

**ALLEN GRANT**

MICHAEL'S

CRAG

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# Grant Allen

## Michael's Crag

### CHAPTER I

#### A CORNISH LANDLORD.

"Then you don't care for the place yourself, Tyrrel?" Eustace Le Neve said, musingly, as he gazed in front of him with a comprehensive glance at the long gray moor and the wide expanse of black and stormy water.

"It's bleak, of course; bleak and cold, I grant you; all this upland plateau about the Lizard promontory seems bleak and cold everywhere; but to my mind it has a certain wild and weird picturesqueness of its own for all that. It aims at gloominess. I confess in its own way I don't dislike it."

"For my part," Tyrrel answered, clenching his hand hard as he spoke, and knitting his brow despondently, "I simply hate it. If I wasn't the landlord here, to be perfectly frank with you, I'd never come near Penmorgan. I do it for conscience' sake, to be among my own people. That's my only reason. I disapprove of absenteeism; and now the land's mine, why, I must put up with it, I suppose, and live upon it in spite of myself. But I do it against the grain. The whole place, if I tell you the truth, is simply detestable to me."

He leaned on his stick as he spoke, and looked down gloomily at the heather. A handsome young man, Walter Tyrrel, of the true Cornish type—tall, dark, poetical-looking, with pensive eyes and a thick black mustache, which gave dignity and character to his otherwise almost too delicately feminine features. And he stood on the open moor just a hundred yards outside his own front door at Penmorgan, on the Lizard peninsula, looking westward down a great wedge-shaped gap in the solid serpentine rock to a broad belt of sea beyond without a ship or a sail on it. The view was indeed, as Eustace Le Neve admitted, a somewhat bleak and dreary one. For miles, as far as the eye could reach, on either side, nothing was to be seen but one vast heather-clad upland, just varied at the dip by bare ledges of dark rock and a single gray glimpse of tossing sea between them. A little farther on, to be sure, winding round the cliff path, one could open up a glorious prospect on either hand over the rocky islets of Kynance and Mullion Cove, with Mounts Bay and Penzance and the Land's End in the distance. That was a magnificent site—if only his ancestors had had the sense to see it. But Penmorgan House, like most other Cornish landlords' houses, had been carefully placed—for shelter's sake, no doubt—in a seaward hollow where the view was most restricted; and the outlook one got from it, over black moor and blacker rocks, was certainly by no means of a cheerful character. Eustace Le Neve himself, most cheery and sanguine of men, just home from his South American railway-laying, and with the luxuriant vegetation of the Argentine still fresh in his mind, was forced to admit, as he looked about him, that the position of his friend's house on that rolling brown moor was far from a smiling one.

"You used to come here when you were a boy, though," he objected, after a pause, with a glance at the great breakers that curled in upon the cove; "and you must surely have found it pleasant enough then, what with the bathing and the fishing and the shooting and the boating, and all the delights of the sea and the country."

Walter Tyrrel nodded his head. It was clear the subject was extremely distasteful to him.

"Yes—till I was twelve or thirteen," he said, slowly, as one who grudges assent, "in my uncle's time, I liked it well enough, no doubt. Boys don't realize the full terror of sea or cliff, you know, and are perfectly happy swimming and climbing. I used to be amphibious in those days, like a seal or an otter—in the water half my time; and I scrambled over the rocks—great heavens, it makes me giddy now just to THINK where I scrambled. But when I was about thirteen years old"—his face grew

graver still—"a change seemed to come over me, and I began . . . well, I began to hate Penmorgan. I've hated it ever since. I shall always hate it. I learned what it all meant, I suppose—rocks, wrecks, and accidents. I saw how dull and gloomy it was, and I couldn't bear coming down here. I came as seldom as I dared, till my uncle died last year and left it to me. And then there was no help for it. I HAD to come down. It's a landlord's business, I consider, to live among his tenants and look after the welfare of the soil, committed to his charge by his queen and country. He holds it in trust, strictly speaking, for the nation. So I felt I must come and live here. But I hate it, all the same. I hate it! I hate it!"

He said it so energetically, and with such strange earnestness in his voice, that Eustace Le Neve, scanning his face as he spoke, felt sure there must be some good reason for his friend's dislike of his ancestral home, and forebore (like a man) to question him further. Perhaps, he thought, it was connected in Tyrrel's mind with some painful memory, some episode in his history he would gladly forget; though, to be sure, when one comes to think of it, at thirteen such episodes are rare and improbable. A man doesn't, as a rule, get crossed in love at that early age; nor does he generally form lasting and abiding antipathies. And indeed, for the matter of that, Penmorgan was quite gloomy enough in itself, in all conscience, to account for his dislike—a lonely and gaunt-looking granite-built house, standing bare and square on the edge of a black moor, under shelter of a rocky dip, in a treeless country. It must have been a terrible change for a bachelor about town, like Walter Tyrrel, to come down at twenty-eight from his luxurious club and his snug chambers in St. James' to the isolation and desolation of that wild Cornish manor-house. But the Tyrrels, he knew, were all built like that; Le Neve had been with three of the family at Rugby; and conscience was their stumbling-block. When once a Tyrrel was convinced his duty lay anywhere, no consideration on earth would keep him from doing it.

