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PACIFIC ISLANDS

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The Island of Tranquil Delights

A South Sea Idyl and Others

By

Charles Warren Stoddard

Author of South Sea Idyls



Boston

Herbert B. Turner & Company

1904

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To William McMichael Woodworth

*O! to burst all links of habit—there to wander far
away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the
day—*

*Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and
happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in clusters, knots
of Paradise.*

*Never comes the trader, never floats an European
flag—
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, droops the
trailer from the crag—*

*Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-
fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark purple spheres
of sea.*

Locksley Hall.

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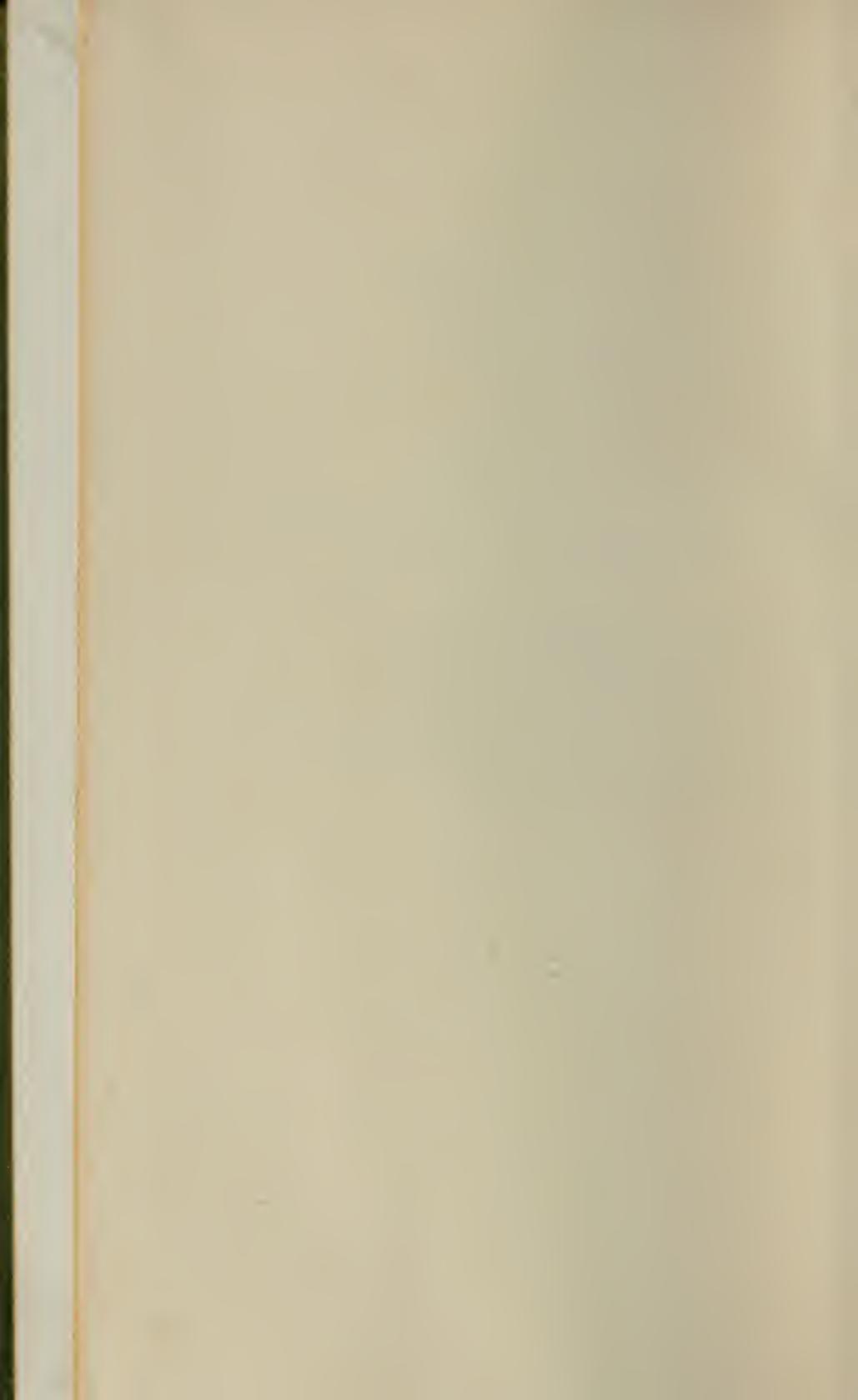
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OTAHETE

*Beautiful Siren, thou whose palm-plumed crest
Gems the horizon like an emerald spray
Plucked from perennial paradise away
And lost forever, yet forever blest!*

*O Summer Isle! the rich sea's rich bequest
Unto her mermen, that with rare display
Meltest the souls of those whose hearts are gray,
Like the warm wave that fawns upon thy breast!*

*Beautiful Siren! Thy voluptuous vales
Invite the weary. As thy raptured guest
The mariner lets hang his mildewed sails
And seeks the fervor of thy full embrace
In bowers whose balm betrays their hiding-place,
Never to rouse from his enchanted rest.*



THE ISLAND OF TRANQUIL
DELIGHTS



THE ISLAND OF TRANQUIL DELIGHTS

AGAIN and again do I spring from my chair and abandon myself to paroxysms of indignation whenever I am reminded of my one sole, solitary experience with the official representative of the Great Republic in a romantic island of the tropic seas; but in a moment my wrath is turned to laughter when I recall the absurd conclusion of the episode which is uppermost in my mind at this moment. Probably it was all my fault. I was saturated with romance. I fed on the nectar and ambrosia that drop from the pens of Herman Melville, Jules Verne, Mayne Reid and the rest. I had already buried myself in the

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Spice Islands, apart from my race, and rambled in perfumed groves, where the children of nature tried their best to spoil me and only half succeeded. I was always sailing out of port in the search of happiness—the kind of happiness one never finds in this life. The quest of the Holy Grail was not more fruitless. Here I longed for the other shore; there I grew restless and stole back betimes to the civilization that makes life a burden by overdoing it. Again I turned towards my islands, and kept doing this sort of thing until it grew monotonous, and then I said to myself, Young fellow this must be stopped; cast yourself penniless upon some undiscovered island and work your passage home. The experience will, in all human probability, effect a permanent cure; you can then settle down and be as stupid as the great majority. I did it.

I embarked with a flourish of trumpets from a French poet, who saw in me a fraternal soul booked for an earthly paradise. He conjured me in clever couplets to spread my wings; he implored me to build my nest among the branches, to bathe in dew, and to look for him at sunrise with the elastic faith of a Second Adventist. All this I did. The island of tranquil delights rose out of the sea

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a pyramid of flowers girdled with a silver zone; the reef that flashed and sang, opened to admit us, and then seemed to close again and shut us in a little world of unutterable beauty. They were positively ravishing, those first four-and-twenty hours. I had a few dollars and a box of books, the circulating library that a literary tramp would be most likely to cling to in adversity.

I took a chamber at the corner of a palm-tree and a jungle of vanilla beans. The great satin sails of the banana hung in a dead calm beneath my window; a bread-fruit tree stood between me and the other world; I was enraptured with my fate. In decent season I presented myself at the Consulate—a bungalow that opened upon the bluest and most delicious sea it has ever been my lot to cruise in. I entered with the air of one who reposes confidence in the representative of his country and is proud to meet him under alien skies. A bright smile lit up my youthful face—this was ages ago—my heart was on my sleeve, and in those days it was just about as much as I could carry. With an ingenuous air, which had won me troops of friends and invited not a few adventurers to capture and lay me waste, I introduced myself to the representa-

tive who sat in white flannel behind the official desk. He was not over young, natty in appearance, brusque, and, I should say, deeply involved in nation affairs. I said, "I am truly yours, a scribe not without honor in my family circle, fond of travel and the tropics, and it is my wish to settle for a time in the island of tranquil delights." I showered upon him letters of introduction, among them one from the poet who had sung my praises and blown me to sea with his inspiring breath. Our representative, without raising his eyes from the volume which he had opened hastily as I entered his august presence, waved me to a chair in the corner of the room. I sat patiently and heard the white breakers clang upon the reef, and saw the blue sea grow bluer every moment, and listened to the piping of three nymphs who were playing nimbly upon the nose-flute on the lawn at the edge of the sea.

Some moments, which were as hours, crept by; the Consul turned the leaves of the volume, compared notes, gave sharp orders to a lad, who, like his master, was jauntily dressed in white flannel, and at last turned upon me with a business-like severity that was not in keeping with the perpetual repose of the

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island of tranquil delights. Doubtless the cares of his office had wearied him, for over yonder there are sometimes as many as three barks and a schooner reported in sight in as many months. I strove to make due allowance for what seemed to me at the time a discourteous reception. He turned upon me his bland blue eyes and said: "What brings you here?" I repeated my formula, and added that I hoped to find some opening in which to hide myself until I might satiate my soul and get money enough to secure my passage home. I was assured that the case was hopeless; that there were men enough in that latitude; and of young men, too many. It was evident that I was out of place as well as out of pocket. However—and here the Consul spoke once more officially—I must conduct myself in a path extremely straight and uncomfortably narrow; I must keep myself aloof from the native population, dress as well as convenient, and possibly in time something might be found for me to do. Meanwhile I might call at the Consulate and occupy at intervals one of the vacant chairs. It would redound, he suggested, to my credit to be seen nestling, as it were, under the metaphorical wing of the

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party in white flannel. With this I departed full of sorrow.

The few whites who monopolized the business of the island seemed to recognize me at once as an intruder. My landlord requested all payments in advance; other letters of introduction were presented with diffidence and received with strictly polite disinterest. A week passed; a week in which I played my part cunningly. There was a deep design in this assumption of genteel repose. I repulsed the native by request—God knows it was against my nature! I wasted my substance in a living which was very far from being riotous; I cried out to my palm, my bean jungle, my banana and my bread-fruit tree to shelter me from the fate that was imminent and inevitable; I dozed in the heat of the day, and disgust was my bedfellow; I passed wakeful nights, and rose from the tedious couch, which could be mine but a few hours longer, and alone I paced the streets of that tropical town, deaf as an adder. Allow me to repeat it, I was deaf as an adder.

It would seem that all hopes of success in life depended upon this infirmity. What if the gentleman in white flannel should discover me yielding for a moment to the seductions of

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the climate? I say the climate. The climate of the Spice Islands is seductive! What if the first citizen, and the second citizen, and the third citizen should meet at the French restaurant, where the chorus of citizens joins them at four P. M. to take roasts, and brochettes, and claret and black coffee, and to sit there feasting until sunset, when the island and the sea are consumed in splendor, and all the children of nature stand upon the shore like angels—minus the harp, and the crown, and the seamless garment—singing as if their hearts would burst.

Great Jove! What if the first citizen should say, "But I saw him with these eyes, and she bewitched him with her song!" and the second citizen, "To be sure the charmers were charming never so wisely, and it is too evident that he has no moral courage;" and the third citizen, with confidence, chipping in with his, "What is it that it should go about the streets mourning at the hours when we slumber?" and the chorus, *sotto voce*, "Disgusting! Who ever heard the like? Positively beastly!" for this reason and this reason only, did I hang upon the edge of the village and turn a deaf ear to the seductive welcome that was freely extended to me by the

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ever frank and ever fond native inhabitants

Yet my aimless pilgrimages did not end without adventure. Was I not seized bodily one night, one glorious night and borne out of a mountain fastness whither I had fled to escape the sight of my own race? Was I not borne down the ravine by a young giant, sleek and supple as a bronzed Greek god, who held me captive in his Indian lodge till I surfeited on bread-fruits and plaintain and cocoanut milk? And then did we not part with a pang—one of those pangs that always leave a memory and a scar? And this happened not once, but often; for the representative of the great Republic whose Consular duty it was to protect the rights, commerce, merchants and resources of the State, and to aid in any commercial transactions, etc.—see Webster's Dictionary, Unabridged—he cut me when he was in the company of revelers; he doubted my integrity; he condemned me to a kind of slavery, the results of which experience are an indelible blot in the bone-bound volume of my memory. With a word he could have let down the bars to the primrose path of dalliance—not that I care a hang for primroses; he could have righted my wrongs, made wise the simple, and

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it wouldn't have cost him a cent either. That word he withheld, and like a stag at bay, I at last defied him.

Then a voice said unto me, "Let us go hence." Blinded, heart-sick, foot-sore, I went out into the green gardens of that summer island like a new Adam whose sins had been forgiven him and who once more found himself alone in Eden. The past he had forgotten, this new Adam, in the beauty of the Eden of his infantile innocence. Now the World, the Flesh, and the Serpent who had introduced him to them, were as a dream that is dreamed and a pretty bad one at that. With steps that seemed to have grown youthful and a heart that was uplifted with a new joy in the life to come, I threaded the streams that flowed from the hidden heights of Fautaua like throbbing veins of silver. It no longer mattered to me whither I wandered. At last I was my own master and he who is his own master is master of the world.

So dense was the wood through which the stream struggled that one might almost have traversed the length and breadth of it by swinging from bough to bough. It was easier to ford it and with my nether garments worn as a vestment upon my shoulders I set forth

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bravely with naked but unfaltering feet; had not my kingdom come? Was I not alone in this silvan solitude?

The shyest and the least traveled of poets, whose sport was the taming of hare and whose wildest dissipation was a chastely-platonic affection, a feminine fondness for letter-writing and the indulgence of the emotions at the almost-too-frequent prayer-meeting could yet abandon himself to the rhyming of Selkirk's soliloquy:

“I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute,
From the center all round to the Sea
I am Lord of the fowl and the brute.”

There is a suggestion of brogue at the termination of line third—but no matter.

I was monarch of all I surveyed for I could no longer see the Consulate or the Consul or any of his retinue; I had no longer to assume a virtue which I have ever found it next to impossible to live up to: I was not waiting as those wait to whom all things come—when they are considerably overdue.

Was ever a wood more silent save for the brawling of the brook? No birds, no beasts, no fish to flash their silver or gold or peacock-green scales at me and tickle me with their

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fins. I might add no breeze, no breath of air and I every moment growing hot and moist. My mantle—what was left of it—descended upon a world that had no use for it: I was a child of nature again and so very, very glad of it.

Suddenly the voice of the water was hushed; it flowed noiselessly past me as I ascended the stream; it was cool as the dew of the morning; it was leaf-stained, amber-tinted and sweeter than honey in the honey-comb. I stood in mid-stream to worship it; I gave thanks that I had lived to love it and to revel in it and to realize that my very soul was responding to the exquisite thrill of it. I thought I heard voices! Little shrilling laughter, faint and far away! I had shaken the dust of the town from my shoes, such as they were; I had parted my garments, one on each side of me; I had cast myself in my extremity upon the bosom of nature and proposed to nestle there just as long as she would let me, and yet at the first sound of a human voice, the voice or voices of one or more, crying or laughing in the wilderness, I had cried back to them and it wasn't a very far cry after all. My call came down to me again and again, fainter and fainter until it had died utterly away—but it was

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only my voice or the echo of it, and not another's; and then a great silence struck all nature dumb. I hurried forward seized with a kind of fear. Was it an isle of voices? Were they wood nymphs and fawns who were luring me to my destruction? On I hastened, yet with a kind of hesitation as one startled and doubting his senses.

The stream curved softly about the foot of a bluff; I laid my hand upon the rocks to steady me, for the waters were deepening and I knew not what lay beyond; a few paces farther and with steady stroke I swam into the depths of a pool that might have been the haunt of naiads, the well-spring of mystery profound.

It lay within the shadow of a great rock; its margin was cushioned with moss and fern; vines fell from the cornice of the cliff veiling it with a veil woven of flower and leaf; flowering trees waved their branches over it, and the bright sky above, with its changeful broidery of cloud, was reflected in the depths of the pool that shimmered like the lambent flame of an opal.

I swam as one inspired—as the fish swims, fanning itself with wings that quiver in ecstasy—and feeling every curve of my limbs

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athrill with a new born grace; I soared in great circles as the bird soars, for the mere pleasure of hovering in space; to cleave that crystal flood as it was cleft when I thrust forth my arms to embrace, as it were the embodied spirit of the place, was to float between two skies lost to all the laws of gravitation.

There was a faint piping of a bird, a liquid note, answered by another and another. I paused in mid-air, mid-water, and listened: from every side came the wood-notes wild; solos, duets, and quartettes; and then a glorious chorus that flooded the recesses of the forest and held me spell bound—I was like to drown. But no! I was indeed thrown off my guard and half paralyzed with rapture and amazement—but I was suffered not to drown. There was a stir among the branches; the leaves and vines were all aquiver—was it I alone, even I, who had fluttered the doves in this Arcady? I knew that the birds were few upon the island, and not famed for song or plumage; yet here was an invisible aviary most musical with melody and that of the finest. I could not drown. Out of the tremulous bough leaped youths and maidens—ripe fruit they call them over yonder, and they were ripe indeed; out of the very sky they

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seemed to fall as they dropped from the higher heights; the curtains of the vine were parted discovering others who had been in hiding, and these flew to my rescue in all haste, for by this time I was sinking. Male and female created He them and they came to me one and all even as they were created.

It seems such was their pastime in the Garden of Eden; to hide at the approach of an intruder and then surprise him. They had heard my cry, they had hushed their laughter as I drew near; then they had mocked the voices of the woodland; they had enjoyed my innocent, though rapturous gambols, and in my last gasp they had snatched me from a watery grave. I was saved, but to what purpose?

There is a fate in Tahiti that is known only to the initiated. I was a stranger in their midst; even the blind might have seen that; they pitied me for the sorrows I had known, the effects of which I could not laugh away; they pitied me again for the sufferings I had endured among the enlightened of the earth and for the indelible scars I bore in form and feature, these the unmistakable evidences of civilization.

As they drew me to shore their beautiful

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eyes glowed with the love-light that is kindled at their birth—the soft radiance of which is not extinguished until it is veiled in death. There were those who would restore my soul with gentle dalliance; who with deft fingers manipulated my body the while they passed pleasantries from lip to lip on the unlovely whiteness of skin.

“I am black but I am beautiful” sang the singer of the Song of Songs and he knew whereof he sang for was he not inspired?

They were not black but they were beautiful; they were not even brown for all their beauty; they were olive-tinted and this tint was of the tenderest olive; of the olive that has a shade of gold in it like a honey-comb that has entangled a sunbeam and is therewith transfigured; and some were of a softer shade as if the film of a shadow had fallen upon them and would not away again—for these were children of the sun and he had set his seal upon them forever. They were all busy as bees in a June garden; the youths vanished for a moment but returned again bringing their sheaves with them, arms full of blossoms that made me faint with their fragrance. These were showered upon the maidens with song and laughter and they, carrying the

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burden of the song as the hum of a hive of bees, wove the flowers into necklaces, and girdles and into a chain that seemed endless and all the while I was silently wondering why. In the course of time it was completed, the endless chain of flower; then they all rose as for a ceremonial—these human, most human flowers-of-flesh, and I was lifted from the bank of moss where I had been reclining like one in a dream and being escorted by the leaders of the party—a chief and chiefess as was evidenced by the deference paid them—at a signal from these, we were laden with necklaces and girdles of flowers, while the chain, having been encircled about us was carried upon the shoulders of the others and footing it softly to a rhythmical chorus we passed into a defile of the mountain.

The heart of Tahiti aspires to Heaven; a mountain like a pyramid with its foot in the sea, a girdle of cloud about its loins native-fashion, and its head among the stars, is the first object that arrests the attention of the weary mariner and with kindling eye he blesses the favoring gale that wafts him hitherward.

Upon the summit of the mountain is a lake, the incomparable jewel in its crown. From

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this center the island is divided into equal portions, like an orange, but the divisions are without a visible border line and only the local governor of each district knows or cares much just when his rule ends and that of his neighbor begins.

There is a law that prevails throughout the island-world of the Pacific, to the effect that the celebrated cup-of-song-and-story shall not cheer under any circumstances within the latitude or longitude of the missionary realm. 'Tis a wise law that knows its own children and all would be well if only the law-makers were not themselves law-breakers. However the children of Nature are a law unto themselves and with them necessity has become the mother of a numerous progeny.

The child of Nature can plunge his arm into the jungle and pluck from out it a leaf or a flower or a fruit or a root from which he will express a nectar undreamed of in your pharmacopœia. From a root the elixir of love and of life; from a fruit unwonted fires that course the veins like molten lava and fill the brain with fancies; from a leaf languor unutterable and sweet oblivion.

These arts are the arts of the necromancer but they are the birthright of the natural chil-

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dren of Nature and they have been practised ever since the world was begotten of the elements.

Now these brews are brewed in secret lest they should suffer confiscation, and it so happens that in course of time many a corpulent calabash is filled with sweets and many a length of bamboo is flushed until the end-stoppers are like to fly and let the fluid run to waste. There is a rivalry among the amateur distillers of the various districts as to which party shall brew the best and the most bountifully and not until every receptacle is filled to overflowing does the Governor call a halt. Then it is whispered as softly as the tell-tale breeze that blows that the Chief of Cray-fishers begs the pleasure of the company of all those who live for the pure joy of living, upon the heights by the shore of the Lake of the Skies, on the evening of the twelfth night of the moon that they may follow in his silver footsteps while they can. Then they all steal up into the mountain by twos and threes, or perchance alone, lest they be missed betimes and peradventure followed in hot haste. It transpired that we were bound thither; that I was, as it were, to be carried away captive and offered as a living sacrifice for aught I

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knew upon the altar of their gods. They were as merry a crew as ever danced airily under a green-wood tree; a mob of mad-cap marauders—yet no—not exactly that, for they at least were bidden to the feast and I went as a helpless though willing hostage.

Rose-wreathed bacchantes tripped it gaily through the forest aisles, clothed in their right minds, perhaps, but all hailing from the land of the barren-fig-tree.

A cannibal feast might begin in this wise; I had never been present at one; yet I feared not. They had the gift and the voice and the eyes of love and better is a dinner of white-meat where love is than the stalled American Consul and the pride of his office therewith.

Do I recall it all, just as it happened, or is it only a dream? The royal greetings, the ceremonious salutations, the cocoanut cups that passed dripping from lip to lip, how often, O! how often? The feast, the song, the dance, that grew wilder and wilder and the shouts of joy that broke forth with the break of day. With the coming of day came sleep; day-dreams they were, that flitted through that sleep; if we waked it was to eat a little or to moisten the lips with the milk of the cocoa-tree; if we ate and drank it was that we

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might sleep the better until nightfall for the night was another night, even more musical, more terpsichorean, more bibulous than the last. There were prizes offered for every separate feature of the fête and this fête was but one of the series; each Governor in his turn invited his neighboring Governors and so the festivities were prolonged until the end of the season, a season that may be said to be without beginning and without end.

I feel it in my heart now, even as I felt it then, to pardon that which verged dangerously upon the unpardonable. I said it is their nature, it is their natural right, it is their night-off, it is their native land. These pent-up Uticas must throw wide their gates at intervals or their walls will fall. If, at times, in some cases, they almost exceed excess, the more's the pity for when they have returned to civilization they shall put on hypocrisy as a garment and pose as a living lie.

This was their joy of life, of living; and the love of it, the lust for it, was bred in the bone or ever the secret of their solitudes had been trumpeted to a covetous world and the shadow of Death descended upon the Isles of the Sea.

Ah me! The return of tranquillity and the

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solemn retreat of the singers and dancers reminded me of my own peculiar case. Fate had led me into the hands of hospitable hosts; it was, alas! my fate to tear myself from their embraces and return to the husks of adversity—and so ended what is known in that delectable land as an orange spree.

How long did it last? How long did I stay there in the mountain heights among the mysteries undreamed of in that business world below? Well: Really, I cannot tell you. No one kept tally up yonder; and, as for pinning me down to so fine a point, I'd as soon think of some one who had been in Paradise for a while suddenly sitting up and asking: "What time is it?"

I stayed on the island until there was neither nook nor corner in the kingdom but I had threaded; until I could not raise my eyes but they met the kindly eyes of some good fellow who had befriended me; until we seemed to have exhausted the tranquil delights of the island, and, to tell the whole truth, it was growing a trifle slow; and then our representative, still clothed in spotless flannel, still feeling the awful responsibilities of the United States of America centering upon him, stopped me short in the street one day and said, abruptly,

“Don’t you think you had better go home?” I replied briefly that I thought I had.

He told me he was about to take ship for California, the only real ship that had been in port during his administration, and that if I would swear in the presence of witnesses that I would pay my passage as soon as I arrived in San Francisco he would bail me out of the island. I swore—like a trooper.

It was later, when we were well at sea, when we were at last forced into an acquaintance, that my hour came. Rocking in the doldrums, overcome with a kind of hollow, Saturday feeling, I drew out my trunk and emptied its contents upon the deck; it is well to air one’s luggage occasionally, and mine was of that nature which would be most likely to interest a fellow who has forsworn the world and retired to a seclusion for life. The Consul, who hourly grew more friendly, aided me in this arduous undertaking; we reviewed the books; we admired the odds and ends, such as one likes to ornament one’s room with; we turned over the albums of photographs and autographs; we unmasked the mystery of my nature; the cloud which had obscured my life was spirited away; it was discovered that we had hosts of friends in common; I grew in-

stantly and immensely in his estimation. Like the night-blooming cereus, I blossomed with such amazing rapidity that I instinctively listened for a report.

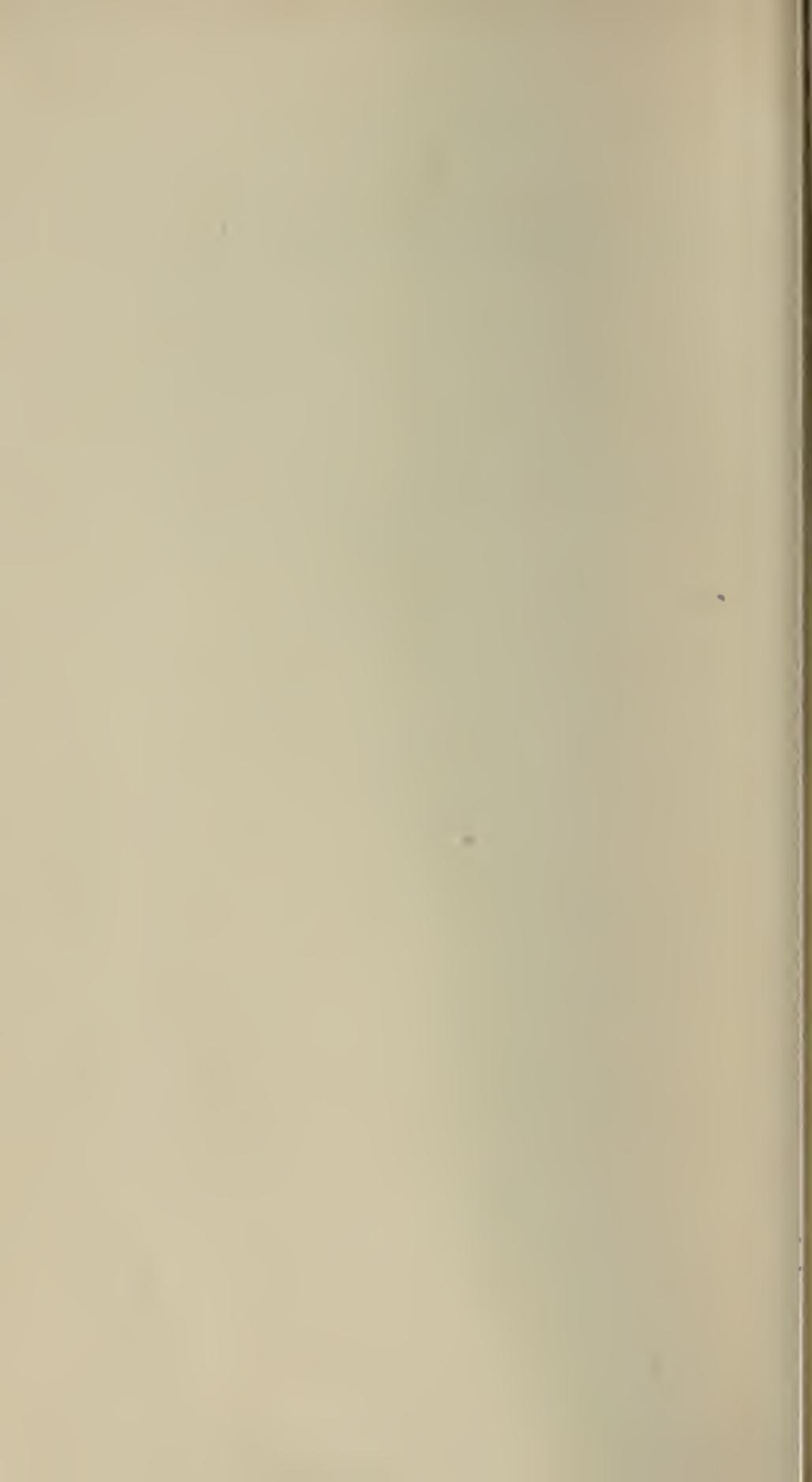
It was well now. It was even better than I had dared to hope. He embraced me madly; he lavished upon me something of the profits of his Consular speculations. "Accept, dear boy," said he, "these pearls, a trifling souvenir of our friendship," and filled my palm with the creamy seeds such as are found in the fisheries of the South Pacific; "and this—and this—and this"—toilet soaps, native cloths prettily plaited or radiantly dyed—as well as other trophies.

Well, I was his debtor against a will as stubborn as a mule's; and I must return with him, he added; we had not had half our visit out. A plantation, one of his own, was at my disposal; he would institute a series of feasts; we should riot, and I could, if I would, end my days in the island of tranquil delights. It is this that shook my faith in humanity to its foundation; it is this that has filled me with vague suspicion; I now instinctively shy at a Consul; I studiously avoid a Legation; I declined with secret horror the testimonial dinner tendered me on our arrival by my fel-

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low voyager, the deformed transformed. Ah, my late lamented U. S. A. Consular friend! You were a slow match for me and struck fire when your hour was past. But do you remember that stubbly beard of mine, and how I longed for a barber? We were three hours out from port, and you kindly volunteered your services. It was the closest shave I ever got. I really don't know what the moral of this sketch is—unless it be that all Consuls are not good barbers.

ONE CHRISTMAS EVE



ONE CHRISTMAS EVE

WE had all been breathless waiting for sunset—breathless, because there was not a breath of air to breathe. We dozed—dozed audibly, some of us; woke, yawned, stole down into the deep path in the wood at the rear of our thatched village; bathed, yawned and dozed again, and so the afternoon was slowly disposed of.

Really there was nothing else to do. Before us stretched the sea, one broad blaze of blue that burned into the horizon sky line; the shining beach was a blaze of white light that sparkled where it was out of reach of the pulsing wave; the water upon the reef broke with a hollow boom and laced itself with ribbons of chain-lightning—O, but it was splendid! glorious;—quite too glorious for human eye to behold; the naked eye, you know; we were mostly naked on that bit of desert island. The village, only one hut deep, ran up and down the shore as if it were trying to get out of the sun but of course it was not; had it really wanted to shelter itself it might easily have done so by merely backing up into the densely leaved grove that came within forty rods of it

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and covered the whole island with deep and fragrant shadows. About a million cocoa palms—I like to be exact in my estimates—crowded upon the shore and reared their plumes triumphantly far aloft in the air; they were so tall, some of them, that their shadow—never very much of a shadow—seemed to have been blown away in the breeze; at any rate it never struck us to any considerable extent.

Well, all at once the big, oval, red-hot, copper-colored sun went down into the sea as if it had foundered; for a little while the waves were like blood, and the sky was a purple canopy, and the reef hushed itself and sobbed softly, and all the palms stood still. Then, suddenly, a veil of shadow, pricked with a few enormous stars fell over us—and evening had come.

That is the way evening always comes in the tropics; twilight and the afterglow are one, and so fervid is their union they are soon consumed away.

A great sigh went up from the village at sundown; a sigh of profoundest relief that was speedily followed by exclamations of pleasure; the long row of huts gave forth its tenants and each saluted the other with the

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love-greeting of the tribe—after which and with one impulse we ran to the shore and plunged into the sea, it was like bathing in wine—no, it was like bathing in milk—for the softest, milkiest, silkiest ripples lapped us all over our bodies, and the palest, most silvery luster suffused the face of the waters.

That evening was like the evening before, and the evenings before that as far back as we could remember; those that were to follow were sure to be like it;—what else could we do there save bathe and fish and eat and sleep and let the world go by.

We were to fish as usual this evening; nothing but a hurricane, could have caused an alteration in the programme; of course we took as little heed of the rain squalls that visited us at frequent intervals as if we were so many canvas-back ducks; the sun dries one in a moment, off yonder in the tropics, and the rain—like the noisy theatrical shower that plays so effective a rôle in the spectacular drama—doesn't seem half as wet as it should be. But, come, the night is passing! With songs and rippling laughter the canoes are dragged down the shelving sand and launched upon the dark waters where they float like long curled plumes; indeed there were as

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many stars in the sea as in the sky,—they glowed like pearls,—and the canoes seemed suspended in mid-air—so transparent was the nether element.

Soon we were all embarked, a fleet of shadowy pirates about to ravage the deep. In the bow of each canoe stood a youth holding aloft a palm torch; the palm branch is a natural-born beacon; it blazes wonderfully when lighted and trails a banner of red flame a yard long, as the torch bearer holds it high over his head; there we had a living statue of Liberty, liberty in its broadest sense, enlightening the Lagoon! The glow from those flaring palm-fronds made plainly visible every object in the waters under the earth.

Now, more than ever, it seemed as if we were drifting through space; the waters beneath us were like amber-tinted air; within it sailed marvelous fish of every conceivable form and hue, and those dainty and fairy like creatures, bewildered by the torchlight swam very near us in blind curiosity. They were too delicate, too brilliantly beautiful to harm; we were in search of nobler prey. It was not only the feathery finned small fry that decorated the Lagoon; a thousand exquisite sea gardens blossomed in splendor below the tran-

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quill waves; and there were coral bowers that caught the light and flashed it back from their gilded tendrils, and then white stretches of sea-sand that shone like a pavement of gold.

There was silence everywhere; only the low music of the reef and the occasional splash of a fish that had freed itself from the spear and dropped back into his native element.

Suddenly a shriek arose! Our fleet was stretched up and down the shore like a chain of fire; at one end of it there was consternation; the torches were being plunged into the sea and the rowers were paddling swiftly forward down the coast.

All followed and when within hailing distance word was passed from mouth to mouth, but under the breath—"the sacred fish had been seen heading for the distant Point of Palms!"

Now, it is well known that when this mysterious fish makes its appearance—which he does at very uncertain intervals—something is about to take place; it may be the death of a chief, or a birth; a great misfortune or a greater joy. It is an omen that thrills the stoutest heart, and no wonder we were all dismayed.

It must be confessed that we were bar-

barians; we had refused to be civilized and our village was looked upon in the South Sea as given over to all manner of iniquities. In fact we were as good as we could be, in our way; we merely chose to stay so, rather than change our spots and so our camp was considered the abomination of desolation.

Thus it happened that our first fear was that the Sacred Fish had come to warn us but he was heading for the Point of Palms and we followed him in fearful curiosity, expecting to reach a climax shortly. We reached it!

Having rounded the Point of Palms we paused a moment; faint music was wafted over the sea to us, chants and joyous refrains and the unaccustomed accompaniment of drums and various instruments. What could it mean, this rejoicing at midnight and in the depths of the forest? Hither the Sacred Fish had piloted us; we drew our canoes ashore, where the music seemed nearest, and with utmost caution began threading the dark alleys of the wood. The music grew louder and louder; arrows of light glistened among the branches overhead and, shortly, through an opening we caught sight of a rustic chapel thronged with worshippers; there was a blaze of light within; upon the high altar, sur-

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rounded by acolytes in picturesque raiment and with clouds of incense hovering over him, the priest was celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

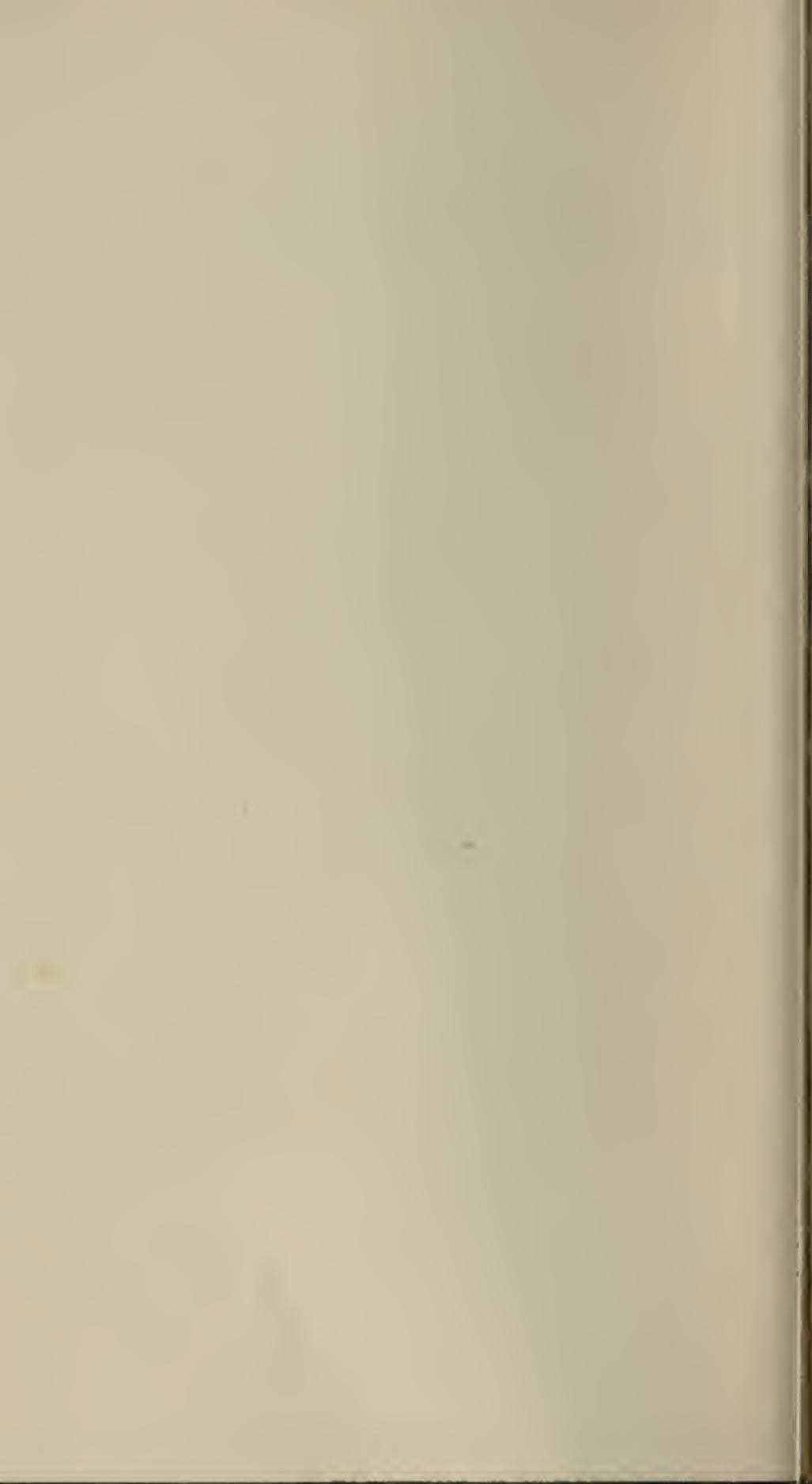
We all drew nearer and were warmly welcomed by the throngs who could not gain admission to the chapel, but this mattered not, for the building was little more than a roof with hardly a side wall to shelter those beneath it. Presently the music ceased; the priest turned toward us and began a fervent appeal to one and all. It was the hour of rejoicing he said, when the morning stars sang together, and the Christ-child was born in glory, though cradled in a manger. The Christ-child! we had not thought of this; most of us knew nothing of it; to us, all days and all seasons were alike—even their names and their significance were forgotten or unheeded by us.

