



DRAWN BY EMLÉN MCCONNELL.

HER MOUNTAIN LOVER.

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IX. JIM BREAKS CAMP ON THE MOOR.

MARY was napping when Jim woke her by cheerily calling, "*Wrangle your horses!*"

She sprang up hastily, and rubbed her cheeks furiously to remove all trace of tears, and when she appeared outside the tent she was as radiant as if no cloud had passed over her mental sky.

"I 've had a delicious doze; now for our ride."

Together they walked down to the farmhouse, where they found Mrs. Robertson taking tea with the farmer's wife, quite in the way of the patronizing city visitor.

"Oh, you traitor!" cried Mary.

Mrs. Robertson had a mysterious smile on her face. "I 've engaged a bed," she whispered.

Jim saddled the horses and brought them around to the door. Again he lifted Mary to the saddle, and the firm grip of his hand on her ankle, as he set her foot in the stirrup, made her flush.

"Now, pardner, you show me the trail."

"Will you trust to my guidance?"

"I reckon so; but I always keep my eyes open, and break a twig once in a while, so I can know where I went in at."

Together they rode away down the valley, past little pastures inclosed by flowering hedges, wherein lazy cattle and sheep grazed with placid content beside canal-like brooks, and then climbed the high ridge to the east where the chalk-white thoroughfare ran, speckled with bicyclers in all shades of costumes. Turning aside from this highway, they followed a bridle-path through the furze and heather down into a circular valley similar

to the one in which their camp was pitched. There Mary drew rein, and Jim, dismounting, led his horse up to Mary, and said:

"Want to get off?"

For answer she shook her foot from the stirrup, and he put his right arm around her and lifted her from the saddle.

"You 're about as big as a pint of soap."

She laughed. "That 's very expressive, but it is n't very nice."

He made no reply, but looked away at the sky-line with a peculiar intentness and unwavering directness that was like the aim of a rifle. His attitude and profile were superb, and her heart quickened as she studied him.

With the trailer's keen, far-reaching eye, he had caught some animal's movement on the hillside.

"You don't suppose that is a fox?" he said.

"I see nothing; but there are foxes about here, I believe."

"Never saw a coyote, I reckon? Well, they 've sung me to sleep ever since I was a kid. I never got clear of 'em till I jumped the train for Chicago. I like to hear 'em. If one should yap right now I 'd jump clean over your horse."

"What are they like?"

"They 're a small wolf—a kind of half-breed between a fox and a wolf. They 're always hungry and always thin as a match, but they are wonders—they sure are so. The Injuns all think the coyote is a sort of god—sure thing! They say 'coyote big medicine-man all same spirit.' He certainly is a queer cuss. He 's always lookin' for something he's lost, and his voice at sunrise sometimes is like a woman cryin' over a dead child.

He's a mysterious pup, and no two ways about it; he and the loon are a pair to draw to and beat the world. But see here, this won't do! I got off here to ask you something. Are there many women like you?"

"I hope not," she replied bitterly. "Why?"

"Nothin'; only you keep me guessin' right straight along. I don't pretend to know many women, and those I do know are either loud, or slouchy and slow. There are a whole lot o' things about you I don't savvy; I don't see why you 're not as happy as a bobolink. Mebbe it's all due to that feller buried down there in the sand in Africa. Anyhow, I'd like to know what makes you talk against your own people and take up with an old two-fisted miner like me. Out with it, now; what's your little game? Are you havin' fun with me? You can't play me, my girl, without givin' an account of yourself. What did you get me down here for, anyway?"

She was leaning against her horse, and her eyes were on the ground. Suddenly she looked at him timidly, and said tremulously, "Because I like you, Jim."

"Well, then, come back to the mountains with me."

She flared out like a flame. "Oh, I can't do that, Jim."

He put his big hand on her shoulder again, awkwardly, caressingly.

"Why not?"

"Oh, I can't tell you; it's just impossible, that's all."

"You hate everything here, so you say. You want to see the high country, you tell me. Now, why not do it? I'll take care o' you; you won't need to worry about anything at all."

She took a seat on a bank, beside a clump of furze. "Sit down, Jim; I want to talk to you. I can't say what is on my mind while we stand."

He tethered the horses to a shrub, and dropped on the grass at her side. She nervously took up and broke small twigs as he waited. When she spoke, her voice was low.

"You can't understand us, Jim; you're too sane and elemental; and if you could understand our disease, I should n't like you any more. But I distrust myself and this mood in which I find myself; if I thought it would last—but it would not. Our worlds are too wide apart; I should n't fit into your life, and I would n't for the world ask you to fit into mine. It would be wicked to transform you into a citizen of London, if I could, and of course I could n't. I can see now that I'm going to be very sorry when you leave

England; but that will be a just punishment. If I were younger, I might adjust myself to your ways; but now it is impossible, quite impossible."

"I'm goin' to be rich," he said quietly. "It is n't a question of livin' in a shack, you know."

"I know—I know; but it is n't that. Even in a mansion your life would be so simple I am afraid of it. I both hate and love the things I do; even the things I loathe most are an inescapable part of me. I'm a bond-woman. I have moods when the city and its drawing-rooms drive me fairly mad; but after a few weeks at the sea or down here, I become restless, and hurry back to the same old round of activities we call gaieties. They are all alike now; nearly everybody bores me; the fact is, I'm sick and in bondage."

