

ANSELO LEE

PAUL KESTER

I

THE fresh wind blew in my face, the night pressed close about me. It was very dark. The pale crescent had gone down behind the western ridge, leaving a dim gray light above the horizon which served to throw into bolder relief the blackness of the star-lit sky. It was not late, but as the season was advanced the heavy darkness, cut here and there by cheerful gleams that came through curtained windows, gave a sense of lateness to the hour and a foreboding of the coming winter.

I was in search of my friends the Egyptians. Their camps for the most part lay to the west of the town beyond an iron bridge, under an elm by the river-side. Thither I had gone in the early evening only to find my many steps useless. No Egyptians were on the old camping ground.

When once one has set out to find the transient habitat of a family of Rom, having promised oneself a seat on the turf with the embers of the low smouldering camp-fire just a yard or two off to look into, with one's back to a tree, and one's friends all about one, one is not easily reconciled to disappointment! Therefore when I chanced to remember that the tents were sometimes set up under a single wide spreading elm in a little green lane over the river south of the town, I bent my steps toward this last hope.

Quitting the street where I had passed on under the maples from lamp-post to lamp-post, from flare into shadow, I made my way down the rough bed of the railway, stumbling over the ties and becoming involved in the switches till I came to the long bridge spanning the water. Here in the dimness I discerned a masculine form seated upon the high buttress, seemingly intent upon the flow of the water. Not knowing his mood—as how should I?—it was startling so to come upon him in the darkness. Perhaps guessing my thought as I paused, and pos-

sessing the kindly spirit which prompts men sometimes to put others at ease, he rose from his seat, but without approaching, and said:

"It's a quiet place here."

"So it is," I replied, but little reassured, for the tone was non-committal and I could not make out his features in the shadowing gloom.

"Are you going across the bridge?" continued the voice.

"I am," I replied.

"I will go over with you."

"Very well," said I, moving away.

"Won't you wait for me?" asked the voice.

"You can follow."

"But I should like to go over with you!" persisted the voice.

"Are you drunk?" I demanded incautiously.

"No," the voice answered without hesitation.

"Then why can't you go over alone?"

"The flow of the water beneath the bridge in the night, and watching the ties when I can but half see them, makes my head dizzy."

"It will not make you dizzy if you count the ties as you walk," I suggested.

"You are afraid to have me go over with you!" said the man out of the darkness.

"I have no reason to be afraid of you if you fear to go over a bridge alone after nightfall."

"You needn't think I'm a coward!" quoth the voice with some indignation. "If I start to go over this bridge alone, I tell you I shall fall through it! If you won't let me walk with you I shall have to go round by the town and cross at the old covered bridge. You have no more reason to be afraid of me than I have to be afraid of you—I never saw you before!"

"You were here first," I demurred.

"I was waiting for some one to come along."

"Have you a match?" I asked.

"I have three," said the voice.

"One is sufficient," said I with dignity. "Light it and let

me see your face, then I will tell you whether or not I will help you over the bridge."

A match scratched on the stone of the abutment, a spark flashed, two hands made a circle about it till it grew strong, then for an instant it was held up to light the face which belonged to the voice which had said, "It's a quiet place here," . . . then a gust of the freshening wind blew it out and we stood shrouded in darkness again.

In the instant I had caught a vague impression of a dark face of remarkable beauty—the face of a Gypsy.

"May I come with you?"

"Yes, pal—we will jal over together!"

"Romanychel!" exclaimed the Gypsy.

"Where are you camping?"

"Under the elm in the lane."

"I was just going over to see you."

"Since we are brothers give me your vast. I cannot walk across such a place in the dark—scarcely at any time; I am not dinnelo. . . . I am no fool, . . . but I cannot do it."

"Keep hold of my hand then," said I.

And indeed it was well he did, for twice he tripped on the ties before we were half over, and was near going through them the third time he stumbled.

While we were yet on the bridge we heard a train up the track and were forced to climb down among the great rafters off the ties as far from the rails as might be. There we waited while the flash of the headlight and the awesome thunder and roar of the train came upon us. The steel rails rang and trembled, the bridge jarred and shook, the black engine rushed crashing upon us, over us, past us—the heavy clang, clang, of the great freight cars rolled on and on, deadening the sound of the cattle crushed in their narrow pens. Then it all went away into the darkness and left us crouching there, stunned by the roar, until the stillness of the night time returned, and the red calaboose lamps died like reluctant sparks in the distance.

"Let us go on," I said, rising stiffly.

So we clambered back to the ties. When we felt the solid

earth beneath our feet the Gypsy paused, and releasing my hand said earnestly:

"Brother, I do not know why it is, but I cannot stand on any high place without wishing to throw myself off; neither can I walk over such a bridge as this, though I have no doubt the young Gorgios often jump or dive from it into the water when they swim here in the summer. My people all know this—I wish they did not. You can now see the fire by the tents down in the lane."

"I see it, but it has grown so late that after all I'd better return to the town—I'll see you to-morrow perhaps."

"To the town, brother? Where is your camp?" the Gypsy asked in surprise.

"I live in a house," I answered regretfully.

"You are not of the Gorgios, brother?"

"I am of the Gorgios, pal."

"But you can rokker?"

"A little."

"I wish you were not of the Gorgios, brother."

"And why do you wish I were not of the Gorgios?"

"Because I do not like the Gorgios, brother—because the Gorgios are full of their evil deceit. Yet there are some good Gorgios, I suppose, . . . and perhaps you are one of them?" This was a question.

"I hope I am, pal, but I would not make too sure of it."

"I will not until I have seen your face in the firelight," he answered.

Then we went on in silence.

"How shall you jal back to the gav?" the Gypsy presently asked.

"Over the covered bridge at the foot of the Main Street."

"Then you can come by the camp, it is just here before us. It is nearly as short as to go round by the railroad."

"I will go by the camp then," I answered.

We went down the steep embankment from the track, climbed a rough fence, passed through some dusty high weeds, and came to the lane where the turf was thick, where the dew lay heavy, and where the camp was made under the spreading boughs of

a huge elm tree. About the camp-fire lounged the Gypsies, in the changing shadows of the night and the flames.

II

"Is it you, Anselo?" asked a voice speaking Romany. "And why have you brought a galderly Gorgio here at this time of the night?"

I paused at the edge of the circle.

"Putch the rye to be dukkered!" cried one of the dark women who sat by the fire. "Ask the gentleman to have his fortune told!"

"Mandy'd chore tute for a pash lill in vonger," said one of the men. ["I'd rob you for half a dollar in money."]

"Mandy'd da tute pang lills in vonger if tute could do it," ["I'd give you five dollars in money if you could do it,"] I answered.

"Beng lell mandy, devil get me—if he isn't Romanychel! Sarishan!"

"Dordi! We are dinnelo!" cried out the witch who had wished to tell me a fortune.

"Oh, me dere Duvel—dovelo adoi? . . . Oh, Lord, who is there?" demanded a deep voice from a tent near at hand.

"Romanychel! Romanychel!" answered the Gypsies.

"Throw on some wood! Make up a good fire!" said my companion, whom the Gypsies called Anselo. "He is not Romany, but a Gorgio who lives in a house in the gav!"

"A Gorgio?" echoed the Gypsies.

"He's tacho Romany—don't talk to me! He opened his eyes in a tan like any proper Egyptian—don't be deceived by his lies! What's your lay, pal? Be sure if you live in a house you make the Gorgios pay for such pleasant company!" spoke in my defence he who but a moment before had expressed his readiness to take violent possession of whatever of value my pockets might hold.