Again the music poured forth and awoke glorious echoes in the solemn wood and somehow we found ourselves uniting in the chorus, and hymning the glad tidings of great joy. The day that followed was a feast such as we had never yet partaken of, and what was the fruit thereof? Did we return to barbarism, think you? Or had our eyes seen and our

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ears heard and our hearts comprehended the power and the glory that prevails forever and ever even in the uttermost parts of the earth?

ABSENT BEYOND SEAS



ABSENT BEYOND SEAS

I

IN the first glimmer of dawn, Pemberton stole out of the cabin and began to pace the deck. It was stuffy down below; he was not comfortable in body; he was not comfortable in mind. Had his best friends seen him at that moment they might have said that he had risen like a ghost from the tomb. And so he had.

There are tombs that are not walled in with clay or marble; there are ghosts that have not yet shed their fleshly mantle; when these arise they rise from living tombs and into them they descend again at the close of the witching hour.

The dove-tinted east grew pale; a pink flush suffused it; then a scarlet wave broke upon the rim of the horizon; beneath it the sea glowered darkly like a thunder cloud. This was the suggestive background against which Philip Pemberton was outlined in silhouette. He pondered, leaned over the rail, fixed his gaze upon the eastern sky and silently awaited sunrise.

For some time the young man watched the ever recurring, ever varying spectacle; he noted the flecks of gold that anon spangled the plumed crests of the waves. His face was brightened with a smile while the sun dazzled his eyes and he thrust his hands into his pockets as he resumed his tread up and down a deck with which he had grown familiar during the last few weeks. When he grew tired of his book and lost interest in the cribbage-board; when conversation flagged—there was little of it on board that ship for he was the sole passenger and the nautical table talk had begun to pall—when he had unbosomed himself in a diary, the like of which could never have been written for himself alone; when the meals had been duly discussed and the siesta had come to an end, what was there left for the disinterested voyager to fly to but the deck and the monotonous beat which reminded him of nothing so much as the nervous, swinging gait of a caged animal forever seeking escape at one end or the other of his prison house?

There he could lose himself in hour-long reveries—memories, they were, for the most part—and none of his fellow sea-farers were aught the wiser. Though he was well-bred and

well-groomed he was not above suspicion. From the cabin to the fo'c'sle he had been a subject of comment and his silence, his polite exclusiveness, were perhaps the cause of it all. He might as well have been a ghost as far as every soul in the ship was concerned, for they knew as little of him as if he were not of this world, and never had been. Not all ghosts are as persistently communicative as that of the "Royal Dane;" nor, indeed, had he much to impart that could have especially interested any listener. His story was simple enough; a simple tale, guiltless of crime or blood and without a climax, though while there is life there is hope—of a climax.

Philip Pemberton, son of a sire who boasted the best blood in his shire, having ended his days at Oxford in a creditable manner and to the entire satisfaction of his hearty, healthy and somewhat haughty family, announced, to the horror of some and the surprise of all, that he was in love. His was not a case of love at first sight, nor a night-blooming cereus affair that may be predicted almost to the moment of its sudden consummation and whose hours are numbered in all their splendor.

Philip's three and twenty years were calm enough and deliberate enough to have set the

paternal and maternal mind at rest. An only son, an only child, they never had just cause for uneasiness so far as he was concerned, had they but known it. But parents seldom know these things. Blindly they beget and blindly they bury and who is there of them all who knows as much of one as one knows of one's self.

Philip had met and liked a daughter of the people; they had met again and again and he had learned to love her. They had not plighted their troth in secret; there was no element of romance in their mutual attachment. Their love was calm and deep and pure and sweet and noble; a love that grew slowly and healthily and holily. It was all in all to them, though they never named it. It was the most ingenuous, the most innocuous of loves; a love without an arrow to his bow, or quiver to his back; whose eyes were not blinded but whose wings were locked.

She was neither milking maid nor lass o' the loom, but his father and his mother would none of her. He had told them all in dispassionate English such as they might well approve of, how there had been no stolen interviews, no secrecy, no vows; nothing from first to last but blameless love and perfect

trust and patience to await the hour when they were free to ask the blessing of the fathers and the God of their fathers on the union which should perfect both their lives. That blessing was withheld; not in sorrow, nor in anger, but after due deliberation and with an expression of the hope that time would settle the vexed question and enable all to see with unclouded vision just what was best for each.

It was decided that matters should be allowed to rest a season; that Philip's Phillis should be permitted to retain the recently awakened interest of Philip's people; that their respect and even their esteem should be added to this; and that Philip should by way of putting the finishing touch to the education which he fancied he had completed, undertake a sea voyage and discover if possible in distant parts undreamed-of treasures. From Philip's point of view this was the reward of virtue, a reward he did not covet. The parents of Philip hoped and prayed that a change of scene might wean him from a love that seemed to them difficult if not dangerous.

In Ariel's song "a sea change" is followed by "something rich and strange." Philip was prepared to weigh the richness and the strangeness in the balance when he came to

port, took ship and sailed away; and so the almost endless procession of the days passed on, and between the sunrise and the sunset there was ever the same picture of the past reviewed, and from sunset to sunrise the same dream of the future was dreamed again.

Pemberton's one wish, one hope, one prayer was for a sight of the longed-for land in that measureless expanse of sea. The gales were soft and sweet; sometimes the faintest fragrance was perceptible, or a panting land bird fluttered to the deck as they sailed under the lee of some invisible island. But of all the islands that litter those southern seas like fallen leaves there was but one he yearned most to see. It was that small earthly Paradise where they were to drop anchor for awhile and where he was to look for letters, the first news from home. Letters might easily overtake him. While he was blown hither and yon by all the winds of heaven, a mail was easily transported by steam over land and sea and thus comparatively late news was sure to greet him on his arrival. With every dawn he said "there is one night less on board," and with every twilight "we are one day nearer shore;" and so, slowly, very slowly, but nevertheless surely, the world-wide voyage and the heart-

ache of suspense were together drawing to a close.

II

To sight land after a long sea voyage is like waking from a dreamless sleep. It is also like dreaming a new dream, a dream that is coming true and really, after all is said, there is nothing else like it in the whole world. Impossibilities seem suddenly to become possible. What was uncertain an hour ago is now a certainty. The eyes dance with joyous expectation; the heart is filled with satisfaction; every nerve tingles with delightful anticipation and the last hope is realized.

In such an hour we know how Columbus felt when he fell upon his knees in a prayer of gratitude at the cry of "Land Ho!"

There was a new heaven and a new earth for Pemberton. There was a shining shore growing broader and more beautiful every hour. There was a wealth of fascinating detail making itself clearer and better defined in a landscape as new to him as if it were the first day of creation—or the sixth if you will—and he, Philip Pemberton, alone, like Adam, were the first man viewing it all with

a certain indescribable sense of proprietorship—and pronouncing it good.

Such egoists are we when our hearts and souls are bent upon our own affairs; and we feel as if for us were created all things that were created from the least unto the greatest.

Letters! News from home on the other side of the world. Letters telling of what happened when he had gone and they no longer saw him, or heard the lessening rumble of the train that was bearing him away to the port from which he sailed. Letters from her from whom he had parted with a pang such as he had never before experienced, and whose last words and last look had haunted him from that day to this. Letters that had hurried over seas and over a continent, as across lots, and were now awaiting him there in the primitive postoffice which was the village forum and the centre and source of all gossip and all gospel, whether true or false. His letters, his very own, with seals unbroken waiting for him to break them and read, breathlessly, the glad tidings—clutched in his trembling hands!

Ah me! The joy of it!

Well: There they were; two, three, a half dozen; he read the superscriptions over and over; father's, mother's—three from the ma-

ternal pen—two from college chums. No letter from her! He read again the familiar chirography; mother, father, again mother, chum, chum and mother once again. None, not one from her!

He had found a little two-roomed cottage, a bungalow, where he was to lodge for the time being. It was a bower-like structure in the corner of the hotel grounds, a latticed cage suitable to the climate. He went thither with a new worry born of his first half-hour on shore. The father's letter was businesslike, bidding him not repine but be brave and manly as befitted the heir of the house of Pemberton, and to hope for the best. He caught his breath and broke the seal of his mother's first letter. Phillis was ill, she wrote; not seriously ill, but ill enough to cause them all some little anxiety. A second letter written two weeks later: Phillis was no better; in fact she was if anything somewhat worse. And then toward the end of the letter, which was written from time to time in the manner of a diary, she was growing still worse, rapidly worse; there was little or no hope for her.

The message fell from Pemberton's hand; he was trembling and laid hold of the table by which he sat, to steady himself. He was not

a demonstrative man; he never in his life did anything in a spectacular way; his emotions were strong and deep but they were usually well under restraint. He was beginning to lose his self control and he flushed when he realized it. His throat thickened and seemed about to close; he breathed with difficulty; he felt that he must call upon some one for help—but he must know the worst before he gave way to this—this agony!

The last letter from his mother was in his hand; he opened it clumsily; it was torn before he had succeeded in reading it, and but half comprehending the words—"The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away"—"His will be done"—Philip Pemberton sank sidewise in his chair and fell in a lifeless heap upon the floor.

III

When he awoke to consciousness he was lying in a bed that was white and cool; there were curtains of gauze all about him. The bed was an old-fashioned four-poster with a canopy, and it stood nearly in the centre of a large room. Deep windows opened upon a wide veranda; the tips of banana leaves

swayed along the edge of the veranda and vines hung their airy hammocks under the eaves above. There was the sound of the sea and a glimpse of it—an azure rim that seemed but a darker sky; between it and the veranda was a hanging garden of tree-tops plumed with towering palms. There was little furniture in the chamber—it was evidently an upper chamber—and there was no one there but himself. With mild curiosity he wondered where he was. The past seemed to have been forgotten, and it was perhaps a matter of indifference to one who was so weary as he. He turned his cheek to the pillow and dozed again.

By and by he awoke; probably he was awakened, for a woman was bending over him. Her eyes were humid; he could not remember having seen such eyes before; the whites of the eyes had the sheen of pearl; she was literally turbaned with glossy ropes of hair that cast a twilight shade over a brow of purest olive; full ripe lips, now parting in a smile, disclosed teeth that were in themselves a smile. The robe she wore adapted itself to the graceful curves of her body as if she were another Galatea breathing her first breath of life. From her he learned the missing chapter in

the story of his life. It was a brief chapter, musically recited in very good English; his nurse, a native, had been educated in the mission school at the outskirts of the village, and this was all she knew of the world, yet in the dusk she might easily have been mistaken for the most charming of Europeans. Social "airs and graces," innate refinement and consummate tact, are the birthright of the south-sea savage. As for Pemberton, some one in passing the open door of his cottage saw him lying upon the floor. The alarm was given, a physician summoned, for he was still unconscious, and by the advice of the medico who had not often so promising and profitable a patient, he was carried on a stretcher to an airy chamber in a detached building where quiet and seclusion were assured. He was placed in charge of Telula, a young woman whose father was a half-caste, her mother a native and whose association with foreigners had not as yet contaminated her.

Pemberton remained unconscious for some hours; for several days he drowsed most of the time; his waking moments found his brain still cloudy; he was indifferent to the presence of his attendants. A weak heart, the Doctor said; a great and sudden excitement after a

long mental strain—it was only natural that he should be slow in returning to a normal condition.

He was slow enough. He seemed quite content to remain where he was, to be propped up upon pillows where he could look into the garden below and off upon the strip of blue sea that stretched between the garden and the vines festooning the veranda eaves. Telula was ever present to talk to him, to sing to him those plaintive native songs that he had grown to like, to minister to his every want—and these were increasing as the days went by.

The Doctor came to rally him, to urge upon him the necessity of getting up and stirring about and meeting nature half-way in her effort to restore him to health. There were jolly excursions to be made by land and sea, lovely places to be visited, a new life in a new land for him to see and enjoy. Why longer waste his time in idleness when there was so much of interest at hand awaiting him?

He had written home; written that his plans had come to naught; that he had no wish to go further and if possible fare worse; that he proposed to remain where he was for the present; there was time enough for him to plan anew. He was of age; he was possessed of means

enough to make him independent of the world. At present no place attracted more than the spot in which he chanced to be. Why not stay just where he was until the spirit of unrest should urge him hence. Then would be time enough to think seriously of moving on. So he stayed there, and stayed, and stayed.

IV

It was the most natural thing in the world for him to stay as he stayed, and to do what he did. He saw all the length and breadth of the island; he camped on a mountain top so that he might watch the sun rise from the sea some time before it was visible from the eastern valleys and shore. He explored the verdant recesses of those valleys, tracked streams to their hidden sources, bathed in shadow-sheltered highland-pools where the water was as the water of life; and with canoe and paddle and an amphibious native pilot learned all the secrets of that summer sea.

And what was the natural consequence? What could, would, should it not fail to be? He did as the others did, the others without exception. It was, is, ever shall be the custom

of the country. Latitude and longitude may have something to do with it, but in any case we know well enough that it is written, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" Nay, nay, not though they be scattered as the stubble that passeth away; not though the wind of the wilderness scattereth them. He did even as they all did, for it was the custom of the country.

V

It was a pretty pastoral. The bungalow stood upon a plateau above the sea. From the wide veranda—where one ate and even slept in the hot nights when the wind was low—half the island shore was visible. To the left, at the end of a winding trail lay the port; at intervals when the wind was favorable one heard the chapel bell calling to prayer. On the right hand the wilderness that girdled the island, save where it was broken by plantation openings, invited the curious foot of the explorer. It was a mystery, fragrant, flowery, the lair of the eternal summer. All else was sea and sky; the sea that turned a thousand faces to the sun and cloud; that sang with a

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thousand voices night and day ; that one could watch forever and listen to without a thought of wearying, for its song was ever varying, ever vague.

Telula was listening to the song of the sea ; she had been sitting on a couch on the veranda lost in reverie ; at her feet two children were playing with a tame bird, feeding it with flies which they caught expertly. Pemberton stood watching the children ; his eye glanced from them to their mother as she dreamed her day dream of her darlings and their future. For eight years this household had been the abode of peace ; of peace that is born of pleasant weather and uneventful days. They had never known want under that roof. Their desires were few and easily gratified. Telula had no knowledge of any other life than this ; she had read of other peoples and other lands but from her point of view they were as fairy tales of fairy lands and she never looked upon them as realities.

Pemberton had fallen into an easy rut and had grown so used to it that a break in the monotony of his daily, weekly, monthly, yearly round would have jarred upon him a little. That is the rule there ; one becomes acclimated and then any unusual change in the weather

upsets one's system. It was only now, only within the last few months or weeks—he no longer measured time with any accuracy—that he had begun to think seriously of the welfare of these children. They were born in that house and had thrived there, but they could not be allowed to remain there indefinitely. They needed such mental training as could not be found at the mission school. Telula had flourished there, but these children were three-fourths white—or a little less for their mother was three-fourths native. They might not always remain upon this island. He began to realize that it was his duty as a father to provide for them as his children should be provided for. But how? He could take them to New Zealand and place them at schools where they should remain until their schooling was completed. What else? Nothing! Having found them well disposed he could return to England and visit the parents who had long been entreating him to return. They knew nothing of his domestic affairs, they need not know; they could not comprehend the conditions even if they were vouchsafed an explanation. The tropics are beyond the comprehension of those who have been born and bred in the temperate zone—unless in the

course of their travels they have become acclimated.

Pemberton had resolved that he would provide for his children, as a parent should, and, having spent a little season at the old home would return to Telula and resume the life which now most appealed to his indolent nature.

By and by the children could rejoin him, the boy enter business of some kind, the girl marry a neighbor and thus they would end their days, blessed in the Island of the Blessed.

VI

Telula sat alone in the bungalow. She had nothing to do now but to watch and to wait. She was used to that. So are they all down yonder; all used to watching and waiting from morning till night, year in, year out—always watching and waiting. What else is there to do in an island lost in a trackless sea out of sight of the world.

The children were in New Zealand where they were likely to remain for the next ten or a dozen years. When they returned they would no longer be children, but they would

be happy. They never outgrow their love for their native land, those natives, or half or a quarter natives, albeit there is so little of it and they may have left that little when they were infinitesimal by comparison. They were destined to yearn for their mother and she to long for them with a longing that made their hearts faint within them; that was all that was left them, all they could hope for during the next ten or a dozen years.

Pemberton returned to England listlessly. He never quite recovered from the shock he received when he broke the seals of those home letters. Truly, he had loved in his animal way and was fond of his children as animals are fond of their young, but it was not the old love, not the first love, the love that enlightens, illumines, transfigures; the love that lives and lasts and should live and last on to the end of time.

He found the old people in the old homestead, older, very much older than when he last saw them. They were bowed and trembling and yet it was but ten years before, yes, less than ten, when he said good-by to them and to the one other who was dearest of all to him.

She was not referred to in any wise. She

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had never been named since the fatal letter reached him and changed the whole current of his life. He sat about the house; he wandered over the place; he drove or rode across country and tried to imagine that he was glad and grateful to be at home again. He was neither glad nor grateful. He was dead to all this and had long been dead to it; for him there was now no other life than that which he had been living for the last few years, the life yonder in his island where he was cut off from the past and could forget it, or could seem to forget it.

He was reasoning thus as he walked alone in one of the byways of the neighboring country; he was passing slowly down a lane between tall hedges; he had turned into it because it was a very quiet lane and there was no one in view to take note of him—he wished to be alone. Lost in meditation he wandered down the lane; his surroundings were forgotten; he fancied himself buried in the depths of an inland forest, pathless, unexplored, far from the sight of man, far from the sound of a human voice; nothing there but the shadows that are never lifted from the wood; no sound save the whir of wings as the startled birds fled shadow-like at his approach, and the rhythmical hum of a

myriad insects as they reeled deliriously in the air

Suddenly he stopped short in his tracks; it was as if a blow had been dealt him between the eyes by an unseen hand; a torrent of boiling blood rushed to his brain and half blinded him; with a sharp wild cry, he faltered, reeled where he stood, stared before him with eyes that seemed bursting from their sockets, staggered, gasped, clutched madly at his heart and fell headlong to the earth.

A woman rushed to him, knelt at his side, raised his head to her bosom and frantically fondled it while she cried hysterically for help.

It was Phillis—alone with her dead!

VII

Were this story not the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, I should carefully avoid the slightest suspicion of the melodramatic. I relate only what I know to be a fact, all the details of which came within my personal knowledge and have long been locked within the casket of my memory.

At the expiration of the customary period of mournful watching, the coffin containing

the remains of the late Philip Pemberton was borne on the shoulders of the household retainers to the chapel and placed in front of the altar. The lid of the coffin was removed; the body, clad in conventional evening dress was exposed to view. The usual ceremonies were progressing with due solemnity. The bereaved parents of Philip seemed scarcely to comprehend the situation. Their son had grown apart from them. For some years their intercourse had been rather formal than otherwise. Letters had crossed the sea at uncertain intervals. They knew no one in that far-away island who was acquainted with their son and who, had they been on terms of intimacy, would have been likely to have revealed anything calculated to embarrass a friend or grieve his parents. Philip's life for the past ten years had been to them a sealed volume; they had almost ceased to wonder at it. He was, as it were, dead to them; his occasional letters offered them no clew as to his moral or spiritual welfare; they were merely an echo of the past, growing fainter and fainter, and served only to revive a memory of what he was when he was all in all to them.

Phillis was there, clad all in black, her tearless face blanched to an unearthly pallor. The

chant of the choir which is apt to move to tears because it is pitched in a loftier key than that to which our work-a-day world is attuned—as if it were something that soared forever half-way between earth and heaven and were luring us hence to better and brighter things—the young, passionless, seraphic voices blending in melting harmonies, did not dim her eyes; nor were the eyes of any in all that congregation blurred even for a moment.

Toward the close of the cruelly cold service there was a stir among those who were seated in the middle aisle, near the chancel-rail; a rustling of garments, the fall of two or three prayer books, a hurrying of people from their pews and a crowding about the coffin.

The music ceased abruptly; the clergyman hastened down from the altar; a dreadful silence followed, during which a few frightened women hurried from the house of prayer.

What did it all mean?

Philip Pemberton was being tenderly and with touching solicitude lifted from the pillow where he was to have slept his last, long sleep; for lo! the third day he had risen again from the dead!

VIII

When Philip was able to reason and to listen to reason he required of his father and his mother an explanation. He had seen and recognized Phillis, or was it but her spirit, re-embodied for the moment, that had appeared to him in the hedge-bordered lane?

Their story was not impossible; much that transpires is improbable. Phillis was a passive participator in the tragedy of errors that came so near to being played on to the lamentable climax. Here is a plain statement of the case.

Shortly after Philip had put to sea, and when he was beyond the reach of the post or the telegraph, Phillis disappeared. Philip's people, never having been interested in her personally, and fearing that a union between Philip and this rustic maiden might prove disadvantageous to their son, who was of gentle birth, took little pains to learn what had become of her. They had never recognized her as a possible daughter-in-law; indeed they scarcely knew her by sight. Not long after her disappearance word was brought to them that she was dangerously ill; and, soon after, that she was dead. They could not fail to ac-

cept this news with easy resignation. It was of course, the will of God and they were quick enough to bow to it. They were sorry for the son whose grief they could understand and appreciate, but it seemed to them that her death was a blessing in disguise and that time would surely heal the wound which he was destined to survive as so many who had been wounded in like manner had survived before him.

That closed the case as far as Phillis was concerned.

The news was gradually broken to him in letters written at different dates, but these letters, having arrived betimes at the port to which he was destined, accumulated there, and on his arrival were delivered to him all at once. We know what followed. Perhaps it was what was most likely to follow under such circumstances, at such a time and in such a place.

Phillis had not written to him because she was hurt at his having left her, thus yielding to the persuasion of his parents. She knew that they did not like her; that they were not likely to favor the suit, nor even to recognize her in case Philip should return and marry her against the parental will. She left her home because it had become intolerable and

she wished to remain away from that part of the country, with all its sweet and bitter associations. She had been ill, very ill; her life was despaired of; the report of her death had been circulated among her friends and so came to the ears of the Pembertons. They never learned that the report was premature; that Phillis still lived and that she had returned to her family on a visit about the time when Philip reappeared in England.

She had never written to Philip because she had never heard from him. How could a modest and sensitive girl be expected to write when she thought herself unloved—perhaps utterly forgotten?

That was the whole of the story. Philip arose from his bed and with the new birth of love and hope and trust, he sought her.

IX

When love that has been sleeping reawakens it is richer, broader, deeper than it was before. What is sweeter than a perfect understanding after a long estrangement? If the rift within the lover's lute be fatal, it is nevertheless the flaw in the moonstone that makes it precious,

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and without that flaw no good fortune would follow it. How much finer is the harmony that is the sequence of a discord. Thus Philip fell into the flowery mazes of euphuism, when he and Phillis had met and mated anew.

He could not remain in England; she could not remain anywhere unless she were with him and then, Paradise was where he was and all these years she had been patiently waiting for him to offer her the key to it.

Telula was of course forgotten on the instant. The children? Phillis should hear that story and condone it in his atonement. He would atone; he had never had the chance to live other than he had lived, until now. Phillis could make all possible, and as Eve in his Eden she should make it so easy to forswear the world; in the world they were sure of meeting with rebuffs; but here they were creating, for themselves alone, a rule of life ideal in its conception which was to be a perpetual benediction in the observance of it.

X

The rays of the setting sun were flooding the deep veranda of the bungalow. The island

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was bathed in a radiant glow. Silence and somnolence were approaching with the twilight. In the densely leaved trees noisy colonies of birds were hushing one another to rest; tired butterflies had gathered upon tall slender swaying stalks of scented grass and with folded wings hung like painted banners in the motionless air. Peace, unutterable peace, was written in the heavens above, upon the earth beneath and in the waters under the earth. Philip was lounging in a long bamboo chair watching the glory as it paled in the western sky. Phillis reclining at his feet rested her head upon his knees and seemed lost in a rapture of requited love. Splendid night moths fluttered noiselessly by. Faint and far away was the lullaby of the surf; all the crickets in christendom seemed to be chirping their lives away in a chorus that was soothing and unceasing. Was anything lacking in this picture of domestic peace? They were married and they were in love in spite of it. Every wish was gratified, every prayer answered. They could only hope that others were as happy as they were, and might remain as happy as they felt they must, on to the end of time.

There were two children in New Zealand,

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pretty thoroughly weaned by this time and contented in their new environment beyond the sea. Children easily accommodate themselves to circumstances, if they are newly circumstanced early enough in life. And was this all that could possibly interest the lovers of that love-life in the bungalow? Apparently!

There was a shadow in the garden; a shadow that haunted it night and day. When the sun was obscured it was still a shadow, a palpable shadow, appearing and disappearing in the dim recesses of the garden. In the darkness of the night it was an embodied shade, passing to and fro, voiceless, almost invisible, like a dark angel watching and waiting for some one, for something—some one to come with a kindly greeting or a reproof, perchance; something to happen that should lift the burden from a soul that was suffering in silence, or set that soul free at last, free forever and forever.

Did Pemberton ever cross the mysterious path of that haunter of the garden? Did he ever challenge the restless spirit whose hungry eyes fed on the form that had once embodied all that was dearest to it on earth? Why did he not banish it from his sight, if he indeed

saw it? Why did he suffer it to hover near him, always within sight, always within hearing, and always utterly ignored?

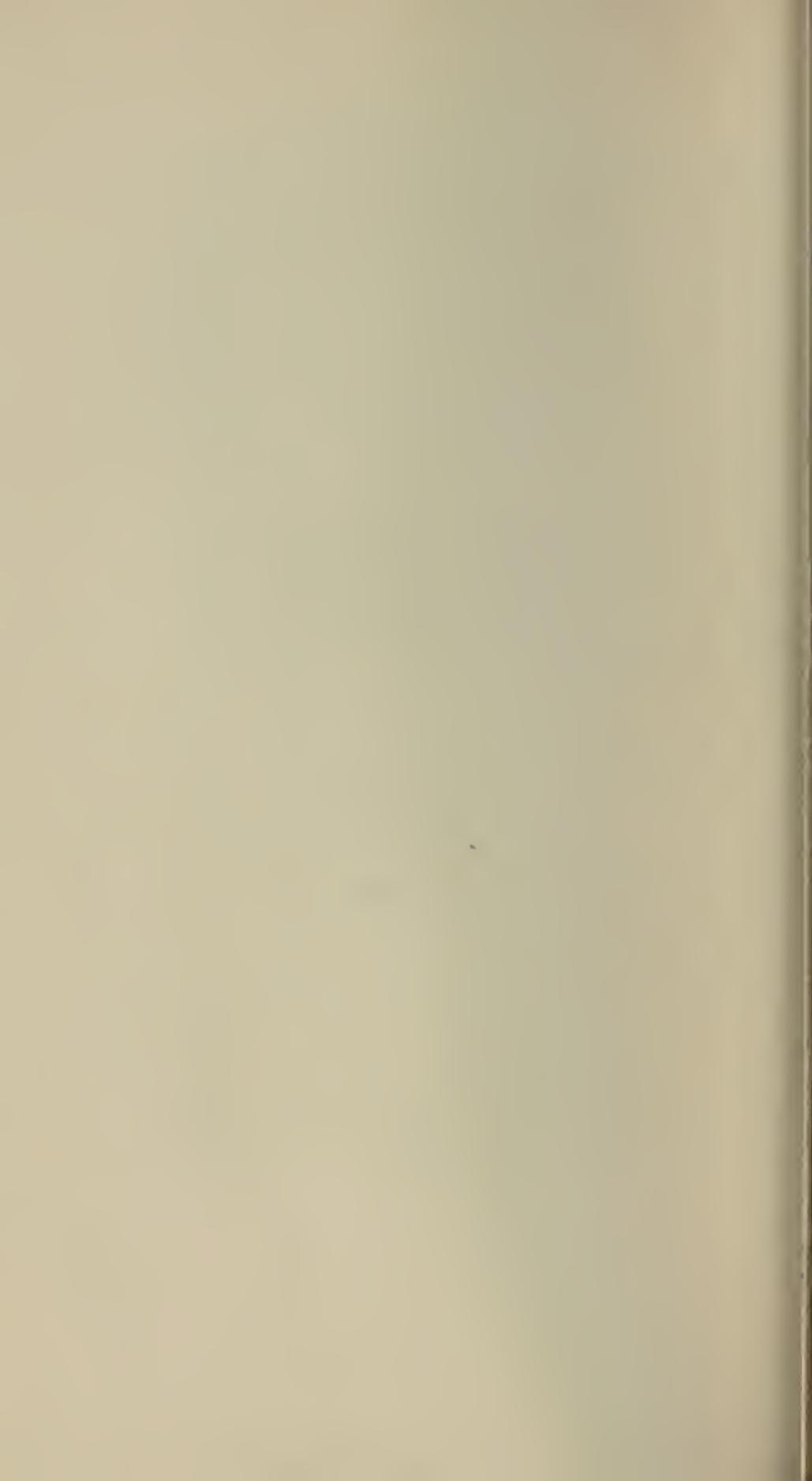
Once they had met, the woman whom he loved and the shadow of the woman whom he had loved but loved no longer. They had fixed their eyes upon each other; a long earnest look full of the severest scrutiny began and ended in silence. They never met face to face again. Phillis had forgotten the strange woman who had gazed at her so wistfully, so passionately. Sometimes when she was wandering in the mazes of the garden she heard the rustle of leaves, the brushing of a garment that fluttered and fled before her, but she thought little of it; there were native retainers there who were fond of that fragrant wilderness and some of them shy enough to take flight on the approach of the foreign lady.

Gradually that shadow faded; seldom was it seen as the months, the years passed by, and when a new joy came to the household, the crowning joy of joys, one might have searched in vain for the shadow that had haunted the garden. But had one looked long enough and well enough one might have followed a narrow fern-feathered trail that wound down the hill slope toward the sea, and there, upon a

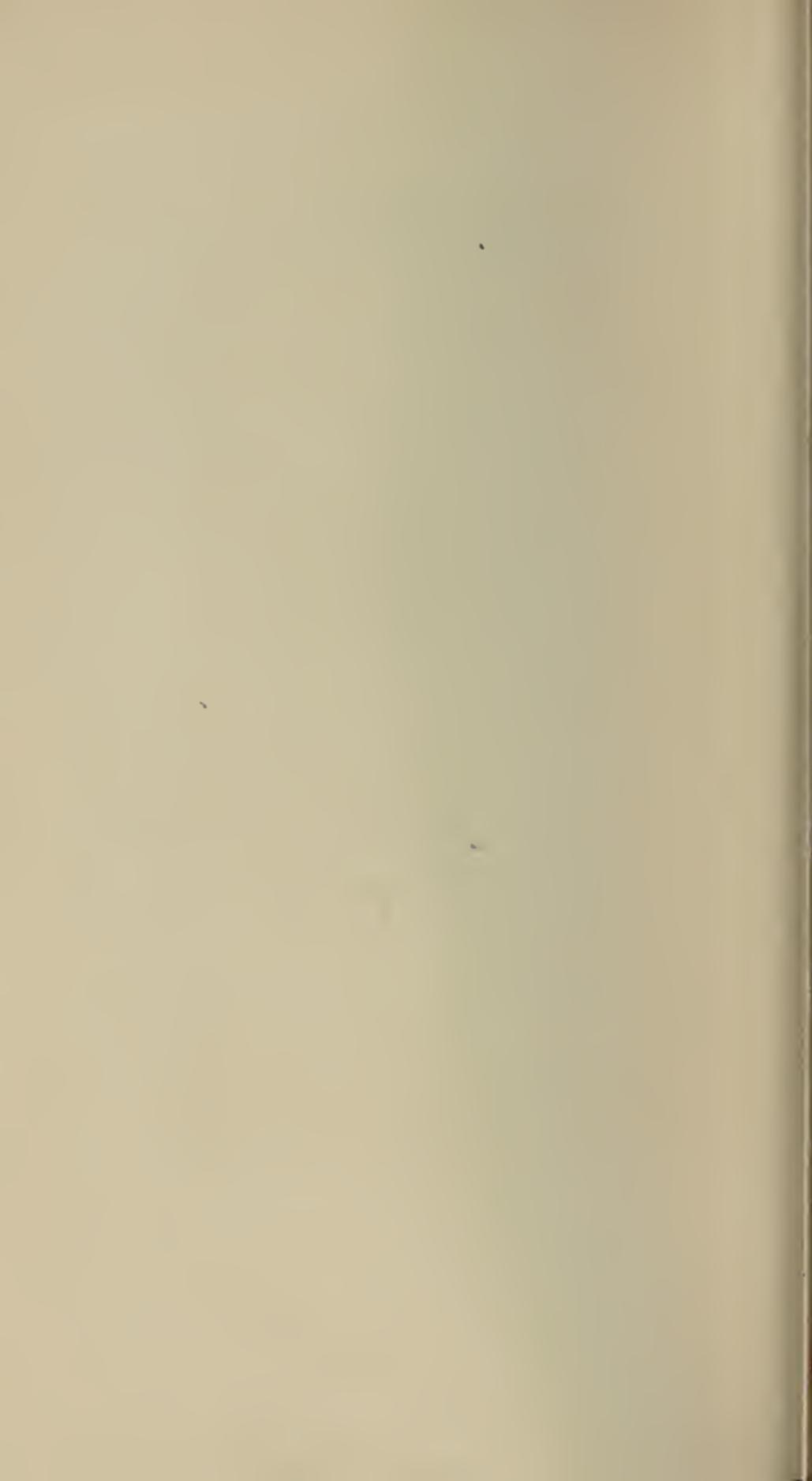
little shoulder of the hill, by a hut woven of boughs and brakes and rushes, one might have seen the crouching form of a woman, who seemed only the withering ghost of a woman, crouching pathetically with forehead bowed upon her knees and hands clutching the naked feet while at intervals a sob that seemed the last utterance of despair was the only evidence that breath still animated that stricken clay.

Oh Telula!

It is written:—"In Ramah was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they were not."



MY LATE WIDOW



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THERE was music, and there was moonlight, and there was the moan of the sea under the palms in the tropical metropolis, when I grew weary of it all and at midnight, with a wave of my hand, I cried, "Good-by, proud world; I'm going home," called a carriage and asked the Kanaka driver what he would charge to take me to the cemetery up Nuwana Valley. With a startled air he replied that the fare there and back was a dollar.

"But I don't wish to come back," said I. "Drive on!"

He nearly fell from the box when I gave my order but I was in earnest; I was merely going home—home to Spook Hall, where I dwelt happily with my late widow, Lady Spook. Why did I dwell there and with her? The question is natural and civil enough; I will tell you. Listen!

In the tropical metropolis I found myself languishing upon the verge of an enchantment that satisfied me not. I speedily grew tired of the hotel. But for the ever-open doors and windows, the broad vine-draped verandas, the cocoa and royal palms, the bananas, the man-

goes and the bread-fruit trees that richly decorated the rainbow-tinted vista, that particular hotel might as well have been anywhere else in the world. So one dull day I said to myself, "I must get out of this at my earliest convenience!" Some one who overheard me suggested that I join an old friend of mine, one of those very old friends who never change; who disappear for an indefinite period and are not heard of for a long time, and then reappear in the most natural manner and quietly begin just where they left off, as if there had never been the slightest interruption in the daily course of human events—and of course there really hadn't been. The heart of neither suffered any estrangement, for those hearts understood one another so perfectly and were so temperate and so content that neither was really conscious of any separation.

She dwelt up the valley, back from the highway. Of course she was a woman and a widow. Upon inquiry I learned that the home of my friend was unique to the verge of abnormality, and I resolved to visit it without delay. The fullest geographical details were freely offered me, but what seemed to me a little singular was the fact that while any one

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could direct the stupidest explorer to the very spot, no one, or almost no one, had ever been there or cared much to go.

This is how I came to the house of my friend: It was in the last ideal hour of the day; the prodigal birds were pouring forth all the melody that was in them, for they were not to sing again until morning—until very early in the morning. The air was heavy with perfume—how I like that antiquated bit of symbolical extravagance, and yet it can hardly be called an extravagance in the tropics.

I had followed the valley road until I came to the cemetery. The rain-washed headstones were very white, the sky was very blue; everything was sweet and clean and inexpressibly peaceful. At the cemetery I swung myself carefully through the turnstile and walked up the not too narrow path in the center until I came to a gray picket fence at the top. Oh, such a jungle of indigo-plants and castor-beans as grew there, with a rank harvest of knee-deep grass, and only the pointed tips of the gray pickets peeping out here and there!

I discovered a kind of beaten track—a track that must have been trodden by a light foot, for the long grass lay in it quite green and comfortable, and nothing was dead and with-

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ered thereabout. This trail I took, as directed, and speedily came to a part of the fence where one picket was off, and one on each side of the open space was loosened at the lower end and pressed apart. I easily crept through here. Now the jungle thickened; everything was growing wild, running wild, and rankly wild at that; tenderly cultivated flowers had gone back to the state of nature and become exaggerations of themselves; lilies, huge Japanese lilies of a deadly fragrance, sprang out of the wind-tangled grass and stared at me; roses ran riot and came to grief; they had grown to an alarming height unpruned, unsheltered, unsupported, and then when the branches were over-full of blossoms and the rain came and deluged them, and the wind followed after, down fell the avalanche of petals, carrying everything with it, in a sudden mass that lay neglected ever after. Wonderful East Indian flowers were there, choking to death in the exuberant herbage that crowded everywhere. Even the little trails about the house were hardly visible.