"Mebbe I can set you free," he said, laying his left hand on her wrist, a tender and chivalric caress. "The mountains would do you good. It's mighty fine business to climb the Grizzly Bear trail."

She shivered with emotion, but shook her head. "No, no; it is madness to think of it. Moreover, I'm not worthy a big, wholesome man like you. I'd only torture you. I am selfish and greedy. Since Joe died I've been careless of the feelings of men; I was remorseless till I met you." She hesitated only a moment. "I intended to amuse myself with you—that's the plain truth. You were good 'copy,' as the journalists say. Now I find myself hurt; you are bigger than I thought you were. I fancied you would be good game; you end by mastering me. Now I have confessed, you may strangle me. I deserve it."

His calm, quiet eyes were like those of a beautiful and kindly animal. He pitied her without understanding her. When he spoke, it was in a musing tone, very gentle and low.

"One year the doc brought a feller out from the States who talked just about as queer and as slick as you do. He was sure scheduled to go over the Big Divide. 'Jim, what'll we do with him?' asks the doc. 'Put him to work on the trail,' I said. 'I don't know but you're right,' he says; 'I turn him over to you.' I used to roust that feller out o' bed before sun-up, and hammer him up and down the hills till he was so dead tired he could n't wag a leg. He stopped his queer talk and eat three full meals a day. Little pardner, what you need is work—just good old-fashioned buckling right to it."

She smiled, and shook her head. "Work is a sovereign remedy, but it won't cure me."

"That's what that 'one-lunger' said; but

it did. He got so blame sassy toward the last that I had to mighty near turn in and lam his head. Now, if you come along with me—"

She rose wearily. "The sky is getting gray; we must return."

He said nothing more, and they rode back to camp in almost complete silence. His masterful reticence again made her afraid of him even while she admired him.

They found Mrs. Robertson at camp, profoundly alarmed at the growing grayness of the sky. Night now assumed a terror it had never possessed before.

"Has n't this gone far enough, Molly?" she asked anxiously. "It is impossible that we are to sleep here in the midst of this wild fire."

"It is quite possible. I'm sure our tent looks very inviting; besides, our sensations are only just begun. I want to feel the darkness pressing round me, and I want to hear the rain on the tent; Jim says it is a lovely sound. Then I want to wake in the night and fancy I hear the wolves howling."

Mrs. Robertson shuddered. "I never understood your depraved tastes. They are not normal."

The supper was less cheerful than the mid-day meal, for Jim made no effort to lighten it. He ate in silence, and cleared away the dishes alone, while the women, wrapped in thick rugs, sat in the door of the tent and watched him. Twombly and Will smoked while sitting humped before the fire, as nearly in the attitude of red men as they knew how. Altogether, the evening was oppressive—not at all the jolly camping-party Mary had expected it to be; yet she knew the fault was her own.

When the camp was in shape for the night Jim lighted his pipe and took his seat beside the fire also. There was an indefinable grace and distinction in his manner, which did not escape Mary's keen eyes. The slant of his hat was just right, and his strong, stern profile had in it something of the severe dignity of the Indian.

As the night began to fall, the fire sparkled with a keener light. It seemed to take on passion and power like a nocturnal animal. The sky grew thick and dark, but the wind died down, and the threatened rain did not fall, but seemed hanging in the air.

Suddenly Twombly said: "This mine, now, Matteson—are there some good properties near?"

Jim did not instantly reply, and when he did his voice was cold and his accent indifferent.

"There are six million dollars' worth of properties on the same hill, and it's my notion that we're in line to strike the Bonanza vein. Of course that's my notion; I can't prove it till we push a little deeper into the hill."

Twombly seemed afraid of committing himself, and only said: "It's a large sum to put in without an assurance of the coming out."

"If we had all you want we would n't sell at all," said Jim, putting up his pipe. "Come, girls, you'd better turn in; this fog seems likely to grow up into a rain."

"Oh, let us sit up, Jim. I like to see you and the fire."

Mrs. Robertson moaned. "I wish I were back in Wyndhurst. I shall be ill of a cold to-morrow, I know I shall."

"I'll see that you don't take cold," said Jim, coming to the tent. "Where is your candle?"

After lighting the candle, he set to work at the bed. "You want the bulk of your blankets under you," he said; "the cold comes up from under when the ground is damp. In the mountains, in the fall, the ground is warmer than the air, and you want to keep close to it. A big rock will hold the heat all night—there you want the cover on top; but here it's the cold below that'll make your bones ache."

After he had rearranged the bed, he handed the candle to Mary. "I reckon you've got 'kiver' enough. Good night."

"Good night, Jim."

Jim dropped the flap of the tent and tied the string. "If you hear a bear nosin' around during the night, just let him alone and he'll go off. The coyotes may begin to sing about midnight, but they're harmless, too."

Mrs. Robertson was not amused, and after Jim went away she said: "I think his pleasantries is ill-judged. I can't sleep a wink under these conditions, and I know I shall hear a whole menagerie of wild beasts during the night."

"I am blissfully resigned," Mary said. "I wish I could be scared; but I'm not, I'm only sleepy. If an elephant trumpeted I would n't hear him."

"Oh, what is that?" Mrs. Robertson turned with wild eyes.