"Oh, me dere Duvel!" again complained the deep voice from the tent. "Wel akai, Anselo, . . . come here!"

Then with much groaning, and many exclamations of

"Dawdy! Oh, dear!" and "Me dere Duvel!" there issued from the tent a huge misshapen mass which, leaning upon Anselo for support, struggled forward to the circle of light and there paused to survey me while I, in my turn, surveyed the strange figure.

It was a woman . . . a woman of very great age and monstrous deformity, the sense of which was much increased by an excessive corpulence, a rare deformity among the Gypsies. Her head was placed far into her shoulders, which rose high above it; her stature was very short, while her arms were of more than usual length, so long, indeed, that they might have reached to the earth as she moved forward; her black curly hair showed no gray in the firelight as it fell unconfined upon either side of a long face of almost Ethiopian complexion, which was lighted by very bright eyes wherein lurked a most malevolent expression. A loose gown of dark crimson made even more startling the woman's appearance.

"Mrs. Lee!" I exclaimed, recognizing at once a famous character of whom I had heard many strange tales.

"Oh, me dere Duvel!" she groaned, as she stared at me balefully.

Suddenly, without any apparent premeditation, but with a wonderful vigor, one of her long arms extended itself, and seizing the Gypsy who lay nearest, she raised him up from the earth and set him upon his feet.

"Make room for the rye—would you keep the yog to yourselves? Do you begrudge him a place on the turf? Make room—or jal to your tans!"

With this effort she sank in a heap upon some blankets Anselo had spread near the fire, where, groaning again, she rocked uneasily to and fro.

I was about to speak, when a sign from Anselo kept me silent. All the Gypsies were standing.

As she rocked to and fro there came to my mind many strange stories I had heard of this woman; of her power over her people, of her lofty pretensions, of her passionate temper, of her endurance and physical strength, of her claim to the powers of divination and sorcery; above all of her ambition and pride.

"I am breaking at last!" she muttered. "The pains in my bones tear me to pieces—it's an awful thing to suffer! Oh, me dere Duvel—an awful thing to suffer—I shall not last many years longer!"

Anselo leaned over her.

"Puro dye!" he said, which means old mother, or, as we would say, grandmother. "Puro dye, the air of the night is cold! The dampness comes up from the river—draw the blankets about you!"

"I do not fear it," she answered. "It has done me its worst, has the cold and the damp and many another bad thing for a body!"

She turned to me, ceasing her slow swaying.

"Sit down by the fire, rye—don't mind their ill manners. What should they know of a decent politeness who know nothing? Beshalay!"

"There is indeed a chill in the air," I replied, sitting down Gypsy fashion with my feet under me. "How long shall you keep to the droms, dye?"

"Till I travel the droms of the duro tem [the far country]. I have never slept in a house—I never shall sleep in one as long as I have a vardo or tan or a bit of coppo [blanket] to throw over the hedge."

"The frosts are heavy now in the mornings."

"So they are, my son, as they should be! When I can raise the flap of my tan at the dawn and feel the chill air on my face, and see the yellow sun rise across the white frosty fields, I know that I live, I breathe deep—I am strong as I was in my youth. What is the frost on the window pane to the cold frozen dew on the tan? It is near a century now since I roamed in the Highlands of Scotland gathering the heather when the hoar-frost was thickest, to lay it close to my cheek—for my blood was hot in those days and I loved the snow and the ice! But above all I loved the frost on the heather!"

She sat for a long time silent.

"I shall not travel to the Gulf when the winter comes. I will stay where the snow falls, for I was born in the north and

I love not the warmth of the south. Anselo, we will stay in the north! "

"It is for you to say, dye," spoke one of the Gypsies. "But at your age the winter is hard to pass."

"At my age!" quoth Mrs. Lee, turning her baleful eyes on the speaker. "At my age! When my day comes I shall tell you! But it shall not come until my work is done—and my work is not done!"

We sat silent a while, watching the fire. It grew late, but until Mrs. Lee should go to her tent I felt constrained to remain where I was.

"Dawdy baw O shillero leste sos!" ["Oh, Lord, how cold it is!"] moaned Mrs. Lee. "The yog cannot warm me now—in my youth the cold could not chill! Dawdy! Dawdy!"

I knew that I might sit there for hours with only the sound of the crackling sticks on the fire, or the soft stirring wind in the leaves overhead, with now and again the low-spoken words in the old rich tongue that seemed as akin to the nature about us as the wind, or the heart of the fire. No one would move until Mrs. Lee should go to her tent.

"I will jaw to my tan," said Mrs. Lee, suddenly breaking the silence. "The rye will be naflo, indeed he will be sick if he sits longer upon the shillo chick [the cold ground]."

She raised herself by the aid of her long arms, and stood with her eyes intent on the fire.

"Go, Anselo, into the tan, and bring me a shawl to warm by the yog."

When he returned Mrs. Lee took the shawl and held it up before the fire to warm, as she said:

"Go now with the rye to the bridge over the river; it is dark and the path is not easy to find in the lane."

"Kushto ratti," I said.

"Kushto ratti, pal—mandy'll not chore tute to-night; I know you for tacho Romany. When you blows open a safe or murders a Justice, I'm the pal to take care of the luvver or to sneak you out of the country!"

"Bring us some Gorgios out of the gav to be rokkered—

fortune telling is *naflo akai* [bad here]," called one of the women from the door of her tent.

"Kushto ratti, my son!" said Mrs. Lee. "And be sure that we have the pleasure of your company to-morrow! Go with the rye, Anselo!"

We passed down the lane through the heavy grass to the road. We then walked abreast. Neither spoke till the bridge was reached.

"Will you come over and have a glass of beer with me?" I asked.

"No, brother, I will have no beer to-night, but to-morrow I will drink with you. I do not like to cross over even this bridge. May I come to see you in your house in the *gav*, brother?"

"Come whenever you will, pal! To-morrow perhaps I will show you where my house is—*kushto ratti*!"

"Kushto ratti, brother!" said Anselo, holding out his hand. "I have seen your face in the firelight—I shall know you again."

III

The next day as I lay in my hammock at home watching the stray fleecy clouds floating slowly over the deep blue of the sky, I heard a Romany whistle, and up to my gate rode Anselo Lee.

"Sar shan," I said, as he leaped from his horse. "How did you learn where I lived?"

"It was easy enough, pal," he answered, tying his horse to the hitching post by the curb.

"But you did not know my name, brother!"

"Others did then, pal—we are not all alike in our ignorance!"

"However you came I am glad that you have come. Let us go into the house."

"Yes, brother, let us go into the house by all means. I have much curiosity to see the place where you live, if it be so that we shall meet with no others."

So I took Anselo within doors, where we sat, *Gorgio* fashion, as he called it, in chairs near an open window through which came the pleasant hum of the locusts and the sound of the beat-

ing of iron in the distant foundries over the hill, and mingling with these the light, easy voices of children as they returned home, happy that school was over; and sitting so we spoke of many a thing of interest in the tents of the Gypsies, but little known or cared for by the house-dweller. At last Anselo rose.

"Why is it, brother," he asked, looking as he spoke curiously about the room, "Why is it that you tempt the wrath of God by shutting yourself up in a box like this? When I see a city where the houses are so crowded that there is no green thing about them, no room but for a few narrow windows where the sunlight can shine in, then I pity the poor people who live there, for I think they must die very young. Oh, you Gorgios—the God you worship is your house! Everything you have is made like it, or to fit into it, or because of it! I often think when I see your trains, with cars as like your houses as they can be made, I often think, brother, that it cannot be pleasant to the Boro Duvel who has taken such pains to make the shady lanes, with all the out-of-doors so beautiful, to have your people riding over it so fast on iron rails from one town to another, as though you thought the country a bad place full of fevers, and that you could not stop with safety until you came to some of your own handiwork!"