"Let's take a stroll down by the shore," Le Neve suggested, carelessly, after a short pause, slipping his arm through his friend's.

"Your cliffs, at least, must be fine; they look grand and massive; and after three years of broiling on a South American line, this fresh sou'wester's just the thing, to my mind, to blow the cobwebs out of one."

He was a breezy-looking young man, this new-comer from beyond the sea—a son of the Vikings, Tyrrel's contemporary in age, but very unlike him in form and features; for Eustace Le Neve was fair and big-built, a florid young giant, with tawny beard, mustache, and whiskers, which he cut in a becoming Vandyke point of artistic carelessness. There was more of the artist than of the engineer, indeed, about his frank and engaging English face—a face which made one like him as soon as one looked at him. It was impossible to do otherwise. Exuberant vitality was the keynote of the man's being. And he was candidly open, too. He impressed one at first sight, by some nameless instinct, with a certain well-founded friendly confidence. A lovable soul, if ever there was one, equally liked at once by men and women.

"Our cliffs are fine," Walter Tyrrel answered, grudgingly, in the tone of one who, against his will, admits an adverse point he sees no chance of gainsaying. "They're black, and repellant, and iron-bound, and dangerous, but they're certainly magnificent. I don't deny it. Come and see them, by all means. They're the only lions we have to show a stranger in this part of Cornwall, so you'd better make the most of them."

And he took, as if mechanically, the winding path that led down the gap toward the frowning cove in the wall of cliff before them.

Eustace Le Neve was a little surprised at this unexpected course, for he himself would naturally have made rather for the top of the promontory, whence they were certain to obtain a much finer and more extensive view; but he had only arrived at Penmorgan the evening before, so he bowed at once to his companion's more mature experience of Cornish scenery. They threaded their way through the gully, for it was little more—a great water-worn rent in the dark serpentine rocks, with the sea at its lower end—picking their path as they went along huge granite boulders or across fallen stones, till

they reached a small beach of firm white sand, on whose even floor the waves were rolling in and curling over magnificently. It was a curious place, Eustace thought, rather dreary than beautiful. On either side rose black cliffs, towering sheer into the air, and shutting out overhead all but a narrow cleft of murky sky. Around, the sea dashed itself in angry white foam against broken stacks and tiny weed-clad skerries. At the end of the first point a solitary islet, just separated from the mainland by a channel of seething water, jutted above into the waves, with hanging tresses of blue and yellow seaweed. Tyrrel pointed to it with one hand. "That's Michael's Crag," he said, laconically. "You've seen it before, no doubt, in half a dozen pictures. It's shaped exactly like St. Michael's Mount in miniature. A marine painter fellow down here's forever taking its portrait."

Le Neve gazed around him with a certain slight shudder of unspoken disapprobation. This place didn't suit his sunny nature. It was even blacker and more dismal than the brown moorland above it. Tyrrel caught the dissatisfaction in his companion's eye before Le Neve had time to frame it in words.

"Well, you don't think much of it?" he said, inquiringly.

"I can't say I do," Le Neve answered, with apologetic frankness. "I suppose South America has spoilt me for this sort of thing. But it's not to my taste. I call it gloomy, without being even impressive."

"Gloomy," Tyrrel answered; "oh, yes, gloomy, certainly. But impressive; well, yes. For myself, I think so. To me, it's all terribly, unspeakably, ineffably impressive. I come here every day, and sit close on the sands, and look out upon the sea by the edge of the breakers. It's the only place on this awful coast one feels perfectly safe in. You can't tumble over here, or...roll anything down to do harm to anybody."

A steep cliff path led up the sheer face of the rock to southward. It was a difficult path, a mere foothold on the ledges; but its difficulty at once attracted the engineer's attention. "Let's go up that way!" he said, waving his hand toward it carelessly. "The view from on top there must be infinitely finer."

"I believe it is," Tyrrel replied, in an unconcerned voice, like one who retails vague hearsay evidence. "I haven't seen it myself since I was a boy of thirteen. I never go along the top of the cliffs on any account."

Le Neve gazed down on him, astonished. "You BELIEVE it is!" he exclaimed, unable to conceal his surprise and wonder. "You never go up there! Why, Walter, how odd of you! I was reading up the Guidebook this morning before breakfast, and it says the walk from this point on the Penmorgan estate to Kynance Cove is the most magnificent bit of wild cliff scenery anywhere in Cornwall."

"So I'm told," Tyrrel answered, unmoved. "And I remember, as a boy, I thought it very fine. But that was long since. I never go by it."

"Why not?" Le Neve cried.

Tyrrel shrugged his shoulders and shook himself impatiently. "I don't know," he answered, in a testy sort of voice. "I don't like the cliff top... It's so dangerous, don't you know? So unsafe. So unstable. The rocks go off so sheer, and stones topple over so easily."

Le Neve laughed a little laugh of half-disguised contempt. He was moving over toward the path up the cliff side as they spoke. "Why, you used to be a first-class climber at school," he said, attempting it, "especially when you were a little chap. I remember you could scramble up trees like a monkey. What fun we had once in the doctor's orchard! And as to the cliffs, you needn't go so near you have to tumble over them. It seems ridiculous for a landowner not to know a bit of scenery on his own estate that's celebrated and talked about all over England."