A low, muffled, hollow wail arose in the darkness outside. It mounted to a howl, then died suddenly away, only to rise again, wild, sorrowful, hungry, appalling, and savage. It stiffened both women in terror, and Mary shuddered with exquisite horror. The cry rose like the moan of a big, wounded,

despairing dog. It was as if a lonely forest had found voice, or the hollow night had condensed itself into a cry of anguish and foreboding. At last it ended, and Twombly cried: "Bravo! Well done!"

"Oh," cried Mary, "it 's Jim; he 's determined to make the play as realistic as possible. That is the howl of the coyote, I suppose."

"I wish he were a little less solicitous about his play; he gave me a terrible fright. My heart is thumping so I can hardly breathe. If I live till morning I shall certainly go back to London and stay there. I 'm not fitted to be a hunter of wild animals."

Mary laughed, and called out, "Was that the coyote, Jim?"

"Well, not exactly," he replied. "That was the timber-wolf when he is hungry. I 'll give you his signal when he sees game and wants help." He uttered a different note, less mournful, but with greater carrying power. "That means, 'Come on; I need help.' I 'll give you the coyote song now," he called, and then broke forth into a singular, high-keyed, yelping clamor that made Mrs. Robertson seize Mary by the arm and grip hard.

"Ask him to stop!" she gasped. "It gets on my nerves."

"That 's beautiful!" Mary called out. "But Grace is frightened nearly out of her senses. Please don't do it any more."

The men all laughed, and Jim said: "I 'd like to give you the cry o' the loon, but I reckon we 'd have the whole township a-rampin' down on us if I did. It 's bedtime, anyhow. Good night again."

"This is all superb material for me," remarked Mary to Mrs. Robertson. "If I could only use it properly, but—"

"He might have spared us his animal show," interrupted Mrs. Robertson. "I hate practical jokes."

"I wish you were n't so idiotic about things, Grace. You 're going to spoil the whole trip if you keep on." This was the first note of protest which Mary had permitted herself. Her voice cut deep, and Mrs. Robertson closed her lips so tight that they quivered. Mary was immediately remorseful. "Forgive me, dear; I did n't mean to be so cross."

Eventually they kissed each other and went to bed friends. It was singular to see how these unwonted surroundings subdued Mrs. Robertson from the proud and self-contained matron to the attitude of a nervous child.

She effectually put an end to the camp-

ing-expedition. She could not sleep, and when Jim, imitating the far-off, liquid, flute-like wail of the coyote at dawn, roused all the camp, her mind was made up. "I cannot endure another such night," she said. Mary, who had slept very well the latter part of the night, looked at her and laughed.

"You poor wreck! The doctor should see you now."

"Don't revile me, dear. I know I look the way I feel, but you should pity me, not make game of me."

Mary yawned. "It did n't rain after all, but oh, is n't it cold outside? I 'm glad I 'm not obliged to kindle the fire and get breakfast."

Mrs. Robertson drew a rug about her shoulders. "I am in perfect torture; I can neither lie down nor sit up. Every bone I possess is aching; I never had such a feeling in my life. I believe I 'm going to have pneumonia. I wish the doctor would come and take me away."

"Well, girls!" called Jim, and Mrs. Robertson dived beneath the coverlet and heard no more of his morning greeting.

Mary sprang up and began dressing. The men were talking in their tent, and Twombly was saying, "Slept like a top—a regular hummer."

"There was a hummock under my bed which began as a mole-hill and ended by becoming Mount Ararat," replied Will; "otherwise I was quite comfortable."

Before they were fairly clothed, Jim called with peculiar intonation: "*Grub-pile!* Everybody rustle and walk chalk, or the snakes 'll git ye! Wow, wow, wow—whoop!"

Every one responded but Mrs. Robertson. Mary came forth as vivid as a rain-wet pink, and with a pretty swagger walked up to the fire. "Hello, pard! Top o' the mornin' to ye!"

"Same here," Jim replied. "How are they comin'?"

"Whom do you mean?"

He smiled. "Where 's the tenderfoot?"

"She 's abed; wants her coffee brought to her."

"She 's all right," he replied in a tone that meant she was all wrong. "Mebbe she thinks this is a hotel."

Mary could not help a little shiver. It was barely sunrise, and the moor was desolate and gray with morning mist. The air was chill, and though Jim had erected a canvas wall to shield the table from the wind, it was a cheerless moment to a delicate woman. But Mary was too proud to

show her dismay. She took her seat at the table and made a brave show of eating the bacon and beans and the hot bread.

The camping-expedition ended right there. The day continued cold and gray, and Mrs. Robertson's coffee merely gave her courage to dress and to complain. "Molly, you must let me go back to Wyndhurst. I *will not* stay here another hour!"

Mary reluctantly asked Jim to get the horses and send them home. "Grace has worked herself into a state of frenzy, and of course if she goes I must go, too. I am sorry, but you know it is a good deal to ask of a woman like Grace."

"All right, pardner; we hit the back trail whenever you say so."

The retreat was made in good order. Jim refused to divide his party, and led his little train back with the same seriousness with which he went forth. He gravely unpacked before the door and laid everything in its place before he finally relinquished command.

Mary smiled with a certain sadness as she said, "All this outfit I shall preserve in memory of you."

That night Jim returned to London.

