BARR ROBERT

A WOMAN INTERVENES

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TO MY FRIEND HORACE HART

CHAPTER I

The managing editor of the *New York Argus* sat at his desk with a deep frown on his face, looking out from under his shaggy eyebrows at the young man who had just thrown a huge fur overcoat on the back of one chair, while he sat down himself on another.

'I got your telegram,' began the editor. 'Am I to understand from it that you have failed?'

'Yes, sir,' answered the young man, without the slightest hesitation.

'Completely?'

'Utterly.'

'Didn't you even get a synopsis of the documents?'

'Not a hanged synop.'

The editor's frown grew deeper. The ends of his fingers drummed nervously on the desk.

'You take failure rather jauntily, it strikes me,' he said at last.

'What's the use of taking it any other way? I have the consciousness of knowing that I did my best.'

'Um, yes. It's a great consolation, no doubt, but it doesn't count in the newspaper business. What did you do?'

'I received your telegram at Montreal, and at once left for Burnt Pine—most outlandish spot on earth. I found that Kenyon and Wentworth were staying at the only hotel in the place. Tried to worm out of them what their reports were to be. They were very polite, but I didn't succeed. Then I tried to bribe them, and they ordered me out of the room.'

'Perhaps you didn't offer them enough.'

'I offered double what the London Syndicate was to pay them for making the report, taking their own word for the amount. I couldn't offer more, because at that point they closed the discussion by ordering me out of the room. I tried to get the papers that night, on the quiet, out of Wentworth's valise, but was unfortunately interrupted. The young men were suspicious, and next morning they left for Ottawa to post the reports, as I gathered afterwards, to England. I succeeded in getting hold of the reports, but I couldn't hang on. There are too many police in Ottawa to suit me.'

'Do you mean to tell me,' said the editor, 'that you actually had the reports in your hands, and that they were taken from you?'

'Certainly I had; and as to their being taken from me, it was either that or gaol. They don't mince matters in Canada as they do in the United States, you know.'

'But I should think a man of your shrewdness would have been able to get at least a synopsis of the reports before letting them out of his possession.'

'My dear sir,' said the reporter, rather angry, 'the whole thing covered I forget how many pages of foolscap paper, and was the most mixed-up matter I ever saw in my life. I tried—I sat in my room at the hotel, and did my best to master the details. It was full of technicalities, and I couldn't make it out. It required a mining expert to get the hang of their phrases and figures, so I thought the best thing to do was to telegraph it all straight through to New York. I knew it would cost a lot of money, but I knew, also, you didn't mind that; and I thought, perhaps, somebody here could make sense out of what baffled me; besides, I wanted to get the documents out of my possession just as quickly as possible.'

'Hem!' said the editor. 'You took no notes whatever?'

'No, I did not. I had no time. I knew the moment they missed the documents they would have the detectives on my track. As it was, I was arrested when I entered the telegraph-office.'

'Well, it seems to me,' said the managing editor, 'if I had once had the papers in my hand, I should not have let them go until I had got the gist of what was in them.'

'Oh, it's all very well for you to say so,' replied the reporter, with the free and easy manner in which an American newspaper man talks to his employer; 'but I can tell you, with a Canadian gaol

facing a man, it is hard to decide what is best to do. I couldn't get out of the town for three hours, and before the end of that time they would have had my description in the hands of every policeman in the place. They knew well enough who took the papers, so my only hope lay in getting the thing telegraphed through; and if that had been accomplished, everything would have been all right. I would have gone to gaol with pleasure if I had got the particulars through to New York.'

'Well, what are we to do now?' asked the editor.

'I'm sure I don't know. The two men will be in New York very shortly. They sail, I understand, on the *Caloric*, which leaves in a week. If you think you have a reporter who can get the particulars out of these men, I should be very pleased to see you set him on. I tell you it isn't so easy to discover what an Englishman doesn't want you to know.'

'Well,' said the editor, 'perhaps that's true. I will think about it. Of course you did your best, and I appreciate your efforts; but I am sorry you failed.'

'You are not half so sorry as I am,' said Rivers, as he picked up his big Canadian fur coat and took his leave.

The editor did think about it. He thought for fully two minutes. Then he dashed off a note on a sheet of paper, pulled down the little knob that rang the District Messenger alarm, and when the uniformed boy appeared, gave him the note, saying:

'Deliver this as quickly as you can.'

The boy disappeared, and the result of his trip was soon apparent in the arrival of a very natty young woman in the editorial rooms. She was dressed in a neatly-fitting tailor-made costume, and was a very pretty girl, who looked about nineteen, but was, in reality, somewhat older. She had large, appealing blue eyes, with a tender, trustful expression in them, which made the ordinary man say: 'What a sweet, innocent look that girl has!' yet, what the young woman didn't know about New York was not worth knowing. She boasted that she could get State secrets from dignified members of the Cabinet, and an ordinary Senator or Congressman she looked upon as her lawful prey. That which had been told her in the strictest confidence had often become the sensation of the next day in the paper she represented. She wrote over a *nom de guerre*, and had tried her hand at nearly everything. She had answered advertisements, exposed rogues and swindlers, and had gone to a hotel as chambermaid, in order to write her experiences. She had been arrested and locked up, so that she might write a three-column account, for the Sunday edition of the *Argus*, of 'How Women are Treated at Police Headquarters.' The editor looked upon her as one of the most valuable members of his staff, and she was paid accordingly.

She came into the room with the self-possessed air of the owner of the building, took a seat, after nodding to the editor, and said, 'Well?'

'Look here, Jennie,' began that austere individual, 'do you wish to take a trip to Europe?'

'That depends,' said Jennie; 'this is not just the time of year that people go to Europe for pleasure, you know.'

'Well, this is not exactly a pleasure trip. The truth of the matter is, Rivers has been on a job and has bungled it fearfully, besides nearly getting himself arrested.'

The young woman's eyes twinkled. She liked anything with a spice of danger in it, and did not object to hear that she was expected to succeed where a mere masculine reporter had failed.

The editor continued:

'Two young men are going across to England on the *Caloric*. It sails in a week. I want you to take a ticket for Liverpool by that boat, and obtain from either of those two men the particulars—the *full* particulars—of reports they have made on some mining properties in Canada. Then you must land at Queenstown and cable a complete account to the *Argus*.'

'Mining isn't much in my line,' said Miss Jennie, with a frown on her pretty brow. 'What sort of mines were they dealing with—gold, silver, copper, or what?'

'They are certain mines on the Ottawa River.'

'That's rather indefinite.'

'I know it is. I can't give you much information about the matter. I don't know myself, to tell the truth, but I know it is vitally important that we should get a synopsis of what the reports of these young men are to be. A company, called the London Syndicate, has been formed in England. This syndicate is to acquire a large number of mines in Canada, if the accounts given by the present owners are anything like correct. Two men, Kenyon and Wentworth—the first a mining engineer, and the second an experienced accountant—have been sent from London to Canada, one to examine the mines, the other to examine the books of the various corporations. Whether the mines are bought or not will depend a good deal on the reports these two men have in their possession. The reports, when published, will make a big difference, one way or the other, on the Stock Exchange. I want to have the gist of them before the London Syndicate sees them. It will be a big thing for the *Argus* if it is the first in the field, and I am willing to spend a pile of hard cash to succeed. So, don't economize on your cable expenses.'

'Very well; have you a book on Canadian mines?'

'I don't know that we have; but there is a book here, "The Mining Resources of Canada;" will that be of any use?'

'I shall need something of that sort. I want to be a little familiar with the subject, you know.'

'Quite so,' said the editor; 'I will see what can be got in that line. You can read it before you start, and on the way over.'

'All right,' said Miss Jennie; 'and am I to take my pick of the two young men?'

'Certainly,' answered the editor. 'You will see them both, and can easily make up your mind which will the sooner fall a victim.'

'The *Caloric* sails in a week, does it?'

'Yes.'

'Then I shall need at least five hundred dollars to get new dresses with.'

'Good gracious!' cried the editor.

'There is no "good gracious" about it. I'm going to travel as a millionaire's daughter, and it isn't likely that one or two dresses will do me all the way over.'

'But you can't get new dresses made in a week,' said the editor.

'Can't I? Well, you just get me the five hundred dollars, and I'll see about the making.'

The editor jotted the amount down.

'You don't think four hundred dollars would do?' he said.

'No, I don't. And, say, am I to get a trip to Paris after this is over, or must I come directly back?'

'Oh, I guess we can throw in the trip to Paris,' said the editor.

'What did you say the names of the young men are?—or are they not young? Probably they are old fogies, if they are in the mining business.'

'No; they are young, they are shrewd, and they are English. So you see your work is cut out for you. Their names are George Wentworth and John Kenyon.'

'Oh, Wentworth is my man,' said the young woman breezily. 'John Kenyon! I know just what sort of a person he is—sombre and taciturn. Sounds too much like John Bunyan, or John Milton, or names of that sort.'

'Well, I wouldn't be too sure about it until you see them. Better not make up your mind about the matter.'

'When shall I call for the five hundred dollars?'

'Oh, that you needn't trouble about. The better way is to get your dresses made, and tell the people to send the bills to our office.'

'Very well,' said the young woman. 'I shall be ready. Don't be frightened at the bills when they come in. If they come up to a thousand dollars, remember I told you I would let you off for five hundred dollars.'

The editor looked at her for a moment, and seemed to reflect that perhaps it was better not to give a young lady unlimited credit in New York. So he said:

'Wait a bit; I'll write you out the order, and you can take it downstairs.'

Miss Jennie took the paper when it was offered to her, and disappeared. When she presented the order in the business office, the cashier raised his eyebrows as he noticed the amount, and, with a low whistle, said to himself:

'Five hundred dollars! I wonder what game Jennie Brewster's up to now.'

CHAPTER II

The last bell had rung. Those who were going ashore had taken their departure. Crowds of human beings clustered on the pier-head, and at the large doorways of the warehouse which stood open on the steamer wharf. As the big ship slowly backed out there was a fluttering of handkerchiefs from the mass on the pier, and an answering flutter from those who crowded along the bulwarks of the steamer. The tug slowly pulled the prow of the vessel round, and at last the engines of the steamship began their pulsating throbs—throbs that would vibrate night and day until the steamer reached an older civilization. The crowd on the pier became more and more indistinct to those on board, and many of the passengers went below, for the air was bitterly cold, and the boat was forcing its way down the bay among huge blocks of ice.

Two, at least, of the passengers had taken little interest in the departure. They were leaving no friends behind them, and were both setting their faces toward friends at home.

'Let us go down,' said Wentworth to Kenyon, 'and see that we get seats together at table before all are taken.'

'Very good,' replied his companion, and they descended to the roomy saloon, where two long tables were already laid with an ostentatious display of silver, glassware, and cutlery, which made many, who looked on this wilderness of white linen with something like dismay, hope that the voyage would be smooth, although, as it was a winter passage, there was every chance it would not be. The purser and two of his assistants sat at one of the shorter tables with a plan before them, marking off the names of passengers who wished to be together, or who wanted some particular place at any of the tables. The smaller side-tables were still uncovered because the number of passengers at that season of the year was comparatively few. As the places were assigned, one of the helpers to the purser wrote the names of the passengers on small cards, and the other put the cards on the tables.

One young woman, in a beautifully-fitting travelling gown, which was evidently of the newest cut and design, stood a little apart from the general group which surrounded the purser and his assistants. She eagerly scanned every face, and listened attentively to the names given. Sometimes a shade of disappointment crossed her brow, as if she expected some particular person to possess some particular name which that particular person did not bear. At last her eyes sparkled.

'My name is Wentworth,' said the young man whose turn it was.

'Ah! any favourite place, Mr. Wentworth?' asked the purser blandly, as if he had known Wentworth all his life.

'No, we don't care where we sit; but my friend Mr. Kenyon and myself would like places together.'

'Very good; you had better come to my table,' replied the purser. 'Numbers 23 and 24—Mr. Kenyon and Mr. Wentworth.'

The steward took the cards that were given him, and placed them to correspond with the numbers the purser had named. Then the young woman moved gracefully along, as if she were interested in the names upon the table. She looked at Wentworth's name for a moment, and saw in the place next to his the name of Mr. Brown. She gave a quick, apprehensive glance around the saloon, and observed the two young men who had arranged for their seats at table now walking leisurely toward the companion-way. She took the card with the name of Mr. Brown upon it, and slipped upon the table another on which were written the words 'Miss Jennie Brewster.' Mr. Brown's card she placed on the spot from which she had taken her own.

'I hope Mr. Brown is not particular which place he occupies,' said Jennie to herself; 'but at any rate I shall see that I am early for dinner, and I'm sure Mr. Brown, whoever he is, will not be so ungallant as to insist on having this place if he knows his card was here.'

Subsequent events proved her surmise regarding Mr. Brown's indifference to be perfectly well founded. That young man searched for his card, found it, and sat down on the chair opposite the young woman, who already occupied her chair, and was, in fact, the first one at table. Seeing there would be no unseemly dispute about places, she began to plan in her own mind how she would first attract the attention of Mr. Wentworth. While thinking how best to approach her victim, Jennie heard his voice.

