

# THE SILVER THREAD.\*

By Lieut. John Lloyd,

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## SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS ALREADY PUBLISHED.

JOHN STANDISH has come from New York to the lively Arizona town of Tombstone. He is a young mining engineer, and has been summoned by the owners of a large silver mine, the Lady Jane, to save their property from a threatened influx of water. The Silver Thread is another important mine, close to the Lady Jane, and its reputed owner is Mr. Halloran. Halloran and his friend Croft, who is a banker in Tombstone, and to whom Halloran is heavily in debt, view Standish with hostility. They suspect him of designs upon the Silver Thread, as to the rightful ownership of which there is a secret shared by Croft and Halloran, and connected in some way with an old uncle of Standish.

In Halloran's daughter, Katherine, Standish recognizes the girl whom he had met the previous summer. She had been a belle in New York society, living there with her aunts, the Misses May, and going by their name. Standish had loved her, she had promised to marry him, and then had gone away without a word, leaving him no clue to her whereabouts. It is all a puzzle to Standish; he does not know what has come between them, or what his present relations with her should be.

Croft is also, in his supercilious way, an admirer of Miss Halloran, and he speedily entertains a vague jealousy of Standish. He intercepts a note that the young engineer sends her, and his jealousy becomes bitter hatred. He tells Katherine that Standish has come to Tombstone to steal away her father's property, the Silver Thread. This is done as Croft and she return from a visit to the Lady Jane, where she has seen Standish at work.

From the mine Standish goes to the house of Mr. Torrance, superintendent of the Lady Jane. There, at the lunch table, young Jack Torrance takes offense at a hinted rebuke of his friendship for a girl named Fanny de Vere, a singer at the Pretty-by-Night saloon. He leaves the table, and when Standish follows and speaks to him, Jack Torrance answers hotly.

## X.

THERE is something in the rush of the West which ages. Men live not by years, but by events; and Standish had aged in the weeks of living since he came to the little border town where nervous life was crowded into every hour.

As he looked at young Jack Torrance, his anger sputtering from the end of his tongue, unable to keep in his indignant retaliation, Standish felt years older. Jack was a child—a child who was not to be considered seriously, a spoiled child in danger of having his last valued toy taken away from him;

and Standish had a tolerant elderly brother's feeling for the impolitic, passionate boy. In Jack's own mind he had delivered an insult which could only be followed by bloodshed, and he waited with the courage which was in him for Standish's words.

"Did Miss de Vere tell you that I had come 'sneaking' out here to steal a mine? I must say that that story merely corroborates my former opinion that she is not the proper sort of young woman to assist you in a judgment of your father's friends."

"Who in hell asked you for your opinion?"

Standish had no time to answer, for with a bustle that was evidently intended to interrupt the hot words, Mr. and Mrs. Torrance walked out on the veranda.

Mrs. Torrance acting like anybody else, or doing the ordinary thing, was an unnatural Mrs. Torrance. Now she sat down in one of the straw chairs and talked about the clear atmosphere, the purple canyons of the distant mountains, and all the setting of the drama. Mrs. Torrance was never designed to take the part of the chorus.

Standish and her husband talked briskly, but they all felt unnatural. Into her heart had come the first pang of jealousy for her boy. He was looking toward another woman, and that woman was not of her choosing. Had it been the most beautiful and charming girl in the world, it would have been hard enough, but *this* girl! This singer in a Tombstone saloon!

It was by the merest chance that Mrs. Torrance had discovered where Jack's fancy was wandering. It was not the custom in Tombstone for family friends to go solemnly to the head of a house and give him information and counsel concerning his family. Arizona was the land where the divine right of doing as you pleased was carried to its last length.

There was a story that a new mining engineer, fresh from a Presbyterian Sunday

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school in an Ohio town, had gone to Mr. Torrance with the story that his assistant had two wives.

"Dear me!" that stout and placid gentleman had said. "I'll raise his salary."

Mrs. Torrance had gone up on the reservoir hill one afternoon botanizing. There were few things Mrs. Torrance did not try. The Arizona wild flowers had fascinated her, and she hunted down the original wild potato of the Huachuca mountains, and filled a herbarium that was one of her prides. Mrs. Torrance was full of resources and enjoyment of life.

The reservoir was a great tank sunk partly into the hilltop. A stream of water poured into it with a sound delightfully sweet to ears used to the sounds of a desert all day and all night. People from the town walked up there only to hear it. The most practical people can become imaginative when they are away from home, and from all their early environment. The unconscious clinging of their minds to early memories creates pictures, and they eagerly seek anything that creates them.

Men stopped on the rocky hillside, and looked out over the dusty plains, arid, dotted with the gaunt arms of the yucca and the mesquite, and hearing the tinkle, tinkle, of the falling water, were carried back to the brook that ran under the thick leaved trees on the farm back in the States. The plain turned to rolling meadow land, and the jar and rumble of the distant stamp mill to the sound of wagons crossing the "culvert" on the country road.

Lovers used to stroll around this path, which led the longest way between the house of the Thread and the Lady Jane; and when Mrs. Torrance had seen a young man in a Mexican hat leaning over until he hid the face of a girl in a white gown, she had only smiled and gone on. Now and then she looked up from her digging, and saw them still sitting there lost in talk, oblivious of the hot sunshine. And then they had arisen to start away; and as the young man brushed the dust from the skirts the girl was shaking out, Mrs. Torrance saw that the two were her Jack and the de Vere from the Pretty-by-Night Saloon!