X. THE EFFECT OF "SAVAGE AFRICA."

LONDON is a small world of itself, and Jim found his time all taken up, after Mary's return, by curious and singular expeditions, the purport of which he did not in the least comprehend. He drove with her in the park, and rode with her, training his horse to guide in the cow-boy fashion. Mary had no wish to see him conform to British models; she continued quite indifferent to the gossip of her friends. The mountaineer went to call at great houses where "hired hands" in gay red-and-yellow coats stood in rows beside the doorway; he shook the cold hands of thin ladies and the puffy hands of fat old gentlemen, while Mary smilingly introduced him as "Jim Matteson of Colorado."

"What does it all lead to, pardner?" he asked once as they were driving home.

"Trust it all to me," she replied.

"I reckon I'll have to," he said.

He had more than a suspicion that people were "having fun with him," but considered it an "even break," so long as he got a little amusement out of it; but when he had attended three or four precisely similar receptions, all incredibly dull, he said: "See here, little pard, I'm willing to play horse so long as it amuses you, but I don't think you're gettin' any fun out of this business yourself. How about it?"

Mary laughed. "No, I don't; but to-day I expected to have you meet an old lady we want to interest in the mine scheme. She has a son, and is eager to settle him in something."

"All right; anything to pull that hole out of the ground."

By such means she continued to exhibit him in drawing-rooms where his presence was almost as exciting as that of a Navajo medicine-man. He could not complain of any plan which kept him near Mary, whose allurements became more powerful day by day. Bessie's letters were neglected, though she wrote regularly and painstakingly in answer to his brief notes. He knew Mary's reply was final, but still the pleasure of her company was too great to be easily put aside.

Meanwhile Ramsdell's letters grew a little urgent. In one he wrote:

All depends on you, Jim. I don't want to hurry you, but don't waste time. I'm sending the draft you asked for, but it pinches me a little. I hate to see that mine waiting out there. I've cut down the force to six men. Get a large hump on yourself, and pull us out o' the hole if possible. Beware of the charmer, old man. Disable the "Earl," and come home as quick as possible.

His enslavement to Mary, though unacknowledged to himself, made him irritable and reticent. The man who took liberties with him during these days regretted it. He was far less cheery and sociable with the porter and the waiters. When not with Mary, he seemed not to know what to do to employ his time. He walked aimlessly about the city during a large part of each day, waiting for Twombly to decide; he had discretion enough not to let the Englishman know how anxious he was about it. Mary continued to be his chief comfort and stay. With her he returned to confident elation, and his talk was as characteristic as ever; away from her he fell back into dark musings. He had almost lost confidence in his power to do the work, and yet he could not bring himself to abandon his plan and go home a defeated man, poorer than he came.

Twombly kept his own counsel, but Jim suspected him to be secretly "looking into the proposition." "If I do not go to South Africa," he said, "I may go home with you," and so kept Jim in doubt and indecision. Thus far he had secured no other "lead," and if he failed with Twombly he must go home virtually penniless.

During these days of trial he went to Mary, sure of an attentive ear and a radiant

smile. At the start he had talked of the mountains to entertain others; now he talked of them to hearten himself. Nearly every day he called he had a new story of his prospecting-tours, and Mary's dilated eyes helped him to feel once more the serene presence of the shining peaks. London itself became ever more hateful to him. What did it all amount to, anyway? It was nothing, he thought, but a jumble of old bricks and mortar soaked with sweat and blood, swarming with men and women as unimportant as lice and almost as ephemeral. Set over against the peaks and the clear, cold streams of the "high country," it was a place of fever-germinating sewers and pest-houses—a place where men died under one another's eyes. Something of this he expressed to Mary, who bitterly agreed with him.

"Of course you're right. London is a wen—the wen of civilization. Did you ever see a pearl in an oyster? It is caused by the presence of a grain of sand. The oyster weeps with agony; the pearl is the tear. Civilization writhes in agony, and great cities result. But no matter about London; we're going to forget it as much as possible. Let's take a gallop in the park, and fancy we're on the trail again. I can't let you get morbid. I saw Twombly again to-day. I think he has determined to go over and inspect the mine, but he is so stupidly sly. He prides himself on his self-restraint. By the way, we are invited to Seldon Douglass's reception Tuesday. I know you hate these things, but I'd like you to go. There are a few people there who are worth while."

"Well, now, see here, little pardner, this ends it! I can't stand any more of—" At this moment a couple of the wide-hatted men of the Australian militia passed, and he called out:

"Hello, there are some of the 'rooster-tails'! That reminds me, we have n't been over to see their camp yet, have we?"

"We'll go at once," she replied. "Say to-morrow, after the lunch at Mrs. Barton Sample's."

"Little pardner, I'm done. Right here I quit fiddling and begin to fight." He looked at her sternly. "I've taken a hand in these fool performances to please you, because you said it was all right; but from this time on you've got to tell me the kind of a shindig I'm gallopin' down into before I stir a hoof. This 'Wild West' Africa show interests me a whole lot, and I want to go; but no more weak tea and old ladies for me."

Mary met these moments of rebellion with

a certain pleasure, for she enjoyed the exercise of her power over him. She turned her smiling, arch, and subtle face upon him, and he softened. She took hold of his lapels, and said: "Now, you old bear, don't you get cross! You are going just once more to please me."

"No," he said, and his voice was abrupt. "Right here the men in calico pants and me part company. I've kept from killin' 'em so far, but I'm ugly to-day; you'd better not bother me. I'm goin' to see the Wild Africa show at Earl's Court."

