon the forehead; the same buoyant poise of body. Even a certain quick suppleness of motion belonged to them both; and, stranger still, their hands were wonderfully like.

The artistic impulse that gave to Ned's a certain femininity in slenderness and taper fingers was curiously balanced by a strain of resourcefulness which lent to Elenore's well-shaped white palms so strong a resemblance to her twin's that it was only by putting them side by side and noting that hers were a bit smaller, a shade more femininely modeled, a trifle more delicately cushioned, that they were distinguishable.

The black locks that Carrington permitted to wave back just enough for picturesqueness, with no trace of the bizarre or of unkemptness, gave to his face a boyishness that carried a suggestion of eternal youth.

But Elenore's dark hair was coiled low in the nape of her neck, and her manner was as feminine as was her distinctly smart and frilly pale blue chiffon frock.

"I'm glad," Elenore went on, chaffingly, "that Aunt Sarah is safely on her way to the North Cape and cannot hear you describe your shocking condition."

"Bless you, child," said Mrs. Van Velt, promptly. "You're

altogether too good-looking. You ought to wear a veil. That's what young Hastings thinks, I hear. He's confided in Carol. And anyone who would confide in Carol must be laboring under strong mental excitement. And so your Aunt Sarah has really started for the North Cape! Women as plain as Sarah Moore are always pretending to be absorbed in the beauties of nature, but they are really trying to get their own minds and yours away from such sensitive subjects as snub noses."

"Where is Carol?" demanded Elenore, laughingly. "Isn't she coming to say good-by to Ned and me?"

"Carol seems to be putting in a stitch in time with that young sewing machine," said Mrs. Van Velt, unperturbed. "She's like her father. He never could bear to see machinery idle."

Elenore looked up at her smilingly from the place she had taken at the tea table. The samovar was steaming gayly, and the girl's white hands moved with housewifely deftness as she prepared to make tea. They were firm, capable hands, that it was a pleasure to watch.

The portières swung back with a decided flourish to admit a short, bright-eyed, gray-headed, animated old gentleman, who came forward with the buoyancy of a boy.

"Here I am, *cher* Edouard," cried Velantour, gayly. "*Mademoiselle, mes hommages*, I come *exprès* to assure you that I shall take the bes' of care of this brother of yours."

"Mrs. Van Velt," said Carrington, putting his hand affectionately on old Velantour's arm, "I present to you Monsieur

Velantour, the master of painting in France."

"Madame," said Velantour, courtly in turn, "I presen' to you Monsieur Edouard Carrington, a *nouveau maître* of whom America will one day be very proud.

"You have a daughter, madame?" he added, gravely.

"Somewhere," said Mrs. Van Velt, calmly.

"*C'est ça!*" said Velantour. "I fall over two young peopl' in the hall as I enter – young Monsieur Parker and a young lady – and the young lady say: 'Oh, Monsieur Velantour, will you tell mother I'll be in in a minute?' And Monsieur Parker say: 'So soon as she have finish' winding the bobbin.'"

"It's all right, Mrs. Van Velt," said Carrington, amusedly. "Bobbins is decidedly an eligible."

"What is that, an eligible?" demanded Velantour, puzzled to know what could justify such calm.

"Well, in America, Monsieur Velantour," Mrs. Van Velt informed him, "an eligible is an attractive man entirely surrounded by daughters – other people's daughters."

"When mother begins to talk about other people's daughters it's always time for me to appear," announced Miss Carol Van Velt, entering gayly.

Bobbins, radiant, was just back of her; and a tall, serious, thoroughbred young fellow followed them.

Carol Van Velt was a remarkably pretty blonde, who looked delightfully *ingénue*, but was entirely capable of managing most masculinity. She accepted admiration as nonchalantly as she

did bonbons, and considered that the sources of supply of both were unlimited. Experience seemed to prove that this theory was correct.

"*We* saw, anyway, that we were just being used as stepping-stones to higher things," she went on; "so we thought we might as well come in with Mr. Hastings."

She sank gracefully down on one end of a large divan, and drew her skirts aside with a gesture that assumed matter-of-factly that Bobbins would occupy the other half of the seat. He justified the conclusion with a promptness which left no doubt that he regarded it as a heaven-sent opportunity.

"Not that we minded being an angels' ladder," he asserted, cheerfully, "but I thought from Hastings' cast of countenance that he might be going to give you a few scenes from 'Hamlet,' and I didn't think it was safe to be sitting behind a curtain when he got to that part about *Polonius*."

Velantour regarded them with that awe which a Frenchman must feel for the rollicking frivolity of the American young and the placid inefficiency of the American parent.

Meantime Hastings had made his way to Elenore and slipped into a vacant chair by the tea table, as a matter of course.

She smiled at him very charmingly.

"You're late," she said, "and you were coming early, you know. Do you think you deserve caravan tea with a dash of burgundy in it?"

"I think I deserve all the good things I can get to-day," he

said, and though his tone was light, there was an undertone that suggested that he meant it.

"It tastes to me more like burgundy with a dash of caravan tea," said Mrs. Van Velt. "After a while they will forget to put in the tea at all."

"And then, Monsieur Velantour?" said Carrington, amusedly; for the old Frenchman was sipping the mixture cautiously.

"Then it will not need mademoiselle's hands to make it perfection," said Velantour, with a humorous twist of his keen old lips.

His gray eyes gleamed as they applauded him laughingly. Age had intensified in him the love of appreciation which is innate in the Gallic heart.

"While we have tea, let us have toast," said Bobbins, promptly. "I propose a toast to Monsieur Velantour. Turn it into rhyme, Ned. You're a crack *improvisatore*."

Carrington stood up, with the easy grace of an Italian. He had the temperament of a troubadour, and he loved in turn a compliment.

> "To Monsieur Velantour" (he began) "whose name
> Is but a synonym for fame – "

He had the *improvisatore's* trick of lingering on the final syllable until it brought its own suggestion.

"Bravo!" they applauded him; while Velantour enjoyed the

adulation with the frankness of a child.

> "So irresistible that Art" (he glanced with gay raillery at Velantour)
> "Quite womanlike, has lost her heart.
> Yet knows it in his keeping, sure.
> A health to Monsieur Velantour!"

They drank it in hilarious mood.

Velantour was on his feet the next instant.

"If I could but make one littl' Americain verse," he implored, expansively. "But I speak so poorly. You mus' help me a littl'."

"Well," said Mrs. Van Velt, practically, "you have to begin with the street he lives on, or something like that. *Rue Boissonade*– " she began, and halted.

"Shall have its Claude," suggested Bobbins.

"*Bon!*" cried Velantour. "Now I have it.

> "*Rue Boissonade*
> Shall have its *Claude*,
> And *l'Amerique*
> The new *Van Dyck*."

His *naïf* delight was contagious.

He patted Carrington's arm affectionately.

"But we shall paint, *cher* Edouard!" he said, fondly. "And you are quite ready?"

“More than ready,” laughed Carrington.

He glanced at the little clock on the mantel.

“And our train goes in just two hours,” he whispered, triumphantly.

“Till then,” said Velantour, gayly. Then he crossed over to Elenore. “Mademoiselle, I will guard your brother as though he was – what is mos’ perishable in English – a bubbl’, is it not? Madame” – he bowed to Mrs. Van Velt. “Mademoiselle” – he inclined to Carol. “In two littl’ hours,” he called to Carrington from the doorway, and was gone.

“Isn’t he the dearest thing?” Carol demanded, frankly, of Bobbins.

“He’s an old brick, but not my idea of the dearest thing,” that discriminating individual replied, promptly. “I don’t suppose you could guess what my idea would be,” he insinuated.

“Oh, that’s too much of an antique,” said Miss Van Velt, with crushing promptness.

“Antique! I bought it this year,” said Bobbins, tacking, unharmed.

“Then some one is selling you back numbers,” Miss Van Velt assured him. “Try to get your money back. It’s been taking candy from children, and it ought to be stopped.”

“The police won’t give it back,” said Bobbins, mysteriously.

“The police!” said Miss Van Velt, startled. “What have they to do – ”

“With my Mercedes?” said Bobbins, cheerfully. “That’s just

the attitude I've tried to take with them. But it has cost me five hundred francs this week, and this is only Wednesday. The dearest thing on earth to me is Mercedes, my Mercedes," he hummed, pathetically.

"You naturally would lavish your young affection on machines," Miss Van Velt remarked, cruelly, but she gave him a look of decided favor.

"So long as you think I am in the running," said Bobbins, placidly.

The maid had brought in a letter with an American postmark. Carrington held it in his hand as he crossed over to join the group around the tea table.

Mrs. Van Velt was enjoying her usual volubility, and Hastings was paying her the flattery of an apparent attention and a comprehendingly amused smile, while his eyes gave the deeper homage of frequent and involuntary glances to Elenore.

For him, at least, Elenore was the central figure. Nor was it only for him. Things were quite apt to gravitate around Elenore. Ned himself did not overshadow his twin. If there is any truth in theosophic theories, she had an unusually powerful aura; if we discard the esoteric for the exoteric, beauty and wit and reserve force, cast in the mold of an alluring femininity, are quite as attractive as the same buoyant youth, plus tremendous talent, in masculine fiber.

Elenore had, too, a certain firm, keen grasp on the realities of life which Carrington, with all his localized talent, lacked. One

felt that she would not fail in any qualm, that she would not be daunted by any obstacle, that in crises she would think not of surrender or sacrifice, but of resource and expedient.

Mrs. Van Velt was concluding her story of a recent tea given for a famous woman novelist.

"*Did* she talk about her work?" she exclaimed. "She never got away from her books, and she drenched us with her successes until our ardor was more than dampened. It was soaked. She gave us to understand that she had Browning beaten on obscurity, Ibsen on subtlety, and Maeterlinck on imagination. And when she left there was a heavy silence for a minute, and then Alec Carter said: 'Now let's talk nursery rhymes for a while. We might begin on "Little *bas bleu*, come blow your horn."'"

She made her adieux on the strength of that, collecting her purse, her feather boa and her daughter from different parts of the room, with surprising promptitude.

It was her practice to save her best rocket for the last, and disappear in the glory of its swish.

Bobbins accompanied the Van Velts to their carriage, and, to misquote long-suffering Omar, once departed, he returned no more.

Carrington turned to Hastings the moment they were out of the door.

"You'll excuse me if I read dad's letter, won't you? My time is getting so short," he said, apologetically; and went over to one of the long windows to get the benefit of its light.

Elenore turned to Hastings with the question that had been hovering on her lips for the last half-hour.

"Tell me why you are so serious," she said. "Has anything gone wrong? It doesn't mean that you are not coming to Brittany to see the Waldens and – me – this summer, does it?"

"It means a great deal more than that," said Hastings, soberly. "Yesterday I thought I was on my way to being a rising architect. To-day I am simply cast into outer darkness. The shears of fate have clipped this piece of my life short, and I can't see what the next is going to be like."

"Tell me," said Elenore, quietly.

"It's grotesquely simple," said Hastings, and there was an involuntary tinge of bitterness in the tone he tried to keep even. "My uncle, who has given me my start in life – the only relative I have – has written me to come back to New York at once. I'm to give up being an architect. When it's the only thing I am fitted for! He has something else for me. He doesn't explain what. He does vouchsafe the information that the place is quite impossible, but, he says, what are a few years out of a young man's life?" His voice was a trifle unsteady. Years seemed eternity to him just then.

"I must go, of course, unquestioningly," he went on, holding himself in check. "Considering that I owe him everything, it's a military command. And I have no right to say anything but good-by to – to any woman. I'm out of things, that's all."

So much, at least, he vowed he would tell her; but he was

determined that he would not be so weak as to ask her to wait for him.

The years of his uncle's bounty fettered him hopelessly. When he knew where he stood, when he had something definite to offer her, then – but not till then. But it was bitter. He had supposed, of course, that he would go back in the autumn, open an office, be self-supporting, and then —

It was a few seconds before Elenore spoke. When she did her voice was cheerful and friendly.

"There is always something interesting in the most impossible places," she said. "It may be rather fun. And we shall expect you to make it as picturesque as possible in your letters, if we tell you all the gossip here in exchange."

He said to himself that she understood, at least. He thanked Heaven for that, as youth is prone to thank Heaven when Heaven lives up to its expectations. And if the place was not so very impossible —*if*– and *perhaps*—

So hope began to whisper. And then because If and Perhaps were all he could take with him, because she was so winsome and dear and so desirably human, because she was so daintily proud, and because the things he was not to tell her refused to be held back, he caught her hands in his, whispered: "God bless you! I shall write you everything – that I can," and, wrapping his New England conscience round him, went without a backward glance.

Elenore stood quite still for a moment. The shadows were beginning to thicken in the long room, and she felt a certain

restfulness in the half-light.

Then she turned resolutely toward her brother. Something in the dejection of his poise quickened her instantly.

"Ned! What is it?" she demanded.

"It's the deluge – without an ark," said Carrington, without stirring.

"Well?" said Elenore, tersely.

"I'm not going east with Velantour. I'm going home," he said, mechanically.

"Not dad?" she said, breathlessly.

"No." He answered the unfinished question. "But he's broken his leg, poor old dad! And other things are wrong, and he wants me."

"And me?" she questioned, quickly. "Doesn't he want me?"

"No," said Carrington, impatiently. "He wants his son, he says, and he shall have me. And he shan't know I ever whimpered about coming. I'm not cad enough for that. But going east with Velantour *is* the chance of a lifetime, and it takes a minute or two to get heroic about giving it up, that's all. All except that it's bitter to think how little use I shall be to him when I get there, for it's partly business, and I haven't a particle of business ability. That will be *his* disappointment, which is bitterer still."

