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ADAM AND EVE.

**BY THE AUTHOR OF
'DOROTHY FOX,' AND 'THE PRESCOTTS OF
PAMPHILLON.'**

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,
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1880.

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CHAPTER I.

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THE news from Jerrem turned out nothing more than a vague report that he had been seen at Jersey, waiting, it was said, to return by a vessel which traded to Weymouth. The man who brought the news belonged to the *Stamp and Go*, which had just arrived, and word had been sent to Joan by Ezekiel Johns, her captain, that she was not to expect Uncle Zebedee till she saw him, as

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they intended waiting in the chops of the Channel for an East Indiaman, which they had learnt from the Plymouth pilots was already overdue.

This prolonged absence of the men would afford a good opportunity for accepting the numerous invitations which Eve's arrival had occasioned; and more than a week passed away, during which the two girls kept up a constant round of junketing tea-drinkings, and as several of these outings were at a little distance from home, Eve soon became quite familiar with the neighbourhood, and talked glibly of Pelynt, Landavidy, Lizen, and many other places, the names of which, but a short time before, had sounded unintelligible and strange to her ears. Fortunately for her preconceived ideas as to the right way of spending Sunday, an invitation had come from Joan's mother, Mrs. Tucker, asking

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them to spend that day at the mill ; and though Joan felt most reluctant to undergo such a severe penance, not seeing her way to a refusal, she was forced to accept.

The certainty that they would have to go to chapel in the evening was a sufficient excuse in Joan's mind for not going there in the morning; and she overruled Eve's proposal of walking to Lansallos Church by saying they wouldn't be back in time for dinner, besides which—strongest of arguments in Joan's eyes—there wouldn't be nobody there to see ; and therefore Eve was beguiled into believing the best thing they could do would be, after having their breakfast and setting all straight, to walk down to the quay, so as to draw breath before being stuffed up with 'they mill lot,' as Joan very irreverently styled the friends to whom on

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Sundays Mrs. Tucker usually offered her hospitality.

'I puts all I got' pon my back whenever I goes to chapel,' said Joan, in explanation of the various adornments with which she was loading her attractive little person. 'I loves to see 'em stare and then give a gashly look at mother;' and she turned up her bright dark eyes in imitation of these scandalised sympathisers.

'But what does your mother do?' said Eve, half inclined (by the lack of assurance she knew she should feel in accompanying Joan) to sympathise with Mrs. Tucker.

'Why, enjoys it, to be sure! Don't mother hang down her head, so much as to say, "See what a trial I's got, and look how I bears it!" '

'Nonsense!' laughed Eve; 'I dare say she's very proud of you all the time. I

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know,' she added, checking her laugh with a sigh, 'my dear mother was of me ; she never thought there was anybody looked like me.'

'Well, she was pretty right there,' said Joan; 'and if you'd only smarten yourself up with a bit o' colour, you'd look a rightdown beauty; iss, that you would! I do hope mother won't die; if 'tis only for that I should hate to wear nothin' but a black gown.'

'Oh no, you wouldn't,' said Eve, gravely. 'I used to think the same; but now I wouldn't change it for the richest gown you could give me.'

Joan shook her head.

'No, I hates black,' she persisted; adding, as she took a more critical survey of Eve, 'Adam will have it you'm too pale, but I tell un, no such thing; 'tis only the black that makes 'ee look so.'

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'Adam's very kind!' said Eve, piqued at this candour. 'Isn't there anything else about me that he can find fault with?'

'Oh, you mustn't take no notice o' he!' replied Joan; 'he's always contrary 'bout maidens' looks, trying to pick 'em to pieces, and find all the faults he can with 'em. I don't b'lieve he can help it. I b'lieve some is born to see crossways.'

And in her mind Joan thought Adam one of these, for to her surprise he had pooh-poohed her admiration of Eve, and contended against the great claim to good looks which Joan put in for her.

'For all he may say, I'd be willin' to change with her, though,' thought Joan, as, turning from the glass, her eyes fell on Eve, already arrayed in her black hat and grey duffle cloak; and this, after the reflection which Joan had just had of her bright little self, was certainly no small

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compliment—a compliment which was not paid to Eve by many of the girls with whom, in their walk to the quay and then to Chapel Rock, they chanced to meet; for Joan was a general favourite, and her style of dress, according to Polperro tastes, was perfection—everything of the best, and plenty of it. So, as the little figure pattered down the street, looking like some bright-plumaged bird, her vanity was tickled by, 'Why, where be you off to, Joan? Well, you'm dressed out, and no mistake!' 'Here, I say, Joan, step in and let's have a look at 'ee! Awh, you be lookin' smart, for sure!' But Joan was deaf to all entreaties; she walked on through the street and past the houses, which, except that they

were more than usually filled with idle loungers, presented none of the orderly appearance usually conspicuous on Sundays, neither did any air of calm quiet

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rest upon the place or people; on the contrary, they seemed unusually noisy and uproarious: the same bustle pervaded the quay, the same smell of fish-cleaning offended the nose; and though Eve could not point to any one, and say they were actually working, yet she saw no reason to suppose they had by any means laid aside their everyday vocations.

By the rock they found the men grouped together, discussing the probability of a change of weather, the signs of the fish rising, and the manoeuvres of Old Boney; the youngsters were indulging in rough practical jokes and skylarking, until Joan and Eve making their appearance, their attention was at once directed towards them. But, try as they might, Joan was equal to their banter or their compliments, both of which she managed to pay back, much to her own satisfaction and

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their amusement; till at last, induced by Eve's showing that they should be late for dinner, she consented to take her departure; and, forbidding her admirers to come farther than the steps, she there bade them adieu, and left them to decide among themselves that Joan Hocken was a sweet and purty dear, and worth twenty o' that stuck-up London consarn, with her pasty face and mim ways.

'I reckon we'd best step out a bit,' said Joan, now fully alive to the danger of keeping the dinner waiting. 'What a bother 'tis havin' to toil all the ways to Crumplehorn! I'd sooner any day than Sunday at mother's.'

'I don't know,' said Eve; 'I'm rather glad we're going there. I've been used, you know, to spend my Sundays very quietly—to church or chapel and back, morning and evening.'

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‘Lors!’ exclaimed Joan, there was a good deal o’ the same thing in that, wasn’t there? Didn’t ‘ee get tired of it all, Eve?’

‘No;’ then, remembering how often she had grown weary over the dull monotony of the day, whose perfect rest was irksome to her vigorous youth, she added, ‘or if I did, I’d give a good deal if they’d but come back again now, Joan.’

‘Poor dear!’ said Joan, touched by the tearful voice; ‘but never mind, next Sunday us’ll go to church if you cares for it—to Talland Church, and come home by the cliff all alongside by the sea: you’ll like that, won’t ‘ee?’

Eve squeezed the hand which Joan put into hers, and after a little silence she said:

‘But don’t think that I’m not happy here, Joan. I feel so different that I can hardly tell myself for the same. I seem

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to be so at home here, so as not to care for anybody but those I’ve got round me.’

‘Awh, come, that ain’t fair,’ said Joan.

“When from William I parted,
I vowed I’d keep true.”

Oh lors!’ she exclaimed, stifling her voice.

‘I forgot ‘twas Sunday, and that we’re close to mill, where’—and she folded her hands and cast down her eyes with a prim look of propriety—

“Maidens should be mild and meek,
Swift to hear and slow to speak.”

After which, flinging open the gate, she gave Eve a sudden push which sent her forward with a most undignified bounce into the presence of Mrs. Tucker, who was standing at the door ready to receive them.

‘Oh, here you be then,’ said Mrs. Tucker, with, as Eve thought, a shade of disappointment in her voice. ‘I didn’t expect ‘ee yet awhile; I was on the look-out for Mr. Blamey and Susannah. I never

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expects Joan to be in time; I always says 'twouldn't be Joan if folks wasn't kep' waitin' while dinner's spoilin'.'

'And it ain't Joan now, mother,' said her daughter, promptly. 'You've got to thank Eve for seein' me. I shouldn't ha' hove in sight for another half-hour to come if 't hadn't bin for she.'

'Well, one thing is, if I'd took the trouble to walk so far as the corner, I should ha' know'd you was comin',' retorted Mrs. Tucker. 'I'm bound to say nobody who wasn't denied the blessin' o' eyesight but must see you, if 'twas a mile away, Joan. I can't think,' she added, taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by following the girls into the house to give their dress a critical survey, 'why, if you'm so wrapped up in Eve as you pretends to be, you don't take what she wears for a pattern.'

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'Why how can I do that, and you livin' all the whiles?' said Joan, with an air of injured innocence. 'You ain't wantin' to see me in mournin' for 'ee fore you'm dead, be 'ee?'

'Death ain't no subject for cuttin' jokes upon,' said Mrs. Tucker, supplying a rebuke for lack of a retort; 'and as there'll be friends present, I do hope you'll be a little becomin' in your talk, Joan, on a Sabbath day of all others.' Then, without giving Joan time to reply, she began inquiring about Uncle Zebedee and Adam, and how long they were likely to be absent. 'And what do ye think o' your cousin, Eve?' she asked.

'I have seen so little of him,' said Eve, evasively.

'Why, they only come home, as you may say, to go away agen,' explained Joan. 'Eve didn't see nothin' of Adam but the one evenin'.'

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Mrs. Tucker sighed:

'Ah!' she said, 'I saw the sodgers go past, and come back again.'

'Iss; no wiser than they was afore, though,' laughed Joan.

'Don't laugh, Joan,' said her mother.

'Why, you wouldn't have me cry 'cos they was balked, would 'ee?'

'They won't allus be balked,' said Mrs. Tucker; 'luck don't last for ever, and the sins of the father often falls heavy on the childern.'

'Oh, well,' retorted Joan, 'if Adam's back ain't bowed down with nothin' heavier than the sins uncle'll lay 'pon it, he'll walk upright to the end of his days. But there, mother,' she added, catching sight of Eve's face, 'don't let's begin a cavil — *that* ain't becomin' o' Sundays, nor no other days; and Eve here's bin lookin' forward to spend the day with 'ee, 'cos her's bin allays used to quiet Sundays.'

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This discernment on the part of Eve as to the visible difference between the two households, diverted Mrs. Tucker from her dismal forebodings into questioning her guest on the usual habits of herself and her mother, until the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Blamey engrossed her attention, and Eve and Joan were left to their own devices. Too thorough a housekeeper to allow her mind to wander from the dinner, which, having provided, she wished to see appreciated, Mrs. Tucker's next efforts were centred on helping the dishes to the best advantage, and proportioning the supply to each person's requirements; a task so onerous that, the meal over, she was not sorry to be left quietly alone with her elderly friends, and therefore raised no objection to her stepson Sammy accompanying Joan and Eve into the orchard, where he was directed to find a sheltered

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spot, that they might sit down and enjoy the apples which lay in yellow heaps under most of the trees. The two girls occupied the gnarled root of a withered trunk, while Sammy, having ascertained that the grass was too 'vady' for him to sit down upon, took up his position at the nearest tree which he leaned against, chewing the end of a flower-stalk, and casting looks of sidelong admiration at Joan.

'Here, where's your knife to?' exclaimed Joan, stretching out her hand for a fresh apple which she selected with particular care; 'I wants to skin one. Did 'ee ever try that, Eve?'

‘Try what,’ said Eve, recalling her drowsy attention.

‘Why, to skin a apple without a-breakin' it, and throw the peelin' over yer shoulder to see what letter it makes? I'm goin' to do this wan;’ and she began to

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carefully set about the task. ‘Whatever letter comes is the first letter o' your sweetheart's name. There,’ she exclaimed, giving the requisite twirl before jerking the apple-peel over her shoulder. ‘Look, Eve, what is it, eh?’

‘Well, I can hardly tell,’ said Eve; ‘tis something like a C, and yet it's like a Q.’

‘I knaws 'tis a S,’ and Sammy directed an unmistakable leer towards Joan.

‘A S spells Ass,’ said Joan, snappishly.

‘Naw, it doan't,’ sniggered Sammy; ‘t wants another S for he.’

‘Well, then, you go and stand there,’ said Joan, ‘then 'twill be all complete, word and picter too. Here, I'm full,’ she added, chucking away the apple in disgust. ‘Now what else could we do? Ain't there no place else for us to go to, eh, stupid?’

‘There's the mill,’ suggested Sammy, ‘but he ain't a doin' nothin', you know.’

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‘Niver mind, for want o' better let's have a look at 'un. Have 'ee ever seen the inside of a mill, Eve?’

Eve never had, and, though perfectly ignorant of what she was to see, expressed her desire of seeing it ; and up they got, Joan leading them by a way that should avoid Mrs. Tucker interposing her dictum against such an adventure. A gap in the orchard hedge brought them to a field of rank grass, at the far end of which was the stream which ran down to the mill-wheel, where Eve was for stopping to gaze at the fringe of maiden-hair and the great clumps of hart's-tongue which peeped out amid the blackness of the crevices. The clumsy key, red with rust, hung on a nail outside the small door, which, for the greater convenience of dropping down the sacks, had a sliding shuttered entrance. Sammy took down the key, and then deliberately took

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off his coat and waistcoat and hung them on the nail.

‘Why, what do you do that for?’ said Eve.

‘Cos of the flour,’ said Joan, an apprehension creeping over her that she had made rather a foolish proposal. However, as they had got so far they might as well go on; but as a precaution she added, ‘Best take your gown up around ‘ee, Eve. I shall put mine over my head,’ and she suited the action to her words.

Seeing them thus prepared, Sammy opened the door—whish-h-h!—and up rose a cloud of flour-dust.

‘They’s rats, I reckon,’ he said, leading the way into an all but dark space, with nothing visible except white sacks and barrels.

‘Oh! I hope there ain’t any rats here now,’ exclaimed Eve; ‘I can’t bear rats.’

‘Can’t ‘ee?’ said Sammy, with some

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surprise. ‘Us caught five and twenty here last week, and they’s nothin’ to what there’s up aloft.’

‘Then I shan’t go there,’ said Eve, preparing to beat a retreat. ‘Joan!’ But Joan, who was already half-way up the ladder which opened into the upper story, called out:

‘Nonsense, Eve! don’t pay no heed to what he says. Come along with me.’

‘Wan at a time,’ interposed Sammy, ‘cos Bill Wyatt’s a put his—’ but before Sammy could get out the word ‘foot,’ a cloud of dust was thrown into the air, and the heels of two shoes were sticking through the ladder. Eve gave a scream, Sammy sprang forward, but too late. Joan, not having been warned in time, had missed her footing on the broken rung of the ladder, and being encumbered by the careful enveloping of her gown, had tumbled headlong into a

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cask of flour. To recover her was the work of a minute, and before the cloud had time to disperse or Eve could advance near enough to offer her assistance, Joan, only waiting to give herself a hasty shake, had attacked the unlucky Sammy like a fury, nor did she stop until forced to do so by want of breath; then, as if this explosion of her temper had expended her wrath, she burst into a fit of laughter, exclaiming:

‘I say, what do I look like? Whatever will mother say? No, my dear sawl, don't 'ee, for goodness' sake, come anighst me; 'tis enough for one of us to look like a flour-bag.’

‘Oh, Joan, you ain't hurt?’ said Eve.

‘Lord, no, I ain't hurt; but I've a made that great lutterputch feel the weight o' me hand, though. Don't you come a near me,’ she called out to Sammy, who stood beating his arms together in his vain endeavour

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to free himself from the flour, ‘or I won't leave a whole bone in yer ugly body.’

‘What had we best do?’ said Eve. ‘You're covered all over; your hair's as full of flour as if 'twas powdered.’

‘I can't tell what to do,’ said Joan, hopelessly; ‘I shouldn't mind if 'twasn't for mother, but there'll be no stoppin' of her. Here, I'll tell 'ee what 'tis,’ she exclaimed, with sudden inspiration; ‘I must make out that I'm ahurt somewheres in my insides, and every time she opens her mouth to spake, I'll raise a groan. Here!’ she called out to Sammy. ‘You be off in, and tell mother I've afalled down in the millhouse, and you think I'm hurt terrible bad.’

Sam hesitated for a moment, but a movement forward from Joan sent him away like a rocket, and before Eve could suggest any more truthful evasion by which Mrs. Tucker's anger could be averted, to their

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dismay she was seen running towards them, with Mr. and Mrs. Blamey following in the rear. ‘So well be killed for a sheep as a lamb,’ said Joan, with a doleful look at the sorry plight of her smart dress; so down she flopped on the stones, by which manoeuvre Mrs.

Tucker's first view of her was half-lying on the ground, with her face as white as her own kerchief.

Now Sammy—wise in his generation— had merely popped his head in at the door and curtailed his announcement into: 'Joan's down by the mill: her's hurt herself terrible bad ;' and by the time Mrs. Tucker had got to the door, Sam had disappeared, leaving her fears to increase with each step she took, until at the sight of Joan pale and prostrate they culminated in an outburst of motherly tenderness, which made her rush forward, throw her arms round her daughter, and exclaim:

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'Awh, my dear! whatever have 'ee done to yourself?' and when a minute after Joan extricated herself from the embrace, it was to see the tears trickling down her mother's face.

'Mother, don't 'ee; I ain't hurt a bit,' cried Joan. 'I would go into the mill, and I fell smack through the ladder into a cask of flour. Iss, you may scold now so much as you will, I don't care a bit; for I wouldn't ha' believed afore you cared half so much for me.'

Mrs. Tucker turned to Eve, who tried to give some further explanation; then she asked Joan again if she was sure she hadn't hurt herself anywhere, and finally suggested they should go in and see if they couldn't rid her of the flour; but in all this she gave her daughter no word of reproach.

'Whatever shall I do about goin' to

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chapel?' said Joan, as the clock warned them it was time to get ready. 'I've brushed till my arms ache, but my things is still like a millard's.'

'I'll stay home with you,' said Eve.

'Will 'ee? that's a dear; and,' she added, with a propitiatory look towards her mother, 'us'll have down the big Bible and read chapters verse by verse.'

'Tis very good of you to offer, Eve,' said Mrs. Tucker, 'but I've bin to a place o' worship once to-day, and you haven't, so I'll stop with Joan, and you go off to chapel

with Mrs. Blamey.' And so the matter was settled, and as Joan said when they finally returned home: 'There's what you do think and what you don't think, for if anybody 'ed a told me that 'stead o' showin' off to chapel, I should ha' sat at home quiet with mother, I wouldn't ha believed it.'

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'And she seemed to have enjoyed the evening,' said Eve.

'Awh, well! I don't know about that,' replied Joan, doubtingly. 'I dare say her wished herself to chapel, but I didn't; for mother's a bootiful reader, and the Bible's a wonderful Book.'

CHAPTER II.

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THE next week passed away and another was nearly at its close, and yet Joan and Eve remained alone—no tidings had come of the *Lottery*. Joan was not in the least uneasy, yet she kept wondering what could be the reason of their unexplained delay, until, having come to the end of all other conjectures, she finally settled down to the belief that they must have given up the *Indiaman*, and gone across to Guernsey. However, one afternoon, as the two girls were

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discussing the advisability of accepting an invitation from Ann Lisbeth to join her and her cousin Jessie, the door opened, and in walked Adam.

'Ah,' he said, in answer to the visible surprise his sudden appearance had created, 'I thought I should catch you napping. You didn't expect to see me, did you?'

'No, indeed we didn't,' said Joan, who had jumped up and ran forward to meet him; 'but I'm so glad you'm come, Adam! Why, where's uncle? Wherever have 'ee bin to all this long whiles? I thought you was never comin' back no more. Why, however could the boat have come in, and me not to know it!'

‘There isn't any boat in yet,’ said Adam.

‘What, uncle not come?’

‘No; he won't be here till to-morrow, or perhaps next day. A pilot boat landed

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me at Plymouth, then I rode so far as Looe, and walked the rest.’

During this speech Adam had advanced towards Eve, had taken her hand, and, to her annoyance, while he was speaking still kept hold of it; after one ineffectual effort at withdrawal, she let it remain passive, until, having finished what he was saying to Joan, he turned, and for the first time looking fixedly at her, said:

‘Well, Cousin Eve?’

‘Well, Cousin Adam?’

‘You haven't said that you're glad to see me yet.’

‘Oh, haven't I? but surely you do not need me to say so?’

‘Yes, but I do,’ said Adam, tightening his hold of her hand. ‘Now, look up at me and say, “Adam, I'm glad you've come back.”’

Eve did as she was bidden, and raising

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a perfectly expressionless face, said, as a parrot might:

‘Adam, I'm glad you've come back.’

‘That's right,’ he laughed, giving her a somewhat significant shake of the head; then, turning to Joan, he asked if she wasn't going to give him something to eat.

‘What would 'ee like?’ said Joan; ‘us has had our dinners, and I was waitin' for the kettle to boil to make a cup o' tay.’

‘That'll suit me exactly. I don't want nothing much as yet; I had some sort of a meal at Looe.’

Joan went into the kitchen to make her preparations, and Adam, taking a chair, seated himself at a little distance from Eve.

'Have you been for any more moonlight rambles?' he said, after he had sat watching her for a few minutes.

'No,' answered Eve, opening her workbox

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and searching in it for the materials to do some darning.

'How is that?' and he edged the chair a bit nearer.

'Because I haven't cared to, I s'pose,' said Eve, assuming an air of indifference, which visibly contrasted with the great interest she took in finding the various articles for her needlework.

'You're very busy there,' continued Adam, and Eve knew by his voice that he must be leaning over the table towards her. 'What is it you are about, eh?'

'Darning the crown of my cap,' she said, endeavouring to appear as composed as she desired to be.

'Let me see;' his hand was stretched out until it touched hers.

'There's nothing to see in it; it's only a common cap-crown,' she said, holding it out for his inspection.

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Adam took hold of the piece of net, fingering it with an air of abstraction, while he kept his eyes fixed on Eve, who, knowing that in another minute Joan would reappear, wished from her heart that he would move himself farther away. Raising her eyes with an effort, for, strive as she would, Eve had only been able to meet Adam's gaze with simulated composure, she said:

'When you've quite done with that, I shall be glad to go on with my work.'

'Where's the lace for it?' said Adam, seemingly struck by a sudden inspiration.

'Lace! it hasn't got any lace;' and Eve snatched the cap away from him.

'But you'd like it to have lace?' said Adam. 'Come, now,' he added, 'all women love lace, don't they?'

'I don't know about all women,' she

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said. 'I suppose many do, or I shouldn't have got a living by mending lace.'

'Ah, I forgot that. Then you must be a bit of a judge. Wait a minute, now, and I'll bring you down some I've got upstairs that I brought home from France with me. You shall tell me what you think of that!'

As fetching this involved moving from his present close proximity, Eve made no opposition, and he had only just got out of the room when Joan appeared, bringing the tea-things. The kettle was found to be boiling, so that when Adam returned the two girls were seated at the table. At sight of Joan Adam's face changed; when he had gone upstairs he had forgotten the probability of her coming back. However, there was no help for it now. The lace was in his hand, so, with no seeming embarrassment,

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he threw it on the table before Eve, saying as he did so:

'There, is that good for anything?'

The lace was a piece of Brussels point of the rarest make and finest description.

'My dear life!' exclaimed Joan, as Eve held it up. 'Wherever did 'ee get that, Adam? Why, 'tis like a spider's web!'

'Yes,' said Eve, examining the delicacy of the groundwork and the evenness of the stitches; 'isn't it lovely?'

'Ah!' and Adam gave a deep-drawn breath; 'then it's the right sort of thing, is it? They told me 'twouldn't be easy to match it this side of the Channel.'

'I don't think I ever saw anything so perfect!' continued Eve, carrying on her inspection with the enjoyment of a connoisseur. 'Look at that stitch, Joan, and the one there!'

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'And the colour!' put in Joan. 'Awh, 'tis downright splendid!'

'Then you like it?' said Adam, addressing Eve.

‘Like it!’ returned both of the girls; ‘it’s beautiful!’

‘Ain’t there two pieces?’ said Adam, leaning over to put aside the paper.

‘Yes, but all the same pattern; it’s the cap and ruffles, you know,’ explained Eve, spreading the first piece out preparatory to folding it.

‘Then it’s worth having?’ said Adam.

Joan was going to answer, but happening to look up, she saw that his question was pointedly addressed to Eve.

‘What?’ said Eve.

‘Should you think it’s worth having?’

‘Certainly; if I were you I should lock it away most carefully,’ replied Eve, speaking very rapidly, and giving a rather

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hurried twist to the paper in which the lace now lay folded.

Then he said, shutting her hand upon it and gently pushing it towards her:

‘Keep it for your cap. I brought it down on purpose for you.’

‘For me, Adam? Oh no!’ and Eve gave a decisive shake of the head. ‘I couldn’t think of taking it. You forget how different my dress is. I shouldn’t presume to wear lace like that; besides, if I did—I—anyway, thank you for offering it, but I could not accept such a gift from you.’

