

AUDREY.¹

IV.

THE ROAD TO WILLIAMSBURGH.

APRIL had gone out in rain, and though the sun now shone brightly from a cloudless sky, the streams were swollen and the road was heavy. The ponderous coach and the four black horses made slow progress. The creeping pace, the languid warmth of the afternoon, the scent of the flowering trees, the ceaseless singing of redbird, catbird, robin, and thrush, made it drowsy in the forest. In the midst of an agreeable dissertation upon May-Day sports of more ancient times the Colonel paused to smother a yawn; and when he had done with the clown, the piper, and the hobbyhorse, he yawned again, this time outright.

"What with Ludwell's Burgundy, hazard, and the French peace, we sat late last night. My eyes are as heavy as the road. Have you noticed, my dear, how bland and dreamy is the air? On such an afternoon one is content to be in Virginia, and out of the world. It is a very land of the Lotophagi, — a lazy clime that Ulysses touched at, my love."

The equipage slowly climbed an easy ascent, and as slowly descended to the level again. The road was narrow, and now and then a wild cherry tree struck the coach with a white arm, or a grapevine swung through the window a fragrant trailer. The woods on either hand were pale green and silver gray, save where they were starred with dogwood, or where rose the pink mist of the Judas tree. At the foot of the hill the road skirted a mantled pond, choked with broad green leaves and the half-submerged trunks of fallen trees. Upon

these logs, basking in the sunlight, lay small black turtles by the score. A snake glided across the road in front of the horses, and from a bit of muddy ground rose a cloud of yellow butterflies.

The Colonel yawned for the third time, looked at his watch, sighed, lifted his finely arched brows with a whimsical smile for his own somnolence; then, with an "I beg your pardon, my love," took out a lace handkerchief, spread it over his face and head, and, crossing his legs, sunk back into the capacious corner of the coach. In three minutes the placid rise and fall of his ruffles bore witness that he slept.

The horseman, who, riding beside the lowered glass, had at intervals conversed with the occupants of the coach, now glanced from the sleeping gentleman to the lady, in whose dark, almond-shaped eyes lurked no sign of drowsiness. The pond had been passed, and before them, between low banks crowned with ferns and overshadowed by beech trees, lay a long stretch of shady road.

Haward drew rein, dismounted, and motioned to the coachman to check the horses. When the coach had come to a standstill, he opened the door with as little creaking as might be, and held out a petitionary hand. "Will you not walk with me a little way, Evelyn?" he asked, speaking in a low voice that he might not wake the sleeper. "It is much pleasanter out here, with the birds and the flowers."

His eyes and the smile upon his lips added, "and with me." From what he had been upon a hilltop, one moonlight night eleven years before, he had become a somewhat silent, handsome gentleman, composed in manner, experienced, not unkindly, looking abroad from his ap-

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portioned mountain crag and solitary fortress upon men, and the busy ways of men, with a tolerant gaze. That to certain of his London acquaintance he was simply the well-bred philosopher and man of letters; that in the minds of others he was associated with the peacock plumage of the world of fashion, with the flare of candles, the hot breath of gamesters, the ring of gold upon the tables; that one clique had tales to tell of a magnanimous spirit and a generous hand, while yet another grew red at mention of his name, and put to his credit much that was not creditable, was perhaps not strange. He, like his neighbors, had many selves, and each in its turn — the scholar, the man of pleasure, the indolent, kindly, reflective self, the self of pride and cool assurance and stubborn will — took its place behind the mask, and went through its allotted part. His self of all selves, the quiet, remote, crowned, and inscrutable *I*, sat apart, alike curious and indifferent, watched the others, and knew how little worth the while was the stir in the ant-hill.

But on a May Day, in the sunshine and the blossoming woods and the company of Mistress Evelyn Byrd, it seemed, for the moment, worth the while. At his invitation she had taken his hand and descended from the coach. The great, painted thing moved slowly forward, bearing the unconscious Colonel, and the two pedestrians walked behind it: he with his horse's reins over his arm and his hat in his hand; she lifting her silken skirts from contact with the ground, and looking, not at her companion, but at the greening boughs, and at the sunlight striking upon smooth, pale beech trunks and the leaf-strewn earth beneath. Out of the woods came a sudden medley of bird notes, clear, sweet, and inexpressibly joyous.

"That is a mocking bird," said Haward. "I once heard one of a moonlight night, beside a still water" —

He broke off, and they listened in si-

lence. The bird flew away, and they came to a brook traversing the road, and flowing in wide meanders through the forest. There were stepping-stones, and Haward, crossing first, turned and held out his hand to the lady. When she was upon his side of the streamlet, and before he released the slender fingers, he bent and kissed them; then, as there was no answering smile or blush, but only a quiet withdrawal of the hand and a remark about the crystal clearness of the brook, looked at her, with interrogation in his smile.

"What is that crested bird upon yonder bough," she asked, — "the one that gave the piercing cry?"

"A kingfisher," he answered, "and cousin to the halcyon of the ancients. If, when next you go to sea, you take its feathers with you, you need have no fear of storms."

A tree, leafless, but purplish pink with bloom, leaned from the bank above them. He broke a branch and gave it to her. "It is the Judas tree," he told her. "Iscariot hanged himself thereon."

Around the trunk of a beech a lizard ran like a green flame, and they heard the distant barking of a fox. Large white butterflies went past them, and a humming bird whirled into the heart of a wild honeysuckle that had hastened to bloom. "How different from the English forests!" she said. "I could love these best. What are all those broad-leaved plants with the white, waxen flowers?"

"May apples. Some call them mandrakes, but they do not rise shrieking, nor kill the wight that plucks them. Will you have me gather them for you?"

"I will not trouble you," she answered, and presently turned aside to pull them for herself.

He looked at the graceful, bending figure and lifted his brows; then, quickening his pace until he was up with the coach, he spoke to the negro upon the box. "Tyre, drive on to that big pine,

and wait there for your mistress and me. Sidon," — to the footman, — "get down and take my horse. If your master wakes, tell him that Mistress Evelyn tired of the coach, and that I am picking her a nosegay."

Tyre and Sidon, Haward's steed, the four black coach horses, the vermilion-and-cream coach, and the slumbering Colonel, all made a progress of an hundred yards to the pine tree, where the cortège came to a halt. Mistress Evelyn looked up from the flower-gathering to find the road bare before her, and Haward, sitting upon a log, watching her with something between a smile and a frown.

"You think that I, also, weigh true love by the weight of the purse," he said. "I do not care overmuch for your gold, Evelyn."