"Do you mean to say that he doesn't want me?" Elenore demanded. "Where is the letter?"

Carrington held it out to her without a word.

> Dear Ned (it read), I'm sorry to call you home, but I

> must. I'm laid up with a broken leg – compound fracture. Don't be alarmed. I'm in no danger of dying. But there are business complications I want to talk over with you – things it's only fair to you to let you help decide. It may be only for a few weeks. Then you can go back. Let Elenore stay in Paris. It's all man's work to be done here. Just responsibilities to be met.
>
> *Your father,*
>
> *John Carrington.*

Ned Carrington was turning over the pages of the morning *Herald*.

"I can catch the train for London in an hour, and sail from Liverpool tomorrow, or – no, here it is – I can leave here in the morning and get a boat at Boulogne. That will be better," he planned.

"And Velantour?" Elenore questioned.

He threw out his hands despairingly.

"I'll drive to the station and tell him," he said. "Then I'll come back and unpack – and pack."

"Why can't I go to dad instead of you?" Elenore demanded.

"Because it's man's work to be done," said Carrington, impatiently. "Don't argue it. I wish I had your brains for it, though. But it's me that dad wants, and what he wants he shall have."

"Two people are going to America who don't want to go in the least. But they are men, and so, presumably, useful," she said, spiritedly. "And the one person who would really like to go can't;

because she is a woman, and so, presumably, useless." She flung her head backward a bit impatiently as she looked at her twin. He was fumbling among the papers on his desk; and the long mirror above it showed his face flushed and perturbed and boyish. Then she caught sight of her own in the glass, and started.

"There isn't a pen here," Ned said, irritably. "I must send dad a cable."

"There's one in my room," she said, and her tone was full of energy and spirit. "Get it, while I tell Berthe to run for a cab, and you can take the message to the office on your way to tell Velantour."

Her hand was on the bell as he disappeared. She had snatched up paper and pencil the next second, and was dashing off a note.

"Berthe," she said, as the little maid hurried in, "you are to go for a cab, and see that it gets here in just fifteen minutes precisely; not before, mind. Tell the *cocher* that he shall have five francs *pourboire* if he is exact."

"*Bien*, mademoiselle," said the little maid.

"Post this note to Mrs. Walden, and come back with a second cab in twenty-five minutes, without fail. Either my brother or myself will give you your last instructions for the summer."

"*Bien*, mademoiselle," said the little maid – as she would have said it to any command short of murder.

She sped out, pleasingly stimulated by the silver coin in her palm.

"Has she gone?" demanded Ned, feverishly, as he reappeared

with the pen.

"Yes," said Elenore. "Write your message and read it off to me when you've done it, will you? I want to tuck some things into the bag that's going to America."

She nodded, smilingly, as she sped into his room.

Carrington sat down with a stifled groan. The sweetness had gone out of life. It was duty now. Say what you will, six years' absence loosens ties of blood; and though he was ashamed to confess it himself, it was with a lagging loyalty that he thought of going home.

His whole life had been bent in one direction, and this abrupt break demanded a heroism which he resolved to simulate, at least. But he need not begin yet.

He could make his little moan to himself for this instant when he was alone.

He dipped the pen in the ink.

The first sheet of paper blotted hopelessly. And the second. The fingers that held a brush with unfaltering and delicate touch were clumsily nervous now.

John Carrington, Yellow Dog, Mich, (he got down). Am coming first boat.

"What was the boat?" he demanded of himself, and helplessly turned back to the *Herald* for information.

> *Kaiser Wilhelm* sailing Cherbourg tomorrow.
>
> *Ned.*

Then he dropped his face in his hands.

The written words seemed to make the thing so irrevocable.

He pulled himself together and walked nervously over to the window. Where on earth *was* the cab? It was a comfort to vent irritability on something.

Then he roved over to the trunk he had packed with such forethought.

He laughed a little bitterly.

“Poor old Velantour! He will be disappointed, too,” he whispered. “But of the two old men who love me, one has to go to the wall. And it shan’t be dad.”

He tramped up and down restlessly until he heard the sound of wheels.

Then he called to Elenore.

“I am going now.”

“Not in this cab, you are not,” her voice answered him. “This is mine. Yours will be here in ten minutes, and you will have lots of time then.”

“What?” he called, halfway to the door, and not believing his ears.

The door swung open, and in it he saw – himself.

Clad in loosely hanging dull gray velveteens, with a soft cravat the color of pigeon blood. Over his arm a long crimson-lined cape hung, half-concealing a suit case. The face, which was his, laughed at him triumphantly, and shook its dark hair, worn a trifle long, back from the forehead.

In the disencumbered hand a soft felt hat waved him back with

a dash of bravado.

“Tell Berthe what you please when she comes with your cab,” his own voice cried gayly. “I’ve just time to catch the London train. You are for the east, I believe.” Then, as he stood thunderstruck, his double laughed exultantly.

“There’s a letter, with copious details, on your dresser,” the apparition stated, with a lilt of pure joy of escapade. “Considering the shortness of the time, I think I’ve been marvelous in thinking out all possible exigencies.”

And to his gesture of protest, of incredulity: “Don’t argue! You are to live the life you care for, for your three wonderful months, and so shall I. It’s not sacrifice. It’s selfishness. I want to go desperately. And I’ll write you here – volumes. You’ll find them when you get back.”

Then that voice which was his, and was not his, chanted saucily:

> “Rue Boissonade
> Shall have its Claude,
> And l’Amerique
> The new Van Dyck;
> But Carrington
> Shall have his son.”

The doorway was empty. He heard a *cocher* crack his whip, and a cab-horse evidently making record time. Five francs, *mon Dieu, ça vaut la peine*!

Ned Carrington stood bewildered. What should he do? He might follow her – might make a scene – but he was always worsted when Elenore became daintily willful. She was quite capable of carrying it off, too. And it *was* a lark!

A cab came clattering up the little street. The call of the East came to him with an overpowering lure. A wave of joy swept over him that he *could* go, after all. He felt a fury of impatience to be off. He grudged the time to give Berthe her instructions, to snatch Elenore's letter from the dresser, to catch up his hat and coat. The mere thought to do these things should be enough. But Berthe's willing feet were speeding up the stairway. He flung the rug from his more-than-ready trunk, and laughed as he touched the strap caressingly with his fingers.

"I'm going!" he whispered; and the words sung themselves to the rhythm of rapture unalloyed.

"*Et puis, m'sieu?*" said Berthe, breathlessly, from the doorway.

CHAPTER II

The case of the old-fashioned watch snapped together for the fortieth time in John Carrington's restless hands, and he sighed impatiently.

Not since those days of dread loneliness after his wife's death, when he had first sent the children abroad, had time dragged so rackingly.

His leonine, iron-gray head moved irritably among the pillows of the bed where he had been "caged," as he called it, for three interminable weeks.

Mrs. Kipley, tidying up the room with an accentuation of her usual briskness, gave him as indulgent a look as the formation of her rigid cast of countenance would permit.

"Wearin' out your watch case won't hurry up that train none," she observed, as she straightened a china cat on the mantel into an expectant attitude.

It had been her gift the previous Christmas to John Carrington, and her admiration of it extended to the hope that it would pleasingly impress the returning traveler.

"Miss Elenore was fondest of animals, though," she murmured, absently.

John Carrington's eyes twinkled appreciatively. He did not share Mrs. Kipley's admiration for her feline gift.

"Ned will appreciate that cat, though, Mrs. Kipley," he said,

genially. "You know he's been studying *art*;" but with the word a shadow came over his face.

"It's hard on the lad, bringing him back," he said. "Yellow Dog will look pretty crude to him, I expect."

He moved his head restlessly, and the leg in its swinging splint became more exasperatingly painful.

Of course it would be only natural for Ned to have grown away from home ties. It was an unspoken thought against which he had braced himself for all these ten days. If the boy came back half-heartedly, contemptuous of the place, indifferent to the mine, alienated from his father – that was the touch of the thumbscrew.

And yet, he told himself wearily, six years was a long time. The boy was talented, cultured, used to all the refinements of an older civilization. What wonder if – And if he, through love for his son, and carrying out his mother's wishes for his future, had been responsible for the separation which might mean all this?

Ah, well, he was not the first father, nor the last, to think out these same things, and try to see them dispassionately.

"He was real spry about starting," said Mrs. Kipley.

John Carrington's face relaxed.

"Caught the first boat," he said. Then "Is his room ready and comfortable?" he demanded, as he had demanded many times.

"I wouldn't worry about that room none, if I was you," said Mrs. Kipley, serenely.

"Did you remember about the cigars and a decanter of whisky?" he asked.

Mrs. Kipley looked at him in a patient exasperation.

"They's two kinds of cigars, every brand of cigarettes Kipley could lay hands on in Yellow Dog, the biggest decanter full of whisky, the motto 'Love One Another,' that my Sunday-school class worked for me last winter; red-white-and-blue soap in the soap dish, and two pincushions with a French motto worked on each of 'em. Hemmy did 'em in black and white pins. She thought't would make it seem more like Paris to him. One says '*Vive Napoleon*,' and the other says '*Veuve Cliquot*.' Kind of twins, you see."

John Carrington's mouth twitched. Then he frowned slightly. For would the boy understand? If he were not amused – if he were merely contemptuous!

"Hemmy's picking some flowers for the house now," Mrs. Kipley went on, serenely. "And Kipley's took a saddle horse besides the road wagon, so's if Mr. Ned wanted to ride over, he could."

The case of John Carrington's watch came open once more. If the train was on time, and Ned did choose the saddle horse, another ten minutes – But would he? The lad was a bit of a dandy. Carrington had smiled indulgently over some of his tailor's bills. Probably you couldn't coax him on a horse, even in Yellow Dog, unless he was arrayed in all the proper paraphernalia.

But what was that clatter of horse's hoofs – fast and furious – faster and more furious than any Yellow Dog had heard since the day three weeks ago when the Carrington team, terrorized by a

small boy's premature bunch of firecrackers, had run away, and John Carrington, thrown from the wreckage of his light buggy, had been brought home with a badly fractured leg?

Mrs. Kipley looked out of the window.

"Merciful sakes!" she ejaculated, startled.

Not an accident to Ned, John Carrington prayed, with stiff, dry lips and apprehensive eyes.

"Of all things!" Mrs. Kipley murmured; and her tone indicated that she was now past surprise, and merely numbered with the numb.

Some one was running up the veranda steps; the door was flung open, and a tall, dark, slender boy in a marvelous suit of dull gray velveteens stood on the threshold.

A long, crimson-lined cape was flung over his arm. He tossed it from him. And "Dad!" he cried, exultantly, and was across the room, with his arms around his father's neck, and had kissed him on both cheeks.

"French fashion, dad!" he laughed, flushing suddenly.

"Now we'll do it the Anglo-Saxon way;" and he caught both his father's hands in his own and wrung them heartily. "It's great to be home again," he said, buoyantly.

And the joyful light in his eyes was unmistakably genuine.

John Carrington's face softened amazingly. Happiness such as he had not known for six years gripped him. The warm ardor of his son's embrace, the touch of the soft, boyish lips, unnerved him, but he liked it astonishingly. It was so naïf, so unspoiled, so

reassuring against that dread of alienation he had endured, that he felt submerged in the warm, comfortable certitude of his son's affection. He gripped the lad's hands strongly, and surveyed him with a proud, fatherly interest.

The blue eyes that looked frankly into his own were like the lad's mother's, like Althea's; the face that smiled gayly at him was alight with youthful energy, and the mouth, though the lips were a trifle full, had firm and resolute lines.

It was no dawdling dreamer that he saw, but an action-lover.

He nodded satisfiedly.

"You'll do, lad," he said, briefly.

Then he smiled as he caught sight of Mrs. Kipley, standing with the rigidity of an automaton, dust cloth in hand.

"You remember Mrs. Kipley," he said, significantly. The boy wheeled instantly.

"Don't I!" he said, laughingly, and something in his advance galvanized Mrs. Kipley into life again.

"None of your French fashions with me," she said, severely, extending her right hand to him, less in greeting than as a rampart.

He swept a wonderful bow over it. Bent to it as a courtier might have done, and kissed its wrinkled, work-hardened back lightly. Then he straightened up to look her full in the eyes, and laughed his bubbling laugh once more.

"Do you still make those wonderful twisted doughnuts, Mrs. Kipley?" he asked, gayly. "I've bragged about them in Paris till

they're famous."

Mrs. Kipley was scrutinizing the back of her hand minutely, to see if it was still intact. Finding it apparently uninjured, she drew breath and looked the surprising apparition in the face. Her own relaxed to his handsome, dashing youth and to his praise.

"I guess they're about the same," she said, dryly. But John Carrington chuckled to himself. He recognized the subjugation of Mrs. Kipley.

"What will he be with the young women!" he commented, to himself, amusedly.

Then he asked the question that was consuming Mrs. Kipley:

"Ned, are those clothes the *style* in Paris?"

The boy swung himself lightly into the big armchair beside the bed.

"They're the badge of my craft, sir," he said, good-humoredly, settling the soft cravat with deft fingers. "Don't you like them?"

"Oh, *I* like them," said John Carrington. ("Handsome lad!" he was whispering to himself, proudly.) "But I was wondering how they would strike Yellow Dog, that's all."

"There did seem to be some little interest in my arrival," the lad admitted, gleefully.

"Sakes alive! They beat anything I ever see in all my life!" Mrs. Kipley communed with herself.

"And Elenore?" said John Carrington. "How did you leave Elenore?"

The boy stirred slightly in his chair.

"Elenore is well, dad. She wanted to come. I think she was a little disappointed that you didn't want your daughter instead of your son."

John Carrington shook his head.