'Here you are, Kenyon; here are our places.'

'Which is mine?' said the voice of Kenyon.

'It doesn't matter,' answered Wentworth, and then a thrill of fear went through the gentle heart of Miss Jennie Brewster. She had not thought of the young man not caring which seat he occupied, and she dreaded the possibility of finding herself next to Kenyon rather than Wentworth. Her first estimate of the characters of the two men seemed to be correct. She always thought of Kenyon as Bunyan, and she felt certain that Wentworth would be the easier man of the two to influence. The next moment her fears were allayed, for Kenyon, giving a rapid glance at the handsome young woman, deliberately chose the seat farthest from her, and Wentworth, with 'I beg your pardon,' slipped in and sat down on the chair beside her.

'Now,' thought Jennie, with a sigh of relief, 'our positions are fixed for the meals of the voyage.' She had made her plans for beginning an acquaintance with the young man, but they were rendered unnecessary by the polite Mr. Wentworth handing her the bill of fare.

'Oh, thank you,' said the girl, in a low voice, which was so musical that Wentworth glanced at her a second time and saw how sweet and pretty and innocent she was.

'I'm in luck,' said the unfortunate young man to himself. Then he remarked aloud: 'We have not many ladies with us this voyage.'

'No,' replied Miss Brewster; 'I suppose nobody crosses at this time of the year unless compelled to.'

'I can answer for two passengers that such is the case.'

'Do you mean yourself as one?'

'Yes, myself and my friend.'

'How pleasant it must be,' said Miss Brewster, 'to travel with a friend! Then one is not lonely. I, unfortunately, am travelling alone.'

'I fancy,' said the gallant Wentworth, 'that if you are lonely while on board ship, it will be entirely your own fault.'

Miss Brewster laughed a silvery little laugh.

'I don't know about that,' she said. 'I am going to that Mecca of all Americans—Paris. My father is to meet me there, and we are then going on to the Riviera together.'

'Ah, that will be very pleasant,' said Wentworth. 'The Riviera at this season is certainly a place to be desired.'

'So I have heard,' she replied.

'Have you not been across before?'

'No, this is my first trip. I suppose you have crossed many times?'

'Oh no,' answered the Englishman; 'this is only my second voyage, my first having been the one that took me to America.'

'Ah, then you are not an American,' returned Miss Brewster, with apparent surprise.

She imagined that a man is generally flattered when a mistake of this kind is made. No matter how proud he may be of his country, he is pleased to learn that there is no provincialism about him which, as the Americans say, 'gives him away.'

'I think,' said Wentworth, 'as a general thing, I am not taken for anything but what I am—an Englishman.'

'I have met so few Englishmen,' said the guileless young woman, 'that really I should not be expected to know.'

'I understand it is a common delusion among Americans that every Englishman drops his "h's," and is to be detected in that way.'

Jennie laughed again, and George Wentworth thought it one of the prettiest laughs he had ever heard.

Poor Kenyon was rather neglected by his friend during the dinner. He felt a little gloomy while the courses went on, and wished he had an evening paper. Meanwhile, Wentworth and the handsome girl beside him got on very well together. At the end of the dinner she seemed to have some difficulty in getting up from her chair, and Wentworth showed her how to turn it round, leaving her free to rise. She thanked him prettily.

'I am going on deck,' she said, turning to go; 'I am so anxious to get my first glimpse of the ocean at night from the deck of a steamer.'

'I hope you will let me accompany you,' returned young Wentworth. 'The decks are rather slippery, and even when the boat is not rolling it isn't quite safe for a lady unused to the motion of a ship to walk alone in the dark.'

'Oh, thank you very much,' replied Miss Brewster, with effusion. 'It is kind of you, I am sure; and if you promise not to let me rob you of the pleasure of your after-dinner cigar, I shall be most happy to have you accompany me. I will meet you at the top of the stairway in five minutes.'

'You are getting on,' said Kenyon, as the young woman disappeared.

'What's the use of being on board ship,' said Wentworth, 'If you don't take advantage of the opportunity for making shipboard acquaintances? There is an unconventionality about life on a steamer that is not without its charm, as perhaps you will find out before the voyage is over, John.'

'You are merely trying to ease your conscience because of your heartless desertion of me.'

George Wentworth had waited at the top of the companion-way a little more than five minutes when Miss Brewster appeared, wrapped in a cloak edged with fur, which lent an additional charm to her complexion, set off as it was by a jaunty steamer cap. They stepped out on the deck, and found it not at all so dark as they had expected. Little globes of electric light were placed at regular intervals on the walls of the deck building. Overhead was stretched a sort of canvas roof, against which the sleety rain pattered. One of the sailors, with a rubber mop, was pushing into the gutter by the side of the ship the moisture from the deck. All around the boat the night was as black as ink, except here and there where the white curl of a wave showed luminous for a moment in the darkness.

Miss Brewster insisted that Wentworth should light his cigar, which, after some persuasion, he did. Then he tucked her hand snugly under his arm, and she adjusted her step to suit his. They had the promenade all to themselves. The rainy winter night was not so inviting to most of the passengers as the comfortable rooms below. Kenyon, however, and one or two others came up, and sat on the steamer chairs that were tied to the brass rod which ran along the deckhouse wall. He saw the glow of Wentworth's cigar as the couple turned at the farther end of the walk, and when they passed him he heard a low murmur of conversation, and caught now and then a snatch of silvery laughter. It was not because Wentworth had deserted him that Kenyon felt so uncomfortable and depressed. He could not tell just what it was, but there had settled on his mind a strange, uneasy foreboding. After a time he went down into the saloon and tried to read, but could not, and so wandered along the seemingly endless narrow passage to his room (which was Wentworth's as well), and, in nautical phrase, 'turned in.' It was late when his companion came.

'Asleep, Kenyon?' asked the latter.

'No,' was the answer.

'By George! John, she is one of the most charming girls I ever met. Wonderfully clever, too; makes a man feel like a fool beside her. She has read nearly everything. Has opinions on all our authors, a great many of whom I've never heard of. I wish, for your sake, John, she had a sister on board.'

'Thanks, old man; awfully good of you, I'm sure,' said Kenyon. 'Don't you think it's about time to stop raving, get into your bunk, and turn out that confounded light?'

'All right, growler, I will.'

Meanwhile, in her own state-room, Miss Jennie Brewster was looking at her reflection in the glass. As she shook out her long hair until it rippled down her back, she smiled sweetly, and said to herself:

'Poor Mr. Wentworth! Only the first night out, and he told me his name was George.'

CHAPTER III

The second day out was a pleasant surprise for all on board who had made up their minds to a disagreeable winter passage. The air was clear, the sky blue as if it were spring-time, instead of midwinter. They were in the Gulf Stream. The sun shone brightly and the temperature was mild. Nevertheless, it was an uncomfortable day for those who were poor sailors. Although there did not seem, to the casual observer, to be much of a sea running, the ship rolled atrociously. Those who had made heroic resolutions on the subject were sitting in silent misery in their deck-chairs, which had been lashed to firm stanchions. Few were walking the clean bright deck, because walking that morning was a gymnastic feat. Three or four who evidently wished to show they had crossed before, and knew all about it, managed to make their way along the deck. Those recumbent in the steamer-chairs watched with lazy interest the pedestrians who now and then stood still, leaning apparently far out of the perpendicular, as the deck inclined downward. Sometimes the pedestrian's feet slipped, and he shot swiftly down the incline. Such an incident was invariably welcomed by those who sat. Even the invalids smiled wanly.

Kenyon reclined in his deck-chair with his eyes fixed on the blue sky. His mind was at rest about the syndicate report now that it had been mailed to London. His thoughts wandered to his own affairs, and he wondered whether he would make money out of the option he had acquired at Ottawa. He was not an optimistic man, and he doubted.

After their work for the London Syndicate was finished, the young men had done a little business on their own account. They visited together a mica-mine that was barely paying expenses, and which the proprietors were anxious to sell. The mine was owned by the Austrian Mining Company, whose agent, Von Brent, was interviewed by Kenyon in Ottawa. The young men obtained an option on this mine for three months from Von Brent. Kenyon's educated eye had told him that the white mineral they were placing on the dump at the mouth of the mine was even more valuable than the mica for which they were mining.

Kenyon was scrupulously honest—a quality somewhat at a discount in the mining business—and it seemed to him hardly the fair thing that he should take advantage of the ignorance of Von Brent regarding the mineral on the dump. Wentworth had some trouble in overcoming his friend's scruples. He claimed that knowledge always had to be paid for, in law, medicine, or mineralogy, and therefore that they were perfectly justified in profiting by their superior wisdom. So it came about that the young men took to England with them a three months' option on the mine.

Wentworth had been walking about all morning like a lost spirit apparently seeking what was not. 'It can't be,' he said to himself. No; the thought was too horrible, and he dismissed it from his mind, merely conjecturing that perhaps she was not an early riser, which was indeed the case. No one who works on a morning newspaper ever takes advantage of the lark's example.

'Well, Kenyon,' said Wentworth 'you look as if you were writing a poem, or doing something that required deep mental agony.'

'The writing of poems, my dear Wentworth, I leave to you. I am doing something infinitely more practical—something that you ought to be at. I am thinking what we are to do with our mica-mine when we get it over to London.'

'Oh, "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof,"' cried Wentworth jauntily; 'besides, half an hour's thinking by a solid-brained fellow like you is worth a whole voyage of my deepest meditation.'

'She hasn't appeared yet?' said Kenyon.

'No, dear boy; no, she has *not*. You see, I make no pretence with you as other less ingenuous men might. No, she has *not* appeared, and she has not breakfasted.'

'Perhaps–' began Kenyon.

'No, no!' cried Wentworth; 'I'll have no "perhaps." I thought of that, but I instantly dismissed the idea. She's too good a sailor.'

'It requires a very good sailor to stand this sort of thing. It looks so unnecessary, too. I wonder what the ship is rolling about?'

'I can't tell, but she seems to be rolling about half over. I say, Kenyon, old fellow, I feel horrible pangs of conscience about deserting you in this way, and so early in the voyage. I didn't do it last time, did I?'

'You were a model travelling companion on the last voyage,' returned Kenyon.

'I don't wish to make impertinent suggestions, my boy, but allow me to tell you that there are some other very nice girls on board.'

'You are not so bad as I feared, then,' replied Kenyon, 'or you wouldn't admit that. I thought you had eyes for no one but Miss—Miss—I really didn't catch her name.'

'I don't mind telling you confidentially, Kenyon, that her name is Jennie.'

'Dear me!' cried Kenyon, 'has it got so far as that? Doesn't it strike you, Wentworth, that you are somewhat in a hurry? It seems decidedly more American than English. Englishmen are apt to weigh matters a little more.'

'There is no necessity for weighing, my boy. I don't see any harm in making the acquaintance of a pretty girl when you have a long voyage before you.'

'Well, I wouldn't let it grow too serious, if I were you.'

'There isn't the slightest danger of seriousness about the affair. On shore the young lady wouldn't cast a second look at me. She is the daughter of a millionaire. Her father is in Paris, and they are going on to the Riviera in a few weeks.'

'All the more reason,' said Kenyon, 'that you shouldn't let this go too far. Be on your guard, my boy. I've heard it said that American girls have the delightful little practice of leading a man on until it comes to a certain point, and then arching their pretty eyebrows, looking astonished, and forgetting all about him afterwards. You had better wait until we make our fortunes on this mica-mine, and then, perhaps, your fair millionairess may listen to you.'

'John,' cried Wentworth, 'you are the most cold-blooded man I know of. I never noticed it so particularly before, but it seems to me that years and years of acquaintance with minerals of all kinds, hard and flinty, transform a man. Be careful that you don't become like the minerals you work among.'

'Well, I don't know anything that has less tendency to soften a man than long columns of figures. I think the figures you work at are quite as demoralizing as the minerals I have spent my life with.'

'Perhaps you are right, but a girl would have to be thrown into your arms before you would admit that such a thing as a charming young lady existed.'

'If I make all the money I hope to make out of the mica-mine, I expect the young ladies will not be thrown into my arms, but at my head. Money goes a long way toward reconciling a girl to marriage.'

'It certainly goes a long way toward reconciling her mother to the marriage. I don't believe,' said Wentworth slowly, 'that my—that Miss Brewster ever thinks about money.'

'She probably doesn't need to, but no doubt there is someone who does the thinking for her. If her father is a millionaire, and has, like many Americans, made his own money, you may depend upon it he will do the thinking for her; and if Miss Brewster should prove to be thoughtless in the matter, the old gentleman will very speedily bring you both to your senses. It would be different if you had a title.'

'I haven't any,' replied Wentworth, 'except the title George Wentworth, accountant, with an address in the City and rooms in the suburbs.'

'Precisely; if you were Lord George Wentworth, or even Sir George, or Baron Wentworth of something or other, you might have a chance; as it is, the title of accountant would not go far with an American millionaire, or his daughter either.'

'You are a cold, calculating wretch.'