She did not answer at once, but stood with her head slightly bent, fingering the waxen flowers with a delicate, lingering touch. Now that there was no longer the noise of the wheels and the horses' hoofs, the forest stillness, which is composed of sound, made itself felt. The call of birds, the whirl of insects, the murmur of the wind in the treetops, low, grave, incessant, and eternal as the sound of the sea, joined themselves to the slow waves of fragrance, the stretch of road whereon nothing moved, the sunlight lying on the earth, and made a spacious quiet.

"I think that there is nothing for which you care overmuch," she said at last. "Not for gold or the lack of it, not for friends or for enemies, not even for yourself."

"I have known you for ten years," he answered. "I have watched you grow from a child into a gracious and beautiful woman. Do you not think that I care for you, Evelyn?"

Near where he sat so many violets were blooming that they made a purple carpet for the ground. Going over to them, she knelt and began to pluck them.

"If any danger threatened me," she began, in her clear, low voice, "I believe that you would step between me and it, though at the peril of your life. I believe that you take some pleasure in what you are pleased to style my beauty, some pride in a mind that you have largely formed. If I died early, it would grieve you for a little while. I call you my friend."

"I would be called your lover," he said.

She laid her fan upon the ground, heaped it with violets, and turned again to her reaping. "How might that be," she asked, "when you do not love me? I know that you would marry me. What do the French call it, — *mariage de convenance*?"

Her voice was even, and her head was bent so that he could not see her face. In the pause that followed her words treetop whispered to treetop, but the sunshine lay very still and bright upon the road and upon the flowers by the wayside.

"There are worse marriages," Haward said at last. Rising from the log, he moved to the side of the kneeling figure. "Let the violets rest, Evelyn, while we reason together. You are too clear-eyed. Since they offend you, I will drop the idle compliments, the pretty phrases, in which neither of us believes. What if this tinted dream of love does not exist for us? What if we are only friends — dear and old friends" —

He stooped, and, taking her by the busy hands, made her stand up beside him. "Cannot we marry and still be friends?" he demanded, with something like laughter in his eyes. "My dear, I would strive to make you happy; and happiness is as often found in that temperate land where we would dwell as in Love's flaming climate." He smiled and tried to find her eyes, downcast and hidden in the shadow of her hat. "This is no flowery wooing such as women love," he said; "but then you are like no other

woman. Always the truth was best with you."

Upon her wrenching her hands from his, and suddenly and proudly raising her head, he was amazed to find her white to the lips.

"The truth!" she said slowly. "Always the truth was best! Well, then, take the truth, and afterwards and forever and ever leave me alone! You have been frank; why should not I, who, you say, am like no other woman, be so, too? I will not marry you, because — because" — The crimson flowed over her face and neck; then ebbed, leaving her whiter than before. She put her hands, that still held the wild flowers, to her breast, and her eyes, dark with pain, met his. "Had you loved me," she said proudly and quietly, "I had been happy."

Haward stepped backwards until there lay between them a strip of sunny earth. The murmur of the wind went on and the birds were singing, and yet the forest seemed more quiet than death. "I could not guess," he said, speaking slowly and with his eyes upon the ground. "I have spoken like a brute. I beg your pardon."

"You might have known! you might have guessed!" she cried, with passion. "But you walk an even way; you choose nor high nor low; you look deep into your mind, but your heart you keep cool and vacant. Oh, a very temperate land! I think that others less wise than you may also be less blind. Never speak to me of this day! Let it die as these blooms are dying in this hot sunshine! Now let us walk to the coach and waken my father. I have gathered flowers enough."

Side by side, but without speaking, they moved from shadow to sunlight, and from sunlight to shadow, down the road to the great pine tree. The white and purple flowers lay in her hand and along her bended arm; from the folds of her dress, of some rich and silken

stuff, chameleon-like in its changing colors, breathed the subtle fragrance of the perfume then most in fashion; over the thin lawn that half revealed, half concealed, neck and bosom was drawn a long and glossy curl, carefully let to escape from the waved and banded hair beneath the gypsy hat. Exquisite from head to foot, the figure had no place in the unpruned, untrained, savage, and primeval beauty of those woods. Smooth sward, with jets of water and carven nymphs embowered in clipped box or yew, should have been its setting, and not this wild and tangled growth, this license of bird and beast and growing things. And yet the incongruous riot, the contrast of profuse, untended beauty, enhanced the value of the picture, gave it piquancy and a completer charm.

When they were within a few feet of the coach and horses and negroes, all drowsing in the sunny road, Haward made as if to speak, but she stopped him with her lifted hand. "Spare me," she begged. "It is bad enough as it is, but words would make it worse. If ever a day might come — I do not think that I am unlovely; I even rate myself so highly as to think that I am worthy of your love. If ever the day shall come when you can say to me, 'Now I see that love is no tinted dream; now I ask you to be my wife indeed,' then, upon that day — But until then ask not of me what you asked back there among the violets. I, too, am proud" — Her voice broke.

"Evelyn!" he cried. "Poor child — poor friend" —

She turned her face upon him. "Don't!" she said, and her lips were smiling, though her eyes were full of tears. "We have forgot that it is May Day, and that we must be light of heart. Look how white is that dogwood tree! Break me a bough for my chimney-piece at Williamsburgh."

He brought her a branch of the starry blossoms. "Did you notice," she asked, "that the girl who ran — Audrey —

wore dogwood in her hair? You could see her heart beat with very love of living. She was of the woods, like a dryad. Had the prizes been of my choosing, she should have had a gift more poetical than a guinea."

Haward opened the coach door, and stood gravely aside while she entered the vehicle and took her seat, depositing her flowers upon the cushions beside her. The Colonel stirred, uncrossed his legs, yawned, pulled the handkerchief from his face, and opened his eyes.

"Faith!" he exclaimed, straightening himself, and taking up his radiant humor where, upon falling asleep, he had let it drop. "The way must have suddenly become smooth as a road in Venice, for I've felt no jolting this half hour. Flowers, Evelyn? and Haward afoot? You've been on a woodland saunter, then, while I enacted Solomon's sluggard!" The worthy parent's eyes began to twinkle. "What flowers did you find? They have strange blooms here, and yet I warrant that even in these woods one might come across London pride and none-so-pretty and forget-me-not" —

His daughter smiled, and asked him some idle question about the May apple and the Judas tree. The master of Westover was a treasure house of sprightly lore. Within ten minutes he had visited Palestine, paid his compliments to the ancient herbalists, and landed again in his own coach, to find in his late audience a somewhat *distracte* daughter and a friend in a brown study. The coach was lumbering on toward Williamsburgh, and Haward, with level gaze and hand closed tightly upon his horse's reins, rode by the window, while the lady, sitting in her corner with downcast eyes, fingered the dogwood blooms that were not paler than her face.