Mary knew when to yield. "Well, if you're determined, we'll cut the reception and go with you."

"Now you're talkin' sense. I'll be on hand like a sore thumb," he replied, and rose to go.

He turned up the next afternoon in a bad mood indeed. He felt like a fool, he said, and he certainly looked like a bandit, and Mary put forth all her skill to win him back to his customary good humor.

As they went out to the carriage, he said: "The sun blame near makes a shadow to-day, don't it?"

He kept silence all the way to Earl's Court, and not till he caught sight of the brown uniforms and gray sombreros of the Australian guards did he shake off his gloomy meditation.

"Hello, boys!" he called to them cheerily. "How'd you leave things at home?" The Australians smilingly replied, and Jim was benefited by their replies. "By the Lord, they look good after these cussed red monkey-cap soldiers with canes."

"I hear they look like your own soldier-boys."

"They do; they look right. They know how it is themselves. If I had time, I'd like to shake hands with 'em all."

As they ran swiftly through the "Greater Britain" exhibit, Jim became thoughtful. "She's a big country," he said—"mighty big and rich."

Will delivered a lecture on this theme: "Here's the place to feel the width of the empire. Consider the names: New South Wales, Ontario, Columbia, South Africa, Australia, Quebec, India!" But Jim had eyes only for the tall men in brown jackets and wide hats. They looked so friendly and big and brown that he could not restrain a word to each. "Howdy, boys, howdy!" They mostly replied in kind, seeming to comprehend the American's essential comradeship.

At last they crossed a sort of bridge and

entered a vast auditorium, one entire side of which was covered by a curtain. The building was, in fact, a mighty oblong theater with a lofty arch, the stage of which was a sanded acre of beaten earth.

Mary was careful to have Jim take a seat beside her, in order that she might hear every word he uttered and have the pleasure also of his near glance. Their seats were the choicest to be had, being close down to the railing of the arena, and they were much observed by those of the immense audience who were near them. Of this scrutiny Jim was unaware.

When the great curtain rose, disclosing a wide, wild, rocky, barren country, the mountaineer sat up with a jerk. "By the Lord Harry, that looks like Utah!" he said. "All it needs is a little sage-brush."

Loud shouts were heard, accompanied by the fierce cracking of whips, and an eight-span team of oxen drawing a big covered wagon came crawling over the plain. It was an immigrant-wagon laden with household goods and speckled with children.

"Now you're drifting into my climate," exclaimed Jim, laying a hand on Will's knee; "that's a prairie-schooner."

The wagon passed, leaving the scene as silent and lonely as before. Then arose a distant wild singing, "Ille-o-o-o-aha!" and two hundred powerful black men, armed with spears and shields, and adorned with snow-white plumes and gay beads, came marching in, their deep voices rolling in splendid rhythmic waves from head to heel of their solemn line of march.

"That's like the Sioux!" Jim said. "I like to hear 'em; they make my hair curl. No pink teas about that! It's a mixture of a Sioux war-dance and a negro camp-meeting. Here comes the boys!" he shouted, oblivious of every other spectator. His eyes were aflame with excitement, and his big hands gripped his seat.

Two and two the horsemen galloped in, led by a middle-aged man who sat his horse in careless serenity. They were all mounted on tough, brown little ponies, not unlike the American bronco; but their saddles were low, without pommels, and had a sort of pad with ridges running along the thigh, which held each leg in place.

"Wait a minute!" said Jim. "Some of these chaps are fakes. See their knees all hunched up? The feller in the lead is right, all right. See the straight leg? He knows his business; but the others are frauds." He turned to look at Mary, his eyes glowing,

his lips tremulous. "This puts me back on the Pecos. I'm homesick right now. I'd like to go down and shake hands with the cow-boss and jump a horse and take a hand in the fight; he's my kind."

His heart was big with emotion, and his throat ached with the tension of it. Every time a horse made a fine leap or a rider swayed in his saddle just right, the Colorado man cried out like a boy:

"That's right! You're the real thing! You've handled a horse before!"

Mary and Will shared very little in his excitement. How could they? To them it was merely amusing; to him it suggested the open spaces, the hardy life, the storm of stampeding cattle, and long rides in the deep of night over the plain. It meant everything that London was not: all the adventures of his mountain life, all his days on the trail, and a hundred camps by rushing streams. It subtended the life he had lived and loved, and to which he was longing to return, and the force of it made Mary of little account and England a dreary prison-place. Had he been in love with Mary and in bondage, the memories called up by these riders would have delivered him.

The grizzled old veteran of the Southern plains rode in with his trained horse, a superb animal, and as he whirled and saluted with bare head, proudly erect, Jim said: "There's a man! Nothing the matter with him! Your dukes and earls are brindle broncos by the side o' him."

The scene changed to a camp beside a big river. The immigrants were just hitching up to begin another day's run, when a detail of the black fellows came charging upon them. The cracking of guns arose, and the black men gave way. The long line of oxen plunged into the river, and, with nostrils spouting water, dragged the wagon safely through, and so escaped.

There was much significance to Jim in all this. "That's great business," he said, with a sigh. "That's the way we did it in my country; only the men we tackled were red."