"I'm not afraid of tumbling over, for myself," Tyrrel answered, a little nettled by his friend's frank tone of amusement. "I don't feel myself so useful to my queen and country that I rate my own life at too high a figure. It's the people below I'm chiefly concerned about. There's always someone wandering and scrambling about these cliffs, don't you see?—fishermen, tourists, geologists. If you let a loose stone go, it may fall upon them and crush them."

The engineer looked back upon him with a somewhat puzzled expression. "Well, that's carrying conscience a point too far," he said, with one strong hand on the rock and one sure foot in the first convenient cranny. "If we're not to climb cliffs for fear of showering down stones on those who stand below, we won't dare to walk or ride or drive or put to sea for fear of running over or colliding against somebody. We shall have to stop all our trains and keep all our steamers in harbor. There's nothing in this world quite free from risk. We've got to take it and lump it. You know the old joke about those dangerous beds—so many people die in them. Won't you break your rule just for once, and come up on top here to see the view with me?"

Tyrrel shook his head firmly. "Not to-day," he answered, with a quiet smile. "Not by that path, at any rate. It's too risky for my taste. The stones are so loose. And it overhangs the road the quarrymen go to the cave by."

Le Neve had now made good his foothold up the first four or five steps. "Well, you've no objection to my going, at any rate?" he said, with a wave of one hand, in his cheerful good-humor. "You don't put a veto on your friends here, do you?"

"Oh, not the least objection," Tyrrel answered, hurriedly, watching him climb, none the less, with nervous interest. "It's...it's a purely personal and individual feeling. Besides," he added, after a pause, "I can stop below here, if need be, and warn the quarrymen."

"I'll be back in ten minutes," Le Neve shouted from the cliff.

"No, don't hurry," his host shouted back. "Take your own time, it's safest. Once you get to the top you'd better walk along the whole cliff path to Kynance. They tell me it's splendid; the view's so wide; and you can easily get back across the moor by lunch-time. Only, mind about the edge, and whatever you do, let no stones roll over."

"All right," Le Neve made answer, clinging close to a point of rock. "I'll do no damage. It's opening out beautifully on every side now. I can see round the corner to St. Michael's Mount; and the point at the end there must be Tol-Pedn-Penwith."

## CHAPTER II

### TREVENNACK.

It was a stiff, hot climb to the top of the cliff; but as soon as he reached it, Eustace Le Neve gazed about him, enchanted at the outlook. He was not in love with Cornwall, as far as he'd seen it yet; and to say the truth, except in a few broken seaward glens, that high and barren inland plateau has little in it to attract or interest anyone, least of all a traveler fresh from the rich luxuriance of South American vegetation. But the view that burst suddenly upon Eustace Le Neve's eye as he gained the summit of that precipitous serpentine bluff fairly took his breath away. It was a rich and varied one. To the north and west loomed headland after headland, walled in by steep crags, and stretching away in purple perspective toward Marazion, St. Michael's Mount, and the Penzance district. To the south and east huge masses of fallen rock lay tossed in wild confusion over Kynance Cove and the neighboring bays, with the bare boss of the Rill and the Rearing Horse in the foreground. Le Neve stood and looked with open eyes of delight. It was the first beautiful view he had seen since he came to Cornwall; but this at least was beautiful, almost enough so to compensate for his first acute disappointment at the barrenness and gloom of the Lizard scenery.

For some minutes he could only stand with open eyes and gaze delighted at the glorious prospect. Cliffs, sea, and rocks all blended with one another in solemn harmony. Even the blackness of the great crags and the scorched air of the brown and water-logged moorland in the rear now ceased to oppress him. They fell into their proper place in one consistent and well-blended picture. But, after awhile, impelled by a desire to look down upon the next little bay beyond—for the coast is indented with endless coves and headlands—the engineer walked on along the top by a coastguard's path that threaded its way, marked by whitened stones, round the points and gullies. As he did so, he happened to notice on the very crest of the ridge that overlooked the rock they called St. Michael's Crag a tall figure of a man silhouetted in dark outline against the pale gray skyline. From the very first moment Eustace Le Neve set eyes upon that striking figure this man exerted upon him some nameless attraction. Even at this distance the engineer could see he had a certain indefinite air of dignity and distinction; and he poised himself lightly on the very edge of the cliff in a way that would no doubt have made Walter Tyrrel shudder with fear and alarm. Yet there was something about that poise quite unearthly and uncanny; the man stood so airily on his high rocky perch that he reminded Le Neve at once of nothing so much as of Giovanni da Bologna's Mercury in the Bargello at Florence; he seemed to spurn the earth as if about to spring from it with a bound; his feet were as if freed from the common bond of gravity.

It was a figure that belonged naturally to the Cornish moorland.