The Colonel's wits were keen. One glance, a lift of his arched brows, the merest ghost of a smile at the corners of his lips, and, dragging the younger

man with him, he plunged into politics. Invective against a refractory House of Burgesses brought them a quarter of a mile upon their way; the necessity for an act to encourage adventurers in iron works carried them past a milldam; and frauds in the customs enabled them to reach a crossroads tavern, where the Colonel ordered a halt, and called for a tankard of ale. A slipshod, blue-eyed Cherry brought it, and spoke her thanks in broad Scotch for the shilling which the gay Colonel flung tinkling into the measure.

That versatile and considerate gentleman, having had his draught, cried to the coachman to go on, and was beginning upon the question of the militia, when Haward, who had dismounted, appeared at the coach door. "I do not think that I will go on to Williamsburgh with you, sir," he said. "There's some troublesome business with my overseer that ought not to wait. If I take this road and the planter's pace, I shall reach Fair View by sunset. You do not return to Westover this week? Then I shall see you at Williamsburgh within a day or two. Evelyn, good-day."

Her hand lay upon the cushion nearest him. He would have taken it in his own, as for years he had done when he bade her good-by; but though she smiled and gave him "Good-day" in her usual voice, she drew the hand away. The Colonel's eyebrows went up another fraction of an inch, but he was a discreet gentleman who had bought experience. Skillfully unobservant, his parting words were at once cordial and few in number; and after Haward had mounted and had turned his horse's head down the side road, he put his handsome, periwigged head out of the coach window and called to him some advice about the transplanting of tobacco. This done, and the horseman out of sight, and the coach once more upon its leisurely way to Williamsburgh, the model father pulled out of his pocket a small book, and, after affection-

ately advising his daughter to close her eyes and sleep out the miles to Williamsburgh, himself retired with Horace to the Sabine farm.

V.

THE STOREKEEPER.

It was now late afternoon, the sun's rays coming slantingly into the forest, and the warmth of the day past and gone. To Haward, riding at a gallop down the road that was scarce more than a bridle path, the rush of the cool air was grateful; the sharp striking of protruding twigs, the violent brushing aside of hanging vines, not unwelcome.

It was of the man that the uppermost feeling in his mind was one of disgust at his late infelicity of speech, and at the blindness which had prompted it. That he had not divined, that he had been so dull as to assume that as he felt, or did not feel, so must she, annoyed him like the jar of rude noises or like sand blowing into face and eyes. It was of him, too, that the annoyance was purely with himself; for her, when at last he came to think of her, he found only the old, placid affection, as far removed from love as from hate. If he knew himself, it would always be as far removed from love as from hate.

All the days of her youth he had come and gone, a welcome guest at her father's house in London. He had grown to be her friend, watching the crescent beauty of face and mind with something of the pride and tenderness which a man might feel for a young and favorite sister; and then, at last, when some turn of affairs sent them all home to Virginia to take lot and part there, he had thought of marriage.

His mind had turned, not unwillingly, from the town and its apples of Sodom to his Virginia plantation that he had not seen for more than ten years. It was his birthplace, and there he had

spent his boyhood. Sometimes, in heated rooms, when the candles in the sconces were guttering down, and the dawn looked palely in upon gaming tables and heaped gold, and seamed faces, haggardly triumphant, haggardly despairing, determinedly indifferent, there had come to him visions of cool dawns upon the river, wide, misty expanses of marsh and forest, indistinct and cold and pure. The lonely "great house," too,—the house which his father had built with so much love and pains, that his son and his son's sons should have a worthy home,—appealed to him, and the garden, and the fishing boats, and the old slaves in the quarters. He told himself that he was glad to go back.

Had men called him ambitious, he would have smiled, and felt truly that they had bungled in the word. Such and such things were simply his appurtenances in London, the regard due to a gentleman who to a certain distinction in his manner of amusing himself added the achievement of a successful comedy, three lampoons quoted at all London tea tables, and a piece of Whig invective, so able, stern, and sustained that many cried that the Dean had met his match; in Virginia, the deferential esteem of the colony at large, a place in the Council, and a great estate. An alliance with the master of Westover was in itself a desirable thing, advantageous to purse and to credit; his house must have a mistress, and that mistress must please at every point his fastidious taste.

What better to do than to give it for mistress Evelyn Byrd? Evelyn, who had had for all her suitors only a slow smile and shake of the head; Evelyn, who was older than her years; Evelyn, who was his friend as he was hers. Love! He had left that land behind, and she had never touched its shores; the geography of the poets to the contrary, it did not lie in the course of all who passed through life. He made his suit, and now he had his answer.

If he did not take trouble to wonder at her confession, or to modestly ask himself how he had deserved her love, neither did he insult her with pity or with any lightness of thought. Nor was he ready to believe that his rejection was final. Apparently indifferent as he was, it was yet his way to move steadily and relentlessly, if very quietly, toward what goal he desired to reach. He thought that Fair View might yet call Evelyn Byrd its mistress.

Since turning into the crossroad that, running south and east, would take him back to the banks of the James and to his own house, he had not slackened speed, but now, as he saw through the trees before him a long zigzag of rail fence, he drew rein. The road turned, and a gate barred his way. When he had opened it and passed through, he was upon his own land.

He had ridden off his irritation, and could now calmly tell himself that the blunder was made and over with, and that it was the duty of the philosopher to remember it only in so far as it must shape his future course. His house of cards had toppled over; but the profound indifference of his nature enabled him to view the ruins with composure. After a while he would strive to build the selfsame house again. The image of Evelyn, as she had stood, dark-eyed and pale, with the flowers pressed to her bosom, he put from him. He knew her strength of soul; and with the curious hardness of the strong toward the strong, and also not without the delicacy which, upon occasion, he could both feel and exhibit, he shut the door upon that tragedy. Who knew? Perhaps, after all, it might turn into a comedy; but until then he would not look. Of course they must meet, and that often. Well, there were masks enough to choose from; doubtless the one that most closely resembled the old, real face would be best.

He had left the woods, and was now riding through a field of newly planted

tobacco. It and the tobacco house in the midst of it were silent, deserted, bathed in the late sunshine. The ground rose slightly, and when he had mounted with it he saw below him the huddle of cabins which formed the ridge quarter, and winding down to it a string of negroes. One turned his head, and saw the solitary horseman upon the summit of the slope behind him; another looked, and another, until each man in line had his head over his shoulder. They knew that the horseman was their master. Some had been upon the plantation when he was a boy; others were more recent acquisitions, who knew not his face; but alike they grinned and ducked. The white man walking beside the line took off his hat and pulled a forelock. Haward raised his hand that they might know he saw, and rode on.

