

You Never Know Your Luck, Volume 1. - STORY OF A MATRIMONIAL DESERTER)

(BEING THE

Gilbert Parker

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#112 in our series by Gilbert Parker

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YOU NEVER KNOW YOUR LUCK

[BEING THE STORY OF A MATRIMONIAL DESERTER]

By Gilbert Parker

Volume 1.

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INTRODUCTION

This volume contains two novels dealing with the life of prairie people in the town of Askatoon in the far West. 'The World for Sale' and the latter portion of 'The Money Master' deal with the same life, and 'The Money Master' contained some of the characters to be found in 'Wild Youth'. 'The World for Sale' also was a picture of prairie country with strife between a modern Anglo-Canadian town and a French-Canadian town in the West. These books are of the same people; but 'You Never Know Your Luck' and 'Wild Youth' have several characters which move prominently through both.

In the introduction to 'The World for Sale' in this series, I drew a description of prairie life, and I need not repeat what was said there.

'In You Never Know Your Luck' there is a Proem which describes briefly the look of the prairie and suggests characteristics of the life of the people. The basis of the book has a letter written by a wife to her husband at a critical time in his career when he had broken his promise to her. One or two critics said the situation is impossible, because no man would carry a letter unopened for a long number of years. My reply is: that it is exactly what I myself did. I have still a letter written to me which was delivered at my door sixteen years ago. I have never read it, and my reason for not reading it was that I realised, as I think, what its contents were. I knew that the letter would annoy, and there it lies. The writer of the letter who was then my enemy is now my friend. The chief character in the book, Crozier, was an Irishman, with all the Irishman's cleverness, sensitiveness, audacity, and timidity; for both those latter qualities are characteristic of the Irish race, and as I am half Irish I can understand why I suppressed a letter and why Crozier did. Crozier is the type of man that comes occasionally to the Dominion of Canada; and Kitty Tynan is the sort of girl that the great West breeds. She did an immoral thing in opening the letter that Crozier had suppressed, but she did it in a good cause--for Crozier's sake; she made his wife write another letter, and she placed it again in the envelope for Crozier to open and see. Whatever lack of morality there was in her act was balanced by the good end to the story, though it meant the sacrifice of Kitty's love for Crozier, and the making of his wife happy once more.

As for 'Wild Youth' I make no apology for it. It is still fresh in the minds of the American public, and it is true to the life. Some critics frankly called it melodramatic. I do not object to the term. I know nothing more melodramatic than certain of the plots of Shakespeare's plays. Thomas Hardy is melodramatic; Joseph Conrad is melodramatic; Balzac was melodramatic, and so were Victor Hugo, Charles Dickens, and Sir Walter Scott. The charge of melodrama is not one that should disturb a writer of fiction. The question is, are the characters melodramatic. Will anyone suggest to me the marriage of a girl of seventeen with a man over sixty is melodramatic. It may be, but I think it tragical, and so it was in this case. As for Orlando Guise, I describe the man as I knew him, and he is still alive. Some comments upon the story suggested that it was impossible for a man to spend the night on the prairie with a woman whom he loved without causing her to forget her marriage vows. It is not sentimental to say that is nonsense. It is a prurient mind that only sees evil in a situation of the sort. Why it should be desirable to make a young man and woman commit a misdemeanor to secure the praise of a critic is beyond imagination. It would be easy enough to do. I did it in *The Right of Way*. I did it in others of my books. What happens to one man and one woman does not necessarily happen to another. There are men who, for love of a woman, would not take advantage of her insecurity. There are others who would. In my books I have made both classes do their will, and both are true to life. It does not matter what one book is or is not, but it does matter that an author writes his book with a sense of the fitting and the true.

Both these books were written to present that side of life in Canada which is not wintry and forbidding. There is warmth of summer in both tales, and thrilling air and the beauty of the wild countryside. As for the cold, it is severe in most parts of Canada, but the air is dry, and the sharpness is not felt as it is in this damper climate of England. Canadians feel the cold of a March or November day in London far more than the cold of a day in Winnipeg, with the thermometer many degrees below zero. Both these books present the summer side of Canada, which is

as delightful as that of any climate in the world; both show the modern western life which is greatly changed since the days when Pierre roamed the very fields where these tales take place. It should never be forgotten that British Columbia has a climate like that of England, where, on the Coast, it is never colder than here, and where there is rain instead of snow in winter.

There is much humour and good nature in the West, and this also I tried to bring out in these two books; and Askatoon is as cosmopolitan as London. Canada in the West has all races, and it was consistent of me to give a Chinaman of noble birth a part to play in the tragicomedy. I have a great respect for the Chinaman, and he is a good servant and a faithful friend. Such a Chinaman as Li Choo I knew in British Columbia, and all I did was to throw him on the Eastern side of the Rockies, a few miles from the border of the farthest Western province. The Chinaman's death was faithful in its detail, and it was true to his nature. He had to die, and with the old pagan philosophy, still practised in China and Japan, he chose the better way, to his mind. Princes still destroy themselves in old Japan, as recent history proves.

YOU NEVER KNOW YOUR LUCK

Volume 1.

PROEM

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PROEM

Have you ever seen it in reaping-time? A sea of gold it is, with gentle billows telling of sleep and not of storm, which, like regiments afoot, salute the reaper and say, "All is fulfilled in the light of the sun and the way of the earth; let the sharp knife fall." The countless million heads are heavy with fruition, and sun glorifies and breeze cradles them to the hour of harvest. The air-like the tingle of water from a mountain-spring in the throat of the worn wayfarer, bringing a sense of the dust of the world flushed away.