Le Neve advanced along the path till he nearly reached the summit where the man was standing. The point itself was a rugged tor, or little group of bare and weather-worn rocks, overlooking the sea and St. Michael's Crag below it. As the engineer drew near he saw the stranger was not alone. Under shelter of the rocks a girl lay stretched at length on a loose camel's-hair rug; her head was hatless; in her hand she held, half open, a volume of poetry. She looked up as Eustace passed, and he noted at a glance that she was dark and pretty. The Cornish type once more; bright black eyes, glossy brown hair, a rich complexion, a soft and rounded beauty.

"Clever," the father said, warningly, in a modulated voice, as the young man approached, "don't let your hat blow away, dear; it's close by the path there."

The girl he called Clever darted forward and picked it up, with a little blush of confusion. Eustace Le Neve raised his hat, by way of excuse for disturbing her, and was about to pass on, but the view down into the bay below, with the jagged and pointed crag islanded in white foam, held him spellbound for a moment. He paused and gazed at it. "This is a lovely lookout, sir," he said, after a second's silence, as if to apologize for his intrusion, turning round to the stranger, who still stood

poised like a statue on the natural pedestal of lichen-covered rock beside him. "A lovely lookout and a wonderful bit of wild coast scenery."

"Yes," the stranger answered, in a voice as full of dignity as his presence and his mien. "It's the grandest spot along the Cornish coast. From here you can see in one view St. Michael's Mount, St. Michael's Crag, St. Michael's Church, and St. Michael's Promontory. The whole of this country, indeed, just teems with St. Michael."

"Which is St. Michael's Promontory?" the young man asked, with a side glance at Cleer, as they called the daughter. He wasn't sorry indeed for the chance of having a second look at her.

"Why Land's End, of course," the dignified stranger answered at once, descending from his perch as he spoke, with a light spring more like a boy's than a mature man's. "You must surely know those famous lines in 'Lycidas' about

'The fable of Bellerus old,  
Where the Great Vision of the guarded mount  
Looks towards Namancos and Bayona's hold;  
Look homeward, angel, now, and melt with ruth.'

"Yes, I KNOW them, of course," Eustace answered with ingenuous shyness; "but as so often happens with poetry, to say the truth, I'm afraid I attached no very definite idea to them. The music so easily obscures the sense; though the moment you suggest it, I see they can't possibly mean anyone but St. Michael."

"My father's very much interested in the antiquities of Cornwall," the girl Cleer put in, looking up at him somewhat timidly; "so he naturally knows all these things, and perhaps he expects others to know them unreasonably."

"We've every ground for knowing them," the father went on, glancing down at her with tender affection. "We're Cornish to the backbone—Cornish born and bred, if ever there were Cornishmen. Every man of my ancestors was a Tre, Pol, or Pen, to the tenth generation backward; and I'm descended from the Bassets, too—the Bassets of Tehidy. You must have heard of the Bassets in Cornish history. They owned St. Michael's Mount before these new-fangled St. Aubyn people."

"It's Lord St. Levan's now, isn't it?" Le Neve put in, anxious to show off his knowledge of the local aristocracy.

"Yes, they've made him Lord St. Levan," the dignified stranger answered, with an almost imperceptible curl of his delicate lower lip. "They've made him Lord St. Levan. The queen can make one anything. He was plain Sir John St. Aubyn before that, you know; his family bought the Mount from my ancestors—the Bassets of Tehidy. They're new people at Marazion—new people altogether. They've only been there since 1660."

Le Neve smiled a quiet smile. That seemed to him in his innocence a fairly decent antiquity as things go nowadays. But the dignified stranger appeared to think so little of it that his new acquaintance abstained from making note or comment on it. He waited half a moment to see whether Cleer would speak again; he wanted to hear that pleasant voice once more; but as she held her peace, he merely raised his hat, and accepting the dismissal, continued his walk round the cliffs alone. Yet, somehow, the rest of the way, the figure of that statuesque stranger haunted him. He looked back once or twice. The descendant of the Bassets of Tehidy had now resumed his high pedestal upon the airy tor, and was gazing away seaward, like the mystic Great Vision of his own Miltonic quotation, toward the Spanish coast, wrapped round in a loose cloak of most poetic dimensions. Le Neve wondered who he was, and what errand could have brought him there.

At the point called the Rill, he diverged from the path a bit, to get that beautiful glimpse down into the rock-strewn cove and smooth white sands at Kynance. A coastguard with brush and pail was busy as he passed by renewing the whitewash on the landmark boulders that point the path on dark

nights to the stumbling wayfarer. Le Neve paused and spoke to him. "That's a fine-looking man, my friend, the gentleman on the tor there," he said, after a few commonplaces. "Do you happen to know his name? Is he spending the summer about here?"

The man stopped in his work and looked up. His eye lighted with pleasure on the dignified stranger. "Yes; he's one of the right sort, sir," he answered, with a sort of proprietary pride in the distinguished figure. "A real old Cornish gentleman of the good old days, he is, if ever you see one. That's Trevennack of Trevennack; and Miss Cleer's his daughter. Fine old crusted Cornish names, every one of them; I'm a Cornishman myself, and I know them well, the whole grand lot of them. The Trevennacks and the Bassets, they was all one, time gone by; they owned St. Michael's Mount, and Penzance, and Marazion, and Mullion here. They owned Penmorgan, too, afore the Tyrrels bought it up. Michael Basset Trevennack, that's the gentleman's full name; the eldest son of the eldest son is always a Michael, to keep up the memory of the times gone by, when they was Guardians of the Mount and St. Michael's Constables. And the lady's Miss Cleer, after St. Cleer of Cornwall—her that gives her name still to St. Cleer by Liskeard."