He stood leaning by the window as he spoke, watching me as though I were some curious animal who wore a very large uncomfortable shell unlike that worn by any other normal thing.

"Dordi!" he cried, abashed a little by my amusement. "The sun will soon be setting, I shall be late for my supper."

"Stay and have supper with me, pal?" I asked him.

But he would not.

"I am glad I came, brother," he said, as he stood by his horse. "I came for more reasons than one. I came to see what the house of the Gorgio is really like to those who live in it. I came to see if a rauni out of a ker could make shift to live in a tent like a Gypsy—I don't think she could! When I come again, brother, I will come but for the pleasure of passing the time with you. Kushto divvas!"

And so into the saddle and away at a brisk pace, riding beautifully as do all his people, went Anselo Lee. I wondered

then why he had come to see if a lady out of a house could make shift to live in a tent like a Gypsy. I said to myself as I thought of this, "He has some reason."

Thus it chanced that I made the acquaintance of Anselo Lee.

IV

It is pleasant in the evening to go down through the town, to pause a moment on the old bridge, to watch the twilight glow deepen and die over the ripples, to lose the line of the willows in the dusk of the coming night; then to go on over the dusty stretch of the road into the green lane, to the tents of the Egyptians.

I never tired of watching Anselo's face as we sat by the yog. I never tired of hearing his low voice recounting the day's experience, horse-trading in the town, or telling some tale of his people, or a story of roadside adventure. Often he came to my gate, often we met in the town, but oftener in the evenings we met by the camp-fire under the elm in the lane.

One evening as we sat so, long after Mrs. Lee and the others had gone to their tents, Anselo broke the silence by saying:

"Brother, I will tell you a strange thing. You are listening, brother?"

"Yes, I am listening. Do you hear the whip-poor-will in the distance?"

"Aye, brother, I hear it—it is a pretty thing to hear in the night time. Often I lie awake listening to it when all the others are asleep. It brings many thoughts to my mind. I have heard it in the evenings down in the land where the winters are like the summer time."

"In Florida?"

"In Florida, brother."

"I did not know you had been there."

"There are many things that you do not know of my ways or the ways of my people, brother—though you know more than another."

He laid his hand upon mine.

"Some day I will tell you what befell me there in the south.

I will not tell you now, pal—we are but strangers—you might laugh or think me a fool, which would hurt me. When we know each other better I will tell you. But it is of this thing that I think when I lie awake in the rardi listening to the whip-poor-wills, it is of this thing I think when I am horse-trading, it is of this thing I think when I look abroad over the country, it is of this one thing I think always—always . . .”

He raised his hand to his face for a moment, whether to shield his eyes from the dull glow of the fire or to hide some sign of emotion, I did not know.

“What was the strange story you had in your mind to tell me?” I asked, after a pause.

“I will tell you now,” he said, letting his hand fall at his side, lowering his voice as he drew nearer to where I sat.

“The puro dye, my grandmother, sent one of the children into the gav with money this morning to buy her all that she might need to write with. After the child came back I went into the tan. It was a strange sight, brother; there sat my grandmother with the paper spread in her lap, the ink by her side, the pen in her hand, and after all she could not write! She had blotted some of the paper and had broken some of the pens in trying to do it, and there were tears of rage in her eyes as she sat looking at the things which the child had brought at her bidding but which she could not use. As I went into the tan she looked up and there was anger and shame in her face. ‘I was never beaten before,’ she said, ‘but I am beaten now in my old age—therefore I curse the name of the Boro Duvel!’ With that she broke up the pens and flung them away, and spilled the ink over the paper, and no one dared speak to her till her fury abated.”

“It is strange,” I said. “Surely Mrs. Lee knew I would gladly write for her.”

“It is indeed strange, brother—the dye has her purposes, she is keeping something away from me! She can deceive all the others, but she cannot deceive me—I have grown up in her tan and I know her ways!”

“Mrs. Lee is very deep, Anselo!”

“Tatchipen, indeed she is very deep!”

"There are none deeper?"

"None, brother."

"I must go back to the gav!" I said, rising. "I am keeping you from your bed."

"No, no—I should but lie awake."

"Listening to the whip-poor-wills, pal?"

"Yes." He rose too. "I shall hear them all night. I shall hear other sounds, other voices; and I am not dinello!"

He walked with me the length of the lane, then on to the bridge, where we paused.

"I will go no further," he said, in answer to my question. "I will stop on this side. But, brother, I would willingly cross over a burning bridge for one of my own people, or for anyone whom I loved—remember that of me, brother!" He held out his hand. "We are tatcho pals? After all, there may be some good in a Gorgio!"

"As there may be in a Romany chal!" I answered, as I took his hand.

V

"Brother," said Anselo, the next afternoon; "Brother, we are a strange people. To-day I had a letter from one of my cousins, Nat Young—not that he can write, for he cannot, but he can pay those who can write to write for him. Therefore my cousin writes me a letter. Now I cannot read very well myself!"

"Read!" quoth old Mrs. Lee, who sat by her tent door. "Read! No one of my blood ever could, save the lines of the hand, and the stars, and the face of a fool. Ha, the dinello Gorgios who must needs write down their thoughts lest they forget them! My people remember—we forget not the ways of Egypt—we are not like the Gorgios, neither my people nor me!"

I caught a look in Anselo's eye which brought to my mind Mrs. Lee's own efforts to acquire one of the arts of the Gorgios, but I held my peace, as all did whose words might be contrary to Mrs. Lee's pleasure.

"Read!" laughed Ben Ward, the Gypsy who had threatened

to rob me the first night we met. "Read, indeed—can you, pal?"

Still laughing, he thrust out his hand to lay it upon Anselo's shoulder.

"Now I cannot read very well myself," Anselo slowly repeated. "Therefore I go to one who can read well enough—a horse-trader apay the gav, and he reads me my letter."

"Ha!" quoth Mrs. Lee. "Ha, he reads your letter, for you cannot read very well." She spoke roughly, but I thought I could detect uneasiness beneath her manner; her eyes, I saw, were ever watchful of Anselo's face.

"My letter is a good letter and it pleases me well. But why, pal, does my cousin ask me in his letter if my complexion is whiter? Why is it my cousin never writes to a Romany chal but he must ask if his complexion is growing whiter? Why is it that I ask the same question when I write to my cousin?"

"It is of no consequence why your cousin should ask a foolish question; it is of no more importance why you should ask him the same," Mrs. Lee said, staring balefully from one to the other. "I like not your cousin Nat Young—he has ways like a Gorgio."

"Now, aunt, Nat's a pal of mandy's!" protested Ben Ward.

"Then jaw to your pal!" cried Mrs. Lee, turning her dark glance upon him. "I like well to see a mush keep with those of his liking! I ask him not to stay from them! I do not beg him to stay—I say to him—Dordi! There is the drom—get your wagon and jaw!"

Mrs. Lee was fast working herself into a passion.

"But, dye—" began Ben Ward feebly.

"Hold your tongue, you fool!" his wife said, plucking his sleeve. "Let her alone, will you?" and then, to soothe Mrs. Lee's fury: "Don't pay any heed to him, aunt!"

"Heed!" muttered Mrs. Lee, rocking backward and forward. "I'll heed him! It is thus I am treated in my age by those I have saved from the gallows! I will not suffer it! Indeed, it is past my endurance!"