‘And for what reason?’ he said. ‘Joan accepts presents from me, and why not you?’

‘Oh, Joan’s quite different to me.’

‘Not at all; a cousin’s a cousin, whether by mother or father.’

‘Yes, I know;’ and Eve hesitated, as she strove to find the right words in which

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to frame her denial. ‘I feel you mean it very kindly, and I am much obliged to you; but I cannot take it;’ and she put the lace, which Adam had again opened and unrolled, resolutely over to his side.

‘Why, what nonsense it is, Eve!’ put in Joan; ‘if Adam didn't wish 'ee to take it, he wouldn't offer it to 'ee.’

‘Oh, she means to take it!’ said Adam, with a little incredulous laugh. ‘You women are all alike. All the time you're saying No, you only mean Yes.’

‘Indeed,’ said Eve, nettled by the imputation, ‘I think you'll find me an exception to that rule.’

Adam shook his head.

‘Oh, there's no need to argue about it,’ she said quietly; ‘but there's your lace.’

He pushed it back; Eve allowed it to

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stay for a moment, then she put it away from her with a more determined movement.

‘Come, nonsense, Eve!’ he said, in a tone of rising vexation. ‘The thing isn't worth half the fuss you've made about it already. The lace isn't of any use to me; I don't wear ruffles and cap-borders, but I like to see my women-folk in them, so take it and say no more about it;’ and with the air of one who had disarmed further opposition, he turned to Joan and said, ‘Well, and how did you get on after we left?’

‘Capital!’ replied Joan. ‘The sodgers was a fresh lot, and such a set o' jolly greens as you never cast eyes upon! All they could think of was racin' up and down stairs, and openin' and shuttin' the cupboard doors.’

‘What did Eve think of it all?’ he

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said, wondering by what explanation Joan had satisfied her naturally aroused curiosity.

‘Eve behaved herself beautiful,’ said Joan. ‘She did good service, I can tell 'ee, and kept the sharpest of 'em by her side all the time.’

‘Why, how was that?’ said Adam, quickly.

‘I'm sure I can't tell,’ replied Joan, ‘t couldn't ha' bin for what he seed to look at in her,’ and she cast a pleasant glance over to Eve.

'I hope, Joan, that you don't make too free with those men,' said Adam, sharply; 'tis all very well to be ready with an answer, but you should ——'

'Oh, teach your granny!' said Joan; 'don't tell me! If I don't know how to trate a passel o' sodgers and throw 'em off the scent, I don't know who should, and

[40] bin up to the game ever since I was five year old.'

Adam gave a meaning frown, which Joan answered by saying in a low voice:

'No; now it's o' no good trying to mask the thing from her; she knows all about it. Why, now, how was I to help tellin' her?' she added, seeing his displeasure. 'Tis all very well to talk, but unless anybody's a born fule, they knaws if you hadn't got sommat to hide, nobody wouldn't be sent to seek it; 'tis foolishness tryin' to make a mystery of a thing that's so plain to see as the naws on yer face.'

'Oh, I might have known you'd make a mess of it,' he said, pushing back his chair from the table, and going to the mantelpiece to help himself to a paper spill, a bundle of which was stuck into the arm of a Chelsea shepherd.

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'Take no notice,' whispered Joan, as she and Eve rose to clear away the tea-things. 'I 'spects he wanted to tell 'ee hisself. I s'pose you'll be ready for some supper, Adam?' she said.

'Well, I s'pose I shall,' he answered, without turning round. 'I told you I hadn't had a regular dinner; they'd only some salt pork to give me at Looe.'

'All right, then I'll try and see what I can get for 'ee.' And going into the kitchen, she said to Eve: 'I'm goin' to run down to Barrett's for a minute, and see what they've got. I'm blessed if I know what to give un: whatever 'tis, 'tis certain to be the wrong thing;' and she crossed her fingers to signify the state of Adam's temper.

'I shouldn't put myself out about him,' said Eve, with a contemptuous little movement of her lips.

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‘No, I believe you wouldn't,’ said Joan, ‘and I'll be bound he'd ate whatever you set before un. But there, as I've made my bed so I must lie upon 'en;’ and having by this time provided herself with a basket and a dish, she opened the door and went out. Eve finished washing the tea-things, lingering over them as long as she could; and then, as these, together with the spoons and teapot, were kept in the sitting-room, she took them in, put them in their place, opened the door and was on the first step going upstairs, when Adam called out:

‘Eve, don't leave that lying about here,’ and he pointed to the small packet on the table; ‘take it up with you, and put it away in your box.’ His voice betrayed the temper he was trying to subdue, making his words seem more like a command than an entreaty.

‘I have told you, Adam,’ said Eve, turning

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round, ‘that I'm not going to accept the lace.’

‘And why not? Why shouldn't you accept the lace? Are you going to tell me that no man's ever given you a present before—is that it, eh?’

‘No, it isn't it!’ she said, her face reddening at the allusion he made. ‘Although such a question hasn't anything to do with it; it's enough for you that, though I'm much obliged to you, I'd rather not accept it.’

‘Oh, indeed! Then you can take presents from others, but you can't from your own cousin. I ought to be very much obliged to you for the distinction you make.’

‘Oh, it isn't always that we've such a high opinion of our own relations,’ retorted Eve. ‘Sometimes we think they ain't worthy of being trusted, and refuse to let

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them be told what they happen to know already.’

‘You know! how did you know?’

‘Simply because after what took place the other evening, before I went to bed, my wonder was aroused so that when I awoke and found everything silent, and Joan not there, I got frightened and crept downstairs. Yes,’ she continued, with a laugh at the

expression on his face, 'twas a pity, as you took the trouble to lock one door, you hadn't remembered there was another way down.'

Now this accusation, which from Eve was but a bow drawn at a venture, went home, for Adam had actually locked the door in question.

'Confound your woman's curiosity!' he said, with a half-confused laugh; then coming towards her, he added: 'But you mustn't be vexed with me for that, Eve; it

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wasn't for want of trust that I wouldn't have you told. I can't explain it now, but some day when we're quietly together, I'll make it all clear to you.'

'Of course,' she said, in an aggrieved tone, 'it's not pleasant to feel you're in the house of those who can't put confidence——'

'No, no! Now, my dear girl,' he interrupted, 'you are quite on the wrong tack there; don't think any more of it in that way. I'm sure,' he added, in a softened tone, 'if I've vexed you, I am very sorry. Come, Eve!' and he laid his hand on her shoulder. 'Come, I can't say more than that, can I?'

'No,' she said.

'Then you'll forgive me; won't you?'

'Yes.'

'And we're friends again now; ain't we?'

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'I suppose so.'

'You suppose so! Now look into my face and tell me so;' and he put his hand under her chin, and with a gentle force raised her face almost to a level with his own. 'Now I shan't let you go,' he said, 'until you look at me. Oh, I'm in no hurry—I have plenty to look at here;' and Eve felt his eyes more bent upon her as he began, with assumed interest, to study her downcast face. 'How dark your eyelashes are!' he said; 'and you haven't a bad nose, and if your mouth were——' but here Eve's risibility threatened to

overcome her, and hoping to hide the dawning smile which was making her lips quiver, she tried to free herself, saying as she gave her head a little twist:

‘Adam, I wish you wouldn't.’

‘Wouldn't what?’ and while her chin was tilted a trifle farther up, the hand which

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was laid on her arm tightened its hold.

‘Now don't be silly, Adam,’ and Eve made another fruitless attempt at a struggle.

‘How silly?’ he said.

‘Oh, Adam!’ and this time the voice and the face pleaded together, ‘please let me go; do!’

‘Why should I let you go?’ he said, bending forward until his face all but touched hers. ‘Eh, tell me that?’

‘Because,’ and Eve felt the whole of her strength had flown to her heart, the rapid beating of which seemed to choke her further utterance. ‘Because ——’

‘Because what?’ and Adam's voice was changed to a whisper, which seemed to give the echo to her own emotion.

‘Because you've ——’ but before the sentence could be finished, Eve had flown

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upstairs and was listening to Adam saying:

‘What the devil do you come in like that at the door for?’

‘Why, what do 'ee mane?’ exclaimed Joan. ‘Come into the door for! do 'ee want folks to come down the chimley, then? Lord, we'm turned narvical all to wance, I should think; but there,’ she continued, swinging the cupboard door and making a great clatter with the things, ‘you needn't put yerself out that I'm goin' to be wan in the way. I've got to get supper ready;’ and she slammed the kitchen door after her with a force that shook all the windows and doors in the house. Filled by a sense of vexation, Eve hesitated as to what she should do; she felt a little shamefaced about just then

confronting Joan, not being quite sure whether or not she had seen her. Still, to go down and sit alone

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with Adam, she would not; so she fidgeted about the room in uneasy indecision, until to her great relief the front door opened and closed, and she heard Adam leave the house, then she plucked up courage to go downstairs and say:

‘Let me help you, Joan?’

‘No, there's nothing to help in,’ returned Joan, rather curtly; ‘sides which Tabithy is here to do all that's wanted.’

‘Are you going to make a pie?’ asked Eve, seeing Joan take off her worked muslin apron and substitute in its stead a large Holland wrapper.

‘Yes, us 'ull want some for to-morrow.’

‘But you needn't do them now,’ said Eve.

‘So well do that as anythin' else,’ replied Joan.

‘Then let me peel the apples?’

‘No; now I'd rather you'd go inside and

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sit down, Eve,’ and Joan tried to take the apple-basket from her.

‘And I'd rather stay here with you, Joan.’

‘Well, I don't want 'ee,’ said Joan; ‘and if Adam comes back, he'll fancy I've set 'ee to work to spite un.’

‘Adam can think what he pleases,’ said Eve; ‘but if I don't stay here I shan't sit in there with him.’

‘I'm sure he or anybody else is welcome to do what pleased 'em best, and as pleases 'em best, for me,’ continued Joan, forced by the presence of Tabithy to make the allusions to her grievance rather enigmatical, ‘only nobody likes to be swored at for walkin' in at the door when they'm as inicent as a babe unborn that they'm not wanted.’

‘Well, don't say you weren't wanted by me, Joan.’

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'I don't say nothin' about you. I wasn't ——' but the sound of the raised latch made her silent, and through the now open kitchen door they saw Adam come in, move about the room, go upstairs, come down again and finally enter the kitchen. 'Now, I don't want Eve here,' said Joan; 'so if she's aminded to go, she'll only be doing what I've axed her to from the first.'

Adam laughed.

'I should take advantage of that, Eve,' he said; 'it's a pity to intrude yourself where you're not wanted.'

'Then perhaps,' said Eve, 'you'll go, for Joan and I were getting on very well alone.'

'Oh, all right,' and off he went.

'I wish to goodness *I* could give 'en a slap with my tongue,' said Joan; 'I can with most of 'em, but he puts me in that passion that when I can't find words to

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answer 'en in, I could fly at 'en like a tiger-cat.'

'Well, he's gone now,' said Eve, 'and let's hope he won't come back till supptime.' But the hope was vain; in less than half an hour Adam was back again, trying by a dozen artifices to get Eve into the sitting-room; but no, away from Joan's side she would not stir, and Joan seemed bent on making enough pies and pasties to victual a fleet. At last his temper could stand it no longer, and upon Eve distinctly refusing to allow him any opportunity of speaking to her alone, he flung himself out of the house with a heartily expressed wish that he hadn't been such a fool as to leave Plymouth.

'There, don't let's have no more of it,' said Joan, as she listened to his departing footsteps; 'if he comes back agen, go in and sit with 'en like a dear. 'Tis o' no use

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contendin', if he's made up his mind to it.'

'Isn't it!' said Eve; 'that's the way you've spoilt him, Joan. A pretty thing if he's to have his way always; he won't from me, I can tell him.'

Joan gave an audible sigh.

'What a world it is!' she said dolefully, as she dusted her arms free from the flour preparatory to washing her hands and taking off her cooking-apron. 'Here, let's go and sit in th'other room, Eve. We may just so well, for I've got no heart to do nothin' more this evening; and Tabithy'll bring in the supper things when we'm ready for 'em.'

Thus it happened that when, about an hour later, Adam returned, he found the two girls sitting together chatting by the light of the fire. He came back in no better humour than when he went; indeed,

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his irritability was increased by the knowledge that something against which he had striven had proved too strong for him, and that he had been almost forced against his will to return. In his effort to seem cool and indifferent, his voice sounded rasping and harsh.

'What, sitting in the dark still?' he said, for want of some other remark. 'How is it you haven't got a candle yet, eh?'

Joan pushed back her chair, as if intending to get a light.

'There, you needn't move; I can reach it:' and leaning across her over to the mantel-piece he took down the candlestick, but in stepping back managed to catch the table-cover, so that several of the articles which lay upon it were swept off on to the ground, and among them the unfortunate lace. 'The end of this will be to get thrown into the fire,' he said, picking up

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the parcel and tossing it into Eve's lap.

‘That would be a pity,’ said Eve; ‘though nobody ‘ud be to blame for it but yourself. I’ve given it back to you several times already, I can’t do more than that;’ and with no attempt to refold it, she threw it with what looked like an air of contempt on the table.

‘Then you don’t mean to take it?’

‘No.’

‘Not after—what—I said—to you,’ stammered Adam, his temper rising with each word.

‘You have not said anything that I know of which should make me change my mind,’ replied Eve.

‘If you don’t take it up this minute, I’ll pitch it all into the fire,’ said Adam.

‘It’s your own to do what you like with,’ said Eve. ‘I shan’t interfere to prevent you.’

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Joan uttered a cry, but already the delicate gossamer was swallowed in the flame which leaped up to receive it.

‘There’s the ruffles,’ said Eve, pushing the remaining pieces towards him.

‘Oh, Eve, I do call that a downright sin!’ exclaimed Joan, as another flame darted up. ‘How can ‘ee be so aggravatin’ to un! To give back a hasty answer’s one thing, but to go pourin’ oil on fire is ill-becomin’ any woman.’

‘I wish you’d——’ but before Adam could thunder forth the rest of his sentence a voice at the door called out:

‘Why, b’ee all deaf or dumb or what, that you can’t answer folks knocking your doors down? Why, that’s never Adam! Awh!’ and the tone altered into one between apology and disappointment. ‘I didn’t know you was back, Adam; I comed to ax ‘em if they was minded to walk with

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me part ways to Lissen and back, for company for Jessie here.’

‘My being home is nothing against that,’ said Adam; ‘all the better. If Jessie wants company, I s’pose I shall do as well as another.’

‘Well, I never!’ exclaimed Ann Lisbeth, turning to the girl who was trying to screen herself behind her, and who was the buxom daughter of a well-to-do farmer. ‘Hark to that, Jessie! Do ‘ee hear what he says? Take him to his word: I would.’

Jessie’s face beamed with delight. In common with many another, to secure the preference of Adam was the ambition of her life. Taking it for granted that the rest of the party would follow, she made no hesitation of accepting his unexpected offer, and in a few minutes, accompanied by him, left the house.

‘What do ‘ee say, Eve?’ said Joan.

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‘Do ‘ee think us had best to go too? Us has had a reg’lar rumpus all round,’ she added, in explanation to Ann Lisbeth.

‘Well, then, do ‘ee come longs for a walk,’ argued her friend; ‘there’s nothin’ more like to set ‘ee all straight agen than that.’

CHAPTER III.

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ANN LISBETH’S advice was taken; and the three girls, with their arms linked together in a friendly fashion, followed Jessie and Adam up the Lansallos road, past Landavidy, and on as far as the point where the road is joined by the one which leads by Langreek and Crumplehorne. Ann Lisbeth and Joan sustained the conversation; Eve only paying enough attention to enable her to drop in a word here and there, and so escape her silence attracting their notice.

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'Don't let's seem to be tryin' to catch them up,' Joan had said, soon after starting. 'I've had enough o' Adam's black looks for one evenin';' and after that they had slackened their pace, and walked leisurely, as best suited their convenience.

The night was dark, the sky cloudy, the road muddy and long; and Eve, unused to the roughness of country lanes, began to grow tired and weary.

'Have we very much farther to go?' she asked, her voice giving utterance to her feelings.

'Why, no,' said Joan; 'and considerin' us has got to go all the ways back agen home, I don't see why us shouldn't turn to once. Jessie don't want to say nothin' more to you, I s'pose, Ann Lisbeth?'

'Lord, no!' laughed Ann Lisbeth. 'I'll be bound for it by this time her's a forgot there's anybody else in the world but Adam.'

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Won't it be sickly to hear her!' she added, with a face of disgust. 'Twill be Adam this, and Adam that, till I shall get to hate the very sound o' his name.'

'She may thank her stars he was in his tantrums to-night,' said Joan, 'or he'd ha' seed her to Jericho afore he'd offered to see her home.'

'Do 'ee think so?' said Ann Lisbeth, dubiously. 'Well, then, he didn't ought to go stuffin' the maid up as he does, if so be he ain't ha' got no manin' in it; 'cos her sooks in all he says for gospel- truth.'

'More fool she, then!' replied Joan, decisively. 'Her's got to do no more than open her eyes and her ears, to know that he's a done the same by a good many afore it comed to her turn. Why, look to Chrissy Pope and Sally Tadd; he's never carried on the quarter with Jessie that he has with they, and a score more that I could name;

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so if hers made a Jinny-ninny of, there's only herself to thank for't.'

'Do 'ee think us'll keep 'em waitin' up to farm gate, 'spectin' us to come on?' suggested Ann Lisbeth.

'If so, they'll be waitin' in vain,' returned Joan, wheeling round decisively; 'so come along, let's go home by Crumplehome —'tis shorter;' and away they went, gossiping as before, only that, on the supposition that Eve felt tired, she was left to "the more undisturbed possession of her own thoughts.

'Here, I say, Joan!' exclaimed Ann Lisbeth, as they came within sight of a gate which led up to a farmhouse, hidden by the high hedge from view, 'I wants to ask Mrs. Clims about some butter. Would 'ee mind runnin' in for a minute to see if her's got it ready?'

'Well, I'm afeard Eve's more tired than

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she owns to,' said Joan; 'I've felt her limpin' for a brave bit.'

'I can't think what I've done to my foot!' said Eve; 'and it almost feels as if I'd turned it somehow, but if ——'

'No, no,' replied Joan; 'us'll stay here while Ann Lisbeth runs in; 'twon't take her but a few minutes.'

Away went Ann Lisbeth through the gate, and Joan and Eve were left standing in the narrow steep lane.

'Lord, what a time her's gone!' exclaimed Joan, going forward to see if there was any sign of their companion's approach. 'I'd a' had all the butter in the place 'fore this;' and she undid the gate, and held it half open in her anxiety.

'Here, Joan, Joan!' called out a voice from within, 'come in for a minute; do 'ee, like a dear! Here's somebody wantin' to spake to 'ee.'

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'Yes, you go, Joan,' said Eve; 'do! you won't be long, and I'll wait here till you come out.'

Joan went inside, and Eve heard her greeted by a clamour of voices. Feeling her foot growing more painful, she went to the gate and leaned on it for support. Her heart was heavy and her thoughts troubled: her anger against Adam had given place to

dissatisfaction with herself. It was not that she repented refusing the lace, but she felt she had no right to refuse it in such an ungracious manner; it was giving way to unnecessary temper, and causing unnecessary strife, for, after all, if he hadn't thought something of her, he wouldn't have offered her such a handsome present; and Eve sighed despondingly as she told herself he wasn't likely to look over it in a hurry. She wished she knew how best to propitiate him. Should she tell him how

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sorry she felt? say to him that she hoped he would forget her uncousinly behaviour? Her mind was full of compunction, ready to make any apology; her heart softened and humbled; when suddenly her ear caught the rapid approach of footsteps; she turned quickly round—it was Adam; and as quickly she had resumed her position, and was again leaning over the gate. There was a moment's pause; if the footsteps had gone on, assuredly Eve would have run after them; but the hesitation determined the balance of power in her favour, and the next instant Adam was standing beside her. Neither of them spoke. Eve silent because her courage was rising; Adam, because his was failing.

'I suppose,' he said, jerking out his words as if forced into saying them, 'it doesn't matter a bit to you whether we're good friends or bad; so I don't know why

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I should mind. But, somehow, mind I do,' he added, altering his position so that he might catch the expression of her now composed face.

Did the mischievous imps, who had so often egged Adam on to tantalise unrequited love, now gloat in triumph at the pitfall into which he in his turn was being lured? for with all the quickness of a woman's appreciation of her situation, Eve seized her advantage, and at once assumed her former demeanour of cool indifference.

'Eve!'

'Adam.'

‘Oh, don't speak like that!’ and he stamped his foot impatiently; ‘as if you didn't care a button whether I stay here or go away; whether I speak or hold my tongue. I know that this evening I didn't do as I ought to have done, that I let my confounded ill-temper get the better of me;

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but you know I had some reason; you know that I was put out and tantalised past bearing by one thing and the other; and seeing that it was you who ——’

‘Hush!’ she said, as a sudden noise suggested that Joan and Ann Lisbeth were coming to join them; they've only gone in to ask Mrs. Climo something, and left me here because my foot pains me so. I think I must have strained it,’ she continued, putting it out.

‘Your foot!’ and in a second he was kneeling on the ground with his hand under her shoe. ‘What, this one? How did you do it?’ he said. ‘Does it ache much? You are not used to such rough walking, perhaps; that's it.’

‘I hardly know;’ and she made an effort to stand upon it. ‘Oh dear!’ she exclaimed, flinching with the pain; ‘how shall I manage to hobble home?’

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‘Oh, I'll get you home fast enough,’ said Adam, growing quite cheerful at the prospect of her probable dependence. ‘If you'll take hold of me, and lean all your weight on my arm, I'll wager you shall reach home safely enough.’

‘But ain't you very tired already?’ suggested Eve.

‘Tired! no. What should I be tired with?’

‘Why, you've had Jessie to ——’

‘Oh, Jessie be—bothered! I only offered to go with her because—well, hoping it would vex you.’

‘Vex me! why, how could it possibly vex me?’ and Eve opened her eyes in innocent astonishment.

‘I don't know,’ he said; ‘only I know I'd give a good deal to be able to vex you, or please you, or even put you in right-down regular passion, so that it would make

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you think of me a bit different to other people.’

‘Dear me, what a time they're staying!’ said Eve abruptly, declining to take any notice of this last speech.

‘There it is!’ he sighed; ‘that's it! You're tired of me in five minutes.’

‘Hardly so soon as that,’ said Eve; and either the softened intonation of her voice or the look she turned upon him made Adam exclaim:

‘Eve, let me run in and tell them we're going on. Yes; do, now! Rawes Climo's home, and he's certain to walk back with Ann Lisbeth. Only think, if you wait for them, how late we shall be! and with you not able to do more than limp home!’

‘Do you think they'd mind?’ said Eve, hesitating.

‘Mind! no;’ and, waiting for no further permission, he opened the gate, and was in

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the house and back again before Eve had more than time to wonder if she ought to have allowed him to go.

‘It's all right,’ he said; ‘Rawes is there, and Barnabas Tadd, and they're all coming together. I told them not to hurry, because you would be forced to walk very slow. Will you have my arm?’ he asked; ‘or shall I take your hand?’

Eve held out her hand, Adam took it; and they so proceeded on their way, picking their steps with a caution which precluded much being said in the way of conversation. At length, however, the bottom of the hill was reached, and the road became more even, so that there was a possibility of talking.

‘I remember this road now,’ said Eve: ‘tis the same one I came here by, up on the horse behind young Mr. Tucker.’

‘Is it?’ replied Adam, with the abstracted

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air of one who makes a remark because he feels something is expected of him.

‘Yes; and we shall come to the turning to the mill presently, shan't we?’ said Eve, apparently desirous of airing her topographical knowledge.

‘Yes.’

‘I dare say it's a very pretty road by day,’ and Eve looked up at the high overhanging hedges; ‘but it's so dreadfully dark now! Isn't it dark?’

‘Dark!’ echoed Adam, after a minute's pause. ‘Yes, perhaps it is, rather;’ there was another pause, during which Eve wished that Adam would talk, or that she could think of something else to say; these periods of silence were embarrassing.

‘Isn't it a pity there's no moon!’ she said, looking up at the sky, murky and dark, with only a glimmering star here and there visible.

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‘What for?’ said Adam. ‘Why should you want the moon?’

‘Oh, because we could see our way so much better!’

‘I know every step of the way blindfolded,’ said Adam; ‘there's quite as much light as I want. And as for you,’ he added, drawing her closer to him, ‘there's no need for you to see: you couldn't slip with me near you.’

‘Oh, couldn't I! I'm not so sure of that,’ she said, with a half-nervous laugh. ‘Why, you've almost let me slip two or three times already.’

‘Not a bit of it!’ he replied stoutly; ‘that wasn't slipping: I only caught hold of you to be ready in case you might slip.’

‘That's very good!’ laughed Eve. ‘I'm afraid you must be nervous.’