Her first impulse was that of the tigress. She wanted to go to that girl and tear her to pieces, and take her boy away from her! What right had this shameless creature to touch her boy? The very sight of her was defiling.

And then gathering up the specimens of ground jasmine and red cactus she had collected, Mrs. Torrance went home. It

was two days before she told her husband. He was not inclined to look upon it so seriously. "Boys will be boys!" he had said comfortably. "There is nothing bad about de Vere." And then he had seen the look of repressed agony on his wife's face, and had gone to her with comfort and consolation, and promised her that he would do anything in his power to stop it. "But, Polly, my dear," he said, "you must be sensible. The way to make this thing real is to recognize its reality. Send Jack away, and he will write to her. Ten visits will not mean as much to him as one letter. A boy only begins to value a thing when there is a suspicion that it is to be taken away from him. Let him alone for a little while. He is a healthy youngster, who has had a good bringing up, and he is *ours*, and he can't go very far wrong."

But it had been impossible for Mrs. Torrance to keep her knowledge entirely from Jack, and, as his father had said, the whole matter had been given a new dignity in his eyes by the veiled opposition to it. Jack had grown impatient of certain little restraints which had never been put upon him before. His mother had kept him at home all one evening playing cribbage with her in the parlor.

He had looked at her wonderingly two or three times and then asked her if she had a headache. He was willing to amuse her if she was ill, but a suspicion of restraint sent him flying. And Jack had begun to set himself and Miss de Vere on a pedestal as a pair of martyrs, and he was beginning also to think it was his duty as a chivalrous man to protect his companion.

Jack still sat sullenly on the veranda railing. He had a little package of cornhusk leaves in his pocket, made for him, oh fickle Jack! by the pretty Mexican girl who lived behind the priest's house in Charleston. And the tobacco which he shook into them, one by one, came from a pouch a pretty cousin back in New York had given him. He was waiting for Standish to go that he might follow him and finish the quarrel. His chief cause of offense against Standish was that he had made him quarrel with him. Standish had settled himself as a good fellow, and Jack's tastes were clean and good, and hung about "good fellows"; but Mr. Torrance had business with Standish and took him off. Standish, to Jack's disgust, went without a word or look in his direction, or any tacit acknowledgment that there was anything to settle between them.

Then there came between the boy and his mother an embarrassment which was new

and painful to both of them. How could they talk with this shadow between them? Perhaps if Mrs. Torrance had had less strength, had been like some weak women who cry and beg of their men kind, she might have so filled Jack's heart that he would have done anything she asked him, and then—have ceased to respect her as his comrade forever. But Mrs. Torrance did not rule by those eternal feminine means. They talked about all sorts of trivial things; of the new cinches for the kicking black mare, who had a playful habit of jumping through her saddle, or bucking until her rider's nose bled, and he tumbled off exhausted; of Mrs. Savage, who was the most conspicuous woman in the camp, and who felt personally aggrieved at the appearance of Miss Halloran; and of Captain Adair's new wife, who only last year had been Mrs. Hecker.

Jack and his mother were given to mild gossip—if it could be called gossiping when Mrs. Torrance expressed her very vivid opinions of men and things, and Jack laughed at her.

"Mother's code," was one of Jack's jokes. This afternoon Mrs. Torrance kept on with talk about Fort Huachuca and its people. Captain Adair had just come back with his wife, and there was merrymaking which had called for Mrs. Torrance's assistance. Adair was very busy, and his wife dreaded Indians. They had hoped to be transferred to some Eastern station, until Adair's company seemed likely to take the field, at which news he had hastened back.

"I don't wonder Mrs. Adair fears Indians, after all those frights; but then she can't be a woman of *very* great feeling, or she couldn't have married again only one short year after poor Mr. Hecker's death. Such a splendid big fellow! Worth two of Adair." Which shows that Mrs. Torrance was an entirely fallible reader of human nature.

"Constancy is something you seldom see," she moralized.

"And to be altogether admired sometimes," Jack said, with some bitterness.

Standish went over the ground in the Lady Jane, and began to make preparations for closing down part of the mine. The water was steadily rising, and the pumps were being made ready. It would be months before that part of the mine could be opened again. He did not go up to dinner. He took some sandwiches from a miner's pail and sat down on a candle box and ate them, then going back to his work. The men had taken a liking to Standish, and respected him enough to see no

shadow of condescension in his frank acceptance of their frankly offered hospitality. The man whose dinner he shared had owned mines of his own up in Colorado, and was a star miner, because he had at one time been a partner with Flood, O'Brien, and Mackay, when that bonanza trio were in the early stages of their fortune.

"I tell you, this hain't minin', Mr. Standish. This is just pickin' away at the ground. Up there in Virginia City, they've dug down so deep that they've neared the *infernals*. The men work for ten minutes and then run into a cool room, a kind of a beer cellar room, until they kin cool off. But I reckon the devil'll turn the heat off of that corner when the Thread gets down so low. He wouldn't play it low down on a partner."

"You men seem to have a prejudice against the Thread owners. Mr. Torrance manages to get along with them well enough."

"Torrance can get along with anybody so long's they mind their own business, and mighty few monkey with Torrance. But"—the man leaned over—"I worked in the Thread for a while, and unless I miss my reckoning there's going to be some trouble between the Thread and the Lady Jane one of these days. There's a lode that comes mighty nigh joinin' 'em, an' they ain't no Siamese twins, neither. But there ain't no use in tellin' Torrance. He ain't listenin' to any talk, even from men that's had ten times his experience."