Arcady? Look closely. Like islands in the shining yellow sea, are houses--sometimes in a clump of trees, sometimes only like bare-backed domesticity or naked industry in the workfield. Also rising here and there in the expanse, clouds that wind skyward, spreading out in a powdery mist. They look like the rolling smoke of incense, of sacrifice. Sacrifice it is. The vast steam-threshers are mightily devouring what their servants, the monster steam-reapers, have gleaned for them. Soon, when September comes, all that waving sea will be still. What was gold will still be a rusted gold, but near to the earth--the stubble of the corn now lying in vast garner by the railway lines, awaiting transport east and west and south and across the seas.

Not Arcady this, but a land of industry in the grip of industrialists,

whose determination to achieve riches is, in spite of themselves, chastened by the magnitude and orderly process of nature's travail which is not pain. Here Nature hides her internal striving under a smother of white for many months in every year, when what is now gold in the sun will be a soft--sometimes, too, a hard-shining coverlet like impacted wool. Then, instead of the majestic clouds of incense from the threshers, will rise blue spiral wreaths of smoke from the lonely home. There the farmer rests till spring, comforting himself in the thought that while he waits, far under the snow the wheat is slowly expanding; and as in April, the white frost flies out of the soil into the sun, it will push upward and outward, green and vigorous, greeting his eye with the "What cheer, partner!" of a mate in the scheme of nature.

Not Arcady; and yet many of the joys of Arcady are here--bright, singing birds, wide adventurous rivers, innumerable streams, the squirrel in the wood and the bracken, the wildcat stealing through the undergrowth, the lizard glittering by the stone, the fish leaping in the stream, the plaint of the whippoorwill, the call of the bluebird, the golden flash of the oriole, the honk of the wild geese overhead, the whirr of the mallard from the sedge. And, more than all, a human voice declaring by its joy in song that not only God looks upon the world and finds it very good.

CHAPTER I

"PIONEERS, O PIONEERS"

If you had stood on the borders of Askatoon, a prairie town, on the pathway to the Rockies one late August day not many years ago, you would have heard a fresh young human voice singing into the morning, as its possessor looked, from a coat she was brushing, out over the "field of the cloth of gold," which your eye has already been invited to see. With the gift of singing for joy at all, you should be able to sing very joyously at twenty-two. This morning singer was just that age; and if you had looked at the golden carpet of wheat stretching for scores of miles, before you looked at her, you would have thought her curiously in tone with the scene. She was a symphony in gold--nothing less. Her hair, her cheeks, her eyes, her skin, her laugh, her voice they were all gold. Everything about her was so demonstratively golden that you might have had a suspicion it was made and not born; as though it was unreal, and the girl herself a proper subject of suspicion. The eyelashes were so long and so black, the eyes were so topaz, the hair was so like such a cloud of gold as would be found on Joan of Are as seen by a mediaeval painter, that an air of faint artificiality surrounded what was in every other way a remarkable effort of nature to give this region, where she was so very busy, a keynote.

Poseurs have said that nature is garish or exaggerated more often than not; but it is a libel. She is aristocratic to the nth degree, and is never over done; courage she has, but no ostentation. There was, however, just a slight touch of over-emphasis in this singing-girl's presentation--that you were bound to say, if you considered her quite apart from her place in this nature-scheme. She was not wholly aristocratic; she was lacking in that high, social refinement which would have made her gold not so golden, her black eyelashes not so black. Being unaristocratic is not always a matter of birth, though it may be a matter of parentage.

Her parentage was honest and respectable and not exalted. Her father had been an engineer, who had lost his life on a new railway of the West. His widow had received a pension from the company insufficient to maintain her, and so she kept boarders, the coat of one of whom her daughter was now brushing as she sang. The widow herself was the origin of the girl's slight disqualification for being of that higher circle of selection which nature arranges long before society makes its judicial decision. The father had been a man of high intelligence, which his daughter to a real degree inherited; but the mother, as kind a soul as ever lived, was a product of southern English rural life--a little sumptuous, but wholesome, and for her daughter's sake at least, keeping herself well and safely within the moral pale in the midst of marked temptations. She was forty-five, and it said a good deal for her ample but proper graces that at forty-five she had numerous admirers. The girl was English in appearance, with a touch perhaps of Spanish--why, who can say? Was it because of those Spanish hidalgos wrecked on the Irish coast long since? Her mind and her tongue, however, were Irish like her father's. You would have liked her, everybody did,--yet you would have thought that nature had failed in self-confidence for once, she was so pointedly designed to express the ancient dame's colour-scheme, even to the delicate auriferous down on her youthful cheek and the purse-proud look of her faintly retrousse nose; though in fact she never had had a purse and scarcely needed one. In any case she had an ample pocket in her dress.

This fairly full description of her is given not because she is the most important person in the story, but because the end of the story would have been entirely different had it not been for her; and because she herself was one of those who are so much the sport of circumstances or chance that they express the full meaning of the title of this story. As a line beneath the title explains, the tale concerns a matrimonial deserter. Certainly this girl had never deserted matrimony, though she had on more than one occasion avoided it; and there had been men mean and low enough to imagine they might allure her to the conditions of matrimony without its status.