Another piece of woods where a great number of felled trees cumbered the ground, more tobacco, and then, in worn fields where the tobacco had been, knee-deep wheat rippling in the evening breeze. The wheat ran down to a marsh, and to a wide, slow creek that, save in the shadow of its reedy banks, was blue as the sky above. Haward, riding slowly beside his green fields and still waters, noted with quiet, half-regretful pleasure this or that remembered feature of the landscape. There had been little change. Here, where he remembered deep woods, tobacco was planted; there, where the tobacco had been, were now fields of wheat or corn, or wild tangles of vine-rid saplings and brushwood: but for this, it might have been yesterday that he had last ridden that way.

Presently he saw the river, and then the marshes with brown dots that were his cattle straying over them, and beyond these the home landing and the masts of the Golden Rose. The sun was near its setting; the men had left the fields; over all things were the stillness and peace, the encroaching shadows, the dwindling light, so golden in its qual-

ity, of late afternoon. When he crossed the bridge over the creek, the hollow sound that the boards gave forth beneath his horse's hoofs had the depth and resonance of drumbeats, and the cry of a solitary heron in the marsh seemed louder than its wont. He passed the rolling-house and drew near to the river, riding again through tobacco. These plants were Orenoko; the mild sweet-scented took the higher ground. Along the river bank grew a row of tall and stately trees: passing beneath them, he saw the shining water between brown columns or through a veil of slight, unfolding leaves. Soon the trees fell away, and he came to a stretch of bank, — here naked earth, there clad in grass and dewberry vines. Near by was a small landing, with two or three boats fastened to its piles; and at a little distance beyond it, shadowed by a locust tree, a strongly built, two-roomed wooden house, with the earth around it trodden hard and bare, and with two or three benches before its open door. Haward recognized the store which his father — after the manner of his kind, merchant and trader as well as planter and maker of laws — had built, and which, through his agent in Virginia, he had maintained.

Before one of the benches a man was kneeling, with his back to Haward, who could only see that his garb was that of a servant, and that his hands were busily moving certain small objects this way and that upon the board. At the edge of the space of bare earth were a horse block and a hitching post. Haward rode up to them, dismounted, and fastened his horse, then walked over to the man at the bench.

So intent was the latter upon his employment that he heard neither horse nor rider. He had some shells, a few bits of turf, and a double handful of sand, and he was arranging these trifles upon the rough, unpainted boards in a curious and intricate pattern. He was a tall man, with hair that was more red than

brown, and he was dressed in a shirt of dowlas, leather breeches, and coarse plantation-made shoes and stockings.

"What are you doing?" asked Haward, after a moment's silent watching of the busy fingers and intent countenance.

There was no start of awakened consciousness upon the other's part. "Why," he said, as if he had asked the question of himself, "with this sand I have traced the shores of Loch-na-Keal. This turf is green Ulva, and this is Gometra, and the shell is Little Colonsay. With this wet sand I have moulded Ben Grieg, and this higher pile is Ben More. If I had but a sprig of heather, now, or a pebble from the shore of Scridain!"

The voice, while harsh, was not disagreeably so, and neither the words nor the manner of using them smacked of the rustic.

"And where are Loch-na-Keal and Ulva and Scridain?" demanded Haward. "Somewhere in North Britain, I presume?"

The second question broke the spell. The man glanced over his shoulder, saw that he was not alone, and with one sweep of his hand blotting loch and island and mountain out of existence, rose to his feet, and opposed to Haward's gaze a tall, muscular frame, high features slightly pockmarked, and keen dark blue eyes.

"I was dreaming, and did not hear you," he said, civilly enough. "It's not often that any one comes to the store at this time of day. What d'ye lack?"

As he spoke he moved toward the doorway, through which showed shelves and tables piled with the extraordinary variety of goods which were deemed essential to the colonial trade. "Are you the storekeeper?" asked Haward, keeping pace with the other's long stride.

"It's the name they call me by," answered the man curtly; then, as he chanced to turn his eyes upon the landing, his tone changed, and a smile irradiated his countenance. "Here comes a

customer," he remarked, "that 'll make you bide your turn."

A canoe, rowed by a young boy and carrying a woman, had slipped out of the creek, and along the river bank to the steps of the landing. When they were reached, the boy sat still, the oars resting across his knees, and his face upturned to a palace beautiful of pearl and saffron cloud; but the woman mounted the steps, and, crossing the boards, came up to the door and the men beside it. Her dress was gray and unadorned, and she was young and of a quiet loveliness.

"Mistress Truelove Taberer," said the storekeeper, "what can you choose, this May Day, that 's so fair as yourself?"

A pair of gray eyes were lifted for the sixth part of a second, and a voice that had learned of the doves in the forest proceeded to rebuke the flatterer. "Thee is idle in thy speech, Angus MacLean," it declared. "I am not fair; nor, if I were, should thee tell me of it. Also, friend, it is idle and tendeth toward idolatry to speak of the first day of the fifth month as May Day. My mother sent me for a paper of White-chapel needles, and two of manikin pins. Has thee them in thy store of goods?"

"Come you in and look for yourself," said the storekeeper. "There 's woman's gear enough, but it were easier for me to recount all the names of all the children of Gillean-ni-Tuioadh than to remember how you call the things you wear."

So saying he entered the store. The Quakeress followed, and Haward, tired of his own thoughts, and in the mood to be amused by trifles, trod in their footsteps.

Door and window faced the west, and the glow from the sinking sun illumined the thousand and one features of the place. Here was the glint of tools and weapons; there pewter shone like silver, and brass dazzled the eyes. Bales of red cotton, blue linen, flowered Kidderminster, scarlet serge, gold and silver druggery, all sorts of woven stuffs from lock-

ram to brocade, made bright the shelves. Pendent skins of buck and doe showed like brown satin, while looking-glasses upon the wall reflected green trees and painted clouds. In one dark corner lurked kegs of powder and of shot; another was the haunt of aqua vitæ and right Jamaica. Playing cards, snuffboxes, and fringed gloves elbowed a shelf of books, and a full-bottomed wig ogled a lady's headdress of ribbon and malines. Knives and hatchets and duffel blankets for the Indian trade were not wanting.

Haward, leaning against a table laden with so singular a miscellany that a fine saddle with crimson velvet holsters took the head of the board, while the foot was set with blue and white china, watched the sometime moulder of peak and islet draw out a case filled with such small and womanish articles as pins and needles, tape and thread, and place it before his customer. She made her choice, and the storekeeper brought a great book, and entered against the head of the house of Taberer so many pounds of tobacco; then, as the maiden turned to depart, heaved a sigh so piteous and profound that no tender saint in gray could do less than pause, half turn her head, and lift two compassionate eyes.

"Mistress Truelove, I have read the good book that you gave me, and I cannot deny that I am much beholden to you," and her debtor sighed like a furnace.

The girl's quiet face flushed to the pink of a seashell, and her eyes grew eager.