Standish listened because every scrap of information concerning the Thread was interesting to him, but he knew how miners like this one try to interest a stranger with stories, or mysteries. They catch the flying talk of the camp and translate it into a semblance of their own thoughts and ideas, which are always highly colored. That night Standish came up on top about midnight. The shifts changed at two o'clock, so that the place outside was deserted now. Away off over the hills he could hear the cries of the coyotes, coming mournfully. The night was brilliant with stars, and the lights of the low, closely built little town looked as if a nest of them had fallen on the plain.

The big timber yard surrounded by the little houses was silent. The great log that Jacoby had been dressing the day before lay white and smooth in the starlight, gleaming as though a frost had touched it.

A tenderness for the big, honest fellow who did his work so well, and who was so brave, struck at Standish's heart. He won-

dered if there was anything he could do for Jacoby—and in thinking he felt amiable. Down in the long house where Nelly kept her boarders there would be lights all night, and men lounging about the door. Nelly's was as comfortable as any saloon in town, and when a man had left a wife and children somewhere back home, while he came down into the camp to make some money, Nelly's was a good place to save it. She would walk into the Pretty-by-Night and drink a glass with her boys, to the success of any of their numerous projects, but not so much as a glass of beer was allowed inside her house. "It's a glass o' root beer you'll be drinkin'," Nelly would say severely, "that's costin' ye only a penny. I'll have no drunkards about me."

Standish strolled slowly along the path under the hill.

There was a little cabin high up where the watchman lived who stayed by the reservoir. It was built of the rough stones of the hillside, and often Nelly and her countrymen had looked up at it with homesick longings, remembering the little stone cabins in County Down, and about there, where many of them were born.

Tonight there was a glance of light from the square window, which disappeared as Standish looked at it.

To him there came the message in the song of the dripping water. The quick thunder showers which came up in the mornings were upon the country now, and the white stars of the low growing, fragrant white jasmine were carpeting the ground.

Standish sat down. A half mile from the place where he sat he could see the lights of the house of Halloran, and could even hear the clang of the bell that signaled for the hoisting in the works beyond.

Halloran's house was lighted all over. It seemed to Standish that he could see a shadowy white figure in the darkness of the great veranda. Even from there it made his heart beat a little.

Back into his heart, his life, Katherine had come, if there ever had been an instant when she had been absent. She filled his thoughts, his mind. He was sitting where a clump of the great, spiny, fleshy leaves of the mesal hid him from sight on one side, and their shadow threw him—dressed as he was in the dust colored corduroy he wore in the mine—into an indistinguishable mass against the ground.

There is something so assertive about the big plant, that its edges cutting the atmosphere attract the attention, leaving little

for the surroundings of its roots. There had been a noise of scrambling down the hillside, but Standish had not noticed it. All day long his ears were filled by the clang of bells and the sound of falling rock. They had come to be as unnoticed as the working sounds of nature; but when the name of Halloran struck his ear, it pierced his consciousness.

In a second he had defined the speakers. It was two miners going down toward Nelly's, or rather one was going toward Nelly's, and the other had stopped to say a few words to him. Standish could see their figures clearly. One of the men he knew—a bulldog looking miner who had some prestige among the men as a leader. He was serious and sullen. An undisciplined mind is always more impressed by seriousness, by a species of heaviness, even when it does not comprehend its reasons, than by a clear, light statement. Heard was given to showing the men their sorrows and their wrongs. Mr. Torrance had not discharged him from the Lady Jane, but he had made him overseer of a little mine over in the Bisbee district to get him out of the way, and here he was back again. The first time Standish had seen him was the night of his own arrival in the camp, dining in the Jeunesse Dorée restaurant with Miss de Vere. Then Heard had sullenly eaten the salad the girl made, while his companion talked about what the union might do. Heard was said to be the head of the union.

The miners' voices now were almost in Standish's ear.

"They are going to close down part of the Lady Jane, and they are going to reduce the wages from four to three dollars a day. When they do, every man goes out."

"They won't leave the Lady Jane. The men who work there say they know all about Torrance's business; that he would pay them more if it wasn't for this trouble about the water, and that when it is over they will go back to four a day. You can't do nothing with Torrance's men!"

"Then by —, we can stop the mine if we have to kill every one of 'em. It's been done before and it can be done again! That hoist"—he threw his big hand toward the roof of the works, visible in the clear starlight—"will burn."

"I suppose every man would leave Halloran."

"To the last one."

The other man's voice sank. "Heard," he said, "Halloran's goin' to give in to the men. He's got to work that mine. I know Halloran. I've knowed him these ten years.

Halloran's nervous about something. There's something up with him. He goes down in the Thread every day and picks around with a hammer, and looks like he was scared to death. He's fixin' the Thread to sell, or he's hunting a new lead. Anyhow, he ain't lookin' for trouble just now. He'll knuckle."

"They'll *all* knuckle!"

"Well, so long." And with a wave of his big hand the man with the information went on toward Nelly's, leaving Standish with something to think about.

# XI.

THE man Heard was in town for a purpose, and he went about it. He left the down town house where he was stopping and went up to Nelly's, but that resolute Irish woman refused to allow him inside the door.

"Go along where you're wanted," she admonished him, "and that's not after bein' inside these walls."

But the men had come out and listened to him, and most of them had laughed. They believed in Torrance.