As with her mother the advertisement of her appearance was wholly misleading. A man had once said to her that "she looked too gay to be good," but in all essentials she was as good as she was gay, and indeed rather better. Her mother had not kept boarders for seven years without getting some useful knowledge of the world, or without imparting useful knowledge; and there were men who, having paid their bills on demand, turned from her wiser if not better men. Because they had pursued the old but inglorious profession of hunting tame things, Mrs. Tyndall Tynan had exacted compensation in one way or another--by extras, by occasional and deliberate omission of table luxuries, and by making them pay for their own mending, which she herself only did when her boarders behaved themselves well. She scored in any contest--in spite of her rather small brain, large heart, and ardent appearance. A very clever, shiftless Irish husband had made her develop shrewdness, and she was so busy watching and fending her daughter that she did not need to watch and fend herself to the same extent as she would have done had she been free and childless and thirty. The widow Tynan was practical, and she saw none of those things which made her daughter stand for minutes at a time and look into the distance over the prairie towards the sunset light or the grey-blue foothills. She never sang--she had never sung a note in her life; but this girl of hers, with a man's coat in her hand, and eyes on the joyous scene before her, was for ever humming or singing. She had even

sung in the church choir till she declined to do so any longer, because strangers stared at her so; which goes to show that she was not so vain as people of her colouring sometimes are. It was just as bad, however, when she sat in the congregation; for then, too, if she sang, people stared at her. So it was that she seldom went to church at all; but it was not because of this that her ideas of right and wrong were quite individual and not conventional, as the tale of the matrimonial deserter will show.

This was not church, however, and briskly applying a light whisk-broom to the coat, she hummed one of the songs her father taught her when he was in his buoyant or in his sentimental moods, and that was a fair proportion of the time. It used to perplex her the thrilling buoyancy and the creepy melancholy which alternately mastered her father; but as a child she had become so inured to it that she was not surprised at the alternate pensive gaiety and the blazing exhilaration of the particular man whose coat she now dusted long after there remained a speck of dust upon it. This was the song she sang:

"Whereaway, whereaway goes the lad that once was mine?
Hereaway I waited him, hereaway and oft;
When I sang my song to him, bright his eyes began to shine--
Hereaway I loved him well, for my heart was soft.

"Hereaway my heart was soft; when he kissed my happy eyes,
Held my hand, and pressed his cheek warm against my brow,
Home I saw upon the earth, heaven stood there in the skies--
'Whereaway, whereaway goes my lover now?'"

"Whereaway goes my lad--tell me, has he gone alone?
Never harsh word did I speak, never hurt I gave;
Strong he was and beautiful; like a heron he has flown--
Hereaway, hereaway will I make my grave.

"When once more the lad I loved hereaway, hereaway,
Comes to lay his hand in mine, kiss me on the brow,
I will whisper down the wind, he will weep to hear me say--
'Whereaway, whereaway goes my lover now?'"

There was a plaintive quality in the voice of this russet maiden in perfect keeping with the music and the words; and though her lips smiled, there was a deep, wistful look in her eyes more in harmony with the coming autumn than with this gorgeous harvest-time.

For a moment after she had finished singing she stood motionless, absorbed by the far horizon; then suddenly she gave a little shake of the body and said in a brisk, playfully chiding way:

"Kitty Tynan, Kitty Tynan, what a girl you are!" There was no one near, so far as eye could see, so it was clear that the words were addressed to herself. She was expressing that wonder which so many people feel at discovering in themselves long-concealed characteristics, or find themselves doing things out of their natural orbit, as they think. If any one had told Kitty Tynan that she had rare imagination, she would have wondered what was meant. If anyone had said to her, "What are you dreaming about, Kitty?" she would have understood, however, for she had had fits of dreaming ever since she was a child, and they had increased during the past few years--since the man came to live with them whose

coat she was brushing. Perhaps this was only imitation, because the man had a habit of standing or sitting still and looking into space for minutes--and on Sundays for hours--at a time; and often she had watched him as he lay on his back in the long grass, head on a hillock, hat down over his eyes, while the smoke from his pipe came curling up from beneath the rim. Also she had seen him more than once sitting with a letter before him and gazing at it for many minutes together. She had also noted that it was the same letter on each occasion; that it was a closed letter, and also that it was unstamped. She knew that, because she had seen it in his desk--the desk once belonging to her father, a sloping thing with a green-baize top. Sometimes he kept it locked, but very often he did not; and more than once, when he had asked her to get him something from the desk, not out of meanness, but chiefly because her moral standard had not a multitude of delicate punctilios, she had examined the envelope curiously. The envelope bore a woman's handwriting, and the name on it was not that of the man who owned the coat--and the letter. The name on the envelope was Shiel Crozier, but the name of the man who owned the coat was J. G. Kerry--James Gathorne Kerry, so he said.