"Will you write me a letter to my cousin, pal?" Anselo

asked, to break the uneasy silence which fell when Mrs. Lee ceased her mutterings.

"I will write for you to-night," I answered.

Mrs. Lee caught my words. A new line of thought seemed to open before her; then she stole a covert glance at my face.

"You will write a pretty letter, I know, rye!" she said.

And late in the evening, after I had written for Anselo to his cousin, she kept by the camp-fire conversing with me until near the time of my leaving; then, a moment offering when we were alone together, she leaned forward and whispered close to my ear:

"Indeed, you write in a manner much to my liking. Come to the camp to-morrow with your pen and paper, my son, and write me a nice pretty letter at my bidding, and set down the words I shall say. Speak not of this to Anselo, my grandson, or to any other—it is for your knowing and mine, and for no others' knowing and meddling!"

She paused awaiting my answer.

"I will come to-morrow, mother, and I will say nothing. I can hold my tongue."

"I had been a fool had I asked one to hold his tongue who could not! The stars are dim to-night, yet can I see by their place in the heavens, as I can also see by the look on your face, that I need not fear what is between us shall ever become common. It is seldom I ask a favor, my son, but I always repay those that are done me!"

She drew back as Anselo came from the tent, her dark face showing no sign of the words she had spoken, seeming as it had seemed the moment before he left us, like the face of one who looks so far into the future that the world about is lost to the vision.

VI

"My son," said Mrs. Lee the next day as I sat in her tent, "I wish you to write me a letter. I have asked you to do this as I cannot write for myself. I am much troubled, my son, as indeed I have reason to be!"

I had taken writing materials with me when I set out for the

camp, therefore it needed but a moment for their adjustment until I could turn to the dye, pen in hand, saying:

"I am ready now, mother."

"I have sent Anselo into the gav to be out of the way," she began slowly. "For it is on his affairs that I wish you to write."

"I hope, mother, you will not ask me to write anything which will do Anselo harm?"

"You are dinnelo!" said Mrs. Lee, turning her baleful glance upon me. "Why should I harm my own grandson? Why should I work ill to my own flesh and blood, when there are the Gorgios always at hand to arouse me to anger? Dawdy—dawdy! Why will you hinder me? Why have you set out to thwart and perplex me? Oh, me dere Duvel—me dere Duvel!"

She sat on a sort of rough divan formed of many pillows heaped on rolls of blankets and bedding. She now arose with the aid of her long arms, and tottering toward me laid her hand heavily upon my shoulder.

"Write as I say—I will not be hindered! Anselo shall know in good time what is written. Write now!"

Her dark hand still lay upon my shoulder, a compelling influence, strong almost as the look in her eyes.

"I will write, Mrs. Lee—I was a fool to think you would wish me to put on the paper anything that I should not!"

"You were truly dinnelo. Had I but a Gorgio's education—which, praise God, I have not—nor have any of my people, being ruled by me; nor shall they ever have while my spirit lasts—had I, I repeat, but the education with which the Gorgios idle their time, I should need to ask favors of none!"

"Do not be angry, Mrs. Lee, have I not said I will write whatever you wish?"

She withdrew her hand from my shoulder and turned slowly back to her seat. I adjusted my little portfolio upon my knee, jarred the stubborn ink to the tip of the fountain pen, then waited her bidding.

"I will tell you the story, my son; you will understand better what I wish you to write when you hear it."

"As you please, mother."

"You have seen Anselo; you know him for a fine young man.

Had he not been born with his good looks this trouble had never come upon him, his head would never have been turned about on his shoulders; he would have taken a wife from among his own people, a rinkeno Romany chie such as I know, and never have gone off after a Gorgio rauni to be made her sport and the laughing stock of her friends!"

"Is it so?" I exclaimed.

"It is, my son, it is! And you shall hear how such a shameful thing came to pass. In the winter we jaws to the gulf. Now in this last winter where should we jal but into Florida, where we had never been before, going for the most part to the city near the mouth of the boro doyav, the big river, where the camp was made on the leveys. But I, like a fool, I must needs be jalling to Florida, hearing that the rich Gorgios go there to be out of the cold, thinking to make more at the dukkering. Well was I punished for my covetous spirit; well was I to pay for wishing more when I already have too much for my peace—having more farms than my fingers, more horses and vans than any Egyptian can count!

"We pitched our tents near the great hotels of a winter resort. I go little abroad from my tan, but the word passes about that a famous witch would dukker the raunis. So the raunis come to my tent in the evening with the ryas, the swells, in their white clothes, gay with light laughter, leaving many a dollar.

"I could see that the raunis cast not a few glances at Anselo, coming again and again, I thought, only to see him. But Anselo paid no heed to them, going about his own business, leaving them to go about theirs, which they did, when they saw he was not to be won by their wiles.

"But it changed; there came one evening a fair girl with golden hair and white cheeks, with eyes like the southern sky when the moon shines. She came with some others, but such was the charm of her looks that I had eyes but for her, feeling a pity rise in my heart as I saw she was one who had come to the south to mend harm which was past all mending.

"She held out her palm, gaily laughing as she crossed mine with a gold piece.

“ ‘ Shall I have luck ? ’ she asked me, still laughing.

“ I smiled, for I knew she would hear my words as a prisoner his sentence.

“ ‘ Ma pen lati tatchipen [Don’t tell her the truth],’ I heard Anselo’s voice from behind me. ‘ The rinkeno rackli [The pretty girl] ! ’

“ ‘ What does he say ? ’ asked the rauni, putting her slender hand to her lips to hide the cough which came lightly. ‘ Is he speaking in Gypsy ? ’

“ She turned then to see him stretched out on the blankets with his eyes full upon hers. As she did so, I felt a quick beat of the pulse in the hand I was holding.

“ ‘ Pay no attention to him ; he says it is a pleasant evening—and he does not speak Gypsy, as there is no such language, only thieves’ cant, which is gibberish not fit for such pretty ears. The planets——’

“ But she stopped me, still looking at Anselo as he lay with his head raised on his hand, to say sadly :

“ ‘ Is there no Gypsy language ? I had believed that there was.’

“ ‘ None indeed, my dear—what would we do with a language ? Are we better than others that we need two for our uses ? The Gorgios speak not two languages, they are dinnelo. How then should Romanychel speak two ? ’

“ ‘ The Gorgios ? ’ she asks quickly. ‘ Dinnelo ? Romanychel ? I never heard such words before ! ’

“ ‘ How should you, my dear ? It is thieves’ jargon not fit for a lady to hear.’

“ ‘ Don’t believe what she tells you ! ’ spoke up Anselo, as I had never heard him speak before. ‘ My grandmother will not tell you the truth. We talk in the Gypsy language among ourselves, or when strangers are by and we do not wish them to know what we say.’

“ ‘ What did your words mean—the first that you spoke ? ’ asked the rauni.

“ ‘ I cannot tell you,’ Anselo answered, now getting upon his feet, showing his fine manly figure. ‘ I should rather not tell you.’

“‘It is of no consequence,’ said the girl, turning to me. ‘Will you tell my fortune, please?’

“When the fortune was finished the young men who were with her were for returning to the hotel ere the chill of the night came up from the earth. However, the other raunis must be dukkered first, and when I had told all their fortunes it was so dark that Anselo went with them to the hotel, carrying a lantern to light the way, for the rauni would not go without it, fearing, she said, to step on a snake in the dark—but, thinks I, wishing to walk beside Anselo, if the truth were told.