In this world a stream is often turned by the merest straw. Away back there in the beginning men do not look at the trifling deviation which comes in the current, but presently there is a new channel worn, and the old way is dry and empty. So it happened now.

Heard went down after his rebuff at Nelly's to see Croft. There had grown up in the minds of the men an idea which they enjoyed turning over and over, that as they were in Halloran's power so was he in Croft's. They made a point, when it was possible, of ostentatiously consulting Croft about Halloran's business, and Croft made no pretense of keeping his partner's dignity by sending them on to him.

Heard asked the loungers about the saloons, and the man in the Papago Store across the street, what time he would be likely to find Croft at home, in that aimless way which seems to be a part of the uncalculating mind. He could have found out in an instant from any of Croft's servants, but he enjoyed hearing that the man he was going to see ate what he called his breakfast at midday, and that about that hour he could be seen. His errand was pretty well known about the camp when he climbed the steps to the long suite of rooms.

Melton, Croft's English valet, met him at the landing with a look of inquiry.

"Is Croft in?" Heard asked.

Melton despised the big booted and dingy miners, but he had discovered that there were some of them to whom he must be more than respectful, and Heard spoke as if conscious of belonging to this class.

"I do not know. If you will walk into the reception room I will see." And with a flourish he flung open the door. There was a dark, evil looking face on a long neck which seemed fairly to shoot up from a pile of white linen just beyond the writing table, and Gooley, Croft's Chinese cook, glared at the intruders, his eyes a pair of dull and remorseless beads in his tight, sallow skin. As he arose, even Melton, who was accustomed to him, and Heard, who had lived in camps with Chinese for twenty years, and who utterly despised them, as is the unwritten law of the West, were startled. He was over six feet tall, and his head was snowy white where the hair had been shaven back to his cue. His face was leathery, opium dried, and his mouth a black line when he was not showing his yellow teeth. The jade bracelets on his lean arms clanked as he moved his hands. One he was drawing stealthily up into his sleeve. It made Melton shiver, as Gooley well knew. Once he had seen him take a thin dagger from up that sleeve somewhere. "Is Mr. Croft in?" Melton asked meekly.

"Me no know," the Chinaman said. "Me clean rooms. Dust table. Empty basket. He come back breakfast." And he turned and walked out.

"He is honly a 'eathen," Mr. Melton said contemptuously, "but now and agin he do start a man. Will you wait here, sir?"

"No," Heard said. "I guess I'll go and see Halloran," and he lumbered out. Some way he didn't feel like staying in the house with that tall creature who looked like a devil out of a story book. He would come some time when Croft was home, and he started out on a walk to the Thread.

Gooley came back as he left, and finished emptying the waste basket. There was an evil smile that wrinkled his cheeks as he worked over the papers. They were all torn into small bits, but that was nothing to Gooley's Chinese ingenuity. Pasting scraps of paper between or on glass was one of his favorite occupations, seemingly. It was popularly supposed that Gooley could speak very little English, understand less, and read it not at all. Considering this, his enjoyment of Croft's correspondence was unusual.

Heard did not take a horse to ride out to Halloran's house. He was more accus-

tomed to the meek and patient burro as a means of getting about, and lacking that he walked, plodding patiently along through the white dust that no morning shower had come to allay.

On the way he passed one of the great ore wagons—three enormous boxes, as large almost as a freight car, drawn by twenty four mules. The ore was being taken to the stamp mill in town. Heard stopped the driver. There was a Mexican wood team just behind that also stopped, but nobody minded inconveniencing a "Greaser."

"What you gettin'?" Heard said to the driver. He had never seen him before, but the formality of an introduction was not necessary. They recognized each other as brothers.

"Three," the man said.

"When was you cut down?"

"Last week."

"Well, you'll hear from us." And the Mexican was allowed to come on. Heard strode up to the wide front door of the Halloran house. There were Mexican pillars there, with great ollas, the red Mexican water pots, holding palms. The hall was wide and as dusky as any place could be on such a blinding day as this. The size and beauty of the place impressed him not at all. He had seen hotels and saloons, and the gaudiness of these, as they are known in the West, meant grandeur to him. Art meant for him a picture of the uncovered human figure.

Katherine was sitting in the hall, gumming feathers to a card to make pictures, after a fashion she had learned from a Mexican Indian woman the day before. She arose as Heard stopped in the doorway. He involuntarily took off his hat to her white clad ladyhood.

"Is—your pa in, miss?" he asked awkwardly.

"I think so. Do you want to see him?"

"Ef he's about."

"I will see," she said, and went across the polished floor to the library door.

Halloran was lying on the broad leather lounge, fast asleep. The case with the three big cut glass bottles stood on a table near by, the silver bar unlocked. Even thus early in the day, poor Halloran had begun to find what comfort he could. He breathed heavily. Katherine went over and touched him on the shoulder, and he opened his eyes and looked up at her with a gaze that hurt her. It was like the expression in the eyes of some animal that expects to be struck.

"Father," she said, "there is a man here who wants to see you."

"Where's Croft?"

"It isn't Mr. Croft he wants to see; it is *you*. He asked for you."

"Is—is it that young man?"

"What young man?"

He had snatched at her dress, and she let him hold it as he turned. "That—Standish."