Kitty Tynan had certainly enough imagination to make her cherish a mystery. She wondered greatly what it all meant. Never in anything else had she been inquisitive or prying where the man was concerned; but she felt that this letter had the heart of a story, and she had made up fifty stories which she thought would fit the case of J. G. Kerry, who for over four years had lived in her mother's house. He had become part of her life, perhaps just because he was a man,--and what home is a real home without a man?--perhaps because he always had a kind, quiet, confidential word for her, or a word of stimulating cheerfulness; indeed, he showed in his manner occasionally almost a boisterous hilarity. He undoubtedly was what her mother called "a queer dick," but also "a pippin with a perfect core," which was her way of saying that he was a man to be trusted with herself and with her daughter; one who would stand loyally by a friend or a woman. He had stood by them both when Augustus Burlingame, the lawyer, who had boarded with them when J. G. Kerry first came, coarsely exceeded the bounds of liberal friendliness which marked the household, and by furtive attempts at intimacy began to make life impossible for both mother and daughter. Burlingame took it into his head, when he received notice that his rooms were needed for another boarder, that J. G. Kerry was the cause of it. Perhaps this was not without reason, since Kerry had seen Kitty Tynan angrily unclasping Burlingame's arm from around her waist, and had used cutting and decisive words to the sensualist afterwards.

There had taken the place of Augustus Burlingame a land-agent--Jesse Bulrush--who came and went like a catapult, now in domicile for three days together, now gone for three weeks; a voluble, gaseous, humorous fellow, who covered up a well of commercial evasiveness, honesty and adroitness by a perspiring gaiety natural in its origin and convenient for harmless deceit. He was fifty, and no gallant save in words; and, as a wary bachelor of many years' standing, it was a long time before he showed a tendency to blandish a good-looking middle-aged nurse named Egan who also lodged with Mrs. Tynan; though even a plain-faced nurse in uniform has an advantage over a handsome unprofessional woman. Jesse Bulrush and J. G. Kerry were friends--became indeed such confidential friends to all appearance, though their social origin was evidently so different, that Kitty Tynan, when she wished to have a pleasant conversation which gave her a glow for hours afterwards, talked to the fat man of his lean and aristocratic-looking friend.

"Got his head where it ought to be--on his shoulders; and it ain't for playing football with," was the frequent remark of Mr. Bulrush concerning Mr. Kerry. This always made Kitty Tynan want to sing, she could not have told why, save that it seemed to her the equivalent of a long history of the man whose past lay in mists that never lifted, and whom even the inquisitive Burlingame had been unable to "discover" when he lived in the same house. But then Kitty Tynan was as fond of singing as a canary, and relieved her feelings constantly by this virtuous and becoming means, with her good contralto voice. She was indeed a creature of contradictions; for if ever any one should have had a soprano voice it was she. She looked a soprano.

What she was thinking of as she sang with Kerry's coat in her hand it would be hard to discover by the process of elimination, as the detectives say when tracking down a criminal. It is, however, of no consequence; but it was clear that the song she sang had moved her, for there was the glint of a tear in her eye as she turned towards the house, the words of the lyric singing themselves over in her brain:

"Hereaway my heart was soft; when he kissed my happy eyes,
Held my hand, and pressed his cheek warm against my brow,
Home I saw upon the hearth, heaven stood there in the skies'
Whereaway, whereaway goes my lover now?"

She knew that no lover had left her; that none was in the habit of laying his warm cheek against her brow; and perhaps that was why she had said aloud to herself, "Kitty Tynan, Kitty Tynan, what a girl you are!" Perhaps--and perhaps not.

As she stepped forward towards the door she heard a voice within the house, and she quickened her footsteps. The blood in her face, the look in her eye quickened also. And now a figure appeared in the doorway--a figure in shirt-sleeves, which shook a fist at the hurrying girl.

"Villain!" he said gaily, for he was in one of his absurd, ebullient moods--after a long talk with Jesse Bulrush. "Hither with my coat; my spotless coat in a spotted world,--the unbelievable anomaly--

"For the earth of a dusty to-day
Is the dust of an earthy to-morrow."

When he talked like this she did not understand him, but she thought it was clever beyond thinking--a heavenly jumble. "If it wasn't for me you'd be carted for rubbish," she replied joyously as she helped him on with his coat, though he had made a motion to take it from her.

"I heard you singing--what was it?" he asked cheerily, while it could be seen that his mind was preoccupied. The song she had sung, floating through the air, had seemed familiar to him, while he had been greatly engaged with a big business thing he had been planning for a long time, with Jesse Bulrush in the background or foreground, as scout or rear-guard or what you will:

"Whereaway, whereaway goes the lad that once was mine?
Hereaway, I waited him, hereaway and off--"

she hummed with an exaggerated gaiety in her voice, for the song had saddened her, she knew not why. At the words the flaming exhilaration of

the man's face vanished and his eyes took on a poignant, distant look.

"That--oh, that!" he said, and with a little jerk of the head and a clenching of the hand he moved towards the street.

"Your hat!" she called after him, and ran inside the house. An instant later she gave it to him. Now his face was clear and his eyes smiled kindly at her.

"'Whereaway, hereaway' is a wonderful song," he said. "We used to sing it when I was a boy--and after, and after. It's an old song--old as the hills. Well, thanks, Kitty Tynan. What a girl you are--to be so kind to a fellow like--me!"

"Kitty Tynan, what a girl you are!"--these were the very words she had used about herself a little while before. The song--why did it make Mr. Kerry take on such a queer look all at once when he heard it? Kitty watched him striding down the street into the town.

Now a voice--a rich, quizzical, kindly voice--called out to her:

"Come, come, Miss Tynan, I want to be helped on with my coat," it said.

Inside the house a fat, awkward man was struggling, or pretending to struggle, into his coat.

"Roll into it, Mr. Rolypoly," she answered cheerily as she entered.

"Of course I'm not the star boarder--nothing for me!" he said in affected protest.