“After that the young rauni came often to the camp, nor could I forbid her, as she brought her friends to be dukkered, leaving them with me in the tan while she went with Anselo to look at the horses that she might try which was best for a saddle. Then when she had bought a horse for her riding she would come by the camp every day that we might see it. She had bought Anselo’s own gry, which before he would not part with, nor even allow another to mount, but which I think he would have given to her as a present if he had dared.

“Though there were many fine young Gorgios come down from the north to make up her court, it was easy to see that the rinkeno rackli cared more for Anselo than for them all. I do not think Anselo knew this at first—for, as you must see, Anselo is but a fool for all his fine face and fine figure! It might have passed by and have come to nothing had not Anselo’s horse, the one she had bought for her riding, been of a high spirit. It chanced in this way:

“A month had gone now since she first came to the camp; so, knowing us well, she would often ride down by herself of a morning, galloping back to the boro ker [the big house] in time for her breakfast. One morning she came in a fine new habit of dark blue which became her white face and light yellow hair. I thought myself as I stood in the door of my tan that she was pretty to look on. But Anselo’s horse being unused to women liked not the long skirt which trailed over his side, as I saw by his restless way and the turn of his eyes toward it.

“Anselo was not in his tent when she came. I think the gry missed him, for it whinnied, and, paying no heed to the

rein, made through the tents toward the field where we shut up the grys over night. Try as she would, she could not turn the horse back.

“‘Anselo! Anselo!’ called the girl at last, seeing him coming.

“The sound of her voice only startled the gry. He shied and plunged forward, throwing her heavily back upon the ropes of my tan. A Romany chie could have kept her seat with no saddle under her well enough, but this Gorgio was no horse-woman—a poor thing without any spirit! There she lay across the ropes of my tan with her yellow hair fallen down all over her shoulders, her white face paler, her eyes closed, in a swoon.

“As Anselo lifted her in his arms I heard him speak her name under his breath; I saw, too, that he held her very close to his breast as he carried her into the tan and laid her upon my bed. Ha! and by this I knew that he loved her!

“He would let me do nothing, nor any other, bathing her white face himself with his hands, which seemed black as they lay on her pallid forehead.

“When she opened her eyes she looked not at me, nor about her, she looked only at him. I do not think it gave her any satisfaction when her people came from the boro ker to take her away, as they soon did—I having sent one of the men to tell them what had befallen.

“From that time came a great change upon Anselo. He went every day with his guitar to sit by her as she lay in her chair out on the lawn under the live oaks, for the fall which would have done one of my people no harm had made her naflo [sick] indeed, and had brought back the cough to her lips.

“He would sit there by her side, the chals told me, and play hour after hour for her pleasure, while the ryes and the raunis looked on from the broad porches. When she would tire of his playing, he would give the guitar into her hands and teach her to pick out the tunes with her slender frail fingers—teaching her also the words of a puro Romany gillie, an old Gypsy song.

“Then she must have him teach her to rokker. I liked not her learning my language! I do not think now there was need

for my anger—she cared not for the words, but to hear his voice speak them!

“I said nothing, holding my peace till the chals I had sent to the gav told me the rauni had left her chair on the lawn, being ferreder kenaw [better now]; then when I heard this I said to myself it is time Anselo should return to his people and forget the white rauni.

“All through the divvus from morning to noon, from noon on to evening was this on my mind, therefore when Anselo, saying no word, rose up from his place where the supper was spread and taking his stadi, his hat, jawed to the gav—I took my staff, and though it is not easy for me now in my age to walk the length of the tan, I followed him into the gav, never losing sight of him till he went up the steps into the boro ker, where she was staying.

“Long windows opened upon the piazza; there were few lights, for the night was warm and the moon at its brightest. I stood in the shadow of some jessamine vines which covered an arbor—I still remember how heavily their fragrance lay on the air; I remember it well, for as I stood there waiting, for what I know not, I heard a voice singing which seemed to me to float on the soft wind as the scent of the yellow jessamine lay on the night. It was her voice. I knew it though I had not heard her sing. I knew it because no other voice was like hers, and because the song was a Romany gillie.

“It was just dark enough on the long porch for me to creep up near to the wide open window where the song came from. Sometimes the voice died. The moon had not risen far over the palm trees, its light still fell through the long windows under the porch. So I could see her sitting with the pale white light on her hair, her face half turned from the window, looking up in Anselo’s face. Her hands moved slowly, making music like moonbeams, and I thought as I stood watching that they seemed like the moonbeams themselves as they moved in the shadows.

“Anselo was close at her side. Gladly would I have called to him to come out to me, had I not been overcome by a fear that came of my seeing the love in his face; for though my

will is high, it is no greater than Anselo's, for all his quiet ways.

"As I stood undecided, not knowing what I should do, the girl stopped her singing, her face raised to his. Then Anselo, bending, kissed her upon the lips, calling her by her name, Gertrude, and, as she rose, catching her close to him in his strong arms. Even in the dim light I could see the look of surprise on her pale face, a look almost startled; then I saw the look change, and I know that her lips answered his kisses and would have answered his loving words had not another light than the moonlight flashed into the room as her friends came to seek her.

"In an instant Anselo had released her, but it was too late—her friends had seen the white lady in the arms of the Gypsy.

"‘How dare you—how dare you!’ the girl cried to Anselo, who stood dazed by the light and the laughter and the strange look on her face. ‘How dare you!’

"At this I would have gone in to Anselo, for he seemed not to know where to look, until her words stung him; then he raised his head proudly, but gently, looking without flinching into her cold eyes, and said slowly, as his way is:

"‘I don't care for these people—I want you to come and live in my tent as my wife. I love you—will you come?’

"Even then I saw her face flush with a flush that came not from shame. But she was a coward, a weak thing, and she turned from his look to the others.

"‘He has insulted you!’ cried one of the young men. ‘Shall I throw him out of the window?’

"He laid his hand upon Anselo's shoulder, while the rauni Anselo loved turned with some of the women to go out of the room.

"‘Gertrude!’ Anselo called. ‘My kamli [my love]!’

"She turned back at the sound of his voice—she would have run to him—I saw it all in her face. Ha—it was too late! I had entered the room through the long window. Seeing me she stood still.

"‘Come, sir, leave the house!’ said the mush who had laid his vast on Anselo's shoulder, pushing Anselo on toward the

door. 'You do not know how to conduct yourself here—go back to your own people!'

"Now Anselo is as strong as the strongest, so when he seized the insolent mush by the collar ill would have happened had I not laid my hand on his arm, saying to him, speaking Romany, that he had best come with me and leave a bad business before it was worse. Hearing my voice he loosened his hold on the mush and following me we jalled out through the window, leaving the boro ker. Nor did he ask me how I had come, nor why; nor did he indeed once speak to me then, nor at any time since, of the matter. For a little way we talked together, then thinking it was best for him to take his own pace, I said so, and he strode on under the tall palmettoes into the hammock, where I could not see him for the turn in the drom and the heavy shadows.

"I had scarce left the gravelled paths of the boro ker, going slowly, leaning much on my staff, when I heard light steps coming quickly behind me and knew without turning that the girl had followed.

" 'Where is he?' she asked, half sobbing, her breath coming hard from the haste she had made.

"Paying no heed I went on.

" 'Where is he? Oh, tell me where he is—I must see him! I must!' she cried, standing before me.

"But I thrust her aside with my arm, and went on.

"She paused there for a little while, standing in the midst of the drom in the moonlight, thinking to turn back, thinking to come to me again. And so I left her standing alone there with her white hands covering her face, but not hiding her sobbing.

" 'She is not used to suffering,' say I to myself. 'Let her learn what it is!'