"Yellow Dog is no place for a young lady, Ned," he said. "It was better for her to stay with her friends. I should have liked to see her, though. She's quite a woman, from her picture. Time for sweethearts, eh? Your Aunt Sarah wrote a good deal about a young Hastings. She seemed to think it might be serious."

The boy flushed annoyedly.

"Aunt Sarah loves to fuss and exaggerate," he said, and there was a slight coolness in his voice. "Maiden aunts are apt to, you know," he went on, more naturally. He smiled his attractive smile once more. Whatever had perturbed him for the instant was past.

Miss Hematite Kipley, *ætat* seventeen, coming into the room with a fragrant bowl of syringa blossoms, compared it favorably with any picture her beloved romancers had been able to conjure up.

From the moment when she had seen the picturesque figure dismount and make a rapid way into the house, she had been perishing to make this entrance, but she had restrained herself in accordance with her ideas of propriety and gentility. Miss Kipley strove to be "elegant," aided by certain open columns in respected periodicals, after which she patterned her conduct and her clothes.

The meeting between father and son she characterized as

“a sacred moment,” and she regretted her mother’s continued intrusion upon it with the resigned exasperation of one who had often and fruitlessly pointed out to a primitive parent the proper forms of procedure.

Miss Kipley was rather pretty in a wholesome, buxom, blond way, and the “open columns” had stimulated her to a crisp freshness of attire, and partially reconciled her to the maternal regulations of its enforced simplicity.

She came into the room with her eyelids so demurely lowered that she might have been taken for a sleepwalker.

“Good-morning, Hemmy,” said John Carrington, with an outward courtesy which marked an inward amusement. In spite of her physical bulk, Miss Hematite was mentally transparent.

“Why, *Hemmy*!” said young Carrington, gayly, “how awfully pretty you have grown!”

Miss Kipley felt an inward commotion which threatened suffocation. Her fingers tightened on the blue bowl in a way which tested its enduring qualities. Mrs. Kipley’s maternal eye became vigilant.

There was a suggestion of a wrinkle on John Carrington’s brow. He hoped the boy would remember that this was not Paris; that the Kipleys represented the survival of a good many New England traits.

But neither parent could find anything to criticise in the way the lad relieved the blushing Hemmy of the bowl, shook her hand in a cordial, unaffected way, and turned to set the white

blossoms on the square ledge of the open window, where the breeze converted them into a spicy censer.

As for Hematite, though visibly she stood in a deep pink embarrassment, in fancy she trod the sunny slopes of romance. This was the way things happened in the books over which she pored, palpitant. She sought vainly for some appropriate expression of welcome.

"I guess Hemmy and me will let you have a chance to get acquainted. I can finish dusting by and by," said Mrs. Kipley, tersely. "Your old room's all ready for you, Mr. Ned. Come, Hemmy."

That young person followed her mother mechanically from the room.

"Cat got your tongue?" inquired Mrs. Kipley, severely, in the hall. "For all you are forever reading about the proper way to do things, you can't even say 'Glad to see you back.'"

Miss Kipley looked down from the happy heights to which she had mentally withdrawn herself, to the prosaic parent treading the valley of plain realities.

"There are moments beyond words," she vouchsafed. Then she sped down the garden path to the now sacred syringa.

Mrs. Kipley watched her from the doorway with an anxious air.

"I hope she ain't caught anything," she murmured. "That was a terrible fool remark. I don't know what there is around just now for her *to* catch."

But it is characteristic of the disorder which Miss Hematite had so recently acquired that no one save the person afflicted knows it's around till the case has taken.

* * * * *

The lad had slipped his fingers in his father's, and they sat a little while in silence. So Althea and John Carrington had often sat, in that silent communion which is the bond of the finest fellowship.

Mr. Abner Kipley, entering suddenly, with Ned's suit case in hand and a desire to expatiate on recent events oozing from every pore, viewed this singular proceeding as one further extraordinary manifestation emanating from the same remarkable cause.

"Seems you *can* teach an old dog new tricks," he communed with himself. "Probably by to-morrow I'll be holding hands myself." He chuckled grimly to himself over the impossible thought. But the glance he gave the lad from under his shaggy eyebrows was unwillingly admiring.

Yet Mr. Kipley prided himself on his unerring attitude of judicial criticism.

The boy swung round in his chair to greet him smilingly.

"You walked over, Mr. Kipley, I assume," he said, mischievously.

"I didn't try to kill a horse 'n' get my neck broke," responded

Mr. Kipley, defensively.

"You picked up thet baby nice, though," he added, with the air of a man willing to be just.

John Carrington looked at him with an air of sudden inquiry.

"It *was* lucky," said the lad, languidly; and he lounged over to the open window, as though the subject was finished.

"I'm goin' to," said Mr. Kipley, impatiently, to the growing insistence of John Carrington's look.

He objected to being hurried in the narration of a story which he rejoiced was his to tell.

"When he," he began, jerking his head in the lad's direction, "'lected to ride the Colonel home, he threw that red-backed garmint" – no mere black-and-white could reproduce the patronage of Mr. Kipley's tone – "'cross the saddle in front of him. 'N' the Colonel, not being used to the fashions in Paris, bolted. They went up the road's though they was goin' to glory, 'n' didn't have but one chance to ketch the limited. 'N' *I* threw his grip in the wagon 'n' started after 'em.

"It was good ridin'," said Mr. Kipley, approvingly, "'n' everybody thet could turned out to see it. It was interestin' and free.

"Thet curve by Trevanion's cottage is a mean place," Mr. Kipley continued, reflectively. "I've run the team into several things there myself, includin' a dog fight, which c'ncluded about the time we run over the principal fighter's tail." He switched himself back on the main track. "Thet baby of Trevanion's was

tryin' to ketch a hen just as the exhibition come along."

"Well?" said John Carrington, and his voice whistled like a pistol shot.

"Down with his arm, 'n' half out of the saddle – grab – 'n' yank up – 'n' 'bout face – hand the baby to a long-legged girl – 'n' off he goes, leaving me to destroy my c'nstitution, breathin' dust all the way home. Thet's your son's idea of gettin' here," he concluded, dryly.

John Carrington drew a breath of relief.

"If anything had happened to that baby, we should have had the devil's own time," he said. "Trevanion has been sullen ugly ever since his wife died – took his trouble that way – and the baby is the only thing in the world he cares for. If – well, we might have lost the best shift boss in the country."

Young Carrington stood very still, looking out of the window. If the incident had shaken him a bit, there was at least no outward sign of it.

Mr. Kipley drew nearer to the bed.

"There's good stuff in him," he said, semi-confidentially, as though recent residence in a foreign land unfitted one to hear undertone, "'n' grit. But, for the sake of Moses, get those clo's offen him."

Upon which advice, he retired hastily from the room.

John Carrington looked across the room at his son with a smile that was at once quizzical and affectionate.

"Yellow Dog finds you a trifle too picturesque, boy," he said,

and his tone suggested that he at any rate was satisfied. "How about you? Pretty big trial to come back?"

"I should have come, whether you sent for me or not, when I knew you were hurt," said the boy, and there was a defiant little ring in his voice. "Where should I be, or want to be, but at home and with you?"

John Carrington's heart beat proudly. This was the kind of son to have. He said "home" as though he meant it. He was loyal. Now he, John Carrington, had an heir to show to some people —

"I needed you," he said, quietly. "Not on account of this confounded leg; though it's been hard to be shut up for the first time in my life – hung up to mend, like a china plate. But it made me think I was just mortal, after all. And of your future and Elenore's. And it's only fair to you to let you decide how you'd rather have things."

The look the boy gave him now was a quiet, concentrated attention.

"Without going into details about our mine, that no one but a mining man could understand," Carrington went on, with a restful security engendered by that look, "I want to tell you the straight facts. It's characteristic of this region that in sinking every now and then you strike a big hole filled with water – a vug, they call it. Now, we can take care of what we strike ourselves, but the Tray-Spot, which is newer and shallower, is letting us take care of theirs. Instead of pumping it up, they let the water seep through to the Star, and *we* lift it. It cuts off profits, and

makes our mine dangerous. The two mines ought to be under the same management, anyway. Expenses could be cut almost in two. So I wrote the owner of the Tray-Spot – an Easterner – never comes out here – to ask him what he'd sell for. Richards, the superintendent, is a good deal of a scoundrel, and responsible for all the trouble. Of course mining is just a business proposition to those Easterners. They haven't fought things out here in the early days, as some of us have. And this man had never even been on the ground. Bought the mine from Riley when he went to smash. And he's childless. No second generation to take it up.

"That's practically what I wrote him," Carrington went on, doggedly, "and why it should have struck him just wrong, and turned him pig-head and ugly is beyond me. But he wrote back that if he had never been here, he wasn't too old to come now. And that if he didn't have a son, he had a nephew, who was a first-class business man and smart as a steel trap, whom he proposed to bring out here, and to keep on the ground. And that, as he understood from his superintendent that the one son *I* had was spending his time in Paris studying art, the mines would be better off with his heir than mine. And would I put a selling price on the Star? The Star, that I've put my lifeblood into! And that letter" – there was the rage of a wounded lion now – "was the first thing they read me after I came out from the ether to find myself tied up like – like this – " he finished, at a loss for any adequate comparison.

"We've got to fight or to sell," he finished, "and if anything

happened to me, what would you children know about disposing of it? That's what I've thought as I've lain here. Hadn't I better leave things safe for you, if I do have to kill time for a few years myself?"

His eyes looked worn. How many times he had gone over it! How many times affection for his children had warred against his pride in the mine he had discovered, developed, managed, owned! It all seemed a part of long, restless nights, of narcotics and anodynes that brought nightmares as often as oblivion; nights in which the young mine doctor seemed mixed up with the obstinate Easterner who owned the Tray-Spot, and the pain throbs and the pumping apparatus at the mine seemed to have some curious relationship.

"Sell! Never!" the fresh young voice flung back instantly, and the timbre of it was a battle-cry. "We'll fight, dad – for our rights first, and then – then we'll buy!"

He stood erect, every curve of fine youthfulness buoyant with victories to come, his head flung a trifle back and his mouth resolute.

Fatherly pride, exultation, triumph, swung John Carrington up on his elbow from his pillows in a certain fierce joy, and something glistened on his cheek – something that pain and fatigue and loneliness had never crystaled there.

"I have a son to stand by me," he said, and it was the dignity of a king to the crown prince.

The leonine old head was lifted proudly, and the hand that he

stretched out might have held a scepter.

Then reaction of the strain came swiftly, and the lad leaped to him, as he dropped back limp and white against the pillows, with a sudden film drawn over the eyes so lately keen of sight, and the rushing of many waters in the ears that had heard so happily.

CHAPTER III

Yellow Dog was having the time of its life.

It was, to use a local idiom, passing out a new line of talk every day.

What this sudden access of interest meant to an isolated small town which existed solely on account of its two mines one would have to live in Yellow Dog to understand.

The Tray-Spot and the Star were at opposite ends of the town's main street, each a local fetish in its way to the miners.

Underfoot everywhere the soft red hematite ore stained everything that it touched.

Beyond, hills after hills covered with scraggy pine. Half a mile to the south was the railway station, and a spur ran to both mines.

Since the loungers around that station had witnessed the home-coming of young Carrington, conversation had flourished in dialects Cornish and Irish and Swedish and "Dago," as well as that tongue to which its users alluded proudly as "United States."

The first comment of all this polyglot assemblage had inclined toward the critical, with emphasis which ran the gamut from the humorous to the snarl, laid on what Mr. Kipley had characterized as "those dum clothes."

Trevanion, shift boss, coming to the surface that first night, to learn of the child's peril, heard it in silence and with smoldering eyes; heard it sullenly as he held the child in his arms, and with

a surly nod went back to his cottage.

And the long-legged girl who told him resented his silence as a lack of interest not only in the event, but in her narrative.

It was not often that anything so exciting happened. Events were usually underground casualties in Yellow Dog. "'E could 'a' said 'e was glad the child wasna killed," she complained to her father.

"'E'd na say what you maun know, onyway," she got for comfort; for the men admired Trevanion, and trusted him blindly.

They comprehended, too, the way he had taken his trouble, and they left him to himself, since he wished it. It was his way; just as it was his way to read, to study, to get some beginnings of the patiently dug-out education of a dully persistent man.

If he had lost his Cornish accent, save in excitement or in his orders to them, he had not lost his Cornish patience, nor that curious Cornish affinity between man and mine.

What they did not understand was the measure of his fierce love for his child; the child that was to have a chance. This was the mainspring of his life.

Trevanion was seated on his doorstep, with the child on his knee, when young Carrington rode down the street once more, leisurely this time; looking at everything with interested eyes that recognized the old and familiar, and saw the new and changed, with a buoyant alertness which seemed to match the careless grace of the way he sat his horse.

The boy Trevanion had used to see at play had grown up to this lordliness, had he? To ride recklessly, careless of whom he ran down, trusting to luck to snatch children from under his horse's feet. Trevanion hated him.

He saw him rein in the Colonel to ask some question of a woman who was leaning her elbows interestedly on her gatepost. Then young Carrington came on to stop opposite him.

"You're just the man I'm looking for, Trevanion," he said, and his tone was clear and crisp.

Trevanion got on his feet and looked at him loweringly. The child smiled at him.

"One of these days, Trevanion, I'm going to let you give me a few lessons in practical mining," he said, pleasantly. "I may decide to become a mining man, after all. But that will have to go for the present, and you may be thankful for it. I'm inclined to think you'd find it harder work than being shift boss."

Trevanion looked at him unsmilingly.