‘I shouldn't wonder but I am,’ he said, bending down so that Eve felt he was

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looking into her face. ‘How ought you to feel when you are nervous?’

‘How!’ repeated Eve, who at that moment needed but to give the description by her personal feelings. ‘Why, you seem in a sort of tremble all over, and your heart is in such a flutter that you can all but hear it beating.’

‘That's exactly how mine feels now, then,’ said Adam.

‘Really!’ and Eve tried to steady her voice to its usual tone. ‘I wonder what it can be with?’

‘Do you want to know?’ said Adam; and the whisper he spoke in seemed to quicken Eve's every vein. ‘Shall I tell you?’

‘No, no!’ she cried. ‘I don't want to hear—Adam——’ but the rest of the sentence was smothered; and when Eve spoke again it was to say, ‘Adam, I'm very angry indeed with you!’

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‘No, Eve, not angry!’ and Adam's voice was penitence itself. ‘Don't say that! How could I help it, when the others will be here in a minute? And you said you didn't know how to repay me.’

‘That didn't mean you were to pay yourself,’ replied Eve, trying to assume a most offended air; for, strange to say, she did not feel nearly as angry with Adam as she desired to.

‘Well, I'm sure I'll return it if you'll ——’ but Eve drew back with a determined movement.

‘Now, Adam, I won't allow any more of this. If you're going to walk home with me, you must behave yourself.’

‘Well, I will,’ he said. ‘Only you mustn't be angry. You must say you forgive me.’

Eve stood for a moment hesitating, then, without looking up, she said:

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‘Well, I'll forgive you now, if you promise never to do so again; for, remember, next time I really shall be very angry indeed with you.’

The rest of the party now coming up, Adam accepted these conditions; and, joining company, they walked along together, singing snatches of such songs as had a chorus in which they could all take part. Between times the men spoke of their vessels, and how they had been employed. Barnabas had a share in a pilchard sean, and was therefore well up in fishing news. Rawes, who belonged to Ezekiel John's boat, was anxious to know when their next trip might be expected. Adam had their late luck with the Indiaman to relate. They had done very well, he said; and he thought by to-morrow, or the next day at the latest, the *Lottery* would manage to run it ashore.

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'How was it you didn't stay aboard her, then?' asked Barnabas.

'Oh, I'd had enough of being away,' replied Adam, giving Eve's hand a significant squeeze. 'Besides, there was a little business to be done at Dock with the landlord of the Blue Boar; so I got Jan Grigg, the pilot, to land me at Plymouth, and from there I got on.'

'Didn't see nothin' of Jerrem, I s'pose?' said Rawes.

Adam shook his head.

'What a chap that is!' continued Rawes. 'I wonder, now, where he's slopin' away his time to?'

'I told 'ee that Ikey Oliver said he'd ha' heerd that he'd left for Jersey Island, meaning to cross for Weymouth—didn't I?' said Joan, addressing Adam.

'Yes; but as Captain Trethewy left Jersey the same day we set sail from

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Guernsey, I don't see how it could have bin true.'

'Have 'ee got any pretty things this time, Adam?' asked Ann Lisbeth, desirous of changing the topic. 'Any chintzes or muslins or that?'

'No, nothing much beyond the china,' said Adam. 'That 'minds me I must look up Dickey Snobnose to-morrow. I s'pose you haven't none o' you seen him about nowheres, have ye?'

‘Yes, they have,’ said Joan. ‘He was no later than yesterday to Jochabed Giles’s, ‘spectin’ to hear you was in; but Jochabed had just met Eve and me goin’ to Bridles, so she told ‘en ‘twould be o’ no use goin’ to our house.’

‘H’m!’ said Adam; ‘I wish I could see him to-night or to-morrow—‘twould save a vast deal o’ bother. I wonder whether she’d know where he’s to be found for the next day or two?’

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‘Very like,’ said Joan; ‘t all events, us can go in and see; ‘tain’t above five minutes out o’ the way down by Ann Lisbeth’s.’

Adam looked at Eve.

‘No,’ he said. ‘We’ll get home first, and then I’ll run down afterwards. I can see her foot’s paining her.’

‘It’s walking on it, I s’pose,’ said Eve; adding, in a vexed tone, ‘I’m so sorry to be keeping all of you!’

‘Stuff a’ nonsense!’ exclaimed Joan. ‘There ain’t nothin’ to be sorry for, except ‘tis for yourself. Shall I go on, Adam?’ she asked. ‘We might just so well, and leave you and Eve to follo’. I’ll be home then so quick as you, or just after; and there’ll be no needs for you toilin’ down all that ways.’

Adam looked his thanks for such undeserved good-nature; and after bidding them

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‘Good-night!’ the rest of the party started off, leaving Eve and Adam to come on at a slower pace.

‘Do you know, I think I must take my shoe off,’ said Eve, quite hot with the pain caused her by the exertion of trying to keep up with the others, who, forgetful of her foot, had by degrees quickened into their ordinary pace.

‘No, don’t do that,’ said Adam; ‘it will be ever so much worse when you put it on again. Suppose you rested here for a minute. You might sit down,’ he added, seeing they were close by the low wall which divided Jowter’s park from the road.

Eve gladly accepted the offer; the pain of her foot was making her feel sick and faint.

‘You may depend you have given it a sprain,’ said Adam; ‘I can hardly feel the ankle-bone. Wait for a minute! I’ll

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loosen the shoestring—that’ll ease you a little;’ and he commenced trying to untie the rather complicated knot of ribbon.

‘Oh, never mind untying it. If you’ve got a knife, cut it!’ exclaimed Eve, impatient with pain.

And in another moment not only was the string cut, but, unable to resist the certainty of increased relief, the shoe, too, was off, lying on the ground.

‘Oh, how good that is!’ she sighed. ‘I felt as if my foot must burst.’

‘Yes, I know what it is,’ said Adam, sympathetically. ‘I gave my foot an ugly twist once, coming along the rocks from Playdy Beach.’

‘Ah, I don’t wonder there; but here in the road, I can’t think how it happened!’

‘I only wonder it hasn’t happened before,’ said Adam; ‘such a little tiny foot as it is!’

‘Come, it’s of no use trying to take me

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in with your flattery,’ said Eve. ‘I’ve been told all about you already.’

‘What do you mean, all about me?’

‘Why, what a regular flirt you are, and how you try to make the girls think you are dying for them one week, and laugh at them for it the next. Ah! you see, I know all about you,’ she laughed, triumphantly.

‘Don’t you give credit to any such lies,’ said Adam, energetically; ‘cos it isn’t true. I don’t say I haven’t carried on a bit with the maidens about, like other chaps; but, as for meaning anything by it, nothing could be further from my thoughts. But that’s the way

with the women; they're never contented unless they think you mean twenty times more than you say.'

'And that's not your case, then?' laughed Eve. 'What you say you mean,

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and what you mean you say, eh—is that it?'

'Not always; lately, if I'd been let, I should have said a great deal more than I have said. I've meant what 't isn't easy perhaps to put into words.'

'Come, come!' said Eve, quickly, 'now you're getting out of your depth again; and it's quite time we were getting back, so give me my shoe!' and she held out her foot—and a very good-looking foot it was, clothed in its well-fitting grey knitted stocking.

Women of all classes were careful over the appearance of their feet in those days, when a pretty foot was reckoned hardly second to a pretty face.

The shoe was produced, but all fruitless were the endeavours to get it on. Adam turned down the heel, held open the sides, while Eve pulled at it with a vigour which

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might have done credit to Cinderella's rivals, but all to no effect. The shoe didn't go on, and the shoe wouldn't go on.

'Whatever's to be done?' she exclaimed, in dismay.

'You can't walk home without your shoe,' exclaimed Adam.

'But I must,' continued Eve.

'Your foot would be cut to pieces,' said Adam. 'There's but one thing to be done,' he added, after a moment's pause, 'I must carry you.'

'Oh no!' said Eve. 'Carry me! absurd nonsense!'

'Then how are you to get back?'

'I can't think.'

'Nor I either; so come along. It's perfectly dark, nobody'll see you; and, if they do, what's the odds?'

'But you've no idea how heavy I am.'

‘Oh, a tidy weight, I’ve no doubt; but

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I can get up most places with a couple of kegs slung to me, so I’ll have a try, and at the worst I can but drop you in the road, you know.’

Eve urged many more scruples, but, as while making them she mounted the wall and arranged her dress, Adam gave them no heed; he directed her to lean her weight well over his shoulder and not to talk, and then off they set, Eve feeling far more at her ease than she had conceived possible under so trying a situation.

‘Don’t you think I’d best walk now?’ said she, as Adam rested for a moment before the little street leading up to Talland lane.

‘No: how could you? the road’s worse here than where we are come from. You don’t want to walk, do you?’

‘No; only I’m afraid of your being tired.’

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‘Tired!’ he said, resuming his burden; ‘I should like to carry you to the world’s end.’

And instead of reproving this idle wish, Eve only said, ‘Put me down before you open the door—in case anybody should be inside.’

Fortunately, with the exception of two men who passed them with a stolid ‘goodnight,’ they met no one. The night was dark, and on dark nights few people who had not a necessity cared to venture abroad; added to this, the air blew keen, so that most of the hatch-doors were closed, and the only gleam of light came from the red-curtained windows of the two public-houses which they passed on their way.

‘I really don’t know how to thank you, Adam,’ said Eve, earnestly; for, the little bridge crossed, she knew they were now close by the house.

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‘So you said before,’ he replied, meaningly.

'No, but really now,' persisted Eve; 'this is quite different, you know.'

'Oh, never mind,' said Adam; 'I'm content to take the same payment.'

'Now, Adam,' and Eve gave him a reproving look.

'Come, that's pretty well,' he said, 'considering that if I'd been minded to I might have helped myself at every step we took.'

'Twas good for you, though, you didn't,' said Eve, as, having reached the door, she slid down on to the step.

'Was it?' he answered her absently; then with a sudden impulse, for his hand was on the latch, he turned, and whispering said:

'Eve, what should you call it if all of a sudden seeing and talking to, and being near to, one person seemed more than anything

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else in the world—should you call it love?'

'I don't know,' she faltered; 'I don't know anything about ——' but before she could get out the word, the door from within was burst open by Joan, who exclaimed, in an excited voice:

'Well, here you be at last, poor souls! Come along in with 'ee, do. There's somebody waitin' to see 'ee; who d'ee think—eh, Adam? Why, 'tis old Jerrem; iss, that's who tis. When I comed back I found un sittin' down waitin' for us.'

And having thus far intercepted the meeting, she now drew on one side and admitted to view a young man, who came forward, and, holding out his hand, said in an awkward, constrained manner:

'Well, Adam, here I am at last; and how's the land lying with you?'

CHAPTER IV.

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TO Joan's great satisfaction Adam accepted the hand which Jerrem proffered, exchanged a few indifferent remarks, and then by degrees sank down into that distant

coolness more fatal to the re-establishment of friendship than an open rupture is. In answer to some questions put by Joan, Jerrem said that he had left Jersey on the previous Sunday and had come across in the *Long Bet*, of Cawsand, a vessel apparently engaged in the same free trade as the *Lottery*.

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He spoke of the places he had visited and the people he had seen, but beyond these and like remarks no mention was made as to his absence, or the cause of his being left behind. Eve, who had expected to find in Jerrem another stalwart sailor, was surprised to see a short slim young fellow with a pleasant face and an irresistible flow of spirits, with which at once he seemed to infect every one but Adam; who, notwithstanding the efforts made by Joan and Eve, continued to sit silent and glum, answering the direct questions put to him, but refusing to be drawn into the general conversation.

This moodiness, however, was no check to Jerrem, who rattled away during the whole of supper-time with a volubility which increased as the two girls, finding their efforts fruitless, resigned themselves to being amused, and gradually became so

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engrossed with their merriment and banter that during long lapses of time Adam and his ill-humour were forgotten. At length the pushing back of his chair with unnecessary violence recalled them to a sense of his presence, after which he got up, took a cigar from his pocket, and leaning across for the candle, held it while he proceeded to take a light.

‘Why, you ain't goin' out, Adam, to be sure?’ exclaimed Joan, now fully alive to the offence they had given.

‘What!’ said Adam, continuing to puff away at his cigar.

‘You ain't goin' out, not now?’ repeated Joan.

‘Yes, I am!’ he said, waiting to set down the candle before he gave the answer.

‘Why? is there any reason why I shouldn't go?’

‘No, no reason,’ said Joan; ‘only 'tis

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gettin' so late, and we two shall be off to bed almost directly.'

'Oh! indeed?' and Adam's face expressed the astonishment he desired to imply. 'Really, I thought from present appearances that you were settled for the night.'

'And why not?' put in Jerrem. 'I for one am ready to make a night of it. Come, what do ee say to a brew o' good punch—eh, Joan? Where's the grog to? out with it, my maid, and let's draw round the fire and have a song;' and throwing his arm round Joan's waist, he trolled out in an uncommonly musical voice:

“ 'Twas landlady Meg that made such rare flip;
Pull away, pull away, my hearties!
At Wapping she lived, at the sign o' the Ship,
Where tars met in such jolly parties.
Parties—where tars——”

but the remainder of the chorus was

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drowned by the clang of the house-door, as Adam slammed it violently after him.

'O Lord, there's the fat in the fire agen!' exclaimed Joan, despondingly.

'Never mind—what's the odds so long as you're happy?' laughed Jerrem, paying no more heed that the door had been slammed by Adam's exit, than if its bolts and bars had been shaken by a gust of wind.

'Happy!' echoed Joan, in a tone of vexation. 'Iss, that's all very fine for you; but Eve and me's had so much o' it as us can carry in wan day, haven't us. Eve? He'd scarce so much as set foot inside the doors afore he began with his tantrums.'

'Blawed out o' Plymouth in a contrairy wind,' suggested Jerrem, who continued to busy himself in stirring the fire, putting on the kettle and getting out fresh glasses.

'I wish to goodness, then, 'twould blow un back agen,' sighed Joan; 'there or

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anywheres, so long as he'd stay 'till he felt a bit more peaceable. I declares you may so well try to walk on the edge o' a knife, as hope to please him when he's in one o' these quondaries.'

'But what on earth could have angered him now?' exclaimed Eve; 'he seemed so sorry that he'd been out of temper, he quite begged my pardon about it.'

'Then, I say, Joan, let's you and me ax of un to beg our pardons, shall us?' said Jerrem, with a comical look. 'Lors, come along, do,' he added, pointing to a low chair which he had placed for her next his own; 'or afore we gets settled us'll have un back agen. So out with the liquor, anyways; and if we can't get punch, give us a drop o' grog.'

Joan placed the bottles on the table, taking out at the same time the little flowered glass which she had previously given to Eve.

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'What do 'ee think?' she said, as she set it in front of her, 'till her corned here, her never so much as tasted spirits o' no kind; and now,' she added, judging the surprise she must be occasioning in her hearer, 'her's only just put her lips to it, so 'tis no good o' mixin' nothin' worth drinkin' for she.'

'All right,' said Jerrem, 'you leave that to me. I know the sort o' brew that tickles the maiden's fancy. You won't say no to what I'll make for ye, miss.'

'Miss,' laughed Joan. 'Why, call her Eve, to be sure, Jerrem; her's so much a cousin to 'ee as I be, and,' she continued assuming to whisper, 'sent a kiss to 'ee, too, on that letter you haven't a got, same as I did.'

'Oh, Joan, how can you!' exclaimed Eve, her face getting very red and confused.

'Come, I like that,' cried Joan; 'how could you? 'Tis truth, though, a reg'lar

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smackin' one, too, so big round as so'—and she pouted up her lips into a rosy button, which to Jerrem looked so irresistible that, deferring the payment he evidently intended making to Eve, he made a dart at Joan, thereby affording an opportunity for Eve to

escape, which she, utterly unmindful of her foot, managed to effect by running up the stairs, which opened out behind her.

‘Her’ll be down agen in a minute, I reckon,’ said Joan. But so long as Joan stayed, Jerrem was perfectly indifferent as to what Eve might do; and, resuming his seat and his grog, he tried to entice Joan to sit down by his side, but of no avail, for Joan, remembering the hurt foot, insisted on taking the candle to run upstairs and see what Eve was about; and when some minutes later she returned, she informed Jerrem that Eve had gone up for

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good and all, and that she’d only come down to say good-night to him.

‘Oh, good-night,’ said Jerrem; and Joan, knowing by his voice that he was not very pleased, endeavoured to propitiate him by making some remark which led to an answer, and gradually expanded into a gossip, the principal topics being Eve and Adam; and Joan had just commenced a whispered account of how Adam had burnt the lace, when a footstep close outside the door made her exclaim: ‘I say, here he comes; I’m bothered if he shall know that her ain’t here too!’ and with a sudden movement she blew out the candle, so that when Adam opened the door it was to find the room empty, while the still bright wick and the scampering of footsteps told him that it was only at his approach that the happy party had taken flight. He drew a chair over to the fire, and flung himself

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down in no enviable mood, debating what course he should take. His strong desire was to make Jerrem come down, and then and there have a settlement of the long array of aggravations which for months had been smouldering between them. He regretted beyond measure that he had accepted his hand, a thing he had resolved not again to do; only that, coming upon him suddenly as he had done, the desire to avoid another outbreak before Eve had made him first waver, and finally give way, and his reward had been that from the moment Jerrem appeared Eve had had eyes and ears for no one else.

Might he not have known it would be so? had he ever cared for the affection of any thing or person, but Jerrem had stepped in between them? That birthright of mother's love which, whole and undivided, should have been his and only his, Jerrem had stolen

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from him; that first place in his father's heart Jerrem had ousted him from, so that the want of tolerance he often showed towards the old man's failings sprang as much from wounded vanity as from wounded morality. Did he single out a companion, Jerrem lured him away; if he made an acquaintance, Jerrem captivated him from his side; the very dog that Adam called his own, Jerrem could entice from his heels; and if he chose to put forth his arts among the crew, Adam's sound reasoning and common-sense arguments were as idle words poured into deaf ears.

Was this to go on for ever? and as the question rose up in his mind, before his eyes there shaped itself a face which, though but lately seen, had so mirrored itself in Adam's heart that its presence seemed reflected in every thought—its

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power felt in every action. Hitherto he had refused to ask the name of this spell, which by turns galled him like a yoke and then hung lightly as a chain of roses; but now his ears tingled with the sound, and every pulse that beat proclaimed its name was love. And was this new-born happiness to be wrenched away and torn aside by one whose shallow nature had no depths to shelter more than a passing passion? No; no, a thousand times no. Rather would he pluck his heart out by the roots than run the risk of such a danger, the dim shadow of which so frenzied him that, unmindful of all else but the tumult of his thoughts, he started from his chair and paced the room with hurried steps, while those above, listening to the sound, drew each their own conclusions: Joan's cup of bitterness sweetened by the thought that at last Adam could be

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made to suffer; Eve's heart swelling with delight as she grew more conscious of her power; Jerrem's weak nature quickened into firm resolve that if Adam was fairly caught, he'd have a game with Eve too; and repay the many stings which Adam's way of doing right so often made him smart and writhe under. Headstrong, impetuous, led by any one he was with, kind-hearted to a fault, generous to excess, Jerrem's virtues led him into more evils than most men's vices do. He was as wax in the hand of friend or foe, and was easily persuaded to follow the lead of the companion who humoured him most completely. Adam prided himself on never having stooped to gain an influence over Jerrem, a very false matter of gratulation; as, had he done so, he might have turned him from much folly and many a vicious habit. For Jerrem, rattle-brained as he

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seemed, had enough good sense to perceive and even to admire—although he could not emulate—Adam's good qualities, and a word of persuasion from him would have often conquered where a dictatorial rebuke only inflamed. Latterly their differences had been more open and more frequent, and the discord kept up by Jerrem's habit of shirking all allusion to an unpleasant subject, and positively refusing, when the cause of offence had once passed by, to give or receive any further explanation of it.

Jerrem could part with a man one day in the middle of a towering rage, and meet him the next with a pleasant smile, a shake of the hand, as if nothing had happened; a great proof, as his friends thought, of a forgiving disposition, while, in reality, the disposition to forgive was very trifling in comparison with his inability to retain; he

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could no more keep up anger than he could maintain silence, prudence, or any of those numerous 'new leaves' which he resolved to turn over one hour and forgot all about the next.

Adam, on the contrary, had no power to throw off an annoyance; it rankled and stuck by him until the matter of it was cleared up or atoned for; and though a year might elapse before an opportunity occurred, when it did occur his mind reverted at once to

the quarrel, and his manner betrayed the consciousness of its presence. Born with that love of his native place which reigns supreme in every true Cornishman's heart, Adam's early ambition had been full of schemes for the prosperity and regeneration of Polperro; and as year by year these aspirations faded away, in the certainty that nothing short of a miracle could change either place or people, he grew

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to have less sympathy for failings he had no share in, and less toleration for follies he had no temptation to.

Noting his unpopularity, it stung him the quick to see the difference made between Jerrem and himself. Jerrem welcomed, made much of, screened, confided in, while he was only sought when an arbitrator was needed; never welcomed except some advice was wanted; seldom trusted, but when betrayal elsewhere was feared — a popularity utterly valueless while Jerrem held the stronghold of favour, for the jealous heart has in no way changed since envious Haman counted all as nought so long as Mordecai the Jew sat at the king's gate.

“’Twas all along o' his head being crammed up with a passel o' book-larnin,' was the verdict pronounced on Adam by the Polperro folk, who, while they showed

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no predilection for his society, could not refrain from compassionating him. A man who didn't, seemingly, care much for badger-baiting, dog-fighting, rat-hunting, wouldn't drink, and seldom fought, what rational enjoyment was there left for him? So well not make money at all, as not to know how to spend it when you had made it. “’Twas a complete judgment on old Zebedee's pride,” they said, “and prettily he was payin' for it now, 'stead o' bringin' up the boy in the way he should go. For to stick by his boat and stand by his cargo, fight fair and die game, was all the larnin' a Polperro lad needed; and if that tachin' didn't make a man of him, nothin' to be larnt out of books would.”

CHAPTER V.

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DISTRACTED by thoughts which even in sleep still held possession of his mind, Adam gladly hailed the dawn, and, rising with it, went out soon after to see if as yet there was any news of the *Lottery*. He was anxious to secure the immediate services of Dicky Snobnose, an itinerant vendor of earthenware—or dome, as it is thereabouts called—who was usually engaged to dispose of the smuggled porcelain, which, as ‘rale Injee Chinee,’ was held at that time in

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great repute. Lostwithiel was the usual market, and thither, concealed away under coarse basins and jugs, Dicky carried it himself: or, if of too weighty a load for his basket, packed it carefully in the panniers of the sturdy donkey which he carefully led along.

Adam found that the fisher portion of the village was already astir, and round and about the quay various preparations were in progress. The sea was smooth, and encircled by a dark blue ridge of boundary, over which clouds—heavy and lowering—spread out in a leaden stretch towards the shore, there to meet the mists which still hung thick, clinging to the cliffs, and obscuring all but their tall heads from view. The few boats which the dawn had found close in shore had managed to round the Peak, and now lay dotted here and there about the little

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harbour, waiting to clear out the fish which they had been best part of the night engaged in catching. The men lounged over the sides, calling to one another, hearing and telling of their luck, or their lack of it. The boys swung idly on the bowsprits, daring their fellows to various feats of venture. The lookers-on gazed idly from the quay, giving, now and again, vent to an abstracted whistle, in the vague hope of bringing the wind and bettering the stagnation of affairs.

Placing himself on a vantage-point, Adam addressed the man nearest within hearing, and making a trumpet of his hands, shouted out an inquiry whether he had seen or heard any word of the *Lottery*. No, he had not, but he'd pass the word and ask if the others had; the result of which was an answer returned that the *Lottery* was just outside, only waiting for

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a bit of a breeze to bring her in. His supposition thus confirmed, Adam determined to seek Dicky Snobnose without further delay, and going across to the Three Pilchards, he found that word had been left on the previous evening that Dicky had gone to Lansallos, where he would remain until the next day.

The morning was clearing up, with a promise of brightness, so without doubt the *Lottery* would make all speed to get in; and as Adam had made arrangements for their store of spirits to be taken away, it was expedient to get the more fragile cargo off their hands with as little delay as possible. His best plan would be to set off for Lansallos at once, and as he should have to pass the mill on his way, he could easily get breakfast with his aunt, and thus avoid the unpleasantness which might not improbably attend another

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home-meal. By crossing the Green he escaped again passing the house, and came at once upon the road to Crumplehorne, his pace quickening as the recollection of the previous night's walk rose up vividly to disturb him. Already over Hard Head the sun had made a rift in the sky. The hoar-frost, changed into drops of dew, hung trembling on each blade of grass; the slowly dispelling mist curled itself into long wreaths of smoke, which, creeping up the hillside, vanished into space; the dripping leaves held up their heads; the shivering birds set up a feeble chirrup, and Adam, touched by soft memories and the cheering prospect of a brighter day, felt the gloom which had oppressed him lifted up, his spirits heightened; and, throwing off the shadows which had hitherto clouded his face, he was able to present himself before Mrs. Tucker with a

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manner which gave rise to no suspicion on her part that she was indebted to aught else but the convenient situation of the mill for the pleasure of his visit.