A dilapidated wire fence hidden in the jungle—a capital trap for the feet of the unsuspecting—lay prostrate between me and the house I was approaching. I succeeded in get-

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ting through this fence, or over it, or under it, it were vain to say which; and so, finally, came upon a broad low cottage, with a vast sweeping roof that hovered over it like an outspreading wing, and upon the creaking floor of the veranda I stood knocking a loud and hollow knock against the worm-eaten sash of a pair of double doors that stood wide open.

I thought I heard an answer but it proved to be only an echo. The place was awfully empty; in the center of the cottage was a large airy hall, a kind of music-room and library combined. A small book-case, a piano of an antiquated pattern, a work-table, a lounge and two or three long Chinese bamboo chairs were all that was visible from the door. Upon the small table, a cozy feminine piece of furniture, lay a bit of unfinished embroidery, a volume of "Friends in Council," the dainty London edition, and a spray of flowers that seemed to have been carelessly thrown there; yet to have moved it a fraction of an inch in any direction would have spoiled a very pretty bit of still-life.

I knocked again; echoes responded from the adjoining apartments, and then on the ceiling just overhead was heard a sharp tapping that was like a derisive mockery of my rap. The

twilight was hurrying away; there was something ghostly in the atmosphere that prevailed; I felt like shivering. "This is Spook Hall," said I, and lifting up my voice I cried, "Where are you, O Lady Spook?"

I heard the tapping overhead softly repeated, and then the patter of feet hastening from one side of the room to the other. I am sure of this; I could not be mistaken, although no one was visible. I wandered out into the grass before the hall and saw there was no upper apartment; there was but the single floor, and I at that moment was stark alone there. Assuring myself of this fact, I went through the several rooms, for all the doors and windows of the house stood wide open. On the one hand of the great central chamber was a sleeping-room—Lady Spook's, no doubt, for it was feminine to the last degree; on the other side of the music-room was a kind of boudoir. Bright chintz draperies and a sunburst of Easter and Christmas cards glorified an improvised screen and gave that corner of the establishment an unwonted air of cheerfulness. In the rear of the music-room was a refectory with its whole outer wall of glass; it commanded a superb view of the cloud-swept heights up the valley. On each side of

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the refectory, beyond a maze of pantries, closets, lockers, and small alcoves, was a pleasant room. One of these chambers, furnished, was for rent; it had its bath, its windows opening upon the wilderness, its lovely vistas inviting the eye, and was in nowise dependent on the hall or the lady of the hall; it was a semi-detached apartment entirely suited to the wants of a modest bachelor.

“I will take this room, if I may,” said I to myself; and, leaving my card on the work-table in the library corner of the great room, I implied as much in a few hasty words penciled on a corner of the card. This accomplished, I somehow found my way out of the jungle into the cemetery and back to town; and when the evening had come and there was an uncommon stillness in the air, I wondered if Lady Spook was sitting in her solemn solitude—beyond the grave, as it were—sitting and listening to the mysterious tapping that saluted and startled me.

* * * * *

Bright and amiable people were lodging at the hotel in the tropical metropolis: young planters, the unlucky young brothers of those heirs to whom the whole estate descended in old England; they had been set up in business

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at the end of the earth by indulgent fathers who had contributed to the ranks of the army, the navy, the Established Church. At intervals they came down on the inter-island steamers from more or less remote canefields and spent their substance in riotous living. I grew to know these young gentlemen and to like them, and many a jovial hour I passed among the hotel cottages, where they entertained in almost princely fashion. But they satisfied me not; after all that was said in their favor the fact remained that they were but young English gentlemen enjoying themselves in the good old English way, and one need not bury oneself at the antipodes in order to enter into the spirit of their festivities. The military concert upon the lawn at night, the rides, the drives, the boating, the bathing—none of these had any latitudinal characteristics whatever. Shut out the palm-tree vistas and the dusky-skinned half-clad islanders who lounged in the middle distance, and the life generally lived in the tropical metropolis might be lived with ease in any summer resort under the sun. So I was glad when a coolie, clad in immaculate white, presented to me a letter upon a tray held by the slenderest fingers I ever saw upon a man's hand.

“You are heartily welcome to the best the hall affords, and the chamber in the south wing even now awaits your pleasure.” It was Lady Spook who wrote; and that very day, almost within the hour, I arrived, bag and baggage, at the entrance to the south wing, and was duly installed at Spook Hall. Lady Spook was in her boudoir. She was of a comfortable plumpness; her rich brown hair was arranged in the simplest manner; her complexion was one of perfect health; a certain independence of manner, while not in the least unfeminine, assured the casual observer that she was entirely capable of taking care of herself; she was English as English, and the hall had an English air of comfort in certain of its nooks and corners, though, generally speaking, it was not abundantly furnished.

In her favorite room there were delicately flowered chintz curtains with wide fluted ruffles, buff portieres with strips of maroon velvet—handily home-made were these; there was a broad, cool lounge with very plump cushions; newly plucked flowers filled several large jars and gave an air of rare attractiveness to that particular corner of the hall. Birds twittered noisily under the low, far-extending eaves; bees buzzed in and out of

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the open windows like lilliputian flying-machines; sometimes the dragon-fly—that winged javelin—pierced the air in such furious haste that he came to grief in a corner of the boudoir and his stiff, glazed wings clashed like cymbals. Then Puggins, the canine pet of our Lady Spook, arose and charged indignantly upon the late free-lance of the air. There was a brief combat, during which the mistress of the hall reproved Puggins for his undignified blood-thirstiness, and silence, punctuated by bird notes and the boom of bees, was restored. There was nothing to eat in the hall—nothing but dragon-flies, and these fell to the lot of the warlike Puggins. Lady Spook daily gathered a small flock of maidens in her music-room, or in the crumbless refectory, or perchance under a tree in the wildest of gardens, and shepherded them among the paths of learning. At stated intervals she opened a huge parasol and, gathering a multitude of well-starched skirts about her ankles, tripped away into leafy space and was fed by the ravens—for aught I knew.

It was agreed between us, without the exchange of a word, that our individual independence should in no wise and under no circumstances be interfered with; therefore,

though I went forth at intervals seeking whom or what I might devour, and generally finding it at a well-laid board a good quarter of a mile distant, she, my Lady Spook, knew little and cared less for my outgoings and incomings. This mutual declaration of independence was our safeguard in an association of interests which was, to say the least, unusual. Geographically, we were isolated; socially, and I think I may say spiritually, we were, so to speak, beyond the grave.

When, luggage in hand, I made my appearance at Spook Hall, my Lady Spook exclaimed in no little surprise: "However did you force an entrance?" It would have been quite impossible with my luggage in hand to force an entrance between the cemetery palings, though they yawned to admit us to our unkept domain. A carriage-drive that originally followed the side wall of the cemetery and entered the highway with some display of stone-work on each hand—I was never able to find any trace of gates, though—this carriage-drive, so long neglected, had been rendered absolutely impassable by the luxuriant growth of the lantana bushes; their slender boughs were locked across it in an impenetrable network, and even a bird might find it difficult to

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enter there, and perhaps more difficult to emerge from this dense maze. "However did you force an entrance?" said Lady Spook, as she paused upon the mossy steps of the hall, while a small lizard sprawled at her feet. "I came over the fence of our nameless neighbors," replied I—and at that moment a sudden shower fell out of a sky that seemed almost cloudless, and so we two sat in easy chairs on the veranda listening to the roar of the precipitated rain. We noted how it seemed to bring the shattered sunbeams with it—it was literally a shining rain, prismatic and brilliant—and we inhaled the delicious fragrance of half-hidden blossoms that were having the very breath beaten out of them during this tropical episode.

There were neighbors on three sides of us—let me say on four sides of us—and each was as harmless and as unobtrusive as the other. Looking through the glazed wall of the refectory was seen the meadow lands of our upper neighbor and his flocks and his herds feeding luxuriously; our neighbor on the other hand, whose estate spread itself on the seaward slopes, was so far distant that agile youth, as it sported upon the tennis court, seemed to be enacting a pantomimic ballet to the music of

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the mountain zephyr; even the merry laughter was blown away from our listening ears. You already know of the neighbors who dwelt beyond the bourn of the undiscovered country. Through these silent paths my friend and I were wont to seek our hardly less silent territory. They never once startled us, nor any shade or shadow of them, that I wot of. On the fourth side of the hall lay a plantation of wild briars. Never briars flourished as these briars flourished, even down to the steep brink of a brook that brawled under the foot of a hill—our last neighbors. There were two or three tumble-down out-houses scattered through the “briary,” as we loved to call that field of desolation. They were no longer to be identified; the doors that had not already fallen were shambling in the wind; windows there were none; the lizards loved the place—it was their forum.

The southern windows of my room commanded this spot—an acre which was lovely in its unloveliness; and when I lifted mine eyes unto the hills the very spirit of God was within me. In an exalted mood I one day turned from this window and sought the refreshing temperature of the boudoir. Lady Spook had been repotting some rare ferns and bathing and

combing Puggins, as was her custom of a holiday afternoon. She was sitting with her hands folded upon her lap as if waiting for something to happen. "Tell me," said I as I entered the boudoir and threw myself upon the lounge—a privilege she always granted me—"tell me how you came to this uncanny hall to nurse yourself in idiopathy." Never did a woman look healthier, heartier or more wholesome than she who without more ado began the following confession:

"It was a goodly ship that brought me over, but there were weary years to follow, and often I was heart-sick and driven almost to despair. You will remember how in those days my society was sought on certain occasions because my linguistic accomplishments were indispensable. The officers of foreign war-ships—Russian, French, German, Italian—would have made but little impression upon the members of our first families (of course it is the brass button that appeals to the heart of maidenhood) had I not been constantly employed as interpreter by every one from majesty down to the least of these. This I found at times aggravating. There were those who overlooked me on important occasions; whoseemed to have forgotten for the time being

that we were friends, or should be such, since we had been more or less intimate for a decade. When my services became necessary they were always swift to seek me; and I have had the questionable privilege of disseminating the vapid gossip of the antipodean capital in several tongues.

“In those days I knew the bitterness of social toleration; as a lady’s companion I was found companionable when in the presence of ‘my lady.’ I was presumably basking in the reflected radiance of a distinguished company—that radiance was nothing to me. The serene solitude of my dainty cottage, the select society of my favorite authors, the sunshine and the shadow that played among the passion-flowers that curtained my cool veranda—these were the consolation of my life.

“As is invariably the case in small isolated communities, my status was defined by the coterie, and for me there was apparently no future beyond the narrow limits of the circumscribed path I was forced to tread. The inherited fortitude of my nature, coupled with highly cultivated reserve power, great patience and a wonderful faculty of silent endurance—the latter is characteristically feminine, but is not the gift of all our sex—enabled me to sur-

vive an experience which would have starved a less well seasoned nature, and which was slowly but surely withering my heart.

“In the midst of this long period of forbearance there came a revolution, as surprising to me, one of its chief factors, as to any one in the kingdom. The brother of the lady whose companion I was possessed a hearty, virile nature, but was a creature of impulse and therefore not always reasonable. I seemed to fill him with aversion, and he was unable or unwilling to disguise the fact; yet I had always treated him with the utmost consideration. Often I have been obliged to unceremoniously leave his presence to restrain the tears which his thoughtless—I will not suffer myself to say heartless—words had well-nigh forced from my eyes. During those three or four years our natural antagonism increased rather than diminished, and during this period my lot was pitiable. For us to be left alone together a few moments, as was sometimes unavoidable, was for a horrible fear to take possession of me; the shadow of his hate seemed to cover and darken my very soul.

“We need not stop to discuss the philosophy of antipathy. It was well known among our friends and acquaintances that he and I could

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not tolerate one another; indeed, an exaggeration of our repugnance was a popular theme for discussion among the gossips in this very paradise of gossips. How they harped upon us, those harpers, when I and my enemy were their chosen victims!

“There was to be a concert by the command of His Majesty, of course the most fashionable event of the season. Amateurdome was shaken to its foundations; the court was to be there and all the world besides—the little world that hung upon the hem of the garments of the court. Our house was well represented. Every member of the family, save only my humble self, had elaborated a toilet suitable to the occasion; and with mingled emotions I had seen the ladies drive away to the palace at an early hour in the evening, for there was a reception before the concert. I did not envy them; the music-room at home was a delightful apartment provided with an admirable piano. If I could not play or sing as well as those whose names appeared on the program of the evening I could truly say that we were all merely amateurs—amateurs in an amateur kingdom. There was at least an emotional pleasure for me in fingering the cool ivory keys in the twilight and in lifting up my voice

when I knew that no one could hear me and I need not be afraid. I sat in the music-room that evening playing and singing as I had never before dared play and sing, and I found the exercise extremely exhilarating.

“There was a pause in the music; I had sung myself into a most exalted or exultant mood, and was silently enjoying it. I turned to look through the open door, across the green lowlands, upon the distant sea. There in the doorway—leaning against the side of it, an image of amiable interest—stood the one who loathed me!

“As I stared at him in astonishment, for I thought he was at the concert, he advanced with hand extended and said, in a voice thrilling with tenderness—a voice I did not know he possessed: ‘I have wronged you; forgive me and let us be friends.’ My amazement rendered me speechless, but he seized my hand, and I found that his touch was harmonious and humanizing. ‘Come,’ said he persuasively, ‘let us obliterate the past. Will you go to the concert with me? It is not yet too late to enjoy the latter half of it.’

“Dazed and half delighted I acquiesced. You can imagine the sensation we created when, in the middle of the program—we were

not down on the bills—he and I entered the palace and were shown to seats in the very front row, as the others were filled to the entrance. You cannot imagine the consternation when, a week later, he and I were married, and before the news had fairly burst upon the little capital like a thunder clap, we quietly departed for another island, where, upon a recently purchased plantation, we began a honeymoon of infinite and pathetic mellow-ness.’’

* * * * *

Puggins, who was endeavoring to scale the wall in quest of a lizard that had glued itself on the cornice, was now sent out of the boudoir in disgrace. No one was more sensitive than he; the very expression of his tail was touching; he walked solemnly, reluctantly, and with a reproachful side-glance over his shoulder at his mistress, through the long room and with a sigh and a dull thud threw himself on the veranda in an attitude of despair.

Lady Spook took from a small round table at her side—there was ever one of these indispensables within her reach—a work-basket decorated with knots of ribbon, and selecting from it a bit of embroidery, began busying her small plump hands with dainty stitches.

She resumed her narrative, after a pause which was as effective as a rest in a musical composition, and stretching myself upon the lounge, by her leave, with my arms thrown over my head, I listened:

“I believe it possible for great enemies to become great friends; of course the cause of enmity must be slight, possibly a mere misunderstanding or a natural or premature antipathy; under these circumstances the antagonists suddenly discover that their eyes were blinded or a distorted vision had led them quite astray. It is as if a pane of bad window-glass through which two people had been sullenly regarding one another was shattered and the deformed were transformed. It was so with us.

“The devotion of my husband was heroic. As he had been rude beyond measure, he became tender in the extreme. He seemed to have but one object in life—my happiness; and his happiness was but a reflection of my own.

“Our plantation lay upon a headland, above the sea, far removed from any settlement. Sometimes a guest rode over the heights to spend a night with us, but for the most part we were alone, yet ever unconscious of our

loneliness. Who that has known the unspeakable blessedness of newly wedded life, its fullness to overflowing, its exquisite privacy, its innocent obliviousness to all the world besides, its insatiate hunger and thirst of love, in a land where love reigns supreme; who that has realized all this will fail to picture our earthly elysium among the palms upon the breezy heights overhanging the delicious sea?

“Together we were absorbed in the development of our new possessions. I seemed not to have lived till now, for until now I had had no deep interest in life. At last all, all was changed, all beautified and glorified. Sometimes only to catch a glimpse of my husband as he rode among his men upon the distant slopes, only to recognize his familiar outline, thrilled me and set my heart afluttering so that I was glad to turn away to recover my self-possession. The thought of his homecoming was enough to brighten my spirits at any moment; when he looked in upon me at unexpected intervals I ran to meet him, flushing like a silly girl, and the anticipation of his return at evening, the labors of the day giving place to the hours of rest, was a kind of emotional intoxication.

“Sunday was our day of rest, a day of rap-

ture. It was our custom to read the Church of England service in honor of the occasion, and we took our turn at the prayers and the responses, for there was no church within many miles of us. A little Roman Catholic chapel, hidden away in a leafy solitude, was at stated intervals visited by a young French priest, who came to shrive the scattered native congregation and say a mass for them. Him we saw and were glad to entertain, although we religiously held aloof from his altar rail and read over our own prayers in our own way.

“Oh, the unutterable happiness of that experience, the repose that was in our souls, the rapture in our hearts, the wholesome satisfaction that was in our daily and hourly lives! Never did we refer to the past; it seemed to be understood between us that during that period we were under a spell, alike painful to each, and the memory of which was to be banished forever. How we could have so misunderstood one another, how we could have been so blinded to the goodness and the gentleness and the loving kindness that each inspired in the breast of the other, was a mystery that still remains unsolved.

“We shared all things generously; our

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tastes were similar, our pleasures and our pains sympathetic. As I look back upon that past it seems to me that no two of God's creatures were ever more perfectly united than he and I. Our little world, our home-life, was so complete that even the letters arriving by the rather uncertain post were almost like intruders; and when the sometimes too rough winds and too troubled sea prevented the touching of the inter-island craft at the neighboring roadstead, we were in no wise disconcerted, but with a smile and a shrug of the shoulders reassured ourselves that we were wholly content and that no disappointment could shake our supreme faith in the goodness of the providence who watched over our house of love. It seemed as if the honeymoon was destined never to wane; there are such moons, a few of them; and there are those that wax and wane repeatedly like the celestial luminary; ours burned with a soft unchanging radiance in which we basked contentedly, asking no odds of any one that lived.

“Of course this could not go on for ever. We were destined to age like other people and to suffer the universal ailments of the flesh, perchance were to be driven out of our Eden into the work-a-day world, where everybody

and everything is inevitably more or less common-place; but these contingencies we feared not. With us love was enough; in it we lived and moved and had our being."

It was time for me to be thinking of supping; it was time for her to be gathering her skirts about her and betaking herself through the long grass to her vesper meal. However, I said nothing, but waited for her to continue her story, if indeed she were inclined to continue it. Presently she resumed, but with evident effort; there was a touch of hardness in her voice as she said: "One evening I was watching a storm cloud that enveloped the mountain at whose feet we dwelt. The spectacle was startling, for the lightning, rare enough with us, cleaved the whole hemisphere with a two-edged sword of wrath. After these storms the torrents that tumble in every ravine are sometimes swollen to frightful proportions. It is as if the deluge had come again and before its awful wall of waters everything is swept to destruction. I was sitting in the vine-shaded veranda enjoying the reviving freshness of the air when I heard at a distance the wailing of the natives.

"As you know, in moments of either joy or sorrow the native gives way to a burst of emo-

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tion which finds expression in a high-pitched, tremulous, prolonged cry; it is a wail in very truth, but whether it be a wail of joy or a wail of grief it is not always possible to determine without some knowledge of the cause of it. I thought how perfectly the wail accorded with the elements—the reeling palm-trees, the wildly tossing banana leaves, the heavy and dark-browed clouds, and the sheets of rain that were shifting across the landscape and the sea. The wailers drew nearer and nearer; I watched them with interest, and presently I saw that they were some of our own people, and I judged from their distracted behavior it was a common grief that stirred them. As they drew nearer one of their number broke away from the band, and, running toward me, fell prostrate at my feet.

“A hot and sickening wave seemed to break over my heart; I grew faint with bewildering apprehension—but you can guess the rest!” She paused for some moments, but finally resumed: “My husband, riding upon his circuit and overtaken in mid-stream by that avalanche of water, was swept to his grave in the sea. His body was recovered; it lies yonder, and here, in this house, I am as near to him as I can hope to get in this life. It is with

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melancholy satisfaction that I see the sun rise on these graves—graves of his companions in the dust—and watch the moonlight whitening the pale stones, and hear the rain fall there and the leaves rustle, and from time to time note how an open grave marks the rending of another heart—yes, many of them, perchance! I am one of those miserable ones who love company, and there is enough of it here, God knows!”

Just then the hysterical barking of her dog startled us. Some one was coming to remind her that supper had been ready a good half-hour. With the perfect composure of indifference, she went away with the messenger. In a few moments I seized my hat and cane and was glad to get out of the hall.

* * * * *

If my newly widowed friend really desired to nurse her sorrow she could not have found a more admirable cradle than Spook Hall. It had its history; what hall worthy of the name has not? It seems to me that this history is worth recording. Let me tell it as it was told to me one evening, when the winds were sobbing and the place was filled with weird and unaccountable noises.

In the beginning it was the not unusual

tropical bungalow, set in a shady grove far back from the highway. Probably, in those days, love dwelt there in seclusion, and was content with the rather limited accommodation the original structure afforded. By and by it began to grow, and it grew and grew, extending its wings with the increase of the family as a hen spreadeth her wings for the sheltering of her brood. Upon the opposite side of the somewhat distant highway lay God's acre; it was a small enough acre, and overfull of the dust of the blessed dead; so it came to pass that other lands were added to it, and these new lands lay between the cottage and the highway, and the highway divided the lands in halves; now the cottage seemed to be cut off from the world and, as it were, banished. To be sure, there was still a carriage-drive left open; it led down the side of the cemetery wall and connected the highway with the lawn and the garden that lay round about the cottage.

Soon enough the graves began to multiply; they crept up under the cottage fence, and tall white stones, perpetuating the last words of love and grief, looked over the fence and shone brightly in the sunshine under the cottage windows. Death is not partial, though in some cases it would almost seem so; neither is death

hedged in nor held aloof by any barriers that the hand of man may raise against him; so it came to pass that he entered the cottage and led away captive one and then another and yet another, and these were laid together in their graves upon the lawn close at the side of the cottage, for it was thought kindlier to let them sleep their last sleep near the old homestead, and with no others of the silent company lying between them and that once happy home.

There it stood, almost within reach of the veranda, the tall ancestral shaft that bore the record of three generations—a memorable scroll that the hand of time was deliberately unrolling. It was fenced about, and the rose bushes that had been planted within the inclosure had long since hidden the low mounds out of sight. This was the private cemetery of the first master of Spook Hall, but it was exclusively ours now. Close against it was the narrow opening among the pickets through which we entered the main avenue of the cemetery, and so made our way to the valley road, for, as I have already stated, the carriage-drive had become impassable.

As the family of our predecessor increased he broadened his roof on one hand and on the other; a deep veranda on the upper side of the

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house was made deeper still and inclosed in glass. It was a refectory in those days, but we found it a charming lounging-room, a divan where I could burn my cigarette in comfort while Lady Spook, far more industriously inclined, treaded gaily at her sewing machine. It was likewise a favorite resort of Puggins; perhaps the lizards were a trifle more numerous there and afforded him better sport; then, as a portion of the glass partition was always open, he could, at a moment's notice, plunge into the tangled grass that grew knee-deep beside the door and lose himself in the damp shadows of the wildest looking garden that ever grew to seed. Just above this strip of garden stretched a row of tumble-down out-houses, so uncanny in their decay that I confess I never had the courage to venture an exploration of them.

I entered my apartment in the wing through the library, music-room, refectory and an odd combination of passages—they resembled joints and elbows in a pipe—which had been formed by the fungus-like growth of the cottage in this particular quarter. Out of this passage at one point a window opened directly into the sleeping apartments of Lady Spook; opposite the window was a branch passage

which had an opening in the direction of the deserted garden and out-houses; there were small cell-like compartments in there which I did not care to examine too closely; one never knows what one may find in such recesses. But that inner window! Is there anything more suggestive of the preternatural than a glazed window in the center of a house, through which the sun never shines—indeed, through whose heavily curtained panes no light passes? Well, thereby hangs a tale.

Assisting my friend one day in moving a heavy article from one part of her chamber to another (these friendly offices were necessary in our case, for we had no servant to call upon), I saw upon her floor, where the Chinese matting was somewhat worn, a faint brown stain. As she was scrupulously cleanly in her house-keeping and had a wholesome dread of dust, I was twitting her upon having allowed this discoloration to escape her vigilant eye.

“Listen,” cried she, with the superior air which the humblest of women is bound to assume when she discovers it is within her power to enlighten one of the lords of creation on a subject of which he is grossly ignorant. “Listen,” she repeated, with a gentle air of authority, as she led the way into the refectory. A

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deliciously cool breeze from the mountain was fluttering the broad banana leaves that waved before us; the scarlet hibiscus blazed in its nest of green; the spider-lilies were a fountain of fragrance. I listened—there was nothing left for me to do but listen.

“He who lies yonder,” she began, waving her fan in the direction of the monument upon our lawn, “slept in that chamber. The inner window which I keep fastened and darkened was left open in his time for the sake of the superior ventilation it afforded. Possibly he was a man whose patience did not stretch to the crack of doom.” Now I suspected that my lady was growing facetious, and I ventured to encourage her with a complimentary smile. “Possibly he was possessed of less patience than other men.” She hesitated, as if this were an almost too cruel suggestion; at once I figuratively bared my bosom to the storm and patiently awaited the worst.

“There was a coolie servant in the house,” she continued; “one who, no doubt, gave both master and mistress sufficient cause for irritation. He had carelessly shattered a valuable piece of porcelain and had in consequence been threatened with punishment by his master. He may have already received that punishment,

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or others before it, and so knew what to expect at the hands of his employer. I know not the exact circumstances, but this I know: one night, when the master and mistress slept, the coolie, armed with a frightful weapon, crept down the passage and climbed noiselessly through the open window by the bedside of the sleepers. There must have been a dim light in the chamber—a low-hanging moon or the luminous stars of this latitude aided him to do his devilish deed. Lifting the blade high above him, he struck with all the hatred of revenge and cleft a head from a body. God knows what other bloody deeds he might have done had not the shrieks of the now awakened widow alarmed the house. The murderer fled, but upon the floor lay the tribute of his vengeance, and the horrid flood that flowed from it has left that indelible witness of his guilt.”

I felt myself shivering slightly and the day seemed suddenly to have grown dark; then the wind rose and slammed the shutters throughout the hall, and upon the wide roof fell the swift shock of the rain with a roar as of an avalanche of hail.

That evening I sat alone in my favorite chair upon the front veranda. All the eaves were dripping, and the damp air was dense

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with the thrilling fragrance of jasmine and tuberose and large white lilies half-hidden in the grass, and with all the ghostly flowers whose odors are forever associated with the dead and the chamber of death. I confess that I was nervous and I preferred sitting there, with the memorial shaft towering close at hand, to entering into the hollow hall, with the blood-stain on the floor; and while I was sitting there, trying my best to think of nothing, and while the darkness deepened and the silence became so profound that I could hear my heart beat huskily, there was a stirring among the rank bushes over against the cemetery, a rushing sound in the knee-deep grass, and out of the gloom rose dimly a pale figure that was hastening toward me. I was frozen where I sat; to save my soul from everlasting loss I could not have moved a hand or foot. Another moment and the air was rent with such a piercing cry as stopped my heart in its frantic beating, and then the delighted Puggins sprang upon my knee, and Lady Spook, her damp skirts clinging about her, approached with her customary greeting.

It was she who had frightened me to my wits' ends; it was the joyous bark of Puggins that had split my horrified ears. There was noth-

ing preternatural in any of this, and the hot blood that bathed my body as soon as the crisis was over assured me that I was in the land of the living and heir to all fleshly ills.

You see it was Friday night. It had been the custom of my lady when within reach of that hallowed grave to sit beside it for an hour or two in the gloaming, since he came to his death on a Friday, and there she would ponder upon the joys of the past—past joys but precious memories. She had just performed that melancholy office, fulfilled religiously and without fail no matter how inclement the season; so thus she startled me as I had never before been startled and as I trust I shall be startled never again.

Upon the swinging book-rack in my study-chamber were my favorite books—"Robinson Crusoe" and "The Arabian Nights," richly illustrated; the King James Bible, in large, clear type, and Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," the substantial edition of '67. With these I could have ended my days in the semi-solitude of Spook Hall and felt no need of any other companionship. A few clever sketches in color or in black-and-white, the gift of artist friends, adorned the walls; a few trophies of travel such as I love to gather—land-

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marks in my life's pilgrimage, and not the least of them but could tell its tale of romantic adventures—were strewn about, and these made my almost too sunny chamber very cheerful and homelike.

In one corner between two windows where my eyes were never tempted to wander in the wild garden without, I sat with my face to the creamy white wall and wrote when the spirit moved me. I knew well enough that the only interruption likely to occur, from dawn to dark, day after day, was the voice of my lady saluting me from some remote corner of the hall, or her touch upon the piano keys, which was an aid rather than an interruption.

I had but few acquaintances and cared but little to see them there. Privacy and an inner life are as necessary to me as meat and drink. Lady Spook had hosts of friends and acquaintances, but the spookiness of the hall kept the nervous and imaginative at a distance. Its peculiar history was known to every inhabitant of the kingdom, and the approach was so difficult that even those who were in no wise superstitious hesitated to visit us.

Sometimes adventurous children hovered upon the borders of our grounds, but if they ever had occasion to enter them or to pass

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through them it was with shy, swift feet that they did so.

Occasionally a native, attracted by the abundance of fruit that remained ungathered through the season, begged the privilege of filling his net, and he was a thousand times welcome. The ripe mangoes fell with a startling thud upon our roof and slid unctuously to the ground, or we heard the muffled blows as they dropped in the night and buried themselves in the grass.

An unfamiliar footstep on that floor would have startled me. I remember once wandering through the hall clad in a loose, flowing kimono which I was wont to wear for coolness and comfort, and on turning one of the corners in the complication of rooms and passages coming suddenly face to face with a stranger, a lady. She had not heard my slippered feet; she had found doors and windows open wide, and, believing the place uninhabited for the moment, was exploring with curious interest a haunt whose surprising history she had not failed to learn. Upon our meeting she shrieked, and I, struck dumb, staggered back a pace. Mutual explanations followed and she departed, never to return.

Naturally enough one is sure to receive a

shock at intervals in such a place; but one grows used to them and perhaps begins to like them and to look forward to them. Life under such circumstances cannot be altogether dull—it never was with us. Shall I ever forget how I sat alone, hour after hour, in the silent heat of a long day, knowing positively that I was alone in the hall and was to remain its sole occupant for two days and nights, during which time Lady Spook sojourned at the seaside? The beguiling drowsiness of the afternoon was stealing over me and I was gradually succumbing to the spell. I believed the place was haunted, if ever a place was haunted, and my nerves were a little on edge a good part of the time; never was I quite at my ease. I was weary of my book, was upon the point of closing my volume, putting off my slippers, stretching myself upon the comfortable couch under the ever-spread mosquito-bar, and resigning myself to the daily siesta. Just at this moment, when I was drowsily hesitating upon the brink of sleep, I heard a heavy foot stalking toward me—a foot heavier than a human foot—that drew nearer and nearer, but stealthily and with frequent pauses. Was it the incarnation of something monstrous? There was an unearthly sound as of sawing

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and grinding and the audible gnashing of teeth. Surely, thought I, the devil of my infancy might appear in this guise. A terrific snort froze the blood in my veins, and then the whole wing of the hall wherein I sat was seized, as it were, and shaken as by a violent convulsion of nature—all this in the brightest sunshine of a glorious summer afternoon.

Ah me! the unraveling of mysteries is a mortifying task. Some neighbor's nag was tickling his cuticle against the corner of my shaky room. He snorted again with the utmost satisfaction and whisked his tail against the hot clapboards with a sound that resounded like a barbaric drum. I took in the situation like a flash, but it was some time before I recovered my normal calm.

If any one had assured me, when I first thought of making Spook Hall my home, that it was blood-stained and full of noises not always easily to be accounted for, and that I should at times have to pass some days and nights there in absolute solitude, I am quite sure that I should have hesitated upon the threshold before summoning the moral and physical courage to enter. But it came to pass, as the place grew more familiar it was

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our custom to divert one another with tales the like of which would have met with the approval of the writer of "The Night Side of Nature." Fortunately there was always a tinge of the serio-comic even in our most tragic moments. "The Ingoldsby Legends" from the lips of Lady Spook—she was a most agreeable reader—enlivened many an evening, and there were no hours too unseasonable for one or the other of us to seek the piano-forte. Even in the pitch-darkness of the night we were wont to wrest from its invisible keys weird melodies appropriate to the occasion.

That our intercourse was unique must be evident to the least suspicious reader; doubtless it was the subject of frequent if not always favorable comment among the citizens of the tropical metropolis who are notoriously predisposed to sit in judgment upon the action of their fellow-men. This mattered nothing to us,—and yet it did matter, for it engendered a fellow-feeling which was the cause of wondrous kindness on our several parts.

Kindness? Why one morning as I was passing through the sun-lit music-room on my way to my breakfast down the valley, I heard a faint voice calling me. For a moment I was startled; Lady Spook was up and away by

sunrise, weather permitting, much exercise being one of her hobbies. I answered the call and discovered that the voice proceeded from my lady's chamber, and that for three days my lady had been a prisoner there, ill, attended at intervals by a maid who had come in search of her when she failed to make her punctual daily round. She would not have me aware of her condition, and had suffered me to go and come in the belief that she was absent from the hall.

There was a kind of martyr-like heroism in this that touched me profoundly, and as I strolled leisurely down the valley road I pictured to myself the life of this woman—her life from first to last—so far as I knew it; I catalogued her sterling excellencies, her numerous and rare accomplishments, and compared them with those of other women whom I knew; I then contrasted her lot with the lot of those whom I was seeing daily, and was conscious of flushing with indignation at the thought of the injustice of her fate.

Now I am a fatalist by right of birth; my Protestant ancestors, who believed in and preached predestination, were fatalists of the most fatal description. When I took into consideration the forlorn lot of this estimable

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woman, I asked myself why I should be torn up by the roots—I have always been going about with my roots in my pockets—and cast away among an isolated people; why, of all these people, it should fall to my lot to become the sole companion of a solitary whose suffering had made her solitude almost sacred?

I also was a lover of solitude, but more especially of that solitude preferred by one whose name I cannot at this moment recall, but whose sentiment I have ever fully sympathized with—“Yes, surely solitude is sweetest when there is one to whom we may say, ‘How sweet is solitude!’” Should I not say it to her? Was it not my duty to say it, just to see if it would not sweeten her solitude? This was my morning thought as I paced the valley road.

* * * * *

There is nothing more delightfully exhilarating than to tread upon delicate ground; it is fascinating to talk familiarly on subjects that are never, or rather should never be, approached without reverence, and seldom without fear. Love lights that dangerous and sublime height beneath whose shadow lies the bottomless abyss of the ridiculous.

Should I return to the hall after breakfast and talk of love to my lady? Shall I confess

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that we had already talked *at* it and all around it; that we had rent the veil which sympathy abhors and revealed our souls to one another in a rarely perfect fellowship born of long suffering shared in our seclusion? I resolved to do this without delay; indeed, I had long been thinking of it, and it was no difficult task for me to lay before her a scheme devised, as by inspiration, for the greater happiness of two souls; to warn her that the shadows of the afternoon grow longer and longer and broader and deeper every hour, and that the clock had struck twelve for us. It was easy to picture a new life for her—a new life in a new land; in a *new land*, for she must needs forget the past if she would find happiness again, and forgetfulness lay in a change of scene. I touched my canvas with an airy brush; I drew a dim outline of hazy heights beyond the sea; the umbrageous groves of that summer-land were brightened with the gorgeous plumage of the flamingo. A line was to be drawn between the future and the past, and that line was the equator. It is so easy to rub out and begin again when one has put a whole ocean between him and the shore he is to know no more.

My lady listened with the sweetest patience. There was no passion in the blood that warmed

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her heart; there was wisdom—worldly wisdom—and there was womanly sympathy, and the greatest honesty, and the fullest understanding in this most singular courtship. It progressed rather slowly, but it was surely progressing. I could read this progress in the dreamier moods of my lady, who was ordinarily not fond of dreaming; I could read it in the character of the songs she was from time to time singing, and in the sentiment of the books she chose for our entertainment of an evening or of a drowsy afternoon in the pink-and-white boudoir, where I stretched myself at ease upon the lounge, at peace with all the world.

I used to wonder why everybody could not be in love, and pitied those who were not. Surely it is not difficult? And such a rejuvenator as it is! My Lady Spook began to bloom beautifully, and, of course, all the tongues of the town were wagging again. They knew much more about the affairs of the hall, down yonder in the tropical metropolis, than we did under our low-sweeping roof by our friendly graves.

Well, it was all nicely settled for us without any effort on our part; we were to be married speedily and to sail away in a big ship,

and to begin the new life in the new land on the other side of the globe. Congratulations, coupled with insinuating smiles and glances of superior intelligence, fell daily to our lot. The I-told-you-so tribe is very numerous over yonder, and we were quite the sensation of the hour.

Then we broke up house-keeping, and there was the prettiest pang for each of us in the not very arduous task; after this my lady made her farewell calls and announced her intention of departing by the very next steamer bound for the nether world. We sent out no cards, but as we were looked upon as eccentrics, 'twas thought 'twould be quite like us to marry privately.

I held my peace; held it so well that no one presumed to disturb it. And so the steamer hove in sight and lay alongside the sweltering dock for six busy hours; and when the gong had growled its last growl, and all those who were going ashore were ordered to make haste, the friends embraced my lady, who, now quite pallid, was dissolved in tears, and the very last one to bid her God-speed and bon voyage was myself!

Perhaps the town was never quite so badly sold since the day when my lady suddenly

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married her first husband—and how I did enjoy it. You see I had been confidentially consulted on a delicate subject; she had confided to me a secret which our fellow citizens, the gossips, were in ignorance of. One who had been faithful to her memory these many years, hearing that her hand if not her heart was free once more, began a long campaign by letter. Again and again she had refused to surrender; possibly she might still have fortified herself had I not begun to plead his cause.

It was a double wooing, a wooing half by proxy. I never in my life enjoyed anything more, unless it was the look of hopeless perplexity that metamorphosed the faces of those friends with their premature farewells.