"As I went on with the aid of my staff, it came into my mind that we must not wait for the morning to be moving, lest she should come or send to the tents, and Anselo fall into her wiles once again.

"Therefore we broke up the camp hastily in the moonlight. In a few hours we were well into the heart of the pine woods,

jalling over the tracks toward the north, where the Big Dipper hung in the sky."

Mrs. Lee paused for breath.

"That is the story," she added; then, after a moment's silence: "You will not soon hear such another."

VII

"And the letter, dye?" I asked, remembering it, as the little portfolio slipped from my knee, bringing my thoughts up from the Florida pine woods to the camp in the lane under the sweeping boughs of the giant elm.

"Dear God!" cried Mrs. Lee. "I had forgot it!"

She rose and went to the door of the tent to call to a child playing under the vans, asking if Anselo were come from the gav. The child replying that he had not come, Mrs. Lee returned to her place, and continued:

"Some three weeks ago there came to me this letter, sent first to one of my farms, then sent by the farmer to me. It says in the letter how she came by the name of the gav. She asked some Egyptians who told her."

Mrs. Lee extended the letter.

"Am I to read it?"

"By all means, young man. I have heard it but once, for I cannot trust every Gorgio to read it, nor would I trust my own people if they could make it out. Let me hear it again."

I opened the letter with hesitation, seeing as I did so that it was addressed to Anselo. However, the compelling eye of Mrs. Lee was upon me, and though I hesitated, it was but for a moment.

"Read it aloud, my son," said Mrs. Lee, impatiently. "Read it aloud."

There were only a few lines, which ran thus:

"Dear Anselo,

"I have waited a long time to write this, for I did not know where I might send it to reach you until yesterday, when I met some Gypsies I had heard you speak of—your cousins the Boswells—who told me where to address it. I hope it may

reach you soon, for I am not well. I shall never be well again unless you forgive me! If you will only send me a few words to say that you have pardoned me, I think I shall be happy again. I was so startled when they came into the room—I was so weak! I did not even follow you, but let Mrs. Lee turn me back! I never said then that I loved you, though I longed often to say it. I love you, Anselo! I loved you then—I still love you.

“Gertrude.”

“Gertrude!”

It was Anselo’s voice that echoed the name.

I looked up. He stood in the tent door before us, his face suffused with a wonderful light, his lips trembling, his hands extended.

“I have heard!” he cried. “Let me see it—I know I can read what she has written, as I could hear her voice if she called to me from a thousand miles! I can read it!”

As he spoke he drew a step nearer, his hands still extended.

“Give me the letter!” cried Mrs. Lee, snatching it from me.

She rose, drawing back to the furthest corner of the tent away from Anselo, who stood mute for a moment, while many of the tribe, among them Ben Ward and his wife, came to peer in at the door. As she saw them, Mrs. Lee’s eyes darkened and flashed.

“Ye are spies!” she cried, turning upon them with a fury that swept through the place like a storm. “Ye have listened and warned him—away to your tans!” and the sound of her voice was as the rolling of thunder.

The Wards, man and wife, with the others, lowered their eyes before her fierce gaze, but made no sign of leaving the tent door.

“Ha!” screamed Mrs. Lee, raising her voice and shaking her black hair over her face in her rage. “Will ye not heed and obey me—have you come to set my own grandson against me? Dear God!—is that your intention!”

“Why should you be angered when I ask you for what is my own?” Anselo said in a voice so quiet that Mrs. Lee’s fury abated and faded before it. “Why should you speak so to your

own people when they come to the door of your tan? Is it that you wish to keep a thing that is his from your grandson—that you wish to deceive and frighten your own people? Give me the letter. I will not ask how it came into your hands.”

“I will not give you the letter,” she said, in a voice as firm and quiet as his. “None of my blood shall be made the sport of a Gorgio. I have spoken.”

As she said this Mrs. Lee tore the letter again and again, then crumpled the fragments close in her palm.

A murmur went up from the Gypsies.

As he saw Mrs. Lee tear the letter a look came into Anselo’s eyes awful to see, but he said calmly enough:

“Now will you give it to me? I can mend it.”

“I have spoken,” quoth Mrs. Lee. “Nor shall this I have torn ever be mended.”

Without warning she darted past Anselo, thrust away the crowd at the door, and ere anyone knew her purpose ran to where the fire smouldered, casting the fragments into the embers.

“They shall burn!” she cried defiantly, turning to Anselo and the Gypsies. “They shall be ashes! They are gone past all mending!”

Ere Anselo could reach her side, ere he could kneel by the fire, the flames caught the thin edges; even as he gathered them into his hands from the very heart of the coals they were ashes.

“Too late!” he cried fiercely; then turning to me, the ashes still in his hands, unheeding the pain, for the fire was not yet smothered entirely from them: “Tell me where she is? Where the letter was sent from? I am going to her.”

I could not tell him, for the date, with the address, was at the end of the page, and I had read neither when Mrs. Lee had caught the letter out of my hands. This I told him.

“Be content,” Mrs. Lee said, moving to Anselo’s side. “Let her alone—she shall have no words of forgiveness! Is she not a Gorgio?”

“I am going to her,” he repeated, taking a step from among us, a look of power on his dreamy face.

“Watch the horses!” Mrs. Lee cried, pointing to where a

dozen grazed at a distance. "No wheel nor hoof of mine shall be lent to this business!"

"Mother!"

His look was reproachful.

"Turn back!" she cried, her voice rising wildly. "Turn back ere I bid you forever begone out of my tent and away from the side of my camp-fire!"

She followed him, clutching his coat. Gently enough he freed himself from the grasp of her trembling hands.

"Mother," he said, "I have set my face to the east. I shall find the rauni I love ere I turn west again. I go without wagon or gry, for you hold back from me what is my own. I do not reproach you, I only bid you farewell. Kushto bok, mother!" He held out his hands to her.

She paid no heed to the gesture. She had turned to the group by the fire.

"Stop him—dear God! are ye dumb? Don't you see he'll be jalling?"

In her fury she shook her clenched hand at the Gypsies.

"Keep back, pals," Anselo said to the men who advanced to do Mrs. Lee's bidding. "I am not to be stayed—I tell you I am going to her—give me room!"

As he spoke he moved slowly away down the lane, none following him.

"Ungrateful!" screamed Mrs. Lee, her face pale with wrath. "Ungrateful! You abandon your people for the Gorgios!—your ways for their ways! Go, then, from my camp, my eyes shall never see you again in my tent door! Go into the east if it pleases you. Me and mine go to the westward. Our ways lie apart. Go! I will try to forget you!"

She looked down the lane. He was gone.

"My Duvel, punish——"

"Aunt! Aunt!" screamed the women in terror.

"I cannot!" Her arm fell at her side; her face softened, her hands trembled.

"Look to her, wife!" cried Ben Ward.

And the Gypsies crowded close about Mrs. Lee, who had fallen.

VIII

I did not venture to the Gypsy camp again, fearing I might not be welcome since Anselo was gone; though often after sunset I would go down through the town to stand on the old covered bridge, watching the last glow of the twilight die over the ripples of the water. Then I would look across, seeing the white tents dimly in the lane, the camp-fire throwing up its sparks when all else lost itself to view.

One evening as I stood so, with my coat drawn close, liking the warmth which kept the little chill away, watching the figures that passed me dimly in the dusk, Ben Ward stopped to speak with me.

"It's a pleasant evening," he said, leaning upon the old gray railing at my side. "But there's frost in the air. There will be ice glazed over the still water in the morning."

"How is Mrs. Lee?" I asked. "I hope she is well."