"And do they live here?" Le Neve asked, much interested in the intelligent local tone of the man's conversation.

"Lord bless you, no, sir. They don't live nowhere. They're in the service, don't you see. They lives in Malta or Gibraltar, or wherever the Admiralty sends him. He's an Admiralty man, he is, connected with the Vittling Yard. I was in the navy myself, on the good old Billy Ruffun, afore I was put in the Coastguards, and I knowed him well when we was both together on the Mediterranean Station. Always the same grand old Cornish gentleman, with them gracious manners, so haughty like, an' yet so condescending, wherever they put him. A gentleman born. No gentleman on earth more THE gentleman all round than Trevennack of Trevennack."

"Then he's staying down here on a visit?" Le Neve went on, curiously, peering over the edge of the cliffs, as he spoke, to observe the cormorants.

"Don't you go too nigh, sir," the coastguard put in, warningly. "She's slippery just there. Yes, they're staying down in Oliver's lodgings at Gunwalloe. He's on leave, that's where it is. Every three or four years he gets leave from the Vittling and comes home to England; and then he always ups and runs down to the Lizard, and wanders about on the cliffs by himself like this, with Miss Cleer to keep him company. He's a chip of the old rock, he is—Cornish granite to the core, as the saying goes; and he can't be happy away from it. You'll see him any day standing like that on the very edge of the cliff, looking across over the water, as if he was a coastguard hisself, and always sort o' perched on the highest bit of rock he can come nigh anywhere."

"He looks an able man," Le Neve went on, still regarding the stranger, poised now as before on the very summit of the tor, with his cloak wrapped around him.

"Able? I believe you! Why, he's the very heart and soul, the brains and senses of the Vittling Department. The navy'd starve if it wasn't for him. He's a Companion of St. Michael and St. George, Mr. Trevennack is. 'Tain't every one as is a Companion of St. Michael and St. George. The queen made him that herself for his management of the Vittling." "It's a strange place for a man in his position to spend his holiday," Le Neve went on, reflectively. "You'd think, coming back so seldom, he'd want to see something of London, Brighton, Scarborough, Scotland."

The coastguard looked up, and held his brush idle in one hand with a mysterious air. "Not when you come to know his history," he answered, gazing hard at him.

"Oh, there's a history to him, is there?" Le Neve answered, not surprised. "Well, he certainly has the look of it."

The coastguard nodded his head and dropped his voice still lower. "Yes, there's a history to him," he replied. "And that's why you'll always see Trevennack of Trevennack on the top of the cliff, and never at the bottom.—Thank'ee very kindly, sir; it ain't often we gets a chance of a good cigar at Kynance.—Well, it must be fifteen year now—or maybe sixteen—I don't mind the right time—"

Trevennack came down in old Squire Tyrrel's days, him as is buried at Mullion Church town, and stopped at Gunwalloe, same as he might be stopping there in his lodgings nowadays. He had his only son with him, too, a fine-looking young gentleman, they say, for his age, for I wasn't here then—I was serving my time under Admiral De Horsey on the good old Billy Ruffun—the very picture of Miss Cleer, and twelve year old or thereabouts; and they called him Master Michael, the same as they always call the eldest boy of the Trevennacks of Trevennack. Aye, and one day they two, father and son, were a-strolling on the beach under the cliffs by Penmorgan—mind them stones on the edge, sir; they're powerful loose—don't you drop none over—when, just as you might loosen them pebbles there with your foot, over came a shower o' small bits from the cliff on top, and as sure as you're livin', hit the two on 'em right so, sir. Mr. Trevennack himself, he wasn't much hurt—just bruised a bit on the forehead, for he was wearing a Scotch cap; but Master Michael, well, it caught him right on the top of the head, and afore they knowed what it was, it smashed his skull in. Aye, that it did, sir, just so; it smashed the boy's skull in. They carried him home, and cut the bone out, and trepanned him; but bless you, it wa'n't no good; he lingered on for a night, and then, afore morning, he died, insensible."

"What a terrible story!" Le Neve exclaimed, with a face of horror, recoiling instinctively from the edge of the cliff that had wrought this evil. "Aye, you may well say so. It was rough on him," the coastguard went on, with the calm criticism of his kind. "His only son—and all in a minute like, as you may term it—such a promising young gentleman! It was rough, terrible rough on him. So from that day to this, whenever Trevennack has a holiday, down he comes here to Gunwalloe, and walks about the cliffs, and looks across upon the rocks by Penmorgan Point, or stands on the top of Michael's Crag, just over against the spot where his boy was hurt. An' he never wants to go nowhere else in all England, but just to stand like that on the very edge of the cliff, and look over from atop, and brood, and think about it."

As the man spoke, it flashed across Le Neve's mind at once that Trevennack's voice had quivered with a strange thrill of emotion as he uttered that line, no doubt pregnant with meaning for him. "Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth." He was thinking of his own boy, most likely, not of the poet's feigned Lycidas.