‘Well, I’m sure!’ she said, as they seated themselves at the well-spread table. ‘Twouldn’t have bin not expectin’ so very much if Joan and Eve had got up for once and gived ‘ee yer breakfast ‘stead o’ layin’ in their beds till nobody knows when; but there, young people’s all alike now—up when they oft to be abed, and abed when they oft to be up.’

‘Well, they were kept up a bit late last night,’ said Adam, by way of excuse; ‘one thing was that we were late home for coming back from seeing Jessie Braddon; on her way Eve managed to give a twist to her foot.’

‘Well, I hope to goodness, then, that Joan had got some lily-leaves to lay to it;

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though ‘twould be nothin’ more than I should look for to be told her’d nothin’ in the house to fly to.’

‘I don’t know, I’m sure, what they did to it,’ said Adam, carelessly; ‘it seemed rather bad at first, but I s’pose the pain went off, for she didn’t appear to be doing anything to it.’

‘Ah!’ said Mrs. Tucker, with a little nod of contempt: ‘I’ve allays heerd say that town folks is capital hands at cryin’ out afore they’m hurted. What do ‘ee think o’ yer cousin then, Adam?’

Adam felt devoutly thankful that, under cover of arranging the contents of his plate (which his aunt in her hospitality had over-bountifully filled), he could avoid meeting her scrutinising gaze.

‘Oh, I think she’s well enough, so far as maidens go,’ he said at length.

‘Ah, you may well say as far as they go,’

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repeated Mrs. Tucker; 'for there's but few o' them worth much, I b'lieve, nowadays, and I'm often checked from findin' more fault with Joan than I do, by the thought that where you see one better there's twenty that's worse.'

'Oh, Joan's well enough,' said Adam, heartily; 'nobody need find much fault with her. If half the women in the world were as good as Joan, there'd be double as many men with lighter hearts.'

'Well, I shouldn't wonder if you only speak the truth there,' returned Mrs. Tucker, complacently; 'for 'tis more her heedless ways than any harm that her's got in her, and for that reason I'm pleased to see Eve so steady, and not one o' your fly-away giglets, such as I could name a dozen for here; rather too steady, I fancy, for the carryin' out o' uncle's scheme.'

'Scheme! what scheme?' asked Adam.

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'Why, don't 'ee mind uncle's sayin' that she and Jerrem must make a match of it?'

'Jerrem!' repeated Adam, sharply; 'father ud much better hold his tongue about such things. Jerrem can find a wife, I dare say, without father helping him to look for one.'

'Oh, well, there was no harm meant,' returned Mrs. Tucker; 'and so far as that goes, I was so much in fault as your father. For Eve's a unprovided-for girl, you know, Adam, and as Jerrem's made to share in everythin' pretty much as if he was a son, I don't see, for my part, why he shouldn't have the keepin' o' one o' the family for it.' 'He's welcome, so far as I go, to all father chooses to do for him,' said Adam; 'but if I'm to be asked, I'd rather he looked out for a wife somewheres else. I

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think our family's had pretty well enough of him without that.'

'Ah! and so do I too,' replied Mrs. Tucker, bristling up. 'There's a way o' doin' things, and a way o' overdoin' things, and Jerrem's feet was never measured for the shoes he stands in; but there, your poor mother was as blind as ever your father is, and,

if 'tis possible, more wrapped up, so that I never got nothin' but black looks from both of 'em if ever I said a word against it.'

'He's been made too much of altogether,' said Adam, conclusively. 'However, I s'pose if parents choose to set up a stranger before their own son they've a right to; only let it end there. I wouldn't advise Jerrem to try on any more of these cutting-out games with me.'

'And I don't wonder at 'ee sayin' so,

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then,' said Mrs. Tucker, sympathetically; 'for the trodden worm will turn.'

'Ah! I don't know that there's much o' the worm about me,' laughed Adam, grimly; 'but there's a touch of a tar-brush which might make a man think twice before he fell foul of me.' And, rising from the table, he pushed back his chair and put an end to the conversation by saying that he should have to be off now.

'And you'll tell Joan not to forget that I haven't got a match to my basin yet,' said Mrs. Tucker, as Adam nodded his good-bye.

'Best come down and match it yourself,' said Adam; 'and Sam here may stand a chance of that neckerchief I heard promised him so long ago— eh, Sammy?'

Sammy's callow countenance expressed his approbation. Following Adam out, he said:

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'I was amanin' to come down. Not about the handkercher, though,' he added, with a chuckle.

'What then?' said Adam, absently.

'To see Eve,' replied Sammy. 'Capen Triggs to Fowey axed me if so be he gived it to me, whether or no I'd give it to she, and I said "Iss, I would."'

'You would what?' said Adam, turning round so sharply that Sammy, who always walked a step or two behind, was forced to avoid him by giving a sudden dodge on one side.

'Why—why,' stammered Sammy, 'tell her 'bout the chap to London, how he's allays agoin' to un axin' if hers a got down all safe and that, and whether her likes it or no, and whether her bain't soon acomin' back agen, and so on.'

'What's he called?' asked Adam.

'Nothin' that I knows by; but her can

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tell 'ee, 'cos lie seed her aboard the *Mary Jane*.'

'Here, you come along with me,' said Adam, holding the gate open to make sure of Sam passing through. 'Now,' he said authoritatively, 'tell me from the beginning what did Capen Triggs say, eh?'

Sammy, who held Adam in the greatest awe, began to feel very uncomfortable.

'Twarn't no fault o' mine,' he whined out in an injured tone.

'Who said it was?' said Adam, testily. 'Fault of yours, of course not; nobody's finding fault with you. All I want to know is, what did Triggs say?'

'Awh!' said Sammy, greatly relieved. 'Well then, so far as I can, I'll tell 'ee how it was.'

And with a large amount of circumlocution he related that Captain Triggs had told him to tell Eve that the young man

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who saw her off had been down twice to the wharf to inquire if he'd heard any word of how she was getting on, and that he, Captain Triggs, had promised him that if he got a chance he'd send and tell her that a few lines from herself would be acceptable.

'And that was all?' said Adam, fixing a searching gaze on Sammy.

Sammy nodded his head.

'Every word,' he said decisively.

‘All right! Then, now look here: don't you say anything about it, but leave it to me to tell her myself, and I'll see you get your neckerchief all right; and, if you can keep a silent tongue, something else that I've got stowed away somewheres at home.’

‘I woan't quit a single ward to no livin' sawl,’ said Sammy, solemnly, his face beaming with anticipation. ‘I reckon,’ he

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added, with a confidential wink at Adam, ‘that thuck'ee chap's her baw, doan't you?’

Adam did not answer, but the look which came into his face as he made a half-step forward sent Sammy back into the hedge, where he remained, apparently paralysed, until with an effort Adam swung himself round, and rapidly walked away, heedless of aught but the tumult of emotion which the slightest word of Eve seemed now to stir up within him.

Ever since this fever had set in, Adam had been torn by a hundred doubts and contradictions. While absent, the idle moments of each day seemed spent in testing the sincerity of this sudden passion. Was it real? would it last? Until the weight of fear that another might step in had cast down the scale and left

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no further room for doubt or reason, the balance had seemed undecided. But now, added to Adam's former anxiety, had come the suspicion conjured up by Sammy Tucker's tale.

Surely it could not be that Eve had left her heart behind, already given to another's keeping. The thought turned Adam sick. Recalling to his mind the words he once had jested on, about her never being a sailor's wife, he asked himself, could there be more in this than he had thought? An ugly look came into Adam's face, and for a while he let a battle rage between a voice which said no girl would look at him as she had looked unless she held her love in her own keeping, and one that argued with a bitter sneer that women were alike and all were false. Yes, all but Eve; for love soon triumphed over doubt, and growing pitiful, called reason to its aid, which

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quickly showed that after all this man in London might be but a friend, that is, on Eve's part; for with the bias of a lover's mind, Adam refused to think that any man could look on Eve's face and not grow covetous that she should be his own, and for this reason he would show her that the answering of inquiries like these had best be left in other hands than hers; and then, out of the talk that would arise from this, the task of warning her would prove an easy one, and her friend's case become a peg on which to hang the cautions he wished to give, although he shrunk from naming Jerrem as the cause of these being given.

Adam was still seemingly engrossed in these reflections when instinct made him stop, and he found himself in front of a long rickety gate, leading to the rather decayed-looking farmhouse at which it

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was Dicky Snobnose's habit to stay. For several minutes Adam had to stand still, trying to pull himself back into the everyday things of life. Why was he here? what had he come for? But before the questions were well asked, the errand was recalled, and he was able to put the necessary inquiries to the girl who was somewhat lazily watching the scramble for food between two lean, long-bodied pigs.

'Here I be, maister,' shouted a voice beyond; and, turning, Adam saw Dicky making towards him through the accumulation of slush and dirt with which the house was surrounded.

Adam began to give his instructions, under the hope that Dicky, supposing he had merely come to deliver these, would allow him to depart without accompanying him—a vain delusion, soon dispelled by the assurance that he knew he should

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be wanted, and so had been taking it easy until he was fetched; and, seeing the companionship unavoidable, with as good a show of grace as could be given by sullen acquiescence, the two men set off at a brisk pace on their road back to Polperro.

Dicky, a short, thick-set fellow between forty and fifty, had his sturdy person rendered conspicuous by a startling waistcoat of red-and-yellow-flowered velvet, the make of which, as regarded flaps and pockets, carried one back for at least half a century. Dicky was a general favourite, and, on account of the store of gossip he was always in possession of, accustomed to be treated with no ordinary consideration. His itinerant calling afforded him grand opportunities of collecting news, and they had not gone far before, with the good natured intent of enlivening the walk, he began retailing some of these to Adam,

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but all to no purpose; Adam evinced not the slightest interest, and as it gradually began to dawn upon Dicky that his eloquence was being thrown away, he too relapsed into silence.

‘I b’lieve I was roused up a trifle too early this morning,’ said Adam, by way of apology. ‘Awh!’ returned Dicky, ‘I was a reckonin’ that ‘twas sommat arter that fashion. It doan’t seem to accord with ‘ee overmuch, neither.’

‘No,’ said Adam; ‘I had a stiffish day yesterday, and I expect I shan’t have much time for keepin’ my hands in my pockets to-day.’

‘For why, thin?’

‘Oh! ‘tisn’t the china. I know you can manage all that, but they’re comin’ to clear the liquor off from our place.’

‘Awh!’ and Dicky drew in his breath

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in signification of his appreciation. ‘Them’s the times! I minds bein’ at plenty of ‘em afore now—brandy—rum—so much and more than you like to call for; nothin’ scarce but watter. That’s what’s up, is it?’ he added, with visible vexation. ‘Soas! but I wishes I warn’t astartin’; it’s ‘nuf to make anybody poor tempered to know they’m missin’ such a game as that’s like to be.’

'I wish the whole concern was at the devil!' exclaimed Adam, passionately, the thought of how Eve might be affected by such coarse revelry coming with all its force before him.

'Divil!' echoed Dicky; 'how divil! Awh, my dear!' he continued reprovingly, 'you might find somefin' wus to wish he than a cargo o' good liquor. Why, what d'ee mane by such words—eh?'

'Mean, that I'm sick o' this everlasting

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drinking,' said Adam; 'what good does it do to a man?'

'Wa-all, that depends on how you carries what you takes,' said Dicky, sententiously. 'I know you'm but a poor ship to pub a good cargo into, though why it should be so, seein' you was abroft up to it, I can't say. But there,' he added, after some reflection, 'tis the same with mate as 'tis with drink—some can't abide thickee and t'other man can't touch thuckee; now I'm none o' that sort, thank the Lord for it, I'm a regular epicoor, I be: I can ate and drink anything, I can, and that's as it should be, and what man was intended for.'



CHAPTER VI.

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FROM the time she discovered Adam's absence, Eve had felt very uneasy. She had awoke with the desire of being propitiatory, and had come downstairs determined to make some amends for the now repented- of behaviour of the previous night. As Adam was the earliest riser in the house, no surprise was felt at his being already out of doors, but when the hour of breakfast came—had passed—and yet no sign of Adam, Eve hazarded various surmises as

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to what could have possibly become of him, surmises which Joan dismissed with the comforting assurance that wherever he was he was all right, as with all his tantrums he'd never yet been known to quarrel with his meat.

Disposed to be critical, Eve could not refrain from thinking that Joan took the matter somewhat too indifferently, and at the same time she felt rather vexed with her for being so engrossed by Jerrem's wants and Jerrem's rattle, for as such, in her present mood, she designated the light-hearted conversation with which he again tried to entertain them. Eve was in no humour for fun and banter, and the continuous flow of joke and laughter jarred upon and ruffled her temper. It was with a sigh of positive relief that she at length saw Jerrem take his departure, only, however, to return again some ten

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minutes later, with the welcome intelligence that the *Lottery* was coming in, and was already in sight. Full of excitement at the news, Joan caught up her hat to run out and get first sight of Uncle Zebedee; but although pressed to accompany her, Eve declined, pleading her lame foot as a reason for keeping quiet.

Seeing she had stayed at home for the sake of rest, Eve might have been expected to remain sitting quietly still; instead of which, no sooner did she feel herself relieved from observation, than she got up and began wandering hither and thither with a purposeless air—fidgeting first with one thing and then another; sometimes listening, sometimes starting; until, finally, she went over to the window, and leaning against it, stood peering out with looks of anxious expectancy. Suddenly the inconsistency of this behaviour seemed

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to strike her, and with a resolute movement she turned away, found her workbox, took out her work, and seated herself, with the evident determination of forcing herself to employment. The occupation, associated as it was with home, sent her thoughts thither—an undefined feeling of emotion seemed to stir her inmost self, as, threading the mazes of that bygone life, memory brought back the past, and with it the thought of

Reuben May—the love he had shown—the hopes he had formed—the promises they had exchanged. ‘I’ll write at once,’ she thought, the recollection of the delayed letter coming to her aid, ‘and tell him now that already I know I never shall go back away from here again, because’ —and here a pause came, and either that she saw or sought a solution to her motives, she sat dreaming on, with half-closed eyes, her

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hands, from which the work soon slipped, idly resting in her lap.

Deaf to the noises that were going on around, Eve was roused by a fresh sound—a hand had been laid upon the latch. She started up—it was Adam.

‘Oh, Adam! why, wherever have you been? we couldn’t think what had become of you,’ she exclaimed, in stammering confusion.

‘Isn’t there any word of father yet?’ said Adam, in a voice that sounded harsh and abrupt, while his eyes, which ignored her presence, looked round the room, as if expecting his question to be answered by some one else.

‘Yes; the ship’s coming in,’ said Eve, ‘and Joan and Jerrem have gone to look at her.’

‘Are you by yourself, then?’ asked Adam, without any modulation of his voice.

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‘Yes, but I can get you whatever you want; the things are all here for your breakfast—shall I make some ready for you?’

Adam vouchsafed no answer, but turning at once to a man who, she now saw, had been standing behind him, he said something which Eve could not hear; then, without casting so much as a look in her direction, he stepped backwards, and pulled to the door; after which, to Eve’s amazement, she saw him and his companion pass by the window.

Was it possible that he was gone?

Eve ran to the side of the window which commanded the longest stretch, and craned her neck to look after them. Yes, they were no longer in sight, and at the fact the tears of disappointment rose into her eyes.

Why was he treating her like that? What had she done to offend him?

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Under the fear of his displeasure Eve's heart sank as it had never done before; for though she had had a presentiment that he was not pleased, she had in no way expected to see the grave change betrayed in Adam's face and voice. Could it be because of this or that?

Eve was racking her brain with fifty suggestions, when click went the latch.

Adam had returned, and this time, closing the door after him, he drew the bolt and fastened it; then he came over and stood in front of Eve, not speaking to her, but looking with an expression which made her throw aside her coyness, and say:

'Oh, Adam, I'm so glad you have come back! You ain't angry with me, are you? When you went away without speaking like that, I thought I had offended you.'

'And if you had,' said Adam, half questioningly, 'you wouldn't care?'

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'You have no right to say that—unless,' she added, raising her soft brown eyes to his face, 'you want to make me say that I should care.'

Adam threw his arms round her, and holding her so that he could look into her face, he said:

'Give me your promise to come out with me sometime this evening; 'tis no use beginning to ask what I want to now, because the others will be back at any minute. But so soon as this bustle is over, promise me that you'll listen to what I've got to say; I must tell it to you before you sleep to-night; 'twould send me wild to pass another twenty-four hours like this last has been.'

'It must not be for very far,' said Eve, by way of not seeming too ready to comply; 'because, though my foot isn't painful, it is stiff.'

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'I'll see you shan't go too far,' said Adam, straining to keep down by commonplace replies the words he longed to speak. 'Tis hard to bring myself to stay till then,' he added, relieving a little of his pent-up emotion by a long-drawn sigh; 'only I'm fearing that the rest will come. Ah!' he exclaimed, as Joan's voice was heard outside: 'here they are—I was sure they wouldn't be long. So 'tis this evening, remember, and that seals the promise.'

'Oh—' but Eve had to swallow down the remainder of her protest, for—the bolt having been quietly drawn — the door opened and admitted Joan, who, followed by Dicky Snobnose, had come back to put the things aside, and get a clear space ready for the arrival of the china. The expression upon Adam's face, combined with the information which Dicky had just imparted, satisfied Joan that nothing more

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than the hope of doing a good stroke of business had caused Adam's absence, and without hesitation she said:

'Why, Adam, whatever made 'ee start off like that this mornin' without a bite or sup inside 'ee? There wasn't no occasion for it. I'm sure you'd only got to say the word and breakfast 'ud ha' bin ready.'

'Oh, I took care of myself,' said Adam, cheerily; 'I had a capital breakfast up to mill, with yer mother. I wanted to see her, so it all fitted in.'

'There, now,' exclaimed Joan; 'didn't I tell 'ee he wouldn't forget number wan? Eve,' she said, turning to Adam, 'would keep on thinkin' you'd started off to Looe, or gone back to Dock or somewheres; her couldn't ate her own breakfast, 'cos I believe her thought you'd got none.'

Adam stole a glance which told his

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gratitude, while Eve, with a little confusion, said:

‘Oh, I suppose it's from being in London that I can't bear people to be away without knowing where they are. There,’ she added, laughing, ‘they would have sent the bell-man after you, and had you cried.’

‘Lord save us from they London ways!’ said Dicky, with an ominous shake of the head. ‘I've bin hearin' a goodish bit o' talk o' late about the things they goes on with up there, and I can't say it 'zackly chimes in with my voos o' what's right and fitty. But there,’ he added, catching sight of Adam's face, ‘that's axin pardon, miss, for bein' so bould as to spake my mind afore you, who's comed frae the place; tho' I dessay, if the truth was spoken, you'm glad enough to be where you bain't scrooged up for elbow-room, and's able to

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draw a breath o' air without waitin' your turn to do it in. Awh, 'twouldn't suit me at all, that wouldn't; and so long as King George don't send word he can't do no longer without me noways, you won't catch Dicky I up to London.’

‘Uncle's all but in,’ said Joan, turning to Adam; ‘and Jerrem's waitin' down to quay, so that they'll bring the things off to once. I didn't count 'pon this rout-out comin' yet whiles, for don't 'ee mind, Eve, 'tis to-day us promised we was to go up to Aunt Hepzibah's.’

‘Well, why not go then?’ returned Adam; ‘there's nothin' to keep you here.’

‘What! and uncle just comed back! Well, you'm a nice one, I must say. Who's goin' to look after folks, and see they have all they wants to ate and drink?—not you, I'll lay a wager.’

‘You're pretty right there,’ said Adam;

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‘but because you care to be here is no reason for Eve staying. It'll be nothing to suit her taste, I'm sure of that, and I'd very much rather she was out of it all; tisen't fitting company for women.’

'Lord save us!' exclaimed Joan, her quick temper rising; 'how mighty particklar we'm grow'd all to wance! The time ain't so very far off when nothin' could be done right if Joan wasn't here to look after it all. Not fittin' company for women! well I never! What d'ee call me then? Ain't I a woman, that you've tooked all this time to find out who 'tis fit to knaw and who 't isn't? Things is comin' to a nice pass, I think.'

'Oh, Joan!' exclaimed Eve; 'you mustn't take it like that. Adam means us both, of course. Why, didn't you tell me yourself what quarrelling and fighting went on when these men came to take

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away the spirits? You said you'd give anything to be out of it all.'

'Sayin's wan thing and manin' it's another,' said Joan, sulkily; 'but there, go if you like. I don't want to hinder 'ee; and you can tell Aunt Hepzibah that Adam's sent 'ee up, 'cos you shan't be hurted by the company we keeps down here. I'm sure,' she added, turning round to Adam fiercely, 'I wonders you let her bide so much with me. I shouldn't, if I was you.'

'Oh, Joan!' and Eve's voice and face expressed the pain these hasty words gave her. 'I'm sure you don't mean what you say.'

'Iss I do, every word, and no wonder neither. I knew you'm chaney and I'm cloam without he rammin' it down my throat all day long.'

Adam gave a little shake of the head

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towards Eve, as if to say Joan's present disposition was hopeless; and feeling things might right themselves better if he was absent, he said something about the *Lottery*, and stepped out to stroll down towards the quay. Dicky, who had been keeping in the background, utterly unable to comprehend the ground of this contention, watched Adam out of sight, and then broke out with:

'Awh, Joan Hocken, my dear, you'm everybody's friend, you be: couldn't 'ee consave no ways o' puttin' the car'yen away o' this gashly auld chaney off till tomorrow?

'Tis beyond bearin' to lave now when such doin's is comin' on; what d'ee say to it, eh? I'll answer to be sober enuf by twelve o'clock to the furthest, and that 'ud be heaps o' time to make the journey in.'

'I can't do nothin' to help 'ee,' said Joan, curtly; 'tis no good axin' me.'

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'Now doan't 'ee say that,' continued Dicky, in his most coaxing voice. 'Come, now, let's see if us can't schame it out together; for 'tis 'nuf to send anybody mazed to know they'm turnin' their backs on such a trate as this. Lors! I minds the last wan that I was to, as if 'twas yesterday. 'Twas up to Cap'n John's; there was brandy for the axin', and rum swimmin' 'bout like watter. A load o' the kegs got busted accidental for the puppose, and 'twas catch who could; some of 'em in their hands and some in their shoes, till we was aal drunk together, rowlin' 'bout the roads and singin', and I don't know what. Nor nobody to tell neither, for there was norra wan sober 'mongst us.'

'Well, you needn't look for that here,' said Joan, sharply; 'Adam'll keep too good a look-out for that.'

'Iss, I reckon,' said Dicky, with a knowing

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wink; 'that's if he ain't doubled by Jerrem. Do 'ee mind the trick Maister Jerrem played last May, when he got un away and served the quay all round while he was agone? Awh, jimmy! wasn't there a kick-up when Adam comed back! he was poor tempered, and no mistake. And that minds me,' he exclaimed, with an energetic movement of his fist, 'I'll seek out Jerrem to wance, and tell un what 'tis I'm aimin' at. I'll bet a guinea to a brass farden but, if 'tis to be done, he'll wark the oracle for me.'

Joan waited for him to get clear of the door, then, going into the front room, where Eve was sitting, she said:

'Don't think nothing o' what I said just now, Eve; 'twas only to tease Adam a bit. I meant 'ee to go to Aunt Hepzibah's all the time, for you'd only be in the way here if you was to stay.'

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'Not if I could help you, Joan!'

'Iss, but you can't help me; 'sides which they'm a rough lot, and, as Adam says, not fit women's company. I'd go too if 'twasn't for uncle; but if he gets a little bit overtook, Adam's got no patience with 'en, and there's no more trustin' to Jerrem than if he was a child; 'sides which, when the drinks on, they two 's sure to sail in one boat.'

CHAPTER VII.

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AUNT HEPZIBAH'S house stood well up the hill, far enough away from the village to escape the hubbub and confusion which, during the removal of any considerable store of spirit, was most certain to prevail.

Hidden away in the recesses of a tortuous valley, amid hills whose steep sides bristled with tier after tier of bare, broken rocks, to reach or to leave Polperro by any other mode than on foot was a task of considerable difficulty. Waggons were unknown,

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carts not available; and it was only at the risk of its rider's life and limbs that any horse ventured along the perilous descents and ascents of the old Talland road. Out of these obstacles, therefore, arose the necessity for a number of men who could manage the drays, dorsals, and crooks which were the more common and favoured modes of conveyance. With the natural love of a little excitement, combined with the desire to do as you would be done by, it was only thought neighbourly to lend a hand at whatever might be going on; and the general result of this sociability was, that half the place might be found congregated about the house, assisting to the best of their ability to impede all progress, and successfully turn any attempt at work into confusion and disorder.