"Yes, she is well enough now. I thought for a day or two it was all up with her, but it wasn't. Lord! There's fire in the old lady yet."

"Any word from Anselo?" I asked, after a pause.

"None, pal; the camp's dull enough, too, without him. We'll be moving on to-morrow."

"Moving on?" I repeated. "Surely you are not going until he returns!"

"He will never return—at least, I don't think so, nor does Mrs. Lee. Why should we keep in one place? The grass is all gone and it's a good way to lead the horses to water. There's no more dukkering for the women in the town, and no more horse trading for the men. It's best to be moving."

"Which road shall you take?"

"The one to the west."

"And you break camp?"

"We'll be moving by ten in the morning."

The wavering bridge-lights stirred uneasily in the rising wind. The Gypsy shivered.

"I hate to think of Anselo when the wind blows cold," he said, looking down at the flow of the river. "If he falls in

with any Romanys travelling his way, he'll be well enough, but it's too cold to sleep under a hedge these nights. He's a good boy, is Anselo—a staunch pal. Mandy'd give the best gry mandy has for a sight of him at my tent door. If you ever see him again, young man—and who knows what may chance in this world—you tell him what I said of the gry—and that's not for now only, but for always! If he should need the loan of some vonger he's welcome to it, but Lord! he's known me since he crawled down the tongue of his mother's van into my arms the first day I ever dicked leste, and that was before he could talk. Kushto bok, pal! I'm glad to have met you, you'll always be welcome in mandy's tent, and if any friend of yours—mind, I don't say who—ever needs a Romany pal to get a pot of luvver, no matter how it was come by, out of the tem—I'm the mush to help a rye like yourself without asking for half of the money. Kushto bok! Kushto ratti!”

And so with an iron grasp of his brawny hand, rough Ben Ward, with his good heart and queer ethics, was gone away under the wavering bridge-lights toward the camp of his people.

A little before ten the next morning wagon after wagon turned from the lane upon the highway that led to the bridge and the town; wagon after wagon until a dozen vans were in motion. Following them came some light covered carts to end the strange train. At the back of the vans horses were tied, while beneath them, their shaggy coats almost touching the swinging camp-kettles, stalked the voiceless dogs of the Gypsies.

On to the bridge, to rumble and creak slowly over its rafters, on into the town goes the train of the Egyptians, differing in no wise from that first caravan as it approached the gates of the City of Paris in times long ago. The swarthy women peer out at those who look strangely upon them, as their ancestors peered from their carts at the wondering people of Paris. The lookers-on do not cross themselves now as of old to ward off the evil eye of the witches, but the children draw back into doorways, and the mothers clasp closely their babies—for the Gypsies are passing.

Mrs. Lee's great van came first, leading the others, resplen-

dent with its gildings, its mirrors, and carvings. The curtains were drawn close, but through them I thought I caught the flash of the pythoness-glance.

Up the principal street of the town to the square moves the vagabond train, then westward until the heavy dust hides it, and the last cart and last horse are gone.

IX

Dull and dead lay the autumn leaves. Over the pasture lands swept the cold winter winds, driving the cattle to huddle close under their shelter of thatch. Gone were all the Egyptians, as the girds were gone, over the hills to the south. The haws were luscious and black on the haw trees that grew by the roadside north of the town. I had gathered a handful and was plunging into the woods to make my way home by paths I had known since my boyhood, when I heard a step on the frozen road and, glancing back through the network of branches, saw a man turn from the highway to follow me into the forest.

"Sharshan!" a voice cried. "Have you forgotten me, pal?"

It was Anselo Lee, but a changed Anselo Lee. There was the same wonderful beauty, only a little worn, a little wilder; the same charm, only deepened a little.

"Well, Anselo?" I asked him.

"It's all over, pal; she is dead."

As he spoke he looked away, while the tears clustered thickly upon the long lashes, and the clasp of his hand tightened upon mine.

"Tell me of it if you can, brother; and let me know how you have come. Are you alone?"

"Alone, my brother. Let us walk on in silence a little, then I will tell you. I came but to tell you. It is strange to me, but since the night we met on the bridge south of the gav I have thought much of you, and since I have left the camp I have longed often for a sight of your face—longed to hear the sound of your voice. I cannot tell why it is, but so it is—and because of it I have come."

The twilight of the woodlands was about us, deepening as the twilight of the day drew on; only the dried oak leaves shook above us in the wintry wind to echo those we rustled with our steps. On and on I led the way, never turning, conscious of his footfall close behind me; on and on until we left the darkening forest to see the amber glory fading from the western sky. Stretches of stubbly fields lay between us and the town, fields where the corn shocks stood like muffled sentinels upon the frozen ground. Over the fields we passed in silence, and so reached the straggling houses and the lighted streets, and my own door.

"When I left you and my people," Anselo began, "when I left you I went eastward. It was not long until I came upon some Gypsies who had seen the Boswells, not long until I found my cousins camped a hundred miles further eastward. My cousins would not at first tell me where they had seen the rauni, pretending they knew nothing of her, but when I reproached them and they saw I was not to be turned aside, they told me she lived in a town further eastward, the name of which they gave me.

"I went on then, thinking Mrs. Lee had sent them word to turn me back; fearing indeed that they had misled me. And so it was. For when I reached the gav I made inquiry and knew that I had been deceived; no one of the name I sought dwelt in the place. All day long I had gone from house to house questioning everyone whom I met, until I knew it was useless. Then the night came on."

"What did you do, brother?"

"What could I do?" He rose, and crossed to the window, looking out into the night, his breast heaving. "I stood there at the edge of the town, tricked and betrayed by my own people! Stood there and knew that she whom I was seeking was waiting for me, thinking perhaps that I was cruel and slow to forgive! Then I set my face to the west again, scarcely resting day or night till I came to the camp of my cousins the Boswells. The bells in the gav nearby were striking midnight when I stopped at the door of Seth Boswell's tent. As I counted the strokes I could hear his heavy breathing; then when the bells were done

ringing, I put by the flaps and went in and knelt by his bed, wakening him from his sleep.

“ ‘Who is it?’ he asked, starting up.

“ ‘But I pushed him back on his pillow, holding him for all his struggles as I would have held a restless child under my hands.

“ ‘Be still!’ I said to his wife, who caught at my arm to tear it away from her husband’s breast. ‘Be still—and answer me—I am Anselo Lee.’

“ ‘She loosened her hold on my arm when she heard the name, and my cousin lay still on his pillow.

“ ‘Why does my cousin come in the blackest hour of the night to the tent of his brother?’ he asked, while I heard the woman whisper to him to answer me—that I was dinnelo and would kill him!

“ ‘I have come, my cousin,’ I said to him, putting my face down close to his face; ‘I have come in the blackest hour of the night because you lied to me in the open light of the day! I have come for no lies, my brother! I have come for the truth! You shall speak it!’

“ ‘I will not,’ he made answer. ‘You are dinnelo—I will not tell you where you can find her—let me go!’

“ ‘But I would not, and we struggled again in the darkness until I overcame him, forcing him back on his pillow, where he lay panting.

“ ‘He will kill you!’ his wife whispered to him. ‘Answer his question! If I rouse the camp he will kill us all—is he not mad?’

“ ‘I will kill you indeed, my cousin, if you who have lied to me do not tell me the truth! Speak no more lies, for I shall know by your voice whether you speak falsely or no. Speak now! I will wait no longer!’

“ ‘I felt him trembling beneath my hand, for he thought me mad, that I would kill him if he did not speak—as indeed I would have done—when I thought of my darling dying without me!