"A little more to starboard and you'll get it on," she retorted with a glint of her late father's raillery, and she gave the coat a twitch which put it right on the ample shoulders.

"Bully! bully!" he cried. "I'll give you the tip for the Askatoon cup."

"I'm a Christian. I hate horse-racers and gamblers," she returned mockingly.

"I'll turn Christian--I want to be loved," he bleated from the doorway.

"Roll on, proud porpoise!" she rejoined, which shows that her conversation was not quite aristocratic at all times.

"Golly, but she's a gold dollar in a gold bank," remarked Jesse Bulrush warmly as he lurched into the street.

The girl stood still in the middle of the room looking dreamily down the way the two men had gone.

The quiet of the late summer day surrounded her. She heard the dizzy din of the bees, the sleepy grinding of the grass hoppers, the sough of the solitary pine at the door, and then behind them all a whizzing, machine-like sound. This particular sound went on and on.

She opened the door of the next room. Her mother sat at a sewing-machine intent upon some work, the needle eating up a spreading piece of cloth.

"What are you making, mother?" Kitty asked. "New blinds for Mr. Kerry's bedroom-he likes this green colour," the widow added with a slight flush, due to leaning over the sewing-machine, no doubt.

"Everybody does everything for him," remarked the girl almost pettishly.

"That's a nice spirit, I must say!" replied her mother reprovingly, the machine almost stopping.

"If I said it in a different way it would be all right," the other returned with a smile, and she repeated the words with a winning soft inflection, like a born actress.

"Kitty-Kitty Tynan, what a girl you are!" declared her mother, and she bent smiling over the machine, which presently buzzed on its devouring way. Three people had said the same thing within a few minutes. A look of pleasure stole over the girl's face, and her bosom rose and fell with a happy sigh. Somehow it was quite a wonderful day for her.

CHAPTER II

CLOSING THE DOORS

There are many people who, in some subtle psychological way, are very like their names; as though some one had whispered to "the parents of this child" the name designed for it from the beginning of time. So it was with Shiel Crozier. Does not the name suggest a man lean and flat,

sinewy, angular and isolated like a figure in one of El Greco's pictures in the Prado at Madrid? Does not the name suggest a figure of elongated humanity with a touch of ancient mysticism and yet also of the fantastical humour of Don Quixote?

In outward appearance Shiel Crozier, otherwise J. G. Kerry, of Askatoon, was like his name for the greater part of the time. Take him in repose, and he looked a lank ascetic who dreamed of a happy land where flagellation was a joy and pain a panacea. In action, however, as when Kitty Tynan helped him on with his coat, he was a pure improvisation of nature. He had a face with a Cromwellian mole, which broke out in emotion like an April day, with eyes changing from a blue-grey to the deepest ultramarine that ever delighted the soul and made the reputation of an Old Master. Even in the prairie town of Askatoon, where every man is so busy that he scarcely knows his own children when he meets them, and almost requires an introduction to his wife when the door closes on them at bedtime, people took a second look at him when he passed. Many who came in much direct contact with him, as Augustus Burlingame the lawyer had done, tried to draw from him all there was to tell about himself; which is a friendly custom of the far West. The native-born greatly desire to tell about themselves. They wear their hearts on their sleeves, and are childlike in the frank recitals of all they were and are and hope to be. This covers up also a good deal of business acumen, shrewdness, and secretiveness which is not so childlike and bland.

In this they are in sharp contrast to those not native-born. These come from many places on the earth, and they are seldom garrulously historical. Some of them go to the prairie country to forget they ever

lived before, and to begin the world again, having been hurt in life undeservingly; some go to bury their mistakes or worse in pioneer work and adventure; some flee from a wrath that would devour them--the law, society, or a woman.

This much must be said at once for Crozier, that he had no crime to hide. It was not because of crime that "He buckles up his talk like the bellyband on a broncho," as Malachi Deely, the exile from Tralee, said of him; and Deely was a man of "horse-sense," no doubt because he was a horse-doctor--"a veterenny surgeon," as his friends called him when they wished to flatter him. Deely supplemented this chaste remark about the broncho with the observation that, "Same as the broncho, you buckle him tightest when you know the divil is stirring in his underbrush." And he added further, "'Tis a woman that's put the mumplaster on his tongue, Sibley, and I bet you a hundred it's another man's wife."

Like many a speculator, Malachi Deely would have made no profit out of his bet in the end, for Shiel Crozier had had no trouble with the law, or with another man's wife, nor yet with any single maid--not yet; though there was now Kitty Tynan in his path. Yet he had had trouble. There was hint of it in his occasional profound abstraction; but more than all else in the fact that here he was, a gentleman, having lived his life for over four years past as a sort of horse-expert, overseer, and stud-manager for Terry Brennan, the absentee millionaire. In the opinion of the West, "big-bugs" did not come down to this kind of occupation unless they had been roughly handled by fate or fortune.

"Talk? Watch me now, he talks like a testimonial in a frame," said Malachi Deely on the day this tale opens, to John Sibley, the gambling young farmer who, strange to say, did well out of both gambling and farming.

"Words to him are like nuts to a monkey. He's an artist, that man is. Been in the circles where the band plays good and soft, where the music smells--fairly smells like parfumery," responded Sibley. "I'd like to get at the bottom of him. There's a real good story under his asbestos vest--something that'd make a man call for the oh-be-joyful, same as I do now."