The scene returned to the camp of the blacks. Uttering their splendid, ululating chant, they filed before their chief. "We go to fight the white man," they shouted in unison. "He shall die! He comes to steal our lands, to kill our babies! He must be beaten back!" They knelt on the earth, imploring the help of the High Ones. Their prayers were like the moaning of November winds in the trees. Their naked bodies glis-

tened like oiled ebony. On their heads were tufts of ostrich-plumes. Great bracelets of silver clasped their arms. Their decorated shields were of bull's hide, and their short spears, shaken in their swarthy right hands, menaced invisible multitudes. Pride and an epic resolution transfigured their dark, uplifted faces.

They passed away, and into the arena rode the British troops, careless, easy of seat, wary and watchful. The captain called a halt. The bustle of camping began. A shot was heard outside, and soon a rider appeared, dragging a gigantic negro at his horse's heels. The black was a scout, and was brought before the commander in order to be forced to tell where and in what force his people were camped. He refused to reply, with magnificent defiance of death. "I can die; I will not speak!" he said.

The commander hesitated about torturing so fine a man, and the prisoner was led away. Alarms sounded; the blacks rushed in, armed mainly with short spears, but with a few rifles. The fire—the withering, blasting fire—of the machine-guns was turned upon them, and they fell like mown grain. Again and again, with desperate, pitiful courage, they rushed upon the British line, falling at the very mouth of the guns, the reports of which blended into a long, high-keyed, crackling, appalling roar. The auditors shuddered, as if they had not heretofore realized the horror which lay behind the quiet description of a machine-gun.

"Is that what our men do?" asked Mary.

"That's about as exact as they can represent it," replied Will. "The blacks were brave men; they fell inside our lines just that way."

"Poor fellows! They are worthy of a better fate."

"It's a hopeless struggle, and the machine-guns went far to teach them the folly of trying to hold back the whites," remarked Will, as the blacks, with wailing chants, gathered up their dead and marched away into the mountain defiles.

"The Apaches were too sharp to fight that way," said Jim. "They did n't give our men a chance to rake 'em with a Maxim."

But beneath all other feeling on Jim's part ran a rising tide of homesickness. The pictured peaks, the mimic waterfalls, the canvas trees, made him long with a mighty yearning for the realities of the far-off lands he called his own. As this emotion grew, he forgot his companions and their words; he dreamed like an eagle on his

perch, with senses filled with old-time sounds and scenes.

He was singularly silent as they moved out with the crowd into the wide halls. His tall figure had a swaying movement at the shoulders which suggested great strength and large aims. His face had lost all its laughter lines and looked dark and stern. He paid no attention to the chatter of his companions; even Mary, eager as she was, respected his mood. As they stood for a moment at the point where the great hall entered upon a sort of plaza wherein fountains were rushing, they heard the black men singing. They were approaching. The noise of their coming echoed in the building as in a cavern; their great, gusty voices, rolling on in deep-toned chant, formed a flood of sound, each moment growing in majesty. Soon they came, with spears held high above their heads, their bangles, their gay shields, their snowy plumes, transforming the glistening ebony of their splendid bodies into some singular and beautiful metal. They came two abreast, with eyes of mystery, full of homesickness, and their song arose in impulses and moved backward as waves arise and flee and break on dim shores.

As they passed, a shudder swept over Jim. "Come!" he said imperiously, and Mary followed.

The negroes entered a gate, and Mary, following Jim, found herself in a lofty amphitheater of painted hills—the hills of Africa. In the middle of the inclosing walls was a kraal of conical mud huts such as geographies had made familiar to Jim. On the painted hills other similar villages, wondrously real, were perched beside bright pools and foaming waterfalls. The land was green and smooth. Narrow paths ran from village to village. High mountains rose on all sides, and the whole glorious valley and its swarming life seemed serene and unmarked of war or greed. Jim lifted his shoulders and drew a deep breath. "This makes me think I'm in the high country," he said.

As he stood there among the huts, night began to fall. Over minute fires women crouched, preparing food. The warriors, smoking slowly, sat at the doors of the huts, talking in low voices. Everywhere young men and women began to croon in half-voice like happy, sleepy fowls, and the murmur of soft speech was broken only by sudden soft laughter.

Jim, listening to the blended stream of sounds with half-shut eyes, rose on it as on an invisible wave. The mine, London, Mary,

became of small account. "To — with it all!" he said, through his set teeth.

Mary laid a hand on his arm. "Come, Jim; we'll be late to dinner."

He turned his face upon her with a look which made her shiver with sudden pain. "I'm done with London and you and all of ye. I'm goin' home. Good *night!*"

Without another word he turned on his heel and was lost in the crowd and the dusk.

It was nearly twelve o'clock when he reached his hotel, and he was tired. He had walked all the way from Earl's Court, and had lost his direction a dozen times in his abstraction. His heart was very bitter, and he said: "They have been foolin' with me. It was all right for a while, but it ends just about here! She has had her fun with me, but I reckon she can't have any more." In this mood he was suspicious of everybody; every Englishman was his enemy, and London intolerable.

The clerk handed him two notes. One was from Twombly, the other from Mary. Twombly was anxious:

Don't leave England without seeing me again. I think I may arrange to go back with you if you are still of a mind to have me. . . .