'Nothing of the sort. I merely have my senses about me, and you haven't at this particular moment. You wouldn't think of trusting a book-keeper's figures without seeing his vouchers. Well, my boy, you haven't the vouchers—at least, not yet, so that is why I ask you to give your attention to what we are going to do with our mine; and if you take my advice you will not think seriously about American millionaires or their daughters.'

George Wentworth jumped to his feet, the ship gave a lurch at that particular moment, and he no sooner found his feet than he nearly lost them again; however, he was an expert at balancing himself as well as his accounts, and though for the moment his attention was occupied in keeping his equilibrium, he looked down on his companion, still placidly reclining in his chair, with a smile on his face.

'Kenyon,' he said, 'I am going to look for another girl.'

'Is one not enough for you?'

'No, I want two—one for myself, and one for you. No man can sympathize with another unless he is in the same position himself. John, I want sympathy, and I'm not getting it.'

'What you need more urgently,' said Kenyon calmly, 'is common-sense, and that I am trying to supply.'

'You are doing your duty in that direction; but a man doesn't live by common-sense alone. There comes a time when common-sense is a drug in the market. I don't say it has come to me yet, but I'm resolved to get you into a more sympathetic mood, so I am going to find a suitable young lady for you.'

'More probably you are going to look for your own,' answered Kenyon, as his friend walked off, and, disappearing round the corner, crossed to the other side of the ship.

Kenyon did not turn again to his figures when his companion left him. He mused over the curiously rapid turn of circumstances. He hoped Wentworth would not take it too seriously, for he felt that, somehow or other, Miss Brewster was just the sort of girl to throw him over after she had whiled away a tedious voyage. Of course he could not say this to his friend, who evidently admired Miss Brewster, but he had said as much as he could to put Wentworth on his guard.

'Now,' said Kenyon to himself, 'if she had been a girl like *that*, I wouldn't have minded.' The girl 'like *that*' was a young woman who for half an hour had been walking the deck alone with marvellous skill. She was not so handsome as the American girl, but she had a better complexion, and there was a colour in her cheek which seemed to suggest England. Her dress was not quite so smart nor so well-fitting as that of the American girl; but, nevertheless, she was warmly and sensibly clad, and a brown Tam o' Shanter covered her fair head. The tips of her hands were in the pockets of her short blue-cloth jacket; and she walked the deck with a firm, reliant tread that aroused the admiration of John Kenyon. 'If she were only a girl like *that*,' he repeated to himself, 'I wouldn't mind. There's something fresh and genuine about her. She makes me think of the breezy English downs.'

As she walked back and forward, one or two young men seemingly made an attempt to become acquainted with her, but it was evident to Kenyon that the young woman had made it plain to them, politely enough, that she preferred walking alone, and they raised their sea-caps and left her.

'She doesn't pick up the first man who comes,' he mused.

The ship was beginning to roll more and more, and yet the day was beautiful and the sea seemingly calm. Most of the promenaders had left the deck. Two or three of them had maintained their equilibrium with a gratifying success which engendered the pride that goeth before a fall, but the moment came at last when their feet slipped and they had found themselves thrown against the bulwark of the steamer. Then they had laughed a little in a crestfallen manner, picked themselves up, and promenaded the deck no more. Many of those who were lying in the steamer-chairs gave up the struggle and went down to their cabins. There was a momentary excitement as one chair broke from its fastenings and slid down with a crash against the bulwarks. The occupant was picked up in a hysterical condition and taken below. The deck steward tied the chair more firmly, so that the accident would not happen again. The young English girl was opposite John Kenyon when this disaster took

place, and her attention being diverted by fear for the safety of the occupant of the sliding chair, her care for herself was withdrawn at the very moment when it was most needed. The succeeding lurch which the ship gave to the other side was the most tremendous of the day. The deck rose until the girl leaning outward could almost touch it with her hand, then, in spite of herself, she slipped with the rapidity of lightning against the chair John Kenyon occupied, and that tripping her up, flung her upon him with an unexpectedness that would have taken his breath away if the sudden landing of a plump young woman upon him had not accomplished the same thing. The fragile deck-chair gave way with a crash, and it would be hard to say which was the more discomfited by the sudden catastrophe, John Kenyon or the girl.

'I hope you are not hurt,' he managed to stammer.

'Don't think about me!' she cried. 'I have broken your chair, and—and–'

'The chair doesn't matter,' cried Kenyon. 'It was a flimsy structure at best. I am not hurt, if that is what you mean—and you mustn't mind it.'

Then there came to his recollection the sentence of George Wentworth: 'A girl will have to be thrown into your arms before you will admit that such a thing as a charming young woman exists.'

CHAPTER IV

Edith Longworth could hardly be said to be a typical representative of the English girl. She had the English girl's education, but not her training. She had lost her mother in early life, which makes a great difference in a girl's bringing up, however wealthy her father may be; and Edith's father was wealthy, there was no doubt of that. If you asked any City man about the standing of John Longworth, you would learn that the 'house' was well thought of. People said he was lucky, but old John Longworth asserted that there was no such thing as luck in business—in which statement he was very likely incorrect. He had large investments in almost every quarter of the globe. When he went into any enterprise, he went into it thoroughly. Men talk about the inadvisability of putting all one's eggs into one basket, but John Longworth was a believer in doing that very thing—and in watching the basket. Not that he had all his eggs in one basket, or even in one kind of basket; but when John Longworth was satisfied with the particular variety of basket presented to him, he put a large number of eggs in it. When anything was offered for investment—whether it was a mine or a brewery or a railway—John Longworth took an expert's opinion upon it, and then the chances were that he would disregard the advice given. He was in the habit of going personally to see what had been offered to him. If the enterprise were big enough, he thought little of taking a voyage to the other end of the world for the sole purpose of looking the investment over. It was true that in many cases he knew nothing whatever of the business he went to examine, but that did not matter; he liked to have a personal inspection where a large amount of his money was to be placed. Investment seemed to be a sort of intuition with him. Often, when the experts' opinions were unanimously in favour of the project, and when everything appeared to be perfectly safe, Longworth would pay a personal visit to the business offered for sale, and come to a sudden conclusion not to have anything to do with it. He would give no reasons to his colleagues for his change of front; he simply refused to entertain the proposal any further, and withdrew. Several instances of this kind had occurred. Sometimes a large and profitable business, held out in the prospectus to be exceedingly desirable, had come to nothing, and when the company was wound up, people remembered what Longworth had said about it. So there came to be a certain superstitious feeling among those who knew him, that, if old Mr. Longworth was in a thing, the thing was safe, and if a company promoter managed to get his name on the prospectus, his project was almost certain to succeed.

* * * * *

When Edith Longworth was pronounced finished so far as education was concerned, she became more and more the companion of her father, and he often jokingly referred to her as his man of business. She went with him on his long journeys, and so had been several times to America, once to the Cape, and one long voyage, with Australia as the objective point, had taken her completely round the world. She inherited much of her father's shrewdness, and there is no doubt that, if Edith Longworth had been cast upon her own resources, she would have become an excellent woman of business. She knew exactly the extent of her father's investments, and she was his confidante in a way that few women are with their male relatives. The old man had a great faith in Edith's opinion, although he rarely acknowledged it. Having been together so much on such long trips, they naturally became, in a way, boon companions. Thus, Edith's education was very unlike that of the ordinary English girl, and this particular training caused her to develop into a different kind of woman than she might have been had her mother lived.

Perfect confidence existed between father and daughter, and only lately had there come a shadow upon their relations, about which neither ever spoke to the other since their first conversation on the subject.

Edith had said, with perhaps more than her usual outspokenness, that she had no thought whatever of marriage, and least of all had her thoughts turned toward the man her father seemed to have chosen. In answer to this, her father had said nothing, but Edith knew him too well to believe that he had changed his mind about the matter. The fact that he had invited her cousin to join them on this particular journey showed her that he evidently believed all that was necessary was to throw them more together than had been the case previously; and, although Edith was silent, she thought her father had not the same shrewdness in these matters that he showed in the purchasing of a growing business. Edith had been perfectly civil to the young man—as she would have been to anyone—but he saw that she preferred her own company to his; and so, much to the disgust of Mr. Longworth, he spent most of his time at cards in the smoking-room, whereas, according to the elder gentleman's opinion, he should have been promenading the deck with his cousin.

William Longworth, the cousin, was inclined to be a trifle put out, for he looked upon himself as quite an eligible person, one whom any girl in her senses would be glad to look forward to as a possible husband. He made no pretence of being madly in love with Edith, but he thought the marriage would be an admirable thing all round. She was a nice girl, he said to himself, and his uncle's money was well worth thinking about. In fact, he was becoming desirous that the marriage should take place; but, as there was no one upon whom he could look as a rival, he had the field to himself. He would therefore show Miss Edith that he was by no means entirely dependent for his happiness upon her company; and this he proceeded to do by spending his time in the smoking-room, and playing cards with his fellow-passengers. It was quite evident to anyone who saw Edith, that, if this suited him, it certainly suited her; so they rarely met on shipboard except at table, where Edith's place was between her father and her cousin. Miss Longworth and her cousin had had one brief conversation on the subject of marriage. He spoke of it rather jauntily, as being quite a good arrangement, but she said very shortly that she had no desire to change her name.

'You don't need to,' said Cousin William; 'my name is Longworth, and so is yours.'

'It is not a subject for a joke,' she answered.

'I am not joking, my dear Edith. I am merely telling you what everybody knows to be true. You surely don't deny that my name is Longworth?'

'I don't mean to deny or affirm anything in relation to the matter,' replied the young woman, 'and you will oblige me very much if you will never recur to this subject again.'

And so the young man betook himself once more to the smoking-room.

On this trip Edith had seen a good deal of American society. People over there had made it very pleasant for her, and, although the weather was somewhat trying, she had greatly enjoyed the sleigh-rides and the different festivities which winter brings to the citizen of Northern America. Her father and her cousin had gone to America to see numerous breweries that were situated in different parts of the country, and which it was proposed to combine into one large company. They had made a Western city their headquarters, and while Edith was enjoying herself with her newly-found friends, the two men had visited the breweries in different sections of the country—all, however, near the city where Edith was staying. The breweries seemed to be in a very prosperous condition, although the young man declared the beer they brewed was the vilest he had ever tasted, and he said he wouldn't like to have anything to do with the production of it, even if it did turn in money. His uncle had not tried the beer, but confined himself solely to the good old bottled English ale, which had increased in price, if not in excellence, by its transportation. But there was something about the combination that did not please him; and, from the few words he dropped on the subject, his nephew saw that Longworth was not going to be a member of the big Beer Syndicate. The intention had been to take a trip to Canada, and Edith had some hopes of seeing the city of Montreal in its winter dress; but that

visit had been abandoned, as so much time had been consumed in the Western States. So they began their homeward voyage, with the elder Longworth sitting a good deal in his deck-chair, and young Longworth spending much of his time in the smoking-room, while Edith walked the deck alone. And this was the lady whom Fate threw into the arms of John Kenyon.

CHAPTER V

Steamer friendships ripen quickly. It is true that, as a general thing, they perish with equal suddenness. The moment a man sets his foot on solid land the glamour of the sea seems to leave him, and the friend to whom he was ready to swear eternal fealty while treading the deck, is speedily forgotten on shore. Edith Longworth gave no thought to the subject of the innocent nature of steamer friendships when she reviewed in her own mind her pleasant walk along the deck with Kenyon. She had met many interesting people during her numerous voyages, but they had all proved to be steamer acquaintances, whose names she had now considerable difficulty in remembering. Perhaps she would not have given a second thought to Mr. Kenyon that night if it had not been for some ill-considered remarks her cousin saw fit to make at the dinner-table.

'Who was that fellow you were walking with today?' young Longworth asked.

Edith smiled upon him pleasantly, and answered:

'Mr. Kenyon you mean, I suppose?'

'Oh, you know his name, do you?' he answered gruffly.

'Certainly,' she replied; 'I would not walk with a gentleman whose name I did not know.'

'Really?' sneered her cousin. 'And pray were you introduced to him?'

'I do not think,' answered Edith quietly, 'any person has a right to ask me that question except my father. He has not asked it, and, as you have, I will merely answer that I *was* introduced to Mr. Kenyon.'

'I did not know you had any mutual acquaintance on board who could make you known to each other.'

'Well, the ceremony was a little informal. We were introduced by our mutual friend, old Father Neptune. Father Neptune, being, as you know, a little boisterous this morning, took the liberty of flinging me upon Mr. Kenyon. I weigh something more than a feather, and the result was—although Mr. Kenyon was good enough to say he was uninjured—that the chair on which he sat had not the same consideration for my feelings, and it went down with a crash. I thought Mr. Kenyon should take my chair in exchange for the one I had the misfortune to break, but Mr. Kenyon thought otherwise. He said he was a mining engineer, and that he could not claim to be a very good one if he found any difficulty in mending a deck-chair. It seems he succeeded in doing so, and that is the whole history of my introduction to, and my intercourse with, Mr. Kenyon, Mining Engineer.'

'Most interesting and romantic,' replied the young man; 'and do you think that your father approves of your picking up indiscriminate acquaintances in this way?'

Edith, flushing a little at this, said:

'I would not willingly do what my father disapproved of;' then in a lower voice she added: 'except, perhaps, one thing.'