"Then does thee not see the error of thy ways, Angus MacLean? If it should be given me to pluck thee as a brand from the burning! Thee will not again brag of war and revenge, nor sing vain and ruthless songs, nor use dice or cards, nor will thee swear any more?"

The voice was persuasion's own. "May I be set overtime on the Lady's Rock, or spare a false Campbell when I meet him, or throw up my cap for the damned

Hogan Mogan that sits in Jamie's place, if I am not entirely convert!" cried the neophyte. "Oh, the devil! what have I said? Mistress Truelove — True-love" —

But Truelove was gone, — not in anger or in haste, for that would have been unseemly, but quietly and steadily, with no looking back. The storekeeper, leaping over a keg of nails that stood in the way, made for the door, and together with Haward, who was already there, watched her go. The path to the landing and the boat was short; she had taken her seat, and the boy had bent to the oars, while the unlucky Scot was yet alternately calling out protestations of amendment and muttering maledictions upon his unguarded tongue. The canoe slipped from the rosy, unshadowed water into the darkness beneath the overhanging trees, reached the mouth of the creek, and in a moment disappeared from sight.

VI.

MASTER AND MAN.

The two men, left alone, turned each toward the interior of the store, and their eyes met. Alike in gray eyes and in dark blue there was laughter. "Kittle folk, the Quakers," said the storekeeper, with a shrug, and went to put away his case of pins and needles. Haward, going to the end of the store, found a row of dusty bottles, and breaking the neck of one with a report like that of a pistol set the Madeira to his lips, and therewith quenched his thirst. The wine cellar abutted upon the library. Taking off his riding glove he ran his finger along the bindings, and plucking forth *The History of a Coy Lady* looked at the first page, read the last paragraph, and finally thrust the thin brown and gilt volume into his pocket. Turning, he found himself face to face with the storekeeper.

"I have not the honor of knowing your name, sir," remarked the latter dryly. "Do you buy at this store, and upon whose account?"

Haward shook his head, and applied himself to the remainder of the Madeira.

"Then you carry with you coin of the realm with which to settle?" continued the other. "The wine is two shillings; the book you may have for twelvenpence."

"Here I need not pay, good fellow," said Haward negligently, his eyes upon a row of dangling objects. "Fetch me down yonder cane; 't is as delicately tapered and clouded as any at the Exchange."

"Pay me first for the wine and the book," answered the man composedly. "It's a dirty business enough, God knows, for a gentleman to put finger to; but since needs must when the devil drives, and he has driven me here, why, I, Angus MacLean, who have no concerns of my own, must e'en be faithful to the concerns of another. Wherefore put down the silver you owe the Sassenach whose wine you have drunken and whose book you have taken."

"And if I do not choose to pay?" asked Haward, with a smile.

"Then you must e'en choose to fight," was the cool reply. "And as I observe that you wear neither sword nor pistols, and as jack boots and a fine tight-buttoned riding coat are not the easiest clothes to wrestle in, it appears just possible that I might win the cause."

"And when you've thrown me, what then?"

"Oh, I would just draw a rope around you and yonder cask of Jamaica, and leave you to read your stolen book in peace until Saunderson (that's the overseer, and he's none so bad if he was born in Fife) shall come. You can have it out with him; or maybe he'll hale you before the man that owns the store. I hear they expect him home."

Haward laughed, and abstracting another bottle from the shelf broke its

neck. "Hand me yonder cup," he said easily, "and we'll drink to his homecoming. Good fellow, I am Mr. Marmaduke Haward, and I am glad to find so honest a man in a place of no small trust. Long absence and somewhat too complaisant a reference of all my Virginian affairs to my agent have kept me much in ignorance of the economy of my plantation. How long have you been my storekeeper?"

Neither cup for the wine nor answer to the question being forthcoming, Haward looked up from his broken bottle. The man was standing with his body bent forward and his hand pressed against the wood of a great cask behind him until the finger nails showed white. His head was high, his face dark red and angry, his brows drawn down until the gleaming eyes beneath were like pin points.

So sudden and so sinister was the change that Haward was startled. The hour was late, the place deserted; as the man had discovered, he had no weapons, nor, strong, active, and practiced as he was, did he flatter himself that he could withstand the length of brawn and sinew before him. Involuntarily, he stepped backward until there was a space between them, casting at the same moment a glance toward the wall where hung axe and knife and hatchet.

The man intercepted the look, and broke into a laugh. The sound was harsh and gibing, but not menacing. "You need not be afraid," he said. "I do not want the feel of a rope around my neck, — though God knows why I should care! Here is no clansman of mine, and no cursed Campbell either, to see my end!"

"I am not afraid," Haward answered calmly. Walking to the shelf that held an array of drinking vessels, he took two cups, filled them with wine, and, going back to his former station, set one upon the cask beside the storekeeper. "The wine is good," he said. "Will you drink?"

The other loosened the clasp of his hand upon the wood and drew himself upright. "I eat the bread and drink the water which you give your servants," he answered, speaking with the thickness of hardly restrained passion. "The wine cup goes from equal to equal."

As he spoke he took up the peace offering, eyed it for a moment with a bitter smile, then flung it with force over his shoulder. The earthen floor drank the wine; the china shattered into a thousand fragments. "I have neither silver nor tobacco with which to pay for my pleasure," continued the still smiling storekeeper. "When I am come to the end of my term, then, an it please you, I will serve out the damage."

Haward sat down upon a keg of powder, crossed his knees, and, with his chin upon his hand, looked from between the curled lengths of his periwig at the figure opposite. "I am glad to find that in Virginia, at least, there is honesty," he said dryly. "I will try to remember the cost of the cup and the wine against the expiry of your indenture. In the meantime, I am curious to know why you are angry with me whom you have never seen before to-day."

With the dashing of the wine to earth the other's passion had apparently spent itself. The red slowly left his face, and he leaned at ease against the cask, drumming upon its head with his fingers. The sunlight, shrinking from floor and wall, had left but a single line of gold. In the half light strange and sombre shapes possessed the room; through the stillness, beneath the sound of the tattoo upon the cask head, the river made itself heard.

"For ten years and more you have been my — master," said the storekeeper. "It is a word for which I have an invincible distaste. It is not well — having neither love nor friendship to put in its place — to let hatred die. When I came first to this slavery, I hated all Campbells, all Whigs, Forster that

betrayed us at Preston, and Ewin Mor Mackinnon. But the years have come and the years have gone, and I am older than I was at twenty-five. The Campbells I can never reach: they walk secure, overseas, through Lorn and Argyle, couching in the tall heather above Etive, tracking the red deer in the Forest of Dalness. Forster is dead. Ewin Mackinnon is dead, I know; for five years ago come Martinmas night I saw his perjured soul on its way to hell. All the world is turning Whig. A man may hate the world, it is true, but he needs a single foe."