Well, that is all I have to tell of my late widow. She was mine while she was a widow, but now she is wed again and a widow no more.

Some time after her departure a fancy seized me to revisit the hall. Instinctively I turned toward the cemetery. The twilight was impending and the large stars hung like golden globes in space. I was thinking of the many times I had paced that “*via dolorosa*,” not exactly sad at heart, yet sympathetic, feeling

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myself a kind of companion of the dead who slept, and wondering always if she would be in the hall to give me welcome, or if only those ticklish tappings (no doubt the birds under the roof) would startle me in the solitude, or the owls hoot among the graves as they often used to do.

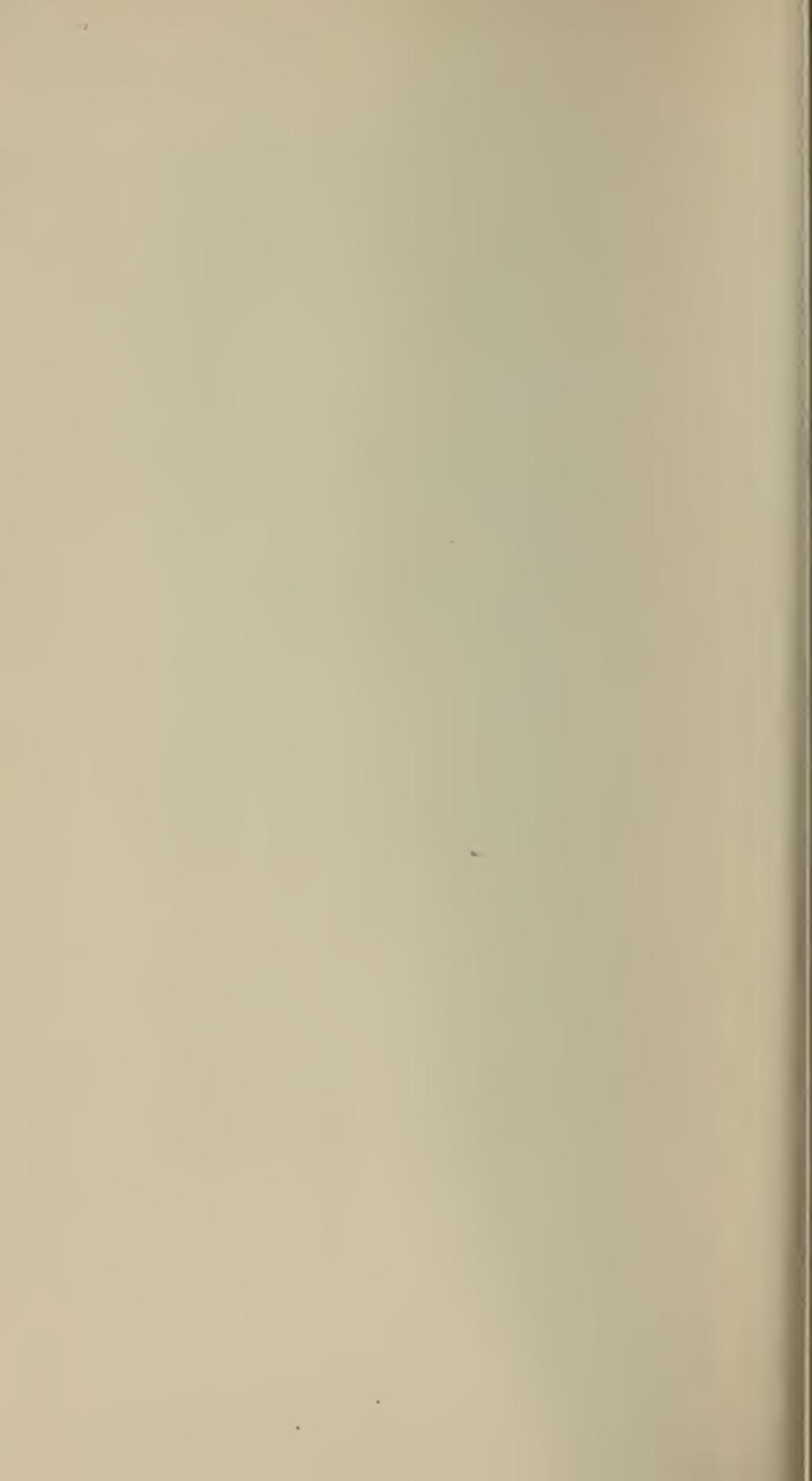
I was thinking of this, and the graves of the half-dozen suicides that were huddled under our fence; of the picturesque disorder that reigned in the jungle-like garden; the great oriental lilies that ruled among the weeds, steeped in dew and loading the air with their fetid breath; and of the roses that grew in drifts everywhere, and the luscious fruits detaching themselves and falling in fatness where they would never again by any eyes be seen. I was half-drunken with the odor of these, and I was absorbed in such tender memories when I came to our broken palings that I was startled to find myself there.

Where was the creep-hole we once found so convenient? I looked in vain for it. Lo! the luxuriant bushes, left to themselves for a little time and having their own sweet wills, had interlaced their branches and barred the way. Nature had locked the entrance to that Eden; I was no longer welcome to enter. I raised

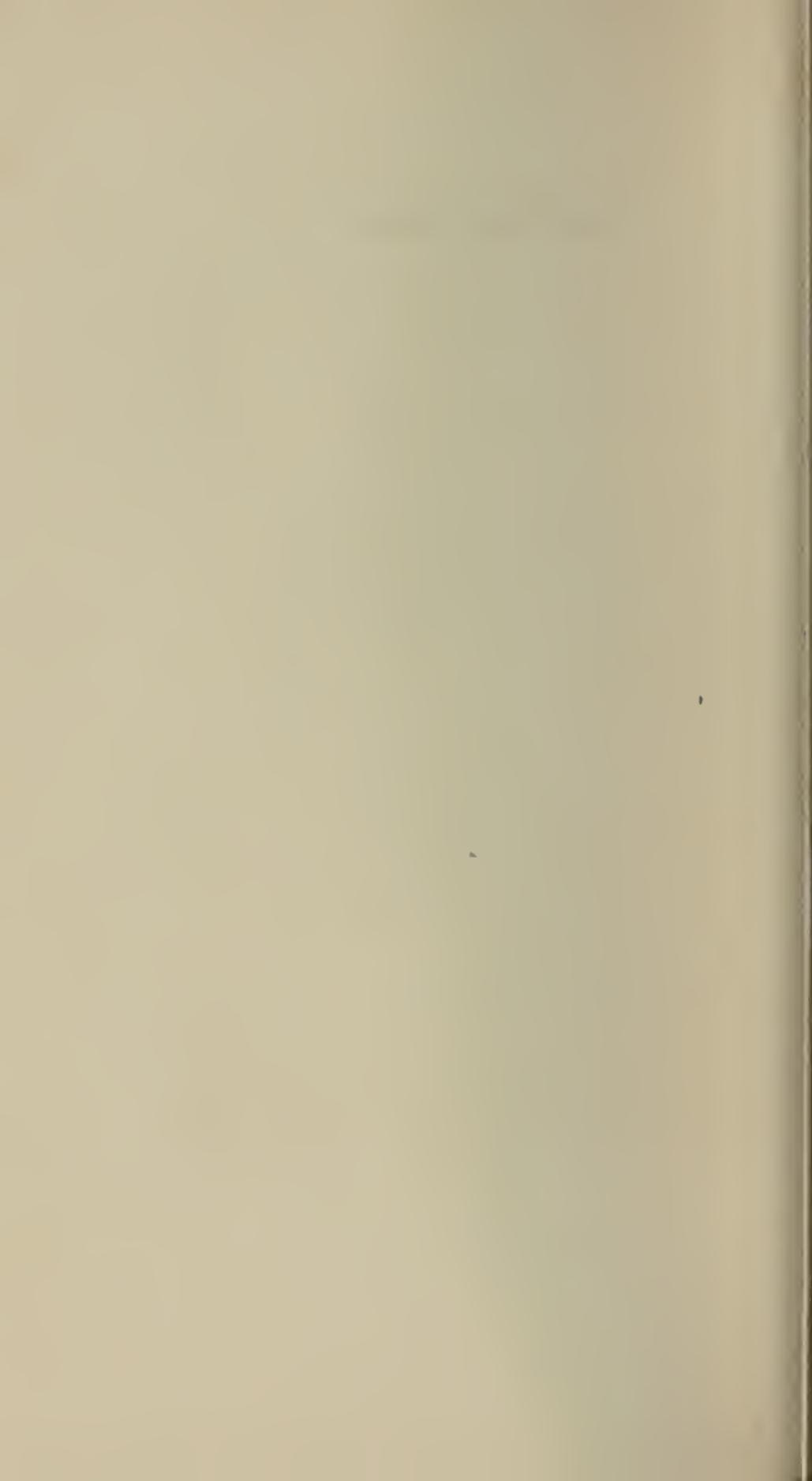
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my eyes with a vivid sense of the fitness of things, and lo! not a vestige of the hall remained. The structure had been spirited away, I know not whither. I imagined I could distinguish some traces of the foundations, now laid bare, but the rank grass was overgrowing these, and the dusk was deepening so rapidly I could no longer swear to any familiar landmark, save only the weather-stained column that towered above the dust of the original occupants of the hall.

Then I turned away and never looked upon the spot again. Indeed, I feared that if I were to search too closely I should find that there was no evidence whatever to prove that the hall and my Lady Spook and my rare association with them were not all fiction. Thus beneficent nature sometimes perfects an experience and helps the tale-teller to tell his tale.



ON THE REEF



ON THE REEF

ONCE upon a time—it was on one of those nights when without apparent reason the spirit of mortal is filled with vague unrest—I strode into the starlight and sought with a kind of desperation the least frequented paths, such as lead away out of the borders of the town toward the shadowy hills.

On such a night the superstitious note with awe the faintest articulation, and too often attribute the least sound to a preternatural cause. I remember that the hedges seemed to shudder at intervals and shadows to move noiselessly before me, while the water that trickled in the shallow stream muttered a refrain that was almost like human speech.

When I stumbled in the darkness I was vexed, and the still air, heavily charged with electricity, was irritating and aggressive.

I had got beyond the reach of voices, as I thought, and was groping in the deep shade of clustering kamani trees, when a dull murmur, like the drone of the hive, fell upon my ear. I paused to listen. The crickets were chirping bravely, the rill fell with a hollow note

into the pool below, and from far away came the solemn suspiration of the sea.

Then I saw a light dimly flickering among the branches in the path and I advanced with some caution, for I was in no mood to discover myself to any one in that seeming solitude.

A few paces distant stood a rude grass hut such as the Hawaiian formerly inhabited, but which, alas, has been suffered to fall into disuse. A door, its only aperture, stood open. Upon a broad, flat stone within the center of the hut flamed a handful of faggots, and over these bowed the withered forms of two venerable Hawaiians, who may have been the last representatives of the ancient race. They were squatted upon their lean haunches, their fleshless arms were extended, their claw-like fingers clasped above the flames. They were both nude, and the light that played about them exaggerated their wrinkles so that the face of each—I say it in all seriousness—resembled a baked apple. They were chanting in turn one of those weird *meles*, now seldom heard and soon to be utterly forgotten. Their thin voices gathered strength as they recounted the triumphs of departed heroes and the glory that has passed forever. The quiv-

ering voices were at times blended, and the ancient bards locked in a tremulous embrace; but at last, profoundly agitated, while the tears coursed their hollow cheeks, they folded their arms above their bowed foreheads, and, shaken with tremors, rocked to and fro in the fading firelight and were dumb.

They were bewailing the fate of their people—a fate that in very many respects is to be deplored. Never again can aught be made of them, for their doom is accomplished. And how? We shall see.

Years ago I sat under the eaves of a grass house which stood upon this sand-dune and looked out upon the reef as I am looking now; the afternoon was waning; the wind, that had for hours been whirling the fine sand in eddies around the corner of the house, began to fail, and the sea, with all its waves, subsided upon the reef. It was as if the little island world was about to compose itself in sleep; on the contrary, we were but beginning to recover from the inertia induced by the tireless activity of the elements.

On my lap lay the only volume I was able to discover in the vicinity, an ill-used copy of the "Evidences of Christianity." How it

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came into the possession of Pilikia, my host, I know not, but that he had found it of great service was evident. At least half of the pages had already been disposed of and the remnant—a catacomb of white ants and such other vermin as affect literature in the tropics—was sure to follow in due course.

Pilikia politely offered me this precious volume at an early stage of our acquaintance, for we were quite unable to communicate with one another, he being stone deaf and I as good as dumb in those days. The truth is, I was awaiting the return of Kane-Pihi, the man-fish, with whom I proposed to pass a night upon the reef practicing the art which had already distinguished him and had won for him the admiration and the envy of his fellow-craftsmen.

Anon I closed the volume with decision; the evidences were incomplete and I was impatient for the arrival of the man-fish, who was certainly more interesting than the antiquated specimen of humanity who sat in the corner of the hut, like an idol, and whose blue-black, weather-beaten figure-head looked as if it had been carved out of a walrus' tusk and smoked.

I arose impetuously, shook off my ennui and

strolled along the beach. There was a joyous sparkle upon the sea; little windy waves slid up the sloping sands, curled crisply and retired in a white litter of explosive bubbles; diminutive crabs rushed pell-mell before my feet; at intervals I felt the sting of the flying sand, but the heat and the burden of the day were about over and I began to lift up my heart, when, in the hollow of the shore, sheltered only by sand ridges, I saw a dark object stretched motionless at full length. Flotsam or jetsam, the prize was mine, and I hastened forward. It was a youth just out of his teens, a slim, sleek creature, unconscious, unclad, sprawled inartistically, absorbing sunshine and apparently steeped to the toes in it; it was Kane-Pihi, the man-fish, stark asleep.

Retiring a little distance, I tossed a pebble upon his motionless body; then another and another, and finally a whole handful of them. At last he turned, with a serpentine movement, lifting his head like a lizard, swaying it slowly to and fro and looking listlessly upon the sand and the sea. When he espied me he coiled his limbs under him and was convulsed with riotous laughter.

I approached him and exhausted my vocabulary in five minutes, but I learned meanwhile

that the fellow had been lying there on the hot sand in the blazing sun for a good portion of the day, and that now he was ready to eat. Two things on earth were necessary to the existence of this superior animal—to eat and to sleep; but for pleasure and profit, for life and all that makes it livable and lovable, the man-fish sought the waters under the earth. He was amphibious.

Pilikia—born to trouble, as his name implies, and like all who are never out of it living to the age of the prophets—Pilikia still sat in his corner when we returned to the grass house, but upon the appearance of Kane-Pihi, the apple of his eye, the child of his old age, peradventure, his face changed suddenly, as if about to weep. This simulation of tearless agony was his method of showing joy. The range of facial expression had grown limited with him and he now seemed to be gradually assuming the fixed, blank stare of the dead. Pilikia crawled out of his obscurity and we all gathered about a calabash of *poi* in the door of the hut as the sun shot suddenly into the sea.

Kane-Pihi began to awaken as the twilight deepened; his eyes—he had bronze eyes, that were opaque in the sunshine—grew limpid and

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lustrous; he began to search the wave as if he could pluck from it the heart of its mystery. Perhaps he could; perhaps its color and texture imparted to him secrets unknown to us. Now and again he sang to himself fragments of *meles* that sounded like invocations and added sacredness to an hour exquisitely beautiful and pathetic.

The sea advanced and retreated noiselessly along the shelving sand; each wavelet, unrolling like a scroll, told its separate story and was withdrawn into the deep. For a moment the shore was glossed where the waters had passed over it, but this varnish immediately grew clouded, like a mirror that has been breathed upon, and then vanished, leaving only a dark shadow in the moist sand. Long, luminous bars lay upon the more distant water, and beyond these the rough edges of the reef, now exposed to the air, were lightly powdered with filmy and prismatic spray. It was dark when we set forth in Kane-Pihi's canoe. Pilikia, who also revived under the beneficent influence of the stars, followed us to the water's edge and even made a feint of aiding us in the launch of our canoe. Our course lay down the coast, within the reef. We might easily have waded throughout the

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length and breadth of the lagoon but for the shoals of sharp coral and the jagged hills among them, of which I knew nothing, though each coral prong was familiar to the man-fish, it having been his chief end to chart every inch of the lagoon at an early stage in his career.

Oh, heavenly night! We floated upon an element that seemed a denser atmosphere; this delicious air was like the spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters. We were both silent, for the earth and sea were silent, but now and again we heard a "glug" under our bow, where a bewildered fish had swum into the air by mistake and dived back in dismay.

The mysterious voyage filled me with a kind of awe, such as a surprised soul might feel after sudden death, upon finding itself propelled slowly across the Styx by an almost invisible Charon. In this mood we rounded the lagoon, and lo, the sea radiant with flaming torches and peopled by a race of shadowy fishers—bronzed, naked, statuesque! The superb spectacle inspired Kane-Pihi; with an exclamation of delight he plunged his paddle into the water and a half dozen vigorous strokes brought us where he was at once recognized

and received with every demonstration of affection.

In the charmed circle all things were transformed; the earth and the very stars were forgotten; the sea was like wine, ripples of perfume played upon its surface; the torches above it were imaged in the water below, where the coral glowed resplendently and the bewildered fish darted to their doom in basket-nets or at the point of the glancing spear. The fishers were for the most part dumb as statues; with a thousand exquisite poses they searched the luminous depths for the fleet prey that shone like momentary sunbeams and were as speedily captured and transferred to their canoes. In this graceful art the women, costumed like fabled sea-nymphs, were as skillful as the men, and even when we had drifted in the shallows, and they, descending into the sea, were wandering apart each with a torch in one hand, a net in the other and a sack hanging upon the hip, they were as fearless and as active as the best man among them. But this kind of fishing was mere child's play in the eyes of Kane-Pihi and only the diversion of a night.

Hour after hour the flotilla dazzled upon the tideless lagoon; it was only when the

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waters seemed to have been robbed of their last vestige of finny life that we separated and soared like meteors into outer darkness. Then I became conscious of fatigue, and throwing myself upon a mat in the corner of Pilikia's grass house I slept while Kane-Pihi sang into the dawn.

In those days a barren plain, relieved here and there by stretches of salt-marsh land, lay between the fishing grounds and the seaport. It was seldom that Kane-Pihi entered the town. A gentle savage, whose childhood had been passed upon the shore of the least civilized of the islands of the group, his unconventional life had scarcely fitted him for anything so confining as a pavement or a trim garden spot, hedged or fenced about in individual exclusiveness.

He had lounged in the fish market, where his fame had preceded him, but the clamoring crowd soon drove him forth, and when he had sat for an hour in silent contemplation of the street traffic, he strode soberly back to the hut on the sand dunes and dreamed away the disgust with which such method and industry invariably inspired him.

We sat together one morning looking far off upon the town and far off upon the sea in

comfortable idleness. We had hoped for a change in the spirit of our dream and it came presently, for it was observed that a school of fish was making for the shore. In an instant several canoes were slid into the water and a dozen excited natives went in hot pursuit of the spoil.

Before the day of dynamite, deep-sea fishing was an art in which few excelled, but with Kane-Pihi it was a specialty, and when we had weathered the breakers and were out upon the swell beyond the reef, he dropped a handful of bait into the water and watched it as it slowly sank; then he cautiously climbed out of the canoe and with fearless resignation sank after it. It was as if he were braving all the laws of nature—as if he were defying death itself.

Breathlessly I watched him as he sank feet foremost into the depths; I saw his motionless body slowly descending, growing dimmer in outline all the while; I saw the fish circling suspiciously about him, attracted by the bait, which they were greedily devouring, and evidently filled with curiosity as to the nature of the man-fish in their midst, who, like a corpse, was fading in the horrible obscurity of the sea; then, at the moment when it seemed that

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life must have deserted him, with a sudden lunge he buried a knife in the body of a huge fish and rose like a water-wraith out of the waves. It was the work of a moment only, but it seemed to me an age since I had seen the sea close over him.

Several times he repeated the act successfully, and it became difficult to see through the blood-stained water, but by moving the canoes cautiously from point to point, we still kept within reach of the shoal and avoided the crimson cloud that marked the scene of Kane-Pihi's recent marine combat. A highly successful catch was the reward of his prowess, and with our canoe well laden, we headed for the shore.

Those who were watching us from the beach must have lost sight of us at intervals as we rose and sank upon the rollers. Sometimes the comber that broke between us and the land looked like a precipitated avalanche of snow, and the mass behind us swelled and burst, darting forward with an impetuosity that threatened the destruction of our frail craft. But into the wilderness of this tumultuous sea it was Kane-Pihi's intention to venture, and through the midst of it lay our perilous course. With a paddle that was never at rest, we

hovered upon the outer edges of the reef, hastening over the brow of a billow before it broke, for it was only upon the bosom of one of these monsters that we could hope for safety, and *the* one had not yet arrived. Like a bird's pinion, the paddle held us poised—suspended in mid-air, I had almost written—until, with an impulse which was an inspiration, Kane-Pihi plowed the sea with swift, impetuous strokes. I felt the canoe leap forward before a wave that seemed rising to overwhelm us; we rose with it, on the inner slope of it, just out of reach of the torrent of foam that hissed and roared behind us. How we sped onward in that mad chase! The very canoe seemed instilled with life; nervous tremors seized it; it was almost as if some invisible power were about to sweep it from under us; so fast it fled over the oily slope of the huge wave, at the top of which tumbled a world of foam—and thus, with hardly so much as a stroke of the paddle, after we were well settled on the down grade, we sprang like a flying-fish into the tranquil waters of the lagoon and then turned to one another with a half-gasp, as if we had been delivered from sudden death.

This was the life of the man-fish; if he had been upset in the breakers he would have

come to shore none the worse for it, but my blood would have stained the reef for a moment and my bones found coral sepulture.

Thus he played with the elements—having not so much vanity as a child, nor so much wisdom either, though he was weather wise, knew all about the moods of the wind and waves, could do everything but shape them—and there I left him to sleep away the hot hours in the hot sun and sand; to eat when he listed and wait upon the turning of the tides, or the advent of those fishy episodes that were events in his life; a perfectly constituted creature, whose highest ambition he could himself satisfy at almost any moment; who, I venture to affirm, never did harm to any one, and who unquestionably was, in his line, a complete and unqualified success—in brief, a perfect human animal, who was doing in his own way and in his own good time what he could towards destroying the last vestiges of the “Evidences of Christianity.”

In revisiting an inconsiderable community nothing is more natural than for one to pick up the threads where they were dropped and then seek to work out the story of the lives of those with whom he has been associated in

former years, and in this wise I was busy enough for some weeks upon my return to Honolulu.

I soon began to familiarize myself with all that had transpired in the intervening decade, and was making lazy pilgrimages to various points of interest, when it occurred to me that the prison was still unvisited.

In the delectable kingdom of which I write the law-breakers in former times were condemned to a period of servitude upon the reef. There, at low water, they hewed out the coral blocks, of which many of the early buildings were constructed, and to this day a convict is spoken of as being "on the reef," although coral has given place to brick and stone and timber, and the reef is comparatively deserted.

At once, or as nearly on the instant as one ever gets in an easy-going land, I made application at the gate of the neatest, coziest, cleanest and most cheerful House of Correction in the world. In form and color only is it outwardly severe, and even this is the kind of severity affected by those suburban residents who build angular, gray monuments of masonry and inhabit them in an uncomfortably mediæval frame of mind. It stands upon a coral ridge and is almost surrounded by fish-

ponds, mud-flats and salt-marshes. It is approached by a well-kept, but unsheltered, coral-dusted drive, that glares in the sunshine and moonlight as if to magnify the shadow of him who is being led away captive, or to cast a glory about the feet of the one who is set free. I knocked with a knocker surmounted by a British lion in bronze; the gate was immediately opened by a native guard in a dark uniform, who, like all natives in dark uniforms, looked exceedingly stuffy and uncomfortable. I asked leave to enter. He seemed to think I had done him a favor and honor in calling upon such a very warm day and at once waved me gracefully across a court that was as trim and complete as a modern stage setting for an act in a society drama. There was, I confess, a superfluity of very neat stonework in wall and pavement; but there were flower plots quite like stage flower plots and a moderate perspective which seemed heightened by exaggerated fore-shortening, all of which was so obviously evident to the naked eye.

Other guards, perched in picturesque nooks and corners, smiled a welcome as I advanced. The original stuffed one, who had backed mechanically into his little sentry-box out of the

sun, was also smiling, and smiling very broadly for a man on serious duty.

Might I come in and inspect the prison? Assuredly. Would I only be good enough to look at everything, see everybody, go everywhere and then graciously inscribe my name in the finest of visitors' books, with the very whitest of paper and a very brave array of signatures? I went in and out, up and down, over and across and back again. The valley of Rasselas could not have been more peaceful than was the inner court of that island jail, with its spreading kamani tree in the midst thereof. The keeper apologized for the smallness of his family at the moment; he begged to assure me that there were more than I found present; that the house was always full; those whom I saw were the lame, the halt and the blind; the able-bodied were all out at work on the road, clad in garments of two colors—half and half, like a chorus in *Boccaccio*—at the expense of the amiable Government.

If those of the infirmary, sunning themselves in the court, were so merry, what must be the state of the able-bodied, thought I. I had seen detachments of them at their work—work which they evidently did not take to

heart, but, on the contrary, regarded in the light of a somewhat tedious joke.

While I was absorbed in the legends of the local museum, illustrated with celebrated shackles, bits of hangman's rope, blood-stained implements of destruction and a whole rogue's gallery of interesting criminals, there was a sound of revelry, and lo! the prisoners who had had their outing were returning joyously to this haven of rest, and some of them without a keeper. Chief among the Ishmaelish crew was one who wore his prison garb jauntily, who betrayed a tendency to good-natured bravado and who kept his fellows on a roar. The Warden presently claimed my attention and told me something of the prisoner's history. He had been reared among a primitive people; was superstitious, ingenuous, confiding; knew little or nothing of foreign ways and manners and cared little to hear of them. The simplicity of his life assured his perpetual happiness, but of course there was no hope of his development—he must forever remain contented with his lot and perish like the beast of the field, if nature were to take her course; but nature was not permitted to take her course; she seldom, or never, is nowadays.

An itinerant evangelist arrived in Honolulu

and began his work. The Hawaiian is nothing if not emotional. You may rouse him to the pitch of frenzy, and he will subside without having achieved anything more than a thrill; but the thrill is very much to him and is worth striving for. The natives became as wax in the presence of this magnetic exhorter. Prayer meetings were held night and day. There was a corner in New Testaments and hymn-books. Prophets—whether true or false you will decide for yourselves—arose in numbers, and the Scriptures were very freely interpreted. Yet, if out of the mouths of babes and sucklings cometh forth wisdom, it may be that these dark ones were wiser in that day than the children of light. Natives were gathering from far and near, attracted by the rumors which surcharged the atmosphere and by the “messenger of the lord,” who ran to and fro gathering the lost sheep into the fold of Kaumakapili. This youth who, while we discussed him, was regaling the prisoners in the courtyard with a *hula-hula*, was finally seduced into the town and ultimately into the fold.

Kaumakapili, whatever may be said of its evasive order of architecture, has a reputation established beyond question, and the evening

meetings held in that trysting-place are ever popular with the young. Hither came this child of nature, and here, listening to the experiences most eloquently detailed of those who had turned from the error of their ways and found salvation under the eaves of Kauhakapili, he in his turn repented—of what it is not easy to conjecture—and was baptized in the name of the eternal Trinity.

It is my belief that the native modesty of the Hawaiians, and of all unclad races, is extinguished the moment they are slipped under cover. They put on vice as a garment and with knowledge comes the desire for evil; so when this youth got into foreign clothing he straightway began to backslide. He picked up bits of English, grew sharp at a bargain, learned to lie a little when necessary, and to cheat now and again. He took that which was not his, not because he meant to defraud the owner of it, but because he needed it himself, and finding it in his way laid hands on it. This he used to do before he knew it was a sin, and in those days he expected you to take of his possessions in like manner according to your need, but now there was a new pleasure in doing it; the excitement of secrecy added an interest to the act which he had

never known until this hour. God pity him! Many and various experiences sharpened the convert's wits, and he became one of the cleverest boys in town—one on whom its mild-eyed constabulary bent loving glances; but his career was shortened for having shattered one of the commandments—the only one of the ten whose number shall be nameless—he was arrested, tried, convicted, and was now serving out his time with charming abandon. His story touched me, though it was not without parallel in the kingdom. There, indeed, it is an oft-told tale.

We descended into the courtyard, where the young rascal was beguiling his fellows, and I saw—I had suspected it—that he was none other than my young friend of yore completely transformed by civilization—in other words, Kane-Pihi, the man-fish, out of his element. We had a few moments' conversation; these few were sufficient to convince me that his case was hopeless. He could never again return to the life to which he was born and in which it seemed that he could do no guile; for those with whom he was associated were as guileless as he, and they were alike subject to no temptations and no snares; but he must now go on to the bitter end, for he had eaten

of the tree of knowledge and fallen in its shade.

As for the ancient Pilikia, it was *pau pilikia* with him; his troubles were over. When he saw the fate of his idol and that no pleading and no incantation could bring the lad to his right mind, the old man turned his face to the wall and gave up the ghost; he tasted death and found it sweeter than the new life which had defrauded him of his own. The boy spoke of it as a matter of course; all who live must die, and, Heaven knows, as the boy implied, he had lived long enough; and with this he returned to the dance.

The chains of the jail birds rang gayly over the battlements as I bade farewell to the keeper and the kept. Among the latter are several of the graduates of Lahainaluna, the Protestant Theological Seminary of the kingdom. The little sentinel showed me out, full of pride and good cheer and swelling bravely in his stuffed jacket; and the key clanked musically in the big lock as I set my face toward town. It is said that this prison is the despair of the rising generation; that those who are turned from it pine until they once more enjoy its inexpensive hospitality; for

here the merriest and the mildest people in the world are prisoners.

Courage, my children! If you can only be naughty enough you, too, in the course of time, shall inherit the penitentiary.

Again I look upon the reef, but now from a hillslope skirted by a belt of perennial verdure; between us a vein of water, the pulse of the sea, throbs languidly. The reef, an amber shoal, seems to rise and float twice in the four and twenty hours—as the tide falls—and to slowly subside meanwhile, until much of it is submerged, but there is always a visible strip of rank green grass, and upon it is perched a cluster of low whitewashed hovels just above highwater mark—the whited sepulchers of the lazaretto.

It is possible to drive through the shallows that ripple between the reef and the mainland when the tide is out. Indeed, one may wade through it then without much difficulty, but the lazaretto is zealously guarded when pestilence has filled it with tenants, and it is rare indeed that any one succeeds in escaping from this desolate, wind-swept strand. They are pretty enough when seen from shore, these small white hovels, and especially so when,

looking from a distant hilltop, one sees the sun launch from a rent cloud his golden bolts upon them, or a rainbow precipitates its curved torrent in their midst, flooding them with prismatic splendor. The reef, or rather that part of the reef—for it is all one, though a ship may pass through the cleft in it at long intervals—seems like a phantom island to most of us, for there are times when it has well-nigh disappeared and when even the little huts are almost obscured by dark cloud-shadows, and then again it shines in glory and the silver surf beyond it leaps against a wall of sapphire, and the sands glisten like refined gold.

It was during my third visit to the Hawaiian capital when, having looked off upon the reef night and morning, and at midday and moonlight, from a serene height, I grew to know it as a theme capable of infinite variation; a kind of poem to which every day, and almost every hour, added a new stanza; a picture that was always complete, though never finished.

About this time it was publicly announced that a great *luau* would be given at the lazaretto, the occasion being the anniversary of the staying of the plague. Now there is no absolute necessity for the introduction of smallpox into the Hawaiian kingdom; among the natives

the measles are sufficiently destructive; but the smallpox has appeared and desolated the people more than once. In such cases it is hard to segregate the victims, for love is stronger than death, and too often the seeds of death are nourished in the bosom of love. But a year or more before my third visit, by persistent energy the authorities gathered some hundreds of natives, and not a few foreigners, upon the reef, and of these no small proportion perished, and the bodies of the natives were interred in the sand. I think of that sad season when I look upon the reef of an evening and behold the watch-fires of the quarantine twinkling across the sea, and when, by daylight, the sequestered coolies swarm like ants upon the sand, yearning, no doubt, as souls in purgatory, for the heavenly hills which we inhabit.

In common with the masses, I crossed the ford on the day appointed and joined them at the *luau* on the reef. A temporary *lanai*, or marquee, had been erected for the feast; the feast is the foundation of a *luau*. Musicians were there and *hula* dancers, for without these no *luau* is worthy of the name.

There was eating, overmuch of it, and temperate drinking and music almost incessantly. Many of the songs were composed for the oc-

casion. The improvisatori were chanting the requiems for the dead, the eulogies on the living and in each case stirring the hearts of the listeners to pathetic raptures.

Long *meles* in praise of those who imperiled their lives for the sake of the suffering ones were droned to the dolorous accompaniment of mourners vociferously wailing among the tombs. It was when the foreign element, drawn thither by curiosity, had returned to town—when the sun had sunk into the golden flood and the rich twilight was melting into darkness—that the natives began to abandon themselves to those rites which we call heathen, and which, though forbidden by Christian law and to some extent obsolete, still sway them irresistibly in their more emotional moods. It was the *hula-hula* that alone satisfied them, and rhythmical refrains from a mythology that defies translation, and mysterious invocations to the unforgotten gods. Call it orgy if you will; there was in it an expression of feeling, momentary it may be, but nevertheless profound; a display of emotion that was contagious. The ecstasies of the dancers mingled strangely with the agonies of the bereaved, and when the music and dancing had finally ceased and the sea seemed to have parted to

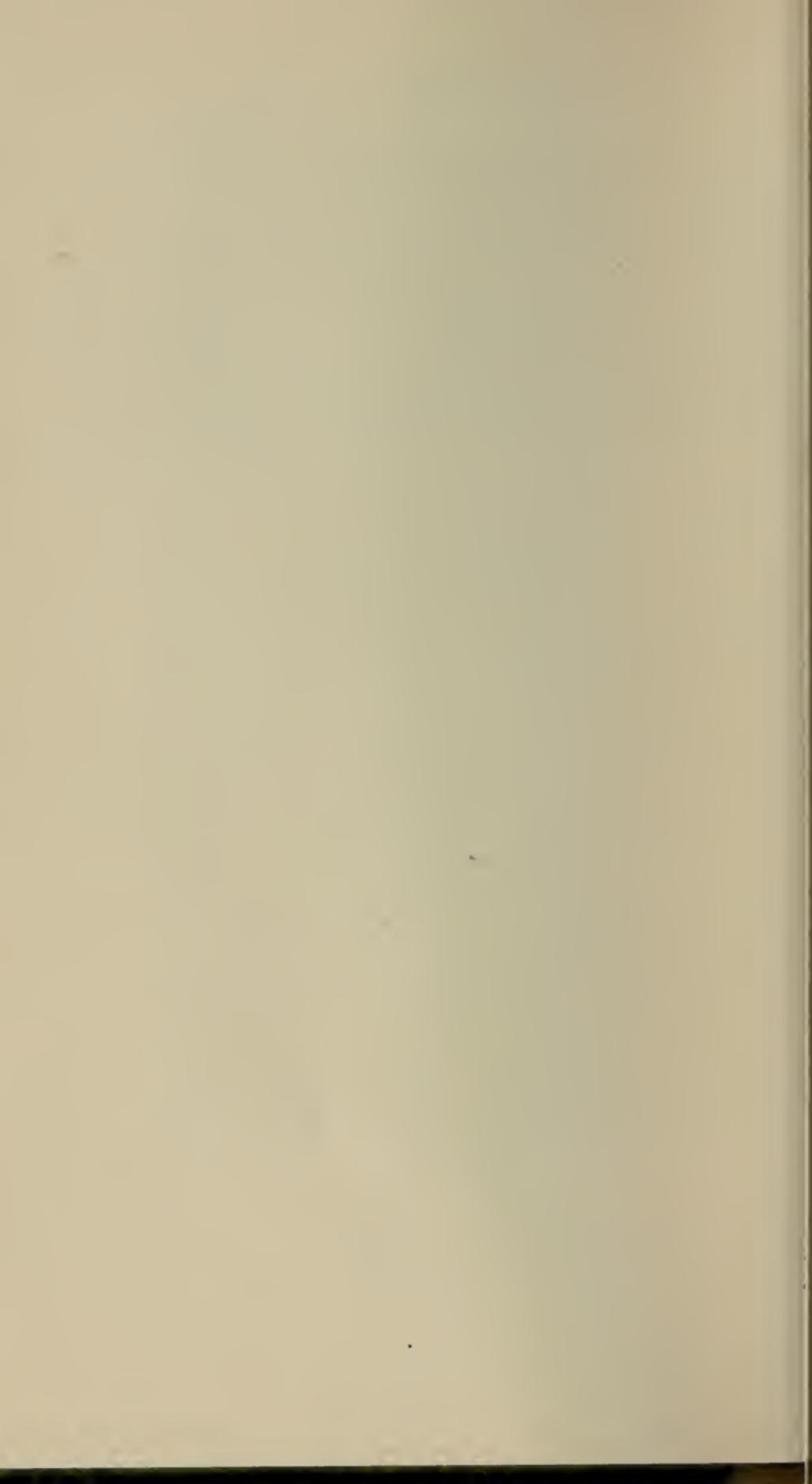
let the multitude pass dry shod to the shore, there were those who lingered yet among the lonely graves, their foreheads prone upon the sand, their hearts broken, and their throats hoarse with the howl of despair. Among these were some who came to weep for one who had passed too rapidly from the simplicity of the savage to the duplicity of civilized man. I had known him in his prime and in his degeneracy, and now I knew that somewhere among the bleaching, seawashed sands lay the bones of Kane-Pihi, who early fell a victim to the scourge.