Her father, who had caught snatches of the conversation, now leaned across towards his nephew, and said warningly:

'I think Edith is quite capable of judging for herself. This is my seventh voyage with her, and I have always found such to be the case. This happens to be your first, and so, were I you, I would not pursue the subject further.'

The young man was silent, and Edith gave her father a grateful glance. Thus it was that, while she might not have given a thought to Kenyon, the remarks which her cousin had made, brought to her mind, when she was alone, the two young men, and the contrast between them was not at all to the advantage of her cousin.

The scrubbing-brushes on the deck above him woke Kenyon early next morning. For a few moments after getting on deck he thought he had the ship to himself. One side of the deck was clean and wet; on the other side the men were slowly moving the scrubbing-brushes backward and forward,

with a drowsy swish-swish. As he walked up the deck, he saw there was one passenger who had been earlier than himself.

Edith Longworth turned round as she heard his step, and her face brightened into a smile when she saw who it was.

Kenyon gravely raised his steamer cap and bade her 'Good-morning.'

'You are an early riser, Mr. Kenyon.'

'Not so early as you are, I see.'

'I think I am an exceptional passenger in that way,' replied the girl. 'I always enjoy the early morning at sea. I like to get as far forward on the steamer as possible, so that there is nothing between me and the boundless anywhere. Then it seems as if the world belongs to myself, with nobody else in it.'

'Isn't that a rather selfish view?' put in Kenyon.

'Oh, I don't think so. There is certainly nothing selfish in my enjoyment of it; but, you know, there are times when one wishes to be alone, and to forget everybody.'

'I hope I have not stumbled upon one of those times.'

'Oh, not at all, Mr. Kenyon,' replied his companion, laughing. 'There was nothing personal in the remark. If I wished to be alone, I would have no hesitation in walking off. I am not given to hinting; I speak plainly—some of my friends think a little too plainly. Have you ever been on the Pacific Ocean?'

'Never.'

'Ah, there the mornings are delicious. It is very beautiful here now, but in summer on the Pacific some of the mornings are so calm and peaceful and fresh, that it would seem as if the world had been newly made.'

'You have travelled a great deal, Miss Longworth. I envy you.'

'I often think I am a person to be envied, but there may come a shipwreck one day, and then I shall not be in so enviable a position.'

'I sincerely hope you may never have such an experience.'

'Have you ever been shipwrecked, Mr. Kenyon?'

'Oh no; my travelling experiences are very limited. But to read of a shipwreck is bad enough.'

'We have had a most delightful voyage so far. Quite like summer. One can scarcely believe that we left America in the depth of winter, with snow everywhere and the thermometer ever so far below zero. Have you mended your deck-chair yet, sufficiently well to trust yourself upon it again?'

'Oh!' said Kenyon, with a laugh, 'you really must not make fun of my amateur carpentering like that. As I told you, I am a mining engineer, and if I cannot mend a deck-chair, what would you expect me to do with a mine?'

'Have you had much to do with mines?' asked the young woman.

'I am just beginning,' replied Kenyon; 'this, in fact, is one of my first commissions. I have been sent with my friend Wentworth to examine certain mines on the Ottawa River.'

'The Ottawa River!' cried Edith. 'Are you one of those who were sent out by the London Syndicate?'

'Yes,' answered Kenyon with astonishment. 'What do you know about it?'

'Oh, I know everything about it. Everything, except what the mining expert's report is to be, and that information, I suppose, you have; so, between the two of us, we know a great deal about the fortunes of the London Syndicate.'

'Really! I am astonished to meet a young lady who knows anything about the matter. I understood it was rather a secret combination up to the present.'

'Ah! but, you see, I am one of the syndicate.'

'You!'

'Certainly,' answered Edith Longworth, laughing. 'At least, my father is, and that is the same thing, or almost the same thing. We intended to go to Canada ourselves, and I was very much disappointed at not going. I understand that the sleighing, and the snowshoeing, and the tobogganing are something wonderful.'

'I saw very little of the social side of life in the district, my whole time being employed at the mines; but even in the mining village where we stayed, they had a snowshoe club, and a very good toboggan slide—so good, in fact, that, having gone down once, I never ventured to risk my life on it again.'

'If my father knew you were on board, he would be anxious to meet you. Doubtless you know the London Syndicate will be a very large company.'

'Yes, I am aware of that.'

'And you know that a great deal is going to depend upon your report?'

'I suppose that is so, and I hope the syndicate will find my report at least an honest and thorough one.'

'Is the colleague who was with you also on board?'

'Yes, he is here.'

'He, then, was the accountant who was sent out?'

'Yes, and he is a man who does his business very thoroughly, and I think the syndicate will be satisfied with his work.'

'And do you not think they will be satisfied with yours also? I am sure you did your work conscientiously.'

Kenyon almost blushed as the young woman made this remark, but she looked intently at him, and he saw that her thoughts were not on him, but on the large interests he represented.

'Were you favourably impressed with the Ottawa as a mining region?' she asked.

'Very much so,' he answered, and, anxious to turn the conversation away from his own report, he said: 'I was so much impressed with it that I secured the option of a mine there for myself.'

'Oh! do you intend to buy one of the mines there?'

Kenyon laughed.

'No, I am no capitalist seeking investment for my money, but I saw that the mine contained possibilities of producing a great deal of money for those who possess it. It is very much more valuable, in my opinion, than the owners themselves suspect; so I secured an option upon it for three months, and hope when I reach England to form a company to take it up.'

'Well, I am sure,' said the young lady, 'if you are confident that the mine is a good one, you could see no one who would help you more in that way than my father. He has been looking at a brewery business he thought of investing in, but which he has concluded to have nothing to do with, so he will be anxious to find something reliable in its place. How much would be required for the purchase of the mine you mention?'

'I was thinking of asking fifty thousand pounds for it,' said Kenyon, flushing, as he thought of his own temerity in more than doubling the price of the mine.

Wentworth and he had estimated the probable value of the mine, and had concluded that even selling it at that price—which would give them thirty thousand pounds to divide between them—they were selling a mine that was really worth very much more, and would soon pay tremendous dividends on the fifty thousand pounds. He expected the young woman to be impressed by the amount, and was, therefore, very much surprised when she said:

'Fifty thousand pounds! Is that all? Then I am afraid my father would have nothing to do with it. He only deals with large businesses, and a company with a capitalization of fifty thousand pounds I am sure he would not look at.'

'You talk of fifty thousand pounds,' said Kenyon, 'as if it were a mere trifle. To me it seems an immense fortune. I only wish I had it, or half of it.'

'You are not rich, then?' said the girl, with apparent interest.

'No,' replied the young man. 'Far otherwise.'

At that moment the elder Mr. Longworth appeared in the door of the companion-way, and looked up and down the deck.

'Oh, here you are,' he said, as his daughter sprang from her chair.

'Father,' she cried, 'let me introduce to you Mr. Kenyon, who is the mining expert sent out by our syndicate to look at the Ottawa mines.'

'I am pleased to meet you,' said the elder gentleman.

The capitalist sat down beside the mining engineer, and began, somewhat to Kenyon's embarrassment, to talk of the London Syndicate.

CHAPTER VI

A few mornings later Wentworth worked his way, with much balancing and grasping of stanchions, along the deck, for the ship rolled fearfully, but the person he sought was nowhere visible. He thought he would go into the smoking-room, but changed his mind at the door, and turned down the companion-way to the main saloon. The tables had been cleared of the breakfast belongings, but on one of the small tables a white cloth had been laid, and at this spot of purity in the general desert of red plush sat Miss Brewster, who was complacently ordering what she wanted from a steward, who did not seem at all pleased in serving one who had disregarded the breakfast-hour, to the disarrangement of all saloon rules. The chief steward stood by a door and looked disapprovingly at the tardy guest. It was almost time to lay the tables for lunch, and the young woman was as calmly ordering her breakfast as if she had been the first person at table.

She looked up brightly at Wentworth, and smiled as he approached her.

'I suppose,' she began, 'I'm dreadfully late, and the steward looks as if he would like to scold me. How awfully the ship is rolling! Is there a storm?'

'No. She seems to be doing this sort of thing for amusement. Wants to make it interesting for the unfortunate passengers who are not good sailors, I suppose. She's doing it, too. There's scarcely anyone on deck.'

'Dear me! I thought we were having a dreadful storm. Is it raining?'

'No. It's a beautiful sunshiny day; without much wind either, in spite of all this row.'

'I suppose you have had your breakfast long ago?'

'So long since that I am beginning to look forward with pleasant anticipation to lunch.'

'Oh dear! I had no idea I was so late as that. Perhaps *you* had better scold me. Somebody ought to do it, and the steward seems a little afraid.'

'You over-estimate my courage. I am a little afraid, too.'

'Then you *do* think I deserve it?'

'I didn't say that, nor do I think it. I confess, however, that up to this moment I felt just a trifle lonely.'

'Just a trifle! Well, that *is* flattery. How nicely you English do turn a compliment! Just a trifle!'

'I believe, as a race, we do not venture much into compliment making at all. We leave that for the polite foreigner. He would say what I tried to say a great deal better than I did, of course, but he would not mean half so much.'

'Oh, that's very nice, Mr. Wentworth. No foreigner could have put it nearly so well. Now, what about going on deck?'

'Anywhere, if you let me accompany you.'

'I shall be most delighted to have you. I won't say merely a trifle delighted.'

'Ah! Haven't you forgiven that remark yet?'

'There's nothing to forgive, and it is quite too delicious to forget. I shall never forget it.'

'I believe that you are very cruel at heart, Miss Brewster.'

The young woman gave him a curious side-look, but did not answer. She gathered the wraps she had taken from her cabin, and, handing them to him before he had thought of offering to take them, she led the way to the deck. He found their chairs side by side, and admired the intelligence of the deck-steward, who seemed to understand which chairs to place together. Miss Jennie sank gracefully into her own, and allowed him to adjust the wraps around her.

'There,' she said, 'that's very nicely done; as well as the deck-steward himself could do it, and I am sure it is impossible to pay you a more graceful compliment than that. So few men know how to arrange one comfortably in a steamer chair.'

'You speak as though you had vast experience in steamer life, and yet you told me this was your first voyage.'

'It is. But it doesn't take a woman more than a day to see that the average man attends to such little niceties very clumsily. Now just tuck in the corner out of sight. There! Thank you, ever so much. And would you be kind enough to—Yes, that's better. And this other wrap so. Oh, that is perfect. What a patient man you are, Mr. Wentworth!'

'Yes, Miss Brewster. You *are* a foreigner. I can see that now. Your professed compliment was hollow. You said I did it perfectly, and then immediately directed me how to do it.'

'Nothing of the kind. You did it well, and I think you ought not to grudge me the pleasure of adding my own little improvements.'

'Oh, if you put it in that way, I will not. Now, before I sit down, tell me what book I can get that will interest you. The library contains a very good assortment.'

'I don't think I care about reading. Sit down and talk. I suppose I am too indolent to-day. I thought, when I came on board, that I would do a lot of reading, but I believe the sea-air makes one lazy. I must confess I feel entirely indifferent to mental improvement.'

'You evidently do not think my conversation will be at all worth listening to.'

'How quick you are to pervert my meaning! Don't you see that I think your conversation better worth listening to than the most interesting or improving book you can choose from the library? Really, in trying to avoid giving you cause for making such a remark, I have apparently stumbled into a worse error. I was just going to say I would like your conversation much better than a book, when I thought you would take that as a reflection on your reading. If you take me up so sharply I will sit here and say nothing. Now then, talk!'

'What shall I say?'

'Oh, if I told you what to say I should be doing the talking. Tell me about yourself. What do you do in London?'

'I work hard. I am an accountant.'

'And what is an accountant? What does he do? Keep accounts?'

'Some of them do; I do not. I see, rather, that accounts which other people keep have been correctly kept.'

'Aren't they always correctly kept? I thought that was what book-keepers were hired for.'

'If books were always correctly kept there would be little for us to do; but it happens, unfortunately for some, but fortunately for us, that people occasionally do not keep their accounts accurately.'

'And can you always find that out if you examine the books?'

'Always.'

'Can't a man make up his accounts so that no one can tell there is anything wrong?'

'The belief that such a thing can be done has placed many a poor wretch in prison. It has been tried often enough.'

'I am sure they can do it in the States. I have read of it being done and continued for years. Men have made off with great sums of money by falsifying the books, and no one found it out until the one who did it died or ran away.'

'Nevertheless, if an expert accountant had been called in, he would have found out very soon that something was wrong, and just where the wrong was, and how much.'

'I didn't think such cleverness possible. Have you ever discovered anything like that?'

'I have.'

'What is done when such a thing is discovered?'

'That depends upon circumstances. Usually a policeman is called in.'

'Why, it's like being a detective. I wish you would tell me about some of the cases you have had. Don't make me ask so many questions. Talk.'

'I don't think my experiences would interest you in the least. There was one case with which I had something to do in London, two years ago, that–'

'Oh, London! I don't believe the book-keepers there are half so sharp as ours. If you had to deal with American accountants, you would not find out so easily what they had or had not done.'