After they had seen the world through the bottom of a tumbler Deely continued the gossip. "Watch me now, been a friend of dukes in England--and Ireland, that Mr. James Gathorne Kerry, as any one can see; and there he is feelin' the hocks of a filly or openin' the jaws of a stud horse, age-hunting! Why, you needn't tell me--I've had my mind made up ever since the day he broke the temper of Terry Brennan's Inniskillen chestnut, and won the gold cup with her afterwards. He just sort of appeared out of the mist of the marnin', there bein' a divil's lot of excursions and conferences and holy gatherin's in Askatoon that time back, ostensible for the business which their names denote, like the Diocesan Conference and the Pure White Water Society. That was their bluff; but they'd come herealong for one good pure white diocesan thing before all, and that was to see the dandiest horse-racing which ever infested the West. Come--he come like that!"--Deely made a motion like a swoop of an aeroplane to earth--"and here he is buckin' about like a rough-neck same as you and me; but yet a gent, a swell, a cream della cream, that's turned his back on a lady--a lady not his own wife, that's my sure and sacred belief."

"You certainly have got women on the brain," retorted Sibley. "I ain't

ever seen such a man as you. There never was a woman crossing the street on a muddy day that you didn't sprint to get a look at her ankles. Behind everything you see a woman. Horses is your profession, but woman is your practice."

"There ain't but one thing worth livin' for, and that's a woman," remarked Deely.

"Do you tell Mrs. Deely that?" asked Sibley.

"Watch me now, she knows. What woman is there don't know when her husband is what he is! And it's how I know that the trouble with James Gathorne Kerry is a woman. I know the signs. Devils me own, he's got 'em in his face."

"He's got in his face what don't belong here and what you don't know much about--never having kept company with that sort," rejoined Sibley.

"The way he lives and talks--'No, thank you, I don't care for anny thing,' says he, when you're standin' at the door of a friendly saloon, which is established by law to bespeak peace and goodwill towards men, and you ask him pleasant to step inside. He don't seem to have a single vice. Haven't we tried him? There was Belle Bingley, all frizzy hair and a kicker; we put her on to him. But he give her ten dollars to buy a hat on condition she behaved like a lady in the future--smilin' at her, the divil! And Belle, with temper like dinnemite, took it kneelin' as it were, and smiled back at him--her! Drink, women--nothin' seems to have a hold on him. What's his vice? Sure, then, that's what I say, what's his vice? He's got to have one; anny man as is a man has to have one vice."

"Bosh! Look at me," rejoined Sibley. "Drink women--nit! Not for me! I've got no vice. I don't even smoke."

"No vice? Begobs, yours has got you like a tire on a wheel! Vice--what do you call gamblin'? It's the biggest vice ever tuk grip of a man. It's like a fever, and it's got you, John, like the nail on your finger."

"Well, p'r'aps, he's got that vice too. P'r'aps J. G. Kerry's got that vice same as me."

"Annyhow, we'll get to know all we want when he goes into the witness box at the Logan murder trial next week. That's what I'm waitin' for, Deely returned, with a grin of anticipation. "That drug-eating Gus Burlingame's got a grudge against him somehow, and when a lawyer's got a grudge against you it's just as well to look where y' are goin'. Burlingame don't care what he does to get his way in court. What set him against Kerry I ain't sure, but, bedad, I think it's looks. Burlingame goes in for lookin' like a picture in a frame--gold seals hangin' beyant his vestpocket, broad silk cord to his eye-glass, loose flowin' tie, and long hair--makes him look pretentuous and showy. But your 'Mr. Kerry, sir,' he don't have anny tricks to make him look like a doge from Veenis and all the eyes of the females battin' where'er he goes. Jealousy, John Sibley, me boy, is a cruil thing."

"Why is it you ain't jealous of him? There's plenty of women that watch you go down-town--you got a name for it, anyway," remarked Sibley maliciously.

Deely nodded sagely. "Watch me now, that's right, me boy. I got a name

for it, but I want the game without the name, and that's why I ain't puttin' on anny airs--none at all. I depend on me tongue, not on me looks, which goes against me. I like Mr. J. G. Kerry. I've plenty dealin's with him, naturally, both of us being in the horse business, and I say he's right as a minted dollar as he goes now. Also, and behold, I'd take my oath he never done annything to blush for. His touble's been a woman--wayward woman what stoops to folly! I give up tryin' to pump him just as soon as I made up my mind it was a woman. That shuts a man's mouth like a poor-box.

"Next week's fixed for the Logan killin' case, is it?"

"Monday comin', for sure. I wouldn't like to be in Mr. Kerry's shoes. Watch me now, if he gives the, evidence they say he can give--the prasecution say it--that M'Mahon Gang behind Logan 'll get him sure as guns, one way or another."

"Some one ought to give Mr. Kerry the tip to get out and not give evidence," remarked Sibley sagely. Deely shook his head vigorously. "Begobs, he's had the tip all right, but he's not goin'. He's got as much fear as a canary has whiskers. He doesn't want to give evidence, he says, but he wants to see the "law do its work. Burlingame 'll try to make it out manslaughter; but there's a widow with children to suffer for the manslaughter, just as much as though it was murder, and there isn't a man that doesn't think murder was the game, and the grand joory had that idea too.

"Between Gus Burlingame and that M'Mahon bunch of horse-thieves, the stranger in a strange land 'll have to keep his eyes open, I'm thinkin'."

"Divils me darlin', his eyes are open all right," returned Deely.