"However," young Carrington went on, "they tell me you've never failed in anything you've tried yet, and I'm sure you wouldn't begin with me. I'm no record-breaker," he laughed, and there was something so pleasant in its sound that Trevanion was furious to find that he liked it.

"No, soberly, Trevanion," he said, and his voice dropped to a seriousness that was sweeter toned than even his laughter, "father isn't quite so well to-day. We've got to keep him pretty quiet for a few days, free from worry as much as possible; but we don't want

the men to know that. When he is up again we'll get after those Tray-Spot people and put a stop to those free baths they've been good enough to give us. But we've got to pull him up carefully for a while. It'll mean extra work and responsibility for you."

Then a new note came in the musical voice.

"It means everything to the mine just now, Trevanion, that you are just where you are, a man to be trusted."

The words were spoken with a grace which made them seem like a decoration conferred. The eyes that Trevanion raised met deep blue eyes with a mysterious something in them that conquered him. Fealty was suddenly strong in him, loyalty to the lad through thick and thin. Every fiber of his big burliness thrilled with a proud protectiveness. The child on his arm was holding out his arms to young Carrington. Three minutes before, his father would have resented it. Now he saw the firm, sure, tender grasp with which Carrington took him up before him on the saddle; he exulted in the child's laugh as the Colonel walked off daintily, then took a bit of a canter down the street, and finally young Carrington brought a reluctant two-year-old back to the fatherly arms.

It was then that he said what he had had in his mind since morning – said it with a tenderness that rang perfectly true:

"All I was thinking of this morning, Trevanion, was to get to my father as soon as possible. But if my impatience had resulted in accident I should never have gotten over it."

And Dick Trevanion, holding the little, warm, happy figure

close in his great arms, said what half an hour ago he had never thought to say:

"I believe you, Mr. Ned."

* * * * *

"Quiet!" said Mr. Kipley, to young Carrington's comment, as he sat on the veranda steps that evening after dinner, looking with growing approval at that young gentleman as he lounged in a big wicker chair. "Well, of course, it tain't the Boo-lee-vards" – for Mr. Kipley had consulted the encyclopedia painstakingly in order to converse comfortably with the returning traveler. "It tain't the Boo-lee-vards," he repeated, with an air of erudition, "but there *are* times when Yellow Dog can have as big a pack of firecrackers tied to its tail as you'd see anywhere."

"Yes?" said the boy, and it was a yes that coaxed. He was enjoying Mr. Kipley hugely.

"Yes," said Kipley, placidly. "Day after pay-day occasionally, or when the lumber-jacks come down from Raegan camp at Christmas time to get their money and blow it in before New Year's." Then he chuckled reminiscently.

"They're queer cusses," he said. "One of 'em came in last Christmas that was a walkin' woolen store, 'n' when he tried to sell mittens and stockin's by the hundred pair, they just naturally locked him up. But he come by 'em honest, after all. You know," he explained, kindly, "these lumber-jacks can't get any money

while they are in the woods, but they can trade at the company's store there, 'n' have it checked against their time. 'N' they *will* play poker. So they used mittens 'n' stockings for chips. 'N' this fellow had got most of 'em. He told *me*," said Mr. Kipley, with intense enjoyment, "that he won eleven hundred pair of mittens on three aces. The other fellow had kings. 'N' he bluffed forty pair of stockings outen a greenhorn on ace high.

"You play poker?" he inquired, for young Carrington's laugh had been deliciously prompt.

The boy nodded.

"Enough to appreciate a good poker story, anyway," he said. "That's a corker."

Mr. Kipley wiped his mouth with his handkerchief to hide a pleased smile.

"D'you know," he said, "Mis' Kipley can't see a thing in that story?" His tone suggested a puzzled commiseration.

"Oh, well," the boy said, gayly, "it's hardly a woman's story, you know." And he showed his white teeth in so gleeful a smile that it warmed Mr. Kipley's heart.

It resulted in his making some inquiries on a subject that had roused his interest earlier in the day.

"Paris is gettin' kind of run down, ain't it?" he asked, cautiously.

"Why, no," said the boy; "it's getting built up. What made you think so?"

"They's a picture in the encyclopedia," said Mr. Kipley, "that I

come acrost to-day. What a lot a person would know who'd read 'em all through!" he commented. "It was a cathedral – Catholic, I s'pose, 'n' they're usually willin' to give liberal to keep up their buildin's, too. It was pretty well timbered up the back, 's though they was expecting a cave-*out*."

Young Carrington recognized the description with an inward joy.

"That's one of the most famous churches of Paris," he said, soberly. "Notre Dame. And it was built that way on purpose."

"Do they *believe* that?" Mr. Kipley inquired.

"Yes," said young Carrington.

"Who give it its name?" Kipley demanded.

"I really couldn't say," the boy laughed.

"It would be interestin' to know," reflected Mr. Kipley. "Of course he wa'n't no kind of an architect, or he wouldn't have had to brace his walls like that; but whether he had the gall to name it because he didn't care a damn, or they named it because it wasn't worth a damn – "

"Your pa's waked up and wanted to know where you was," said Mrs. Kipley, appearing in the door, just as young Carrington was trying to decide whether to enlighten an ignorance which was such bliss to the listener.

"Thank you," he said, and sped into the house at once.

Mr. Kipley turned a philosopher's eye upon the wife of his bosom.

"He's got good principles, M'r'," he said, with conviction; "'n'

a very entertainin' way of puttin' things. He's good company."

"What was he talkin' about?" asked Mrs. Kipley, interestedly.

Mr. Kipley's cough was extremely apologetic.

"Come to think of it, I guess I did most of the talkin'," he said, with some embarrassment.

"I should say 't was likely," said Mrs. Kipley, dryly; and she disappeared in the house. She reappeared for a parting shot. "I s'pose his principles was good because he agreed with you," she observed, sarcastically. Mr. Kipley gazed at the evening star confidentially.

"Beats all about women!" he mused. "They act's if all the principles was theirs, 'n' kind of exasperated if you've got any. 'N' more if you ain't," he murmured.

He had refilled his pipe, and was looking placidly across the lights of the town to the hills beyond.

Hemmy came up the walk with the light of a new and lovely romantic suggestion in her eyes.

She sat down beside her father and slipped a warm, plump hand in his.

"Pa," she said, sweetly, "am I really your child and ma's?"

Mr. Kipley recoiled sharply.

"Well, of all things!" he ejaculated.

Miss Hematite Kipley experienced a pang of disappointment.

She had just been reading a "perfectly lovely romance," where an adopted child turned out to be the daughter of a duke. While she did not insist on a dukedom, she had had an ecstatic feeling

that she might be a millionairess.

"You never brought me home in your arms and told ma that a beautiful young gypsy girl – " she began, falteringly.

"No," said Mr. Kipley, with precision; "I never did, and that's the reason I'm alive to-day. If I'd come home with a baby, talking about beautiful young gypsies, there'd have been a funeral, and no mourners. An 't would have served me right, too."

Then he softened parentally toward this young woman of his own flesh and blood.

"It don't seem so very long ago, Hemmy, since you was born. Born in the regular, genu-wine way. Why, we named you Hematite because they struck the big find of ore in the mine that same morning. It was my idea, too, for your aunt, who lived in the copper country, had just named her little girl Amygdoloid – Amy, for short – and she was plum offensive about having the most elegant name out. 'What's the matter with Hematite?' says I!"

Miss Hematite kissed her undoubted parent forgivingly, and rose from the ashes of her air castle like an undiscouraged young phœnix.

Already she had another in process of construction, and she pillowed her cheek against the battered volume containing the encounter between Cophetua and the beggar maid, though *he* was not a king, and *she* was not pauperized. "I think, perhaps, it's even *sweeter*," she whispered, as she fell asleep.

* * * * *

Down in the village of Yellow Dog, the club which the Star had built for its miners was ablaze not only with lights, but with excitement.

There was a circle of miners around the room.

In the center of the floor lay a man who had been shaken into a little heap of clothes; a heap that stirred with caution even in catching breath, lest more punishment should follow.

Over it towered Dick Trevanion's sturdy figure, made brawnier still by rage.

"Any more remarks about Mr. Ned and his clothes?" he demanded, sweeping that quiet group with furious eyes.

There was not a breath from them. Trevanion's reputation as an athlete and a boxer was a matter of local pride.

He walked across the room to the door and flung it open.

Then he turned his flushed face to them.

"You can all have as much and more, if you like," he said. "I stand for him."

He struck the side of the door a blow with his closed fist, a blow that seemed to shake the entire side of the room. "Remember that when your tongues start," he emphasized, and was gone in the darkness.

There was no danger that they would forget.

* * * * *

In a quiet bedroom, the lad whom he had championed had fallen asleep in a big chair beside his father's bed.

He had sat there till John Carrington had slept, and then, too drowsy to move, had slept himself – that youthful sleep of healthy exhaustion.

John Carrington, waking in the night, looked at the boy as he rested his head in the corner of the high-backed chair. The long, dark lashes lay lightly on cheeks rounded daintily enough for a girl, but the lines of the firm young chin had a quiet decision even now.

Far into the night John Carrington lay with open eyes resting on his son, and in the depths of those eyes was content immeasurable.

* * * * *

The days stretched into weeks, weeks to months. It was September now.

John Carrington was almost convalescent.

He could walk now with a crutch from his bedroom to the veranda couch. The bone had knit, but the flesh was slow to heal.

And what a comfort his son had been to him through those

months!

Sunny. Tireless. Capable. Ready to read if he wanted to be read to; to write letters when they had to be written; to amuse him with tales of his life and Elenore's in Paris, when the pain was bad and time dragged.

And outside there was not a miner who did not speak boastingly of Mr. Ned. Even Yellow Dog, noncommittal Yellow Dog, sang his praises.

Only the miners at the Tray-Spot sneered. Only their wives flung a contemptuous laugh when young Carrington and the Colonel sped by out on long rides through the country.

These rides, in whose solitude one might think one's own mind freely; and certain letters that went overseas addressed to one E. Carrington, to be held in Paris till called for, were the only relaxations in which young Carrington permitted himself an entire honesty of thought.

One morning Mr. Kipley came home jubilant.

"Strangers in town," he announced. "Owner of the Tray-Spot, I guess, and a young fellow. Saw them driving with Richards."

John Carrington rapped his crutch sharply against a chair.

"Now there's going to be something doing," he said, defiantly; and all the repressed activity of months rang in the words.

Young Carrington waved a hand airily in the direction of the other mine.

"The Tray-Spot shall cease from troubling," he said, gayly, "and we'll just gather you gently in."

If anything stirred the stillness, it was the mocking laughter of the goddess of fate.

CHAPTER IV

The brownstone house on Madison Avenue suggested the solid and respectable affluence of its owner, Mr. Livingstone Wade, in that quieter old New York way which preceded Millionaire's Row, and which, on account of that precedence, Mr. Livingstone Wade considered immeasurably superior.

Nor was this suggestion a mere exterior effect.

The somber elegance of its interior furnishings showed in every detail that Mr. Wade's conservatism to earlier ideals was unfaltering.

The ormolu clock on the drawing-room mantel was flanked by a pair of tall vases, Sèvres, as a matter of course, standing equidistant with the precision of sentinels.

His pictures included a Landseer, a Meissonier, a Bouguereau, and some excellent copies of Raphael. He was fond of calling your attention to the fact that all of these gentlemen could draw, and that their figures "stood out."

The books in his library showed a strong tendency to run in sets, with modern fiction conspicuously absent. And as for his dinner services, they were complete, and he considered odd sets of plates as a fad which had its origin in economy or inefficient housekeeping.

He rated *l'art nouveau* with *nouveaux riches*, considered impressionism as a cloak for defective draughtsmanship,

declined to admit anything made as far west as Rookwood to the companionship of the Capodamonte and Meissen in his cabinets, and would have banished to his stables the most priceless Indian basket ever made.

West of New York he considered that the wilderness howled, impelled to such mournful vocalization by a dawning sense of its own abnormal crudities.

In business, however, Mr. Wade consented to compromise with the spirit of the times. No out-of-date methods characterized the bank of which he was president, nor, on the other hand, did any up-to-date crook contrive to outwit the keen-eyed, white-haired, thin-lipped old gentleman, who held himself as erect ethically as he did physically.

His wife, born a Van Dorn, christened in Grace Church and married in the same, had died at fifty-seven, childless – a course of conduct which Mr. Wade, while he preserved a high silence, felt as deeply as a European monarch might have done. It was not a mere personal question, but the continuation of the Wade line would have been for the good of the country at large.

As for his only nephew, he had done his duty by him. Not extravagantly, to spoil the young man, or delude him with unfounded hopes of heirship; but by a college course, Columbia *bien entendu*! and when he determined to become an architect, the Beaux Arts was naturally the only correct place.

When he read John Carrington's letter, with its phrase "since you have no direct heir," Mr. Livingstone Wade

experienced a very primitive bitterness, which resolved itself into a determination to make his nephew heir to that particular piece of property at least; to recall him from Paris, and to insist upon his going out to Michigan and becoming thoroughly conversant with the mine as soon as possible.

Having begun the accomplishment of this design, Mr. Livingstone Wade began to feel a consciousness of benevolence in acting so generously toward the young man, which resulted, very naturally, in his regarding his nephew with more affection than even Mr. Wade himself would have thought possible.

As they sat together in the well-ordered library, Mr. Wade said to himself that he had done well.

"When the mine came to us with that tangle of collateral from the Riley failure, I found that it was paying dividends regularly; and Richards, the manager, wrote me that they could be doubled easily if he was allowed a free hand to cut down expenses and exercise his own judgment. He has done it, too, and the mine is a splendid property. And it is yours, my boy, when you have made yourself thoroughly conversant with it." Mr. Wade's tone was complacently benevolent.