'Well, Miss Brewster, I may say I have just had an experience of that kind with some of your very sharpest American book-keepers. I found that the books had been kept in the most ingenious way with the intent to deceive. The system had been going on for years.'

'How interesting! And did you call in a policeman?'

'No. This was one of the cases where a policeman was not necessary. The books were kept with the object of showing that the profits of the m—of the business—had been much greater than they really were. I may say that one of your American accountants had already looked over the books, and, whether through ignorance or carelessness, or from a worse motive, he reported them all right. They were not all right, and the fact that they were not, will mean the loss of a fortune to some people on your side of the water, and the saving of good money to others on my side.'

'Then I think your profession must be a very important one.'

'We think so, Miss Brewster. I would like to be paid a percentage on the money saved because of my report.'

'And won't you?'

'Unfortunately, no.'

'I think that is too bad. I suppose the discrepancy must have been small, or the American accountant would not have overlooked it?'

'I didn't say he overlooked it. Still, the size of a discrepancy does not make any difference. A small error is as easily found as a large one. This one was large. I suppose there is no harm in my saying that the books, taking them together, showed a profit of forty thousand pounds, when they should have shown a loss of nearly half that amount. I hope nobody overhears me.'

'No; we are quite alone, and you may be sure I will not breathe a word of what you have been telling me.'

'Don't breathe it to Kenyon, at least. He would think me insane if he knew what I have said.'

'Is Mr. Kenyon an accountant, too?'

'Oh no. He is a mineralogist. He can go into a mine, and tell with reasonable certainty whether it will pay the working or not. Of course, as he says himself, any man can see six feet into the earth as well as he can. But it is not every man that can gauge the value of a working mine so well as John Kenyon.'

'Then, while you were delving among the figures, your companion was delving among the minerals?'

'Precisely.'

'And did he make any such startling discovery as you did?'

'No; rather the other way. He finds the mines very good properties, and he thinks that if they were managed intelligently they would be good paying investments—that is, at a proper price, you know—not at what the owners ask for them at present. But you can have no possible interest in these dry details.'

'Indeed, you are mistaken. I think what you have told me intensely interesting.'

For once in her life Miss Jennie Brewster told the exact truth. The unfortunate man at her side was flattered.

'For what I have told you,' he said, 'we were offered twice what the London people pay us for coming out here. In fact, even more than that: we were asked to name our own price.'

'Really now! By the owners of the property, I suppose, if you wouldn't tell on them?'

'No. By one of your famous New York newspaper men. He even went so far as to steal the papers that Kenyon had in Ottawa. He was cleverly caught, though, before he could make any use

of what he had stolen. In fact, unless his people in New York had the figures which were originally placed before the London Board, I doubt if my statistics would have been of much use to him even if he had been allowed to keep them. The full significance of my report will not show until the figures I have given are compared with those already in the hands of the London people, which were vouched for as correct by your clever American accountant.'

'You shouldn't run down an accountant just because he is American. Perhaps there will come a day, Mr. Wentworth, when you will admit that there are Americans who are more clever than either that accountant or that newspaper man. I don't think your specimens are typical.'

'I don't "run down," as you call it, the men because they are Americans. I "run down" the accountant because he was either ignorant or corrupt. I "run down" the newspaper man because he was a thief.'

Miss Brewster was silent for a few moments. She was impressing on her memory what he had said to her, and was anxious to get away, so that she could write out in her cabin exactly what had been told her. The sound of the lunch-gong gave her the excuse she needed, so, bidding her victim a pleasant and friendly farewell, she hurried from the deck to her state-room.

CHAPTER VII

One morning, when Kenyon went to his state-room on hearing the breakfast-gong, he found the lazy occupant of the upper berth still in his bunk.

'Come, Wentworth,' he shouted, 'this won't do, you know. Get up! get up! breakfast, my boy! breakfast!—the most important meal in the day to a healthy man.'

Wentworth yawned and stretched his arms over his head.

'What's the row?' he asked.

'The row is, it's time to get up. The second gong has sounded.'

'Dear me! is it so late? I didn't hear it.' Wentworth sat up in his bunk, and looked ruefully over the precipice down the chasm to the floor. 'Have you been up long?' he asked.

'Long? I have been on deck an hour and a half,' answered Kenyon.

'Then, Miss What's-her-Name must have been there also.'

'Her name is Miss Longworth,' replied Kenyon, without looking at his comrade.

'That's her name, is it? and she *was* on deck?'

'She was.'

'I thought so,' said Wentworth; 'just look at the divine influence of woman! Miss Longworth rises early, therefore John Kenyon rises early. Miss Brewster rises late, therefore George Wentworth is not seen until breakfast-time. If the conditions were reversed, I suppose the getting-up time of the two men would be changed accordingly.'

'Not at all, George—not at all. I would rise early whether anybody else on board did or not. In fact, when I got on deck this morning, I expected to have it to myself.'

'I take it, though, that you were not grievously disappointed when you found you hadn't a monopoly?'

'Well, to tell the truth, I was not; Miss Longworth is a charmingly sensible girl.'

'Oh, they all are,' said Wentworth lightly. 'You had no sympathy for me the other day. Now you know how it is yourself, as they say across the water.'

'I don't know how it is myself. The fact is, we were talking business.'

'Really? Did you get so far?'

'Yes, we got so far, if that is any distance. I told her about the mica-mine.'

'Oh, you did! What did she say? Will she invest?'

'Well, when I told her we expected to form a company for fifty thousand pounds, she said it was such a small sum, she doubted if we could get anybody interested in it in London.'

Wentworth, who was now well advanced with his dressing, gave a long whistle.

'Fifty thousand pounds a small sum? Why, John, she must be very wealthy! Probably more so than the American millionairess.'

'Well, George, you see, the difference between the two young ladies is this: that while American heiresses are apt to boast of their immense wealth, English women say nothing about it.'

'If you mean Miss Brewster when you speak in that way, you are entirely mistaken. She has never alluded to her wealth at all, with the exception of saying that her father was a millionaire. So if the young woman you speak of has been talking of her wealth at all, she has done more than the American girl.'

'She said nothing to indicate she was wealthy. I merely conjectured it when I discovered she looked upon fifty thousand pounds as a triviality.'

'Well, the fault is easily remedied. We may raise the price of the mine to one hundred thousand pounds if we can get people to invest. Perhaps the young lady's father might care to go in for it at that figure.'

'Oh, by the way, Wentworth,' said Kenyon, 'I forgot to tell you, Miss Longworth's father is one of the London Syndicate.'

'By Jove! are you sure of that? How do you know? You weren't talking of our mission out there, were you?'

'Certainly not,' replied Kenyon, flushing. 'You don't think I would speak of that to a stranger, do you? nor of anything concerned with our reports.'

Wentworth proceeded with his dressing, a guilty feeling rising in his heart.

'I want to ask you a question about that.'

'About what?' said Wentworth shortly.

'About those mines. Miss Longworth's father being a member of the London Syndicate, suppose he asks what our views in relation to the matter are: would we be justified in telling him anything?'

'He won't ask me as I don't know him; he may ask you, and if he does, then you will have to decide the question for yourself.'

'Would you say anything about it if you were in my place?'

'Oh, I don't know. If we were certain it was all right—if you are sure he *is* a member of the syndicate, and he happens to ask you about it, I scarcely see how you can avoid telling him.'

'It would be embarrassing; so I hope he won't ask me. We should not speak of it until we give in our reports. He knows, however, that you are the accountant who has that part of the business in charge.'

'Oh, then you have been talking with him?'

'Just a moment or two, after his daughter introduced me.'

'What did you say his name was?'

'John Longworth, I believe. I am sure about the Longworth, but not about the John.'

'Oh, old John Longworth in the City! Certainly; I know all about him. I never saw him before, but I think we are quite safe in telling him anything he wants to know, if he asks.'

'Breakfast, gentlemen,' said the steward, putting his head in at the door.

After breakfast Edith Longworth and her cousin walked the deck together. Young Longworth, although in better humour than he had been the night before, was still rather short in his replies, and irritating in his questions.

'Aren't you tired of this eternal parade up and down?' he asked his cousin. 'It seems to me like a treadmill—as if a person had to work for his board and lodging.'

'Let us sit down then,' she replied; 'although I think a walk before lunch or dinner increases the attractiveness of those meals wonderfully.'

'I never feel the need of working up an appetite,' he answered pettishly.

'Well, as I said before, let us sit down;' and the girl, having found her chair, lifted the rug that lay upon it, and took her place.

The young man, after standing for a moment looking at her through his glistening monocle, finally sat down beside her.

'The beastly nuisance of living on board ship,' he said, 'is that you can't play billiards.'

'I am sure you play enough at cards to satisfy you during the few days we are at sea,' she answered.

'Oh, cards! I soon tire of them.'

'You tire very quickly of everything.'

'I certainly get tired of lounging about the deck, either walking or sitting.'

'Then, pray don't let me keep you.'

'You want me to go so you may walk with your newly-found friend, that miner fellow?'

'That miner fellow is talking with my father just now. Still, if you would like to know, I have no hesitation in telling you I would much prefer his company to yours if you continue in your present mood.'

'Yes, or in any mood.'

'I did not say that; but if it will comfort you to have me say it, I shall be glad to oblige you.'

'Perhaps, then, I should go and talk with your father, and let the miner fellow come here and talk with you.'

'Please do not call him the miner fellow. His name is Mr. Kenyon. It is not difficult to remember.'

'I know his name well enough. Shall I send him to you?'

'No. I want to talk with you in spite of your disagreeableness. And what is more, I want to talk with you about Mr. Kenyon. So I wish you to assume your very best behaviour. It may be for your benefit.'

The young man indulged in a sarcastic laugh.

'Oh, if you are going to do that, I have nothing more to say,' remarked Edith quietly, rising from her chair.

'I meant no harm. Sit down and go on with your talk.'

'Listen, then. Mr. Kenyon has the option of a mine in Canada, which he believes to be a good property. He intends to form a company when he reaches London. Now, why shouldn't you make friends with him, and, if you found the property is as good as he thinks it is, help him to form the company, and so make some money for both of you?'

'You are saying one word for me and two for Kenyon.'

'No, it would be as much for your benefit as for his, so it is a word for each of you.'

'You are very much interested in him.'

'My dear cousin, I am very much interested in the mine, and I am very much interested in you. Mr. Kenyon can speak of nothing but the mine, and I am sure my father would be pleased to see you take an interest in something of the sort. I mean, you know that if you would do something of your own accord—something that was not suggested to you by him—he would like it.'

'Well, it is suggested to me by you, and that's almost the same thing.'

'No, it is not the same thing at all. Father would indeed be glad if he saw you take up anything on your own account and make a success of it. Why can you not spend some of your time talking with Mr. Kenyon discussing arrangements, so that when you return to London you might be prepared to put the mine on the market and bring out the company?'

'If I thought you were talking to me for my own sake, I would do what you suggest; but I believe you are speaking only because you are interested in Kenyon.'

'Nonsense! How can you be so absurd? I have known Mr. Kenyon but for a few hours—a day or two at most.'

The young man pulled his moustache for a moment, adjusted his eyeglass, and then said:

'Very good. I will speak to Kenyon on the subject if you wish it, but I don't say that I can help him.'

'I don't ask you to help him. I ask you to help yourself. Here is Mr. Kenyon. Let me introduce you, and then you can talk over the project at your leisure.'

'I don't suppose an introduction is necessary,' growled the young man; but as Kenyon approached them, Edith Longworth said:

'We are a board of directors, Mr. Kenyon, on the great mica-mine. Will you join the Board now, or after allotment?' Then, before he could reply, she said: 'Mr. Kenyon, this is my cousin, Mr. William Longworth.'

Longworth, without rising from his chair, shook hands in rather a surly fashion.

'I am going to speak to my father,' said the girl, 'and will leave you to talk over the mica-mine.'

When she had gone, young Longworth asked Kenyon:

'Where is the mine my cousin speaks of?'

'It is near the Ottawa River, in Canada,' was the answer.

'And what do you expect to sell it for?'

'Fifty thousand pounds.'

'Fifty thousand pounds! That will leave nothing to divide up among—by the way, how many are there in this thing—yourself alone?'

'No; my friend Wentworth shares with me.'

'Share and share alike?'

'Yes.'

'Of course, you think this mine is worth the money you ask for it—there is no swindle about it, is there?'

Kenyon drew himself up sharply as this remark was made. Then he answered coldly:

'If there was any swindle about it, I should have nothing to do with it.'

'Well, you see, I didn't know; mining swindles are not such rarities as you may imagine. If the mine is so valuable, why are the proprietors anxious to sell?'

'The owners are in Austria, and the mine in Canada, and so it is rather at arm's-length, as it were. They are mining for mica, but the mine is more valuable in other respects than it is as a mica property. They have placed a figure on the mine which is more than it has cost them so far.'

'You know its value in those other respects?'

'I do.'

'Does anyone know this except yourself?'

'I think not—no one but my friend Wentworth.'

'How did you come to learn its value?'

'By visiting the mine. Wentworth and I went together to see it.'

'Oh, is Wentworth also a mining expert?'

'No; he is an accountant in London.'