Mary's note was abruptly passionate:

You must not leave me in this way! It is brutal! Come and see me to-morrow. What is wrong with you? What did I do to anger you? Dear old Mountaineer, I don't see how I'm going to live without the clasp of your big hand. Give me a chance to set myself right with you. What did I do or say to make you leave us so abruptly? I'm scribbling this here at home, with brother Will waiting. I can't say what is in my heart to say. You *must* come for a good talk. You are a great, fresh, bitter wind to me; you've done me much good: you've restored my faith in men; you've made me love the lonely mountains. Come and say good-by to me.

Yours,
MARY.

Jim read this letter twice and then tore it into a dozen strips and threw them into the grate. "Matter is, I've woke up," he grimly said, and went to bed.

XI. AGAIN THE BIG CANOE.

HE was awake at daylight the next morning, and set to work sullenly and swiftly to pack his trunk. At ten o'clock he was on his way to Liverpool. He was not sure that he could get a boat, but he had determined to leave London at all costs. Again green England —solemn, silent, and empty rural England—

passed before his eyes; but this time he was too discouraged and too deeply moved to observe any detail.

He felt as if he had torn himself away from something very sweet and beautiful, and this feeling, combined with a realizing sense of his failure, took away the elation which would naturally have been his at starting out on a return to the West. The accent of the people in his compartment annoyed him; three of them were plainly London "runties," who smoked tobacco which should have cut their throats, and the fourth was a very silent, moon-faced person, who opened his mouth only when he thrust his head from the window and called to the guard, "Weer are us noo?" The fifth man was a Scotsman, and his burring tongue at last helped Jim to forget his bitter failure. The small cockneys were contending for Liverpool, while the Scotsman defended "Glassgie," as the best place in which to live.

It was raining in Liverpool, and the sunshine-lover was miserable. The fast boat did not go till the next day, and so all the afternoon he lounged about his hotel, silent and sullen. At the earliest moment next day he sought the boat and boarded her; and so weary was he of the city and the rain, and so homesick for the mountains, that he felt very little hate of the boat. The ugly smells were there, but the interior was newer and cleaner in all ways than the boat he had left New York in. The miner spent nearly his last dollar in getting a berth where little motion would be felt, and was quite overawed by the polished cabinets and the fittings of the room. It was an immense satisfaction to feel that he was in the fastest boat on the ocean.

Again he stood looking down on the bustle of embarkation, but this time with a different feeling. "I'm going home, no more to roam," kept ringing in his head, and he could not keep out the rest of the hymn, "No more to sin and sorrow." The thought of Mary came circling again and again in the swirl of his thought, and always with a sunny radiance and an odor of flowers, but always, too, with a subtle pain quite beyond his analysis. She was the one sweet and sunny place in all England to him.

He was leaning over the rail, seeing the moving porters but dimly and thinking of Wyndhurst, when he caught sight of Twombly stalking majestically up the gang-plank, attended by a valet and a couple of porters. He was dressed in a gray-and-yellow plaid

suit, wore a cap with two "bills," as Jim would say, and carried a brown-and-green shawl over his arm. He was a stalwart and striking figure.

When Jim met him at the top of the plank Twombly "grinned a little sheepishly and said, "I turn up, you see."

"I'm mighty glad to see you. Are you goin' with me?"

"I am, provided you are still of a mind to let me look at that property."

"That's what it's for; but how did you happen to hit on this boat?"

"Oh, Mary told me you had planned to board the fastest boat on your return, and so I assumed you'd take this one."

Twombly's manner toward the mountaineer had undergone great change. All stiffness had melted away, and his eyes were frank and manly. He no longer affected to look at Jim's hat-rim without seeing it.

"I say, old chap," he said suddenly, "you left Mary and the rest of your friends all cut up by your sudden departure. Here is a letter intrusted to my keeping." He handed Jim a letter addressed "James Matteson, Esq.," and the handwriting was Mary's. Jim took it and put it into his pocket.

"And here are some letters handed to me by the clerk at your hotel. You left no forwarding address, you know."

Jim pocketed these also without a word, and Twombly turned to his men. "Here, Thomas, get my luggage stowed into my room."

When he turned, Jim said: "Well, I'll tell you how it was. I stood it about as long as I could, and then I had to hit the back trail or slip a cog. I'm sorry they feel that way, but when I heard them blacks a-singin' and saw their camp-fires sparkle, I just naturally had to hit leather quick. I'm mighty sorry, but that's the way I'm made."

It was wonderful to see how Twombly made himself at home on the ship. Wherever he walked, porters attended him. He had the snuggest corner for his chair, the best seat at the table, and his state-room at the end of ten minutes looked like a place of permanent residence. The tone in which he spoke to the various stewards gave Jim a desire to kick him, and yet he liked him, after all, and in spite of all.

Jim opened the letters from home first. One was from Mrs. Ramsdell, and contained a small picture of Bessie, which Jim looked at a long time before going on with the text. Mrs. Ramsdell said that they were all

a little worried about him and wished to see him returning soon.

We realize how hard it is to sell mining stock just now, and if it were not so dull here the doctor says he would ask you to come home and let things go. I inclose a proof of a new picture Bessie has been having taken. She did n't want to have me send it, but I thought it might serve as a charm to keep off the power of that pretty English girl. We talk of you every day, and wonder when you will be able to start back.

Mary's letter was unexpectedly calm and kindly, for he had not penetration enough to understand the mood in which it was written.