"Do you mean that you want me to take a course in mining engineering?" said Hastings, and his voice was carefully expressionless.

"No," said his uncle; "I want you to go out to the mine itself, put yourself in Richards' hands, and get a good working knowledge of the proposition, so that Richards will know you are

master. He wouldn't try any tricks with me, because it is pretty well known that men who have tried have repented it; but with a young fellow like you, it's different, of course. I shall not expect you to spend all your time there. Perhaps for a year or so you'd better stay on the ground. Then come East, open your architect's office, and go West once a year on a tour of inspection."

Hastings' face cleared.

"It is more than good of you, sir. I'll try to deserve it," he said, frankly.

"There is only one condition," Mr. Wade went on, "and your word is sufficient for that. You are not to sell the mine without my consent. The very fact that John Carrington is so anxious to get hold of it is one of the best points in its favor."

"Carrington?" said Hastings, mechanically, wondering if the name so constantly in his thoughts had begun to repeat itself audibly.

"He is a – a boor – who owns the adjoining mine," Mr. Wade classified him. "He offered to buy the Tray-Spot. Of course I declined. And he had the insolence to charge Richards with flooding his mine with water from ours, instead of pumping it to the surface. Threatened us with a lawsuit if we didn't put in additional pumps. He said his men were not educated to the luxury of free baths as yet, and that swimming was an unpopular sport on the eleventh level."

"But if it was true?" said Hastings.

"Of course it wasn't," said Mr. Wade, testily. "I wrote

Richards, and he said Carrington was just trying to get hold of the mine, and wouldn't stop at anything to do it, because his, the Star, is down so deep it is about worked out. Do you know," Mr. Wade went on, "this John Carrington had the audacity to say that, since I'd never been West, he didn't suppose I'd care to begin such trips *at my age*, and that, as I had no son, he should think a reasonable proposition to sell ought to interest me."

Mr. Wade intended to suggest only John Carrington's breach of good manners, but in spite of himself his voice showed where the taunt stung. And Hastings had a sudden comprehension of his uncle's sudden benevolence, which in its very humanness quickened him from his heavy sense of indebtedness for benefits received, into that warmer loyalty of the ties of blood, into that sense of inter-dependence which this was the first emergency to rouse.

He began to feel ashamed of the sense of injury he had had in the abrupt summons to quit Paris, to put away his chosen profession for a time. He began to feel ashamed of the lagging gratitude with which he had received a gift which would make him a rich man; of that involuntary wish that his uncle's generosity had taken another form.

A realization of the loneliness of age bound him to the older man with bonds of sentiment stronger far, with warmhearted, generous youth, than all those the government has seen fit to issue.

But Carrington? Though there might be dozens of Carringtons

who owned mines in the West.

"We'll take Holliday's car – he's offered it to me time and again – and go out there. We can live on the car the few days I am here, and you're young and can manage to make yourself comfortable afterward. I shall be proud to introduce you as my nephew, Laurence." Mr. Wade was tasting victory in prospect, and the taste was palatable. "Carrington has only one son, and he's daubing canvas in Paris."

Then this was Elenore's father. Hastings foresaw complications to come.

"Ned Carrington and his sister were two of my best friends in Paris, sir," he said, firmly. "I knew their father was a mine owner somewhere in the West."

"Has this young Carrington any business ability?" demanded Mr. Wade. His tone was quick and keen. He was getting at an important factor.

Hastings smiled in spite of himself.

"Not a scrap," he said, amusedly, "but he's a genius. He'll be a new 'old master' one of these days."

Mr. Wade's countenance relaxed amiably.

"These erratic young fellows are always *going* to do wonders," he said, indulgently. "For all the help he'll be to his father, he might as well be a girl. One of these days you will be buying out John Carrington on your own terms."

Nor did he dream that in the silence that followed, as he sat comfortably certain of the discomfiture of the man who had

flung at him the two-edged taunt of age and childlessness, his nephew was saying to himself that surely Elenore's father must be a reasonable man, that there must be some rational basis on which he and John Carrington could meet as friends. More, he saw himself with an assured income. *Then* could he not, by virtue of that future friendship, gain a remarkably valuable ally in that siege of the marvelous citadel – invulnerable, indeed, save to a certain small sportsman who bends his bow to no man's dictation, and yet for love of valor, or from mere caprice, ranges himself at the unlikeliest moment with the besieging force, and wins with a single well-sped shaft?

Whatever emotions the arrival of Mr. Wade and his nephew at Yellow Dog excited in Richards, his outward attitude was one of bluff heartiness.

"You can't stay on your car, though, Mr. Wade," he said, decisively, looking over its comfortable appointments with an appraising eye. "The miners at the Star are too lawless. You'll have to put up with the hotel." ("About twenty-four hours of the Raegan House will start them for New York," he thought, with grim humor.)

"Do you mean to tell me that they would dare attack a private car?" Mr. Wade demanded, aghast.

Richards shrugged his shoulders.

"There isn't much they wouldn't dare," he said, coolly, wondering how thick it would be safe to pile it on, "but they're more interested in people than property. The car's safe enough

as long as you aren't in it, but if a stick of dynamite happened to drop under it some night when you were – "

"What has made such bad feeling between the mines?" Hastings asked, quietly.

Richards' eyes narrowed slightly.

"Miners take the tone of their manager," he said, significantly.

Simple as question and answer were, antipathy quickened in that instant between the two men.

Richards resented a certain something in Hastings' tone, and Hastings made up his mind that Richards was overplaying.

Mr. Wade was regretting with exceeding heartiness that he had come at all. Being blown to bits in this desolate-looking hole was furthest from his desire.

Trusting himself to the horrors of a wilderness hotel seemed about as hazardous an alternative. As for leaving his nephew in such a place, was it not virtually condemning him to a more or less lingering death? And Mr. Wade had grown amazingly fond of him during the last few months, in the companionship which had resulted from their many-times delayed expedition westward.

He was half inclined to make a formal tour of inspection, announcing Hastings as the future owner, and then take him back and let him open his architect's office at once. But Mr. Wade hated retreat.

"Then I am sure that you have men equally vigilant in repelling any attacks upon property or persons," Hastings said, smoothly.

"However, it doesn't matter to me. I should have to come to the hotel, anyway, later, when you have gone back, sir."

"Going to stay with us a while?" Richards asked him.

"Permanently," said Hastings, pleasantly.

Richards swung a questioning face toward Mr. Wade.

"The mine would have been my nephew's at my death, naturally, Richards," Mr. Wade explained, with some dignity. "He is coming into his own a little sooner, that is all. And if he chooses to remain – "

"As he does," Hastings laughed, genially, "and to learn all about his mine from its competent manager."

Mr. Richards' face did not express any extreme joy.

"If you'll take my advice, you'll go home with your uncle and leave your mine in my hands, Mr. Hastings," he said, bluffly. "It's a rough country, and hard, dangerous work – work that you don't know anything about, and that it will take you years to learn. And – I beg your pardon, but I'll speak plainly – while you are learning you'll want to give orders, and you'll make bad mistakes – expensive mistakes. They're easy to make and hard to right. Not that it will be your fault. I should if I tried to run Mr. Wade's bank. If you want your mine to keep on being a good paying proposition, leave it in the hands of men who made it one. Isn't that business, Mr. Wade? I've satisfied you, haven't I?" His manner had a certain brusque appeal.

"Perfectly," said Mr. Wade, suavely.

Then he looked at Hastings. He was standing by the table

heaped with books and magazines, and there was something in the alertness of his virile figure, well poised enough for a soldier; something in the lines of his well-cut features, something in the steadiness and frankness of the cool gray eyes, that suggested not only the strength of youth, but the strength of the spirit. It came to Mr. Wade suddenly that he was going to miss him, that the young fellow ought to have a chance to live with his own class.

"And my nephew may suit himself," Mr. Wade went on, steadily. "The mine is his without condition" – he spoke the words slowly – "and if he chooses to leave it in your hands, and return East with me, he is quite at liberty to do so."

Hastings smiled at him cheerfully.

"I shall stay, of course," he said, decidedly. "But I'll try not to make my mining education too expensive."

"I've got a carriage outside," said Mr. Richards, rising abruptly. "I s'pose you'd like to drive around town and out to the mine, to look around a little. Then if you'll take dinner with me at the Raegan House, you'll have quite an idea what it's like out here."

Mr. Livingstone Wade surveyed the landau into which he stepped with scant favor; and the look which he gave to the ragged darky who held the reins was only equaled by the one he bestowed on the two battered equines who were to serve as their means of locomotion.

As they swung into the main street of the little town, Hastings laughed with a perfectly genuine amusement.

“I might open an architect’s office here, on the side,” he said. “They certainly need it.”

Mr. Wade’s eyes were upon an up-to-date trap, drawn by a well-matched, high-stepping pair. The middle-aged man who was driving turned on them a look of amused curiosity as they passed.

“Whom do those horses belong to?” demanded Mr. Wade, sharply.

“Belong to Carrington,” said Richards, shortly. “That was his man. That’s his house at the other end of the street – that big one on the hill.” He jerked his head to indicate that it was back of them, and they turned to see it. It had a large, comfortable, hospitable look, more suggestive of the South than of the North.

“The hotel’s good enough for me,” said Richards, dryly.

Mr. Wade wondered why this sentiment, which had seemed so admirable to him in New York, lost its flavor here on the ground.

As they passed a blacksmith’s shop, the smith was shoeing a Kentucky thoroughbred, who looked at them with an airy unconcern.

“Carrington’s,” said Richards to Mr. Wade’s uplifted eyebrows.

The expression on Mr. Wade’s face was a curious one. Your tourist in Europe now and then wears its twin, on discovering that the United States is renting a second-rate building for an embassy, when other governments own pretentious ones.

“Tell you what,” said Hastings, suddenly. “I think I shall buy a

neat little touring car to run around here. Pretty bad grades, but there are half a dozen makes that could take them easily."

Mr. Wade looked at him with the ever-growing conviction that he was the kind of nephew to have. In spite of his conservatism, he had adopted the auto as he had the telephone.

"Quite right, Laurence," he said, complacently. "When you order the one you prefer, have the bill sent to me."

"Going to import a show-fure?" queried Richards, with ironic pleasantry.

Hastings shook his head.

"Never saw one I couldn't run yet," he said, cheerfully, "and when I do I'll send it back to the factory as defective."

"If he'll just put in his time running it, it's all I'll ask of him," communed Richards with himself.

* * * * *

At two o'clock of that day Mr. Wade had concluded that all he had ever heard of the enormities of the West was far below the actual fact.

His first grievance had been the dilapidated conveyance; his second the fact that Richards, who for reasons of his own had not tried to make the expedition a bed of roses, had insisted on his getting out a dozen times to see certain offices, the shaft house, and a number of other buildings, about whose use he was extremely hazy. And these pilgrimages had necessitated

his walking through fine red dust, which not only reduced his immaculate footgear to its lowest terms, but bordered the bottom of his pale gray trouser legs with a deep red band, which Richards assured him was indelible.

But the crowning enormity came with the dinner at Raegan's Hotel, which invitation Mr. Wade had felt he could hardly refuse in courtesy.

At the moment they entered the dining room Richards was called to the phone.

"Take these gentlemen down to my table, Maggie," he said to the head waitress as he turned away.

Mr. Wade regarded this young woman disapprovingly. The curve of her pompadour and the curves of her figure were too aggressively spherical. That her overgenerous bulk could be compressed to the dimensions of her waist seemed to indicate that whalebone had been unduly overlooked in modern mechanics. It hinted, too, though not to Mr. Wade, of a forcefulness of spirit which, seeing in a handkerchief-sized, knife-pleated white apron a legitimate adornment, adjusted the physical, Spartan-like, to its requirements. But Mr. Wade's mere passive and impersonal dislike quickened to an active rage in that awful moment when she tucked her arm comfortably in his, and promenaded him the length of the dining room to an untidy looking table already occupied by a portly Hibernian, who was engaged in extensive molar exploration with a diminutive wooden pick.

"Friends of Mr. Richards, Mr. O'Shaughnessy," she said, glibly, and Mr. Wade felt himself released from her muscular arm only to feel the front of a chair pressed with energetic purpose against the back of his knees.

As certain muscles automatically relaxed to enable him to be seated, his stunned sense of propriety recovered consciousness enough to enable him to decide that of all outrages ever perpetrated on a gentleman, this last was the worst.

"Mr. Richards' friends are my friends," responded Mr. O'Shaughnessy, cordially.

Mr. Wade looked at Hastings, who was seating himself with outer sobriety and inward hilarity. He comforted himself by taking that sobriety for disgust.

"I suppose you are not out here for your health?" Mr. O'Shaughnessy opined, genially.

"No," said Mr. Wade, icily.

"What line ar-re you in?" Mr. O'Shaughnessy pursued.

"I fail to understand you," said Mr. Wade, stiffly.

"What house are you thravelin' for? What are you selling?" Mr. O'Shaughnessy explained.

That he, Mr. Livingstone Wade, should be taken for a traveling salesman!

"I am a banker," said Mr. Wade. He felt it due to himself to say as much as that.

"Faro and that face of yours ar-re twins the world over," said Mr. O'Shaughnessy, genially, closing one eye and looking

intelligently at Hastings through the other. Then he cast the toothpick on the floor. “Have a cigar?” he said, hospitably, throwing a couple carelessly on the table as he rose to depart. “Drop in and see me if you get thirsty while you’re here. The palm garden. Two doors up. The house is good for a few yet.”

He stopped to joke with the head waitress a moment on his way out.

Richards, returning, decided that Mr. Wade was pretty well fagged. He had become monosyllabic.