"Still, I'd like to jog his elbow," Sibley answered reflectively. "It couldn't do any harm, and it might do good."

Deely nodded good-naturedly. "If you want to so bad as that, John, you've got the chance, for he's up at the Sovereign Bank now. I seen him leave the Great Overland Railway Bureau ten minutes ago and get away quick to the bank."

"What's he got on at the bank and the railway?"

"Some big deal, I guess. I've seen him with Studd Bradley."

"The Great North Trust Company boss?"

"On it, my boy, on it--the other day as thick as thieves. Studd Bradley doesn't knit up with an outsider from the old country unless there's reason for it--good gold-currency reasons."

"A land deal, eh?" ventured Sibley. "What did I say--speculation, that's his vice, same as mine! P'r'aps that's what ruined him. Cards, speculation, what's the difference? And he's got a quiet look, same as me."

Deely laughed loudly. "And bursts out same as you! Quiet one hour like a mill-pond or a well, and then--swhish, he's blazin'! He's a volcano in harness, that spalpeen."

"He's a volcano that doesn't erupt when there's danger," responded Sibley. "It's when there's just fun on that his volcano gets loose. I'll go wait for him at the bank. I got a fellow-feeling for Mr. Kerry. I'd like to whisper in his ear that he'd better be lookin' sharp for the M'Mahon Gang, and that if he's a man of peace he'd best take a holiday till after next week, or get smallpox or something."

The two friends lounged slowly up the street, and presently parted near the door of the bank. As Sibley waited, his attention was drawn to a window on the opposite side of the street at an angle from themselves. The light was such that the room was revealed to its farthest corners, and Sibley noted that three men were evidently carefully watching the bank, and that one of the men was Studd Bradley, the so-called boss. The others were local men of some position commercially and financially in the town. Sibley did not give any sign that he noticed the three men, but he watched carefully from under the rim of his hat. His imagination, however, read a story of consequence in the secretive vigilance of the three, who evidently thought that, standing far back in the room, they could not be seen.

Presently the door of the bank opened, and Sibley saw Studd Bradley lean forward eagerly, then draw back and speak hurriedly to his companions, using a gesture of satisfaction.

"Something damn funny there!" Sibley said to himself, and stepped forward to Crozier with a friendly exclamation. Crozier turned rather impatiently, for his face was aflame with some exciting reflection. At this moment his eyes were the deepest blue that could be imagined--an almost impossible colour, like that of the Mediterranean when it reflects the perfect sapphire of the sky. There was something almost wonderful in their expression. A woman once said as she looked at a picture of Herschel, whose eyes had the unworldly gaze of the great dreamer looking beyond this sphere, "The stars startled him." Such a look was in Crozier's eyes now, as though he was seeing the bright end of a long road, the desire of his soul.

That, indeed, was what he saw. After two years of secret negotiation he had (inspired by information dropped by Jesse Bulrush, his fellow-boarder) made definite arrangements for a big land-deal in connection with the route of a new railway and a town-site, which would mean more to him than any one could know. If it went through, he would, for an investment of ten thousand dollars, have a hundred and fifty thousand dollars; and that would solve an everlasting problem for him.

He had reached a critical point in his enterprise. All that was wanted now was ten thousand dollars in cash to enable him to close the great bargain and make his hundred and fifty thousand. But to want ten thousand dollars and to get it in a given space of time, when you have neither securities, cash, nor real estate, is enough to keep you awake at night. Crozier had been so busy with the delicate and difficult negotiations that he had not deeply concerned himself with the absence of the necessary ten thousand dollars. He thought he could get the money at any time, so good was the proposition; and it was best to defer raising it to the last moment lest some one learning the secret should forestall him. He must first have the stake to be played for before he moved to get the cash with which to make the throw. This is not generally thought a good way, but it was his way, and it had yet to be tested.

There was no cloud of apprehension, however, in Crozier's eyes as they met those of Sibley. He liked Sibley. At this point it is not necessary to say why. The reason will appear in due time. Sibley's face had always something of that immobility and gravity which Crozier's face had part of the time--paler, less intelligent, with dark lines and secret shadows absent from Crozier's face; but still with some of the El Greco characteristics which marked so powerfully that of the man who passed as J. G. Kerry.

"Ah, Sibley," he said, "glad to see you! Anything I can do for you?"

"It's the other way if there's any doing at all," was the quick response.

"Well, let's walk along together," remarked Crozier a little abstractedly, for he was thinking hard about his great enterprise.

"We might be seen," said Sibley, with an obvious undermeaning meant to provoke a question.

Crozier caught the undertone of suggestion. "Being about to burgle the bank, it's well not to be seen together--eh?"

"No, I'm not in on that business, Mr. Kerry. I'm for breaking banks, not burgling 'em," was the cheerful reply.

They laughed, but Crozier knew that the observant gambling farmer was not talking at haphazard. They had met on the highway, as it were, many times since Crozier had come to Askatoon, and Crozier knew his man.

"Well, what are we going to do, and who will see us if we do it?" Crozier asked briskly.

"Studd Bradley and his secret-service corps have got their eyes on this street--and on you," returned Sibley dryly.

Crozier's face sobered and his eyes became less emotional. "I don't see them anywhere," he answered, but looking nowhere.

"They're in Gus Burlingame's office. They had you under observation while you were in the bank."

"I couldn't run off with the land, could I?" Crozier remarked dryly, yet suggestively, in his desire to see how much Sibley knew.