Nothing was more natural than that he should absorb the seeds of disease, for caution is unknown of his race and he would not be likely to desert a comrade in affliction. He took the smallpox with avidity and never for a moment, so I am credibly informed, thought of letting it go again. Fatalism was the foundation of his faith and not all the Scriptures in Christendom could rob him of one jot or tittle of it. He could enjoy the religious diversions at Kaumakapili, and distinguish himself in the afterglow of the periodical revival; he could abandon his birthright of health, happiness and wholesome liberty for the shams which were offered him in their stead; he

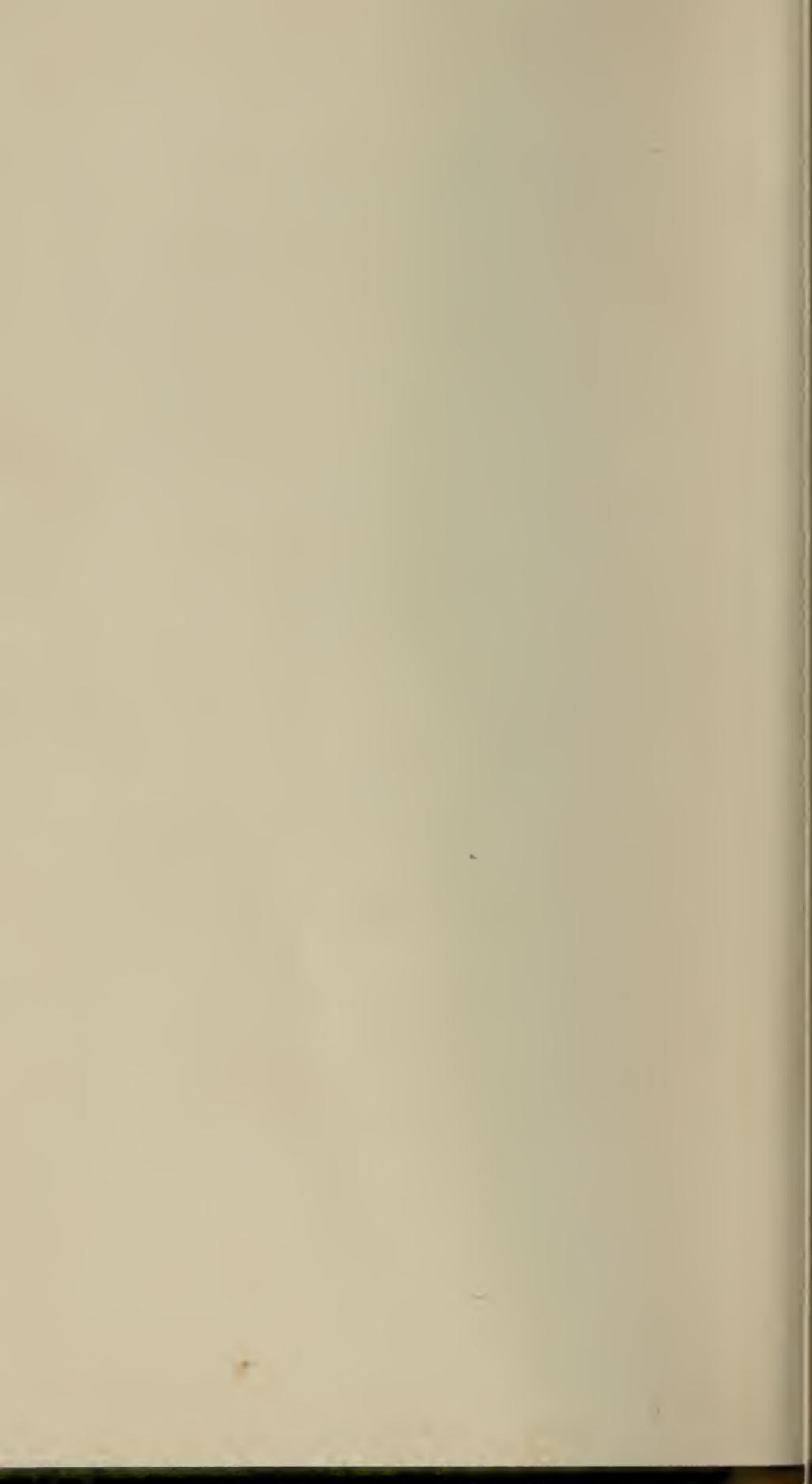
could play fast and loose, false and true with the best of them, for this art is easily acquired by the ingenious, and once acquired is never again forgotten or neglected; but he could not survive the great change—the change of heart, the change of diet and of air and water and all the elements, and he went to his death like a bird in a snare without so much as a hope of rescue. It chanced to be the smallpox that finished him; had it not been this doubtless it would shortly have been something else as unpremeditated. The *luau*—the feast,—was perhaps not entirely appropriate, it is true; it may never recur on that lonely slip of sand, and if it should the bones of the dead will have been ground to powder in the pitiless mills of the sea; yet it cannot be said of him that he perished unwept, unhonored and unsung, and there is some satisfaction in that. It was only the smallpox, but it was enough; I don't note the fact as being one of the evidences of Christianity as applied to the Hawaiian race, though for the most part Puritanism touches them like a frost. The epidemic merely precipitated the inevitable climax. One has only to glance at a comparative table of the census during the last three score years, or to take the dimensions of the numerous and now al-

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most vacant Protestant churches scattered through the length and the breadth of the land to draw a conclusion by no means flattering to any Board of Missions. Having spied the gentlest of savages out of the lonely sea for the purpose of teaching them how to die, the American Missionary calmly folds his hands over the grave of the nation and turns his attention to affairs more private and peculiar.



PLANTATION DAYS



PLANTATION DAYS

TO sail over placid seas in sight of my summer islands; to lie off and on before the mouths of valleys that I have loved, where, in my youth, I have been in ecstasy; but never again to set foot on shore, or to know whether it be reality or a dream—this is the dance my imagination leads me; this is the prelude to many an unrecorded souvenir.

Why did I ever leave a land so paradisiacal? It grew too hot for me down in the tropics; everything I cared for withered, and all the juices within me simmered away; so in a moment of temporary sanity, I fled. But my heart, the vagabond, returns again to the green pastures of its youth, which reminds me:

It was not yet day when the inter-island steamer from Honolulu, bound to the most windward of the Hawaiian Islands, came to anchor at Makena, a port that looks very much as if a bite had been taken out of a not very appetizing sea-coast; but it is a port not to be despised in rough weather, for here the wind is tempered, and the sea during the prevalence of the strong trade winds is far quieter than at Maalaea, a few miles over the stern rail.

THE ISLAND OF TRANQUIL DELIGHTS

Here at Makena, under a fringe of the forlornest palms conceivable, I debarked. Being an expected guest, I found a saddle-horse awaiting me in charge of an amiable guide, and without delay we began the ascent of Haleakala, the gigantic extinct crater, the largest in the world, beyond which the sun is hidden for two hours after he has begun his course. That is why the poetical aborigines have called the crater, Haleakala,—the house of the sun,—as if he rose literally from it, or out of it.

With a cluck and a light touch of the spur, we dashed forward. Three rather dreary miles stretched between us and the haven of hospitality at "Rose Ranch," two thousand feet above, and the day broke gloriously as we toiled up the slope through a wilderness of colossal cacti. Need I add, that the dust rose long before the sun did, while our animal spirits and our not very spirited animals flagged beautifully in concert.

Courage! There was the restfullest kind of rest and the most refreshing refreshment ahead of us. The top end of the trail launched one into a deliciously cool atmosphere,—a lung-bath full of healing,—and from that semi-sublime elevation one looked back upon

the earth and the sea in the superior mood that usually succeeds any difficulty well surmounted.

Sparkling with the dew of the morning, Ulupalakua emerged as if by enchantment from a sea of clouds. Ulupalakua,—ripe breadfruit for the gods,—was not thy mellifluously flowing, polytheistical, pictorial—not to say spectacular,—denomination as goodly a morsel upon the tongue as “Rose Ranch?” Bread-fruits were there in the olden days, rare-ripe for the gods, and no doubt they were as acceptable as the roses that came in with the Christians, and the mosquitoes and all the other vermin to which civilization is the undisputed heir.

It was a ripe, bread-fruity, and god-like morning when I first beheld Ulupalakua emerging from her maze of clouds. What clouds they were! Sometimes they overshadowed her like a great downy wing; sometimes, but not often, they took possession of her, and her high-hanging garden was drenched with fog. But her air is always of the purest, her mists of the whitest description, and her bowers breathe a delicate odor, the fragrance of which varies according to the floral calendar of the year.

THE ISLAND OF TRANQUIL DELIGHTS

The hearty and homelike welcome at the gate was followed by a substantial breakfast, as soon as I had been given time to shake off the dust of travel; and then by easy stages was I suffered to drift on from one tranquil delight to another; those delights, somehow, growing more and more tranquil, but none the less delightful as they multiplied.

I write of Halcyonian Hawaii, of the days that are no more, and have not been for a very long time. In my mind's eye is a vision typical of the period, one peculiar to the western slope of Haleakala, even in those days of royal hospitality; one never again to be known in that degenerated territory. This is what I see:

The long table in the long, long dining hall, stretched to its utmost and filled with naval guests. The host who through the somewhat formal dinner has wielded the carver with unruffled composure, albeit a very magnificent Admiral is enthroned on his right hand—the host is heartily commended when the viands are removed, and the cloth displayed in all its original purity. It is the Admiral who calls attention to his host's skill; of course the Admiral's suit echoes the Admiral, and the

applause which has become general heightens the color in the cheek of the carver.

I believe we have no guest on this occasion less distinguished than the companions of the wardroom, but the never to be forgotten mid-dies have a brief outing and a banquet somewhat later in the week.

Now the Admiral, being both on shore and on very good terms with himself, wishes to stake his ship—at anchor in the harbor of Makena just under the mountain—that the Captain-host at Ulupalakua is qualified to carve a peacock at a Roman feast; in fact, to carve a peacock among magnificent signors—here the Admiral's forefinger tapped lightly upon the Admiral's brow—such as had “their pheasants drenched with ambergris; and the carcasses of three fat wethers bruised for gravy to make sauce for a single peacock!”

A responsive chorus of approval from the guests at table, a double broadside as it were, follows this gallant speech, with its fine, old-school quotation.

It is now the Captain's turn, and with the smile that flatters its author and lends him the air of one peering from giddy heights, he replies complacently enough:—

“Gentlemen, the birds you have just eaten—were peacocks!”

By this time, wine and cigars being in order, the whole company turns with enthusiasm upon the host, and for awhile the conversation takes on a pronounced peacock tinge.

“By the by,” says the Admiral, with a drawl and an eyeglass that silence every tongue,—“I believe I have never seen a peacock with his tail spread, unless he were on a screen, or upon the title page of a polka!” If this is a surprising concession on the part of a naval dignitary, it is likewise a reproof for the bird.

“We have musters of them here,” adds the Captain, still reveling in his smile; “pray satisfy yourself that the tail is not a fable.”

With this he leads the way to a long row of *mauka*-windows, and there upon the up-sloping lawn—for *mauka*, in soft Hawaiian, means toward the mountain—there a score of the foolish fowls are strutting in the pomp of their splendid plumage. It is as if the Great Mogul had sent an embassy to treat with us; or, as if an Arabian night had suddenly turned into day. Huge feathery disks are shimmering in the sun, now near its setting: the silken rustle of agitated plumage,

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the indignant rivalry, the amazing pomposity, the arrogance and conceit of the silly birds, whose bosoms are aglow with phosphorescent beauty, draw shouts of admiration and astonishment from the bewildered guests. Is it a sunburst, or a feast of fuss and feathers? The clashing of the imperious rivals begins to be alarming. Heaven knows what might have happened but for the timely appearance of a pet dog upon the scene, when, with a shriek of dismay, the whole muster takes wing, filling the air with discordant cries.

As I recall the Ulupalakua of that period, it seems to me that everything pertaining to plantation life was done upon an impressive scale. At the time I write of, the ladies of the family, numbering a half-dozen or more, were at the roomy town house in Honolulu, or at the Coast—as California is familiarly styled. The Captain had left the capital to escort the Admiral to Makena and do the honors of the plantation, while the flagship lay in port.

Ulupalakua hospitality began as soon as a foot was set on shore. There were “cattle” enough at command to horse a company of cavalry, and to stay the stomachs of a British regiment with the traditional roast. The

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slaughter under axe and saddle was bloody—for Jack Tar is a merciless rider and has a salt air appetite—yet the flocks and herds seemed never to decrease upon the hills.

The homestead was open wide at all times and seasons. It was a one-storied, rambling mother-house, with many wings and angles; about it were clustered numerous cottages of various dimensions—such cozy cottages as bachelors delight in—each quite independent of the others, and having a leafy screen and an atmosphere of its own. At night every chamber of every house was lighted, so that the bounteous garden in the midst of the settlement was suffused with the glow of good cheer.

On the plateau above the garden was the billiard-hall, and some little distance beyond it,—though not so far away but in the still afternoon a muffled peal on peal was faintly audible even in the select silence of the private chapel—stretched the long bowling alley. Between billiards and bowls lay the elysian fields, a tennis court of velvety perfection.

Probably business preceded pleasure, even at Ulupalakua, but it took precedence with such modest grace that the latter seemed the more honored. Everywhere one saw evidences

of practical activity, for method was the Captain's mania; but over all, especially in guest-time, pleasure played like a smile. Cart-wheels groaned to the music of ballad singing drivers; and the steam whistle down at the sugar mill was hardly more pronounced than the matutinal crash of ten-pins.

I can see them now, the blue jackets off duty, improving the shining hours with an earnestness that might put a bee to the blush; for between the side-board and the siesta, time flew with the speed of a six-winged seraph and shed no feather in his flight.

The ladies were indeed absent on the auspicious occasion above referred to, and it were folly to say that they were not regretted; but in this picturesque period a household like the one under consideration seemed almost to take care of itself. Ulupalakua was originally the best exemplification of the patriarchal system in the whole kingdom; a system that came in with the American Missionaries, and has now become one of the fond traditions of Island life. From the veriest child that was destined to grow up and probably end his days on the plantation, to the old fellow who passed his declining years upon the lawn, with a low camp-stool and a pair of scissors, clipping the

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grass blades as they grew from day to day, and his antiquated wife whose sole duty was to shoo the peacocks at intervals, the various members of the community looked upon the Captain's word as absolute. The innumerable plantation hands were like members of one family; you could have ordered almost anyone within sight to do your bidding, and it was done as a matter of course.

The fourth of July was the great holiday of the year, for the spirit of liberty is catching. As the Captain was a staunch American, the stars and stripes floated from the flag-staffs before the homestead and the plantation office, and from the peak of a private packet that plied between the ports of Makena and Honolulu. She was a trim schooner yacht that was in no wise afraid to try her speed with the old inter-island steamer, the *Kilauea* in any sort of weather, save only a dead calm. But let me not cast a reproach upon the memory of the *Kilauea*; she is said to have whetted her keel upon every reef in those treacherous waters; and when, after long years of faithful service, she was condemned, it required the aid of powder to dismember her; yet if the prayers of the wicked—the uncomfortable passengers—could avail aught,

she would probably have gone to the bottom at a much earlier period in her career.

O happy past! What a blessing it is that pleasant memories are immortal!

When the young ladies were at the homestead, and the guest chambers unoccupied—it sometimes so happened even at Ulupalakua—there came a cry from the garden, a pitiful and despairing cry—“Oh, sister, do you see a dust?” Then the sister, two or three of her, probably, responded from the housetop “No!” Or perhaps the marine glass was turned upon the far distant horizon seeking for a sail—“No sail from day to day.” Only once a week was there hope of the mail gladdening us; news from the outer world in that dim age came at such uncertain intervals, that all business was suspended when it did arrive, until the thrice welcome letters were read and re-read and reluctantly laid away for innumerable re-re-readings.

When the sisters came down from the housetop, having abandoned the seas in despair, the piano was played more wildly; the balls shot madly from their spheres in the billiard hall; the tennis court grew positively perilous; sometimes, in desperation, the *ennuyées* dashed over the hills at break-neck speed on the backs

of saddleless broncos that were but half broken, from start to finish.

Yet the Navy was not so shy of us in those days: there was nearly always a glimmer of brass buttons in the tableaux of social life. Ah, me! Many a youthful mariner, beautiful in broadcloth, gorgeous in gold lace, and surcharged with those graceful accomplishments that are forever associated with the aspiring off-shoots of Annapolis, found his way as if by instinct into the rose-garden of Ulupalakua; the shadows of the kamani avenue were known to him, and in the *kukui* grove, under the lee of Puumahoe, he has left his heart firmly imbedded in the impressionable bark of some love-nourishing tree. If he has not, it is because he was not up to the high-water mark of the Navy.

When the social resources of the place were exhausted, and not till then, was the Admiral of the peacock episode permitted to honorably withdraw from the siege of Ulupalakua. Meanwhile Jack-tar had been relishing his barbecued beef down at Makena-by-the-sea, and had not had half a bad time, though the port is undoubtedly a dull one between meals.

The sun had set nightly with great *éclat*—a sunset was one of the features of our enter-

tainment. The magnolias had filled their alabaster bowls with moonlight of the first quality—moonlight that ran over and flooded the whole island. Hawaiian singers had sung themselves hoarse under the verandas o' nights. The clouds had come down—they had not far to come—and put a damper on the season of festivity. It was evidently about time for the Admiral to steam back to the capital if he would escape a threatening gale and that he did one morning, taking his host along with him as a souvenir of his very jolly experience.

Then followed a season of reaction and convalescence, during which I was quite alone in my glory the greater part of the day. Transient guests, making the tour of the island, dropped in upon us and dropped out again without causing so much as a ripple on the peaceful surface of life's stream. The latch-string hung within the reach of every one, and I regret to add, even in the halcyonian age this gracious hospitality was sometimes abused.

As for myself, a favored guest at all times, I had books without number—many of them choice ones, such as one even nowadays may occasionally stumble upon among the private libraries scattered throughout the kingdom.

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Then there was the piano in the parlor, a choice one; another in the school-room, where one could indulge his taste for melodious calisthenics; an organ in the chapel, and a collection of portable instruments scattered about the place. There were romantic trails to be tracked only in the saddle—on saddle horses and in saddles of every possible description. There was pigeon-shooting in the cavern, half way down the mountain slope—but the birds were much too tame for sport, and we seldom fluttered them.

A cattle drive was one of the more exciting pastimes, and in this all joined with enthusiasm—even the ladies sometimes amazoned our party. If you desire, Oh reader! to witch the world with noble horsemanship, let me see how you manage a mustang during a stampede in those vast orchards of prickly-pear, and I will answer for your chances in the game of witchery.

Wild cattle stand not upon the order of their going, and they are as nimble though not as light-footed as goats when they once get started for the jungle where they vanish in a cloud of dust. Though the cactus is like a rack full of reversed pin-cushions—never was there a more formidable chevaux de frise

—yet the cattle plunge among them with fearless abandon and even munch barbed thorns with amazing relish.

Ah, me! but my season of solitude was a rare delight, and the frequent *divertissement* a never-failing source of refreshment. From books, moused out of a deep, dark closet, where they had been stored and long since forgotten,—old books, with freckled pages and a faint musty odor that I found positively intoxicating,—to the bowling alley, was the giddy flight I took when so disposed.

It was a unique game of ten-pins I was wont to play in those days. Small natives swarmed like bees whenever I went abroad; and you see I was the one *haoli*—or foreigner—who had unlimited leisure, and they knew not at what moment it might suit my fancy to embark upon some erratic expedition such as they delighted in. At a moment's notice I could command a troop of horse worthy of an outlaw chief. If I retired to the billiard hall to amuse myself with the light and airy cue, the windows and doors commanding the four sides of the table were certain to be darkened with a cloud of witnesses—but I am forgetting the ten-pins.

There was a small kanaka for every pin, and

one for each ball; these in some mysterious way hung upon the wall at the far and fatal end of the bowling alley, at the imminent peril of life and limb. Whenever I made a ten strike, which I swear I did occasionally, it was invariably received with a deafening round of cheers—not omitting the “tiger”: but still I was not happy, for I always feared to find the alley, after the atmosphere had cleared a little, strewn with Hawaiian slain.

Many and various changes have taken place since my first visit to Ulupalakua. Then the summer breezes sighed in the white plumed cane fields as the busy ox carts were laboring up and down the winding road from dawn to dusk. There was a whole village—full of plantation hands—a kind of happy-family-village, peopled with mixed races whose nationalities ranged from Japan almost to the Antarctic, and lapped clean round the world.

Cane-planting was the Captain's business, but tree planting was his pleasure. I know not how many thousand saplings were rooted under his very eyes—many of them he set out with his own hands. There were acres and acres of choice cuttings; they crowned the hill-tops and filled the beds of valleys not otherwise engaged. He watched their growth with

ceaseless and loving care. We used to ride among the shrubs when they were scarcely up to our stirrups, and he would talk of his plans for the future; not those plans that had to do with the sugar market, or were in any way material or sordid, but only such as fed his fancy and aided him to picture the magnificent estate that was his delightful hobby as it would appear in after years.

In his mind's eye he saw a tropical garden in the midst of Alpine groves, upon a plateau possessing singular climatic advantages, and commanding breadths of earth, sea, and sky—a panorama of marvelous variety and beauty. Comparative isolation was in this instance a blessing. Had it been advisable, the Captain could at any moment block his highways with sharpshooters, read the Declaration of Independence, and look down serenely upon the little kingdom that swam and sweltered below him. His people were loyal to a man and this spirit of loyalty was easily warmed to enthusiasm; sentiment is one of the prominent characteristics of the Hawaiian race and there is something in the soft atmosphere of these favored islands,—the melting humidity, the permeating fragrance, the sensuous warmth, and the surprising beauty bursting at inter-

vals upon the enraptured vision, that nourishes the voluptuous element in our nature, and encourages an easy inclination to sentimentality.

There were natives in the Captain's employ whose parents were born on the premises, and whose children are likely to pass their lives there. Though the Hawaiian has acquired a taste for travel, he is passionately attached to his native heath, and formerly he was easily content to dwell at home and let the world go by. At Ulupalakua there was a venerable coolie—the tyrant of the kitchen, but fondly indulgent when the little ones appeared—who had served the Captain's family faithfully for thirty years; when his master died he redoubled his devotion to his mistress; but when her body also was borne to the family mausoleum on the hill overhanging the sea, he threw himself upon his cot and never again left it alive.

These are traditions of the past; one does but dream of them nowadays. The modern servant is a hireling, a mercenary fellow with an eye single to his sole advantage. Moreover the entertainer's wits are sharpened, his heart is hardened, and doubtless for good and sufficient reasons. Often he was imposed upon

in the old days when the veriest stranger was welcomed with a cordiality worthy of an angelic guest. Now there are public lodgings to be obtained for hire on most of the thoroughfares, and calculating Caucasians ready to serve one with the best the provincial market affords, at a price just within the bounds of reason.

Rose Ranch has ever been a paradise in the imaginations of those who were beginning to succumb under the monotonous, high temperature of the lowlands. They dream of nights in which woolen blankets, and several of them, are indispensable to comfort; and of evenings when, at some seasons of the year, a blazing hearth is the chief attraction of the place; they think of days that dawn in another zone, as it were, where temperate fruits are ruddy-ing and ripening; yet from under the shadow of those olive boughs the eye of contemplation kindles at the vision of glowing sands, by glittering, silver sea, where palm groves nod and quiver in the heat—and then they weep with longing.

The startling notes of unfamiliar birds are heard there at intervals, for the forests are haunted by the shy progeny of the imported songsters who are for the most part too home-

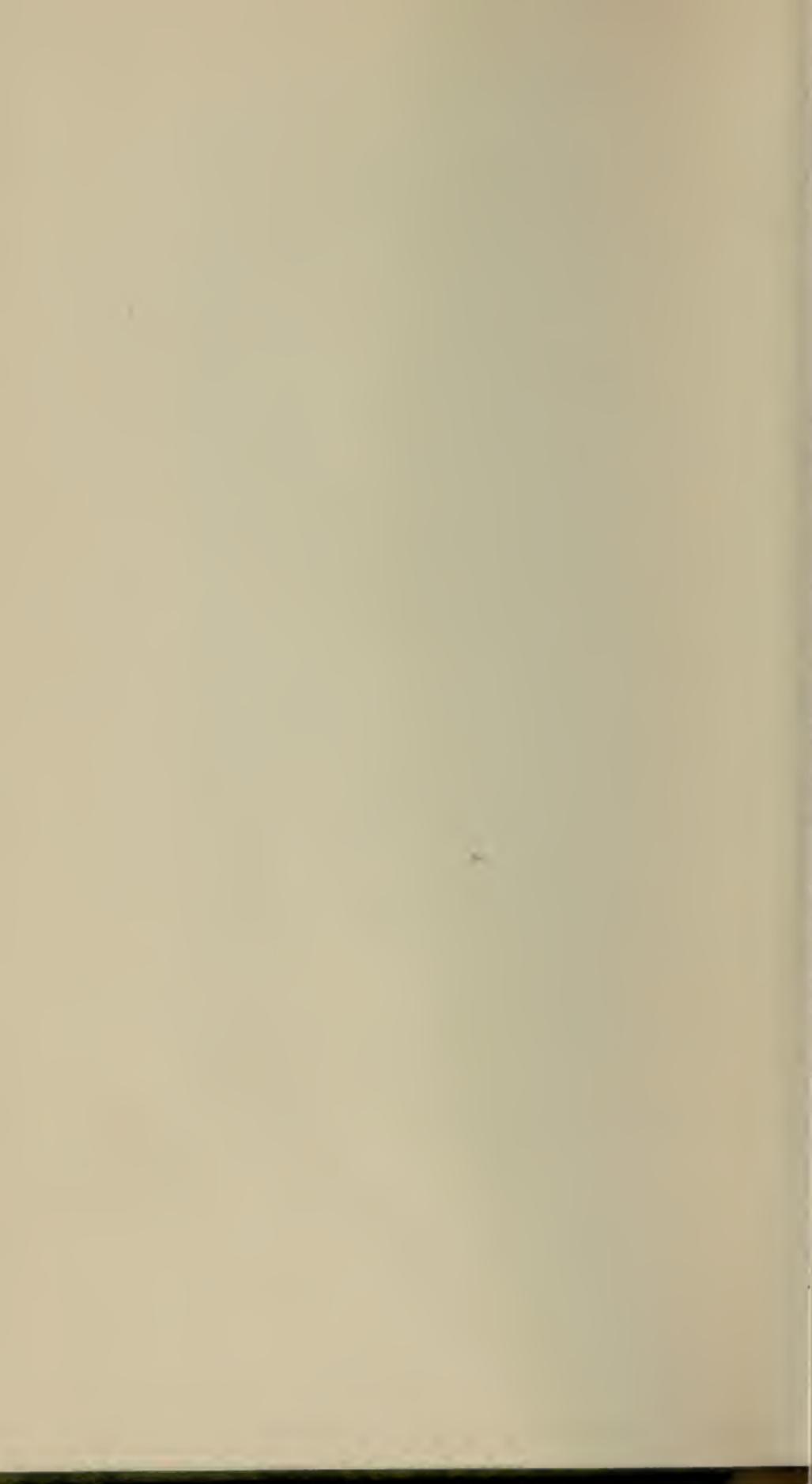
sick to sing. Once in a while a paroquet flutters in the edge of the garden, but the green solitudes farther up the heights afford superior attractions. Even the mynah, that feathered bohemian of the far East, finds the groves of Honolulu a fitter field for his gipsyism, and Ulupalakua resounds to the trumpet blast of the peacock; but for these highly decorative birds, that troop in hundreds over the abundant acres, the quiet of the Rose Ranch of today would take on a somber tinge; for the sound of the grinding is low, and the herds that abound there, if they have not a thousand hills to feed upon, have yet ample room in which to wander and browse, and they are for the most part out of sight and sound.

The bowling alley long since was blown down in a gale, and its forgotten *débris* lies buried under moss and creepers, awaiting the enterprising pick of some future archæologist. Tennis survives, and is likely to be perpetuated; a game in which feminine grace and masculine agility are striving for victory, while the looker-on has only to approve with equal fervor and discrimination, is sure of honorable mention while youth and beauty disport upon the lawn.

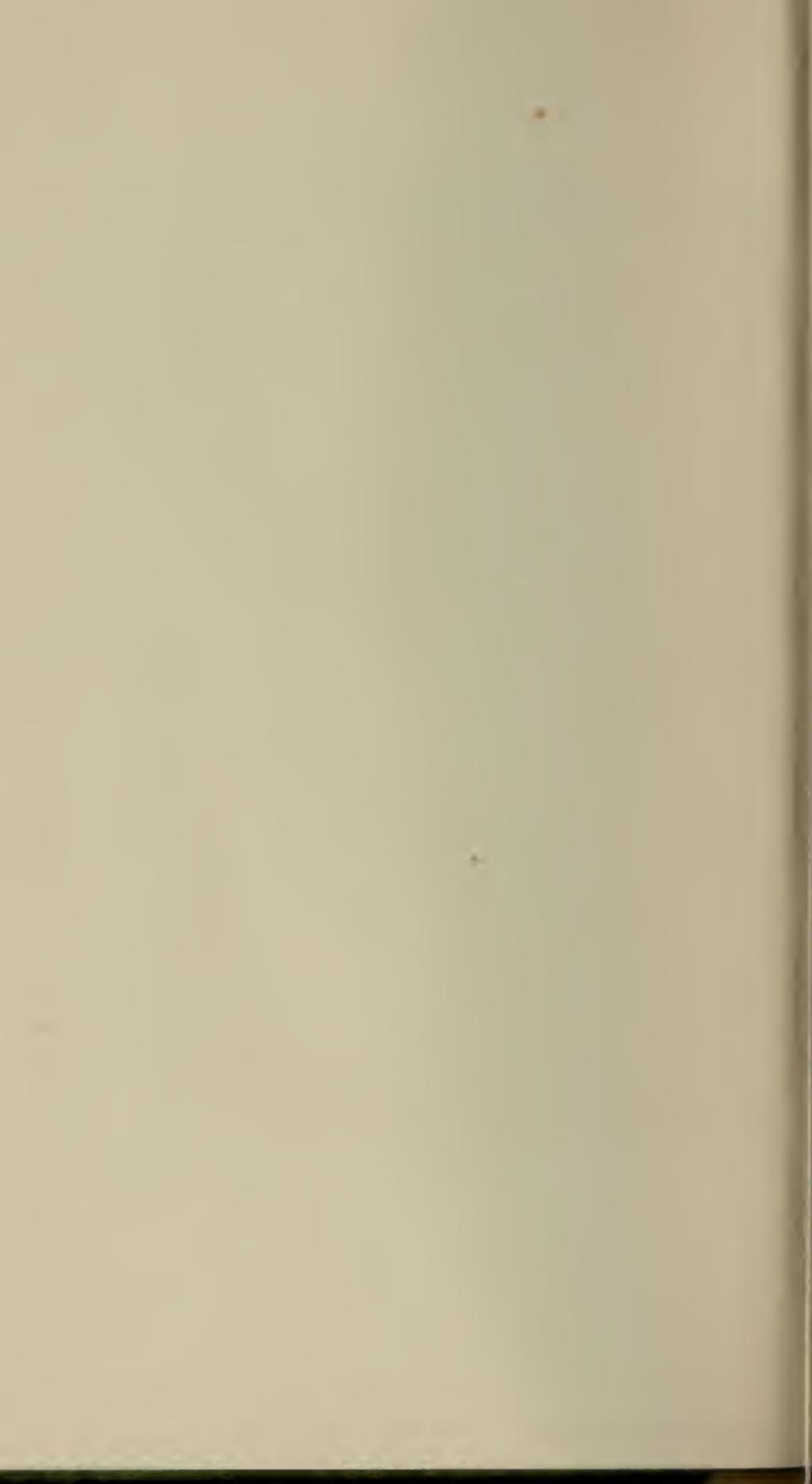
Prospect Hill, which was a nursery when

the Captain and I used to climb it, is now a wood worthy to be called umbrageous; while the row of solemn cypresses, the funereal urns and the sad paths that surround the mausoleum, forcibly remind one of the terraces in a Florentine villa.

Yet this is not a melancholy spot, even for those who remember the gayeties of the past; and if I dwell more upon the soft cadence of the evening breeze, the caress of drooping boughs, and the silent showers of rose petals in the unvisited arbor, than upon the jollity of the season, it is because these are characteristic of Ulupalakua in repose, a repose singularly grateful to a disquieted soul. And these charms will lead one ever to think of the place and to speak of it very much in the spirit of Peter Martyr, who thus wrote long ago of the queen's garden in the Antilles:—"Never was any noisome animal found there, nor yet any ravaging four-footed beast, nor lion, nor bear, nor fierce tigers, nor crafty foxes, nor devouring wolves, but all things blessed and fortunate."



THE DRAMA IN DREAMLAND



THE DRAMA IN DREAMLAND

IT is from the seaward window of the United States Legation in Honolulu that I have of late cast a pathetic eye. The "tear of sympathy" may not flow as freely in recent literature as was its custom in the age of more reverent readers and writers; but there is something in the forlorn beauty of the wilderness over against the Legation that conjures the obsolete globule above referred to, and I shed it fearlessly and not without reason.

Upon the diagonal corner of the street stands the new hall of the Young Men's Christian Association, smelling of bricks and mortar; over the way is a tenement where plain board and lodging entice the stranger under a disguise of fresh paint;—these are both innovations necessary, no doubt, to the requirements of a progressive age; but the occasion of my present solicitude is a vacant corner lot, trimly fenced, wherein two rows of once stately palms now struggle with decay and the parasites that fatten on them.

It is a weird garden, where Flora and Thespis once held friendly rivalry. What a jumble of botanical *débris* and histrionic rubbish now

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litters the arena flanked by forlorn palms! Out of it all I doubt if the sentimental scavenger would be able to pick any relic more substantial than the airy dagger of Macbeth; but upon points so slight as this hang imperishable memories; hence follow these reminiscences of the late Royal Hawaiian Theater.

Well nigh two score of years ago I was lounging at Whitney's bookstore in Honolulu; it was at that time a kind of Hawaiian Forum, with a postoffice on one side of the room and a semaphore on the roof. It was dull work in those days, waiting for the gaunt arms of the semiphore to swing about, uttering its cabalistical prophecies. No steamers then to stain the brilliant sky with trailing smoke; the mail-days depended entirely upon the state of the wind and the tide.

I was weary of fumbling the shop-worn books, of listening or trying not to listen to the roar of the rollers on the reef; woefully weary of the tepid monotony that offered not even an excuse for irritation.

Upon this mood entered a slender but well-proportioned gentleman, clad in white duck raiment, spotless and well starched; there was something about him which would have caused the casual observer to give him a second glance

—a mannerism and an air that distinguished him. A professional, probably, thought I; an eccentric, undoubtedly. I was not surprised when, upon the entrance of a common friend a few moments later, I was made acquainted with Mr. Proteus, proprietor and manager of the Royal Hawaiian Theater; likewise government botanist and professor of many branches of art both sacred and profane. Mr. Proteus bowed somewhat in the manner of a French dancing-master, and shuddered slightly upon being shaken by the hand; at a later date he requested me never to repeat a formality which he could not but consider quite unnecessary in general and in particular cases highly objectionable.

After having cautiously exchanged a few languid commonplaces, Mr. Proteus invited me to visit his Temple of the Muses. Nothing could have pleased me better. I regarded him as a godsend, and we at once repaired to the theater, threading the blazing streets together under a huge green-lined umbrella of dazzling whiteness, held jauntily by my new-found friend.

I like theaters; I dote on dingy tinsel and stucco which in a flash of light is transformed into brilliant beauty; and the odor, the un-

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mistakable odor, of stale foot-lights and thick coats of distemper; the suggestive confusion of flats and wings and flies; the picturesque bric-a-brac of the property-room; the trap-doors, the slides, the grooves, the stuffy dressing-rooms, and the stray play-bills pasted here and there in memory of gala nights in the past. Of all the theaters that I have known, this was the most theatrical, because the most unreal; it was like a make-believe theater, wherein everything was done for the fun of it; a kind of child's toy theater grown up, and full of grown-up players, who, by an enchantment which was the sole right of this house, became like children the moment they set foot upon that stage; and there, people and players were as happy and careless as children should be so long as one stone of that play-house stood upon another.

We turned into Alakea Street a pastoral lane in those days; the grass was parted down the middle of it by a trail of dust; strange trees waved blossoming branches over us. I looked up: in the midst of a beautiful garden stood a quaint, old-fashioned building; but for its surroundings I might easily have mistaken it for a primitive, puritanical, New England village meeting-house; long windows, of

the kind that slide down into a third of their natural height, were opened to the breeze; great dragon-flies sailed in and out at leisure.

The theater fronted upon a street more traveled and more pretentious than the one we entered, and from that street a flight of steps led to a door which might have opened into the choir-loft if this had really been a meeting-house; but as it was nothing of the sort, the door at the top of the stairs admitted you without a moment's notice to the dress circle; bees and butterflies lounged about it; every winged thing had the *entrée* of this delightful establishment.

With Proteus I approached the stage door; tufts of long grass trailed over the three broad wooden steps that led to the mysterious portal; luxuriant creepers festooned the casement; small lizards, shining with metallic luster, slid into convenient crevices as we drew near. A faint delicious fragrance was wafted from the garden, where a native lad with spouting hose in hand was showering a broad-leaved plant, upon which the falling water boomed like a drum; it was the only sound that broke the soothing silence.

Proteus produced a key, and with a flourish applied it to the lock; the door swung in upon

the stage—no dingy and irregular passage intervened—the cozy stage flooded with sunshine, from which the mimic scenes had been swept back against the wall, and the space filled to the proscenium with trapeze, rings, bars, and spring-boards; in brief, the theater had been transformed into a gymnasium between two dramatic seasons.

The body of the house was in its normal condition—the pit filled with rude benches; a piano stood under the foot-lights—it usually comprised the orchestra; thin partitions, about shoulder high, separated the two ends of the dress-circle, and the spaces were known as boxes. A half-dozen real kings and queens had witnessed the lives and deaths of player-kings and queens from these queer little cubby-holes.

Folding doors thrown wide open in the rear of the stage admitted us to the green-room—a pretty parlor well furnished with bachelor comforts. The large center-table was covered with a rich Turkish tapestry; on it stood an antique astral lamp with a depressed globe and a tall, slender stem; handsome mirrors, resting upon carved and gilded consoles, extended to the ceiling; statuettes and vases were placed before them; lounges, Chinese reclining-chairs

and ottomans encumbered the floor; a valuable oil-painting, which had a look of age, hung over the piano; on the latter stood two deep, bell-shaped globes of glass that protected wax tapers from the tropical drafts; a double window, which was ever open to the trade-wind was thickly screened by vines. On one side of this exceptional green-room—it was in reality the boudoir of the erratic Proteus—was a curtained arch, and within it the sleeping apartment of him who had for years made the theater his home. On the other side of the room was a bath supplied with a flowing stream of fresh, cool mountain water; these compartments were in their turn the dressing rooms of leading man and lady. Beneath the stage were all the kitchen wares that heart or stomach could desire. And thus was the drama nourished in Dreamland before the antipodes had lost their savour.