"And in that capacity you have adopted me?" demanded Haward.

MacLean let his gaze travel over the man opposite him, from the looped hat and the face between the waves of hair to the gilt spurs upon the great boots; then turned his eyes upon his own hand and coarsely clad arm stretched across the cask. "I, too, am a gentleman, the brother of a chieftain," he declared. "I am not without schooling. I have seen something of life, and of countries more polite than the land where I was born, though not so dear. I have been free, and have loved my freedom. Do you find it so strange that I should hate you?"

There was a silence; then, "Upon my soul, I do not know that I do," said Haward slowly. "And yet, until this day I did not know of your existence."

"But I knew of yours," answered the storekeeper. "Your agent hath an annoying trick of speech, and the overseers have caught it from him. 'Your master' this, and 'your master' that; in short, for ten years it hath been, 'Work, you dog, that your master may play!' Well, I have worked; it was that, or killing myself, or going mad. I have worked for you in the fields, in the smithy, in this close room. But when you bought my body, you could not buy my soul. Day after day, and night after night, I sent it away; I would not let it bide

in these dull levels, in this cursed land of heat and stagnant waters. At first it went home to its own country, — to its friends and its foes, to the torrent and the mountain and the music of the pipes; but at last the pain outweighed the pleasure, and I sent it there no more. And then it began to follow you."

"To follow me!" involuntarily exclaimed Haward.

"I have been in London," went on the other, without heeding the interruption. "I know the life of men of quality, and where they most resort. I early learned from your other servants, and from the chance words of those who had your affairs in charge, that you were young, well-looking, a man of pleasure. At first when I thought of you the blood came into my cheek, but at last I thought of you constantly, and I felt for you a constant hatred. It began when I knew that Ewin Mackinnon was dead. I had no need of love; I had need of hate. Day after day, my body slaving here, my mind has dogged your footsteps. Up and down, to and fro, in business and in pleasure, in whatever place I have imagined you to be, there have I been also. Did you never, when there seemed none by, look over your shoulder, feeling another presence than your own?"

He ceased to speak, and the hand upon the cask was still. The sunshine was clean gone from the room, and outside the wind in the locust tree answered the voice of the river. Haward rose from his seat, but made no further motion toward departing. "You have been frank," he said quietly. "Had you it in mind, all this while, so to speak to me when we should meet?"

"No," answered the other. "I thought not of words, but of" —

"But of deeds," Haward finished for him. "Rather, I imagine, of one deed."

Composed as ever in voice and manner, he drew out his watch, and held it aslant that the light might strike upon the dial. "'Tis after six," he remarked

as he put it away, "and I am yet a mile from the house." The wine that he had poured for himself had been standing, untouched, upon the keg beside him. He took it up and drank it off; then wiped his lips with his handkerchief, and, passing the storekeeper with a slight inclination of his head, walked toward the door. A yard beyond the man who had so coolly shown his side of the shield was a rude table, on which were displayed hatchets and hunting knives. Haward passed the gleaming steel; then, a foot beyond it, stood still, his face to the open door, and his back to the storekeeper and the table with its sinister lading.

"You do wrong to allow so much dust and disorder," he said sharply. "I could write my name in that mirror, and there is a piece of brocade fallen to the floor. Look to it that you keep the place more neat."

There was dead silence for a moment; then MacLean spoke in an even voice: "Now a fool might call you as brave as Hector. For myself, I only give you credit for some knowledge of men. You are right. It is not my way to strike in the back an unarmed man. When you are gone, I will wipe off the mirror and pick up the brocade."

He followed Haward outside. "It's a brave evening for riding," he remarked, "and you have a bonny bit of horseflesh there. You'll get to the house before candlelight."

Beside one of the benches Haward made another pause. "You are a Highlander and a Jacobite," he said. "From your reference to Forster, I gather that you were among the prisoners taken at Preston and transported to Virginia."

"In the Elizabeth and Anne of Liverpool, *alias* a bit of hell afloat; the master, Captain Edward Trafford, *alias* Satan's first mate," quoth the other grimly.

He stooped to the bench where lay the débris of the coast and mountains

he had been lately building, and picked up a small, deep shell. "My story is short," he began. "It could be packed into this. I was born in the island of Mull, of my father a chieftain, and my mother a lady. Some schooling I got in Aberdeen, some pleasure in Edinburgh and London, and some service abroad. In my twenty-third year — being at home at that time — I was asked to a hunting match at Braemar, and went. No great while afterwards I was bidden to supper at an Edinburgh tavern, and again I accepted the invitation. There was a small entertainment to follow the supper, — just the taking of Edinburgh Castle. But the wine was good, and we waited to powder our hair, and the entertainment could hardly be called a success. Hard upon that convivial evening, I, with many others, was asked across the Border to join a number of gentlemen who drank to the King after our fashion, and had a like fancy for oak boughs and white roses. The weather was pleasant, the company of the best, the roads very noble after our Highland sheep tracks. Together with our English friends, and enlivened by much good claret and by music of bagpipe and drum, we strolled on through a fine, populous country until we came to a town called Preston, where we thought we would tarry for a day or two. However, circumstances arose which detained us somewhat longer. (I dare say you have heard the story?) When finally we took our leave, some of us went to heaven, some to hell, and some to Barbadoes and Virginia. I was among those dispatched to Virginia, and to all intents and purposes I died the day I landed. There, the shell is full!"

He tossed it from him, and going to the hitching post loosed Haward's horse. Haward took the reins from his hand. "It hath been ten years and more since Virginia got her share of the rebels taken at Preston. If I remember aright, their indentures were to be made for

seven years. Why, then, are you yet in my service?"

MacLean laughed. "I ran away," he replied pleasantly, "and when I was caught I made off a second time. I wonder that you planters do not have a Society for the Encouragement of Run-aways. Seeing that they are nearly always retaken, and that their escapades so lengthen their term of service, it would surely be to your advantage! There are yet several years in which I am to call you master."

He laughed again, but the sound was mirthless, and the eyes beneath the half-closed lids were harder than steel. Haward mounted his horse and gathered up the reins. "I am not responsible for the laws of the realm," he said calmly, "nor for rebellions and insurrections, nor for the practice of transporting overseas those to whom have been given the ugly names of 'rebel' and 'traitor.' Destiny that set you there put me here. We are alike pawns; what the player means we have no way of telling. Curse Fate and the gods, if you choose, — and find that your cursing does small good, — but regard me with indifference, as one neither more nor less the slave of circumstances than yourself. It has been long since I went this way. Is there yet the path by the river?"

"Ay," answered the other. "It is your shortest way."