“ ‘I will not!’ he cried again, being a man of great courage.

“ ‘But I put one hand at his throat, and one hand I put over

his heart, and with the one over his heart I pressed downward until he suddenly gasped.

“‘I will tell you——’

“Then he told me the truth.

“I did not wait for water to drink, for food to eat, nor for the light of the day to brighten the droms. I went out from the tan into the night, while all the world seemed open and wide and free, for at last I was going to her!”

He paused, stretching out his arms.

“Oh, brother, a great rapture filled me, a great rapture such as comes to one who is dying of thirst, when he plunges his face deep into the icy waters of the spring he has found in the heart of the frozen desert. I was mad, brother—I ran on and on over the rough road, on and on till my breath would not come and I fell on the frosty turf by the drom’s side.

“I lay there panting, as the dogs lie in the shade and pant when the camp is made after thirty miles up hill and down; lay there looking at the clear stars overhead until a great calm came in the place of the wild joy, until the pain from the running died out of my heart; then I rose and went on steadily until the morning came, every hour happier, for every hour I was nearer to her.

“In two days I reached the gav where she lived. It was evening when I came to the house of her people, evening with the white snow falling softly over the gray walls of the building, over the frozen lake at the foot of the garden. Lights shone in many windows, lamps burned on either side of the door. It was such a great house that I feared to go up to it, thinking after all that she could not love me—that I had made it all out of my fancy, or that I had dreamt it.

“I stood for a long time at the gateway looking in while the falling snow lodged on my coat; the first snow of the season. As I stood so, wondering what I should do, feeling almost as far from her as I had felt before I set out on my journey—as I stood so, a figure came into the long window that opened down to the ground, and all the light fell on her yellow hair. It was my kamli.

“Her hands touched the glass of the window, her cheek

was pressed close against it. I knew she was looking out into the night, waiting, watching, thinking of me! All the doubt left my heart, nothing was in my soul but a great passion of rapture and love. . . . In a moment I stood by the window all trembling, as my hand trembles now at the telling. . . . I spoke her name, I held out my arms to her as I stood where the light fell upon me.

"She heard my voice, she saw me—she threw wide the window, she came to my arms as a young wounded bird flies to the nest and falls by its mother. She put her arms close about my neck, then lay still on my breast with her eyes closed, saying no word but my name over and over again, while she pressed her lips to my rough coat, not willing to look in my face nor to kiss me. I don't know how long we stood there with the white of her dress trailing over the white of the snow, but I know that never, never, never were moments so sweet as those moments—never, never were kisses so sweet as those kisses she pressed on my coat!

"We did not speak, we did not move, until the wind shook her yellow hair loose on my shoulder. Then I gathered her into my arms and bore her within the house.

"'Anselo! Anselo!' she whispered, laying her wan cheek close to my dark one. 'Oh, my love, I was waiting for you—I would not die until you came! I was looking for you from the window—all day I have waited for you; I could not see far through the snow, but I knew—I knew you were coming! I knew you would not let me die without saying you pardoned me . . . say that you do . . . say it now—again and again! I dare not look into your face until you have said it! Say it again and again and again!'

"And not until I had told her a hundred times that I pardoned and loved her would she raise her eyes to mine or answer my kisses with kisses. She was so changed, brother—only the gold of her hair, only the deep blue of her eyes were the same. Her voice was but a sweet whisper now, yet I loved her more dearly than ever, and there was only joy in my soul as I held her close in my arms.

"When her people came, as they soon did, hearing her

voice, they wondered to see me, but let me stay, knowing it was her wish; and were kind to me in their cold way because of the love she bore me.

"The next morning my kamli could not rise from her bed, so I went to sit by her, playing on her guitar all the old songs I had taught her, while she lay with her white face close to the edge of the pillow, her eyes watching me. Sometimes she would sing with me, but so softly that the sound of the strings almost hid the sound of her voice.

"Oh, those were sweet days, brother, sweet to me who was free now to love her, sweet, too, to her, who was free now to be loved! We spoke but once of the past and our parting, but once of the future. The past had held sorrow, the future was all despair! We lived in the moments and hours that we had—we made years of our days, filling them full of our love, full of the glory of living!

"‘Anselo,’ she whispered one day, drawing me closer to her, her frail hand resting on mine. ‘Anselo, we have lived in the golden days—I have lived in the castles I built in my childhood; there is not time now to linger, but the best thing life can give has been mine, and I am content. I have dwelt in the golden days I had dreamt of . . . with you.’ She raised her hands to cover my eyes, for tears had come into them at her words. ‘When the golden days pass, and I have gone alone into a far country, and you have turned back into the ways of this old world, you will remember how sweet the time was together. Lean nearer—lay your face close to mine—closer—closer . . . I love you, Anselo——’

"She was still for a moment, then she whispered, trembling a little:

"‘I think I am dying—call to them—I should be frightened if your hands did not hold mine so closely! Yet I must go alone——’

"The others came and wept over her, and wondered at me as I sat as I always did, holding her hands and smiling into her eyes to give her strength for the journey. When she had kissed them all, with some whispered word of affection, she turned wearily to me, a faint smile lighting her tired face.

“ ‘I have come to the end of the sweet golden days——’

“Smiling, her head drooped back on the pillow, her yellow hair rich with the last light of the sun that sank into the west as she died.”

For a long while he stood looking out from the window at the pale moonlight that fell through the bare boughs of the maples, dimming the lights of the neighboring windows, sparkling on the frost-laden lawns.

“That is all, brother,” he said, turning to me, looking again into the fire. “I knew no more of what happened, only that they gave me a little picture of her, set with pearls, that hung on a chain; and were kind to me in the midst of their own grief.” His voice broke. “Oh, brother, I have tried to turn back into the ways of the world as she said I must turn—but I cannot! I am as one stricken down in the midst of the day, as one without hope—the joy of life has gone out, as she has gone out of the world! I shall never see her again—she has gone to too high a heaven——”

As he spoke he turned slowly from me.

“Aye, pal, mandy knows what you would pen, but there is no comfort in it. Only the great God could give me my kamli, and He never gives back the dead. . . . Only He could show me her face by the hedges, wherever I look, but He will not, for my people blasphemed Him over a thousand years ago and He will not forgive them—we are to wander and never to rest! I will take up my penance, and maybe for her sake who loved me so well the great God will show me her face over the hedges as I jal on the droms. Maybe for her sake He will open the gates of the high heaven when my penance is done that I may go through them to her——”

I held out my hands to detain him. He took them, pressed them, and, smiling sadly, was gone from the room and the house.

OUT FROM LYNN

LEWIS WORTHINGTON SMITH

WHEN I came down the road to Lynn
The surf was beating loud.
Across the sea a ship came in,
Each sail a clinging shroud.
I stood upon the windy hill,
The vagrant heart within me still.
The world was larger to my view,
That moment, than my boyhood knew.

When I put out to sea from Lynn
The tide was dropping down.
I saw the evening lights begin
To glint out in the town.
Straining my eyes across the night,
I watched them till they vanished quite.
My father's house, the day before,
Had seemed as distant as the shore.

When I was out of sight of Lynn
I caught the seaman's tread.
I had a hole to stow me in
And hard boards for my bed.
Like one enchanted, through my work
I watched the stars out in the murk,
Above and in our wake of foam,
The changeless stars I knew at home.

When I go back some day to Lynn,
I know the street that leads
To country lanes I loitered in
Before my manhood's needs.
I shall not mind the buffets then,
The earnest give and take of men,
If some one stands within the door,—
If some one stands—I ask no more.