The catsup bottle in the middle of the table, the greasy, lukewarm soup in stone-china bowls, the tasteless profusion of canned vegetables, the dubious-looking water, and the muddy mixture, bitter from long boiling, which the Raegan House called coffee, were only additional affronts to a man already at the limit of his endurance.

His announcement of his intention to spend the rest of the day in the car, and to make it his headquarters during his stay, was delivered with a decision which left no possibility for protest.

What was mere dynamite to such indignities as these!

He stepped into the landau, which Richards had ordered round again, with a sensation of relief, heightened by that gentleman’s statement that he shouldn’t be able to see them again until morning. Richards found Mr. Wade rather exhausting, on his side.

“If you see a fellow in freak clothes on your way back, you can know it’s that son of Carrington’s,” he observed, as he stood

on the sidewalk.

Hastings had his foot on the step of the landau, but he wheeled.

"Is Ned Carrington here?" he demanded.

"Been here all summer. Father broke his leg in a runaway and sent for him," Richards growled.

"Then I think I'll walk over and see him," Hastings said promptly, "if you'll excuse me, sir."

He smiled confidently at his uncle.

"You shan't go near him," said Richards, fiercely, "with that shark of a father of his trying to swindle us every way he can."

"Whatever his father is, Ned Carrington is a gentleman and my friend," said Hastings, quietly.

"Tell him he can't go," Richards demanded of Mr. Wade. And his insistence was fatal. Mr. Wade would not have influenced his nephew at Richards' dictation just now if Hastings had announced his intention of going to perdition.

Moreover, he trusted Hastings. And – this is an awful anti-climax – he wanted a nap.

"I hope you will find your friend home, Laurence," he said, suavely. "Business quarrels can safely be ignored between gentlemen."

Richards, watching the erect old figure disappearing in the landau toward the station, and the athletic young one striding off in the direction of the Star mine, hated them with an equal intensity.

* * * * *

John Carrington, dozing away on the great wicker divan on his broad veranda, in the warmth of a September afternoon, opened his eyes at the click of the gate.

The young man coming rapidly up the graveled walk was a stranger.

“Mr. Carrington?” he said, pleasantly.

“Yes, sir,” Carrington replied.

“Your son and I were friends in Paris, Mr. Carrington,” he went on. “My name is Hastings. I hope he is at home.”

Hastings! Paris! This was the young fellow whom Sarah had written about – who was so attentive to Elenore.

Carrington looked at him critically, and was pleased.

“Sit down, Mr. Hastings,” he said, cordially. “Ned just went in to order the horses for a little later. He will be out presently, and will be glad to see you.”

“I was surprised to hear that Ned was here, Mr. Carrington,” Hastings went on, seating himself. “He was to start for the East with Velantour the day I left Paris, and I supposed he was painting away for dear life somewhere in the Vale of Cashmere.”

“I didn’t even know he intended to go,” said Carrington, quietly.

“What!” said Hastings. “He hasn’t told you that Velantour asked him to go? It was the greatest opportunity he could ever

have!" Then he thought. "Of course your illness was first with him," he said. "I hope I haven't been telling tales out of school." He smiled frankly. Then "He's a genius, though." The praise burst out spontaneously. "They expect great things of him in Paris, Mr. Carrington."

John Carrington did some rapid thinking. So the boy had put aside the biggest opportunity in his life to come back to him. Put it aside cheerfully. To gratify – John Carrington was hard on himself now – his father's selfish pride. The need had not been imperative. He could have written him all the questions it was advisable to ask him. But he had been in pain, and harassed, and he had sacrificed the boy to it. Well, he should go back soon. He, John Carrington, was not so near senility that he couldn't manage his own affairs. His jaw set squarely.

"I'm glad you told me, Mr. Hastings," he said, calmly. Quick steps were coming through the hall. "Before he had a chance to head you off," he concluded, smilingly. The eyes he turned toward the door were very proud. "Here's a friend you'll be glad to see," he said, cheerily. Yet it seemed to him, and to Hastings, that the lad's first impulse was toward recoil.

He certainly paled a little. And Hastings said to himself that Ned had, in some subtle way, changed indefinably, but certainly. His eyes did not carry out the comfortable familiarity of his attire. It appeared to Hastings that they were making some demand upon him – a demand that he could not understand.

But the next second young Carrington came forward with at

least a surface cordiality.

"How did you find me out – Hastings?" he said, with a slight hesitation before the name, as perplexing as the characteristic grasp of his hand, familiar and unfamiliar at once, and the tinge of formality that obtruded itself unmistakably.

"I had no idea you were here until I heard it just now from Richards," said Hastings, struggling with a vague sense of rebuff.

The name might have been the Medusa head.

Then "Richards?" John Carrington queried. Hastings flushed.

"My uncle, Mr. Wade, has given me the Tray-Spot mine," he said, and his voice became formal in turn. "We lunched with our manager to-day."

In spite of his annoyance, his lips twitched at the memory of it.

"It seems that there is war between the two mines, Mr. Carrington;" he turned to the older man. "I don't know anything of mining, but there must be some way out of it which would be just both to your interests and to ours."

For John Carrington had impressed him indelibly as an honest man.

Hastings' tone was both dignified and frank. John Carrington liked it. But could good come out of anything connected with the Tray-Spot? It had always been a thorn in the flesh.

Ned had crossed the veranda quickly, to seat himself behind a book-laden table. Once so ensconced, he drew a long breath of relief. Then he began to look amused.

"We have suggested a way, but it did not meet with your

uncle's approval," said John Carrington, quietly.

"I quite agree with my uncle that we do not care to sell," said Hastings, calmly.

"Nor, I assume, do you care to discharge your manager," John Carrington went on.

"No," said Hastings, frankly again; "my uncle has always considered Richards an invaluable man."

"He certainly has been," Carrington commented, ironically. "Then, I think we can cut out mining as a topic of conversation, Mr. Hastings. You and Ned can gossip about Paris."

"That's where I differ with you, dad," Ned broke in, spiritedly.

Hastings, stung, started to rise, but "Don't be silly," the lad said, impatiently, but with more friendliness than he had yet shown. "We may have a thousand pleasant things to say about Paris, but this is the important thing, and we had better keep at it.

"Laurence" – Hastings gave a little start; Ned had never called him Laurence – "is quite as much of a greenhorn about mines as I was a few months ago. It's only fair to tell him just what our position is. He will at least hear a story of our grievances that hasn't been garbled." His tone was spirited.

"I should like that," said Hastings, quietly.

Ned leaned forward eagerly. Then he settled his cravat with a peculiar twist, which Hastings recognized as Ned's characteristic preliminary to discourse. He and Elenore had laughed over it many times together.

"Ours is the older and deeper mine," Ned began. "That's

the first thing. And all the mines here strike the big bodies of water in sinking. That's the second. Your manager has hit on the economical plan of doing without large pumps; and when you strike water, he lets it seep through to us, and we raise it for you. It increases our dangers and expenses and your dividends. How would you like it in our place?"

John Carrington watched him with a look of mingled pride and amusement.

"In the case you have stated, I shouldn't like it at all," Hastings stated, coolly. "But Richards has assured my uncle that this grievance of yours is imaginary; that the water you get comes from your own sinking. Isn't there a possibility that may be so?"

"No," said Ned, positively; "there isn't."

Hastings hesitated. That Ned believed what he was saying was obvious; but, after all, what did he know about it? Wasn't he, save in his art, the most impractical soul living? Why shouldn't it be quite as likely that Carrington's men deceived him as that Richards deceived his uncle?

"There ought to be the simplest of ways of settling that," he said, slowly. "Let a couple of your men go down our mine and satisfy themselves that we're doing what's right."

John Carrington's laugh was ironically amused.

"You might suggest that to Richards," he said. Then his tone changed. "He won't even give us a map of your workings," he said, sharply. "As for letting anyone from the Star underground, he has announced pretty clearly that the man who tried it wouldn't

come up again. And though Richards' word hasn't any par value, I am willing to believe that for once he meant what he said."

"Aren't you painting Richards in rather too black a color?" Hastings protested. "Aren't you unduly prejudiced against him? Premeditated murder, now?"

"Accident, my dear sir," John Carrington said, ironically, "and underground accidents are almost too easy."

Hastings hesitated. He looked at Ned.

The lad made a Gallic gesture that sent his hands far apart. "What would you?" it signified.

There was a tinge of mockery in his friendly smile. Yet something of confidence, too.

"My dear Hastings," he said; "it is decidedly up to you. Our word or Richards'."

Hastings flushed.

"My dear Ned," he said, steadily, "that I should doubt your good faith is impossible. Nor," he flared, "do I think you doubt mine. I have been thrust suddenly, through the great generosity of an uncle to whom I am as loyal as you are to your father, into a situation that I know nothing about. I have a manager in whom my uncle, a cautious man, has believed implicitly. You tell me this man is a rogue. But you may be wrong. I can't condemn him unheard. One thing is certain," he went on. "I shall find out. And if there has been anything crooked about our management, it shall be righted." The line of his lips straightened. The muscles of his jaw grew tense. It was impossible to doubt that he meant

what he said.

Both listeners believed him. Both admired him. But John Carrington looked his admiration frankly, and young Carrington dropped his eyelids satisfiedly over his.

"That is all we could ask," said John Carrington, approvingly. "Now let me hear you youngsters chat about Paris."

But Hastings was impatient to be off now.

"I must get back to my uncle," he said, lightly. "It has been a hard day for him, and I suggested that I would serve as secretary for once."

"Then, order the horses round for Mr. Hastings, Ned," said John Carrington, and as the lad disappeared, and Hastings protested: "They are standing harnessed in the stable," he said, decisively. "You mustn't insist on our being too inhospitable."

And as Hastings capitulated, John Carrington followed out a sudden impulse.

"You will explain to your uncle that this half-mended leg of mine will prevent my calling on him," he stated, feeling suddenly that Hastings' uncle must have some good points, "but I shall be glad to put my horses at his disposal while he is here. Ned will come over to your car in the morning, and say so gracefully."

He smiled confidently at the returning lad.

There was a queer, contented look lurking in the lad's eyes. "As gracefully as he can," he laughed, lightly. "I'll walk down to the gate with you," he added.

It was on the way to the gate that Hastings asked the question

which was really the mainspring of his call.

"Where is your sister now? Did she go to Brittany?"

Young Carrington seemed amused.

"Elenore's plans were rather upset this summer," he said, lightly, "as well as mine. She's far from Brittany, in a curious little place you never heard of in France." He was rather proud of the way that sentence was turned. "She's with a friend, and enjoying herself, though she says it's all queer."

Hastings had a mental vision of Elenore in some far-off corner of France, making gay over all its out-of-the-way absurdities in that companionable way of hers.

"I wish she were here," he said, suddenly.

"Oh, well, I dare say she'd rather be where she is than anywhere else," Ned rejoined, carelessly.

Which was cold comfort to Hastings.

"By the way," he said, turning, as he was about to step into the trap, "I suppose we're perfectly safe to make our headquarters in the car here?"

"Safe as the Waldorf, if you're on a siding," Ned laughed. "If you stay on the main track the cars will hit you."

Hastings mentally swore at himself. The question had sounded idiotic.

"See you in the morning," Ned called, as Hastings drove off. But he walked back to the house rather slowly.

"Pretty tired, dad?" he asked, cheerfully.

"Ned," said John Carrington, slowly, "when you children were

little I'm afraid I loved Elenore best. But no daughter can be to a man what his son is."

There was a little silence. John Carrington lay with his eyes closed. He was tired.

"Do you think Elenore was interested in that young fellow?" he asked, finally.

"If she was, she never said so," young Carrington replied. He was looking off in the direction of the Tray-Spot.

"If I were a girl, I'm inclined to think he could have me," John Carrington announced.

Young Carrington's laugh was lightly amused.

"If I were a girl, I'd lead him on a bit, myself," he announced.

CHAPTER V

When Hastings had returned to the car the afternoon before, he told his uncle the story of his interview with the Carringtons quite simply. He was too wise to urge action upon a tired, out-of-temper man; nor did he wait for Mr. Wade's comment. He shifted conversation to pleasanter things, and by the time Joseph had served them a nice little dinner Mr. Wade's outer man bore the visible signs of gastronomic peace. A few games of cribbage, which he won, yet not too easily, were also a soothing influence. When Hastings said good-night, Mr. Wade opened the subject of his own accord.

"How did this claim of Carrington's strike you, Laurence?"

"It struck me that we must satisfy ourselves about it as a matter of personal honor," said Hastings, firmly. "Of course you will know better than I how and when to take the initiative."

There was nothing that urged or insisted in his tone. It was quietly assured.

"Good-night, sir," he smiled, and disappeared. Disappeared to dream that the car was a balloon, and that he was sailing swiftly through sunny skies to Elenore.

Mr. Livingstone Wade, over-fatigued, was jolted through dreamland by that unbridled nocturnal equine who bolts from one disaster to another.

The horror-stricken Mr. Wade found himself lunching at

Sherry's with the head waitress from Raegan's. She had tied that knife-pleated apron around her neck, like a bib; and she told him things were "elegunt," and he could call her Maggie.

She insisted on his drinking catsup instead of claret, and ordered the salad compounded with soft hematite instead of paprika.

All the directors of the bank were seated at a table near them; and they looked quite as appalled as Mr. Wade felt *he* would, had he seen any one of them in his place.

How he came to be in this awful predicament, he had no idea. He only knew that he was riveted to his chair, and that his face, in spite of his inward horror, *would* wear a pleased smile. And speech, though he strove desperately to articulate, was an impossibility.

Then Hastings appeared, and said seriously: "This, sir, is a matter that affects your personal honor."