"Then I will be going," said Haward. "It grows late, and I am not looked for before to-morrow. Good-night."

As he spoke he raised his hat and bowed to the gentleman from whom he was parting. That rebel to King George gave a great start; then turned very red, and shot a piercing glance at the man on horseback. The latter's mien was composed as ever, and, with his hat held beneath his arm and his body slightly inclined, he was evidently awaiting a like ceremony of leave-taking on the store-keeper's part. MacLean drew a long

breath, stepped back a pace or two, and bowed to his equal. A second "Good-night," and one gentleman rode off in the direction of the great house, while the other went thoughtfully back to the store, got a cloth and wiped the dust from the mirror.

It was pleasant riding by the river in the cool evening wind, with the colors of the sunset yet gay in sky and water. Haward went slowly, glancing now at the great, bright stream, now at the wide, calm fields and the rim of woodland, dark and distant, bounding his possessions. The smell of salt marshes, of ploughed ground, of leagues of flowering forests, was in his nostrils. Behind him was the crescent moon; before him were terraces crowned with lofty trees. Within the ring of foliage was the house; even as he looked a light sprang up in a high window, and shone like a star through the gathering dusk. Below the hill the home landing ran its gaunt black length far out into the carmine of the river; upon the Golden Rose lights burned like lower stars; from a thicket to the left of the bridle path sounded the call of a whippoorwill. A gust of wind blowing from the bay made to waver the lanterns of the Golden Rose, broke and darkened the coral peace of the river, and pushed rudely against the master of those parts. Haward laid his hand upon his horse that he loved. "This is better than the Ring, is n't it, Mirza?" he asked genially, and the horse whinnied under his touch.

The land was quite gray, the river pearl-colored, and the fireflies beginning to sparkle, when he rode through the home gates. From the uppermost of its three low, broad terraces, in the dusk of the world and the deeper shadow of the surrounding trees, his house looked grimly down upon him. The light had been at the side; all the front was stark and black with shuttered windows. He rode to the back of the house and hallooed to the slaves in the home quarter, where

were lights and noisy laughter, and one deep voice singing in an unknown tongue.

It was but a stone's throw to the nearest cabin, and Haward's call made itself heard above the babel. The noise suddenly lessened, and two or three negroes, starting up from the doorstep, hurried across the grass to horse and rider. Quickly as they came, some one within the house was beforehand with them. The door swung open; there was the flare of a lighted candle, and a voice cried out to know what was wanted.

"Wanted!" exclaimed Haward. "Ingress into my own house is wanted! Where is Juba?"

One of the negroes pressed forward. "Heah I is, Marse Duke! House all ready for you, but you done sont word" —

"I know, — I know," answered Haward impatiently. "I changed my mind. Is that you, Saunderson, with the light? Or is it Hide?"

The candle moved to one side, and there was disclosed a large white face atop of a shambling figure dressed in some coarse, dark stuff. "Neither, sir," said an expressionless voice. "Will it please your Honor to dismount?"

Haward swung himself out of the saddle, tossed the reins to a negro, and, with Juba at his heels, climbed the five low stone steps and entered the wide hall running through the house, and broken only by the broad, winding stairway. Save for the glimmer of the solitary candle all was in darkness; the bare floor, the paneled walls, echoed to his tread. On either hand squares of blackness proclaimed the open doors of large, empty rooms, and down the stair came a wind that bent the weak flame. The negro took the light from the hand of the man who had opened the door, and, pressing past his master, lit three candles in a sconce upon the wall.

"Yo' room 's all ready, Marse Duke," he declared. "Dere 's candles enough, an' de fire am laid an' yo' bed aired.

Ef you wan' some supper, I kin get you bread an' meat, an' de wine was put in yesterday."

Haward nodded; and taking the candle began to mount the stairs. Halfway up he found that the man in the sad-colored raiment was following him. He raised his brows, but being in a taciturn humor, and having, moreover, to shield the flame from the wind that drove down the stair, he said nothing, going on in silence to the landing, and to the great eastward-facing room that had been his father's, and which now he meant to make his own. There were candles on the table, the dresser, and the mantelshelf. He lit them all, and the room changed from a place of shadows and monstrous shapes to a gentleman's bedchamber, — somewhat sparsely furnished, but of a comfortable and cheerful aspect. A cloth lay upon the floor, the windows were curtained, and the bed had fresh hangings of green-and-white Kidderminster. Over the mantel hung a painting of Haward and his mother, done when he was six years old. Beneath the laughing child and the smiling lady, young and flower-crowned, were crossed two ancient swords. In the middle of the room stood a heavy table, and pushed back, as though some one had lately risen from it, was an armchair of Russian leather. Books lay upon the table; one of them open, with a horn snuffbox keeping down the leaf.

Haward seated himself in the great chair, and looked around him with a thoughtful and melancholy smile. He could not clearly remember his mother. The rings upon her fingers and her silvery laughter were all that dwelt in his mind, and now only the sound of that merriment floated back to him and lingered in the room. But his father had died upon that bed, and beside the dead man, between the candles at the head and the candles at the foot, he had sat the night through. The curtains were half drawn, and in their shadow his ima-

gination laid again that cold, inanimate form. Twelve years ago! How young he had been that night, and how old he had thought himself as he watched beside the dead, chilled by the cold of the crossed hands, awed by the silence, half-frighted by the shadows on the wall; now filled with natural grief, now with surreptitious and shamefaced thoughts of his changed estate, — yesterday son and dependent, to-day heir and master! Twelve years! The sigh and the smile were not for the dead father, but for his own dead youth, for the unjaded freshness of the morning, for the world that had been, once upon a time.

Turning in his seat, his eyes fell upon the man who had followed him, and who was now standing between the table and the door. "Well, friend?" he demanded.

The man came a step or two nearer. His hat was in his hand, and his body was obsequiously bent, but there was no discomposure in his lifeless voice and manner. "I stayed to explain my presence in the house, sir," he said. "I am a lover of reading, and, knowing my weakness, your overseer, who keeps the keys of the house, has been so good as to let me, from time to time, come here to this room to mingle in more delectable company than I can choose without these walls. Your Honor doubtless remembers yonder goodly assemblage?" He motioned with his hand toward a half-opened door, showing a closet lined with well-filled bookshelves.

"I remember," replied Haward dryly. "So you come to my room alone at night, and occupy yourself in reading? And when you are wearied you refresh yourself with my wine?" As he spoke he clinked together the bottle and glass that stood beside the books.

"I plead guilty to the wine," answered the intruder, as lifelessly as ever, "but it is my only theft. I found the bottle below, and did not think it would be missed. I trust that your Honor does

not grudge it to a poor devil who tastes Burgundy somewhat seldomer than does your Worship. And my being in the house is pure innocence. Your overseer knew that I would neither make nor meddle with aught but the books, or he would not have given me the key to the little door, which I now restore to your Honor's keeping." He advanced, and deposited upon the table a large key.