"He'll stand like that for hours," the coastguard went on confidentially, "musing like to himself, with Miss Cleer by his side, reading in her book or doing her knitting or something. But you couldn't get him, for love or money, to go BELOW the cliffs, no, not if you was to kill him. He's AFRAID of going below—that's where it is; he always thinks something's sure to tumble from the top on him. Natural enough, too, after all that's been. He likes to get as high as ever he can in the air, where he can see all around him, and be certain there ain't anyone above to let anything drop as might hurt him. Michael's Crag's where he likes best to stand, on the top there by the Horse; he always chooses them spots. In Malta it was San Mickayly; and in Gibraltar it was the summit of Europa Point, by the edge of the Twelve Apostles' battery."

"How curious!" Le Neve exclaimed. "It's just the other way on now, with my friend Mr. Tyrrel. I'm stopping at Penmorgan, but Mr. Tyrrel won't go on TOP of the cliffs for anything. He says he's afraid he might let something drop by accident on the people below him."

The coastguard grew suddenly graver. "Like enough," he said, stroking his chin. "Like enough; and right, too, for him, sir. You see, he's a Tyrrel, and he's bound to be cautious."

"Why so?" Le Neve asked, somewhat puzzled. "Why a Tyrrel more than the rest of us?"

The man hesitated and stared hard at him.

"Well, it's like this, sir," he answered at last, with the shamefaced air of the intelligent laboring man who confesses to a superstition. "We Cornish are old-fashioned, and we has our ideas. The Tyrrels are new people like, in Cornwall, as we say; they came in only with Cromwell's folk, when he fought the Grenvilles; but it's well beknown in the county bad luck goes with them. You see, they're descended from that Sir Walter Tyrrel you'll read about in the history books, him as killed King William Rufious in the New Forest. You'll hear all about it at Rufious' Stone, where the king was

killed; Sir Walter, he drew, and he aimed at a deer, and the king was standing by; and the bullet, it glanced aside—or maybe it was afore bullets, and then it'd be an arrow; but anyhow, one or t'other, it hit the king, and he fell, and died there. The stone's standing to this day on the place where he fell, and I've seen it, and read of it when I was in hospital at Netley. But Sir Walter, he got clear away, and ran across to France; and ever since that time they've called the eldest son of the Tyrrels Walter, same as they've called the eldest son of the Trevennacks Michael. But they say every Walter Tyrrel that's born into the world is bound, sooner or later, to kill his man unintentional. So he do right to avoid going too near the cliffs, I say. We shouldn't tempt Providence. And the Tyrrels is all a conscientious people."

## CHAPTER III

### FACE TO FACE.

When Eustace Le Neve returned to lunch at Penmorgan that day he was silent to his host about Trevennack of Trevennack. To say the truth, he was so much attracted by Miss Cleer's appearance that he didn't feel inclined to mention having met her. But he wanted to meet her again for all that, and hoped he would do so. Perhaps Tyrrel might know the family, and ask them round to dine some night. At any rate, society is rare at the Lizard. Sooner or later, he felt sure, he'd knock up against the mysterious stranger somewhere. And that involved the probability of knocking up against the mysterious stranger's beautiful daughter.

Next morning after breakfast, however, he made a vigorous effort to induce Walter Tyrrel to mount the cliff and look at the view from Penmorgan Point toward the Rill and Kynance. It was absurd, he said truly, for the proprietor of such an estate never to have seen the most beautiful spot in it. But Tyrrel was obdurate. On the point of actually mounting the cliff itself he wouldn't yield one jot or tittle. Only, after much persuasion, he consented at last to cross the headland by the fields at the back and come out at the tor above St. Michael's Crag, provided always Eustace would promise he'd neither go near the edge himself nor try to induce his friend to approach it.

Satisfied with this lame compromise—for he really wished his host to enjoy that glorious view—Eustace Le Neve turned up the valley behind the house, with Walter Tyrrel by his side, and after traversing several fields, through gaps in the stone walls, led out his companion at last to the tor on the headland.

As they approached it from behind, the engineer observed, not without a faint thrill of pleasure, that Trevennack's stately figure stood upright as before upon the wind-swept pile of fissured rocks, and that Cleer sat reading under its shelter to leeward. But by her side this morning sat also an elder lady, whom Eustace instinctively recognized as her mother—a graceful, dignified lady, with silvery white hair and black Cornish eyes, and features not untinged by the mellowing, hallowing air of a great sorrow.

Le Neve raised his hat as they drew near, with a pleased smile of welcome, and Trevennack and his daughter both bowed in return. "A glorious morning!" the engineer said, drinking in to the full the lovely golden haze that flooded and half-observed the Land's End district; and Trevennack assented gravely. "The crag stands up well in this sunshine against the dark water behind," he said, waving one gracious hand toward the island at his foot, and poising lighter than ever.

"Oh, take care!" Walter Tyrrel cried, looking up at him, on tenterhooks. "It's so dangerous up there! You might tumble any minute."

"*I* never tumble," Trevennack made answer with solemn gravity, spreading one hand on either side as if to balance himself like an acrobat. But he descended as he spoke and took his place beside them.