"No, it isn't," and her face grew crimson. She could not help feeling that her father must know something of her love for Standish, and be waiting for the young man to come and speak to him. It was dreadful. Who could have told him? Perhaps everybody knew it. Some one here might have had friends down there on the coast last year. And she had asked him to forgive her, and he had saved her life, and had said nothing! It all went through her brain with that one rush of blood. It seemed an hour before she spoke again, but it was only an instant. "It's an old miner—or a miner. He says he wants to speak to you."

"Well, ask him to go over to the office. Or no—somebody will be coming in. Just ask him in here, won't you?"

Heard slouched into the room and sat gingerly down on the edge of a chair, while Halloran hastened to pour out a glass of whisky, which the man drank at one gulp before he opened his mouth. Then he cleared his throat and began:

"There's goin' to be trouble in this camp," he announced. "The men ain't goin' to stand all this litigation about their lots—nor they ain't goin' to have their wages cut. I come up to see what you had to say about it."

A year or two ago Halloran knew how he would have answered that speech. He would have laughed in the man's face, made a joke or two, and told him to go ahead and make prophecies until he was black in the face. But with the wave of unpopularity and trouble, Halloran was losing his grip. He didn't know how to fight averted faces. Even the loss of the cheery greetings of the miners hurt him, although he had never cared what became of them personally. He had always been popular, good luck or bad luck, until lately, and he did not know how to live without it. It seemed to him that it was all Croft's fault. Croft was responsible for everything. He had taken everything into his own hands, and now he might straighten out this tangle. He never would have bothered about the town site. Nobody ever accused

him of being grasping. He had always wished everybody to have everything they wanted, just as long as he had everything that he wanted. He was aggrieved and he was afraid of trouble, and he wished in his heart that Croft was dead.

"I haven't been well, lately," was what he finally said. "You had better see Mr. Croft."

"Are you going to cut the men's wages in the Thread as Torrance did in his mines? The Thread ain't Croft's, it's yours."

"I haven't thought much about it. I'll think about it. I'll do what's right," and with that Mr. Heard had to be content.

After he had gone, Katherine heard a queer muffled sound coming from the library. Her father was lying face downward on the lounge, his head buried in the cushions, sobbing. She had never seen a man cry before. She had never lived in the house with a man before, nor had she ever known her father. It seemed to her a solemn and an awful thing. She could know nothing of the nerves worn to rags with heat, and brandy, and fret; of the loneliness of a man who had always led an active life, full of interest, of a certain kind of light boastfulness, of an adulation that was as incense to his heart, who now was left entirely to himself on the brink of ruin; with old scores coming up to be settled. Halloran asked himself over and over what he had ever done to merit this.

When Katherine knelt down beside him and put her arm around his shoulder, he put out his own arm and held her close to him.

"My poor, poor child!" he said brokenly. "What have I done for you?"

"Father, what is the matter? Tell me what is the matter."

He couldn't tell her that he was crying because he was lonely and miserable, and wanted to be a great man again, swaggering about the camp; that he by his weakness and folly was a tool in the hands of a stronger man. No! As he would have said, he had a little self respect left.

"It is trouble, trouble! It is more than I can bear. It is breaking my heart to bring upon you poverty—and—" Halloran's voice fell—"disgrace." He liked to be dramatic when he had an audience, and if he could not play melodrama as the hero, he could be the victim.

"There is no disgrace in poverty, and, besides, Aunt Mary would gladly take me back with her, if it is I who worry you."

"It is not that!" He sat up and shook his head, the tears still on his cheeks. "By a mistake, a criminal neglect upon my

part, a paper was never drawn up transferring part of the Thread to me. The man who may make the claim is here, and already has begun to show his hand." This was pure imagination upon Mr. Halloran's part, but he pushed himself into believing it. "I am in debt to Croft. I shall not have"—his voice broke again—"a dollar in the world!"

"Oh father, do not!" Katherine's distress almost controlled her. "Is there nothing to be done?"

An inspiration came to Halloran. He could not have arranged this, and he would not have wished to. He hated Croft, and he wanted to make him suffer, but there was a way out of his difficulties, and here it had been put before him—or at least the thread that led out of the labyrinth had been shown him, if it did not snap in his fingers.

"The one thing, the one sacrifice, I could not ask of my daughter," he said as he stroked her head. "I know you love me, but I could not ask you to give your young life to make the road bright for me. Wealth will come to you, by and by, through other channels. My life will be short at best."

"What is it?"

Halloran hesitated for a little. "Croft loves you," he said finally.

Katherine arose to her feet. "He has not told me so."

"But he has told me," her father said, and as she left the room the tears were all gone.

Katherine stopped for a moment, and looked through the piazza pillars up toward the Lady Jane.

"Persecuting my father! Ready to steal a mine from a man whose crime was generous carelessness! And I asked you to forgive me! And you never said one word!"

## XII.

IF Mr. Jack Torrance had not had his temper soured, things might have been different.

Miss de Vere lived at Nelly's this warm weather, and Jack, though he hated himself for hurting his mother, could no more keep away from there than a moth can keep away from a candle. The de Vere would sing nothing but hymns in the saloon on Sunday nights, and she would not sing late. She said that she had been well brought up, and she knew what was proper. So after the men who did not happen to be at work—everything went on just as usual on Sunday night at Tombstone—had joined in the

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strains of some of the old songs they could remember having heard in white churches on New England hillsides, Miss de Vere, escorted by Jack, had strolled back home over the hill. They went slowly, to the music of the stamp mill, the rattle of ore falling into bins, and the clang of bells, with underneath it all the rising and falling song of the water as it fell into the reservoir.