To add to this tumult, a keg of spirits was kept on tap, to which all comers were

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made free, so that the crowd grew first noisy and good-tempered, then riotously merry and quarrelsomely drunk, until occasions had been known when a general fight had ensued, the kegs had got burst open and upset, the men who were hired to deliver them lay maddened or helpless in the street, while the spirit, for which liberty and life had been risked, flowed into the gutters like so much water.

In vain had Adam, to whom these scenes afforded nothing but anger and disgust, used all his endeavours to persuade his fellow-workers to give up running the vessel ashore with the cargo in her. The Polperro men, except under necessity, turned a deaf ear to his entreaties, and in many cases preferred risking a seizure to foregoing the foolhardy recklessness of openly defying the arm of the law. The plan which Adam would have seen

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universally adopted here, as it was in most of the other places round the coast, was that of dropping the kegs, slung on a rope, into the sea, and (securing them by an anchor) leaving them there until some convenient season when, certain of not being disturbed, they were landed and either removed to a more distant hiding-place, or conveyed at once to their final destination. But all this involved immediate trouble and delay, and the men who, without a complaint or murmur, would endure weeks of absence from their homes, the moment those homes came in sight grew irritable under control and impatient of all authority.

With a spirit of independence which verged on rebellion, with an uncertain temperament in which good and bad lay jostled together so haphazard, that to calculate which at any given moment might come uppermost was an impossibility, these

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sons of the sea were hard to lead, and impossible to drive. Obstinate, credulous, superstitious, they looked askant on innovation and hated change, fearing lest it should

turn away the luck which they vaunted in the face of discretion; making it their boast that so many years had gone by since any mischance had overtaken the Polperro folk, that they could afford to laugh at the soldiers before their faces, and snap their fingers at the cruisers behind their backs.

Under these circumstances, it was not to be supposed that Adam's arguments proved very effective; no proposition he made was ever favourably received, and this one was more than usually unpopular. So, in spite of his prejudice against a rule which necessitated the sequence of riot and disorder, he had been forced to give in, and to content himself by using his

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authority to control violence, and stem as much as possible the tide of excess. It was no small comfort to him that Eve was absent, and the knowledge served to smooth his temper and keep down his irritability. Besides which, his spirits had risen to no common height, a frequent result of the reaction which sets in after great emotion, although Adam placed his happy mood to the credit of Eve's kind words and soft glances.

It was late in the afternoon before the kegs were all got out and safely cleared off; but at length the last man took his departure, the visitors began to disperse. Uncle Zebedee and Jerrem disappeared with them, and the house was left to the undisturbed possession of Joan and Adam.

'I shall bring Eve back when I come,' Adam said, reappearing from the smartening up he had been giving to himself.

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'All right,' replied Joan, but in such a weary voice that Adam's heart smote him for leaving her sitting there alone, and "with a great effort at self-sacrifice he said: 'Would you like to go too?'

'Iss, if I could go two p'raps I should,' retorted Joan; 'but as I'm only one, p'raps I might find myself one in the way. There, go along with 'ee, do,' she added, seeing him

still hesitate. 'You know if there'd bin any chance o' my goin', you wouldn't ha' axed me.'

A little huffed by this home-thrust, Adam waited for nothing more, but turning away, he closed the door after him, and set off at a brisk pace up the Lansallos road, towards Aunt Hepzibah's house.

The light had now all but faded out, and over everything seaward a cloudy film of mist hung thick and low; but this would soon lift up and be blown away, leaving

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the night clear and the sky bright with the glitter of a myriad stars, beneath whose twinkling light Adam would tell his tale of love, and hear the sweet reply; and at the thought a thousand hopes leaped into life, and made his pulses quicken, and his nerves thrill. Strive as he might, arrived at Aunt Hepzibah's he could neither enter upon nor join in any general conversation; and so marked was his silence and embarrassed his manner, that the assembled party came to the charitable conclusion that something had gone wrong in the adjustment of his liquor, and knowing it was ticklish work to meddle with a man who, with a glass beyond, had fallen a drop short, they made no opposition to Eve's speedy preparations for immediate departure.

'Oh Eve!' Adam exclaimed, giving vent to deep-drawn sighs of relief, as, having

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turned from the farm-gate, they were out of sight and hearing of the house. 'I hope you're not vexed with me for seeming such a fool as I've been feeling there. I have been so longing for the time to come when I could speak to you, that for thinking of it I couldn't talk about the things they asked me of.'

'Why, whatever can you have to say of so much importance?' stammered Eve, trying to speak as if she was unconscious of the subject he was about to broach, and this from no coquetry, but because of an embarrassment so allied to that which Adam felt, that if he could have looked into her heart, he would have seen his answer in its tumultuous beating.

‘I think you know,’ said Adam, softly; and as he spoke he stooped to catch a glimpse of her averted face. ‘It’s only what I’d on my lips to say last night, only

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the door was opened before I’d time to get the words out, and afterwards you wouldn’t so much as give me a look, although,’ he added reproachfully, ‘you sat up ever so long after I was gone, and only ran away when you thought that I was coming.’

‘No, indeed I didn’t do that,’ said Eve, earnestly; ‘that was Joan who you heard. I went upstairs almost the minute after you left.’

‘Is that really true?’ exclaimed Adam, seizing both her hands, and holding them tight within his own. ‘Eve, you don’t know what I suffered, thinking you were caught by Jerrem’s talk, and didn’t care whether I felt hurt or pleased. I lay awake most of the night, thinking whether it could ever be that you could care for me, as by some magic you’ve made me care for you. I fancied ——.’

But here a rustle in the hedge made

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them both start. Adam turned quickly round, but nothing was to be seen.

‘Twas most like nothing but a stoat or a rabbit,’ he said, vexed at the interruption; ‘still ’tis all but certain there’ll be somebody upon the road. Would you mind crossing over to the cliff? ’tis only a little bit down the other side.’

Eve raised no objection, and turning, they picked their way along the field, got over the gate, and down through the tangle of gorse and briar to the path which ran along the Lansallos side of the cliff. Every step of the way was familiar to Adam, and he so guided Eve as to bring her down to a rough bit of rock which projected out and formed a seat on a little flat of ground overhanging a deep gully.

‘There,’ he said, in a tone of satisfaction, ‘this isn’t so bad, is it? You won’t feel cold here, shall you?’

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'No, not a bit,' said Eve.

Then there was a pause, which Eve broke by first giving a nervous, half-suppressed sigh, and then saying:

'It's very dark to-night, isn't it?'

'Yes,' said Adam, who had been thinking how he should best begin his subject. 'I thought the mist was going to clear off better than this, but that seems to look like dirty weather blowing up;' and he pointed to the watery shroud, behind which lay the waning moon.

'I wish a storm would come on,' said Eve. 'I should so like to see the sea tossing up, and the waves dashing over everything.'

'What, while we two are sitting here?' said Adam, smiling.

'No; of course I don't mean now, this very minute, but sometime.'

'Sometime when I'm away at sea?' put in Adam.

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Eve gave a little shudder.

'Not for the world. I should be frightened to death if a storm came on and you away. But you don't go out in very bad weather, do you, Adam?'

'Not if I can help it, I don't,' he answered. 'Why, would you mind if I did?' and he bent down so that he could look into her face. 'Eh, Eve, would you?'

His tone and manner conveyed so much more than the words, that Eve felt it impossible to meet his gaze.

'I don't know,' she faltered. 'What do you ask me for?'

'What do I ask you for?' he repeated, unable longer to repress the passionate torrent which he had been striving to keep under. 'Because suspense seems to drive me mad. Because, try as I may, I can't keep silent any longer. I wanted, before I said more, to ask you about somebody

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you've left behind you at London; but it's of no use. No matter what he may be to you, I must tell you that I love you, Eve; that you've managed in this little time to make every bit of my heart your own.'

'Somebody in London?' Eve silently repeated. 'Who could he mean? Not Reuben May; how should he know about him?'

The words of love that followed this surprise seemed swallowed up in her desire to have her curiosity satisfied and her fears set at rest.

'What do you mean about somebody I've left in London?' she said; and the question, abruptly put, jarred upon Adam's excited mood, strained as his feelings were, each to its utmost tension. This man she had left behind then could, even at a moment like this, stand uppermost in her mind.

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'A man, I mean, to whom, before you left, you gave a promise;' and this time, so at variance was the voice with Adam's former tones of passionate avowal, that, coupled with the shock of hearing that word 'promise,' Eve's heart quailed, and to keep herself from betraying her agitation she was forced to say, with an air of ill-feigned amazement:

'A man I left—somebody I gave a promise to? I really don't know what you mean.' 'Oh yes, you do,' and by this time every trace of wooing had passed from Adam's face, and all the love so late set flowing from his heart was choked and forced back on himself. 'Try and remember some fellow who thinks he's got the right to ask how you're getting on among the country bumpkins; whether you ain't tired of them yet; and when you're coming back.

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Perhaps,' he added, goaded on by Eve's continued silence, 'twill help you if I say 'twas the one who came to see you off aboard the *Mary Jane*. I suppose you haven't forgot *him*?'

Eve's blood boiled at the sneer conveyed in Adam's tone and look. Raising her eyes defiantly to his, she said:

‘Forgotten him, certainly not! If you had said anything about the *Mary Jane* before, I should have known directly who you meant. That person is a very great friend of mine.’

‘Friend!’ said Adam.

‘Yes, friend! the greatest friend I've got.’

‘Oh, I'm very glad I know that; because I don't approve of friends. The woman I ask to be my wife must be contented with me, and not want anything from anybody else.’

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‘A most amiable decision to come to,’ said Eve; ‘I hope you may find somebody contented to be so dictated to.’

‘I thought I had found somebody already,’ said Adam, letting a softer inflection come into his voice. ‘I fancied that at least, Eve, you were made out of different stuff to the women who are always hankering to catch every man's eye.’

‘And pray what should make you alter your opinion? Am I to be thought the worse of because an old friend, who had promised he would be a brother to me, offers to see me off on my journey, and I let him come? You must have a very poor opinion of omen, Adam, or at least a very poor opinion of me.’

And the air of offended dignity with which she gave this argument forced Adam to exclaim:

‘Oh, Eve! forgive me if I have spoken

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hastily; it is only because I think so much more of you—place you so much higher than any other girl I ever saw—that makes me expect so much more of you. Of course,’ he continued, finding she remained silent, ‘you had every right to allow your friend to go with you, and it was only natural he should wish to do so; only when a man's so torn by love as I am, he feels jealous of every eye that's turned upon you: each look you give another seems something robbed from me.’

Eve's heart began to soften; her indignation was beginning to melt away.

‘And when I heard he was claiming a promise, I ——’

‘What promise?’ said Eve, sharply.

‘What promise did you give him?’ replied Adam, warily, suspicion giving to security another thrust.

‘That's not to the point,’ said Eve. ‘You

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say I gave him a promise: I ask what that promise was?’

‘The very question I put to you. I know what he says it was, and I want to hear if what he says is true. Surely,’ he added, seeing she hesitated, ‘if this is only a friend, and a friend who is to be looked on like a brother, you can't have given him any promise that if you can remember you can't repeat.’

Eve's face betrayed her displeasure.

‘Really, Adam,’ she said, ‘I know of no right that you have to take me to task in this manner.’

‘No,’ he answered; ‘I was going to ask you to give me that right, when you interrupted me; however, that's very soon set straight. I've told you I love you, now I ask you if you love me? and, if so, whether you will marry me? After you've answered me, I shall be able

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to put my questions without fear of offence.’

‘Will you indeed!’ said Eve. ‘I should think that would rather depend upon what the answer may be.’

‘Whatever it may be, I'm waiting for it,’ said Adam, grimly.

‘Let me see, I must consider what it was I was asked,’ said Eve. ‘First, if ——’

‘Oh, don't trouble about the first; I shall be satisfied of that, if you answer the second and tell me you will accept me as a husband.’

‘Say keeper.’

‘Keeper, if that pleases you better.’

‘Thank you very much, but I don't feel quite equal to the honour. I'm not so tired yet of doing what pleases myself, that I need submit my thoughts and looks and actions to another person.’

‘Then you refuse to be my wife?’

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‘Yes, I do.’

‘And you cannot return the love I offer you?’

Eve was silent.

‘Do you hear?’ he said.

‘Yes, I hear.’

‘Then answer: Have I got your love, or haven't I?’

‘Whatever love you might have had,’ she broke out passionately, ‘you've taken care to kill.’

‘Kill!’ he repeated; ‘it must have been precious delicate, if it couldn't stand the answering of one question. Look here, Eve, when I told you I had given you my heart and every grain of love in it, I only spoke the truth; but unless you can give me yours as whole and as entire as I have given mine, 'fore God I'd rather jump off yonder rock than face the misery that would come upon us both. I know what

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'tis to see another take what should be yours—to see another given what you are craving for. The torture of that past is dead and gone, but the devil it bred in me lives still, and woe betide the man or woman who rouses it.’

Instinctively Eve shrank back; the look of pent-up passion frightened her, and made her whole body shiver.

‘There, there, don't alarm yourself,’ said Adam, passing his hand over his forehead, as if to brush away the traces which this outburst had occasioned: ‘I don't want to frighten you, all I want to know is—can you give me the love I ask of you?’

‘I couldn't bear to be suspected,’ faltered Eve.

‘Then act so that you would be above suspicion.’

‘With a person always on the watch looking out for this and that, so that you

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would be afraid to speak or open your mouth, I don't see how one could possibly be happy,’ said Eve. ‘All you did, all you said, might be taken wrongly, and when you were most innocent you might be thought most guilty. No; I don't think I could stand that, Adam.’

‘Very well,’ he said coldly; ‘if you feel your love is too weak to bear that—and a great deal more than that—you are very wise to withhold it from me: those who have much to give require much in return.’

‘Oh, don't think I haven't that in me which would make my love equal yours any day,’ said Eve, nettled at the doubt which Adam had flung at her. ‘If I gave any one my heart, I should give it all; but when I do that, I hope it will be to somebody who won't doubt me and suspect me.’

‘Then I'd advise you not to give them cause to,’ said Adam.

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‘And I'd advise you to keep your cautions for those that need them,’ replied Eve, rising from where she had been sitting, and turning her face in the direction of home.

‘Oh, you needn't fear being troubled by any more I shall say,’ said Adam; ‘I'm only sorry that I've been led to say what I have.’

‘Pray don't let that trouble you; such things, with me, go in at one ear and out at the other.’

‘In that case I won't waste any more words,’ said Adam; ‘so if you can keep your tongue still, you needn't fear being obliged to listen to anything I shall say.’

Eve gave a little scornful inclination of her head, in token of the accepted silence between them, and in silence the two commenced their walk, and took their way towards home.

CHAPTER VIII.

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EXCEPT the long surging roll of the waves, as in monotonous succession they dashed and broke against the rocks, not a sound was to be heard. The night had grown more lowering; the sprinkle of stars was hid behind the dense masses of cloud, through which, ever and anon, the moon, with shadowy face, broke out and feebly cast down a glimmering light. Below, the outspread stretch of water lay dark and motionless, its glassy surface cold and

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glittering like steel. Walking a little in the rear of Adam, Eve shuddered as her eyes fell on the depths, over whose brink the narrow path they trod seemed hanging. Instinctively she shrank closer to the cliff-side, to be caught by the long trails of bramble which, with bracken and gorse, made the steep descent a bristly wall. Insensibly affected by external surroundings, unused to such complete darkness, the sombre aspect of the scene filled her with nervous apprehension; every bit of jutting rock she stumbled against was a yawning precipice, and at each step she died some different death. The terrors of her mind entirely absorbed all her former indifference and ill-humour, and she would have gladly welcomed any accident which would have afforded her a decent pretext for breaking this horrible silence. But nothing occurred, and they

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reached the open piece of green, and were close on the crumbling ruins of St. Peter's chapel, without a word having passed between them. The moon struggled out with greater effort, and to Eve's relief showed that the zigzag dangers of the path were past, and there was now nothing worse to fear than what might happen on any uneven grassy slope. Moreover, the buzz of voices was near, and though they could not see the persons speaking. Eve knew, by the sound, that they could not be very far distant. Having before him the peculiar want of reticence generally displayed by the Polperro folk, Adam

would have given much to have been in a position to ask Eve to remount the hill and get down by the other side; but under present circumstances he felt it impossible to make any suggestion: things must take their course. And without a word of

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warning he and Eve gained the summit of the raised elevation which forms a sheltered background to this favourite loitering-place, at once to find themselves the centre of observation to a group of men whose noisy discussion they had apparently interrupted.

‘Why, ‘tis my son Adam, ain’t it?’ exclaimed the voice of Uncle Zebedee; and at the sound of a little mingled hoarseness and thickness Adam’s heart sank within him. ‘And who’s this he’s a got with un, eh?’

‘Tis me, Uncle Zebedee,’ said Eve, stepping down on to the flat, and advancing towards where the old man stood lounging. ‘Eve, you know.’

‘Awh, Eve, is it?’ exclaimed Zebedee. ‘Why, how long’s t’wind veered round to your quarter, my maid? Be you two sweetheartin’, then—eh?’

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‘I’ve been all day up to Aunt Hepzibah’s,’ said Eve, quickly, trying to cover her confusion, ‘and Adam came to fetch me back: that’s how it is we’re together.’

‘Wa-al, but he needn’t ha’ fetched ‘ee ‘less he’d got a mind for yer company, I s’pose,’ returned Zebedee, with a meaning laugh. ‘Come, come now! ‘t ‘ull niver do for ‘ee to try to cabobble Uncle Zibedee! So you and Adam’s courtyin’ be ‘ee? Wa-al, there’s nuffin to be said agen that, I s’pose?’ and he looked round as if inviting concurrence or contradiction. ‘Her’s my poor brother Andrew’s little maid, ye know, shipmates,’ and here he made a futile attempt to present Eve to the assembled company, ‘what’s dead—and drowned—and gone to Davy’s locker; so notwithstandin’ I’d lashins sooner ‘twas our Joan he’d ha’ fix’d on—Lord ha’ massy!’ he added, parenthetically, ‘Joan’s worth a

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horsgead o' she—still, what's wan man's mate's another man's pison; and, howsomedever that lies, I reckon it needn't go for to hinder me fra' drinkin' their healths in a drap o' good liquor. So come along, my hearties;' and making a movement which sent him forward with a lurch, he began muttering something about his sea-legs the effect of which was drowned in the shout evincing the ready satisfaction with which this proposal for friendly conviviality was hailed.

Eve drew in her breath, trying to gather up courage and combat down the horrible suspicion that Uncle Zebedee was not quite himself—didn't exactly know what he was saying—had taken too much to drink. With congratulatory intent she found herself jostled against by two or three others near her, whose noisy glee and uncertain gait only increased her fears.

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What should she do? Where could she go? What had become of Adam? Surely he would not go and leave her amongst—

But already her question was answered by a movement from some one behind, who, with a dexterous interposition, succeeded in placing himself between Uncle Zebedee and herself.

'Father!' and Adam's voice sounded more harsh and stern than usual, 'leave Eve to go home as she likes; she's not used to these sort o' ways, and she will not take things as you mean them.'

'Eh! what? How not mane 'em?' exclaimed old Zebedee, taken aback by his son's sudden appearance. 'I arn't a said DO harm that I knaws by; there's no 'fence in givin' the maid a wet welcome, I s'pose.'

A buzz of dissatisfaction at Adam's interference inspired Zebedee with renewed confidence, and with two or three sways in

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order to get the right balance, he managed to bring himself to a standstill right in front of Adam, into whose face he looked with a comical expression of defiance and humour, as he said:

‘Why, come 'long with us, lad, do 'ee, and name the liquor yerself, and see it passes round free, and turn and turn about; and let's have a song or two, and get up Rozzy Treloar wi' his fiddle, and Zeke Orgall there 'ull dance us a hornpipe,’ and he began a double-shuffle with his feet, adding, as his dexterity came to a sudden and somewhat unsteady finish, ‘Tis a ill wind that blows nobody no good, and a poor heart what niver rejices.’

Eve during this time had been vainly endeavouring to make her escape, an impossibility, as Adam saw, under existing circumstances, and this decided him to use no further argument; but, with his arm

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put through his father's, and in company with the rest of the group, he apparently conceded to their wishes, and motioning Eve on, the party proceeded along the path, down the steps, and towards the quay, until they came in front of the Three Pilchards, now the centre of life and jollity, with the sound of voices and the preparatory scraping of a fiddle to enhance the promise of comfort which glowed in the ruddy reflection sent by the bright lights and cheerful fire through the red window-curtain.

‘Now, father,’ exclaimed Adam, with a resolute grip of the old man's arm, ‘you and me are homeward-bound. We'll welcome our neighbours some other time, but for this evening let's say good-night to them.’

‘Good-night!’ repeated Zebedee; ‘how good-night? Why, what 'ud be the manin’

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o' that? None o' us ain't agoin' to part company here, I hopes. We'm all goin' to cast anchor to the same moorin's—eh, mates?’

‘No, no, no!’ said Adam, impatiently; ‘you come along home with me, now.’

'Iss, iss; all right,' laughed the old man, trying to wriggle out of his son's grasp; 'only not just yet awhile. I'm agoin' in here to drink your good health, Adam lad, and all here's acomin' with me —ain't us, hearties?'

'Pack of stuff—drink my health!' exclaimed Adam. 'There's no more reason for drinking my health to-night than any other night. Come along now, father; you've had a hard day of it, you know, and when you get home you can have whatever you want quietly by your own fireside.'

But Zebedee, though perfectly

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good-humoured, was by no means to be persuaded; he continued to laugh and writhe about as if the fact of his detention was merely a good joke on Adam's part, the lookers-on abetting and applauding his determination, until Adam's temper could restrain itself no longer, and with no very pleasant explosion of wrath he let go his hold, and intimated that his father was free to take what course pleased him most.

'That's right, lad!' exclaimed old Zebedee, heartily, shaking himself together. 'You'm a good son, and a capital sailorman, but you'm pore company, Adam—verra pore company.'

And with this truism (to which a general shout gave universal assent) ringing in his ears, Adam strode away up the street with all possible speed, and was standing in front of the house door when he was suddenly struck by the thought of what

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had become of Eve. Since they had halted in front of the Three Pilchards, he had seen nothing of her; she had disappeared, and in all probability had made her way home.

The thought of having to confront her caused him to hesitate: should he go in? What else could he do? where had he to go? So, with a sort of desperation, he pushed open the door and found himself within the sitting-room. It was empty; the fire had burnt low, the wick of the unsnuffed candle had grown long—evidently Eve had not

returned; and with an undefined mixture of regret and relief Adam sat down, leaned his arms on the table, and laid his head upon them.

During the whole day the various excitements he had undergone had so kept his mind on the stretch that its powers of keen susceptibility seemed now thoroughly

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exhausted, and in place of the acute pain he had previously suffered there had come a dull, heavy weight of despair, before which his usual force and determination seemed vanquished and powerless. The feeling uppermost was a sense of the injustice inflicted on him; that he, who in practice and principle was so far removed above his neighbours, should be made to suffer for their follies and misdeeds, should have to bear the degradation of their vices. As to any hope of reclaiming them, he had long ago given that up, though not without a certain disappointment in the omniscience of that Providence which could refuse the co-operation of his valuable agency.

Adam suffered from that strong belief in himself which is apt, when carried to excess, to throw a shadow on the highest qualities. Outstepping the Pharisee, who thanked God that he was not like other

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men, Adam thanked himself, and fed his vanity, by the assurance that had the Polperro folk followed his lead, and his advice, they would now be walking in his footsteps; instead of which they had despised him as a leader, and rejected him as a counsellor, so that, exasperated by their ignorance and stung by their ingratitude, he had cast them off and abandoned them for ever; and out of this disappointment had arisen a dim shadow of some far-off future, wherein he caught glimpses of a new life, filled with fresh hopes and successful endeavours.

From the moment his heart had opened towards Eve, her image seemed to be associated with these hitherto undefined longings; by the light of her love, of her presence, her companionship, all that had been vague seemed to take shape and grow into an object which was real, and a

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purpose to be accomplished; so that now one of the sharpest pricks from the thorn of disappointment came of the knowledge that this hope was shattered, and this dream must be abandoned. And, lost in moody retrospection, Adam sat stabbing desire with the sword of despair.

‘Let me be—let me be!’ he said, in answer to some one who was trying to rouse him.

‘Adam, it’s me; do look up!’ and, in spite of himself, the voice which spoke made him lift his head and look at the speaker. ‘Adam, I’m so sorry;’ and Eve’s face said more than her words.

‘You’ve nothing to be sorry for,’ returned Adam, sullenly.

‘I want you to forgive me, Adam,’ continued Eve.