'Both of you were sent out by the London Syndicate, I understand, to look after their mines, or the mines they thought of purchasing, were you not?'

'We were.'

'And you spent your time in looking up other properties for yourselves, did you?'

Kenyon reddened at this question.

'My dear sir,' he said, 'if you are going to talk in this strain, you will have to excuse me. We were sent by the London Syndicate to do a certain thing. We did it, and did it thoroughly. After it was done the time was our own, as much as it is at the present moment. We were not hired by the day, but took a stated sum for doing a certain piece of work. I may go further and say that the time was our own at any period of our visit, so long as we fulfilled what the London Syndicate required of us.'

'Oh, I meant no offence,' said Longworth. 'You merely seemed to be posing as a sort of goody-goody young man when I spoke of mining swindles, so I only wished to startle you. How much have you to pay for the mine—that is the mica-mine?'

Kenyon hesitated for a moment.

'I do not feel at liberty to mention the sum until I have consulted with my friend Wentworth.'

'Well, you see, if I am to help you in this matter, I shall need to know every particular.'

'Certainly. I shall have to consult Wentworth as to whether we require any help or not.'

'Oh, you will speedily find that you require all the help you can get in London. You will probably learn that a hundred such mines are for sale now, and the chances are you will find that this very mica-mine has been offered. What do you believe the mine is really worth?'

'I think it is worth anywhere from one hundred thousand pounds to two hundred thousand pounds, perhaps more.'

'Is it actually worth one hundred thousand pounds?'

'According to my estimate, it is.'

'Is it worth one hundred and fifty thousand pounds?'

'It is.'

'Is it worth two hundred thousand pounds?'

'I think so.'

'What percentage would it pay on two hundred thousand pounds?'

'It might pay ten per cent., perhaps more.'

'Why, in the name of all that is wonderful, don't you put the price at two hundred thousand pounds? If it will pay ten per cent and more on that amount of money, then that sum is what you ought to sell it for. Now we will investigate this matter, if you like, and if you wish to take me in with you, and put the price up to two hundred thousand pounds, I will see what can be done about it when we get to London. Of course, it will mean somebody going out to Canada again to report on the mine. Your report would naturally not be taken in such a case; you are too vitally interested.'

'Of course,' replied Kenyon, 'I shouldn't expect my report to have any weight.'

'Well, somebody would have to be sent out to report on the mine. Are you certain that it will stand thorough investigation?'

'I am convinced of it.'

'Would you be willing to make this proposition to the investors, that, if the expert did not support your statement, you would pay his expenses out there and back?'

'I would be willing to do that,' said Kenyon, 'if I had the money; but I haven't the money.'

'Then, how do you expect to float the mine on the London market? It cannot be done without money.'

'I thought I might be able to interest some capitalist.'

'I am much afraid, Mr. Kenyon, that you have vague ideas of how companies are formed. Perhaps your friend Wentworth, being an accountant, may know more about it.'

'Yes, I confess I am relying mainly on his assistance.'

'Well, will you agree to put the price of the mine at two hundred thousand pounds, and share what we make equally between the three of us?'

'It is a large price.'

'It is not a large price if the mine will pay good dividends upon it; if it will pay eight per cent. on that amount, it is the real price of the mine, while you say that you are certain it will pay ten per cent.'

'I say I think it will pay that percentage. One never can speak with entire certainty where a mine is concerned.'

'Are you willing to put the price of the mine at that figure? Otherwise, I will have nothing to do with it.'

'As I said, I shall have to consult my friend about it, but that can be done in a very short time, and I will answer you in the afternoon.'

'Good; there is no particular hurry. Have a talk over it with him, and while I do not promise anything, I think the scheme looks feasible, if the property is good. Remember, I know nothing at all about that, but if you agree to take me in, I shall have to know full particulars of what you are going to pay for the property, and what its peculiar value is.'

'Certainly. If we agree to take a partner, we will give that partner our full confidence.'

'Well, there is nothing more to say until you have had a consultation with your friend. Good-morning, Mr. Kenyon;' and with that Longworth arose and lounged off to the smoking-room.

Kenyon waited where he was for some time, hoping Wentworth would come along, but the young man did not appear. At last he went in search of him. He passed along the deck, but found no trace of his friend, and looked for a moment into the smoking-room, but Wentworth was not there.

He went downstairs to the saloon, but his search below was equally fruitless. Coming up on deck again, he saw Miss Brewster sitting alone reading a paper-covered novel.

'Have you seen my friend Wentworth?' he asked.

She laid the book open-faced upon her lap, and looked quickly up at Kenyon before answering.

'I saw him not so very long ago, but I don't know where he is now. Perhaps you will find him in his state-room; in fact, I think it more than likely that he is there.'

With that, Miss Brewster resumed her book.

Kenyon descended to the state-room, opened the door, and saw his comrade sitting upon the plush-covered sofa, with his head in his hands. At the opening of the door, Wentworth started and looked for a moment at his friend, apparently not seeing him. His face was so gray and ghastly that Kenyon leaned against the door for support as he saw it.

'My God, George!' he cried, 'what is the matter with you? What has happened? Tell me!'

Wentworth gazed in front of him with glassy eyes for a moment, but did not answer. Then his head dropped again in his hands, and he groaned aloud.

CHAPTER VIII

There was one man on board the *Caloric* to whom Wentworth had taken an extreme dislike. His name was Fleming, and he claimed to be a New York politician. As none of his friends or enemies asserted anything worse about him, it may be assumed that Fleming had designated his occupation correctly. If Wentworth were asked what he most disliked about the man, he would probably have said his offensive familiarity. Fleming seemed to think himself a genial good fellow, and he was immensely popular with a certain class in the smoking-room. He was lavishly free with his invitations to drink, and always had a case of good cigars in his pocket, which he bestowed with great liberality. He had the habit of slapping a man boisterously on the back, and saying, 'Well, old fellow, how are you? How's things?' He usually confided to his listeners that he was a self-made man: had landed at New York without a cent in his pocket, and look at him now!

Wentworth was icy towards this man; but frigidity had no effect whatever on the exuberant spirits of the New York politician.

'Well, old man!' cried Fleming to Wentworth, as he came up to the latter and linked arms affectionately. 'What lovely weather we are having for winter time!'

'It *is* good,' said Wentworth.

'Good? It's glorious! Who would have thought, when leaving New York in a snowstorm as we did, that we would run right into the heart of spring? I hope you are enjoying your voyage?'

'I am.'

'You ought to. By the way, why are you so awful stand-offish? Is it natural, or merely put on "for this occasion only"?'

'I do not know what you mean by "stand-offish."'

'You know very well what I mean. Why do you pretend to be so stiff and formal with a fellow?'

'I am never stiff and formal with anyone unless I do not desire his acquaintance.'

Fleming laughed loudly.

'I suppose that's a personal hint. Well, it seems to me, if this exclusiveness is genuine, that you would be more afraid of newspaper notoriety than of anything else.'

'Why do you say that?'

'Because I can't, for the life of me, see why you spend so much time with Dolly Dimple. I am sure I don't know why she is here; but I do know this: that you will be served up to the extent of two or three columns in the *Sunday Argus* as sure as you live.'

'I don't understand you.'

'You don't? Why, it's plain enough. You spend all your time with her.'

'I do not even know of whom you are speaking.'

'Oh, come now, that's too rich! Is it possible you don't know that Miss Jennie Brewster is the one who writes those Sunday articles over the signature of "Dolly Dimple"?'

A strange fear fell upon Wentworth as his companion mentioned the *Argus*. He remembered it as J.K. Rivers' paper; but when Fleming said Miss Brewster was a correspondent of the *Argus*, he was aghast.

'I—I—I don't think I quite catch your meaning,' he stammered.

'Well, my meaning's easy enough to see. Hasn't she ever told you? Then it shows she wants to do you up on toast. You're not an English politician, are you? You haven't any political secrets that Dolly wants to get at, have you? Why, she is the greatest girl there is in the whole United States for finding out just what a man doesn't want to have known. You know the Secretary of State'—and here Fleming went on to relate a wonderfully brilliant feat of Dolly's; but the person to whom he was talking had neither eyes nor ears. He heard nothing and he saw nothing.

'Dear me!' said Fleming, drawing himself up and slapping the other on the back, 'you look perfectly dumfounded. I suppose I oughtn't to have given Dolly away like this; but she has pretended all along that she didn't know me, and so I've got even with her. You take my advice, and anything you don't want to see in print, don't tell Miss Brewster, that's all. Have a cigar?'

'No, thank you,' replied the other mechanically.

'Better come in and have a drink.'

'No, thank you.'

'Well, so long. I'll see you later.'

'It can't be true—it can't be true!' Wentworth repeated to himself in deep consternation, but still an inward misgiving warned him that, after all, it might be true. With his hands clasped behind him he walked up and down, trying to collect himself—trying to remember what he had told and what he had not. As he walked along, heeding nobody, a sweet voice from one of the chairs thrilled him, and he paused.

'Why, Mr. Wentworth, what is the matter with you this morning? You look as if you had seen a ghost.'

Wentworth glanced at the young woman seated in the chair, who was gazing up brightly at him.

'Well,' he said at last, 'I am not sure but I *have* seen a ghost. May I sit down beside you?'

'May you? Why, of course you may. I shall be delighted to have you. Is there anything wrong?'

'I don't know. Yes, I think there is.'

'Well, tell it to me; perhaps I can help you. A woman's wit, you know. What is the trouble?'

'May I ask you a few questions, Miss Brewster?'

'Certainly. A thousand of them, if you like, and I will answer them all if I can.'

'Thank you. Will you tell me, Miss Brewster, if you are connected with any newspaper?'

Miss Brewster laughed her merry, silvery little laugh.

'Who told you? Ah! I see how it is. It was that creature Fleming. I'll get even with him for this some day. I know what office he is after, and the next time he wants a good notice from the *Argus* he'll get it; see if he don't. I know some things about him that he would just as soon not see in print. Why, what a fool the man is! I suppose he told you out of revenge because I wouldn't speak to him the other evening. Never mind; I can afford to wait.'

'Then—then, Miss Brewster, it *is* true?'

'Certainly it is true; is there anything wrong about it? I hope you don't think it is disreputable to belong to a good newspaper?'

'To a good newspaper, no; to a bad newspaper, yes.'

'Oh, I don't think the *Argus* is a bad newspaper. It pays me well.'

'Then it is to the *Argus* that you belong?'

'Certainly.'

'May I ask, Miss Brewster, if there is anything I have spoken about to you that you intend to use in your paper?'

Again Miss Brewster laughed.

'I will be perfectly frank with you. I never tell a lie—it doesn't pay. Yes. The reason I am here is because *you* are here. I am here to find out what your report on those mines will be, also what the report of your friend will be. I have found out.'

'And do you intend to use the information you have thus obtained—if I may say it—under false pretences?'

'My dear sir, you are forgetting yourself. You must remember that you are talking to a lady.'

'A lady!' cried Wentworth in his anguish.

'Yes, sir, a lady; and you must be careful how you talk to *this* lady. There was no false pretence about it, if you remember. What you told me was in conversation; I didn't ask you for it. I didn't even make the first advances towards your acquaintance.'

'But you must admit, Miss Brewster, that it is very unfair to get a man to engage in what he thinks is a private conversation, and then to publish what he has said.'

'My dear sir, if that were the case, how would we get anything for publication that people didn't want to be known? Why, I remember once, when the Secretary of State–'

'Yes,' interrupted Wentworth wearily; 'Fleming told me that story.'

'Oh, did he? Well, I'm sure I'm much obliged to him. Then I need not repeat it.'

'Do you mean to say that you intend to send to the *Argus* for publication what I have told you in confidence?'

'Certainly. As I said before, that is what I am here for. Besides, there was no "in confidence" about it.'

'And yet you pretend to be a truthful, honest, honourable woman?'

'I don't *pretend* it; I am.'

'How much truth, then, is there in your story that you are a millionaire's daughter about to visit your father in Paris, and accompany him from there to the Riviera?'

Miss Brewster laughed brightly.

'Oh, I don't call fibs, which a person has to tell in the way of business, untruths.'

'Then probably you do not think your estimable colleague, Mr. J.K. Rivers, behaved dishonourably in Ottawa?'

'Well, hardly. I think Rivers was not justified in what he did because he was unsuccessful, that is all. I'll bet a dollar if I had got hold of these papers they would have gone through to New York; but, then, J.K. Rivers is only a stupid man, and most men *are* stupid'—with a sly glance at Wentworth.

'I am willing to admit that, Miss Brewster, if you mean me. There never was a more stupid man than I have been.'

'My dear Mr. Wentworth, it will do you ever so much good if you come to a realization of that fact. The truth is, you take yourself much too seriously. Now, it won't hurt you a bit to have what I am going to send published in the *Argus*, and it will help me a great deal. Just you wait here for a few moments.'

With that she flung her book upon his lap, sprang up, and vanished down the companion-way. In a very short time she reappeared with some sheets of paper in her hand.

'Now you see how fair and honest I am going to be. I am going to read you what I have written. If there is anything in it that is not true, I will very gladly cut it out; and if there is anything more to be added, I shall be very glad to add it. Isn't that fair?'