"Let's sit here a little," Jack said as they came under it. "There are people down there on Nelly's step. It is so pretty here."

She sat down beside him, glad, perhaps, to have somebody tell her what to do in even so trivial a thing.

"I used to live in a place where I could hear the water all the time. There was a little waterfall just behind our house, back home."

"Where is 'back home'?" Jack asked. He had often wondered about the girl, as everybody had who had stopped to think at all, and they were a great many.

"Back in Ohio. I come from Jackson County, in Ohio. Were you ever over there? Did you ever see the big black rocks that hem you in and seem to choke you?" She put her hands up to her throat.

"I never was in Ohio," Jack said.

"I never tell them anything about it here. My father was an exhorter, a Methodist exhorter, and he thought I was an imp of darkness when I said I wanted to get away from there, and sing on the stage. He whipped me, when I was fourteen, for saying it. When I was fifteen my mother died, and I ran away—with a circus concert company." She had spoken with sorrow, but now she laughed. "I thought that that was 'singing on the stage'! I am not educated for the stage. I know I couldn't do anything."

"You could do anything! Your face is magnificent," Jack said impulsively.

"Magnificence uneducated."

"Let me educate you. I have plenty of money. I will give you anything."

The girl arose, and there was a smile, half of self contempt and more of sorrow, on her face.

"I have heard that before," she said dryly. "Suppose we go down to the house. There are rough men down there, but they do not insult a girl like me."

"How can you think such things?" Jack said hotly. He was holding her hand. "I love you. I love you better than all the world. I want you to marry me—only I know I am not good enough. I am only a boy."

"Yes," she said, "you are only a boy."

But he would not let her go. You shall say something to me, do not hate me!" Poor Jack, his original! He put her hand to his forehead and held it there. The witchery of their youth, was upon them. They were oblivious to everything except each other. They did not hear, in all the sounds about, a heavy footstep that came up from below on its way to the stone cabin.

Jack leaned his face over to the girl's. "I love you," he said again. Their eyes looked into each other's under the moonlight, their faces came closer and closer, and he kissed her.

A big hand was laid upon his shoulder, and he was thrown aside.

"I'll teach a young whelp like you to insult an honest girl," Heard said furiously. "You miserable son of a sneaking father!"

Jack fell against the rock, and his hand went instinctively toward the revolver in his belt. The girl snatched at it, standing between the two men.

"What is it to you, Martin Heard?" she said—panted. "What business is it of yours? You know that I would not—laugh!"

"You needn't say nothing, but if you encourage this lying young libertine—more shame to you!—you are not the honest girl the camp has thought you."

Jack made a dive for him, fury in his heart; but his slender frame was as nothing in the hands of the burly miner. He was flung off again, and this time he was stunned as he fell.

"Go!" the girl said wildly. "He will kill you as soon as he sees you again;" and Heard went on.

He walked into Nelly's this time without asking her leave, and he had something to say to the men.

"Are we," he asked, "to go on working for, and taking the word of, men whom we support in idleness to ruin our woman kind?" And then he gave a version of the scene on the hillside, which sent half a dozen of the men flying toward the door. They met Miss de Vere, calm and cool, just coming in, and they walked back without saying a word, while she went up stairs and into her room.

### XIII.

WHEN Heard finally saw Croft, the interview lasted only five minutes.

"We are closing down part of the Thread, and that part where we are working is dangerous, for I am constantly fearing indi-

cations of water, as it came into the Lady Jane," Croft said. "We are keeping only a small staff of picked men, and to these we shall pay five dollars a day. It is worth that to have the trust and confidence of the men, and to know that we can keep them steadily at work in these troubled times."

Heard went away only half satisfied. Croft had certainly "knuckled," but there was nothing in the keen, impassive, dark face to signify that he was doing anything save his own will. Heard left him feeling that Croft knew what he was about, and that the union could not get the best of him, whatever happened. Then, too, it was small compensation to the men who were discharged, to know that the little handful left in the mine were receiving five dollars a day.

Most of Heard's work lay among Torrance's men. He set them against Jack. The singer was a favorite with them. She was one of them, and yet she never allowed a man to come near her; and here Heard's fury arose. He had asked her to marry him, a month or two before, and she had cut him off with short words. And now he had seen her kissing that Torrance boy!

His indignation poured from his mouth. The owner of the Pretty-by-Night encouraged the trouble. It advertised his place. The de Vere sang her songs, and went her way unmolested. Jenny tried to tell her of some of the things that were being said by the speakers after she left at night, and something of the buzzing talk that was inciting the men to riot, but she would not listen.

And of late Jenny had seemed to have something upon her own mind. She had accessions of feverish gaiety, and then she would go about for whole days sorrowful and hollow eyed. Her life made her turn night into day, but that was true of almost everybody in the camp; and yet instead of sleeping through the long, hot afternoons, sometimes Jenny disappeared. Nelly and Miss de Vere talked about it. Nelly never talked about anything unless her opinion was asked, and then she gave it sparingly. She said she had heard of men who had grown rich minding their own business.

"It is because Jacoby has gone down into the Cananeas for a month," Nelly said. "He's thinkin' he'll make a strike down there. It was Torrance put him on to it."

"Jacoby's a good fellow," Fanny de Vere said, "and knows how to keep a flighty thing like Jenny; but I didn't believe she would be so moody over his going

away. She seems lost all the time. She never has a word for the boys any more, but I believe she is getting prettier than ever."