‘I’ve nothing to forgive.’

‘Yes, you have;’ and a faint flush of colour came into her cheeks as she added,

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with hesitating confusion, ‘You know I didn’t mean you to take what I said as you did, Adam; because’—and the colour suddenly deepened and spread over her face—‘because I do care for you—very much indeed.’

Adam gave a despondent shake of his head.

‘No, you don’t,’ he said, steadily averting his eyes; ‘and a very good thing too. I don’t know who—that wasn’t forced to it—would willingly have anything to do with such a God-forsaken place as this is. I only know I’m sick of it, and of myself, and my life, and everything in it.’

‘Oh, Adam! don’t say that; don’t say you’re sick of life—at least, not now;’ and she turned her face so that he might read the reason.

‘And why not now?’ he asked stolidly. ‘What have I now that I hadn’t before?’

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'Why, you've got me.'

'You! You said you couldn't give me the love I asked you for.'

'Oh, but I didn't mean it. What I said was because I felt so hurt that you should suspect me, as you seemed to.'

'I never suspected you—never meant to suspect you. All I wanted you to know was that I must be all or nothing.'

'Of course; and I meant that too, only you—— but there, don't let's drift back to that again;' and as she spoke she leaned her two hands upon his shoulders and stood looking down. 'What I want to say is that every bit of love I have is yours, Adam. I am afraid,' she added shyly, 'you had got it all before ever I knew whether you really wanted it or not.'

'And why couldn't you tell me that before?' he said bitterly.

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'Why, is it too late now?' asked Eve, humbly.

'Too late! you know it can't be too late!' exclaimed Adam, his old irritability getting the better of him; then, with a sudden revulsion of his over-wrought susceptibilities, he cried: 'Oh, Eve, Eve! bear with me to-night; I'm not what I want to be. The words I try to speak die away upon my lips, and my heart seems sunk down so low that nothing can rejoice it. To-morrow I shall be master of myself again, and all will look different.'

'I hope so,' sighed Eve, tremulously. 'Things don't seem quite between us as they ought to be. I shan't wait for Joan,' she said, holding out her hand. 'I shall go upstairs now; so good-night, Adam.'

'Good-night,' he said; then, keeping hold of her hand, he drew her towards him, and

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stood looking down at her with a face haggard and full of sadness.

The look acted as the last straw which was to swamp the burden of Eve's grief. Control was in vain; and in another instant, with Adam's arms around her, she lay sobbing out her sorrow on his breast, and the tears, as they came, thrust the evil spirit away. So that when, an hour later, the two said good-night again, their vows had been exchanged, and the troth that bound them plighted; and Adam, looking into Eve's face, smiled as he said: 'Whether for good luck or bad, the sun of our love has risen in a watery sky.'

CHAPTER IX.

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MOST of the actions and events of our lives are chameleon-hued; their colours vary according to the light by which we view them. Thus Eve, who the night before had seen nothing but happiness in the final arrangement between Adam and herself, awoke on the following morning with a feeling of dissatisfaction and a desire to be critical as to the rosy hues which seemed then to colour the advent of their love.

The spring of tenderness, which had burst

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forth within her at sight of Adam's humiliation and subsequent despair, had taken Eve by surprise. She knew, and had known for some time, that much within her was capable of answering to the demands which Adam's pleading love would most probably require; but that he had inspired her with a passion which would make her lay her heart at his feet, feeling, for the time, that though he trampled on it, there it must stay, was a revelation entirely new and, to Eve's temperament, rather humiliating. She had never felt any sympathy with those love-sick maidens whose very existence seemed swallowed up in another's being, and had been proudly confident that, even when supplicated, she should never seem to stoop lower than to accept. Therefore, just as we experience a sense of failure when we find our discernment led astray in our perception of a friend, so

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now, although she studiously avoided acknowledging it, she had the consciousness that she had utterly misconceived her own character, and the balance by which she had adjusted the strength of her emotions had been a false one. A dread ran through her lest she should be seized hold upon by some further inconsistency, and she resolved to set a watch on the outposts of her senses, so that they might not betray her into further weakness.

These thoughts were still agitating her mind when Joan suddenly awoke, and, after a time, roused herself sufficiently to say:

‘Why, whatever made you pop off in such a hurry last night, Eve? I runned in a little after ten, and there wasn't no signs of you nowheres; and then I come upon Adam, and he told me you was gone up to bed.’

‘Yes,’ said Eve; ‘I was so tired, and

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my foot began to ache again, so I thought there wasn't any use in my sitting up any longer. But you were very late, Joan, weren't you?’

‘Very early, more like,’ said Joan; ‘twas past wan before I shut my eyes. Why, I come home three times to see if uncle was back; and then I wouldn't stand it no longer, so I went and fetched un.’

‘What, not from——where he was!’ exclaimed Eve.

Joan nodded her head.

‘Oh lors!’ she said, ‘tain't the fust time by many; ‘and,’ she added, in a tone of satisfaction, ‘I lets 'em know when they've brought Joan Hocken down among 'em. I had Jerrem out, and uncle atop of 'un, 'fore they knawed where they was. Awh, I don't stand beggin' and prayin', not I; 'tis “whether or no, Tom Collins,” when I come, I can tell 'ee.’

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‘Well, they'd stay a very long time before they'd be fetched by me,’ said Eve, emphatically.

‘Awh, don't 'ee say that now,’ returned Joan; ‘where do 'ee think there'd be the most harm in then, sittin' comfortable at home, when you might go down and 'tice 'em away, or the goin' down and doin' of it?’

‘I've not a bit of patience with anybody who drinks,’ exclaimed Eve, evading a direct answer.

‘Then you'll never cure anybody of it, my dear,’ replied Joan. ‘You'm like Adam there, I reckon, wantin' to set the world straight in one day, and all the folks in it bottommost side upwards; but, as I tell un, he don't go to work the right way. They that can't steer 'ull never sail; and I'll bet any money that when it comes to be counted up how many

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glasses o' grog's been turned away from uncle's lips, there'll be more set to the score o' my coaxin' than ever 'ull be to Adam's bullyraggin'.’

‘Perhaps so,’ said Eve; and then, wishing to avoid any argument into which Adam could be brought, she adroitly changed the subject, and only indifferent topics were discussed until, their dressing completed, the two girls were ready to go downstairs.

The first person who answered the summons to breakfast was Uncle Zebedee, not heavy-eyed and shamefaced, as Eve had expected to see him, but bright, and rosy-cheeked as an apple. He had been up and out since six o'clock, looking after the repairs which a boat of his was laid up to undergo; and now, as he came into the house, fresh as a lark, he chirruped, in a quavery treble—

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“Tom Truelove woo'd the sweetest fair
That e'er to tar was kind,
Her face was of a booty rare.”

That's for all the world what your'n is,' he said, breaking off to bestow a smacking kiss on Joan. 'So look sharp, like a good little maid as you be, and gi'e us sommat to sit down for'; and he drew a chair to the table and began flourishing the knife which had been set there for him. Then, catching sight of Eve, whose face, in her desire to spare him, betrayed an irrepressible look of consciousness, he exclaimed, 'Why they've bin tellin' up that I was a little over-free in my speech last night about you, Eve; is there any truth in it, eh? I doan't fancy I could ha' said much amiss, did I?'

'Oh, nothing to signify, uncle.'

'Twas sommat 'bout you and Adam, warn't it?' he continued, with a puzzled

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air; 'tis all in my head here, tho' I can't zackly call it to mind. That's the devil o' bein' a little o'ertook that ways,' he added, with the assurance of meeting ready sympathy. 'Tis so bafflin' to set things all ship-shape the next mornin'. I minds so far as this, that it had somehow to do with me holdin' to it that you and Adam was goin' to be man and wife; but if you axes for the why and the wherefore, I'm blessed if I can tell 'ee.'

'Why, whatever put such as that into your head?' said Joan, sharply.

'Wa-al the liquor, I reckon,' laughed Zebedee. 'And somehow or 'nother Maister Adam didn't seem to have overmuch relish for the notion;' and he screwed up his face and hugged himself together as if his whole body was tickled at his son's discomfiture. 'But there, never you mind that, Eve,' he added hastily;

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'there's more baws than wan to Polperro, and I'll wager for a half score o' chaps ready to hab 'ee without yer waitin' to be took up by my son Adam.'

Poor Eve! it was certainly an embarrassing situation to be placed in, for, with no wish to conceal her engagement, to announce it herself alone and unaided by even the presence of Adam, was a task she naturally shrank from. In the endeavour to avoid any direct reply, she sat watching anxiously for Adam's arrival, her sudden change of manner construed by Zebedee into the effect of wounded vanity, and by Joan into

displeasure at her uncle's undue interference. By sundry frowns and nods of warning, Joan tried to convey her admonitions to old Zebedee, in the midst of which Adam entered, and, with a smile at Eve and an inclusive nod to the rest of the party, took a chair and drew up to the table.

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‘Surely,’ thought Eve, ‘he intends telling them.’

But Adam sat silent and occupied with the plate before him.

‘He can't think I can go living on here with Joan, even for a single day, and they not know it,’ and in her perplexity she turned on Adam a look full of inquiry and meaning.

Still Adam did not speak; in his own mind he was casting over the things he meant to say when, breakfast over and the two girls out of the way, he would invite his father to smoke a pipe outside, during the companionship of which he intended taking old Zebedee decidedly to task, and, putting his intended marriage with Eve well to the front, clinch his arguments by the startling announcement that, unless some reformation was soon made, he would leave his native place and seek a home in a foreign land. Such words and such threats as

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these could not be uttered to a father by a son save when they two stood quite alone, and Adam, after meeting a second look from Eve, shook his head, feeling satisfied that she would know that only some grave requirement deterred him from immediately announcing the happiness which henceforth was to crown his life. But our intuition, at the best, is somewhat narrow, and, where the heart is most concerned, most faulty; therefore Eve, and Adam too, felt each disappointed in the other's want of acquiescence, and inclined to be critical on the lack of mutual sympathy.

Suddenly the door opened and in walked Jerrem, smiling and apparently more radiant than usual, under the knowledge that he was more than usually an offender. Joan, who had her own reasons for being very considerably put out with him, was not disposed to receive him very graciously.

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Adam vouchsafed him no notice whatever. Uncle Zebedee, oppressed by the sense of former good-fellowship, thought it discreet not to evince too much cordiality, so that the onus of the morning's welcome was thrown upon Eve, who, utterly ignorant of any offence Jerrem had given, thought it advisable to make amends for the pettish impatience she feared she had been betrayed into on the previous morning.

Old Zebedee, whose resolves seldom lasted over ten minutes, soon fell into the swing of Jerrem's flow of talk: a little later on, and Joan was forced to put in a word, so that the usual harmony was just beginning to recover itself when, in answer to a remark which Jerrem had made, Eve managed to turn the laugh so cleverly back upon him that Zebedee, well-pleased to see what good friends they were growing, exclaimed:

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'Stop her mouth! stop her mouth, lad! I'd ha' done it, when I was your years, twenty times over 'fore this. Her's too sarcy—too sarcy by half, her is!'

Up started Jerrem but Adam was before him.

'I don't know whether what I'm going to say is known to anybody here already,' he burst out, 'but I think it's high time that some present should be told by me that Eve has promised to be my wife,' and turning, he cast a look of angry defiance at Jerrem, who, thoroughly amazed, gradually sank down and took possession of his chair again, while old Zebedee went through the dumb show of giving a long whistle, and Joan, muttering an unmeaning something, ran hastily out of the room. Eve, angry and confused, turned from white to red, and from red to white.

A silence ensued—one of those pauses

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when some event of our lives seems turned into a gulf to separate us from our former surroundings.

Adam was the first to speak, and, with a touch of irony, he said:

'You're none of you very nimble at wishing us joy, I fancy.'

'And no wonder, you've a tooked us all aback so,' said old Zebedee; 't seems to me I'm foaced to turn it round and round afore I can swaller it for rale right-down truth.'

'Why, is it so very improbable then?' asked Adam, already repenting the abruptness of the disclosure.

'Wa-al, 'twas no later than last night that you was swearin' agen, and cussin' everybody from stem to starn, for so much as mentionin' it as likely. Now,' he added, with as much show of displeasure as his cheery, weather-beaten old face would

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admit of, 'I'll tell 'ee the mind I've got to'ards these sort o' games: if you see fit to board folks in the smoke, why do it, and no blame to 'ee; but hang me if I can stomach 'ee sailin' under false colours!'

'There wasn't anything of false colours about us, father,' said Adam, in a more conciliatory tone; 'for though I had certainly spoken to Eve, it was not until after I'd parted with you last night that she gave me her answer.'

'Awh!' said the old man, only half propitiated. 'Wa-all, I s'pose you can settle your consarns without my help; but I can tell 'ee this much, that if my Joanna had took so long afore she could make her mind up, I'm blamed if her ever should ha' had the chance o' bein' your mother, Adam, so there.'

Adam bit his lip with vexation.

'There's no need for me to enter upon

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any further explanations,' he said; 'Eve's satisfied, I'm satisfied, so I don't see why you shouldn't be satisfied.'

'Awh, I'm satisfied enough,' said Zebedee; 'and so far as that goes, though I ain't much of a hand at speechifyin', I hopes that neither of 'ee 'ull never have no raison to repent yer bargain. Eve's a fine bowerly maid, so you'm well matched there; and so long

as she's ready to listen to all you say and bide by all you tells her, why, 'twill be set fair and sail easy.'

'I can assure you Eve isn't prepared to do anything of the sort, Uncle Zebedee!' exclaimed Eve, unable to keep silence any longer. 'I've always been told if I'd nothing else I've got the Pascals' temper, and that, according to your own showing, isn't very fond of sitting quiet and being rode over rough-shod.'

The whistle which Uncle Zebedee had

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tried to choke at its birth now came out shrill, long, and expressive; and Adam, jumping up, said:

'Come, come, Eve, we've had enough of this; surely there isn't any need to take such idle talk as serious matter? If you and me hadn't seen some good in one another we shouldn't have taken each other, I suppose; and, thank the Lord, we haven't to please anybody but our two selves.'

'Wa-al, 'tis to be hoped you'll find that task asier than it looks,' retorted Uncle Zebedee, with a touch of sarcasm, while Jerrem, after watching Adam go out, endeavoured to throw a tone of regret into the flattering nothings he now whispered by way of congratulation; but Eve turned impatiently away from him. She had no further inclination to talk or to be talked to; and Uncle Zebedee having by this

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time sought solace in a pipe, Jerrem joined him outside, and the two sauntered away together towards the quay.

Left to the undisturbed indulgence of her own reflections, Eve's mood was no enviable one—the more difficult to bear because she had to control the various emotions struggling within her. She felt it was the time for plain speaking between her and Adam, and rightly judged that a proper understanding come to at once would be the safest means of securing future comfort. Turn and twist Adam's abrupt announcement as she would, she could assign but one cause for it, and that cause was an overweening

jealousy; and as the prospect came before her of a lifetime spent in the midst of doubt and suspicion, the strength of her love seemed to die away and her heart grew faint within her. For surely if the demon of jealousy

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could be roused by the sight of commonplace attentions from one who was in every way like a brother—for so in Eve's eyes Jerrem seemed to be—what might not be expected if at any time circumstances threw her into the mixed company of strangers? Eve had seen very little of men, but whenever chance had afforded her the opportunity of their society she had invariably met with attention, and had felt inwardly gratified by the knowledge that she was attracting admiration; but now, if she gave way to this prejudice of Adam's, every time an eye was turned towards her she would be filled by fear, and each time a look was cast in her direction her heart would sink with dread.

What should she do? Give him up? Even with the prospect of possible misery staring at her, Eve could not say yes; and

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before the thought had more than shaped itself, a dozen suggestions were battling down the dread alternative. She would change him, influence him, convert him, anything but give him up or give in to him. She forgot how much easier it is to conceive plans than to carry them out; to arrange speeches than to utter them. She forgot that only the evening before, when, an opportunity being afforded, she had resolved upon telling Adam the whole circumstance of Reuben May, and the promise made between them, while the words were yet on her lips she had drawn them back, because Adam had said he knew that the promise was 'nothing but the promise of a letter;' and Eve's courage had suddenly given way, and by her silence she had led him to conclude that nothing else had passed between them. Joan had spoken of the envious grudge

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which Adam had borne towards Jerrem, because he had shared in his mother's heart, so that this was not the first time Adam had dropped in gall to mingle with the cup of his love. The thought of Joan brought the fact of her unexplained disappearance to Eve's mind, and, full of compunction at the bare suspicion of having wounded that generous heart, Eve jumped up, with the intention of seeking her and of bringing about a satisfactory explanation. She had not far to go before she came upon Joan, rubbing and scrubbing away as if the welfare of all Polperro depended on the amount of energy she could throw into her work. Her face was flushed and her voice unsteady, the natural consequence of such violent exercise, and which Eve's approach but seemed to lend greater force to.

'Joan, I want to speak to you.'

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'Awh, my dear, I can't listen to no speakin' now,' replied Joan, hastily, 'and the tables looking as they do.'

'But Tabithy always scrubs the tables, Joan; why should you do it?'

'Tabithy's arms ain't half so young as mine, worse luck for me or for she.'

Having by this time gained a little insight into Joan's peculiarities. Eve argued no further, but set herself down on a convenient seat, waiting for the time when the rasping sound of the brush would come to an end. Her patience was put to no very great tax, for after a few minutes Joan flung the brush along the table, exclaiming:

'Awh, drabbit the ole scrubbin', I must give over. I b'lieve I've had enuf of it for this time, 't all events.'

'Joan, you ain't hurt with me, are you,' said Eve, trying to push her into the seat

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from which she had just risen. 'I wanted to be the first to tell you, only that Adam spoke as he did, and took all I was going to say out of my mouth; it leaves you to think me dreadfully sly.'

‘Awh, there wasn't much need for tellin' me,’ said Joan, with a sudden relax of manner. ‘When I didn't shut my eyes o' purpose I could tell, from the first, what was certain to happen.’

‘It was more than I could, then,’ said Eve. ‘I hadn't given it a thought that Adam meant to speak to me, and when he asked me I was quite taken aback, and said “no” for ever so long.’

‘What made 'ee change yer mind so suddent, then?’ said Joan, bluntly.

Eve hesitated.

‘I hardly know,’ she said, with a little confusion. ‘I think it was seeing him so cast down made me feel so dreadfully sorry.’

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‘H'm,’ said Joan, ‘didn't 'ee never feel no sorrow for t'other poor chap that wanted to have 'ee, he to London—Reuben May?’

‘Not enough to make me care in that way for him, I certainly never did.’

‘And you do care for Adam, then?’

‘I think I do.’

‘Think?’

‘Well, I am sure I do.’

‘That's better. Well, Eve, I'll say this far’—and Joan gave a sigh before the other words would come out, ‘I'd rather it should be you than anybody else I ever saw.’

The struggle with which these words were said, their tone, and the look in Joan's face, seemed to reveal a state of feeling which Eve had not suspected; throwing her arms round her, she cried out:

‘Oh, Joan! why didn't he choose you? you would have been much better for him than me.’

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‘Lord bless the maid!’ and Joan tried to laugh through her tears, ‘I wouldn't ha' had 'un if he'd axed me. Why, there'd ha' bin murder 'tween us 'fore a month was out; us 'ud

ha' bin hung for one 'nother. No; now don't 'ee take no such stuff as that into yer head, 'cos there's no sense in it. Adam's never looked 'pon me not more than a sister;' and, breaking down, Joan sobbed hysterically; 'and when you two's married I shall feel 'zackly as if he was a brother, and be gladder than e'er a one else to see how happy you makes un.'

'That's if I do make him happy,' said Eve, sadly.

'There's no fear but you'll do that,' said Joan, resolutely wiping the tears from her eyes; 'and 'twill be your own fault if you bain't happy too yourself, Eve. Adam's got his fads to put up with, and his fancies same as other men have, and a masterful

[213] temper to keep under, as nobody can tell better than me; but for rale right-down goodness, I shouldn't know where to match his fellow—not if I was to search the place through; and, mind 'ee, after all, that's somethin' to be proud of in the man you've got to say Maister to.'

Eve gave a little smile.

'But he must let me be mistress, you know, Joan.'

'All right; only don't you stretch that too far,' said Joan, warningly, 'or no good 'ull come of it; and be foreright in all you do, and spake the truth to un. I've many a time wished I could, but with this to hide o' that one's, and that to hush up o' t'others, I know he holds me for a downright liard; and so I am by his measure, I 'spects.'

'I'm sure you're nothing of the sort, Joan,' said Eve; 'Adam's always saying

[214] how much people think of you. He told me only yesterday that he was certain more than half the men of the place had asked you to marry them.'

'Did he?' said Joan, not wholly displeased that Adam should hold this opinion. 'Ah, and ax they may, I reckon, afore I shall find a man to say "Yes" to.'

'That is what I used to think myself,' said Eve.

'Iss, and so you found it, till Roger put the question' replied Joan, decisively. Then, after a minute's pause, she added, 'What be 'ee goin' to do 'bout the poor sawl to London, then—eh? You must tell he somehow.'

'Oh! I don't see that,' said Eve. 'I mean to write to him, because I promised I would, and I shall tell him that I've made up my mind not to go back, but I shan't say anything more; there isn't any

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need for it that I see: at least, not yet awhile.'

'Best to tell un all,' argued Joan. 'Why shouldn't 'ee? 'Tis the same, so far as you'm concerned, whether he's killed to wance or dies by inches.'

But Eve was not to be persuaded.

'There isn't any reason why I should,' she said.

'No reason?' replied Joan. 'Oh, Eve, ray dear,' she added, 'don't 'ee let happiness harden your heart; if love is sweet to gain, think how bitter 'tis to lose, and by all you've told me, you'll forfeit a better man than most in Reuben May.'

CHAPTER X.

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THE month of December was well advanced before Eve's letter had reached Reuben May. It came to him one morning when, notwithstanding the fog which reigned around, Reuben had arisen in more than usually good spirits—able to laugh at his neighbours for railing against weather which he declared was good weather, and seasonable.

The moment the postman entered the shop his heart gave a great bound—for who but Eve would write to him?—and no

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sooner had his eyes fallen on the handwriting than his whole being rejoiced, for surely nothing but good news could be heralded by such glad feelings. With a resolute self-denial, of which on most occasions Reuben was somewhat proud, he refused himself the immediate gratification of his desires, and with a hasty glance laid the letter on one side, while he entered into a needlessly long discussion with the postman, gossiped with a customer, for whose satisfaction he volunteered a minute inspection of a watch which might have very reasonably been put off until the morrow; and finally (there being nothing else by which the long-coveted pleasure could be further delayed) he took up the letter and carefully turned it first this side and then that, before breaking the seal and unfolding the paper.

What would it say? That she was

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coming back—coming home? But when? how soon? In a month—in a week—now at once? In one flash of vision, Reuben saw the furniture polished and comfortably arranged, the room smartened up and looking its best, with a blazing fire and a singing kettle, and a cosy meal ready laid for two people; and then all they would have to say to one another: on his part much to hear and little to tell, for his life had jogged on at a very commonplace trot, his business neither better nor worse; but still, with the aid of the little sum his more than rigid economy had enabled him to save, they might make a fair start, free from all debt and able to pay their way.

These thoughts only occupied the time which Reuben took to undo the complicated folds by which, before the days of envelopes, correspondents endeavoured to baffle the curiosity of those who sought to

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know more than was intended for them. But what is this? for Reuben's eyes had been so greedy to suck up the words that he had not given his mind time to grasp their meaning. 'Not coming back! never—any—more!' 'I like the place, the people, and, above all, my relations, so very much that I should never be happy now away from them.'

He repeated the words over again and again before he seemed to have the least comprehension of what they meant; then, in a stupor of dull despondency he read on to the end, and learnt that all his hopes were over, that his life was a blank, and that the thing he had dreaded so much as to cheat himself into the belief that it could never happen had come to pass. And yet he was still Reuben May, and lived and breathed, and hadn't much concern beyond the thought of how he should best send the

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things she had left to Polperro—the place she never intended to leave—the place she now could never be happy away from.

Later on a hundred wild schemes and mad desires wrestled and fought, trying to combat with his judgment, and put to flight his sense of resolution; but now, as in the first moment of death, with the vain hope of realising his loss, the mourner sits gazing at the inanimate form before him, so Reuben, holding the letter in his hands, returned again and again to the words which had dealt death to his hopes, and told him that the love he lived for no longer lived for him. For Eve had been very emphatic in enforcing this resolve, and had so strongly worded her decision that, try as he would, Reuben could find no chink by which a ray of hope might gain admittance—all was dark with the gloom of despair, and this notwithstanding that Adam

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had not been mentioned, and Reuben had no more certain knowledge of a rival to guide him than the jaundiced workings of a jealous heart. Many events had concurred to bring about this blamable reticence. In the first place, the letter which Eve had commenced as a mere fulfilment of her promise, had grown through a host of changing moods; for, as time went on, many a sweet and bitter found its way to that stream whose course did never yet run smooth; and could the pages before him have presented one tithe of these varied emotions, Reuben's sober nature would have rejoiced in the certainty that such an excess of sensitiveness needed but time and opportunity to wear itself out.