Wentworth was so confounded with the woman's impudence that he could make no reply.

She began to read: '"By an unexampled stroke of enterprise the *New York Argus* is enabled this morning to lay before its readers a full and exclusive account of the report made by the two English specialists, Mr. George Wentworth and Mr. John Kenyon, who were sent over by the London Syndicate to examine into the accounts, and inquire into the true value of the mines of the Ottawa River."'

She looked up from the paper, and said, with an air of friendly confidence:

'I shouldn't send that if I thought the people at the New York end would know enough to write it themselves; but as the paper is edited by dull men, and not by a sharp woman, I have to make them pay twenty-five cents a word for puffing their own enterprise. Well, to go on: "When it is remembered that the action of the London Syndicate will depend entirely on the report of these two gentlemen—"'

'I wouldn't put it that way,' interrupted Wentworth in his despair. 'I would use the word "largely" for "entirely."'

'Oh, *thank* you,' said Miss Brewster cordially. She placed the manuscript on her knee, and, with her pencil, marked out the word 'entirely,' substituting 'largely.' The reading went on: '"When it is remembered that the action of the London Syndicate will depend *largely* on the report of these two gentlemen, the enterprise of the *Argus* in getting this exclusive information, which will be immediately

cabled to London, may be imagined." That is the preliminary, you see; and, as I said, it wouldn't be necessary to cable it if women were at the head of affairs over there, which they are not. "Mr. John Kenyon, the mining expert, has visited all the mineral ranges along the Ottawa River, and his report is that the mines are very much what is claimed for them; but he thinks they are not worked properly, although, with judicious management and more careful mining, the properties can be made to pay good dividends. Mr. George Wentworth, who is one of the leading accountants of London—"'

'I wouldn't say that, either,' groaned George. 'Just strike out the words "one of the leading accountants of London."'

'Yes?' said Miss Brewster; 'and what shall I put in the place of them?'

'Put in place of them "the stupidest ass in London"!'

Miss Brewster laughed at that.

'No; I shall put in what I first wrote: "Mr. George Wentworth, one of the leading accountants of London, has gone through the books of the different mines. He has made some startling discoveries. The accounts have been kept in such a way as to completely delude investors, and this fact will have a powerful effect on the minds of the London Syndicate. The books of the different mines show a profit of about two hundred thousand dollars, whereas the actual facts of the case are that there has been an annual loss of something like one hundred thousand dollars—"'

'What's that? what's that?' cried Wentworth sharply.

'Dollars, you know. You said twenty thousand pounds. We put it in dollars, don't you see?'

'Oh,' said Wentworth, relapsing again.

'"One hundred thousand dollars"—where was I? Oh yes. "It is claimed that an American expert went over these books before Mr. Wentworth, and that he asserted they were all right. An explanation from this gentleman will now be in order."'

'There!' cried the young lady, 'that is the substance of the thing. Of course, I may amplify a little more before we get to Queenstown, so as to make them pay more money. People don't value a thing that doesn't cost them dearly. How do you like it? Is it correct?'

'Perfectly correct,' answered the miserable young man.

'Oh, I am so glad you like it! I do love to have things right.'

'I didn't say I *liked* it.'

'No, of course, you couldn't be expected to say that; but I am glad you think it is accurate. I will add a note to the effect that you think it is a good *résumé* of your report.'

'For Heaven's sake, don't drag me into the matter!' cried Wentworth.

'Well, I won't, if you don't want me to.'

There was silence for a few moments, during which the young woman seemed to be adding commas and full-stops to the MS. on her knee. Wentworth cleared his throat two or three times, but his lips were so dry that he could hardly speak. At last he said:

'Miss Brewster, how can I induce you not to send that from Queenstown to your paper?'

The young woman looked up at him with a pleasant bright smile.

'Induce me? Why, you couldn't do it—it couldn't be done. This will be one of the greatest triumphs I have ever achieved. Think of Rivers failing in it, and me accomplishing it!'

'Yes; I have thought of that,' replied the young man despondently. 'Now, perhaps you don't know that the full report was mailed from Ottawa to our house in London, and the moment we get to Queenstown I will telegraph my partners to put the report in the hands of the directors?'

'Oh, I know all about that,' replied Miss Brewster; 'Rivers told me. He read the letter that was enclosed with the documents he took from your friend. Now, have you made any calculations about this voyage?'

'Calculations? I don't know what you mean.'

'Well, I mean just this: We shall probably reach Queenstown on Saturday afternoon. This report, making allowance for the difference in the time, will appear in the *Argus* on Sunday morning. Your

telegram will reach your house or your firm on Saturday night, when nothing can be done with it. Sunday nothing can be done. Monday morning, before your report will reach the directors, the substance of what has appeared in the *Argus* will be in the financial papers, cabled over to London on Sunday night. The first thing your directors will see of it will be in the London financial papers on Monday morning. That's what I mean, Mr. Wentworth, by calculating the voyage.'

Wentworth said no more. He staggered to his feet and made his way as best he could to the state-room, groping like a blind man. There he sat down with his head in his hands, and there his friend Kenyon found him.

CHAPTER IX

'Tell me what has happened,' demanded John Kenyon.

Wentworth looked up at him.

'Everything has happened,' he answered.

'What do you mean, George? Are you ill? What is the matter with you?'

'I am worse than ill, John—a great deal worse than ill. I wish I were ill.'

'That wouldn't help things, whatever is wrong. Come, wake up. Tell me what the trouble is.'

'John, I am a fool—an ass—a gibbering idiot.'

'Admitting that, what then?'

'I trusted a woman—imbecile that I am; and now—now—I'm what you see me.'

'Has—has Miss Brewster anything to do with it?' asked Kenyon suspiciously.

'She has everything to do with it.'

'Has she—rejected you, George?'

'What! *that* girl? Oh, you're the idiot now. Do you think I would ask *her*?'

'I cannot be blamed for jumping at conclusions. You must remember "that girl," as you call her, has had most of your company during this voyage; and most of your good words when you were not with her. What *is* the matter? What has she to do with your trouble?'

Wentworth paced up and down the narrow limits of the state-room as if he were caged. He smote his hand against his thigh, while Kenyon looked at him in wonder.

'I don't know how I can tell you, John,' he said. 'I must, of course; but I don't know how I can.'

'Come on deck with me.'

'Never.'

'Come out, I say, into the fresh air. It is stuffy here, and, besides, there is more danger of being overheard in the state-room than on deck. Come along, old fellow.'

He caught his companion by the arm, and partly dragged him out of the room, closing the door behind him.

'Pull yourself together,' he said. 'A little fresh air will do you good.'

They made their way to the deck, and, linking arms, walked up and down. For a long time Wentworth said nothing, and Kenyon had the tact to hold his peace. Suddenly Wentworth noticed that they were pacing back and forth in front of Miss Brewster, so he drew his friend away to another part of the ship. After a few turns up and down, he said:

'You remember Rivers, of course.'

'Distinctly.'

'He was employed on that vile sheet, the *New York Argus*.'

'I suppose it is a vile sheet. I don't remember ever seeing it. Yes, I know he was connected with that paper. What then? What has Miss Brewster to do with Rivers?'

'She is one of the *Argus* staff, too.'

'George Wentworth, you don't mean to tell me that!'

'I do.'

'And is she here to find out about the mine?'

'Exactly. She was put on the job after Rivers had failed.'

'George!' said Kenyon, suddenly dropping his companion's arm and facing him. 'What have you told her?'

'There is the misery of it. I have told her everything.'

'My dear fellow, how could you be–'

'Oh, I know—I know! I know everything you would say. Everything you can say I have said to myself, and ten times more and ten times worse. There is nothing you can say of me more bitter than what I think about myself.'

'Did you tell her anything about *my* report?'

'I told her everything—*everything*! Do you understand? She is going to telegraph from Queenstown the full essence of the reports—of both our reports.'

'Heavens! this is fearful. Is there no way to prevent her sending it?'

'If you think you can prevent her, I wish you would try it.'

'How did you find it out? Did *she* tell you?'

'Oh, it doesn't matter how I found it out. I did find it out. A man told me who she was; then I asked her, and she was perfectly frank about it. She read me the report, even.'

'Read it to you?'

'Yes, read it to me, and punctuated it in my presence—put in some words that I suggested as being better than those she had used. Oh, it was the coolest piece of work you ever saw!'

'But there must be some way of preventing her getting that account to New York in time. You see, all we have to do is to wire your people to hand in our report to the directors, and then hers is forestalled. She has to telegraph from a British office, and it seems to me that we could stop her in some way.'

'As, for instance, how?'

'Oh, I don't know just how at the moment, but we ought to be able to do it. If it were a man, we could have him arrested as a dynamiter or something; but a woman, of course, is more difficult to deal with. George, I would appeal to her better nature if I were you.'

Wentworth laughed sneeringly.

'Better nature?' he said. 'She hasn't any; and that is not the worst of it. She has "calculated," as she calls it, all the possibilities in the affair; she "calculates" that we will reach Queenstown about Saturday night. If we do, she will get her report through in time to be published on Sunday in the *New York Argus*. If that is the case, then see where our telegram will be. We telegraph our people to send in the report. It reaches the office Saturday night, and is not read. The office closes at two o'clock; but even if they got it, and understood the urgency of the matter, they could not place the papers before the directors until Monday morning, and by Monday morning it will be in the London financial sheets.'

'George, that woman is a fiend.'

'No, she isn't, John. She is merely a clever American journalist, who thinks she has done a very good piece of work indeed, and who, through the stupidity of one man, has succeeded, that's all.'

'Have you made any appeal to her at all?'

'Oh, haven't I! Of course I have. What good did it do? She merely laughed at me. Don't you understand? That is what she is here for. Her whole voyage is for that one purpose; and it's not likely the woman is going to forego her triumph after having succeeded—more especially as somebody else in the same office has failed. That's what gives additional zest to what she has done. The fact that Rivers has failed and she has triumphed seems to be the great feather in her cap.'

'Then,' said Kenyon, 'I'm going to appeal to Miss Brewster myself.'

'Very well. I wish you joy of your job. But do what you can, John, there's a good fellow. Meanwhile, I want to be alone somewhere.'

Wentworth went down the stairway that led to the steerage department, and for a few moments sat among the steerage passengers. Then he climbed up another ladder, and got to the very front of the ship. Here he sat down on a coil of rope, and thought over the situation. Thinking, however, did him very little good. He realized that, even if he got hold of the paper Miss Brewster had, she could easily write another. She had the facts in her head, and all that she needed to do was to get to a telegraph office and there hand in her message.

Meanwhile, Kenyon took a few turns up and down the deck, thinking deeply on the same subject. He passed over to the side where Miss Brewster sat, but on coming opposite her had not the courage to take his place beside her. She was calmly reading her book. Three times he came opposite her, paused for a moment, and then continued his hopeless march. He saw that his courage was not going to be sufficient for the task, and yet he felt the task must be accomplished. He didn't know how to begin. He didn't know what inducement to offer the young woman for foregoing the fruits of her ingenuity. He felt that this was the weak point in his armour. The third time he paused in front of Miss Brewster; she looked up and motioned him to the chair beside her, saying:

'I do not know you very well, Mr. Kenyon, but I know who you are. Won't you sit down here for a moment?'

The bewildered man took the chair she indicated.

'Now, Mr. Kenyon, I know just what is troubling you. You have passed three or four times wishing to sit down beside me, and yet afraid to venture. Is that not true?'

'Quite true.'

'I knew it was. Now I know also what you have come for. Mr. Wentworth has told you what the trouble is. He has told you that he has given me all the particulars about the mines, hasn't he?'

'He has.'

'And he has gone off to his state-room to think over the matter, and has left the affair in your hands, and you imagine you can come here to me and, perhaps, talk me out of sending that despatch to the *Argus*. Isn't that your motive?'

'That is about what I hope to be able to do,' said Kenyon, mopping his brow.

'Well, I thought I might just as well put you out of your misery at once. You take things very seriously, Mr. Kenyon—I can see that. Now, don't you?'

'I am afraid I do.'

'Why, of course you do. The publication of this, as I told Mr. Wentworth, will really not matter at all. It will not be any reflection on either of you, because your friends will be sure that, if you had known to whom you were talking, you would never have said anything about the mines.'

Kenyon smiled grimly at this piece of comfort.

'Now, I have been thinking about something since Mr. Wentworth went away. I am really very sorry for him. I am more sorry than I can tell.'

'Then,' said Kenyon eagerly, 'won't you–'

'No, I won't, so we needn't recur to that phase of the subject. That is what I am here for, and, no matter what you say, the despatch is going to be sent. Now, it is better to understand that at the first, and then it will create no trouble afterwards. Don't you think that is the best?'

'Probably,' answered the wretched man.

'Well, then, let us start there. I will say in the cablegram that the information comes from neither Mr. Kenyon nor Mr. Wentworth.'

'Yes, but that wouldn't be true.'

'Why, of course it wouldn't be true; but that doesn't matter, does it?'

'Well, on our side of the water,' said Kenyon, 'we think the truth does matter.'

Miss Brewster laughed heartily.