The next morning, in the cool hour just before sunrise, when they were taking their first rest, Jenny came into Fanny's room and crept into bed beside her, putting her white arms up under the crisp, short hair, which sometimes gave the elder girl the look of a clever boy.

"Fanny," she said, "if you were to marry Jack Torrance—and I know it isn't anything but marry with you—would people forget that you used to sing in a saloon?"

"No."

"Not if you had a great deal of money, and went away to foreign countries, where there was nobody that had ever known you before?"

"You couldn't ever travel far enough away to get out of the lights of the Pretty-by-Night. They'd follow wherever you went. But that needn't make any difference to you, Jenny. Jacoby knows and understands. He hasn't any people to throw him aside because he marries you, and even if he does make a big strike down in Mexico, and have money like other mine owners, why, you have been brought up the same way. There isn't any reason why you should not be as happy as the day is long. Don't you worry. It is only when a girl like us marries a man who ought to marry a girl that's been brought up sheltered in her own home, that there's trouble to pay. We know things, we've seen things, that haven't hurt us, but they'd hurt a lady; and those people can't understand that we can know them, and yet be good. But it don't make any difference how much good old Jacoby makes. You're all right."

"Jacoby?" Jenny said, as though she were thinking of something else. And then, "oh, yes!" she went on dreamily.

De Vere patted her shoulder soothingly. "Jacoby will be Jacoby if he makes a million dollars. He will be all right."

"Then ain't you goin' to marry Jack Torrance?"

"No."

"Well, I think you're a fool," Jenny said, and went back to her own bed. "I'm as good as anybody," she added as she went through the door.

After that, she kept more and more to herself. Jacoby sent up a letter every week, and there were rumors that he had made a strike. Down at Nelly's they

laughed good naturedly over Jenny's airs. She seemed to feel superior to all of them.

"Gettin' ready to build a house like Halloran's," somebody said.

"More likely to buy that one cheap 'fore long," another ventured, but there was a knowing laugh all around.

## XIV.

KATHERINE HALLORAN was restless. She saw on her father's face a look of relief such as had not been there for weeks. He asked her if she could not get somebody to stay with her, some of the Fort people. He wanted to go to San Francisco, he said; but when she suggested going to the Fort herself, he would not hear of it. He wanted her to be there to tell Croft that she would marry him. When that was settled everything would be all right. Croft could manage Standish.

But Croft seemed in no particular hurry. He was building up in Katherine's mind a confidence in him that was new. There was in him a reserve of strength which she was forced to admire; a quiet management of everything and everybody. He did not force himself upon her, but he was always there to do her bidding.

The officers were all in the field, following Indians, except a few married men who had been left at the post; and she was thrown more and more with Croft. Mrs. Savage had gone away for a visit. Mrs. Torrance had no heart for entertaining, and Jack was morose and kept to himself.

One day Croft asked her to go down in the Thread to see a pocket of wire silver that had been struck. She asked Mrs. Torrance to come, and they waited until night. Croft seldom went to the mine at night. The work was under a man who had been in his employ, testing mines that came to him in the way of business, for several years. While Croft's interest in the Thread was nominally trifling, he had come to take almost the entire management of it, upon that fiction of Halloran's health.

The drifts were almost empty tonight, and the ore cars that ran by on their way to the shaft were far between. It was not long before the visitors came to the place where the pocket lay. A blow from a pick had exposed a cavity as large as a kettle drum, filled with threads of silver wire that looked like some dew spangled cobweb. It was the finding of one of these pockets which had given the name to the mine, and had aroused Halloran's cupidity to the extent of taking it for his own.

"You have another formation in the mines that I should like to see," Mrs. Torrance said—"the peacock copper beds."

Croft looked for one instant as though there was an excuse ready on his tongue; but at the mention of the peacock copper he had smilingly assented.

"It is over here in the old part of the mine, quite a little distance away," he said. "Will you care to walk it?"

"I will," Mrs. Torrance answered, "but Katherine——"

"I have seen the peacock copper walls. I will sit here until you come back. You may make me comfortable."

Croft rolled up a miner's coat that was lying near, and made her a cushioned seat on a shelf of rock. Then they went away and left her. She was glad to be left alone. She had a great deal to think of. She sat for an hour, it seemed to her. She wondered if she were a weak woman. Surely no one but a weak woman would be in the position in which she felt herself. She had always believed herself one who was capable of managing affairs; and here everything seemed a hopeless muddle.

They had left her with a candle in her hand, and she was surprised to see how little it had burned, they seemed to have been gone so long. Then simultaneously, in the two vistas of the tunnel, she saw lights—at one end came the rumble of an ore car with a pushing miner, a candle in his hat, and at the other the wavering lights which Mrs. Torrance and Croft held.

A woman's eyes are very sharp sometimes. There was something in the contour of the figure of the coming miner which set Katherine's heart beating. He was in shadow, but she knew every line. Her heart came up into her throat.

It was Standish!

What could he be doing here but spying, seeing what the mine was, whether it would be worth while to push his claim for it all? Her heart froze towards him, but she realized what it would mean for Croft to meet him there, disguised as a miner.

Quick as a flash she arose, dropping her candle, which went out. She went ahead of him, stumbling over the rails almost into Croft's arms.

"Take me out," she said pantingly. "I am suffocating!"

The miner fell silently behind, and Croft did not turn.

As they reached the door of Katherine's home that night, Croft stopped her, and held the hand on his arm.

"I wish," he said, "you would give me

the right to straighten out your father's affairs. They are tangled."