It was nearly two months now since it had been known all through the place that Adam Pascal was keeping company with his cousin Eve; and the Polperro folk, one

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and all, agreed that no good could surely come of a courtship carried on after such a contrary fashion—for the two were never for twenty-four hours in the same mind, and the game of love seemed to resolve itself into a war of extremes wherein anger, devotion, suspicion, and jealousy raged by turns, and afforded equal occasions of scandal and surprise. To add to their original difficulties, the lovers had now to contend against the circumstances of time and place, for, during the winter, from most of the men being on shore, and without occupation, conviviality and merriment were rife among them, and from bell-ringing night, which ushered in Gunpowder-plot, until Valentine's Day was passed, revels, dances, or amusements of any kind which brought people together, were welcomed and well-attended. With the not unnatural desire to get away from her own thoughts,

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and to avoid as much as was possible the opportunity of being a looker-on at happiness in which she had no personal share, Joan greedily availed herself of every invitation which was given, or could be got at, and, as was to be expected, Eve, young, fresh, and a novice, became to a certain degree infected with the anxiety to participate in most of these amusements. Adam made no objection, and, though he did not join them with much spirit and alacrity, he neither by word nor deed threw any obstacle in their way to lessen their anticipation or spoil their pleasure, while Jerrem—head, chief, and master of ceremonies—found in these occasions ample opportunity for trying Adam's jealousy and tickling Eve's vanity.

Nettled by the indifference which, from her open cordiality, Jerrem soon saw Eve felt towards him, he taxed every art of pleasing to its utmost, with the determination

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of not being baffled in his attempts to supplant Adam, who, in Jerrem's eyes, was a man upon whom fortune had lavished her choicest favours. Born in Polperro —Zebedee's son—heir to the *Lottery*—captain of her now in all but name, what had Adam to desire? While he, Jerrem, belonged to no one, could claim no one, had no name, and could not say where he came from. Down in the depths of a heart in which nothing that was good or bad ever lingered long, Jerrem let this fester rankle, until often, when he seemed most gay and reckless, some thoughtless word or idle joke would set it smarting. The one compensation he looked upon as given to him above Adam was the power of attraction, by which he could supplant him with others, and rob him of their affection, so that, though he was no more charmed by Eve's rare beauty than he was

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won by her coy modesty, no sooner did he see that Adam's affection was turned towards her, than he coveted her love, and desired to boast of it as being his own. With this object in view, he began by enlisting Eve's sympathies with his forlorn position, inferring a certain similarity in their orphaned condition, which might well lead her to bestow upon him her especial interest and regard; and so well was this part played, that before long Eve found herself learning unconsciously to regard Adam as severe and unyielding towards Jerrem, whose misfortune it was to be too easily influenced. Seeing her strong in her own rectitude, and no less convinced in the truth of Jerrem's well-intentioned resolutions, Adam felt it next to impossible to poison Eve's ears with tales and scandals of which her innocent life led her to have no suspicion; therefore, though the sight of

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their slightest intercourse rankled within him, he was forced to keep silent, knowing, as he did, that if he so much as pointed an arrow, every head was wagged at him, and if he dared let it fly home, every tongue was ready to cry shame on his treachery.

So the winter wore away, and as each day lengthened, Adam found it more difficult to master his suspicions, to contend with his surroundings, and to control the love which

had taken complete hold and mastery of all his senses. With untiring anxiety he continued to dodge every movement of Jerrem and Eve—all those about him noting it, laughing over it; and, while they thwarted and tricked him, making merry at his expense, until Jerrem, growing bold under such auspicious countenance, no longer hesitated to throw a very decided air of love-making into his hitherto innocent and friendly intercourse.

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Shocked and pained by Jerrem's altered tone, Eve sought refuge in Joan's broader experience by begging that she would counsel her as to the best way of putting a stop to this ungenerous conduct.

'Awh, my dear!' cried Joan; 'unless you'm wantin' to see murder in the house, you mustn't braithe no word of it. 'Tw'ud be worse than death to Jerrem if't should iver come to Adam's ears; why, he'd have his life, if he swung gallows-high for takin' of it; so, like a good maid, keep it from un now, 'cos they'm all on the eve o' startin', and by the time they comes home agen Jerrem 'ull have forgot all about ee.'

Eve hesitated.

'I told him if ever he spoke like that to me again I'd tell Adam.'

'Iss; but you won't do it, though,' returned Joan, 'cos there ain't no manin' in what he says, you know. 'Tis only what he's told

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up to scores and hunderds o' other maidens afore, the rapscallion-rogued raskil! and that Adam knows, and's had it in his mind from fust along what game he was after. Us two knows un for what he is, my dear; wan best loved where he's least trusted.'

'It's so different to the men I've ever had to do with,' said Eve.

'Iss, but you never knawed but wan afore you comed here, did 'ee?'

'I only knew one man well,' returned Eve.

'Awh, then, you must bide a bit 'fore you can fathom their deepness,' replied Joan; 'and while you'm waitin', I wouldn't advise 'ee to take it for granted that the world's

made up o' Reuben Mays—nor Adam Pascals neither;' and she ran to the door to welcome a cousin for whose approach she had been waiting, while Eve, worried

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and perplexed, let her thoughts revert to the old friend who seemed to have quite forgotten her; for Reuben had sent no answer to Eve's letter, and thus had afforded no opportunity for the further announcement she had intended making. His silence, interpreted by her into indifference, had hurt her more than she liked owning, even to herself; and the confession of their mutual promise, which she had intended making to Adam, was still withheld because her vanity forbade her to speak of a man whose affection she had undoubtedly overrated.

Already there had been some talk of the furniture being sent for, and with this in view, the next time she saw Sammy Tucker she asked him if he had been to Fowey lately, and if he had seen anything of Captain Triggs.

Sammy, as was his wont, blushed up to

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the eyes before he stammered out something about having met 'un just for a minit comin' down by Place, 'cos he'd bin up there to fetch sommit he was goin' to car'y to London for Squire Trefry; but that was a brave bit agone, so p'r'aps,' added Sammy, 'he's back by now, 'cos they was a-startin' away that ebenin'.'

Eve made no other remark, and Sammy turned away, not sorry to escape further interrogation, for it had so happened that the opportunity alluded to had been turned by Sammy to the best advantage, and he had contrived in the space of ten minutes to put Captain Triggs in possession of the whole facts of Adam and Eve's courtship, adding that 'folks said 'twas a burnin' shame o' he to marry she, and Joan Hocken fo'ced to stand by and look on, and her's' (indicating by his thumb it was his stepmother he meant) 'a tooked on tar'ible bad,

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and bin as moody-hearted as could be ever since.'

Captain Triggs nodded his head in sympathy, and then went on his way, with the intuitive conviction that this bit of news, which he intended repeating to 'thickee chap in London,' would not be received with welcome; 'however,' he reflected, 'tis allays best to know the warst, so I shall tell 'un the fust time I meets 'un, which is safe to be afore long, 'cos o' the ole gentleman,' meaning thereby an ancient silver watch, through whose medium Captain Triggs and Reuben had struck up an intimacy. How Reuben blessed that watch, and delighted in those ancient works which would not go, and so afforded him an opportunity for at least one visit!

Each time the *Mary Jane* came to London, Reuben was made acquainted with the fact, and the following evening

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found him in the little cabin, poring over the intricacies of his antique friend, whose former capabilities, when in the possession of his father, Captain Triggs was never weary of recounting.

Standing behind Reuben, Triggs would nod and chuckle at each fresh difficulty that presented itself, delighting in the proud certainty that after all the London chap 'ud find 'the ole gentleman had proved wan too many for he;' and when Reuben, desirous of further information, would prepare his way for the next visit by declaring he must have another try at him, Triggs, radiant but magnanimous,- would answer:

"Iss, iss, lad; do 'ee—come agen; for 'tis aisy to see with half a eye that 'tain't wan look nor two neither that 'ull circumnavigate the insides o' that ole chap, if 'taint to his likin' to be set agoin."

CHAPTER XI.

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IT was some weeks after the receipt of Eve's letter that Reuben, having paid several fruitless visits to Kay's Wharf, walked down one afternoon to find the *Mary Jane* in, and

Captain Triggs on board. The work of the short winter's day was all but over, and Reuben accepted an invitation to bide where he was and have a bit of a yarn.

'You've bin bad, haven't 'ee?' Captain Triggs said, with friendly anxiety, as, seated in the little cabin, their faces were brought on a level of near inspection.

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'Me—bad?' replied Reuben. 'No. Why, what made you think of that?'

'Cos you'm lookin' so gashly about the gills.'

'Oh, I was always a hatchet-faced fellow,' said Reuben, wondering, as he spoke, whether his lack of personal appearance had in any way damaged his cause with Eve, for poor Reuben was in that state when thoughts, actions, words, have but one centre round which they all seem unavoidably to revolve.

'But you'm wuss than ever, now. I reckon,' continued Captain Triggs, 'tis through addlin' your head over them clocks and watches too close, eh?'

'Well, perhaps so,' said Reuben. 'I often think that if I could, I should like to be more in the open air.'

'Come for a voyage with me, then,' said Triggs, heartily. 'I'll take 'ee, and give

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'ee a shake-down free, and yer mate and drink for the aitin'. Come, you can't have fairer than that said now, can 'ee?'

A wild thought rushed into Reuben's mind. Should he go with him? see Eve once more, and try whether it was possible to move her to some other decision?

'You're very kind, I'm sure,' he began, 'and I feel very much obliged for such an offer; but——'

'There, 'tis nothin' to be obliged for,' interrupted Triggs, thinking it was Reuben's modesty made him hesitate. 'We'm a hand short, so anywise there's a berth empty; and as for the vittals, they allays cooks a sight more than us can get the rids of. So I'm only offerin' 'ee what us can't ate ourselves.'

‘I think you mean what you're saying,’ said Reuben—‘at least,’ he added, smiling, ‘I hope you do, for 'pon my word I feel as if I should like very much to go.’

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‘Iss, sure. Come along, then. Us shan't start afore next week, and you'll be to Bristol and back 'fore they've had time to miss 'ee here.’

‘Bristol?’ ejaculated Reuben. ‘I thought you were going to Cornwall again.’

‘Not to wance, I ain't; but wouldn't 'ee rather go to Bristol? 'Tis a brave place, you know. For my part, I'd so soon see Bristol as London—'tis pretty much o' the same look-out here as there.’ But while Captain Triggs had been saying these words his thoughts had made a sudden leap towards the truth, and finding Reuben not ready with a remark, he continued:

‘Tain't on no account of the young female you comed aboard here with, that's makin' 'ee think o' Cornwall, is it?’

‘Yes, it is,’ said Reuben, bluntly. ‘I want to see her. I've had a letter from her and it needs a little talkin' over.’

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‘Awh, then I 'spects there's no need for me to tell 'ee that her's took up with Adam Pascal. You knaws it already?’

Reuben felt as if a pike had been driven into his heart, but his self-command stood him in good stead, and he said quite steadily:

‘Do you happen to know him, or anything about him?’

‘Awh, iss; I knaws 'en fast enuf,’ said Triggs, who felt by intuition that Reuben's desire was to know no good of him, ‘and a precious stomachy chap he is. Lord! I pities the maid who'll be his missis; whether gentle or simple, her's got her work cut out afore her.’

‘In what way? How do ye mean?’

‘Why, he's got the temper o' the old un to stand up agen, and wherever he shows his face he must be head and chief, and must lay down the law, and you must

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hearken to act by it, or else look out for squalls.'

Reuben drew his breath more freely. 'And what is he?' he asked.

'Wa-all, I reckon he's her cousin, you know,' answered Triggs, misinterpreting the question; 'cos he's ole Zebedee's awnly son, and the ole chap's got houses and lands, and I dunno what all. But there, I wouldn't change with 'em; for you know what they be, all alike—a drunkin', fightin', cussin' lot. Lor's, I cudn't stand it, I cudn't, to be drunk from mornin' to night and from night to mornin'!

'And is he one of this sort?' exclaimed Reuben, in horror. 'Why, are her relations like that?'

'They'm all tarred with the wan brush, I reckon,' replied Triggs. 'If not, they cudn't keep things goin' as they do; 'tis the drink carys 'em through with it.

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Why, I knaws by the little I've a-done that ways myself, how 'tis. Git a good skinful o' grog in 'ee, and wan man feels he's five, and, so long as it lasts, he's got the sperrit and 'ull do the work o' five, too; then when 'tis beginnin' to drop a bit, in with more liquor—and so go on till the job's over.'

'And how long do they keep it up?' said Reuben.

'Wa-all, that's more than I can answer for. Let me see,' said Triggs, reflectively; 'there was ole Zeke Spry, he was up eighty-seben, and he used to say he'd never that he knowed by, and could help, bin to bed not to say *sober*, since he'd comed to years o' discretion—but in that ways he was only wan o' many; and after he was dead 't happened just as t' ole chap had said it wud, for he used to say, "When I'm tooked, folks 'ull get up a talk that ole Zeke Spry killed hissself with drink; but

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don't you listen to it," he says, "'cos' 'tain't nothin' o' the sort—he died for want o' breath, that's what killed he;" and I reckon he was about right, else there wudn't be nobody left to die in Polperro.'

'Polperro!' said Reuben; 'that's where your ship goes to?'

'No, not ezactly; I goes to Fowey: but they bain't over a step or so apart—a matter o' six miles, say.'

There was a pause, which Captain Triggs broke by saying: 'Iss, I thought whether it wudn't surprise 'ee to hear 'bout it bein' Adam Pascal ; they'm none of 'em overmuch took with it, I reckon, for they allays counted on 'im havin' Joan Hocken: her's another cousin, and another nice handful, by all that's told up.'

Reuben's spirit groaned within him: 'Oh, if I'd only known of this before,' he said, 'I'd have kept her by force from

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going; or if she would have gone, I'd have gone with her. She was brought up so differently,' he continued, addressing Triggs. 'A more respectable woman never lived than her mother was.'

'Awh, so the Pascals all be; there's none of 'em but what's respectable and well-to-do. What I've bin tellin' of 'ee is their ways, you know; 'tain't nothing agen 'em.'

'It's quite decided me to go down and see her, though,' said Reuben. 'I feel it's what her mother would have me do: she in a way asked me to act a brother's part to her when she was dying, for she didn't dream about her having anything to do with these relations whom she's got among now.'

'Wa-all, 'twas a thousand pities you let her go then,' said Triggs, 'and though I'm not wantin' to hinder 'ee—for you'm so welcome to a passage down to Fowey as

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you be round to Bristol—still, don't it strike 'ee that if her wudn't stay here for yer axin' then, her ain't likely to budge from there for your axin' now?'

‘I can but try, though,’ said Reuben, ‘and if you'll let me go when you're going——
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‘Say no more, and the thing's settled,’ replied Triggs, decisively. ‘I shall come back to London with a return cargo, which 'ull have to be delivered; another wan 'ull be tooked in, and that aboard, off us goes.’

‘Then the bargain's made,’ said Reuben, holding out his hand; ‘and whenever you're ready to start you'll find me ready to go.’

Captain Triggs gave the hand a hearty shake in token of his willingness to perform his share of the compact; and the matter being so far settled, Reuben made his necessary preparations, and with all the patience

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he could summon to his aid, endeavoured to wait with calmness the date of departure.

While Reuben was waiting in London, activity had begun to stir again in Polperro. The season of pleasure was over; the men had grown weary of idleness and merry-making, and most of them now anxiously awaited the fresh trip on which they were about to start.

The first run after March was always an important one, and the leaders of the various crews had been at some trouble to arrange this point to the general satisfaction.

Adam's temper had been sorely tried during these discussions, but never had he so well governed it, nor kept his sharp speech under such good control; the reason being that at length he had found another outlet for his wounded sensibility.

With the knowledge that the heart he most cared for applauded and sympathised with his hopes and his failures,

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Adam could be silent and be calm—to Jerrem alone the cause of this alteration was apparent, and with all the lynx-eyed sharpness of vexed and wounded vanity, he tried to thwart and irritate Adam by sneering remarks and covert suggestions that all must now give way to him; it was nothing but ‘follow my leader’ and do and say what he chose—

words which were as pitch upon tow to natures so readily inflamed, so headstrong against government, and impatient of everything which savoured of control; and the further misfortune of this was that Adam, though detecting Jerrem's influence in all this opposition, was unable to speak of it to Eve. It was the single point relating to the whole matter on which the two kept silent, each regarding the very mention of Jerrem's name as a firebrand which might perchance destroy the wonderful harmony

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which for the last week or so had reigned between them, and which to both was so sweet that neither had the courage to endanger or destroy it.

At length the day of departure had come, and as each hour brought the inevitable separation closer, Eve's heart began to discover itself more openly, and she no longer disguised or hid from those around that her love, her hopes, her fears were centred upon Adam.

In vain did Jerrem try, by the most despairing looks and despondent sighs, to attract her attention, and entice her to an interview. Away from Adam's side or, Adam absent, from Joan's company. Eve would not stir, until Jerrem, driven into downright ill-humour, was forced to take refuge in sullen silence.

It had been decided that the *Lottery* was to start in the evening, and the day had

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been a busy one; but towards the end of the afternoon, Adam managed to spare a little time, which was to be devoted to Eve and to saying the farewell which in reality was then to take place between them.

In order to ensure a certain amount of privacy, it had been arranged that Eve should go to an opening some half-way up Talland Lane, and there await Adam's approach, which he would make by scrambling up from under the cliff, and so across to where she could see and come to meet him.

Accordingly, as soon as five o'clock had struck, Eve, who had been fidgeting about for some time, got up and said:

‘Joan, if Jerrem comes in, you won't tell where I've gone, will you?’

‘Well, seein' I don't knaw the whereabouts of it myself, I should be puzzled,’ said Joan.

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‘I'm goin' up Talland Lane to meet Adam,’ faltered Eve; ‘and as it's to say good-bye, I—we don't want anybody else, you see.’

The tremulous tone of the last few words made Joan turn round, and looking at Eve, she saw that the gathered tears were ready to fall from her eyes. Joan had felt a desire to be sharp in speech, but the sight of Eve's face melted her anger at once, and with a sudden change of manner, she said

‘Why, bless the maid, what's there to cry about? You'm a nice one, I just say, to be a sailor's wife! Lor's, don't let 'em see that you frets to see their backs, or they'll be gettin' it into their heads next that they'm somebodys and we can't live without 'em! They'll come back soon enough, and a sight too soon for a good many here, I can tell 'ee.’

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Eve shook her head.

‘But will they come back?’ she said despairingly. ‘I feel something different to what I ever felt before—a presentiment of evil, as if something would happen. What could happen to them, Joan?’

‘Lord bless 'ee! don't ax un what could happen to 'em? Why, a hunderd things—they could be wracked and drowned, or caught and killed, or tooked and hung;’ then, bursting into a laugh at Eve's face of horror, she exclaimed, ‘Pack o' stuff, nonsense! don't 'ee take heed o' no fancies nor rubbish o' that sort. They'll come back safe enuf, as they've allays done afore; nothin's ever happened to 'em yet, what should make it now? T'world ain't acomin' to an end 'cos you'm come down fra' London town. There, get along with 'ee, do,’ and she pushed her gently towards the door, adding, with a sigh, ‘Twould be a poor tale

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if Adam was never to come back now, and it the first time he ever left behind un anything he cared to see agen.'

Eve soon reached her point of observation, and under shelter of the hedge she stood looking with anxious eyes in the direction from which Adam was to come. It had been a clear bright day, and the air blew fresh and cool; the sky (except to windward, where a few white fleecy masses lay scattered about) was cloudless; the sea of a deep indigo-blue, flecked with ridges of foam, which unfurled and spread along each wave, crested its tip, and rode triumphant to the shore. Inside the Peak, over the harbour, the gulls were congregated, some fluttering over the water, some riding on its surface, some flying in circles over the heights, now green and soft with the thick fresh grass of spring. Down the spine of the cliff the tangle of briar-wood and

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brambles, though not leafless, still showed brown, and the long trails, which were lifted and bowed down as the sudden gusts of wind swept over them, looked bare and wintry.

Eve gave an involuntary shiver, and her eyes, so quick to drink in each varied aspect of the sea, now seemed to try and shut out its beauty from before her.

What should she do if the wind blew and the waves rose as she had seen them do of late, rejoicing in the sight, with Adam by her side? but with him away, she here alone—oh, her spirit sank within her; and, to drive away the thoughts which came crowding into her mind, she left her shelter, and hurrying along the little path, crossed the cress-grown brook, and was soon half-way up the craggy ascent, when Adam, who had reached the top from the other side, called out:

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'Hallo! I didn't think to find you here. We'd best walk back a bit, or else we shall be just in the eye of the wind, and it's coming on rather fresh.'

'You won't go if it blows, Adam?' and Eve's face betrayed her anxiety.

‘Oh, my dear one,’ he said kindly, ‘you mustn't think of the wind's having anything to do with me; besides, it's all in our favour, you know: it'll rock us to sleep all the sooner.’

Eve tried to smile back as she looked up at him, but it was a very feeble attempt.

‘I don't want to feel frightened,’ she said, ‘but I can't help it.’

‘Can't help what?’

‘Why, thinking that something may happen.’

‘Oh, nonsense!’ he said; ‘there's nothing going to happen. It's because you care for me, you think like that. Why, look at

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me—ain't I the same? Before this, I never felt anything but glad to be off and get away; but this time,’—and he drew a long sigh, as if to get rid of the oppression—‘I seem to carry about a lump of lead inside me, and the nearer it comes to saying good-bye the heavier it grows.’

This sympathy seemed to afford Eve some consolation, and when she spoke again it was to ask, in a more cheerful tone, how long their probable absence would be? where they were going? what time they would take in getting there? to all of which Adam answered with unnecessary exactness; for both of them felt they were talking, for talking's sake, of things about which they knew all they could know already. Yet how was it possible, in the light of open day, when at any moment they might be joined by a third person, to speak of that which lay deep down in their

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hearts, waiting only for a word, a caress, a tender look, to give it voice?

Adam had had a dozen cautions, entreaties, injunctions, to give to Eve; he had been counting through every minute of the day the time to this hour, and now it had come, and he seemed to have nothing to say, could think of nothing, except how long he could possibly give to remaining.

‘By Jove!’ he exclaimed, as after more than an hour had slipped away — time wasted in irrelevant questions and answers, with long pauses between—when neither could think of anything to say, and each wondered why the other did not speak. ‘By Jove, Eve, I must be off! I didn’t think the time had gone so quick. We mustn’t start at the furthest later than eight; and if I ain’t there to look after them, nobody’ll think it worth while to be ready.’

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They were back under shelter of the hedge again now, and Adam (who possessed the singular quality of not caring to do his love-making in public) ventured to put his arm round Eve’s waist, and draw her towards him.

‘You’ll never let me go again,’ he said, ‘without bein’ able to leave you my wife, Eve, will you? ’Tis that I b’lieve is pressing on me. I wish now more than ever that you hadn’t persisted in saying no all this long winter.’

‘I won’t say no next time,’ she said, while the hitherto restrained tears began to fall thick and fast.

Adam’s delight was not spoken in words, and for the time he forgot all about the possibility of being overlooked.

‘Then, when I come back, I shan’t be kept waiting any longer?’

‘No.’

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‘And we shall be married at once?’

‘Yes.’

Adam strained her again to his heart.

‘Then come what may,’ he said, ‘I shan’t fear it. So long as I’ve got you, Eve, I don’t care what happens. It’s no good,’ he said, after another pause. ‘The time’s up, and I must be off. Cheer up, my girl—cheer up! Look up at me, Eve—that’s a sweetheart! Now, one kiss more, and after that we must go on to the gate, and then goodbye indeed.’

But the gate reached, and the good-bye said, Eve still lingered.

‘Oh, Adam!’ she cried, ‘stop—wait for one instant!’

And Adam, well pleased to be detained, turned towards her once more.

‘Good-bye, Adam, God watch over you!’

‘Amen, my girl—amen! May He watch over both of us, for before Him we are one

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now, Eve; we’ve taken each other, as the book has it, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health.’

‘Till death do you part,’ said the sepulchral tones of a voice behind the hedge, and with a laugh at the start he had given them, Jerrem passed by the gate, and went on his way.

CHAPTER XII.

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SEVERAL weeks had now passed by since the bustle of departure was over, and though no direct intelligence had come from the absentees, a rumour had somehow spread abroad that the expected run of goods was to be one of the largest ever made in Polperro.

The probability of this fact had been known to the leaders of the expedition before they started, and had afforded Adam another opportunity for impressing upon them the great necessity for increased caution.