It was in a grim determination to escape from this purgatory at all hazards that Mr. Wade finally jumped himself awake; and though every muscle in his body ached throbbingly, he gave a sigh of contentment as he stirred his face on his pillow.

* * * * *

Trevanion, coming up to the house on a summons from John Carrington, found young Carrington coming down the steps, looking a bit more of a swashbuckling dandy than ever.

“Morning, Trevanion,” he greeted him, buoyantly.

Then he nodded toward the waiting trap.

“I’m going to pay a morning call on the owners of the Tray-Spot,” he announced, genially.

“Confound ’em!” muttered Trevanion.

The lad looked him straight in the eyes, in the way Trevanion found so remarkable.

“Oh, I think they’re square,” he said, lightly, “and that Richards’ day is about done. It will decide itself in a few days now, anyway.”

Trevanion watched him with a curious expression as he drove off.

* * * * *

Mr. Wade had wakened not only refreshed but in a mood which a certain irreverent clerk had once characterized as his “dusting off the earth day” and a good time to lie low. Hastings greeted the morning sun joyfully, because it shone on the little town where Elenore had spent her childhood.

Richards came in just as they were enjoying their after-breakfast cigars.

“Well,” he said, dropping into a chair without preliminary greetings, or waiting for Mr. Wade to request him to do so, “what’s the program for to-day?”

Then his eyes fell on Mr. Wade’s trouser legs.

"Told you it wouldn't come off, didn't I?" he laughed, boisterously.

Mr. Wade resented Richards' unceremonious entrance, and resented still more this direct allusion to his sartorial disfigurement, which had resisted the most zealous efforts of Joseph. He considered that, under present circumstances, the legs should be considered as analogous to those of the Queen of Spain.

And that phrase of Hastings, "a matter of personal honor," had hit the bull's-eye.

Mr. Wade prided himself first that the family fortune had been made honestly, by the rise in Manhattan real estate; and last, that the Wade name stood in the business world to-day as a symbol of integrity that erred, if it erred at all, on the side of over-scrupulousness.

"Mr. Richards," he said, a trifle stiffly, "when I inquired into the matter, you wrote me that Mr. Carrington's grievance had no foundation in fact, did you not?"

The bluffness faded out of Richards' face and left ugliness disclosed.

"He brought that old yarn back with him from Carrington's yesterday, I suppose," he sneered, jerking his head toward Hastings.

Hastings had that rare faculty of knowing when to let the game play itself.

"Very naturally, Mr. Richards," said Mr. Wade, with

dangerous smoothness; “but that is not the question.”

Richards’ face darkened.

“I’ll tell you what the question is, Mr. Wade, and you can settle it right now,” he snarled. “It’s whether you are going to take the word of the man who has made the mine, or the word of the man who’s trying to blackmail it, so’s he can buy it cheap.”

It was a good issue, so good that Richards himself was proud of it. He leaned back in his chair with something of a swagger.

“That you are still in charge of the Tray-Spot is the best proof of my confidence in you,” Mr. Wade said, in a more gracious tone, “but I propose to place the Carringtons in a position where they will have to admit that they are in the wrong, as you say they are. We will tell them that they may send a representative through our mine at any time, and that he will be accorded every courtesy.”

“Not on your life, we won’t!” said Richards, fiercely.

“That,” said Mr. Wade, serenely, “is a matter where we differ.”

“Do you suppose,” Richards went on, working himself into a rage, “that anyone they sent down would come up and tell the truth? He’d say just what he was paid to say, and he’d find just what he was paid to find.”

Joseph entered with two cards, and thereby effected a diversion.

One of the cards bore the name of Mr. John Carrington and the other that of Mr. Edward Carrington.

The gods fought on the Carrington side.

"Show him in," said Mr. Wade, suavely.

Young Carrington, debonair as a certain Monsieur Beaucaire, made his entrance with an easy grace. The delicate deference of his manner toward Mr. Wade, the pleasant *camaraderie* which he showed to Hastings, the impersonal politeness with which he recognized Richards' existence, were all points in his favor.

So, too, were his punctiliousness in making his father's excuses, and the quiet courtesy with which he placed his horses at Mr. Wade's disposal.

His manner was so free from embarrassment or assertiveness, so evidently inspired by a nice sense of proprieties, that he might have been the ambassador of one king to another.

Richards, retiring to one of the car windows, his back toward them all, his fingers beating a nerve-racking tattoo upon the glass, was his direct antithesis.

"My nephew tells me you have distinct ability as an artist," Mr. Wade said, when, the preliminary interchange of courtesies over, the three were comfortably seated. Mr. Wade thought it was likely, too.

"Then, I may tell you that we expect him to be one of our best architects," young Carrington returned, gracefully.

"The rising architect of Yellow Dog," Hastings said, with a wave of his hands. "I think I shall begin by building a little bungalow here for myself."

"A very good idea," said Mr. Wade, decisively.

Hastings' first phrase had smitten him with a sudden

contrition. He felt, too, that if he was going to come out to Yellow Dog himself, and if his nephew stayed there he should, of course, come out once a year, at least, a cozily built bungalow, where he might be made comfortable, was in the line of a necessity. "I should get about it at once," he declared.

"Perhaps you would like to drive about this morning, and select your site for 'A Bungalow for One,'" said young Carrington, laughingly. There was a slightly mocking emphasis on the last word.

"I shouldn't have it too small," said Mr. Wade, firmly.

Richards was whistling between his teeth now, a performance which always enraged Mr. Wade.

"But we will have to let the site go for this morning, at least;" and there was a precise distinctness about Mr. Wade's words now. "Mr. Richards has just been arranging to take us down the mine this morning."

Richards wheeled round, surprised.

Young Carrington rose with an unhurried ease.

"Then, I must not detain you," he said, calmly.

"And why would it not be a good idea for you to send one of your men, in whom you have full confidence, down with us?" – Mr. Wade's tone was entirely urbane. "He would, perhaps, be able not only to assure himself of actual conditions, but to explain your contention to us in the workings under discussion."

Richards held himself tense.

"I should like to send our shift boss, with your permission,"

said young Carrington, quietly, though inwardly he exulted. “I will have him meet you at your shaft house whenever you say.”

“Mr. Wade,” said Richards, and the effort he made to control himself made the veins in his face distend purplingly, “when Mr. John Carrington is well enough to go down our mine, I shall be glad” – how the word choked him – “to take him down myself; but Trevanion, their shift boss, is at the bottom of the trouble. He’s tricky and dishonest. I’d rather resign than take him down the mine.”

For in the time that would elapse before John Carrington was able to take such a jaunt much could be done.

There was a moment’s pause, in which Richards’ claim and Carrington’s were equi-balanced. The very fact of Hastings’ personal bias held him inactive.

Then young Carrington spoke.

“I will answer for Trevanion’s honesty with my own,” he said. There was an emotional note in the voice he tried to hold steady.

“Off the same piece, *I* guess,” sneered Richards, nastily.

The scales swayed down on the Carrington side.

Mr. Wade’s code did not permit his guests to be insulted by his subordinates.

“My dear Mr. Carrington, you leave us no option when you take that stand,” he said, suavely. “Whenever your man is ready, then.”

“I think he is still at the house with my father,” said young Carrington, unsteadily. “I can telephone from the station here.”

Mr. Wade looked out of the window. Beside Carrington's trap stood the landau of yesterday. "If you will drive home and bring your man over, we will go directly to the mine with Mr. Richards," he said.

* * * * *

Young Carrington, bursting in upon his father and Trevanion, told it all in a breath.

Trevanion rose with the last word.

"The sooner I'm there the better," he said, phlegmatically.

"It's queer business," said John Carrington, frowning. "Keep your eyes open. What do you think of it?"

"I'll tell you when I come up," said Trevanion. "If I don't come up, you'll look after my boy?"

John Carrington nodded.

"Keep close to young Hastings," he said, tersely. "Don't let Richards get behind you alone. I'm inclined to think, though, that the whole thing will be a farce. He'll take you into a few levels where there couldn't be any question, and that will be all. Wade and his nephew won't know. And that will be all there is to it."

"I'll drive you over," said Ned. His eyes were bright with excitement.

Trevanion grinned as he settled himself in the trap.

"I'm going to get my swell ride before I go down," he said. "Mostly they take 'em when they come up – in a box."

* * * * *

The others were waiting, garbed in oilskins, candles in their caps – precautionary measures which inclined Mr. Wade to feel that there was something wrong in the management of a mine that was neither lighted nor heated.

Hastings was struggling not to chafe under his rôle of masterly inactivity; he comforted himself with the thought that it was causing things to move in the right direction, at any rate.

Richards' expression was sardonic. As Carrington had surmised, he proposed to tire out the greenhorns by an exhaustive progress through workings which would be of no possible interest to Trevanion.

He calculated shrewdly about how long it would take before they would be glad to come up. If Trevanion remained behind them, or if he went down without them later – Richards shrugged his shoulders. It was easy for a man to fall down an uncovered winze in a strange mine. And the fall would explain any bruises.

As they started for the cage, he turned to young Carrington. His smile was distinctly disagreeable.

"Sorry you don't feel like coming, too," he said, "but you might catch cold or get your clothes dirty."

Whatever faults there were to young Carrington's credit, cowardice was not one of them. Not that foolhardiness is not almost as reprehensible.

“If you’ll lend me a cap and a pair of boots, I shall be delighted,” he answered instantly.

“No, Mr. Ned. You’re not in this,” Trevanion remonstrated.

Young Carrington was pulling on his cap composedly now.

“You’ve never been down the Star, even. You won’t be of any use,” Trevanion insisted. Young Carrington was getting into an oilskin coat. Richards had not thought he would.

“I’ll telephone your father,” Trevanion declared.

“Then I’ll go down without you while you’re doing it,” young Carrington declared, willfully.

Trevanion followed him into the cage without more ado. But he didn’t like it.

As the cage dropped into the blackness of the shaft, Richards thought with malicious pleasure that he would outwit them all. Trevanion, holding it everyday work for himself, was uneasy over the boy; Hastings was impatient at his own ignorance – he hated to feel so out of his sphere; Mr. Wade, reviewing each successive stage of the proceedings which had placed him in his present situation, called himself what he would have slain any fellow man for thinking, a silly old fool; and Carrington – ah, a curious tangle of thoughts was young Carrington’s brain, with a curious after-vision of a bright blue sky.

Up in the big house on the hill, John Carrington was wondering if it was not time for Ned to come home.

* * * * *

It is a curious experience – this going underground for the first time.

The chill and the dampness, the change in the air pressure, and the darkness – that vague, depressing darkness, on which the candle in your cap makes so vague and flickering an impression that it seems nervous and palpitant at its own temerity in attempting so gigantic a task.

Above all, and above you, as you clearly realize, for an eighth of a mile, perhaps, the huge impending weight of earth and rock, against whose menace timbering a foot and a half thick seems like trying to bolster the basement of a tottering St. Paul's with matches.

It is like finding oneself in some gigantic letter press, the screw of which the hand of fate may choose to turn – perhaps now; pressing downward with pitiless, relentless, inanimate mechanism until the Parchment of the World bears the dull red mark of these unwilling witnesses to its deed.

These are all terrors unconfessed. Farthest of real menaces you find – whose vague terror is made dormant by the real necessities of the moment, the constant strain of the eye to distinguish – now to avoid the direct peril of an uncovered winze underfoot, now to notice how closely the "lagging" roofs in the drift, this indefinitely long hole, seven and a half feet square, in

which you find yourself.

Then comes the strain of the novice brain to comprehend the reasons and the logic of it all.

Richards showed his native shrewdness in the way he managed the expedition. The humor of its personnel was quite within his comprehension. Three men, ignorant of every detail of mining, Trevanion of the Star, and himself.

It was grotesque enough for comedy.

And, too, Richards had at last taken Mr. Wade's measure – or thought he had.

"You have to sling softsoap to suit the pig-headed old sissy," he phrased it.

And he assumed a bluff heartiness which actually became genuine at times, as he explained carefully and clearly the A B C's of things.

For Richards loved the mine he had made, loved it after the fashion of his nature, with an intensity of possession.

Fought for it fairly when fairness served best, and trickily when trickiness seemed more profitable. Took a man's genuine pride when he had forced it to obey him. Abused its future for the present good if he felt like it. Slaved for it fiercely in reprisal. It was the only way Richards knew how to love anything.

That these two men whom the accident of fortune had placed in actual ownership of the mine should interfere with him had roused first his rage, and now his determination to placate them, to hoodwink them. He showed a good-natured tolerance of their

ignorance, and an indefatigable patience in explanation.

"That's it; now you're catching on fine," he encouraged them, as they grasped some elemental principle of mining. He led them over a good deal of ground during these explanations. He piloted them with a rough carefulness which even included young Carrington. The boy's being there at all amused him rather than otherwise. But Trevanion was guarding young Carrington with as wary an eye as he was watching Richards.

Mr. Wade decided that for the first time Richards was appearing to advantage.

Aboveground his crudities of manner might be repellent; here he was in his native element, shrewd, practical and zealous.

Mr. Wade began to feel that Trevanion the Taciturn was quite as likely to prove the villain of the piece.

To be sure, it appeared that they had embarked on a tremendous undertaking. Mr. Wade felt that the mine was larger than he had supposed, but, as Richards said, they might as well understand it thoroughly. On this Mr. Wade, with legs that threatened to drop from his hip sockets, plodded on.

Young Carrington turned white more than once, but shut his teeth and went on defiantly; and Hastings owned to himself that he was desperately tired. Trevanion was as unwearied as Cornish patience, but Richards was not trying to tired out Trevanion – physically.

It lacked five minutes of the noon hour when they saw the cage ahead of them, waiting at this, the seventh and lowest, working

level of the mine.