"Yes," she said, "I know."

"I do not ask you to love me now, but that will come. I hope it will come. There is nobody else?"

"No, there is nobody else."

"Then I may tell your father that the matter of money obligation cannot be between us, because our interests are identical. Will you let me do that?"

"Yes," she said.

"Thank you."

He held the hand a moment and then kissed it and turned away. Katherine did not look after him. She did look, long and earnestly, at a white face in her mirror that night.

"I suppose this is life. I shall never tell any one that my faith and trust and love have been uprooted. Perhaps such things come to all women, and they never tell of them. Perhaps all the men and women we think are happy are only miserable creatures, full of sorrow. But Mr. Croft is a kind, honest man. He will straighten out affairs, and he is too calm and cold to deceive me."

Croft climbed the hill with exultation. He had carried his point, and in his gratification he almost forgot another appointment that he had.

He remembered it now, retraced his steps, and went back to the private office in the Thread hoisting works. Like every room where Croft lived, this was luxurious. He had taken Halloran's key, and it was all his own.

It was late. Jenny's dancing at the Pretty-by-Night was over, and de Vere, with her full, flexible voice, was carrying the men on with new songs and old melo-

dies. They could not distrust her when they heard her sing, but they hated the young man with whom her name had been connected. She was theirs. She could call them from anything while she sang.

Standish brought his ore car to the top. Seeing that Croft was gone, he made one more trip below, and then came to the opening of the mine. As he walked away through the echoing building, he heard in the dark the click of a lock, as a key was turned. He stopped still. A door was opened, and then came a whisper.

"Are you there? I am afraid," a woman's voice said.

Standish knew the spot. It was the owner's private office. The speaker struck a match, and looked about timidly. She knew she was alone, and was childishly afraid of the dark. Then she shut the door, but not before Standish had recognized her.

Torrance was waiting for Standish when he came back.

"Well!" he said, as the young man took his seat wearily.

"They are digging for your ore as fast as they can. Croft came over here and went down to see where you were closing up. He had heard of the new lode. That is the secret of the men being turned off. They are looking for your vein."

Torrance and the young man looked into each other's faces.

"Can we prove it?"

"Not in a court of law. But there is another way," Standish said. There was a question in Torrance's eyes to which he already half knew the answer. "When they strike it," Standish went on, "the water will be just behind it. The first blow of the pick that comes through will flood their mine."

*(To be continued.)*

## A WISH.

SWEETER than roses or lilies white,  
Brighter and higher than stars of light,  
Bridging the depths of the deep blue sea,  
Reaching from time to eternity;  
Greater than monarch or conqueror crowned,  
Reaching the wide world round and round,  
'Tis a gem from the crowns above!  
What is this I would wish for thee?  
This—that thy life enframed may be  
In a golden setting of love.

*Thomasina M. Telfer.*

## AMERICAN CANOES AND CANOEISTS.

*The speedy and beautiful little craft which the white man copied from the Indian—  
The canoe clubs of the United States and Canada, their camps, their  
cruises, and their champions.*

By Frank W. Crane.

EVER since the American Indian was discovered, the benign influences of civilization have been steadily relegating him to more limited quarters. At the same time they have laid hold upon some of the more desirable products of his handicraft, and by judicious improvements have made them attractive to the highly cultured mortals of this modern age. This is particularly true of the canoe. The Indian may die without being able to shake off the load of curses which has been heaped upon his name, but his canoe will live, honored and admired by those who now cheerily paddle their frail bark down quiet streams, once his, and bordered by refreshing woods and meadows, which were once his hunting grounds.

The early travelers to these shores all had something to say about the peculiar boats used by the natives. That redoubtable explorer, Captain John Smith, gives us a very interesting description of the canoes he saw among the Indians of Virginia. "These," he says, "they make of one tree, by burning and scratching away the coales with stones and shels, till they have made it in forme of a trough. Some of them are an elne deep and fortie or fiftie foote in length, and some will beare 40 men, but the most ordinary are smaller, and will beare 10, 20, or 30, according to their bignesse. Instead of Oares, they use Paddles and sticks, with which they will rowe faster than our Barges."

Purchas, also, in his quaint book of "Pilgrimages," mentions several varieties of canoes, all built on the same plan. Those seen by James Hall,

who was killed by the Indians in 1612, while attempting to find a northwest passage to Asia, were twenty feet long and two and a half feet broad, "so light that one may carry many of them at once; so swift that no ship is able with any wind to hold way with them, and yet use but one oare, which they hold by the middle, in the midst of their boat, broad at both ends, wherewith they row forwards and backwards at pleasure."

The canoe being essentially an American craft, it is fitting that in this country its use should meet with heartiest favor. But it is only within the past few years that its possibilities for enjoyment and sport have been generally recognized. Those who might justly be called the fathers of canoeing may yet be seen at the annual encampments, and although they may not be as active in racing as in their earlier years, their enthusiasm is not a whit less keen.

Whatever else canoeists may be, they are loyal to their sport. It has sometimes been said that canoeing is but the stepping stone to yachting. That may be true, but it is also a truer fact that very few canoeists ever entirely renounce their first love for their graceful little boats. There is a certain freedom and romantic fascination about the sport which is irresistible. Among its devotees are numbered not only hundreds of energetic young men, but the middle aged, and even those verging toward the point which the world calls old. And the ladies must not be forgotten, for many of the fair sex have learned to paddle their own canoes as