Proteus was an extremist in all things, capable of likes and dislikes as violent as they were sudden and unaccountable; we became fast friends at once, and it was my custom to lounge under the window in the green-room hour after hour, while he talked of the vicissitudes in his extraordinary career, or related episodes in the dramatic history of his house

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—a history which dated back to 1848; some of these were romantic, some humorous or grotesque, but all were alike of interest to me.

Honolulu has long been visited by musical and dramatic celebrities, for they are of a nomadic tribe. As early as 1850, Steve Massett—"Jeems Pipes of Pipesville"—was concertizing here, and again in 1878. In 1855 Kate Hayes gave concerts at three dollars per ticket; Lola Montez and Madame Ristori have visited this capital, but not professionally. In 1852 Edwin Booth played in that very theater, and for a time lived in it, after the manner of Proteus; among those who have followed him are Charles Mathews, Herr Bandmann, Walter Montgomery, Madame Marie Duret, Signor and Signora Bianchi, Signor Orlandini, Madame Agatha States, Madame Eliza Biscaccianti, Madame Josephine d'Ormy, J. C. Williamson and Maggie Moore, Professor Anderson, "The Wizard of the North," Madame Anna Bishop in 1857 and 1868, Ilma di Murska, the Carrandinis, the Zavistowskis, Charlie Backus, Joe Murphy, Billy Emerson, etc. As for panoramas, magicians, glass-blowers, and the like, their number and variety are confounding.

The experiences of these clever people while

here must have been a delight to most of them; though the professional who touches for a few hours or a few days only at this tropical oasis in the sea-desert on his way to or from Australia will hardly realize the sentimental sadness of those who have gone down into the Pacific to astonish the natives, and have found it no easy task to get over the reef again at the close of a disastrous season. The hospitality of the hospitable people is not always equal to such an emergency; but there are those who have returned again to Dreamland, and who have longed for it ever since they first discovered that play-acting is not all work—in one theater, at least.

That marvelously young old man, the late Charles Mathews, who certainly had a right to be world-weary if any one has, out of the fullness of his heart wrote the following on his famous tour of the world in 1873-74:

“At Honolulu, one of the loveliest little spots upon earth”—he was fresh from the gorgeous East when he wrote that—from the Indies, luminous in honor of the visit of the Prince of Wales—“I acted one night by command and in the presence of His Majesty Kamehameha V., King of the Sandwich Islands—not Hoky Poky Wanky Fum, as er-

ronously reported; and a memorable night it was.

“I found the theater—to use a technical expression—crammed to suffocation, which means very full; though, from the state of the thermometer on this occasion, suffocation wasn’t so incorrect a description as usual.

“A really elegant-looking audience; tickets ten shillings each, evening dresses, uniforms of every cut and country; chiefesses and ladies of every tinge in dresses of every color; flowers and jewels in profusion, satin play-bills, fans going, windows and doors all open, an outside staircase leading straight into the dress-circle, without check-taker or money-taker.

“Kanakan women in the garden below selling bananas and peanuts by the glare of flaming torches on a sultry, tropical moonlight night.

“The whole thing was like nothing but a midsummer night’s dream.

“And was it nothing to see a whole pit full of Kanakas, black, brown, and whity-brown, till lately cannibals, showing their teeth, and enjoying ‘Patter *versus* Clatter’ as much as a few years ago they would have enjoyed the roasting of a missionary or the baking of a baby?

“It was certainly a page in one’s life never to be forgotten.”

Let me add that Mr. Mathews is more amusing than authentic; cannibalism is unknown in the annals of the Hawaiian kingdom; if there has been any human roasting done in this domain, it has been done since the arrival of the American missionaries.

That little play-house was in its day thronged by audiences attracted by very dissimilar entertainments; anything from five acts and a prologue of melo-drama to a troupe of trained poodles was sure to transform the grassy lane into a bazaar of fruit-sellers, and the box-office under the stairs into a bedlam of chattering natives. One heard almost as well outside as within the building; the high windows were down from the top, because air was precious and scarce; banana leaves fluttered like cambric curtains before them! if a familiar air was struck upon the piano in the orchestra, the Kanakas lying in the grass under the garden fence took up the refrain and hummed it softly and sweetly; the music ceased, the play began, the listeners in the street, seeing no part of the stage—little, in fact, save the lamp-light streaming through the waving banana leaves—busied themselves

with talk; they buzzed like swarming bees, they laughed like careless children, they echoed the applause of the spectators, and amused themselves mightily. Meanwhile, the royal family was enjoying the play in the most natural and unpretentious fashion. Perhaps it was an abbreviated version of a Shakesperian tragedy primitively played by a limited company; or it may have been the garden scene from "Romeo and Juliet," wherein Juliet leaned from a balcony embowered with palms and ferns transplanted from the garden for this night only, and making a picture of surpassing loveliness.

Everybody in that house knew everybody else; a solitary stranger would have been at once discovered and scrutinized. It was like a social gathering, where, indeed, "carriages may be ordered at 10:30;" but most of the participants walked home. Who would not have walked home through streets that are like garden paths very much exaggerated; where the melodious Kanaka seeks in vain to out-sing the tireless cricket, and both of them are overcome by the lugubrious double-bass of the sea?

But to Proteus once more: When social dinners ceased to attract, when the boarding-

house grew tedious and the Chinese restaurant became a burden, he repaired to the cool basement under the stage, a kind of culinary laboratory, such as amateurs in cookery delight in, and there he prepared the daintiest dishes; he and I often partook of them in Crusoe-like seclusion. Could anything be jollier? Sweetmeats and semi-solitude, and the Kanaka with his sprinkler to turn on a tropical shower at the shortest notice. This youth was a shining example of the ingenuousness of his race; he had orders to water the plants at certain hours daily; and one day we found him in the garden under an umbrella, playing the hose in opposition to a heavy rain-storm. His fidelity established him permanently in his master's favor.

Many strange characters found shelter under that roof: Thespian waifs thrown upon the mosquito shore, who, perhaps, rested for a time, and then set sail again; prodigal circus boys, disabled and useless, deserted by their fellows, here bided their time; basking in the hot sunshine, feeding on the locusts and wild honey of idleness, they at last, falling in with some troupe of strolling athletes, have dashed again into the glittering ring with new life, a new name, and a new blaze of spangles; the

sadness of many a twilight in Honolulu has been intensified by the melancholy picking of the banjo in the hands of some dejected minstrel who was coral-stranded as it were. All these conditions touched us similarly. Reclining in the restful silence of that room, it was our wont to philosophize over glasses of lemonade—nothing stronger than this, for Proteus was of singularly temperate appetites; and there I learned much of those whom I knew not personally, and saw much of some whom I might elsewhere have never met.

One day he said to me: "You like music; come with me and you shall hear such as is not often heard." We passed down the pretty lane upon which the stage door opened, and approached the sea; almost upon the edge of it, and within sound of the ripples that lapped lazily the coral frontage of the esplanade, we turned into a bakery and inquired for the baker's lady. She was momentarily expected. We were shown into an upper room scantily furnished, and from a frail balcony, that looked unable to support us, we watched the coming of a portly female in a short frock, whose gait was masculine, and her tastes likewise, for she was smoking a large and handsomely colored meerschaum; a huge dog, drip-

ping sea water at every step, walked demurely by her side. Recognizing Proteus, who stood somewhat in fear of her, for she was bulky and boisterous, she hailed him with a shout of welcome that might have been heard a block away.

This was Madame Josephine d'Ormy, whose operatic career began—in America—long ago in Castle Garden, and ended disastrously in San Francisco. Her adventures by land and sea—she was once shipwrecked—will not be dwelt on here. Enough that she laid aside her pipe, saluted Proteus with an emphasis that raised him a full foot from the floor, and learning that I was from San Francisco, she embraced me with emotion; she could not speak of that city without sobbing. Placing herself at an instrument—it looked like an aboriginal melodeon, the legs of which were so feeble that the body of it was lashed with hempen cord to rings screwed into the floor—she sang, out of a heart that seemed utterly broken, a song that was like the cry of a lost soul.

Tears jetted from her eyes and splashed upon her ample bosom; the instrument quaked under her vigorous pumping of the pedals; it was a question whether to laugh or to weep

—a hysterical moment—but the case she speedily settled by burying her face in her apron and trumpeting sonorously; upon which, bursting into a hilarious ditty, she reiterated with hoarse “ha, ha’s,” that ended in shrieks of merriment, “We’ll laugh the blues away!”—and we did.

This extraordinary woman, whose voice, in spite of years of dissipation, had even to the end a charm of its own, came to her death in San Francisco at the hands of a brute who was living upon the wages she drew from playing the piano in an underground beer hall.

Then there was Madame Marie Duret, who, having outlived the popularity of her once famous “Jack Sheppard,” would doubtless have ended her days in Dreamland chaperoning the amateurs, and probably braving the footlights herself at intervals, for she was well preserved. But alas! there was a flaw in the amenities, and she fled to worse luck. She went to California, fighting poverty and paralysis with an energy and good nature for which she was scarcely rewarded. A mere handful of friends, and most of those recent ones, saw her decently interred.

And mad, marvelous Walter Montgomery, with his sensational suicide in the first quar-

ter of a honeymoon. He used to ride a prancing horse in Honolulu, a horse that was a whole circus in itself, and scatter handfuls of small coin to and fro just for the fun of seeing the little natives scramble for it.

And Madame Biscaccianti—poor soul! the thorn was never from the breast of that nightingale. After the bitterest sorrows mingled with the brilliantest triumphs, did she, I wonder, find comfortable obscurity in Italy a compensation for all her sufferings? At last she sleeps in her unvisited grave. Sleep well, old friend!

Proteus himself had, perhaps, the most uncommon history of all. This he related one evening when we were in the happiest mood; there was a panorama dragging its slow length along before an audience attracted, no doubt, as much by the promise of numerous and costly gifts of a sum-total far out stripping the receipts of the house, as by the highly colored pictorial progress of Bunyan's famous Pilgrim. We had been lounging in the royal box, and, growing weary of the entertainment, especially weary of a barrel-organ that played at the heels of Christian through all his tribulation; we repaired to the green-room, and somehow fell to talking of individual progress,

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and of the pack we each of us must carry through storm and shine. Proteus evidently began his story without premeditation; it was not a flowing narrative; there were spurts of revelation interrupted at intervals by the strains of the barrel-organ, from which there was no escape. Later, I was able to follow the thread of it, joining it here and there, for he himself had become interested, and he had frequent recourse to a diary which he had stenographed after his own fashion, and the key of which no one but himself possessed.

He was of New England parentage, born in 1826; as a youth, was delicate and effeminate; was gifted with many accomplishments; sketched well, sang well, played upon several instruments, and was, withal, an uncommon linguist. He was a great lover of nature. His knowledge was varied and very accurate; he was an authority upon most subjects which interested him at all; was a botanist of repute, had a smattering of many sciences, and was correct as far as he went in all of them.

He lost his father in infancy, and his training was left to tutors; he was a highly imaginative dreamer, and romantic in the extreme; for this reason, and having never known a father's will, he left home in his youth, and

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was for some years a wanderer, seeking, it was thought, an elder brother, who had long since disappeared. He was in California in early days; in Hawaii, Australia, and Tahiti; the love of adventure grew upon him; he learned to adapt himself to circumstances. Though not handsome he was well proportioned and possessed of much physical grace. He traveled for a time with a circus; learned to balance himself on a globe, to throw double-somersaults, and to do daring trapeze-flights in the peak of the tent. Growing weary of this, and having already known and become enamored of Hawaii, he returned to the islands, secured the Royal Hawaiian Theater and began life anew. His collection of botanical plants surrounding the theater was exceptionally rich and a source of profit to him; but the theater was his hobby, and he rode it to the last.

Nothing seemed quite impossible to him upon the stage; anything from light comedy to eccentric character parts was in his line; the prima donna in burlesque opera was a favorite assumption; nor did he, out of the love of his art, disdain to dance the wench-dance in a minstrel show; he had even a circus of his own; but his off hours were employed

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in his garden or with pupils whom he instructed in music, dancing, fencing, boxing, gymnastics, and I know not what else.

On one occasion he took with him to California a troupe of Hawaiian *hula-hula* dancers, the only ones who have gone abroad professionally, and his experiences with these people, whose language he had made his own, and with whom he was in full sympathy, would fill a volume. Their singular superstitions; the sacrifices of pig and fowl which he had at times to permit them to make in order to appease their wrathful gods; the gypsy life they led in the interior of the State, where, apart from the settlements, they would camp by a stream in some cañon and live for a little while the life of their beloved islands; the insults they received in the up-country towns from the civilized whites, who like wild beasts fell upon them, and finally succeeded in demoralizing and disbanding the troupe—these episodes he was fond of enlarging upon, and his fascinating narrative was enlivened with much highly original and humorous detail.

Through all his vicissitudes he preserved a refinement which was remarked by every one who knew him. He was the intimate of the Kings Lunalillo I., and Kalakaua I., and of

many Hawaiians of rank; he had danced in the royal set at court-balls; was a member and correspondent of several scientific societies; a man of the most eccentric description; greatly loved by a few, intensely disliked by many, and perhaps fully understood by no one. He had learned to hate the world, and at times to irritate himself very much over it; doubtless he had cause.

My last night in the little theater was the pleasantest of all. The play was over; during its action great ruby-eyed moths with scarlet spots like blood-drops on their wings flew through the windows and dove headlong into the foot-lights, where they suffered martyrdom, and eventually died to slow music; and then the rain came and beat upon that house, and it leaked; but umbrellas were not prohibited; the shower was soon over; we shook our locks like spaniels, and laughed again; and it was all very tropical.

Late in the night Proteus and I were supping in the green-room, when he told me in a stage whisper how night after night, when the place was as black as a tomb, he had heard a light footfall, a softly creaking floor, and a mysterious movement of the furniture; how twice a dark figure stood by his bedside with

fixed eyes, like the ghost of Banquo; there was enough moonlight in the room to reveal the outline of this figure, and to shine dimly through it as through folds of crape. And often there were voices whispering audibly, and it was as if the disembodied had returned to play their parts again before a spectral audience come from the graves of the past; and he was sure to hear at intervals, above the ghostly ranting, the soft patter of applause—"Like that," said Proteus, starting from his chair, as a puff of wind extinguished the lamp and left us in awful darkness. We listened. I heard it, or thought I heard it; and though a gentle rain was falling, I rushed out of the place bristling like the fretful porcupine.

Once more I look from the seaward window of the Legation upon the field where, in days long gone, so many histrionic honors were won. In the midst of it an itinerant phenomenon, "the celebrated armless lady," has for the moment pitched her tent; presently no doubt, the corner lot will be absorbed by that ever-increasing caravansary, the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, and a series of semi-detached villas for the accommodation of its guests will spring up under the palms.

Were the old theater still standing, the leafy lattice of the green-room would be directly opposite; I might, in such a case, by stretching forth my hands, part the vines and look once more into the haunted chamber. Perhaps he would be sitting there in pajamas and slippers, his elbows resting on the arms of his chair, his face buried in his hands as was his wont when his monologue ran dreamily into the past. Perhaps there would come those pauses, so grateful even in the most interesting discourse, when we said nothing, and forgot that there was silence until it was emphasized by the shudder of leaves that twinkled in the fitful summer gale.

But no! The long silence, unbroken evermore, has come to him, as it must come to each and all, and there is little left to tell of a tale that ended tragically.

I often wondered what fate was in reserve for Proteus; in the eternal fitness of things a climax seemed inevitable; yet the few bits of tattered and mildewed scenery leaning against the fence, the weights of the drop curtain, like cannon balls, half buried in the grass, and the bier over which Hamlet and Laertes were wont to mouth—now standing in the midst of an unrecognizable heap of rubbish—are not less

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heeded than is the memory of one who was a distinguished character in his time.

He fell upon evil days; was hurried out of the kingdom to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune; contumely, humiliation, abject poverty—these were his companions in an exile and the company of these he endured with heroic fortitude. At last he found asylum in his native town, but not the one he would have chosen, nor the one of which he was deserving; yet that he was grateful for even this much is evident from the tenor of a letter which I received from him in his last days. He wrote:

“If you could see and know how restricted my present life is, you would realize how more than welcome your letter was. . . .

“In your reference to the past, my mind went with you, as it has often done without you, back to the pleasant hours we have spent together. Often in my loneliness I recur to them, with the same gratitude that a traveler feels when he recalls to mental view the oases that softened the weariness of the desert.

“I hope I am as thankful as I should be for the power of memory; in the present darkness I have many bright pictures of the past to look upon: these are my consolation.

“I have to be, as the Hebrews term it, in ‘a several house;’ I am in a large, well-heated, well-ventilated upper room with a south-easterly aspect; I see no one but the physicians, the superintendent, and my especial attendant.

“In this seclusion from the world in which I have seen so much variety, you may well believe I have leisure for thought and retrospection. How many experiences I would love to live over again! how many I would gladly efface from the records of memory!

“In the vacuity of my present condition I long for occupation, but my misfortune precludes the hope of it. Only one thing is certain; I must try to be content, and give an example of resignation if I can do no other good.

“I have gone through this sorrowful detail because you requested it, and I regret to give you the pain of reading it. . . . Write when you will; a letter from you will bring with it a sense of the light which I have once known—now gone forever.”

Of course I wrote again—on the instant; but before my letter had reached that melancholy house the telegraph had flashed throughout the continent news of his ignoble death.

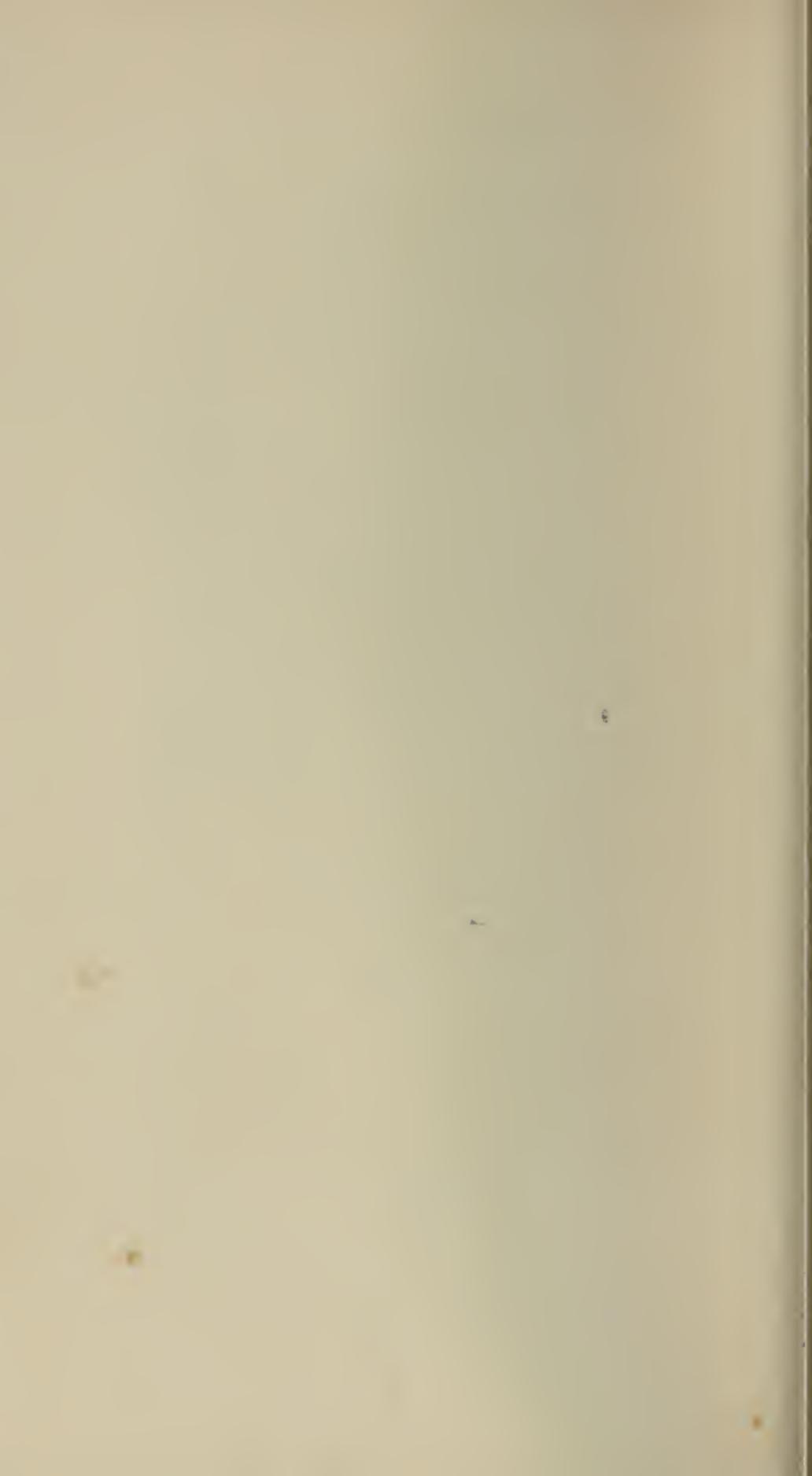
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For Proteus was none other than he who, through the irony of fate, came to be known as "The Salem Leper."

Whether he was or was not a leper is a question upon which the doctors disagree; but I know that his life for two years before he found shelter in the almshouse of his native town was of the most agonizing description. Perfidious gossip hunted him down; vile slander drove him from door to door; his imagination peopled the air with foes; and even the few true and tried friends who stood by him found it difficult at times to persuade him that they were not spies upon him.

Oh death, where is thy sting! So it seems that even in Dreamland the drama is not all a delusion, and that in one case, at least, the reality was more cruel than the grave.

A SAWDUST FAIRY



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IT was twilight in Hornitos, the twilight of the California summer—a very roomy twilight, that is at first blue and then purple, with a silver lustre in it, and finally grows dense with seamless and unbroken shadows.

Hornitos has not, however, a twilight of its own: I had not sought that dull Spanish town for any beauty it possessed in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. In truth, its water-privileges are so limited that only out of compliment may they be spoken of in the plural. I had been dragged through the fine floating dust of the foot-hills for hours and hours. The heavens were as brass; the overburdened coach was as a full orchestra of tinkling cymbals; the mouth of every man, woman and child aboard was stopped with a poultice of moist clay: the deck passengers, mostly Mongolians, had wilted flat over heaps of luggage lashed to the roof; the driver, falling out of love with his jaded beasts, made savage cuts at the leaders with a whip-lash of extraordinary length. At such intervals he seemed to start from sleep, or something very like it, such

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as broods over the summer of the foot-hills, and possesses all animated Nature save only the rasping locusts and the clamoring katydids.

As we labored over the low hills, leaving a long wake of floating dust behind us, we once or twice sighted a distant habitation that gave us hope of rest in the near future. We were evidently nearing port: we were soon to alight in a tenable spot, and meet face to face other men and women and children, who, like us, had braved the fixed billows of baked earth wherein no tree has the hardihood to strike its roots, and whereon the short grass is withered and curled beneath the fierce heat of the interminable, unclouded summer.

Mounting the last billow with evident effort, we rolled rapidly down into the town with more flourish than there was any excuse for; but this is the time-honored custom of every driver on the line, and we were none of us in the mood to enter a protest against the assumption of a gayety we were far from feeling.

In the course of Nature, Hornitos should have hailed our arrival with visible emotion: a deputation of the idle and the curious was expected to await us on the veranda of the

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chief hotel; we thought to see the doors and the windows open up and down the main street; heads thrust forth; in brief, every soul we met should have turned at us—but nothing of the kind occurred. It was evident that there was a counter-attraction somewhere within the limits of the little town. We passed on between a double row of squat adobe houses, over whose roofs, scalloped with tiles, we might almost have vaulted from the stage-box, and drew up at the hotel door with an abruptness that left the clumsy vehicle bucking like a bronco. Our hair, beard and eyebrows were powdered with dust, we were all of a color, and it was some time before we came back to Nature and greeted one another over a late dinner.

The next stage left at midnight; why it left at that witching hour it would be hard to state; perhaps because the road beyond was even more uninteresting than the road just passed, and the stage company had some regard for our feelings. At all events, we were to be called out at midnight, and wheeled off again among the ribbed and rolling hills toward some other port, half Spanish and half paralyzed. There is a broad belt between the fruitful lowlands and the fair highlands of

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California whereon nothing more fair or fruitful than the gaunt cactus stretches its flat and thorny wings; there you may look for the adobe and its swarthy brood. Hornitos is a fork in the roads strung full of cacti and adobes.

I forget just where I was going. It was not my first advent nor my second in that town: probably I was heading for Yosemite or the monstrous trees; possibly I was slowly working my way across the country toward that high sweet-water sea, Tahoe, the pearl of the Sierras; at any rate I was going somewhere, and was booked for the midnight stage.

Meanwhile, I must needs kill time that dies hard in a Spanish town. I sauntered forth. The cloudless sky had arched itself, and seemed to retreat farther and farther from the earth; a few stars pricked through it with sharp and dazzling points; up and down the main street the lamps were less brilliant than these stars, and but for the inexpressible loveliness of the evening Hornitos would have lain heavy on my mind. I kept to the sidewalk while it lasted, though again and again I was precipitated into heaps of refuse that were doubtless the foundations of sidewalks yet to be, yet they poorly compensated for the ab-

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sence of the narrow planking such as is usually met with and soon parted with in the village streets.

There was an uncommon stir among the inhabitants: clusters of people were passing more or less rapidly through the town toward the opposite side from that on which we had entered. I turned and followed on their track: it was pleasant to stretch my legs after the cramped quarters afforded by the stage. Our procession swelled rapidly into respectable proportions: half the population seemed to be drifting in the same direction, while the other half stood by and followed the outseting tide with earnest and eager eyes. Fortunately, the gathering darkness resolved us into an anonymous mass; it is humiliating to be jogging along with a crowd, no matter how genteel it may be, for one is bound to feel so common and so small.

The edge of the town was soon reached: it is the redeeming feature of most country places that there is very little of them. By this time I had solved the mystery of the evacuation of Hornitos. An enormous barndoor cartoon, done in such high lights that the figures stood out in the dusk with preternatural vividness, betrayed the agreeable fact that an equestrian

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company would that evening have the honor of appearing before the citizens of Hornitos. It was well, it was very well indeed! I love a circus—once in a thousand years: I court the blinding flash of the spangles as a moth the flame that consumes him; spangles are my divine despair; could I be born again—which I cannot at this late hour—I would choose to come of a long line of gymnastic ancestors, with a side-splitting clown for an uncle; I would have limber legs, that go any way of their own free will; and a spine like a centipede's, that bends over as naturally as a hoop; I would be reared on the amiable stock horse, with his padded back as flat as a floor; and I would know all the cunning tricks of the ring, such as climbing pyramids of decanters, and shooting myself through numberless wreaths, and spinning myself madly about like a weather-cock in a hurricane, with the top of a tall pole set in the pit of my stomach. The scent of the sawdust would be to me as attar of rose, and applause my meat and drink; I would dress scantily, but gorgeously, in fleshings and silver; I would be the pet of the men and the darling of the ladies, and the youth of the land should see me and die of envy. All this I would if I could. But

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I have none of it: perhaps you know why I have not? Let it pass: how many lives begin at the wrong end, and have their climax in the middle!

As we drew near the forum—slowly enough, for the crowd was dense and not charitable—every man pressed forward blindly in search of a ticket-office, which apparently did not exist. The great tent glowed like an enormous illuminated balloon, and swayed gently to and fro in the light breeze that had risen at sunset; a row of weather-worn and travel-stained vans encircled the field, and two or three bright fires threw a lurid glow over a thousand faces that looked all alike, and therefore very ludicrous, as they stared at the narrow entrance to the arena. Evidently, the circus was popular in Hornitos, for a throng of citizens stormed the ticket-office. If I had only known where to look, I might have sighted it a mile off, for a beacon flamed on the roof of it, while close at hand a small orchestra of brass instruments blew out their blustering music at random; the canvas roof of the tent seemed to heave gently to the vibrations of the boisterous harmony.

I slowly worked my way to the edge of the crowd, for I hate being buried alive in any

shape: instinctively my steps led me to the rear of the tent, where a smaller tent sheltered the performers, man and beast. To me this was ever a charming and charmed spot. There was a hum of voices within: had the place been full of hiving bees there could not have been a busier stir than I there heard. I walked to and fro, catching floating fragments of sentences that filled me with curiosity and desire. Why could I not enter and see something of the inner life of these picturesque nomads, who compass the world with their gorgeous caravans, and are welcome in every land, for they speak a language intelligible to the whole world, the language of grace and beauty?

Great shadow-horses moved about on the white canvas of the dressing-tent; shadow-men passed to and fro like living statues; a strange and interesting pantomime was in course of action, and I alone, of all the throng of anxious pleasure-seekers, had the good fortune to stumble upon it.

No, I was not quite alone. Two or three youngsters, who had stolen up unobserved, were watching the shadow-play with me, but in a silent rapture. Perhaps we were all meditating a secret entrance under the loose can-

vas of the tent—perhaps we proposed to throw ourselves simultaneously on our respective stomachs and insert our heads in a row under the thin walls that shut us out from the mysteries of professional life. I don't know what might not have happened had time enough been given us, but as it was, we were cut down in the prime of our purposes by the unexpected appearance of an important personage who emerged from the green-room and demanded the nature of our business in that forbidden locality. My comrades being youngsters and light of foot, fled like frightened kids: I stood my ground, for I was too late to retreat in good order. Fancy my delight when the important personage drew near to me, and then, on a sudden recognition, embraced me with flattering fervor! He was my good friend, Mr. Crook. Surely, you know him—Mr. Crook of Astley's, the clown, the funambulist, the horse-tamer, the Shakespearian jester, the whatnot? Mr. Crook took me in hand as if I were a desirable acquisition to his unrivalled company. Mr. Crook said: "Come in, my friend, and make yourself at home. I am busy—you see I have my hands full—but here is room for you." We entered the delightful retreat, and I was at once in

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the midst of the most picturesque spectacle my eyes ever fell upon in a civilized world.

Close to the canvas flap at the entrance stood a score of thoroughbreds just then being decked in splendid paraphernalia (a very potent odor of the stable saluted my nostrils, but I was prepared for this); a span of Shetland ponies nodded to me as if they were actually delighted to welcome a friend of Mr. Crook; a trick mule presented one hind hoof for me to shake, as if that were the customary exchange of compliments between man and beast.

No one else took notice of my entrance, and I followed Mr. Crook into the farthest part of the enclosure, where curtains were hung about in various corners, dividing it into a series of small closets or dressing-rooms. In one of these closets across which the curtain was but half drawn, a girl in an exceedingly short skirt was rouging with considerable abandon; in the enclosure next her, which was likewise open to inspection, two superbly proportioned gymnasts were testing their strength as a prelude to the brilliant act which was shortly to electrify the public. Three clowns contented themselves with a nook formed by two dressing-rooms, and all three were busy over a

half-melted candle and the fraction of a mirror that was passed from hand to hand, while they decorated their faces with moons in partial eclipse and long streaks of red paint that shone like blood on the ashen whiteness of their thickly-powdered faces. A dozen "supers" stood about in scarlet coats and Hessian boots, waiting their calls.

Mr. Crook led me to the farther corner of the tent, raised a curtain that formed one side of the last dressing-room of the series and bade me enter. "This, sir," said he with palpable pride, "this, sir, is Young Romeo, the star of the arena. Pray be seated; as you cannot take a chair take a box or a basket, and make yourself at home." I took a basket on end, and Mr. Crook withdrew. There was nothing else in the enclosure but a large box or a basket, with the lid thrown back: half buried in this box was a little fellow as lithe and graceful as a fairy, pawing about in the midst of an ample wardrobe of the most extraordinary description, throwing plumed caps, velvet capes, silk trunks and spangled sashes over his head in a flowing fountain of dry goods. I had scarcely discerned what manner of boy this was when a cap of cotton velvet about large enough for an epaulette descended

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upon the candle and snuffed it out. Young Romeo uttered a sharp exclamation in one syllable; I will not record it. To the heart of the saint it brings no terror; to the heart of the sinner it is everything—everything that is applicable to everything else; it suits all moods, all tenses, all weathers. The warmth of this remark had scarcely cooled when I struck a match and relit the candle, thinking it a convenient way of getting better acquainted with the juvenile pride of the arena.

Young Romeo forgot to thank me for my civility: it was evidently out of place. He continued his excavations, and finally emerged from the depths of the great box with a glittering star of the first magnitude in his hand. Then he leaped into the air, and closing the box-lid with a sudden movement, he lit on the top of it with one foot as high as his head, and the star held aloft in a rapture that not only suffused his face with a beauty that was almost angelic, but made his whole frame seem radiant with light: at that moment it would not have astonished me had he floated off on the air and vanished like a wraith against the canvas roof of the tent.

I wish small circus boys didn't look so much like cupids: I wish they need not do airy and

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bewitching things that make one dissatisfied with plain, honest, every-day people.

Having dazzled me, apparently without effort, Young Romeo leaped into the air, turned a bewildering somersault and landed at my feet: he then ordered me, with an impudent assumption of authority that was not at all in keeping with his personal appearance, to fasten the star to the flesh-colored shirt that fitted him like a glove. I attached the glittering ornament to his breast and awaited further orders.

“Come on,” said Young Romeo with all the gruffness of a baby Macbeth as he led the way to the heavy drapery that swung before the entrance to the arena. We stood in the passage and peeped through the folds of the curtain with mutual satisfaction. The amphitheatre was crowded from the ring to the last row of raised benches that surrounded it; the orchestra had just taken its place on the platform over our heads: everybody was in a state of excitement; it was delicious and intoxicating. Young Romeo turned suddenly, as if unable to restrain himself longer, threw half a dozen somersaults back into the dressing-room, and returned to me with a face flushed even through magnesia.

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The orchestra crashed into an overture that was highly inspiring: then came the grand *entrée* of a dozen supers well mounted, led by a painted lady in a dashing riding habit. They waltzed and polked and quadrilled, those trained animals, with as much precision and grace as if they had been bred in a dancing-school. They knelt down on their knees and made obeisances to the occupants of the high-priced seats: then they whirled thrice around the ring at utmost speed—the glory of their nostrils was terrible—and darted past us into the dressing-tent, leaving a cloud of sawdust behind them.

We were covered with it, Young Romeo and I, as well as the two supers who caught back the curtains just in season to let the caravan make its escape in safety: I wonder that we were not crushed to death. Romeo was not in the least disconcerted; he dusted himself with his hands, and beckoned me to follow him.

Mademoiselle Idalia, the Equestrian Sylph, or some such party, was about to hop back and forth on the padded horse and leap through capacious hoops, just as her grandmother and her great-grandmother had done before her. It was the old, the stupid old act,

that was never anything but a bore, and I was glad to escape it.

Mr. Crook in full evening-dress, with a whip that snapped like a pistol shot, introduced the mademoiselle. She was a high-stepping and ill-tempered girl, who had hard words for one of the supers when she came in from her brief triumph. The unlucky fellow had tripped her with a banner, and she bade him repair at once to a life out of the flesh at a temperature that no man in his right mind would seek willingly. Young Romeo encouraged her in her language, but this she resented, and there was a battle of words which Mr. Crook alone proved able to bring to a harmless close.

It seemed strange to me that a child so like a spirit, an angel out of a picture, such as Young Romeo surely was, could retain an atom of his natural beauty in so polluting an atmosphere. My heart bled for him: it is a way my heart has of doing, and it has caused me much unnecessary and useless pain; but it continues to keep at it, for experience has taught me how precious a boon sympathy is, though so often wasted.

Romeo and I talked freely at last: he was presently to make his *entrée* in a treble act with the gymnasts in the neighboring dressing-

room. Had I seen him on his ponies alone? Unfortunately, I had not, and was obliged to say as much. Ah! I should have seen him at 'Frisco, with a flag in each hand, a long bridle in his teeth and his two little legs spread out between his two little ponies in a low bridge from back to back. Had I seen him with the Flying Men? Again I was forced to confess that I had not had the happiness. Very well, I should see him presently, he said, though he evidently thought meanly of me for being unacquainted with his fame.

Young Romeo was not idle a moment: he ran into the arena when the great carpet was spread and tumbled with twenty other tumblers, and out-tumbled them every one; he climbed over the backs and under the bellies of horses that seemed to care no more for him than if he had been a rather large fly, nor half so much indeed; he played the pranks of a very Puck, and was the wonder and delight of a row of boys about his own size, who reached into the ring when he skipped about just to touch him and see if he were really flesh and blood.

He was the soul, the little fair soul, of the company—dainty, diminutive, delightful in the eyes of the immense audience. He was as

warmly greeted whenever he leaped into the ring as if he had actually dropped out of the air; and when he left it, after posing for a moment in an attitude exquisitely graceful and artful, showering whole handfuls of kisses upon the ladies and giving the gentlemen a very saucy nod, he vanished behind the curtains followed by thunderous applause that was sure to bring him out again with a pretty affectation of infantile modesty that was far too effective to be genuine.

Herr Hercules next rode a monstrous horse, and tossed cannon-balls about in the air as if they had been bubbles of ink. Herr Hercules was a bore, as mere strength without grace or sentiment is bound to be.

Romeo and I returned to the dressing-room and sat together on the wardrobe box. Romeo asked if I had a *chaw* about me: I half regretted that I had not, for I wanted to oblige him in some way or other; but permit me to add in self-defense that my mouth is not a tobacco-vat.

Romeo took it as a personal slight that I wasn't provided with the article he so much desired, and going sulkily to a shabby jacket that lay in the corner, he took from a pocket the short, stout stump of a cigar: it was badly

chewed at one end and burned diagonally at the other. There was scarcely an inch of it left, but it had ill odor enough to poison my nostrils. Romeo lit this nauseating thing at the candle and smoked for a moment in silence. I may as well add that I do indulge in the dry weed, but I do not smoke the corpse of a cigar under any circumstances.

I ventured to ask Romeo his age: he looked about six, an oldish and precocious six; he might have been seven on a pinch, but I doubted it. Young Romeo was fifteen, as near as he could guess; he wasn't sure, and didn't care a something which I have vainly tried to forget ever since he mentioned it: I have heard the same expression often enough in the world, but it sounded quite shocking as it came from those baby lips. He could not possibly have looked fifteen.