Tyrrel looked at the view and looked at the pretty girl. It was evident he was quite as much struck by the one as by the other. Indeed, of the two, Cleer seemed to attract the larger share of his attention. For some minutes they stood and talked, all five of them together, without further introduction than their common admiration for that exquisite bay, in which Trevennack appeared to take an almost proprietary interest. It gratified him, obviously, a Cornish man, that these strangers (as he thought them) should be so favorably impressed by his native county. But Tyrrel all the while looked ill at ease, though he sidled away as far as possible from the edge of the cliff, and sat down near Cleer at a safe distance from the precipice. He was silent and preoccupied. That mattered but little, however, as the rest did all the talking, especially Trevennack, who turned out to be indeed a perfect treasure-house of Cornish antiquities and Cornish folk-lore.

"I generally stand below, on top of Michael's Crag," he said to Eustace, pointing it out, "when the tide allows it; but when it's high, as it is now, such a roaring and seething scour sets through the channel between the rock and the mainland that no swimmer could stem it; and then I come up here, and look down from above upon it. It's the finest point on all our Cornish coast, this point we stand on. It has the widest view, the purest air, the hardest rock, the highest and most fantastic tor of any of them."

"My husband's quite an enthusiast for this particular place," Mrs. Trevennack interposed, watching his face as she spoke with a certain anxious and ill-disguised wifely solicitude.

"He's come here for years. It has many associations for us."

"Some painful and some happy," Cleer added, half aloud; and Tyrrel, nodding assent, looked at her as if expecting some marked recognition.

"You should see it in the pilchard season," her father went on, turning suddenly to Eustace with much animation in his voice. "That's the time for Cornwall—a month or so later than now—you should see it then, for picturesqueness and variety. 'When the corn is in the shock,' says our Cornish rhyme, 'Then the fish are off the rock'—and the rock's St. Michael's. The HUER, as we call him, for he gives the hue and cry from the hill-top lookout when the fish are coming, he stands on Michael's Crag just below there, as I stand myself so often, and when he sights the shoals by the ripple on the water, he motions to the boats which way to go for the pilchards. Then the rowers in the lurkers, as we call our seine-boats, surround the shoal with a tuck-net, or drag the seine into Mullion Cove, all alive with a mass of shimmering silver. The jowsters come down with their carts on to the beach, and hawk them about round the neighborhood—I've seen them twelve a penny; while in the curing-houses they're bulking them and pressing them as if for dear life, to send away to Genoa, Leghorn, and Naples. That's where all our fish go—to the Catholic south. 'The Pope and the Pilchards,' says our Cornish toast; for it's the Friday fast that makes our only market."

"You can see them on St. George's Island in Looe Harbor," Cleer put in quite innocently. "They're like a sea of silver there—on St. George's Island."

"My dear," her father corrected with that grave, old-fashioned courtesy which the coast-guard had noted and described as at once so haughty and yet so condescending, "how often I've begged of you NOT to call it St. George's Island! It's St. Nicholas' and St. Michael's—one may as well be correct—and till a very recent date a chapel to St. Michael actually stood there upon the rocky top; it was only destroyed, you remember, at the time of the Reformation."

"Everybody CALLS it St. George's now," Cleer answered, with girlish persistence. And her father looked round at her sharply, with an impatient snap of the fingers, while Mrs. Trevennack's eye was fixed on him now more carefully and more earnestly, Tyrrel observed, than ever.

"I wonder why it is," Eustace Le Neve interposed, to spare Cleer's feelings, "that so many high places, tops of mountains and so forth, seem always to be dedicated to St. Michael in particular? He seems to love such airy sites. There's St. Michael's Mount here, you know, and Mont St. Michel in Normandy; and at Le Puy, in Auvergne, there's a St. Michael's Rock, and at ever so many other places I can't remember this minute."

Trevennack was in his element. The question just suited him. He smiled a curious smile of superior knowledge. "You've come to the right place for information," he said, blandly, turning round to the engineer. "I'm a Companion of St. Michael and St. George myself, and my family, as I told you, once owned St. Michael's Mount; so, for that and various other reasons, I've made a special study of St. Michael the Archangel, and all that pertains to him." And then he went on to give a long and learned disquisition, which Le Neve and Walter Tyrrel only partially followed, about the connection between St. Michael and the Celtic race, as well as about the archangel's peculiar love for high and airy situations. Most of the time, indeed, Le Neve was more concerned in watching Cleer Trevennack's eyes, as her father spoke, than in listening to the civil servant's profound dissertation. He gathered, however, from the part he caught, that St. Michael the Archangel had been from early

days a very important and powerful Cornish personage, and that he clung to high places on the tors and rocks because he had to fight and subdue the Prince of the Air, whom he always destroyed at last on some pointed pinnacle. And now that he came to think of it, Eustace vaguely recollected he had always seen St. Michael, in pictures or stained glass windows, delineated just so—with drawn sword and warrior's mien—in the act of triumphing over his dragon-like enemy on the airy summit of some tall jagged crag or rock-bound precipice.