DEAR JIM: I hope Mr. Twombly will overtake you and hand you my letter. If he does I wish you would write me a word to say you forgive me and that you are not angry at us. I know you think we were "having fun" with you; but we were not—at least not after we knew you. My memory of your visit will always be a great joy if only you'll write and say that you are not disgusted and angry with me. I am horribly lonesome to-day, and I wish you could come in to lunch. Twombly thinks you have had news of a "strike" in your mine, and is suddenly very anxious to go in with you. He's a good fellow, and I hope you'll sell a share of the mine to him. And remember I want a share also—a very little, but enough so that I can feel you are my partner.

It's a horrible thing to say good-by when you know it is good-by. I know I shall never see you again. But you've done me good, and every thought of you is wholesome and medicinal. I shall always think of you striding up the trail or smoking your pipe with old Ouray soaring behind you and the Grizzly Bear roaring in the cañon. There is a wild side to my nature, so that I can understand you; but you are not tame enough, not *insane* enough, to understand me, and so we must always live at opposite poles of the world. When you die they'll bury you on the mountain-side, where it is lonely and bright with sun, where the winds roar in the pines. When I die they'll put me into ground rotten with thousands of others like me, and so even in death we'll be set as far apart as the width of the world.

It was a comfort to me that you seemed to understand that man whose body lies buried in the sands of Africa. It is time to seal my letter. I could write all day to you, but I must say good-by.

MARY.

Jim lay in his berth and read and re-read this letter. There was something in it which moved him deeply, but he could not analyze it. He felt dimly the woman's love for her dead hero, but her attitude toward him was too complicated for his ways of thinking. In the end he fastened upon one dominant note, that of her loneliness, and set to work to answer and assuage that pain.

With Twombly's aid he secured a place at a writing-desk and wrote his answer:

LITTLE PARTNER: Dont you worry a minute. Im not disgusted about anything special; Im not mad at you. I was homesick, thats the fact about it, and so I just naturally jumped the whole business. I like you all, but youre strangers, after all: I dont quite savvy you; youre not my people. I have no kick coming; you all treated me white —mighty white, considering what an old lahoo I am, anyway. Id no business to get into your country; its like a caribou wandering into the

buffalo-grass country: he can live, but he aint happy. I was pretty lonesome myself yesterday waiting for the boat, but Im all right to-day, for Im going back. Im aiming for old Ouray, and if we dont blow out a cylinder-head or bust a knee Ill see the snow-peaks again in ten days. Im mighty sorry youre not going along, but I reckon youre right—Colorados a little too far from London for you. Yes, I reckon its good-by, except when I hear from you in a letter. Anyhow, Im much obliged for all you did for me. I wont forget it.

Yours respectfully,

JIM MATTESON.

(To be continued.)

AN ENGLISH PASSION PLAY.

BY REBECCA HARDING DAVIS.



WE were two Americans who had spent the summer idly jogging along the coasts of Devonshire and Cornwall on top of lumbering coaches, or in old gigs drawn by sleepy horses, which we hired from village to village. We had no plans and no purposes. Now and then we ventured into the solitude of the two great moors, and came out again frightened and awed. We stopped in roadside inns or picturesque old towns, and explored all the so-called Roman camps and Norman towns in the neighborhood; we crawled up over the foggy Cornish hills, catching a glimpse now and then of the sea beyond, the only living figure in the solitude usually being some ambitious cockney bicyclist out on his vacation, tramping red and perspiring alongside of the coach, pushing his wheel up the height only to push it down again.

Sometimes the steep, narrow road climbed all day between graystone walls feathered with richly tinted lichen, red and yellow and purple, or the hedge was a matted mass of beech- and ash-trees and green vines, the knobs of scarlet and jetty berries shining through it like jewels.

Outside of the towns in this region, over the moors and slow-stealing streams and the mountains, there was everywhere a curious silence and calm. The yellow sunlight slept in the broad valleys; the very mists crept drowsily up the sides of the peaks. The old horses dozed as they stumbled along with us, their drivers nodded behind them, and the silent villages under their thatched roofs,

when we drove into them, seemed never to have wakened since Merlin enchanted them in the days of Arthur.

But in the queer little seaside resorts, Minehead, Clovelly, Bude, and the others, there were precisely the same pleasure-seekers, the same eager click-clack of gossip about golf and art and novels, the same perfumes, the same songs strummed to guitars, and the same incessant flirtation as could have been found at that season in any of the ten thousand American summering-places.

When, therefore, late one stormy evening, we drove into a little village on the Cornish coast, and through the rain saw nailed to a tree in front of the inn a poster which called upon us hysterically to "Come, Come, Come to an Entertainment to be Given in Behalf of Worthy Charity," we looked at each other and smiled. That poster might have hung in front of any summer hotel from Bar Harbor to Asheville.

It was a grim little village, as we saw when the fierce wind drove the rain-clouds out to sea, and a gray sunset light shone about it for a few minutes. A vast mountain-peak jutting out into the ocean, but which the tides of ages had gnawed in two; on the steep side of the inner height a dozen old stone houses, clinging like barnacles to a ship's prow: this was the village. It was there when Christ was born, overhanging the hungry sea, which then, as now, clutched incessantly up to reach it. The baffled cry of it has not been silent for centuries. Down that defile in the rocks Sir Galahad and Tristram often had ridden, for it was here that the king founded his Round Table. Yonder