Romeo consented to tell me his story. It began under the roof of a home in a great city; poverty and want and cruelty were his companions. He was attracted, as all children old and young are ever attracted, by the glittering caravan encamped in the quarter of the city where he lived; he hung about the circus-field night and day; he ran errands and threw himself in the way of circus-folk because he

A SAWDUST FAIRY

was fascinated by their life; the circus was to him a paradise on wheels that passed from land to land and from clime to clime in one golden round of years. He was cuffed and kicked and cursed for getting under foot of brutal and low-minded men; he was dragged out from under the canvas by one leg, all that was left of him on the worldly side of his paradise; he was ducked in the water-trough and turned into the streets drenched and weeping; he had had tar daubed in his hair, and was once cruelly beaten with a rope's end; but he crept back to the charmed land and hid himself in the crowd only to hear the harsh music that was passing sweet in his ears, the neighing of the Arabian steeds and the pawing of the Shetland ponies, the clown's jest, the snap of the ring-master's whip, and the applause, the darling, the terribly sweet applause that even then made his blood tingle and his heart sick with envy.

One day the master saw him. The circus season was near its close; the company was about starting on a long voyage to many distant lands, and there would be plenty of time on shipboard to break in a boy. A boy is very useful in a circus; in fact, a circus is not a circus without a circus-boy. The proprietor

had lost his boy; the stupid fellow had missed his footing and broken his neck not two months before. Heaven knows where he had come from and whither he went, but he was buried in the town where he met with his shocking death; the band played a slow march over his open grave, and then went back to the circus-grounds to drum up a crowd for the evening.

Romeo, whose name was Skits or Skites, gladly accepted the tempting proposal of the circus-master, which sounded, as he recalled it, something like the following: "If you will go all over the world with us, my little man, and do your prettiest, I will give you six ponies, some of the most beautiful dresses you ever saw, and as much money as you can spend." There was no leave-taking and no leave-asking: he never went back to his wretched home, which was doubtless even more wretched now that he had deserted it, for the very sight of his face was sunshine, and he had all the coquetry of infancy even in his fifteenth year. O! he certainly could not have been above twelve. Well, Romeo went to sea, and died daily for the next six months. It was rather late to unjoint the body without pain, and you know you can't tie your legs in bow-knots on the first sitting. Try it and see

if you can. He went through all the other bitter phases of that bitter life and began to grow tough and cruel under it. I believe his heart was as hard as a little hickory-nut. I know that he distrusted every member of the company, and hated the most of them. He learned to care little for Mr. Crook, who certainly was proud of him, and very kind to him. He regretted nothing in the past, looked forward to nothing in the future, formed no attachments; lived only in his art, and was vain of that. He was selfish, cynical, vulgar, but he had the physical beauty of one of Titian's cloud-children and the face of an angel that lived close to death.

Mr. Crook entered presently to summon Young Romeo; the Flying-Men were about to sport in mid-air like veritable winged creatures. I was invited to witness the spectacle from a seat my friend had reserved for me in the amphitheatre. Don't imagine that any accident befell any one; everything went off magically, and a slip seemed out of the range of possibility. The two gymnasts, the "Zingarelli Brothers," whose names were in reality Bill Jones and Sam Hawkins, climbed into the trapeze that swung high up in the peak of the tent, and there they arched their insteps in

spasmodic ecstasy and rubbed their feet together as flies do, and, as if it were the most delightful situation in the world, all the while playing with their handkerchiefs in a very becoming and unconscious manner.

Young Romeo was placed in a noose and hoisted into the arms of one of the "Zingarelli," where he looked like a babe from the cradle. The game commenced: Romeo was rolled into a ball about half his natural size, and tossed lightly from Jones to Hawkins as they sat in their respective perches; then he was unrolled and swung over by his hands and by his feet, flying from one trapeze to another and back again as if he had been a bird; he was thrown into the air and caught between the feet of Bill Jones, who lightly kicked him over to the feet of Hawkins, where he hung upside down much longer than it is pleasant to think of. A double flight followed: Hawkins dropped from the upper trapeze into the arms of Jones and hung there, reversed: Romeo climbing into a baby swing above the heads of both, let go his hold, fell past the fellow in the first trapeze, and was grasped by the ankles just as his brains should have been dashed out, but were not; for Hawkins, who was still inverted, and had his feet hooked

over the feet of Jones in the trapeze, seemed accidentally to have interposed, an humble instrument in the hands of Providence and silk tights, to save the life of this flying boy, still sighing for more worlds to conquer.

There was nothing after that but rapturous applause and a speedy descent into the arena, where the Flying Men folded their invisible wings and fled from the gaze of the enthusiastic audience.

A farce closed the bill of the evening—the stupidest of all farces, wherein supers played women so badly that any woman would scorn to be the mother of such supers. The pony who discharged a pistol with his mouth, standing on a box with one foot in the air, and who afterward stole a handkerchief with the very look of a pickpocket in his eye, had more dramatic talent than was evidenced by the combined company.

Romeo and I ended our interview while he was putting off his fairy dress and getting back into an ill-fitting suit of clothes. I wondered how he felt in them: he seemed to have very little feeling in any state, not excepting the state of nature, for he acted as if he were utterly unconscious that it was thus God made him and all the world besides, and that we

think it a very shameful condition, and are therefore in it as seldom as possible.

Romeo asked me whither I was bound; he also was to leave immediately, and he confided to me the one secret of his life—namely, that he would gladly escape from his glittering thralldom—I am not quoting his language, but that is how it sounded to me then—and live a nobler and a purer life—were it but possible. I believed that if his hard little heart could only be cracked open, a very good kernel would be found within. Could I not save this soul at once, in season, before it had sunk deeper into the miry clay that besmeared it? I believed I could. I freely offered him my services, and, to my surprise, my offer was eagerly accepted. He seemed indeed weary of his life. That very night he would have to sleep on a wagonload of canvas, and be slowly dragged on to the next town. Night after night this had been his portion; in all countries, in all weathers, he had rolled himself in bunting and rocked in that lumbering cradle through dust, through mire, under rain or starlight, up hill, down dale, from town to town, never resting—for his hardest work was when they came to a halt. Sometimes he lay awake under the midnight moon and saw the country-houses dark and

still, and a longing seized him to seek a home somewhere in the world and live as other boys lived: once or twice he had made friends, and when he spoke of these episodes in his young career his voice seemed to soften a little, though it was a hard, harsh voice for a child. I might do something for him; I might help him to escape if he desired to; he would meet me at the edge of the town, and we would go on together. It looked easy enough, and I saw nothing very wrong in it.

The company would not miss him till day-break; by that time he would be miles away, and they would never be the wiser. My friend, Mr. Crook, had no real claim on him; there were hundreds of boys anxious to risk their lives in the same profession, who would surely come to it sooner or later; he had only to raise his finger and a dozen would respond in any town. Young Romeo had surely served his time; why should he not be free?

With astonishingly long sight for such young eyes, Romeo had looked at the case in all its bearings. When he hailed our coach it would be necessary for him to have the price of the passage with him, otherwise the driver would at once suspect him of being a runaway, and treat him accordingly. He was

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quite safe from recognition. I hardly knew him when he got his paint off and his clothes on: he was then merely a dwarf, spotted with rather large freckles, but he was worth saving if he sought salvation; probably any sort of a fellow is under such aggravating circumstances.

I willingly advanced thrice the price of his passage, and we parted with a compact that sounded like a line in a melodrama, but I didn't care for that—"Alone, in the highway, when the clock strikes one, and so farewell!" "So long, boss," said the fairy of the sawdust; and with that I turned to bid Mr. Crook good-night, and then followed the mob back into town.

It was only ten P. M. The circus never gives a long bill to these interior people. They are used to early rising, and of course retire betimes. I tipped back against the wall of the public room in the hotel, dreaming over my cigar and impatiently awaiting the departure of the coach. Everybody talked in a low drowsy voice; nearly everybody talked of the circus, and not one of all who spoke of that but at once introduced the sawdust fairy with a flourish that delighted me, for I had already begun to feel that in a measure he

belonged to me, and you know one likes to get praise by proxy.

Twelve o'clock came at last. The coach had been standing a full half hour at the door: there was a jingling of harness, a champing of bits, a snorting of horses, and a lashing on of baggage that called every wakeful person on to the veranda to witness the preparations for departure. I was glad to be left alone, for I half believed that I must have a guilty look: I certainly felt quite awkward. When we started I sank into a dark corner on the back seat, and wondered how long it would be before the circus-boy would join me. We hurried down the dark, still street with unaccountable clatter. A fragment of the old moon had risen, and a faint, ghastly light suffused the landscape. We rocked from side to side: the horses, scenting the night air, pranced gaily, and were nothing loath to quit the road and take the first fence they came to. When we passed the circus-lot, lo! not a vestige of the pageant remained; the tent, the mammoth vans, everything had disappeared; only the faint gray circle of the sawdust shone dimly in the thin moonlight, and it all seemed like a dream.

An hour passed: One after another of the

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passengers fell asleep. We were not hailed by any voice; the night without was still as death. I listened fretfully to the heavy breathing of my companions: I heard the driver chirrup to his horses and wondered at the necessity of speeding them just then. We might pass Young Romeo in the uncertain moonlight; we might fail to catch his voice, and what would become of him in that case? An hour and a half, two hours, went by, and we were still jogging on over the shadowless foot-hills with no incident to break the monotony of the midnight journey. It was now evident that Romeo had missed us; probably his premeditated flight had been discovered and he was watched. It would be ill for him in such a case; far better had he never sought to escape. I regretted that I had encouraged him from bad to worse, and I dreaded to think of the consequences. Having given over all hope of picking him up on the road, I finished the night in an unpleasant dream, and woke long before breakfast-time in a little town at the foot of the mountains.

Several days passed: Again I was staging from place to place in a vagabond summer vacation. It made little odds to me whither I went; I might, had I chosen, have followed up

the glaring placards of the circus that were strewn broadcast over the country. One night in this town a week previous, two nights in the next, and then three villages on the main road with a night each—such was the progress of the caravan.

At Sacramento I found the gorgeous gallery of “sheets” and “streamers” displayed in every convenient quarter of the city. The benefit of Young Romeo was placarded for the night previous, which had closed the brief season in the capital. So Romeo was still with the company; the fact relieved my mind of something that was beginning to prey upon me like the shadow of guilt; at any rate, I rejoiced to think that the boy was not adrift in the world without home or friends, possibly without food. At two P. M. that very day I took the river-boat for San Francisco. The afternoon was glorious, and as we paddled down the winding stream with its low, flat banks, its small cabin homes hoisted on stilts above the flood-mark, its scanty groves of trees and the occasional meadows of tall tule, every passenger remained on deck to enjoy, and become a part of the pastoral picture.

We slackened speed as we came to the sharp bends in the river; stopped now and again at

infinitely small landings, each having a great name, and a future greater than can easily be imagined unless you have lived in California and had some practice in that line. Schooners with big flat sails were working their way up the stream, with about three men and a dog in each. Our steamer crowded these craft against the muddy banks and rolled a round wave of yellow, creamy water quite up to their deck-line as we passed them; they lurched heavily, three men and a dog growled in concert, and we splashed on toward the next landing.

Swinging up to a respectable dock connected with a small village by a bridge a mile in length, stretching over a dank marsh, we threw out our bow and stern lines and rested for a moment. A dozen men and boys were waiting to do the honors of the settlement; a smaller number might easily have accomplished all that was expected of so unpromising a place; but unpromising places are sometimes hospitable even to an unnecessary degree. There was a large tent on the edge of the village. I saw it a mile away, but didn't care to acknowledge it till I was obliged to. That hour was now come. Evidently Crook's circus was at Peking, or whatever the name of the village

was: it was diminutive enough to have called itself Peking.

I at first concluded to debark at Peking and rescue Young Romeo boldly and by daylight; but something said to me, "Don't meddle with other people's affairs; let well enough alone," and other familiar words that reminded me of the copy-book. I hate proverbs and maxims—they always sound personal—but I resolved to sacrifice my feelings rather than any portion of my through ticket and I retained my seat by the guard, calmly surveying the citizens of Peking, who were staring at us with embarrassing steadfastness.

In a moment we were off again, and in the last half of that moment some one on the dock attracted my attention. A small boy in ill-fitting garments, whose hat was on the back of his head and whose lips were glued to the stump of a cigar: he was the embodiment of saucy defiance, and when he caught my eye he put a thumb to the tip of his nose and wagged his fingers like the claws on one side of a crab. Would you believe it?—it was Young Romeo! I wonder how I came to know him by daylight.

A year later I was vegetating in Honolulu sunshine. Twilight is the hour when the semi-

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tropical inhabitants of that pretty hamlet go out like fire-worshippers to see the last sun-beam pale over the delicious summer sea. I had come out of my oven, and was inhaling the light breeze that springs up at sunset, when a voice accosted me—a weak and therefore a respectful voice, with a whine in it. I turned suddenly as one is apt to when a revery is broken in upon, and there stood a piteous fellow, thin, haggard, sickly-looking, and altogether a melancholy spectacle.

“Well, what can I do for you?” said I in a tone which was hardly encouraging.

“You can give me a lift, sir,” said the voice. “I wants to git to Australia to join the company: they’s left me here in the hospital, but if I git to them I’s all right agin.”

It was Young Romeo’s third and last appearance on this stage. His old company was disbanded and Mr. Crook had gone back to Astley’s or some other world with the determination to conquer or expire. Young Romeo had joined a troupe drawn from all sources, and, I fear, but badly regulated. The company started to visit Honolulu, Australia, China, India, and so on, till they should find themselves cornered somewhere, and there forced to disband and work their several ways

home again as best they might. At Honolulu they did well. The natives are passionately fond of horses and riders: I believe they would sell their soul for a front seat in a circus, close to the sawdust.

Romeo, the pet of every public it had been his lot to appear before, fell one night from the trapeze and dislocated his arm. He was at once taken to the hospital, and received some attentions from admirers whose sentiment was touched by the romantic story of his life, which was just then freely circulated. He mended rapidly, but being forced to his old work too soon, the arm was again disabled: after this second misfortune there was every prospect of a permanent weakness, and as soon as the fact was discovered his comrades, whose departure had been delayed a few days in hope of a more promising verdict, made sail at once, and left him alone and penniless among strangers in a strange land.

He was the picture of abject misery, wasted by disease and dissipation, his spirit gone with the glitter of the spangles and the incense of applause; there was not one line in his whole body that answered to the image of the Romeo I had seen for the first time that night in Hornitos. Now he was indeed a fit subject for

charity. The captain of a vessel bound for Melbourne had promised to take him in the steerage for a few dollars, and this sum he had nearly raised. I had now an opportunity of doing him a real service, and I was only too glad to do it.

Young Romeo and I had our talks, our walks, our little times together in the course of the next three days. I could keep him in good humor and cigars for so long at least; it seemed a pity that one who had given a delight to thousands should be reduced to beggary.

He filled up for me the breaks in his pitiful history; even showed some little signs of feeling when he spoke of the past and of Mr. Crook's kindness to him. Neither of us referred in any way to the affair at Hornitos; it was as if it had never happened, and I wished that it never had. On the fourth day Romeo set sail. He was cheerful and hopeful; said he would get some one to write to me when he reached Melbourne—he could not write well enough to think of doing it himself. I alone saw him off; everybody seemed to have lost interest in him, poor boy! One or two youngsters who chanced upon the dock as the vessel swung into the stream recognized and hailed him, but he gave no sign of emotion of any

sort whatever, he was quite too world-weary for that, and so he went out to sea.

Poor little fellow! After waiting a reasonable time with the hope of hearing from him, I gave him up for good, with a kind of tender regret that never left me after I saw him last. I was glad that I had thought kindly of him through all the phases of our friendship—though it was hardly equal enough to be called that—for the news came after a while that the boy had been swept overboard in a heavy gale off the coast of Australia, and was never seen again.

KANE-ALOHA

KANE-ALOHA

GOD made me! He made me long before the confiscated, tailor-made Hawaiian had begun to crease his trousers, for the very good reason that in those days there were no trousers to crease. Yet it was not until the Missionary preacher had pronounced the Doxology and the members of his dusky flock had begun to turn their faces toward the church door, and the glory of land and sea ablaze beyond it, that I found myself within speaking distance of Kane-Aloha.

I had not seen him approach the church door with the others, his shoes in his hands; I had not noticed him squatting there in the porch, while with infinite trouble and not a little clucking of his tongue in the roof of his mouth for sheer vexation, he forced his bare feet into his shop-made shoes and walked painfully up the aisle and into the pew; there the shoes were at once removed and placed respectfully on the seat beside him. It is hard indeed to tread the straight and narrow path encased in unaccustomed shoe-leather, even when that path is no longer than from the threshold of the church to the gate of the pew. Had he,

had any of his fellows up at the Mission school, ever asked himself if it was in deed and in truth following in the footsteps of our Lord and Master to enter a meeting house in boots two sizes too small for him? and then remove them in hot haste in order that he might doze in comfort up to the administration of the Sacrament of the Collection, and so on to the Grand Amen?

Is it not written in the Good Book, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet?" Well they did it. They put them on to go down the aisle in, but at the church door, or rather on the lawn in front of the church they removed them and these instruments of torture were folded in a handkerchief or swung by the strings over the arm or the shoulder or even about the neck, and borne home in triumph to be deposited reverently in a calabash together with all other Sabbath finery.

I had first seen this Kane-Aloha in the swimming pool above Hilo. The stream that flows down from the mountain over a bed of lava as smooth as glass, there leaps from the brink of a cliff and buries itself in foam at the top of a deep pool half a hundred feet below. It was like pouring cream from the lip of a mug the way that stream slid off into the air, and

'twas whipped cream for sure when it struck the rim of the pool.

The jungle ran down to the edge of the stream and reached over it with gently swaying boughs that were never for a moment at rest. Zephyrs played pranks there and the little waves that sometimes leaped for very joy caught the tips of pendulous vines and tugged at them prettily as if they would carry them down into the depths, but all in play; the vines yielded for a moment only and then swung back with haughty grace, while all the world of little leaves shook with the lightest laughter, and its game of life went on.

That was my haunt every afternoon so long as I tarried in Hilo. Every day, at a certain hour of the day, I went thither, rain or shine. Down yonder we didn't heed the showers any more than we heeded sunshine; each was a joy in itself and heightened the joy of the other; for if the rain wet us the sun dried us, if the sun heated us the showers cooled us, and so between alternating shine and shower everything was just as it should be and altogether lovely.

I had been a guest at the Mission House a week or more when, one day as I was starting for a stroll, the Missionary lady of the

house said to me, rather abruptly I thought at the time, "Where do you go every afternoon about this hour?" She was perchance and perforce my hostess; where there is no Inn with accommodation for man and beast, both, in a certain sense, become objects of charity. Where there is but one house in a village capable of offering a stranger hospitality, worthy of the name, the way faring man though a fool, must willy-nilly, accept it; therefore, my chance-hostess became of necessity my entertainer and as such she no doubt thought she had the right to enquire into the conduct of my life, or at least the conduct of such portion of it as I was passing under her hallowed roof-tree.

"Where do you go every afternoon about this hour?" said she. "I go to the pool in the river to see the natives swim," replied I. In the wide world of waters there are no better swimmers than were those I went to see, to admire, to envy and even to worship with all my eyes.

The lips of my hostess pursed with the prunes and prisms of propriety. Persimmons, thought I, have not yet ripened in the Vineyard of the Lord and I hardened my heart as I turned from her and went my way, feeling

that I had perhaps given pain to one who had shown me nothing but kindness.

There was a natural throne set upon a rock above the river; this was my haunt where the wild cataract leaped in glory and the waters sang themselves hoarse at my feet. There the natives in the full splendor of adolescence were gathered; there youths and maidens, that might have adorned an Arcadian landscape, rejoiced together; and there, laying aside such artifices as civilization and the new dispensation had forced upon them, returned again to that state of Nature which is nothing if not innocence exemplified.

With what rapture my beauty loving eyes fed upon this animated scene. Those children of the wilds were as modest in deportment as if their souls were guiltless of the knowledge of sin.

To be modest is to be utterly unconscious of one's self; to admire beauty for its sole sake; to forget one's own perfections or imperfections in admiration of all that is perfect in another; to be unconscious of the fact that one is clad or unclad and not to care in either case, for all beauty is appealing and appealing beauty calls only for that which is noblest in the mind; there is nothing within the range of

its clear vision that verges in the slightest degree upon carnality. Carnality and clothes both begin with C and each is the product of the sweat-shop.

What went I forth for to see, O! Prudence! To see the bathers bathing in their bath, as follows: Resigning themselves to the resistless current, their folded feet tapering like arrow-heads, their hands clasped high above them, they stretched their lithe length in ecstasy as they sank into the curved crest of the cataract and shot down with the descending flood, a flight of shadows over the shimmering surface of a screen. The wave clothed them in its limpid garment; they were as spirits in their native elements, a denser part of it fashioned in the image of their maker, that anon dissolved, as it were, only to flash again in spurts of phosphorescent flame adown that crystal column; naiads they were, and nereides, and water sprites, and angels in liquid amber, as they vanished into the depths below. There they were not lost, although invisible; not lost, but gone before you knew it, and away down yonder where the river broadens they were borne again out of the bosom of the flood; and the greatest of these was Kane-Aloha!—reborn in that bath of beauty.

Friendship ripens quickly in the tropical sunshine and it was not many days before the young native and I were inseparable. He was profoundly interested in my career and had suggested that we unite our fortunes and brave the world together; but cruel fate decreed otherwise, as you shall presently see.

It seems that I was young, perchance boyish; and that I had a chaperone who would gladly have heard from these lips the reverent words "Not my will but Thine be done." He never heard them nor anything in the least resembling them. My chaperone, growing weary of Hilo and all its hallowed haunts, announced one day that we would saddle our beasts and take to the trail on the following Monday; it was, therefore, necessary that the services of a path finder be secured at once.

My first thought was of Kane-Aloha. Surely he was guide, philosopher and friend in one; all savages are philosophers and there are few who are not guides and friends as well; but none of them could approach Kane-Aloha, especially since he had such a start in my affections.

Of course my chaperone at first demurred after the manner of chaperones. He deplored the youth of the lad and his inexperience, as

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if experience were any better than instinct, or half as good.

With cunning beyond my years I hinted that the services of Kane-Aloha might be obtained at half price, he being but a child.

Child of Nature he certainly was for he would have cast himself upon the bargain counter with joy if I had merely suggested such a thing. I did suggest it; the heart and the pocket of the chaperone were touched, the latter very lightly, and my hero was mine for the asking.

Now that is why I waited in the Church after Doxology so as to get within speaking distance of Kane-Aloha. I wanted to make sure that he would be at the old swimming hole that afternoon, the last I was likely to pass there for many a year to come.

Well, we were off the next morning bright and early. A procession like a village funeral followed us to the garden-gate where our caravan was in waiting. The adieus were tremulously intoned, for it is not every day that the emotions are stirred in the quiet life at the Mission. I was briefly exhorted to remember my Creator in the days of my youth for the time might come when I'd lose my memory; and the chaperone was assured that if our

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separation was to be of any considerable length or even final there was still the immortal hope that we might meet in another and a better place. To which the chaperone responded gaily "Oh yes! You'll be down to Honolulu one of these days." Upon which odious comparison we buried our spurs in our horses' flanks, as Cavaliers are apt to do, and dashed into the perfumed distance. We had ridden an hour or two in comparative silence, for there was nothing in particular to talk about, when Kane-Aloha suddenly hurried away from us and disappeared in the bush. I was stricken with fear and trembling. What if he had deserted us? What if he had played me false and shaken my faith in his whole delightful tribe? I knew the eyes of the chaperone were fixed upon me and not in the friendliest way. I felt myself growing pale and was beginning to be very miserable indeed when, all at once out of a clear sky came the long plaintive wail of the great emotional mother of Hawaiian men and I took heart of grace. I knew the significance of that wail. It was like the voice of the mosquito a million times multiplied in the deep recesses of a megaphone. It meant in this case that Kane-Aloha had come unto his own; that he was now being

hailed with joy by the mother who bore him and who had not had the pleasure of seeing him for some days—he being a resident of Hilo. Some one lifted up a second voice in a top note that was as piercing as prolonged. Another and another voice was raised; evidently the entire family had burst into song and was now triumphantly chanting his praises.

I said as much to the chaperone who had little faith in my intuitions. I said he is greeting his kinfolk. In a moment there will be silence during which they will break bread-fruit together and quaff the delicious milk of the infantile cocoanut. Their voices will then rise in the chorus of despair and he will take his leave amidst tears and lamentations. It was even so. Out of the wilderness emerged Kane-Aloha and with him a companion old enough to be his father, which was fortunate for all parties concerned since that was just exactly what he happened to be.

In the cheerfulest manner Kane-Aloha announced that his parent would accompany us on our journey since it was not possible for him to separate himself from his son for love of him. The chaperone protested. The son had been engaged for half-price, being as it

were a child. No father was mentioned in the bond. Two were not needed to guide us in trackless wilds; moreover there was not money enough to go around and that settled it.

Kane-Aloha spoke, he having the only English at the service of the family and a little of it went a long way. Formally presenting his well-horsed companion, he said: "This man, she my father, she love me too much, I love her too much; she take my money; I not want money; we all go together; you two; me two; one price; half price; that's all right!"

The matter was no longer debatable; the chaperone rode away with the father; the son and I lingered a little, but made a feint of trying to keep up with our leaders. They were a solemn pair; we were not to be named in the same day with them, if we could help it, and so it came to pass that before many hours we had somehow become separated and were not in the least alarmed. Our trust in Providence and in each other increased as the day waned and we found ourselves alone in the world. There were no sign posts on that road pointing the way to Crater or Creature-comforts; no notices to "Keep off the Lava," or, "Beware of the Missionary." No Town Criers ran after us filling the vales with the clang of their

dreadful bell. We had nothing to do but to get as lost as possible and hug ourselves and chuckle in sheer delight at the thought of our delicious predicament. Kane-Aloha played the Raven and I the Prophet and he fed me with the fairest fruits that ripened by the wayside. Sometimes in the shadow of deep ravines we stopped to bathe, and water and refresh our beasts. Sometimes upon the breezy hill-tops with the azure sea curled up at the horizon brim like a wine cup, we paused to laugh aloud, or shout, for the very joy of living, and our hearts were ready to burst with the love and lust of it all. For a wonder we met no one. Hour after hour passed on and we seemed only to be journeying farther and farther from the world we had left behind us. The Hawaiians in those old days seemed always to be visiting and returning visits, or voyaging to and fro between their islands; yet here were we, babes in the wood, with hardly a robin to bring us a leaf for covering. However we were in need of nothing. Whenever this jolly fact occurred to us we looked into each other's eyes and laughed again; and while we were thus regaling ourselves with laughter Kane-Aloha uttered a cry and dashed down the trail before me. There, in the very

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middle of the trail, a trail so narrow that two could not possibly pass one another on it, but one must plough into the clinkers or sink into the forest of fern and surrender the right of way, there stood a stick as tall as one's middle and in a slit at the top of it a slip of paper folded letter-fashion; the stake was planted firmly in the center of the trail and no one could pass it by daylight without its arresting his attention.

Kane-Aloha with a hesitating hand delivered the message to me; I, wishing the winds had swept it from our coast before we passed that way, opened and read. The chaperone was much concerned at our absence; it had become necessary for him to press on to the next Mission House where he sincerely hoped that I would join him at an early hour. I asked Kane-Aloha if he knew where this particular Mission House was situated. He said he thought he did. I asked him to think again. He thought he did not; but he knew of a native house over yonder, pointing to a purple and golden paradise on the verge of the cerulean sea, where very good people lived, and they would shelter us from the elements in case they should declare merry war during the night. Unto that very house we came, we saw,

we conquered. If we were prodigal sons, with nothing to waste but our time, our host was more prodigal than we and yearned to kill every fatted thing on the premises—that the words of the prophets might be fulfilled to our advantage.

We reveled in riotous living and unraveled with an alacrity worthy of machine-made clothing. Kane-Aloha had been shedding garments by the way all the blessed afternoon. It was evident that presently there would not be a solitary stitch left for propriety's sake. Nobody seemed to care in the least. It was hot out yonder in the sun; it was cooler than cucumbers in the twilight of the thatch that sheltered us. The indolent zephyr breathed upon us freighted with the narcotic aroma of cocconut-oil and we yielded to the seductions of the hour. Is there anything more soothing, more cleansing, more ennobling and refining than the caress of the pure, cool air when it comes in immediate contact with the human body as God created it? O, Ye Tailors! Ye Men-Milliners! Ye Out-fitters of the Unfit! Ye Padders, and Upholsterers, and Repairers and Remodelers of the human form divine, out upon Ye! To the bargain counter with you, with you and your wiles and

your wares! Know ye not that sin came into the world along with a clout of fig-leaves and that a set of bifurcated morals is offered with every marketable pair of "Gents' pants?"

We slept the sleep of the just made perfect by the realization of our wildest dream; meanwhile at the Mission House, far beyond the border of our private horizon, the chaperone was joining in the prayer of the Family Circle, that we, the unregenerated, might be delivered from evil.

A misty morning followed and the trail was faintly traceable when we struck it and resumed our way. Silver hammocks, fairy fabrics decked with diamond-dew, swung across our path and sometimes swept our faces. There lurked colossal spiders as gorgeous as Easter eggs; resplendent spiders with legs like umbrella frames, feathered with lambrequins. Sometimes a rain squall chased us to the nearest shelter and so we barely escaped falling into the hands of the good samaritans who mourned with the bereaved chaperone our untimely taking off. A seasonable detour spared us a luncheon and an apology or an explanation that must have robbed us of our appetites. There were messages along the way, white billets, set in beforked twigs that increased and

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multiplied in numbers and severity as we reluctantly followed in the footsteps of our Elders. Ours was a solemn burlesque of a paper chase; what trophy awaited us when we should have reached the goal? That was the question.

There was another night between us and our journey's end. A night of wind-gusts and spluttering rain; a poor shelter with half-starved goat herds whose hearts beat far beyond the dreams of avarice for neither love nor money could tempt them to offer what they had not. There was *poi*, of course, as there always is *poi* where two or three are gathered together if only for a few moments; and there was a leaf full of berries that looked like great amber beads and when they exploded in your mouth you had to hunt all around for a flavor; and there were five *ohias*, those wild apples that have never been tamed, with flesh as pale as spermaceti; it tastes like temperate ice-cream sopped in rose water. No fish was there, no sea food of any description ever is; no meat is ever there unless it be a yard or two of jerked Billy Goat, but even this is a movable feast. No vegetables? O, yes! there is the *taro*, and of the dust of the *taro* is *poi* created. There is no wine mingled with myrrh, no bottle,

no bird, not even cologne, or kerosene, or so little as an English sparrow. Why, at that crisis a "fiver" in the hand would have been worth two of them in the bush.

It is written the way of the transgressor is hard. We had certainly transgressed the unwritten law but we were not in the least sorry for it. We were wet through, chilled to the bone and as hungry as two City Cats in mid-summer. Therefore we hastened our steps and at last bounded into the arena, where the chaperone and his consort were waiting to receive us. We were cordially welcomed though we knew we didn't deserve to be. No questions were asked, no revelations volunteered; you see the island was too narrow for us to go very far astray in, and they knew it. Moreover there was a small steamer in port and our passages, the chaperone's and mine, were already engaged. In an hour we were to embark for another shore and all that was left to be done must be done quickly.

Nearly everything had been done and done alone, without consulting me. To begin with the chaperone had sold my horse from under me. Now that was the first horse I ever owned and it is likely to be the last. I bought him because he was beautiful and bright, and when

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he stood, he stood as born to rule the storm, like young Casabianca. He was sleek, nut-brown and silky, with a silver star upon his forehead, a star upon his breast and two pairs of white stockings gartered above the knee. I thought him a rival to the celebrated Arab Steed, for his pink nostrils quivered, his tail was a funereal plume and his mane broke like a black wave along his high arched neck. I bought him for ten dollars and one sporting man thought he was worth it, but I had to get him shod at the rate of one dollar a shoe and that nearly staggered me at the time. His name was Kona, the South wind, for he was born on the leeward side of the island where it never rains; where there are no running streams or standing pools and he had never learned to drink. He used to gather a mouthful of grass by the wayside and carry it in his mouth for hours, munching and sucking the juices from it. At first I strove to rid him of it, fearing it was tangled in his bit. He looked like a stuffed horse that had sprung a leak; but through all our struggles he hung on to the grass for he was brave and didn't care for appearances, and he was a confirmed chewer.

Bye and bye we rounded the corner of the

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island and came into a land where it is almost always afternoon—and a rainy afternoon at that—and where there was ever the lightning flash of intermittent waterfalls and the babbling of brooks galore and I said to him: Rejoice, O Kona! This is even the promised land; but I would especially recommend you, after all the days of your life during which you have been athirst, to devote yourself to the consumption of the sparkling and bright! He did not drink; he evidently had not the slightest intention of drinking, on to the end of time. Surely you remember the words of the old song, or is it just plain prose? “You may lead a horse to the water but you cannot make him drink.” We remembered it and lost patience and with one accord sat upon him and shinned out upon his neck as if it had been a bowsprit and then his head went under and he nearly strangled to death, but, O! how he liked it. After that he insisted upon being led beside still waters and there he dreamed and drooled. We had accomplished our hellish purpose. We had driven him to drink.

Kane-Aloha stood close by me when the chaperone gently broke the news. He thought it a bargain but he didn't want me to be too happy over it for some people die of joy;

so he broke the news gently; he had sold my Kona for the sum of one dollar and there was the identical coin. I was struck dumb, it was all so sudden; my eyes were fixed on vacancy. Kane-Aloha turned light green, and then wailed to beat the band. Sobs shook him to his very foundations. His dream was o'er. Had he not pictured me in these last moments giving him as a royal gift,—the steed we loved so well? He was to lead it leisurely back to Hilo and set it free in the greenest of pastures where it should feed and fatten even to the pitch of bursting, until my long looked-for return. Then we should again ride together, as in the days of our youth, scaling mountain heights regardless of the laws of gravitation. There was more of this word-painting set to the music of a voice that had a hard time dodging the heart in his throat.

I could stand this no longer; seizing the poor boy by the arm I ran in search of the man who had purchased Kona. He drove a sharp bargain; he had a will of iron, a heart of marble; he was not a man of feeling, of sensibility. His cup of Kindness did not run over, at least not on our side of it.

I bought back my Kona. He was by this time skin and bone; he had been hard ridden

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for many weary days, over landscapes in which he took no interest whatever. Moreover his habits were beginning to tell upon him. It was a wonder he was not water-logged. I placed him in the hands of Kane-Aloha. I had to pay one fifty to get him back again so his purchaser made fifty per cent. on his investment inside of fifteen minutes.

I said, "Take him O, Beloved! O, comrade by flood and field! Keep him forever in memory of the past! He is thine, all thine, *aikane!* Bosom-friend! Take him and wear him next thy heart, until we meet again!"

Then I ran as fast as ever I could to the shore where the chaperone was shouting to me from the boat that was to bear us to the little Transport in the offing, and that was the end of it all. The end of the story of Kona, the South Wind; and of Kane-Aloha, well named the Loving Man.

Kane-Aloha? I never saw him more, nor Kona either; nor ever heard of any scion of the former, the fruit of some undreamed marriage, following in the footsteps of his father to the lookout on the hill-top, watching, ever watching for my return; nor for any foal in whose frisky veins rioted the blood of the unforgotten Kona.

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It may be that sometime, somewhere, the tale-tellers will tell the tales of two horses and their boys and that our harmless life and adventures will become historical, as has many another incident of little moment; it may be that this episode is hardly worth remembering at all, yet I cannot forget it nor refrain from recounting it since it once touched me to the quick. It does not matter if in my calmer moments reason cautions me to beware—my head and my heart don't hitch—they never did—and so I have written as I have written; and I shall not have written in vain if I, for a few moments only, have afforded interest or pleasure to the careful student of the Unnatural History of Civilization.

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DOES any one know aught of primeval Lahaina, I wonder, more than this—that she was once populous and paradisiacal; that the sun sat in the lap of her and the sea laved her shores night and day?

Of all the *meles*, tongued trippingly from generation to generation, that now seldom seek to beguile the more worldly ear, I find little that concerns Lahaina. It seems that from the very beginning she lay under the sun and was a namesake of the fact; the fact is as patent to-day as ever it dared to be; and that her grape blossoms were sweet—the breath of her maidens not sweeter, for was it not said of something luscious and sung of old, that verily it was “*Sweet as the grape blossoms of Lahaina?*” But both the maidens and the fruit of the Vine have degenerated, along with her court-favors and her commerce.

I write of the middle-age of the Hawaiian Era, when royalty had already abandoned Lahaina to her slumbers and she was no longer the Capital of one of the proudest and prettiest Kingdoms that was ever reigned over

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by right divine. The days when voyagers graciously arrived and departed by the two-masted schooner—the doubtfullest craft afloat; when, if once or twice a year a whaler dropped anchor in the roadstead, it was apparently for no other purpose than to kill time with water-melon-orgies and make a silhouette against one of those celebrated sunsets—I may add that in both instances she was eminently successful.

Your toilers and spinners would have found life there very slow, no doubt, for they flourish in the hurly-burly and are a component part of it; but it was sweet and commendable for a' that and a' that.

There was a reviving coolness in the air about daybreak that was quite irresistible; we were out of bed and into the sea long before the sun peeped over the Eastern hill-tops; by the by, those hill-tops are uncommonly lofty in the rear of Lahaina. Coffee was then in order, and a leisurely stroll through the main street of the settlement, its boulevard, its only highway worthy of the name; that avenue has but one civilized side to it, for the wave breaks lightly upon the other and as a thoroughfare for the amphibious it is perhaps the broadest in the world

—stretching, as it does, from the breadfruits of Lahaina to the bamboos of Cathay. A bountiful breakfast at the tenth hour waited upon the sharpened appetite, and this was followed by a long peace-pipe shared with the gossips of the town. Ah! that was a motley gathering, when we gathered together with one accord and solemnly hit the Calumet. Some of these worthies used to assemble at the Custom House, a semi-serious conclave whose unwritten history is well-nigh forgotten. There was T——, a circulating encyclopædia of anecdote, whose appropos trod upon the heels of every utterance, and yet he was never known to repeat himself. There was the mysterious S——, of whom it was whispered his mother tongue had a step-mother rival in the Arabic; he certainly had an Oriental air and secretly dealt in magic and spells for all we knew to the contrary. And there was O——, the great communicator, who could say more in a minute than he could stand to in a month; he was descended from the Ananiases and so well had he established his reputation that, when he was one day missing and some time afterward found hanging by the neck to his own roof-tree, no one would believe that he was dead, dead, dead.