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Grown suspicious at the supineness which generally pervaded the revenue department, the Government had decided upon a complete revolution, and during the winter months the entire force of the coast had been everywhere superseded, and in many places increased. Both at Looe and Fowey the cutters had new officers and crews, and the men, inflamed with the zeal of new-comers, were most ardent to make a capture and so prove themselves worthy of the post assigned to them.

While all his comrades had affected to laugh at these movements, Adam had viewed them with anxiety, had seen the graveness of their import, and the disasters likely to arise from them; and at length his arguments had so far prevailed that a little better regulation was made for the working of signals and insuring that they should be given and attended to if required. In case

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of danger the rule was to burn a fire on different heights of the cliff, and small huts were even erected for that purpose; but the lighting these fires was often delayed until the last moment—what had become everybody's business was nobody's business—and secure that, in any case, the cruisers were no more willing to fight than the smugglers were wanting to be fought, hazards were often incurred which, with men whose silence could not be bought (for up to that time every crew had had its go-between), would most certainly have proved fatal.

Upon the present force no influence could as yet be got to bear, and to prove the temper of their dispositions, no sooner was it known to them that three of the most daring of the Polperro vessels were absent, than they set to watching the place with such untiring vigilance that it needed all the sharpness of those left behind to

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follow their movements and arrange the signals so that they might warn their friends without exciting undue suspicions among their enemies.

Night after night, in one place or another, the sheltered flicker of the flame shone forth, as a warning that any attempt to land would prove dangerous, until word being suddenly brought that the cruiser had gone off to Polruan, out went the fire, and, an answering light showing that at least one of the vessels was on the watch, when the morning dawned the *Stamp and Go* was in, and her cargo safe under water. The *Lottery*, she said, had contrived to decoy the revenue men away, hoping that by that means the two smaller vessels might stand a chance of running in; but from their having to part

company and keep well away from each other, the *Stamp and Go*—though certain the *Cleopatra* was not far off—had lost sight of her.

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The day passed away, the evening light had all but faded, when to the watchers the *Cleopatra*, with crowded sail and aided by a south-west wind, was seen trying to make the harbour, close followed by the cruiser. The news flew over the place like lightning, and but a few minutes seemed to have passed before all Polperro swarmed the cliffs, each trying to secure a vantage-point by putting forth some strong claim of interest in those on board. With trembling hearts and anxious gaze, the lookers-on watched each movement of the two vessels, a dead silence prevailing among them so long as they both followed in the same course; but the instant a clever tack was made by which the pursuers were baffled, up rose the shout of many voices, and cries were heard and prayers uttered that the darkness would come quickly on and afford their friends a safe retreat.

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Except to such men as steered the *Cleopatra*, to enter Polperro harbour amid darkness and wind was a task beyond their skill; and knowing this, and seeing by their adversary's tactics the near possibility of defeat, the cruiser had resort to her guns, trying to cut away the *Cleopatra's* gear, and by that means compel her to heave-to. But though partly disabled, the stout little vessel bore onwards, and night's friendly clouds coming to her aid, the discomfited cruiser had to withdraw, within hearing of the triumphant shouts which welcomed its rival's safety.

With the exception of the *Lottery*, all was now safe; but no fears were entertained on her account, because, from her superior size and her well-known fast sailing qualities, the risks which had endangered the other two vessels would in no way affect her. She had merely to cruise

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outside, and await, with all the patience her crew could command, a fitting opportunity for slipping in, escaping the revenue men, and turning on them a fresh downpour of taunts and ridicule.

In proof of this, several of the neighbouring fishing-boats had from time to time seen and spoken to the *Lottery*; and with a view to render those at home perfectly at ease, every now and again one of these trusty messengers would arrive with a few words, which would be speedily circulated among those most interested. The fact of their absence, and the knowledge that at any time the attempt to land might be made, naturally kept every one on the strain; and directly night set in, both Joan and Eve trembled at each movement and started at every sound.

One night, as, in case of surprise, they were setting all things in order, a sudden shuffling made Joan fly to the door.

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'Why, Jonathan!' she exclaimed, admitting the man whom Eve had never seen since the evening after her arrival, 'what's up? What brings you here, eh?'

'I've comed with summat for you,' he said, casting a suspicious look at Eve.

'Well, out with it, then,' said Joan; quickly adding, as she jerked her head in that direction, 'us don't have no secrets from she.'

'Awh, doant 'ee!' returned Jonathan, in a voice which sounded the reverse of complimentary. 'Wa-all, then, there's what 'tis;' and he held towards her a piece of paper folded up like a letter.

'Who's it from? Where did 'ee get un?' asked Joan; while Eve exclaimed, 'Oh, Joan, see is it from them?'

'I can't stay no longer,' said Jonathan, preparing to retreat.

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'But you must stay till we've made out what this here is,' said Joan.

Jonathan shook his head.

‘Tain't nothin' to do with what I'm about,’ he answered, determined not to be detained; ‘and I've got to run all the faster 'cos I've comed round this way to bring it. But Jerrem gived it to me,’ he whispered, ‘and Adam ain't to be tould nothin' of it;’ and he added a few more words, which made Joan release her hold of him and seem as anxious to see him gone as he was to go.

The first part of the whisper had reached Eve's ears, and the hope which had leaped into her heart had been forced back by the disappointment that Jerrem, not Adam, had sent the letter. Still it might contain some news of their return, and she turned to Joan with a look of impatient inquiry.

‘I wonder whatever 'tis about,’ said

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Joan, claiming the right of ownership so far as the unfolding the missive went. ‘Some random talk or 'nother, I'll be bound,’ she added, with a keener knowledge of her correspondent than Eve possessed.

‘I'll warrant he's a nice handful aboard there 'mongst 'em all, with nothin' to do but drinkin' and dice-throwin' from mornin' to night. Awh laws!’ she said, with a sigh of discontent, as the written pages lay open before her, ‘what's the good o' sendin' a passel o' writin' like that to me? 't might so well be double Dutch for aught I can make out o' any o' it. There! take and read it, do 'ee, Eve, and let's hear what he says—a good deal more 'bout you than me, I'll lay a wager to.’

‘Then I don't know why he should,’ said Eve.

‘No, nor I neither,’ laughed Joan; ‘but

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there! I ain't jealous o' he, for as I'm Jerrem's cut-and-come-agen, his makin' up to other maidens only leaves un more relish for comin' back to the dish he can stick by.’

Eve's eyes had by this time run over the carelessly-written, sprawling page of the letter, and her face flushed up crimson as she said:

‘I really do wish Jerrem would give over all this silly nonsense. He has no business to write in this way to me.’

‘To you!’ exclaimed Joan, snatching back the letter to look at the outside. ‘Why, that ain’t to you!’ and she laid her finger on the direction. ‘Come now, ’tis true I bain’t much of a scholar, but I’m blessed if I can’t swear to my awn name when I sees un.’

‘That’s only the outside,’ said Eve; ‘all the rest is to me—nothing but a parcel of

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silly questions, asking me how he has offended me, and why I don’t treat him as I used to, as if he didn’t know that he has nobody but himself to blame for the difference.’

‘And ain’t there nothin’ else? Don’t he send no word to me?’ asked Joan, ruefully.

Eve, who was only too glad that poor Joan’s ignorance prevented her reading the exaggerated rhodomontade of penitence and despair with which the paper was filled, ignored the first question.

‘He says,’ she said, turning to read from the page, ‘As you won’t give me the opportunity of speaking to you, promise me that, when we meet, which will be tomorrow night ——’ Oh! Joan, can that be true? Do you think he means really tomorrow night?’ then, running her eyes farther on, she continued: ‘Perhaps he

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does, for—listen, Joan—“You mustn’t split on me to Adam, who’s cock-a-hoop about giving you all a surprise; and there’d be the devil to pay if he found out I’d blown the gaff.”’

‘Now, ain’t that Jerrem all over?’ exclaimed Joan, angrily, anything but pleased at the neglect she had received. ‘Just flyin’ in the face o’ everything Adam wants done. He knaws how things has got abroad afore nobody could tell how; and yet, ’cos he’s axed, he can’t keep a quiet tongue in his head.’

‘I tell you what we’ll do,’ said Eve: ‘not take a bit of notice of the letter, Joan, and just act as if we’d never had it; shall we?’

‘Well, I reckon 'twould be the best way, for I shouldn't wonder but they be comin',’ she added, while Eve, anxious to be rid of the letter, hastily flung it into

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the fire, and stood watching it blaze up and die out. ‘Jonathan gave a hint o' somethin’,’ continued Joan, ‘though he never named no time, which, if he was trusted with, he knaws better than to tell of.’

‘I wonder they do trust him, though,’ said Eve, ‘seeing he's rather silly.’

‘Awh, most o' his *silly* is to serve his own turn. Why, to see un elsewheres, you'd say he'd stored up his wits to Polperro, and left 'em here 'til he gets back agen; and that's how 'tis he ferrets out the things he does, 'cos nobody minds un, nor pays no heed to un; and if he does by chance come creepin' up, or stand anigh, “'Tis only poor foolish Jonathan,” they says.’

CHAPTER XIII.

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THE sun, which came streaming in through the windows next morning, seemed the herald of coming joy. Eve was the first to be awakened, and she soon aroused Joan. ‘It won't make no difference to them because the day's fine,’ she asked; ‘will it, Joan?’

‘Not a bit; they don't care a dump what the day is, so long as the night's only dark enough, and there'll be no show o' moon this week.’

‘Oh, I'm so glad,’ said Eve, breaking

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out into a snatch of an old song which had caught her fancy.

‘Awh, my dear, don't 'ee begin to sing, not till breakfast is over,’ exclaimed Joan. ‘“Sing afore you bite—cry afore night.”’

‘Cry with joy, perhaps,’ laughed Eve; still, she hushed her melody, and hastened her speed to get quickly dressed, and her breakfast over. That done with, the house had to be fresh put in order, while Joan applied herself to the making of various pies and

pasties; for 'You see,' she said, 'if they won't all of 'em be just ready for a jollification this time, and no mistake.'

'And I'm sure they deserve to have one,' said Eve, whose ideas of merrymaking were on a much broader scale now than formerly: it is true she still always avoided the sight of a drunken man, and ran away from a fight, but this was more because her feelings were outraged at these

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sights, than because her sense of right and wrong was any longer shocked at the vices which led to them.

'I'll tell 'ee what I think I'll do,' said Joan, as, her culinary tasks over, she felt at liberty to indulge in some relaxation; 'I'll just run in to Polly Taprail's, and two or three places near, and see if the wind's blowed them any of this news.'

'Yes, do,' said Eve, 'and I shall go along by the Warren a little way, and look at the sea and that——'

'Lord save the maid!' laughed Joan, 'whatever you finds in the say to look at I can't tell. I knaw 'tis there, but I niver wants to turn my eyes that way, 'ceptin' 'tis to look at somethin' 'pon it.'

'Wait 'till you've been in a town like I have for some time,' said Eve.

'Wait! iss, I 'spects 'twill be wait 'fore my turn comes to be in a town for long.

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Awh, but I should just like to go to London, though,' she added; 'wouldn't I just come back ginteel!' and she walked out of the door with the imaginary strut such an importance would warrant her in assuming. Eve followed, and the two walked together down Lansallos Street, at the corner of which they parted—Joan to go to Mrs. Taprail's, and Eve along by the Warren towards Talland, for although she had not told her intention to Joan, she had made up her mind to walk on to where she could get sight of Talland Bay.

She was just in that state of hope and fear when inaction becomes positive pain, and relief is only felt while in pursuit of an object which entails some degree of bodily movement. Joan had so laughed at her fears for the *Lottery*, that to a great extent her anxiety had subsided; and everybody else seemed so certain that, with Adam's

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caution and foresight, nothing could possibly happen to them, that to doubt their safety seemed to doubt his wisdom.

During this last voyage Adam had had a considerable rise in the opinions of the Polperro folk: they would not admit it too openly, but in discussions between twos and threes it was acknowledged that 'Adam had took the measure o' they new revenoo chaps from the fust, and said they was a cunnin', decateful lot, and not to be dealt with no ways;' and Eve, knowing the opposition he had had to undergo, felt a just pride that they were forced into seeing that his fears had some ground, and that his advice was worth following out.

Once past the houses, and she determined no longer to linger, but walk on as briskly as possible; and this was the more advisable because the day was a true April one—sharp showers of mingled hail and

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rain had succeeded the sun, which now again was shining out with dazzling brightness.

The sea was green, and rippled over with short dancing waves, across which ran long slanting shadows of a bright violet hue, reflected from the sun and sky; but by the time Eve reached a jutting stone, which served as a landmark, all this was vanishing; and turning, she saw coming up a swift creeping shadow, which drew behind it a misty veil that covered up both sea and sky, and blotted them from view.

'Oh my! here's another hailstorm coming,' she said; and drawing the hood of her cloak close over her face, she made all haste down the steep bit of irregular rock towards where she knew that, a little way off the path, a huge boulder would afford her shelter.

Down came the rain, and with it such a

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gust of wind that, stumbling up the bit of cliff on which the stone stood, Eve was almost bent double. Hullo! Somebody was here already, and, shaking back her hood to see who her companion in distress might be, she uttered a sharp scream of horror, for the man who stood before her was no other than Reuben May.

‘Then you're not glad to see me, Eve?’ he said, for the movement Eve had involuntarily made was to put out her hands as if to push him away.

Eve tried to speak, but the sudden fright of his unexpected presence seemed to have dried up her throat and tongue, and taken away all power of utterance.

‘Your old chum, Capen Triggs, asked me how I should like to take a bit of a trip with him, and I thought as I hadn't much to keep me I'd take his offer; and, as he's stopped at Plymouth for a day or

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so, I made up my mind to come so far as here and see for myself if some of what I've been told is true.’

‘Why, what have you been told?’ said Eve, catching at anything which might spare her some of the unpleasantness of a first communication.

‘Well, for one thing, that you're going to be married to your cousin.’

Eve's colour rose, and Reuben, thinking it might be anger, said:

‘Don't make any mistake, Eve; I haven't come to speak about myself All that's past and over, and God only knows why I ever got such folly into my head;’ and Reuben thought himself perfectly sincere in making this statement, for he had talked himself into the belief that this journey was undertaken from the sole desire to carry out his trust. ‘What I've come to do is to speak to you like a friend, and ask you to tell me

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what sort of people these are that you're among, and how the man gets his living that you're thinking of being married to?'

Eve hesitated, then she said:

'There is no need for me to answer you, Reuben, because I can see that somebody already has been talking about them to you, haven't they?'

'Yes, they have; but how do I know that what they've said is true?'

'Oh, I dare say it's true enough,' she said; 'people ain't likely to tell you false about a thing nobody here feels ashamed to own to.'

'Not ashamed of being drunkards, lawbreakers—thieves!' said Reuben, sternly.

'Reuben May!' exclaimed Eve, flaming up with indignation, and entirely forgetting that but a little time before she had held an exactly similar opinion, 'do you forget that you're speaking of my own father's

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blood-relations—people who're called by the same name I am?'

'No, I don't forget it, Eve; and I don't forget neither that if I didn't think that down here you would soon become ruined, body and soul, I'd rather cut my tongue out than it should give utterance to a word that could cause you pain. You speak of your father, but think of your mother, Eve; think if she could rise up before you, could you ask her blessing on what you're going to do?'

Eve's face quivered with emotion, and Reuben, seizing his advantage, continued:

'Perhaps you think I'm saying this because I'm wanting you for myself, but, as God will judge us, 'tisn't that that's making me speak, Eve,' and he held out his hand towards her. 'You've known me for many a long year now; my heart's been laid more bare to you than to any

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living creature: do you believe what I'm saying to you?'

'Yes, Reuben, I do,' she answered firmly, though the tears, no longer restrained, came streaming from her eyes, 'and you must also believe what I say to you, that my

cousin is a man as honest and upright as yourself, that he wouldn't defraud any one of the value of a pin's point, nor take a thing that he didn't think himself he'd got a proper right to.'

'Good God, Eve! is it possible that you can speak like this of one who gets his living by smuggling?' and a spasm of positive agony passed over Reuben's face as he tried to realise the change of thought and feeling which could induce a calm defence of such iniquity. 'What's the difference whether a man robs me or he robs the king? Isn't he stealing just the same?'

'No—certainly not!' said Eve, quickly.

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'I can't explain it all to you, but I know this—that what they bring over they buy and pay for, and certainly therefore have some right to.'

'Have a right to!' repeated Reuben. 'Well, that's good! So men have a right to smuggle, have they—and smuggling isn't stealing? Come! I should just like this cousin of yours to give me half an hour of his company to argue out that matter in.'

'My cousin isn't at home,' said Eve, filled with a sudden horror of what might be expected from an argument between two such tempers as Reuben and Adam possessed. 'And if you've only come here to argue, whether 'tis with me or with them, Reuben, 'tis a waste of time that'll do no good to you, nor any of us.'

Reuben did not speak. He stood, and for a few moments looked fixedly at her; then he turned away, and hid his face in his

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hands. The sudden change from anger to sorrow came upon Eve unexpectedly—anything like a display of emotion was so foreign to Reuben that she could not help being affected by it, and after a minute's struggle with herself, she laid her hand on his arm, saying gently:

'Reuben, don't let me think you've come all this long way only to quarrel and say bitter things to me: let me believe 'tis as you said, because you weren't satisfied, and

felt—for mother's sake—you wanted to be a friend to me still. I feel now as if I ought to have told you when I wrote that I was going to marry my cousin Adam, but I didn't do it because I thought you'd write to me, and then 'twould be easier to speak; and when you didn't take no notice, I thought you meant to let me go altogether, and I can't tell you how hurt I felt. I couldn't help saying to myself over and

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over again (though I was so angry with you I didn't know what to do)—I shall never have another such friend as Reuben —never.'

Eve's words had their effect, and when Reuben turned his pale face to her again, his whole mood was softened.

'Tis to be the same friend I always was that I've come, Eve,' he said; 'only you know me, and how I can never keep from blurting out all at once things that I ought to bring round bit by bit, so that they might do good, and not give offence.'

'You haven't offended me yet,' she said—'at least,' she added, smiling in her old way at him, 'not beyond what I can look over; and so far as I can, and it will ease your mind, Reuben, I'll try to tell you all you care to know about uncle and—the rest of them. I'm sure, if you knew them, you'd like them, you couldn't help it, more particularly

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Joan and Adam—if you once saw those two.'

'And why can't I see them, Eve? It wouldn't seem so very strange, being your friend—for that's all I claim to be—going there to see you, would it?'

'No, I don't know that it would; only' —and here she hesitated—'whatever you saw that you didn't like, Reuben, you'd only speak to me about? You wouldn't begin arguing with them, would you?'

Reuben shook his head. Then, with a sudden impulse, he said:

'And have you really given all your love to this man, Eve?'

'Yes,' she said, not averting her eyes, although her face was covered with a quick blush.

‘And, whatever comes, you mean to be his wife?’

‘I don't mean to be anybody else's wife,’ she said.

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‘And he—he cares for you?’

‘If he didn't, be sure I should have never cared for him.’

Reuben sighed.

‘Well,’ he said, ‘I'll go and see him. I'll have a talk with him, and try and find out what sort of stuff he's made of. If I could go away certain that things ain't as bad as I feared to find them, I should take back a lighter heart with me. You say he isn't home now. Is he at sea, then?’

‘No, not at sea; he's close by.’

‘Then you expect him back soon?’

‘Yes; we expect him back to-night.’

‘To-night! Then I think I'll change my plan. I meant to go back to Plymouth, and see what Triggs is about to do, for I'm going round to London with him when he goes; but if you're expecting your cousin so soon, why shouldn't I stop here till I've seen him?’

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‘Oh! but he mightn't come,’ said Eve, who in any case had no wish that Reuben should appear until she had paved the way for his reception, and, above all things, desired his absence on this particular occasion.

‘Well, I must take my chance of that—unless,’ he added, catching sight of her face, ‘there's any reason against my stopping?’

Eve coloured.

‘Well,’ she said, ‘perhaps they mightn't care—as they don't know you—about your being here. You see,’ she added, by way of excuse, ‘they've been away a long while now.’

‘Been to France, I s'pose,’ said Reuben, in a tone which conveyed his suspicions.

‘No,’ replied Eve, determined not to seem ashamed of their occupation; ‘I think they've been to Guernsey.’

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‘Oh, well, all the same, so far as what they went to fetch. Then they're going to *try* and land their cargo, I s'pose?’

‘I don't know what they may be going to *try* and do,’ and Eve endeavoured to imitate the sneer with which Reuben had emphasized the word, ‘but I know that trying with them means doing. There's nobody about here,’ she added, with a borrowed spice of Joan's manner, ‘would care to put themselves in the way of trying to hinder the *Lottery*.’

‘Tis strange, then, that they shouldn't choose to come in open daylight, rather than be sneaking in under cover of a dark night,’ said Reuben, aggravatingly.

‘As it happens,’ retorted Eve, with an assumption of superior nautical knowledge, ‘the dark night suits them best, by reason that at high tide they can come in close to Down End. Oh! you needn't try to think

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you can hurt me by your sneers at them,’ she said, inwardly smarting under the contempt she knew Reuben felt. ‘I feel hurt at your wanting to say such things, but not at all at what you say. That can't touch me.’

‘No, so I see,’ said Reuben, hopelessly. Then, after a minute's pause, he burst out with a passionate, ‘Oh, Eve! I feel as if I could take and jump into the sea with you, so as I might feel you'd be safe from the life. I'm certain you're going to be dragged down to! You may think fair now of this man, because he's only showed you his fair side; but they who know him know him for what he is — bloodthirsty, violent, a drunkard, never sober, with his neck in a noose, and the gallows swinging over his head. What hold will you have over one who fears neither God nor devil? Yes, but I will speak. You shall listen to the

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truth from me,' for she had tried to interrupt him. 'It isn't too late, and it's but fit that you know what others say of him!'

Eve's anger had risen until she seemed turned into a fury, and her voice, usually low and full, now sounded hard and sharp, as she cried:

'If they said a hundred times worse of him, I would still marry him; and if he stood on the gallows that you say swings over his head, I'd stand by his side and say I was his wife!'

'God pity you!' groaned Reuben.

'I want no pity,' she said, 'and so you can tell those who would throw it away on me. Say to them that you sought me out to cast taunts at me, but it was of no use, for what you thought I should be ashamed of I gloried in, and could look you and all the world in the face,' and she seemed to grow taller as she spoke, 'and say I felt

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proud to be a smuggler's wife,' and, turning, she made a movement as if to go; but Reuben took a step so as to impede her.

'Is this to be our parting?' he said. 'Can you throw away the only friend you've got left?'

'I don't call you a friend,' she said.

'You'll know me for being so one day though, and bitterly rue you didn't pay more heed to my words.'

'Never!' she said proudly. 'I'd trust Adam with my life; he's true as steel. Now,' she added, stepping on one side, 'I have no more time to stay. I must go back, so let me pass!'

Mechanically Reuben moved. Stung by her words, irritated by a sense of failure, filled with the sharpest jealousy against his rival, he saw no other course open to him than to let her go her way, and to go his.

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‘Good-bye, then, Eve,’ he said, in a dry, cold voice.

‘Good-bye,’ she answered.

‘I don’t think, after what’s passed, you need expect to see me again,’ he ventured, with the secret hope that she would pause and say something that might lead to a fresh discussion.

‘I had no notion that you’d still have a thought of coming. I should look upon a visit from you as very out of place.’

‘Oh! well, be sure I shan’t force myself where I’m not wanted.’

‘Then you’ll be wise to stay away, for you’ll never be wanted where I am!’

And without another glance in his direction, she walked away, while Reuben stood and watched her out of sight.

‘That’s ended,’ he said, setting his lips firmly together and hardening the expression of his naturally grave face. ‘That

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mad game’s finished, and finished so that I think I’ve done with sweethearting for as long as I live. Well, thank God! a man may get on very fairly, though the woman he made a fool of himself for flings back his love, and turns him over for somebody else;’ then, as if some unseen hand had dealt him a sudden thrust, he cried out: ‘Why did I ever see her? Why was I made to care for her? Haven’t I known the folly of it all along, and fought and strove from the first to get the better of myself? and here she comes down and sees a fellow whose eye is tickled by her looks and he acts in a week what I’ve been begging and praying for years for; and they tell you that God’s ways are just, and that He rewards the good and punishes the evil;’ and Reuben’s face worked with suppressed emotion, for in spirit he stood before his Creator and upbraided Him with, ‘Lo!

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these many years have I served Thee; neither transgressed I at any time Thy commandments; and yet this drunkard, this evil-liver, this law-breaker, is given that for



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which in my soul I have thirsted;’ and the devils of envy and revenge ran by his side rejoicing, while fate flew before and lured him on to where opportunity stood and welcomed his approach.

END OF VOL. II.