Below, as Richard told them, was the development level, to which the cage did not descend.

“We can’t go down now,” he said, looking at his watch. “They’re just going to blast, and it will take an hour afterward for the smoke to clear. We’ll go up and have our dinner, and come down again this afternoon to finish up, eh?”

Lunch, up on the earth’s surface, with sunshine and first grade air. The words were as welcome to Mr. Wade as though an archangel had spoken them.

Young Carrington, too, shared his feeling; shared, too, though unknowingly, Mr. Wade’s calculation that his legs would just about carry him to the cage.

Richards, with an inward grin, assured himself that those two, at least, would attempt no afternoon expedition.

This farce of investigation would soon be ended. It would be quite safe to urge them to come down again. They had had quite enough. He looked forward with amused anticipation to making the suggestion after lunch.

Trevanion hesitated about declaring an intention to remain without the others through the noon hour. No, he would see young Carrington safely out of it first; then —

They were almost at the cage now.

Richards was showing them the bell at the side of the shaft, the signal to the engineer to hoist the cage.

“All the men but one get in,” he explained. “He touches the

bell and races across to get in the cage. The engineer allows him so many seconds to make it. No, you can't stop it after it starts."

Mr. Wade, who had arrived at that stage when he recked not how the cage went up, as long as it went, continued an unlistening way to that haven.

There was a detonation from the development level.

"Blast," said Richards, to young Carrington's look. "They're in rather dangerous ground, and so we have them leave it until just before the noon hour, in case – "

A man shot up from the ladder-way. Another. And another. The ladder-hole spouted them out like a volcano.

They ran toward the cage panic-stricken, sweeping Mr. Wade into it before them. With an instant comprehension of the disaster that placed them all in a common peril, Richards turned swiftly to the others.

"Get in!" he shouted. "They've struck water!"

He caught Hastings by the arm, and rammed his way through the press like a great machine.

"You – fools! There's plenty of time!" he railed at his men.

Trevanion, guarding young Carrington with his right arm, thrust his mighty bulk through the struggling mass just behind Richards.

They were almost at the cage door when a terrorized Finn fought his way past them, striking out blindly at everything in reach.

One elbow thrust sent young Carrington spinning from

Trevanion's protecting arm to the ground, and the next instant the Finn dropped his full weight between Richards and Hastings, and leaped past them into the cage.

He shouted triumphantly to his fellows. It was jargon to Mr. Wade. But Richards knew, and raged, and the other miners knew, and rejoiced, that he had given the signal to hoist. Trevanion was lifting young Carrington in his arms.

Richards stepped into the cage, with an oath.

"Come!" he said, fiercely, to Hastings, jamming a few inches of space free in the cage with his bulk. "Room for one. You haven't a second to lose!" he shouted.

Hastings put his hands in his pockets, coolly.

"I stay with my guests," he said. And with his first word, the cage started upward.

As he turned toward the others, Trevanion, one arm round young Carrington, caught hold of his sleeve.

"We maun run for it!" he shouted.

For out of the great black hole beneath them rose the water, spreading across the bottom of the shaft.

From above, and suddenly faint, they could hear Mr. Wade calling that they must stop, that they must go back for his nephew, and his voice was the voice of a very old man. Trevanion instinctively led them running back into the drift. Young Carrington wrenched himself free. "I'm all right," he said. "Took the breath out of me for a minute. I won't hinder."

Back of them the water followed silently, gaining gradually up

the grade of the drift.

"Not time to make that first rise – the one we came down," Trevanion said, as they sped along. "Ought to be another – here it is!"

He swerved into a black air shaft, but swept them back into the drift the next instant.

"No ladder. Stripped!" he said, laconically, and on they hurried again.

The water was a thin encroaching line thirty feet back now. Now the rise in the level hid it from sight.

And finally another rise. Stripped.

And on again.

Young Carrington was getting tired. Even peril was losing its spur. He stumbled a little.

Trevanion caught him round the waist, lifting him along with a strong gentleness; looking at him with curiously wondering eyes, but eyes that never lost their look of fealty.

"Why are the ladders gone?" young Carrington asked, and he kept his voice resolutely free from fear.

"Economy," said Trevanion, briefly. "Wanted to use them somewhere else. We'll find one after a bit." Which might or might not be so.

"And if we don't?" said Hastings, swinging alongside.

"They'll send the cage to the level above, and your men will be hallooing all over the place for us," Trevanion told him. He thought with a certain grim humor that Richards would not make

any wild exertion to save him. Hastings' presence was their best hope, if the ladders failed.

"If it should take them a long time to find us?" It was young Carrington now.

"Water may stop altogether," Trevanion stated. "Depends on the size of the vug. Anyway, it rises slower the more ground it covers. We'll have time enough." But no one could tell that.

Disappointment. Hope. Then the end of the drift stared them in the face – rock and dirt as a final blast had left it.

But "Here's our raise," said Trevanion, bluffly, turning off.

And the raise was ladderless: a vertical opening, whose hard rock walls were too slippery for even a Cornishman to climb. Trapped!

They looked at the place where the ladder should have been, as though it must, perforce, appear. Young Carrington ran a finger rapidly round inside his collar, as though it had grown suddenly tight. The air seemed close. Then he pulled himself together sharply. Say what you will, blood will tell.

"And now what?" he asked Trevanion, cheerfully.

Hastings' eyes were looking the same question.

"Wait," said Trevanion, stoically.

To wait, inactive: it is the real test of courage.

With any kind of activity, hope plays an obligato; but when there is no struggle to be made, fears tries a tremolo first on one heartstring and then another.

"You should have gone with the others," said young

Carrington to Hastings, reproachfully.

"Never!" said Hastings, decidedly. "There's that drop of comfort in the whole thing, anyway.

"How do you suppose I should feel," he flashed, "if I were safe on the surface, and you were here? I should feel as though I had decoyed you into it." He turned to Trevanion. "Can't the pumps get the water under control?" he demanded.

"If you had enough of 'em," said Trevanion. "That's another place where Richards economized. The Star'll pump it out for you after a while."

"Richards will have his day of reckoning if I get out of this," said Hastings, furiously.

"Does he know that?" asked Trevanion, dryly.

And Hastings saw the point. So did young Carrington. The cards were Richards' now, to play as he chose. Hastings turned to his friends.

"Ned," he said, "I'm mighty sorry. Sorry I interfered at all. I'd give my life to have you and Trevanion safe on the surface."

"Don't worry about me," said the lad, quickly.

Trevanion's eyes watched him curiously.

"I want to talk with you about Elenore," Hastings went on, quietly. "I suppose you know that I love Elenore, Ned?"

Trevanion stepped back a few paces, but he listened intently.

"Do you?" said the lad, simply.

"Do I?" said Hastings, impetuously. "The hardest thing I ever did was to leave her without telling her I loved her. But you can't

ask a girl like that to wait indefinitely, you know. Then, when I found out where I was coming, it seemed as though it might have been meant, after all. And I wanted to patch up the trouble between the mines, so that I'd have at least a fair chance."

"And then?" said young Carrington, softly.

"Then," said Hastings, recklessly, "I hoped – I was daft enough to dream – that she might not think it a hardship to come back to the little place where she was born – to her father – to me. To *me*! And when I talked of building a bungalow, I thought what it would mean to bring my wife home to it."

There was silence. Then Hastings shrugged his shoulders.

"I may not have the chance to tell Elenore," he said, bruskly, half-ashamed of the emotion he had displayed. "It's not quite the same thing to tell you, old man. I'm afraid there's small chance of our ever being brothers-in-law, but you wouldn't have objected to me as a brother, would you?"

"Whatever Elenore wished, I should have wished," the lad said, calmly.

Hastings laughed a short, impatient laugh.

"I suppose we're all egoists," he said. "But I don't mind confessing to you that it would be easier to face the music if I knew what Elenore *did* wish – whether *she* cared."

There was silence again. Trevanion's figure in the background grew tense. Then the lad laughed lightly.

"You hadn't asked her, you know," he said, "and Elenore isn't the kind of a girl to wear her heart on her sleeve. But I know

Elenore pretty well, and I think she cared – really."

Hastings flung his arm in front of his face with a gesture that was almost boyish.

"Elenore!" he whispered to the cold comfort of his coat sleeve. For virile youth loves strongly, humanly.

Young Carrington's eyes watched him with a wonderful light. Even the flickering candlelight showed Trevanion that.

Then Hastings rammed his hands in his pockets and drew a deep breath.

"Thank Heaven, she's on the other side of the ocean! It will be easier for her, after all. Harder to realize," he said, fervently.

Young Carrington drew a quick breath, a breath of relief. "I thought you'd feel that way," he said, quietly.

Trevanion stepped out into the drift.

"I want to speak with you a bit," he nodded to young Carrington.

The lad followed him. Hastings, left alone, gave himself up to thoughts of Elenore. The other side of the rock wall, young Carrington faced Trevanion, and knew that he knew. Every detail of their surroundings stood out in the light of that, with sudden distinctness. The great timbers that walled in the drift, the flickering light of the candles in their caps – all seemed but the setting for Trevanion's eyes. The hand he laid on young Carrington's arm was almost reverential in its touch.

"I've held you in my arms to-day twice," he said, hurriedly. "I don't understand why it's you, but it's all right." He looked at

young Carrington as one of Jeanne d'Arc's soldiers might have looked.

Young Carrington faced him very quietly.

"I thought 'twas queer, the way you held the child that time," Trevanion went on. "And you ride just as you did as a youngster. Will he come back now if – " he demanded.

Young Carrington nodded gently. "Yes, and he's a splendid fellow." If the young voice broke for a second, that was all. "He'll help dad to bear it. It was best for me to come. Best, above all, if this was to happen." The voice was steady now. "I'm sorry you know, but it would have been safe with you, anyway."

It was that same confident charm that had conquered Trevanion at the outset.

"You won't tell *him*?" he questioned, jerking his head toward the raise.

Young Carrington's head shook a slow negative.

"Not unless at the very last I turn weak and womanish;" and there was a whimsical touch in the last word.

Then the young figure straightened up with a quick decision.

"And I really think, Trevanion" – young Carrington's voice was light now – "that I shall make a nice, plucky, manly finish."

Trevanion, following back into the raise, would have cut his heart out to save that buoyant young life, but his devotion was the pure fealty of a serf for his sovereign.

They played at bravery after that, each abetting the other.

Young Carrington coaxed Trevanion into telling them mining

stories, wheedled Hastings into all kinds of reminiscences of his boyhood, assumed their ultimate escape so confidently that Hastings thought it a genuine hopefulness.

Not so Trevanion. He knew what the spring was that moved young Carrington to play up to a buoyant part. And he helped, with anecdotes of wonderful rescues, of escapes just in the nick of time.

He was in the midst of one of the best of these when a little lapping sound stopped him.

A thin little line of water pulsed gently into the entrance of the raise.

CHAPTER VI

Mr. Wade had shouted his fruitless commands, in the ascending cage, all the way to the surface, raging at Richards and his management, and unconvinced, in spite of a united and profane assurance, of his inability to stop the cage and go back; furious at him for having installed such a defective system, and threatening him with dismissal at the earliest possible moment.

His nephew and his nephew's friend left to danger, while these brutes were being brought to the surface! He had never suffered such helpless frenzy in all his neatly adjusted life.

At the surface the cage cleared with magical suddenness. Mr. Wade, breathless with rage, was fairly dragged out by Richards, and in so short a time as a signal may be given and obeyed, the cage had again started downward.

Mr. Wade leaned back against the timbers of the shaft house, with the exhaustion of relief.

But it was a relief that Richards did not share. This particular kind of disaster was so frequently recurrent that he knew its possibilities all too well. And he raged that it should have come just now. It was such a routine danger that he had not thought of it as a special menace in taking them down. Casualty, with Mr. Wade involved or witnessing, had been furthest from his thoughts or desires.

"How long before they will be up?"' Mr. Wade asked, faintly.

Richards, tensely alert, made no answer. The cage had reached the bottom of the shaft now. He waited a minute – two – three. There was no sign from below. He himself gave the signal to hoist.

"Are they coming?" demanded Mr. Wade.

Richards shook his head. "I can't say, sir," he said, "but they've had plenty of time. Either they got in the cage and forgot to give the signal" – and with Trevanion below this was an unlikely contingency – "or – " he hesitated.

"Or?" said Mr. Wade, sharply.

"Or the water has cut them off," Richards finished.

"Then – " said Mr. Wade, faintly.

"Reach 'em from the level above," Richards answered. But he thought of certain contingencies – thought of a good many important things.

There was a crowd of miners now, watching for the cage to appear. The jargon of Finnish comment sounded to Mr. Wade like the buzzing of bees. Then the cage came in sight. Empty and dripping wet.

The next second everything was action, and Richards its mainspring. His orders pelted down like hailstones. Men, tools, paraphernalia, filled the cage. Other men went racing off on surface errands.

Mr. Wade, paralyzed by his complete ignorance of conditions or remedies, seemed crushed under the consciousness of casualty. Richards caught him by the arm and shook him into

attention.

"We'll bring them up, if they are alive," he shouted to him, as though he were deaf.

Then he stepped into the cage, and down it went again. Mr. Wade leaned back against the wall, motionless, his eyes fixed on the hole where it had disappeared.

But over all the little town the news was spreading like wildfire.

* * * * *

John Carrington had spent a horrible morning. When the trap came back, and the stable boy Ike, who was driving, announced that Mr. Ned had sent him home, John Carrington promptly demanded why.

"I dunno," said the boy. "He said, 'That's all,' so I come."

It couldn't be possible that Ned had gone down the Tray-Spot! Ned, who had never shown the slightest eagerness to go down the Star. But what – And why —

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