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In those days the gentle resident Historian with placid eye surveyed us from his mount of tradition, no doubt marveling that we could play so thoughtlessly upon the surface of things, the foundations of which were laid in the myths of the ages.

We laughed at care then even in the hollow halls of the Custom House, and from time to time went out upon the high veranda and scoured the sea with a verdigrised telescope in search of phantom ships. We were invariably lost in amazement that they were not even then making for the palm-punctuated port under full sail, so that the Commodore might that very evening sit with us under the wide-spreading Banian-tree and watch the sun go down.

That sun-down-sea was a sight to behold! There were always a couple of islands thrown in for effect, and the whole population came out to look on with a chorus of audible approval that was like the drone of bees; we invariably dozed before this hour so as to be able to live up to it, and when we awoke, we drove briskly to and fro among the groves to quicken our seven senses. By this time the sky began to show symptoms and the sea to grow sympathetic—but I'll not go all through

a Lahaina sunset at this late date for there never were two alike and I know not where to choose.

After sunset lo, precipitous twilight! It usually came on with the black coffee just as T—— and S——, at whose joint-board I sat many an evening, turned from the table on the veranda to tales that might have staggered the marines. At nine o'clock we adjourned to the dusky sitting-room, a room that was still dusky even when the astral lamp was lighted and flanked by waxen satellites flickering in tall glass cylinders, that sheltered them from the winds; a room tapestried with shadows and having dark furnishings that absorbed the light. It was a room in which to tell a grewsome tale and to nourish the gravest superstitions. On the wall hung flat Chinese paintings of Chinese seaports in frames grotesquely carved; tattooed walrus tusks shone dimly among the bric-a-brac, trophies of T——'s early voyages.

On the stroke of the clock a coolie entered with bowls of scalding tea; a fragile Chinese tabouret placed by each occupied chair held the steaming draughts; there we smoked and sipped and chatted while the gray night moths with their ruby eyes waltzed about the

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lights and dragon flies, those natural born flying-machines, skated athwart the ceiling.

The sea was very near us; its spray was sometimes scattered over the *lanai*, or broad veranda, where we had dined; and the low mutter of the long wave that fell languidly upon the Lahaina shore was the key-note of the Even-song, without which the village would have lost its identity.

The pestiferous O—— lived a kind of hermit life in a suburban cottage where he treasured a few interesting volumes and certain cups and medals of silver by which he set great store, hinting vaguely at ancestral honors, which no one cared to question. He had cottages at hand, connected with his own by grape arbors that seemed a league in length when viewed in delusive perspective. I lodged in one of these nest-like cots for a time courting solitude, but was continually surprised among the leafy cloisters by the sly-footed O——, or his shade, and soon learned that he had an all-seeing eye and an all-saying tongue, so I was obliged to seek refuge elsewhere. House hunting in those days, when Lahaina was a dream and not the nightmare it now is, was no easy matter. The huddle of grass-huts was crowded to excess. On the other hand there

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was no hotel, no pension, no tenement to fly to for temporary refuge. The villa-like residences of the élite were private property and not on the market, or likely soon to be. I knew of but one available mansion and it would be necessary to remodel it in order to make it habitable; this was the Tomb of the Kings. Lahaina in its glory was the home of royalty. There dwelt the rulers of the people and there they died and were buried, for in death they were not divided. It was an airy mausoleum builded of coral blocks; within it of old were ranged the sarcophagi that encased the spiced dust of the mightiest of their race. A hallowed spot it was where the natives gathered at intervals chanting, in tremulous recitative, the epic of their heroes—heroes who ranked even among the gods. When the new Mausoleum was erected up the Valley of Nuuanu, back of Honolulu, all the dust of the dead was solemnly conveyed from its long home—which was not so long as it might have been under other circumstances—and with august ceremonies deposited where in all probability it will remain until doomsday. Then the old tomb was “To Let,” nobody seemed to care for it any longer. Once upon a time it had been as the Holy of Holies.

Never anyone who was hatted passed near it without uncovering. Not a day went by but there was wailing there; elegies were sung by those whose voices were softened with tears. Matins and vespers of profound solemnity filled the air with lamentations that stormed high heaven and perchance saluted the ears of those whose numberless virtues were thus heralded to the skies. It was a place of pilgrimage, a shrine to which willing and loyal hearts wended their way from the uttermost parts of the kingdom. A tribute of flowers was forever heaped upon its threshold and the over-creeping vines had made of it a bower of beauty. Before it were planted the tall *kahilis*—those stately staves tipped with deep ruffs of feathers that for splendor of form and color rival the plumage of paradise-birds—these the emblems of royalty, precious as the relics of the saints. Always there fell with the shades of night such a silence as was never broken or profaned by even so much or so little as a whisper. It was the season of communion among the gods and no mere mortal ever ventured there in the darkness. No wonder it was “to let;” the finest, airiest, roomiest chamber in the port “for rent” and yet suffered to remain untenanted year after year,

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and avoided even in daylight by all the passers-by as if it had been a pest house. This unsealed sepulchre I could have for the asking. It had been unvisited for a generation; no one cared to enter and explore it; yet no one would ask to have its walls thrown down for it had been consecrated by the dust of Kings and was a hallowed landmark for all time.

One day I procured a rusty key and with some difficulty forced the lock and entered. It had a chill of its own, like a refrigerator. I found that its pavement was in good repair; that if its walls were whitened and a window or two let into them it might present a pleasing and even cheerful appearance. The roof was in excellent condition. What was needed most was a deep veranda, or *lanai*, before it, and a door opening on the side or rear that would admit one to a sleeping room to be added by the occupant.

It was surely a bargain. When I took possession of the place there was not one more attractive in the whole archipelago. Whatever shadow of fear I may have had in the beginning soon passed away. I had forgotten to be afraid. Moreover I had as my constant companion a Gordon setter whose loving trust-

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fulness had won all my heart and awakened in me a passion that was akin to devotion. We comprehended one another perfectly; the exchange of a glance of the eye was sufficient to bring us to a complete understanding of any circumstance, and I never had occasion to reprove Fantine or to speak harshly to her so long as we were spared to one another. At the mere sound of my voice she moved her plume-like tail and often and often looked up to me over her shoulder with the luminous eyes of love—eyes like great jewels imprisoning a flame. We were never separated; we were nearly always within sight of one another and my slightest movement brought her to my side. How could one be lonely with such companionship even though our home was a deserted sepulchre and the shade we dwelt in as the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

That living tomb was the very place wherein something unusual might happen; I assured myself of the fact over and over again. Well, it happened, and it happened in this wise:

I was lying upon the couch in the inner room and had evidently been dozing. A portion of the room was latticed, but the night was dark and the only light we had burned dimly on the center table in the great hall of

the tomb. Fantine was violently agitated and giving vent to little screams of fright. She was crouching on the floor beside me and striving to get nearer to me, but was trembling so violently that her paralyzed limbs seemed unable to support her and she, poor little lady, was as one suddenly stricken with palsy. Her eyes, which seemed bursting from their sockets, were fixed upon some object in the outer room, something I could not see from my pillow, and I rose to take her in my arms and comfort her for her condition alarmed me. As I knelt by her side and put forth my arms to draw her to my bosom I looked in the direction in which her eyes were fixed and there stood a tall, motionless figure clad in the feather helmet of the Roman fashion such as was worn by the high chiefs of old and the long cloak of feathers that was the mantle of royalty, when such divinity hedged the Lord's Anointed that to tread even upon the shadow of the throne was certain and instant death. My heart fainted within me. Had the buried majesty of the Island Kingdom revisited the glimpses of the pale lamp then burning feebly in that hall of death? Was his spirit agrieved at my intrusion? His slumbers broken at the sacrilege? Bore he upon his breathless lips

the curse of all his tribe, for the everlasting peril of my soul? I gathered the agonizing Fantine to my heart and thought to steal away, for my soul's sake, and to spare my companion the horror of madness that now sadly shook her frame.

I could not speak; I could not stir; all my nerves were frozen in horror. Slaver bubbled upon the lips of my poor, beautiful darling; mine were parched as with fever; my brain reeled, I grew faint and was about to sink to the floor, when the cause of my consternation moved slowly from the spot where it had first appeared. I had assured myself from the moment my eyes fell upon it that it was not a living being; no one with the breath of life in his body would ever have appeared to me in that guise, at the hour when graveyards yawn and graves give up their dead. It moved slowly, very, very slowly, and so silently that I could hear the beating of our foolish hearts, Fantine's and mine, in the little room whence we were watching it. It did not walk, there was no perceptible motion of the limbs; it floated as if suspended in the air; there was no suggestion of corporeal weight, or of gravity; the spectre had the carriage of one who had been born to rule; a dignity that com-

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pelled respect; a solemnity that commanded awe; yet it was buoyant like a palpable shadow, and drifted toward us as noiselessly as if it were a pillar of cloud. One arm was lifted, one shadowy hand pointed to a corner of the chamber and a slight inclination of the hand seemed to beckon me to follow it—for it was still in motion as if it were being wafted upon the air. With an effort I rose to do its bidding; Fantine seized me by my slumber robe and would have held me back had I not stopped transfixed at the sight I then beheld.

The apparition drifted softly and slowly between me and the lamp and in that moment there was but a partial eclipse of the flame. It was as if a beacon were burning through a fog, or a coal were smouldering in smoke. All the outline of the figure was preserved and as sharply defined as a silhouette, but it was not opaque; neither was it transparent; it was translucent, like a wraith or a London fog; as it moved away a cool breath of air seemed to sweep after it, a breath that had the slight chill of a vault and the musty odor of a subterranean cell. Again I started to approach it, but at that moment the faint note of a bell in the tower of the native church at the other end of the village fell upon my

ear and the shade dissolved away; a cock crowed shrilly; Fantine barked in her accustomed manner, shook herself and began sniffing about the premises. I rubbed my eyes in bewilderment for I could hardly believe that they had seen what I seemed to have seen—the shadow of something that did not exist, though it must have once lived and moved and had its being in the flesh. Was it a spiritual body that had put off mortality and was, for the time being, made manifest in its resurrection? It looked corporeal, yet vapory; rotund, yet of such a texture that the eye might pierce into its depths and the hand pass through it as through a denser mist. It was a demon, possibly, a good spirit, though ill at ease as one unshrived; but it was no devil come to haunt me—of this I assured myself a thousand times. Fantine and I went forth and wandered by the sea till daybreak for our hearts were troubled and our minds perplexed. I made a careful examination of the tomb. I strove to ascertain if in the corner to which the spectre pointed there was any evidence of a secret door that should lead to a hidden recess where, possibly, some forgotten treasure might be stored. It could not be of much intrinsic value, but, surely, it would be

worth an effort at discovery. I searched long and carefully, but all in vain. If there was anything secreted there, its receptacle was no doubt within the wall or beneath the pavement. To find it the plaster must be removed from the wall or the flagstone from the pavement. In any event I resolved to prosecute my exploration. The second night, my Demon came again. I was watching for it and so, also, was Fantine, for she grew nervous and fretful as the midnight hour drew near and was fain to nestle in my arms while she watched my every movement with loving but anxious eyes.

Suddenly a paroxysm seized her. There towered the shadowy form, waving its hand persuasively toward the corner of the tomb as on its previous visitation. Forewarned is forearmed in very truth. With comparative calmness I arose and followed where it beckoned; Fantine, grovelling at my heels, dragged her quivering body after me, moaning piteously. A spectral finger of a spectral hand that seemed to have become detached from the arm, floated in mid-air, pointing downward and slowly settling till it touched a certain flag in the pavement where, pausing for a moment only, it passed through the stone and disappeared, leaving no trace behind.

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The body of the spectre, with feather-cloak and Roman helmet coated with well-preened feathers, when it first came to view seemed to have materialized in my very presence, and fashioned itself out of the air like a frosty breath. It made no formal entrance, and no exit; but, even as it was created out of nothing, so it returned to nothing, leaving only the hand plainly visible to point me to the spot where it sank from view.

The rest is soon told, though it was kept secret for a considerable time lest gossip should scandalize the neighborhood. With the help of my native servant, a faithful soul, who was sworn to secrecy, I removed the flagging in the corner of the tomb where the vanished hand had paused and returned to nothingness, and began an excavation that soon brought to light—to lamp light, for our labors were not begun until the whole settlement had sunk to rest and were completed before the peep o' day—soon brought to light the remains of what was once a Chieftain. The cloak and the helmet were easily identified, though the last vestiges of these were mixed with mould and past the possibility of transportation. The skull was intact; the bones fallen together were still to be classified; but what

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thrilled me with delight was the handsome *palaoa*, in perfect preservation, lying where it had been placed about the neck of the Chief who had worn it, and buried with him when his body had been committed to the tomb, so many years before. The *palaoa*—a whale's tooth very cunningly carved, and suspended about the neck by a thousand tiny strands of plaited human hair. The whale's tooth with its broad hook curved outward hung upon the royal breast; the strands of human hair gathered into a knot were fastened behind the neck. When I saw it, lying there in a grave that had hidden it for an unknown period, I reached eagerly for it, and, seizing it bore it to the light in triumph. It was mine, all mine; money could not have purchased it, nor love either, for it is now so rare a relic that no more are to be obtained. I was rejoicing in the possession of my new-found treasure when a cry from my boy, the second grave-digger, called me to his side. He was peering into the grave in amazement, and no wonder! I looked where lately lay the ashes of the dead and not a vestige of them remained to view. Being exposed to the air they had suddenly crumbled away and the grave was ravished of its own. An hour later, you would not have known that

anything unusual had happened in our household. Fantine was waving her plume in perfect satisfaction; I was the richer for my prize; and the Ghost of the long-departed walked no more in its unrest down the dim corridors of time. Well; there it hangs, the *palaoa*, on the wall yonder; there to the left of the feather necklace, just over the idol from Easter Island, with the missionary-pearl-shirt buttons for eyes.

Fantine? Alas, poor pet! We were on the wing, in mid-channel, one starlight night, and booming along under a right stiff breeze. The schooner's deck was crowded with recumbent sleepers; the decks were always crowded in those days. Fantine lay beside me, her head upon my arm, I dozing, dreaming a contented dream. All at once, out of the midst of the people scattered about us, up rose a man who was a perfect stranger to everybody and who would have passed unnoticed but that during the previous day he had seemed the victim of melancholy. Up rose this stranger and without charge to jury, verdict, death-sentence, benefit of clergy or passing bell, he swooped upon that sleeping dog, snatched her from my relaxed, unguarding arms and cast her into the midst of the sea. Pariah-curs batten unmo-

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lested throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom; but so unexpected and inconceivable was this climax that not a syllable was uttered and not a hand raised till all hope of rescue was futile. So perished the sweetest spirit, the gentlest, most loving, most trusting, most sympathetic, most refined and best-bred lady of her race.

And the Man lived!

Now, if your predestinarian finds anything providential in this, let him lay the flattering unction to his soul and be hanged to him!

Ah me! the dear dead days and all that died and was buried with them! Gone now are the vines and the fig-trees, and the grass-roofed lodges that nestled in their shade. Gone now are friends I loved and who loved me for my love of them—we hadn't very much else to do in those days and this was our chief delight in that island of tranquillity. Gone is neighbor S——, the mystery, who was mysterious to the very last; the post-mortem examination of his personal effects—I had almost said im-personal in this case—discovered nought to the curious and inquisitive of his ambiguous history; he may have been an out-cast Cabalist or an unfrocked Dervish for aught we knew to the contrary; if he ever

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imparted the dead secret to anyone, that one must have been the living witness of his death, the Angelican archdeacon in whose knowledge it is locked up under the ecclesiastical seal; and he, the archdeacon, may now be an archbishop in some other vineyard of the Lord. The vineyards of Lahaina are no more; monopoly is sugaring the soil, seeking to turn beauty into very hard cash; but crushed cane is not so sweet as the grape blossoms of lang syne, nor the president's pennies so goodly as the grapes of the Hawaiian Eschol.

The sound of the grinding has not ceased on any side of the island; on the contrary it has painfully increased. O Sugar! how often has thy name been taken in vain! Desire has failed, down yonder in the forlorn Annex, save the desire of the almighty dollar. The mourners go about the streets bewailing their better days; all the daughters of music have been brought low, and the clodhopper has become a burden. I wonder if anything is left as it was when I knew you, Lahaina? Passing the port again after nightfall or before daybreak I, at least, might recognize the outline of the delectable mountains, the ceaseless song of the sea, the clatter of the indigenous boat-boys. Does the green lane still thread the

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bread-fruit grove at the back of the village and lose itself from time to time in a guava jungle, or are the planters raising cane on every square foot of the soil? Do the gold-fish flicker flame-like among the rushes of the forsaken canal or have the docks rushed in where angels feared to tread and raised rainbow blisters on the oily face of the waters? Are the eyeless skulls still staring at the sun as they lie bleaching in the white sand on the road to Kaanapali, or have they been kicked into space by impudent feet of aliens on the pitiless march of progress? And the doves, the fair white doves with wings as white as snow, dart they out of the belfry of the old native church when the bell begins to swing and ding and ring? The clang of the bell alone could flutter the dove-cots of Lahaina, but they had very little rest for all that, it being an ever-swinging, ever-dinging, ever-ringing bell. Are the thick coral walls of the old mansions still standing and do they cover themselves with vines and splendor and flash a broadside of windows that seem to wink and to blink as they stare out upon the blinding sea of a sunny summer afternoon? Are the Reverend Fathers in faded soutanes still watching their flock by night and do they

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teach the little ones under the trees, as Plato taught? And sing Mass with failing voices, some of them, and feed sparingly, all of them, for the love of Christ and Him crucified?

Do the surf swimmers climb a comber as lightly as the petrel, and trip it along the fringing crest like water-sprites? Does anyone find his way into the little white-washed cala-boose and there converse gaily with the Peri on the other side of the gate?

Dear, dear, old Lahaina! Is she as warm and comfortable and lazy and luxurious a strip of tropical territory as she was wont to be before death or devilish activity laid heavy hands on her and sealed her doom?

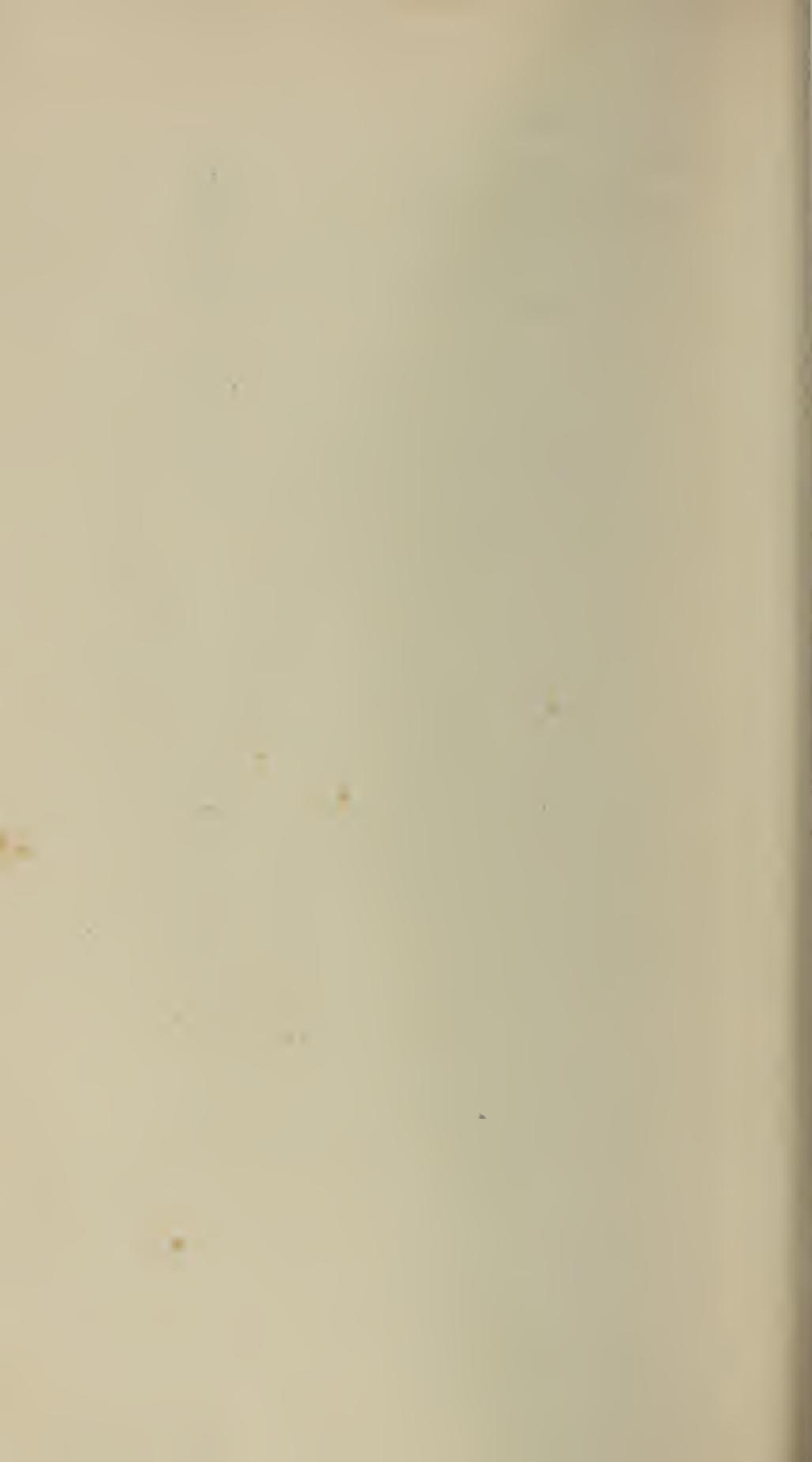
Well, I suppose I must go and see for myself, and may Heaven prepare me for the worst. Of course it will, and perhaps, in my case, it won't matter so very much. I was sick unto death and when I died all doubt in the goodness of God and all distrust of my fellow men died with me, and this materially contributed to the glory of my resurrection; so perhaps all things considered it is just as well that it is as it is.

I shall never forget my last night in Lahaina. All nature slept—save only the human as represented in my person. Even the sea

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was hushed; now and again an over-ripe mango, or a bread-fruit dropped into the grass with a muffled sound; once a withered palm branch fell with a crash in the cocoa-grove at the foot of the garden, and then all was stiller than ever.

Two dreamland islands rested like clouds upon the water, and one shadowy ship, with shadowy masts and spars, and silken rigging as fine as a spider's web, hung suspended in the breathless moonlight.



A BUNGALOW "BEE"

A BUNGALOW "BEE"

A VERY dear friend once said to me, in a moment of enthusiasm: "Oh, I wish you would be sick so that I could take care of you!" Not to be outdone by him in generosity and self-sacrifice I straightway fell ill and took to my bed on the shortest possible notice. It happened in this wise.

I awoke one morning with a heavy heart and no appetite at all. Life seemed an unbearable burden, and the world was a blank. In the good old days of Hawaii there used to be a purely local low fever, to which very many of the unacclimated foreigners fell easy victims. It was called the boohoo fever. When it seized one there was only one thing to be done, and that was to dissolve in tears. There was nothing to cry over,—not even spilled milk. The sun shone just as brightly, the birds sang just as sweetly, the zephyr was as fragrant as ever, and the world was beautiful as of yore; but—everything was wasted on the boohoo feverish patient. Rivers of tears flowed night and day, as if one were weeping for one's sins. Surely they should have been washed away, even the stain of

them, for the lachrymation that seemed never to cease for a moment.

There were four of us keeping bachelors' hall at Stag-Rocket Bungalow, up Nuuanu Valley, just above Honolulu. There was not a woman within sight of us. We could not recognize any one entering our gate, it was so far away from the house. The house itself was as light and airy as a barn. There was never a door or a window closed there from one year's end to the other—unless the great Kona blew, the "sick-wind" that everyone dreads and shuts out of doors if possible. But the Kona was not blowing when I resolved to give up the ghost, if possible, and depart out of that summer land with all its beauty, and return no more for aye.

I lay speechless upon my pillow, albeit the breakfast bell had been jingled twice at least. Still I lay there with my face to the wall, and pitied myself mightily. Akamah, the Celestial chef and man-of-all-work, stood in my doorway with a puzzled cast of countenance; the like of this he had never seen before. Being but a poor sleeper, often I wandered in the dead of night onto the broad veranda and sat rocking to and fro until the dawn of day. I was not wedded to my pillow. Moreover,

our menagerie—a half dozen fox and Irish terriers—had the freedom of the place, and at intervals during the night would spring from dreams of the chase and go tearing throughout the house with a barking chorus that was enough to encourage a fit of nervous prostration.

On this particular morning Akamah withdrew from my presence, and I heard a conversation going on in the breakfast room. Then Momona, who was our chosen head-of-the-house, entered my room.

"Are you ill?" he asked.

"No."

"Are you not hungry?"

"No."

"Do you want anything done for you?"

"No."

"Then what is the matter?"

"Nothing is the matter. Life is a blank; that is all."

Exit Momona.

Then Polo came as if by accident. Happened to be passing that way, that was all. More questions, more negative replies. Exit Polo. Enter Kali-Lili—all these were our native Hawaiian names. Kali-Lili would fain have me ill so that he might nurse me back

THE ISLAND OF TRANQUIL DELIGHTS

to health, and feel that he had saved my life. Kali-Lili had dark, sympathetic eyes and a laugh that led all of us to laughter. He was serious now; he sat on the edge of the bed and wondered what he could do for me. Alas! nothing—nothing whatever; and he turned away with a sad face. Then there was another consultation in the breakfast room. After that they came in a body to say good-by; for they were busy in the town, and had to leave the Bungalow on their horses at eight in the morning. I did not see them until five o'clock in the afternoon. They each and all wondered if they could not get me something in town and bring it home to gladden me in the evening. "No, nothing whatever." And again I turned my face to the wall, thinking how difficult it is for some people to die, how easy for some others.

I heard the cavalcade galloping down the long lane; and later I heard their horses' hoofs booming on the two wooden bridges that span the stream flowing between the Bungalow and town. Silence followed, broken only by the chirp of crickets, the delirious headlong flight of those winged javelins, the dragon-flies, that darted into my chamber and nearly broke their necks before they could find their

way out again. There was also the nasal drawl of the trumpeting mosquito, the noisy carol of the myna birds, and the soft, far-away refrain of the reef that sings with unceasing song.

I was thinking of all these things as I lay in my gauzy tent,—for one must lie under a tent of gauze if one would escape the assaults of the mosquito night or day. My bed was evidently an heirloom. It was one of those very tall four-poster bedsteads such as must have come over in the Ark. These posts were richly carved and supported a canopy of turkey red material with a fringe of white tassels; the mosquito tent slid beneath it on two iron rods that ran the length of the bed. Once within this gauzy fortress, I felt secure from all assaults.

Yet I was not! As I lay there and thought upon my foolish waste of life, I heard a soft footstep in the passage that separated the breakfast room from the rest of the house and made of it a kind of kiosk at the end of the great veranda. I said to myself: "That must be Akamah. He is putting the breakfast things away. A faithful soul is Akamah!" Then I heard a noise as of something being stirred violently in a glass. I hoped and

prayed that my illness—such as it was—had not driven this highly respectable son of the Orient to drink. We already had one untimely grave in the back yard. It was that of the young wife of the proprietor of the Bungalow. It was enclosed within a white picket fence, and a dense foliage had grown all about it.

Presently Akamah appeared in my doorway with a small glass in his hand. His face was radiant with smiles. The glass contained a liquid of some kind,—a dark and pungent liquid. Akamah approached me with the air of an ambassador who is the bearer of royal gifts. He crept carefully under the gauze curtain of my bed, and, extending his hand with the glass, said soothingly: “Cockatail: you take cockatail?” I could not deny him, for to repulse his kindness would have been cruel. I took the potion, probably his first attempt at a like concoction. Shades of quinine and gall, with red pepper and a dash of the extract of unripe persimmons in it! I think that draught was compounded of Worcestershire sauce, cherry bounce and tobacco. Well, if it did not cure me, it did not kill me, and Akamah was supremely happy. Then I sank into the soothing languors of the

afternoon. Surely the hours were restful; for they were not long, though they were empty.

By and by came the boys galloping home. As soon as the horses were turned loose—one does not stable them in that delectable land—the riders stole softly into my room, one at a time. The first brought a fruit offering—the very choicest fruits filling a net to overflowing. Oh, the alligator pears, the mangoes, guavas, and the *ohias* which seemed like the materialized ghosts of the most delicious apples that ever grew! The next a flower offering—wreaths and garlands of the native flowers, such as the Hawaiians love to adorn themselves with,—and it must be confessed that they adorn the flowers who wear them. Lastly, a book offering—a selection of the very latest literary successes. What more could be done for me, or for any one under similar circumstances?

They dined without me, though I was thrice invited, and Akamah put in an imploring word as a kind of "Amen" to it all. After dinner there was a popular concert on the veranda, but very near my end of it, and evidently especially addressed to my ears. Every song that I liked was sung, to the accompaniment of mandolins, guitars, and *ukuleles*

—or “Taro Patch fiddles,” a Portuguese instrument that looks like a lilliputian guitar and is strummed after the manner of the mandolin. This, the favorite instrument of the Hawaiian, has almost become national, and when heard in the twilight or the moonlight is bewitching beyond compare. Listening to this offering of devotion, I fell asleep, and even the terriers seemed to realize that it was the polite—not to say the humane thing—to walk about on their tiptoes.

The languor of the morning followed. “Will you breakfast with us?”—“No!” They each paid me his first visit on returning from the bath-house, a rustic arbor on the other side of the lawn, with a deep basin constantly refilled by a flowing rivulet of mountain water. After breakfast another interview, with an air of increased anxiety darkening the brows of those dear fellows.

“Would you like to take a little tour around the island of Oahu?”—the island on which we lived.

“No.”

“Some of us will go with you if you would like to go.”

“No! I have been around and around the island.”

Then spake the second voice:

"Will you go to Maui and Haleakala, if some of us will go with you?"

"No! I have been there again and again."

The third voice was lifted doubtfully:

"Will you go to Hawaii and see the volcano? It is very active now."

"No! I have seen in action three of the greatest volcanoes in the world, including Hale-Mau-Mau. I should not care to see any one of them, even if it were brought to my door."

The trio left me in despair, but not until, at my request, Momona had suggested to Akamah that perhaps, owing to the abnormal condition of my nervous system, it were better for him not to tempt me in future with the "flowing bowl."

Another day, in which I seemed almost at my last gasp, passed like a dream. I must have dozed, for the hours were so very brief. But all through it I heard the faint murmur of the reef; the voices of Hawaiians singing or wailing for joy or sorrow; the birds, the bees, the sougning of the trade-wind as it swept through the house; and again the pelt-ing of the passing showers that fell upon the roof like avalanches of shot. Betimes Aka-

THE ISLAND OF TRANQUIL DELIGHTS

mah came softly to the door in sandals and peeped in, but said nothing. He was evidently grieved: his occupation was gone. The menagerie grew sympathetic; all the dogs came in and threw themselves in a half-tragic manner upon the floor, as if they despaired of me, but were faithful unto death; then they went to sleep, but rousing and rushing at intervals into the air, as if they had been sent for in hot haste. On a table beside me was a tray of tempting fruits, a pitcher of lemonade, and flowers whose fragrance was almost overpowering. Even the Circean cigarette was left unlit, though I was a smoker then.

Again the boys returned and paid me their visits of sympathy. More kindly enquiries followed:

“Will you have a doctor?”

“No.”

“Would you like all the fellows to come up some evening and have a good time with you?”

“No.”

“Then what on earth *do* you want?”—with a pardonable touch of impatience.

“Nothing!”

When they said good-by next morning they seemed to be taking leave of my remains.

A BUNGALOW "BEE"

I found that Akamah was passing most of his time just outside of my door. He spread his mat there, and there waited hour after hour the happening of the unexpected. Of course anything that might happen must be unexpected, for no one of us could read the future, and we were all in the dark so far as my case was concerned. I discovered him on his watch, because I heard a knock at one of the veranda doors; it was repeated twice or thrice, and then footsteps came my way, and in a few moments Father Leanore, of the cathedral, entered my room. He had wandered through the house—the rooms were all connected—until he found me in my bed. Then he went to the veranda door and saw Akamah wrapped in profoundest slumber. I fear he had been sitting up o' nights and was overcome at last. We let him sleep.

Good Father Leanore had learned of my case from one of the boys—or all of them. He said, as he sat by my side, his finger on my pulse: "My dear child, there is nothing the matter with you. You are a little run down and have the boohoo fever, which is rather depressing but perfectly harmless. You need change, that is all,—you need a change." At once I lifted up my heart.

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Change? Of course! Why not take the steamer, then in port, and run up to the Coast—that is San Francisco—for a few weeks? I had not seen my friends there for two quiet, balmy, beautiful, but monotonous years. I smiled at the prospect. We became almost merry, Father Leanore and I; he left me feeling brighter than I had felt for a long time. I could hardly wait for the return of the boys. But presently I heard their horses' hoofs on the two bridges in the edge of the town, and then I heard them tearing wildly up to the Bungalow and then—

Well, they were beaming. They had consulted Father Leanore, and he had said to them, on his return to town: "Send him to the Coast by steamer which leaves to-morrow. A change is all he needs, and that is the one change for him." When the boys came in Momona was waving a slip of paper in his hand. He gave it to me with an air of triumph. It was a pass to San Francisco and return, good for three months! I laughed outright. The boys gave three cheers, and then each in turn embraced me and said: "You will dine with us this evening?" Of course I did. But imagine my amazement when I was escorted to the dining-room to

A BUNGALOW "BEE"

find it thronged with our most intimate friends who were to spend the evening with us. And such a joyous evening! Music into the dawn—almost. Merry tales of the merry times we had had together in the Bungalow. Akamah was quite in his element, for we were hungry again at midnight, and he gloried in preparing an impromptu repast. I seemed to have somehow suddenly come to the surface out of the depths. It was Father Leanore who was the good physician, and his prescription worked wonderfully.

The next day at noon I drove to the dock, accompanied by a retinue of outriders; all of the boys who frequented the Bungalow came with me. Bandmaster Berger, with his Royal Hawaiian Band, played for me a farewell—"Beautiful Isle of the Sea!"—and we slipped cable and drifted out of the harbor into the blue Pacific.

The truth is, I suppose, that I had sucked my orange dry and was sick of the pulp: I needed a new orange,—that is all. Yet that night, when the beautiful isle of the sea had vanished beyond the horizon, and I began to think of the pastimes which we had all lately shared in the dear old Bungalow, I could have wept anew, and would have given all I was

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possessed of only to be back again with the best fellows in the world. Such is the perversity of the human heart.



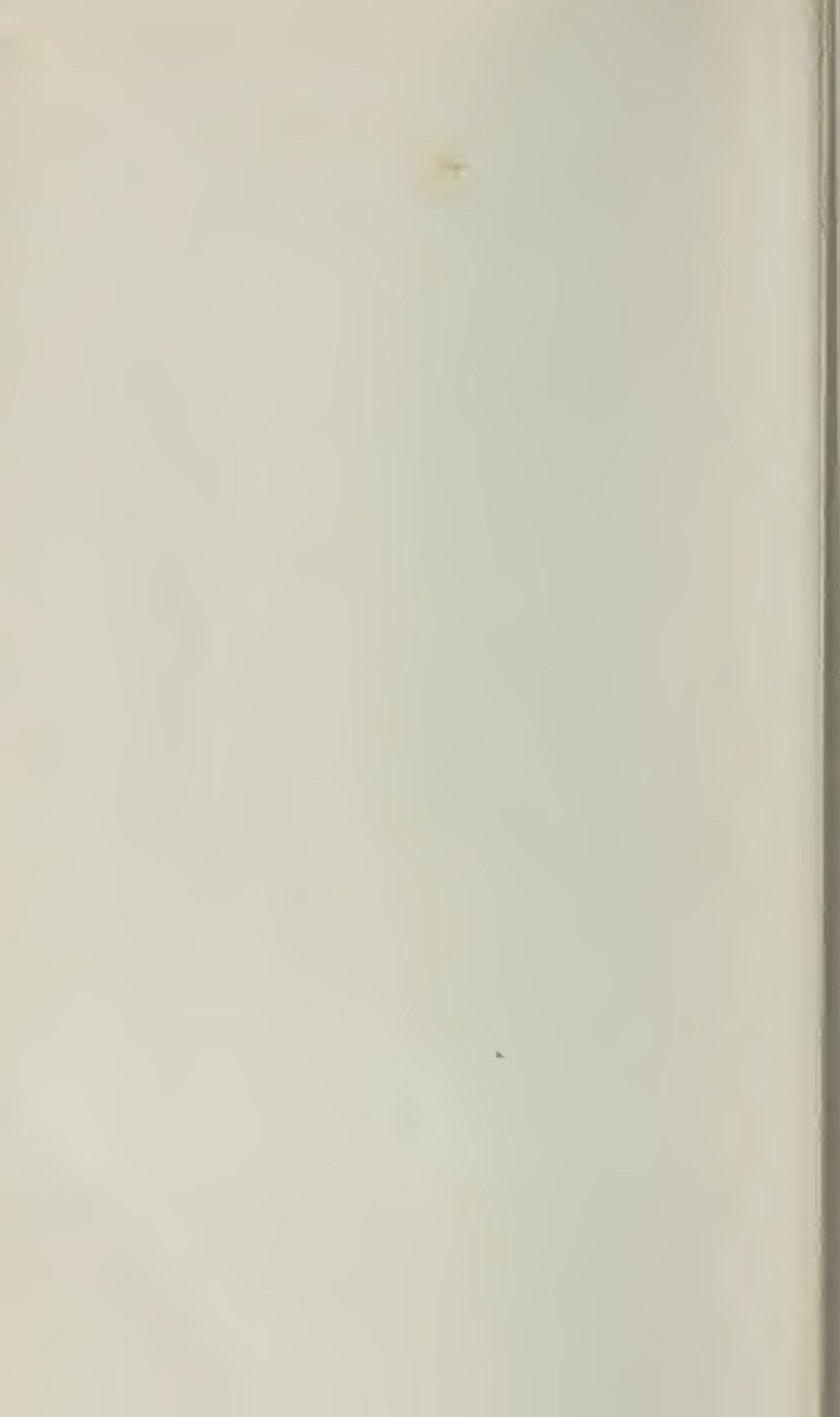
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