As for Mrs. Trevennack, she watched her husband every moment he spoke with a close and watchful care, which Le Neve hardly noticed, but which didn't for a minute escape Walter Tyrrel's more piercing and observant scrutiny.

At last, as the amateur lecturer was beginning to grow somewhat prolix, a cormorant below created a slight diversion for awhile by settling in his flight on the very highest point of Michael's Crag, and proceeding to preen his glittering feathers in the full golden flood of that bright August sunlight.

With irrepressible boyish instinct Le Neve took up a stone, and was just on the point of aiming it (quite without reason) at the bird on the pinnacle.

But before he could let it go, the two other men, moved as if by a single impulse, had sprung forward with a bound, and in the self-same tone and in the self-same words cried out with one accord, in a wildly excited voice, "For God's sake, don't throw! You don't know how dangerous it is!"

Le Neve let his hand drop flat, and allowed the stone to fall from it. As he did so the two others stood back a pace, as if guarding him, but kept their hands still ready to seize the engineer's arm if he made the slightest attempt at motion. Eustace felt they were watching him as one might watch a madman. For a moment they were silent. Trevennack was the first to speak. His voice had an earnest and solemn ring in it, like a reproving angel's. "How can you tell what precious life may be passing below?" he said, with stern emphasis, fixing Le Neve with his reproachful eye. "The stone might fall short. It might drop out of sight. You might kill whomsoever it struck, unseen. And then"—he drank in a deep breath, gasping—"you would know you were a murderer."

Walter Tyrrel drew himself up at the words like one stung. "No, no! not a murderer!" he cried; "not quite as bad as a murderer! It wouldn't be murder, surely. It would be accidental homicide—unintentional, unwilling—a terrible result of most culpable carelessness, of course; but it wouldn't be quite murder; don't call it murder. I can't allow that. Not that name by any means.... Though to the end of your life, Eustace, if you were to kill a man so, you'd never cease to regret it and mourn over it daily; you'd never cease to repent your guilty carelessness in sackcloth and ashes."

He spoke so seriously, so earnestly, with such depth of personal feeling, that Trevennack, starting back, stood and gazed at him slowly with those terrible eyes, like one who awakens by degrees from a painful dream to some awful reality. Tyrrel winced before his scrutiny. For a moment the elder man just looked at him and stared. Then he took one step forward. "Sir," he said, in a very low voice, half broken with emotion, "I had a dear son of my own once; a very dear, dear son. He was killed by such an ACCIDENT on this very spot. No wonder I remember it."

Mrs. Trevennack and Cleer both gave a start of surprise. The man's words astonished them; for never before, during fifteen long years, had that unhappy father alluded in any way in overt words to his son's tragic end. He had brooded and mused over it in his crushed and wounded spirit; he had revisited the scene of his loss whenever opportunity permitted him; he had made of his sorrow a cherished and petted daily companion; but he had stored it up deep in his own inmost heart, never uttering a word of it even to his wife or daughter. The two women knew Michael Trevennack must be profoundly moved, indeed, so to tear open the half-healed wound in his tortured bosom before two casual strangers.

But Tyrrel, too, gave a start as he spoke, and looked hard at the careworn face of that unhappy man. "Then you're Mr. Trevennack!" he exclaimed, all aghast. "Mr. Trevennack of the Admiralty!"

And the dignified stranger answered, bowing his head very low, "Yes, you've guessed me right. I'm Michael Trevennack."

With scarcely a word of reply Walter Tyrrel turned and strode away from the spot. "I must go now," he muttered faintly, looking at his watch with some feigned surprise, as a feeble excuse. "I've an appointment at home." He hadn't the courage to stay. His heart misgave him. Once fairly round the corner he fled like a wounded creature, too deeply hurt even to cry. Eustace Le Neve, raising his hat, hastened after him, all mute wonder. For several hundred yards they walked on side by side across the open heathy moor. Then, as they passed the first wall, Tyrrel paused for a moment and spoke. "NOT a murderer!" he cried in his anguish; "oh, no, not quite as bad as a murderer, surely, Eustace; but still, a culpable homicide. Oh, God, how terrible."

And even as he disappeared across the moor to eastward, Trevennack, far behind, seized his wife's arm spasmodically, and clutching it tight in his iron grip, murmured low in a voice of supreme conviction, "Do you see what that means, Lucy? I can read it all now. It was HE who rolled down that cursed stone. It was HE who killed our boy. And I can guess who he is. He must be Tyrrel of Penmorgan."

Cleer didn't hear the words. She was below, gazing after them.

## CHAPTER IV

### **TYRREL'S REMORSE.**

The two young men walked back, without interchanging another word, to the gate of the manor-house. Tyrrel opened it with a swing. Then, once within his own grounds, and free from prying eyes, he sat down forthwith upon a little craggy cliff that overhung the carriage-drive, buried his face in his hands, and, to Le Neve's intense astonishment, cried long and silently. He let himself go with a rush; that's the Cornish nature. Eustace Le Neve sat by his side, not daring to speak, but in mute sympathy with his sorrow. For many minutes neither uttered a sound. At last Tyrrel looked up, and in an agony of remorse, turned round to his companion. "Of course you understand," he said.

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