'Dear me!' she said, 'what little tact you have! How does it concern you whether it is true or not? If there is any falsehood, it is not you who tell it, so you are free from all blame. Indeed, you are free from all blame anyhow, in this affair; it is all your friend Wentworth's fault; but still, if it hadn't been Wentworth, it would have been you.'

Kenyon looked up at her incredulously.

'Oh yes, it would,' she said, nodding confidently at him. 'You must not flatter yourself, because Mr. Wentworth told me everything about it, that you wouldn't have done just the same, if I had had to find it out from you. All men are pretty much alike where women are concerned.'

'Can I say nothing to you, Miss Brewster, which will keep you from sending the message to America?'

'You cannot, Mr. Kenyon. I thought we had settled that at the beginning. I see there is no use talking to you. I will return to my book, which is very interesting. Good-morning, Mr. Kenyon.'

Kenyon felt the hopelessness of his project quite as much as Wentworth had done, and, thrusting his hands deep into his pockets, he wandered disconsolately up and down the deck.

As he went to the other side of the deck, he met Miss Longworth walking alone. She smiled a cordial welcome to him, so he turned and changed his step to suit hers.

'May I walk with you a few minutes?' he said.

'Of course you may,' was the reply, 'What is the matter? You are looking very unhappy.'

'My comrade and myself are in great trouble, and I thought I should like to talk with you about it.'

'I am sure if there is anything I can do to help you, I shall be most glad to do it.'

'Perhaps you may suggest something. You see, two men dealing with one woman are perfectly helpless.'

'Ah, who is the one woman—not I, is it?'

'No, not you, Miss Longworth. I wish it were, then we would have no trouble.'

'Oh, thank you!'

'You see, it is like this: When we were in Quebec—I think I told you about that—the *New York Argus* sent a man to find out what we had reported, or were going to report, to the London Syndicate.'

'Yes, you told me that.'

'Rivers was his name. Well, this same paper, finding that Rivers had failed after having stolen the documents, has tried a much more subtle scheme, which promises to be successful. They have put on board this ship a young woman who has gained a reputation for learning secrets not intended for the public. This young woman is Miss Brewster, who sits next Wentworth at the table. Fate seems to have played right into her hand and placed her beside him. They became acquainted, and, unfortunately, my friend has told her a great deal about the mines, which she professed an interest in. Or, rather, she pretended to have an interest in him, and so he spoke, being, of course, off his guard. There is no more careful fellow in the world than George Wentworth, but a man does not expect that a private conversation with a lady will ever appear in a newspaper.'

'Naturally not.'

'Very well, that is the state of things. In some manner Wentworth came to know that this young woman was the special correspondent of the *New York Argus*. He spoke to her about it, and she is perfectly frank in saying she is here solely for the purpose of finding out what the reports will be, and that the moment she gets to Queenstown she will cable what she has discovered to New York.'

'Dear me! that is very perplexing. What have you done?'

'We have done nothing so far, or rather, I should say, we have tried everything we could think of, and have accomplished nothing. Wentworth has appealed to her, and I made a clumsy attempt at an appeal also, but it was of no use. I feel my own helplessness in this matter, and Wentworth is completely broken down over it.'

'Poor fellow! I am sure of that. Let me think a moment.'

They walked up and down the deck in silence for a few minutes. Then Miss Longworth looked up at Kenyon, and said;

'Will you place this matter in my hands?'

'Certainly, if you will be so kind as to take any interest in it.'

'I take a great deal of interest. Of course, you know my father is deeply concerned in it also, so I am acting in a measure for him.'

'Have you any plan?'

'Yes; my plan is simply this: The young woman is working for money; now, if we can offer her more than her paper gives, she will very quickly accept, or I am much mistaken in the kind of woman she is.'

'Ah, yes,' said Kenyon; 'but we haven't the money, you see.'

'Never mind; the money will be quickly forthcoming. Don't trouble any more about it. I am sure that can be arranged.'

Kenyon thanked her, looking his gratitude rather than speaking it, for he was an unready man, and she bade him good-bye until she could think over her plan.

That evening there was a tap at the state-room door of Miss Jennie Brewster.

'Come in,' cried the occupant.

Miss Longworth entered, and the occupant of the room looked up, with a frown, from her writing.

'May I have a few moments' conversation with you?' asked the visitor gravely.

CHAPTER X

Miss Jennie Brewster was very much annoyed at being interrupted, and she took no pains to conceal her feelings. She was writing an article entitled 'How People kill Time on Shipboard,' and she did not wish to be disturbed; besides, as she often said of herself, she was not 'a woman's woman,' and she neither liked, nor was liked by, her own sex.

'I desire a few moments' conversation with you, if I have your permission,' said Edith Longworth, as she closed the door behind her.

'Certainly,' answered Jennie Brewster. 'Will you sit down?'

'Thank you,' replied the other, as she took a seat on the sofa. 'I do not know just how to begin what I wish to say. Perhaps it will be better to commence by telling you that I know why you are on board this steamer.'

'Yes; and why am I on board the steamer, may I ask?'

'You are here, I understand, to get certain information from Mr. Wentworth. You have obtained it, and it is in reference to this that I have come to see you.'

'Indeed! and are you so friendly with Mr. Wentworth that you–'

'I scarcely know Mr. Wentworth at all.'

'Then, why do you come on a mission from him?'

'It is not a mission from him. It is not a mission from anyone. I was speaking to Mr. Kenyon, or, rather, Mr. Kenyon was speaking to me, about a subject which troubled him greatly. It is a subject in which my father is interested. My father is a member of the London Syndicate, and he naturally would not desire to have your intended cable message sent to New York.'

'Really; are you quite sure that you are not speaking less for your father than for your friend Kenyon?'

Anger burned in Miss Longworth's face, and flashed from her eyes as she answered:

'You must not speak to me in that way.'

'Excuse me, I shall speak to you in just the way I please. I did not ask for this conference; you did, and as you have taken it upon yourself to come into this room uninvited, you will have to put up with what you hear. Those who interfere with other people's business, as a general thing, do not have a nice time.'

'I quite appreciated all the possible disagreeableness of coming here, when I came.'

'I am glad of that, because if you hear anything you do not like, you will not be disappointed, and will have only yourself to thank for it.'

'I would like to talk about this matter in a spirit of friendliness if I can. I think nothing is to be attained by speaking in any other way.'

'Very well, then. What excuse have you to give me for coming into my state-room to talk about business which does not concern you?'

'Miss Brewster, it *does* concern me—it concerns my father, and that concerns me. I am, in a measure, my father's private secretary, and am intimately acquainted with all the business he has in hand. This particular business is his affair, and therefore mine. That is the reason I am here.'

'Are you sure?'

'Am I sure of what?'

'Are you sure that what you say is true?'

'I am not in the habit of speaking anything but the truth.'

'Perhaps you flatter yourself that is the case, but it does not deceive me. You merely come here because Mr. Kenyon is in a muddle about what I am going to do. Isn't that the reason?'

Miss Longworth saw that her task was going to be even harder than she had expected.

'Suppose we let all question of motive rest? I have come here—I have asked your permission to speak on this subject, and you have given me the permission. Having done so, it seems to me you should hear me out. You say that I should not be offended–'

'I didn't say so. I do not care a rap whether you are offended or not.'

'You at least said I might hear something that would not be pleasant. What I wanted to say is this: I have taken the risk of that, and, as you remark, whether I am offended or not does not matter. Now we will come to the point–'

'Just before you come to the point, please let me know if Mr. Kenyon told you he had spoken to me on this subject already.'

'Yes, he told me so.'

'Did he tell you that his friend Wentworth had also had a conversation with me about it?'

'Yes, he told me that also.'

'Very well, then, if those two men can do nothing to shake my purpose, how do you expect to do it?'

'That is what I am about to tell you. This is a commercial world, and I am a commercial man's daughter. I recognise the fact that you are going to cable this information for the money it brings. Is that not the case?'

'It is partly the case.'

'For what other consideration do you work, then?'

'For the consideration of being known as one of the best newspaper women in the city of New York. That is the other consideration.'

'I understood you were already known as the most noted newspaper woman in New York.'

This remark was much more diplomatic than Miss Longworth herself suspected.

Jennie Brewster looked rather pleased, then she said:

'Oh, I don't know about that; but I intend it shall be so before a year is past.'

'Very well, you have plenty of time to accomplish your object without using the information you have obtained on board this ship. Now, as I was saying, the *New York Argus* pays you a certain amount for doing this work. If you will promise not to send the report over to that paper, I will give you a cheque for double the sum the *Argus* will pay you, besides refunding all your expenses twice over.'

'In other words, you ask me to be bribed and refuse to perform my duty to the paper.'

'It isn't bribery. I merely pay you, or will pay you, double what you will receive from that paper. I presume your connection with it is purely commercial. You work for it because you receive a certain amount of money; if the editor found someone who would do the same work cheaper, he would at once employ that person, and your services would be no longer required. Is that not true?'

'Yes, it is true.'

'Very well, then, the question of duty hardly enters into such a compact. They have sent you on what would be to most people a very difficult mission. You have succeeded. You have, therefore, in your possession something to sell. The New York paper will pay you a certain sum in cash for it. I offer you, for the same article, double the price the *New York Argus* will pay you. Is not that a fair offer?'

Jennie Brewster had arisen. She clasped and unclasped her hands nervously. For a small space of time nothing was said, and Edith Longworth imagined she had gained her point. The woman standing looked down at the woman sitting.

'Do you know all the particulars about the attempt to get this information?' asked Miss Brewster.

'I know some of them. What particulars do you mean?'

'Do you know that a man from the *Argus* tried to get this information from Mr. Kenyon and Mr. Wentworth in Canada?'

'Yes; I know about that.'

'Do you know that he stole the reports, and that they were taken from him before he could use them?'

'Yes.'

'Do you know he offered Mr. Kenyon and Mr. Wentworth double the price the London Syndicate would have paid them, on condition they gave him a synopsis of the reports?'

'Yes, I know that also.'

'Do you know that, in doing what he asked, they would not have been keeping back for a single day the real report from the people who engaged them? You know all that, do you?'

'Yes; I know all that.'

'Very well, then. Now you ask me to do very much more than Rivers asked them, because you ask me to keep my paper completely in the dark about the information I have got. Isn't that so?'

'Yes, you can keep them in the dark until after the report has been given to the directors; then, of course, you can do what you please with the information.'

'Ah, but by that time it will be of no value. By that time it will have been published in the London financial papers. At that time anybody can get it. Isn't that the case?'

'I suppose so.'

'Now, I want to ask you one other question, Miss—Miss—I don't think you told me your name.'

'My name is Edith Longworth.'

'Very well, Miss Longworth. I want to ask you one more question. What do you think of the conduct of Mr. Kenyon and Mr. Wentworth in refusing to take double what they had been promised for making the report?'

'What do I think of them?' repeated the girl.

'Yes; what do you think of them? You hesitate. You realize that you are in a corner. You think Mr. Wentworth and Mr. Kenyon did very nobly in refusing Rivers' offer?'

'Of course I do.'

'So do I. I think they acted rightly, and did as honourable men should do. Now, when you think that, Miss Longworth, how dare you come and offer me double, or three times, or four times, the amount my paper gives to me for getting this information? Do you think that I am any less honourable than Kenyon or Wentworth? Your offer is an insult to me; nobody but a woman, and a woman of your class, would have made it. Kenyon wouldn't have made it. Wentworth wouldn't have made it. You come here to bribe me. You come here to do exactly what J. K. Rivers tried to do for the *Argus* in Canada. You think money will purchase anything—that is the thought of all your class. Now, I want you to understand that I am a woman of the people. I was born and brought up in poverty in New York. You were born and brought up amid luxury in London. I have suffered privation and hardships that you know nothing of, and, even if you read about them, you wouldn't understand. You, with the impudence of your class, think you can come to me and bribe me to betray my employer. I am here to do a certain thing, and I am going to do that certain thing in spite of all the money that all the Longworths ever possessed, or ever will possess. Do I make myself sufficiently plain?'

'Yes, Miss Brewster. I don't think anyone could misunderstand you.'

'Well, I am glad of that, because one can never tell how thickheaded some people may be.'

'Do you think there is any parallel between your case and Mr. Wentworth's?'

'Of course I do. We were each sent to do a certain piece of work. We each did our work. We have both been offered a bribe to cheat our employers of the fruits of our labour; only in my case it is very much worse than in Wentworth's, because his employers would not have suffered, while mine will.'

'This is all very plausible, Miss Brewster, but now allow me to tell you that what you have done is a most dishonourable thing, and that you are a disgrace to our common womanhood. You have managed, during a very short acquaintance, to win the confidence of a man—there is a kind of woman who knows how to do that: I thank Heaven I am not of that class; I prefer to belong to the class you have just now been reviling. Some men have an inherent respect for all women; Mr. Wentworth is apparently one of those, and, while he was on his guard with a man, he was not on

his guard with a woman. You took advantage of that and you managed to secure certain information which you knew he would never have given you if he had thought it was to be published. You stole that information just as disreputably as that man stole the documents from Mr. Kenyon's pocket. *You*

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