"What is your name?" demanded Haward, leaning back in his chair.

"Bartholomew Paris, sir. I keep the school down by the swamp, where I impart to fifteen or twenty of the youth of these parts the rudiments of the ancient and modern tongues, mathematics, geography, fortifications, navigation, philosophy" —

Haward yawned, and the schoolmaster broke the thread of his discourse. "I weary you, sir," he said. "I will, with your permission, take my departure. May I make so bold as to beg your Honor that you will not mention to the gentlemen hereabouts the small matter of this bottle of wine? I would wish not to be prejudiced in the eyes of my patrons and scholars."

"I will think of it," Haward replied. "Come and take your snuffbox — if it be yours — from the book where you have left it."

"It is mine," said the man. "A present from the godly minister of this parish."

As he spoke he put out his hand to take the snuffbox. Haward leaned forward, seized the hand, and, bending back the fingers, exposed the palm to the light of the candles upon the table.

"The other, if you please," he commanded.

For a second — no longer — a wicked soul looked blackly out of the face to which he had raised his eyes. Then the window shut, and the wall was blank again. Without any change in his listless demeanor, the schoolmaster laid his left hand, palm out, beside his right.

"Humph!" exclaimed Haward. "So you have stolen before to-night? The marks are old. When were you branded, and where?"

"In Bristol, fifteen years ago," answered the man unblushingly. "It was all a mistake. I was as innocent as a newborn babe" —

"But unfortunately could not prove it," interrupted Haward. "That is of course. Go on."

"I was transported to South Carolina, and there served out my term. The climate did not suit me, and I liked not the society, nor — being of a peaceful disposition — the constant alarms of pirates and buccaneers. So when I was once more my own man I traveled north to Virginia with a party of traders. In my youth I had been an Oxford servitor, and schoolmasters are in demand in Virginia. Weighed in the scales with a knowledge of the humanities and some skill in imparting them, what matters a little mishap with hot irons? My patrons are willing to let bygones be bygones. My school flourishes like a green bay tree, and the minister of this parish will speak for the probity and sobriety of my conduct. Now I will go, sir."

He made an awkward but deep and obsequious reverence, turned and went out of the door, passing Juba, who was entering with a salver laden with bread and meat and a couple of bottles. "Put down the food, Juba," said Haward, "and see this gentleman out of the house."

An hour later the master dismissed the slave, and sat down beside the table to finish the wine and compose himself for the night. The overseer had come hurrying to the great house, to be sent home again by a message from the owner thereof that to-morrow would do for business; the negro women who had been called to make the bed were gone; the noises from the quarter had long ceased, and the house was very still. In his rich, figured Indian nightgown and his

silken nightcap, Haward sat and drank his wine, slowly, with long pauses between the emptying and the filling of the slender, tall-stemmed glass. A window was open, and the wind blowing in made the candles to flicker. With the wind came a murmur of leaves and the wash of the river, — stealthy and mournful sounds that sorted not with the lighted room, the cheerful homeliness of the flowered hangings, the gleeful lady and child above the mantelshelf. Haward felt the incongruity: a slow sea voyage, and a week in that Virginia which, settled one hundred and twenty years before, was yet largely forest and stream, had weaned him, he thought, from sounds of the street, and yet to-night he missed them, and would have had the town again. When an owl hooted in the walnut tree outside his window, and in the distance, as far away as the creek quarter, a dog howled, and the silence closed in again, he rose, and began to walk to and fro, slowly, thinking of the past and the future. The past had its ghosts, — not many; what spectres the future might raise only itself could tell. So far as mortal vision went, it was a rose-colored future; but on such a night of silence that was not silence, of loneliness that was filled with still, small voices, of heavy darkness without, of lights burning in an empty house, it was rather of ashes of roses that one thought.

Haward went to the open window, and with one knee upon the window seat looked out into the windy, starlit night. This was the eastern face of the house, and, beyond the waving trees, there were visible both the river and the second and narrower creek which on this side bounded the plantation. The voice with which the waters swept to the sea came strongly to him. A large white moth sailed out of the darkness to the lit window, but his face scared it away.

Looking through the walnut branches, he could see a light that burned steadily, like a candle set in a window. For a

moment he wondered whence it shone; then he remembered that the glebelands lay in that direction. The parish was building a house for its new minister, when he left Virginia, eleven years before. Suddenly he recalled that the minister — who had seemed to him a bluff, downright, honest fellow — had told him of a little room looking out upon an orchard, and had said that it should be the child's.

It was possible that the star which pierced the darkness might mark that room. He knit his brows in an effort to remember when, before this day, he had last thought of a child whom he had held in his arms and comforted, one splendid dawn, upon a hilltop, in a mountainous region. He came to the

conclusion that he must have forgotten her quite six years ago. Well, she would seem to have thriven under his neglect, — and he saw again the girl who had run for the golden guinea. It was true that when he had put her there where that light was shining, it was with some shadowy idea of giving her gentle breeding, of making a lady of her. But man's purposes are fleeting, and often gone with the morrow. He had forgotten his purpose; and perhaps it was best this way, — perhaps it was best this way.

For a little longer he looked at the light and listened to the voice of the river; then he rose from the window seat, drew the curtains, and began thoughtfully to prepare for bed.

Mary Johnston.

(To be continued.)

THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE SMALL COLLEGE.

THE opinion that small colleges are doomed is rapidly hardening into an axiom. The prevailing megalomania of the twentieth century is to sweep them away with its other victims. In the great evolutionary movement of the world's social forces, so we are confidently told, there will soon be no room for anything that is not organized on the grand scale. The future economy of civilization will tolerate neither small states nor small businesses. (There are certain small states, by the way, which have need to crave pardon for the unconscionable time they take a-dying.) All the newspapers of a nation or of an empire — why not of the whole globe, while one is about it? — are to shriek to the tuning of one editor. Amid these revolutions, how is it possible for the small college to escape? Education is not a more sacred thing than civil gov-

ernment or the influence of the press; it must pay tribute, like everything else, to the new Laws of Nature. That the small college is impossible anywhere in an up-to-date universe, and especially in that uppermost-to-date section called America, is being asserted so often that people are beginning to believe it must be true. There are indications that the hubbub of these protestations is stirring the small colleges themselves into doubts whether they have a right to be alive. They are beginning to ask what they must do to be saved, and some of them are attempting to answer their own question by making themselves look as much like large colleges as their size permits. If they are "to compete with the universities," said a professor the other day, they must do this, that, and the other thing that the universities do. Since the frog attempted to compete