"Well, you said it was a bank. I've no more idea what it is you're tryin' to run off with than I know what an ace is goin' to do when there's a joker in the pack," remarked Sibley; "but I thought I'd tell you that Bradley and his lot are watchin' you gettin' ready to run." Then he hastily told what he had seen.

Crozier was reassured. It was natural that Bradley & Co. should take an interest in his movements. They would make a pile of money if he pulled off the deal--far more than he would. It was not strange that they should watch his invasion of the bank. They knew he wanted money, and a bank was the place to get it. That was the way he viewed the matter on the instant. He replied to Sibley cheerfully. "A hundred to one is a lot when you win it," he said enigmatically.

"It depends on how much you have on," was Sibley's quiet reply--"a dollar

or a thousand dollars.

"If you've got a big thing on, and you've got an outsider that you think is goin' to win and beat the favourite, it's just as well to run no risks. Believe me, Mr. Kerry, if you've got anything on that asks for your attention, it'd be sense and saving if you didn't give evidence at the Logan Trial next week. It's pretty well-guessed what you're goin' to say and what you know, and you take it from me, the M'Mahon mob that's behind Logan 'll have it in for you. They're terrors when they get goin', and if your evidence puts one of that lot away, ther'll be trouble for you. I wouldn't do it--honest, I wouldn't. I've been out West here a good many years, and I know the place and the people. It's a good place, and there's lots of first-class people here, but there's a few offscourings that hang like wolves on the edge of the sheepfold, ready to murder and git."

"That was what you wanted to see me about, wasn't it?" Crozier asked quietly.

"Yes; the other was just a shot on the chance. I don't like to see men sneakin' about and watching. If they do, you can bet there's something wrong. But the other thing, the Logan Trial business, is a dead certainty. You're only a new-comer, in a kind of way, and you don't need to have the same responsibility as the rest. The Law'll get what it wants whether you chip in or not. Let it alone. What's the Law ever done for you that you should run risks for it? It's straight talk, Mr. Kerry. Have a cancer in the bowels next week or go off to see a dyin' brother, but don't give evidence at the Logan Trial--don't do it. I got a feeling--I'm superstitious--all sportsmen are. By following my instincts I've saved myself a whole lot in my time."

"Yes; all men that run chances have their superstitions, and they're not to be sneered at," replied Crozier thoughtfully. "If you see black, don't play white; if you see a chestnut crumpled up, put your money on the bay even when the chestnut is a favourite. Of course you're superstitious, Sibley. The tan and the green baize are covered with ghosts that want to help you, if you'll let them."

Sibley's mouth opened in amazement. Crozier was speaking with the look of the man who hypnotises himself, who "sees things," who dreams as only the gambler and the plunger on the turf do dream, not even excepting the latter-day Irish poets.

"Say, I was right what I said to Deely--I was right," remarked Sibley almost huskily, for it seemed to him as though he had found a long-lost brother. No man except one who had staked all he had again and again could have looked or spoken like that.

Crozier looked at the other thoughtfully for a moment, then he said:

"I don't know what you said to Deely, but I do know that I'm going to the Logan Trial in spite of the M'Mahon mob. I don't feel about it as you do. I've got a different feeling, Sibley. I'll play the game out. I shall not hedge. I shall not play for safety. It's everything on the favourite this time."

"You'll excuse me, but Gus Burlingame is for the defence, and he's got his knife into you," returned Sibley.

"Not yet." Crozier smiled sardonically.

"Well, I apologise, but what I've said, Mr. Kerry, is said as man to man. You're ridin' game in a tough place, as any man has to do who starts with only his pants and his head on. That's the way you begun here, I guess; and I don't want to see your horse tumble because some one throws a fence-rail at its legs. Your class has enemies always in a new country --jealousy, envy."

The lean, aristocratic, angular Crozier, with a musing look on his long face, grown ascetic again, as he held out his hand and gripped that of the other, said warmly: "I'm just as much obliged to you as though I took your advice, Sibley. I am not taking it, but I am taking a pledge to return the compliment to you if ever I get the chance."

"Well, most men get chances of that kind," was the gratified reply of the gambling farmer, and then Crozier turned quickly and entered the doorway of the British Bank, the rival of that from which he had turned in brave disappointment a little while before.

Left alone in the street, Sibley looked back with the instinct of the hunter. As he expected, he saw a head thrust out from the window where Studd Bradley and his friends had been. There was an hotel opposite the British Bank. He entered and waited. Bradley and one of his companions presently came in and seated themselves far back in the shadow, where they could watch the doorway of the bank.

It was quite a half-hour before Shiel Crozier emerged from the bank. His face was set and pale. For an instant he stood as though wondering which way to go, then he moved up the street the way he had come.

Sibley heard a low, poisonous laugh of triumph rankle through the hotel office. He turned round. Bradley, the over-fed, over-confident, over-estimated financier, laid a hand on the shoulder of his companion as they moved towards the door.

"That's another gate shut," he said. "I guess we can close 'em all with a little care. It's working all right. He's got no chance of raising the cash," he added, as the two passed the chair where Sibley sat--with his hat over his eyes, chewing an unlighted cigar.

"I don't know what it is, but it's dirt--and muck at that," John Sibley remarked as he rose from his chair and followed the two into the street.

Bradley and his friends were trying steadily to close up the avenues of credit to the man to whom the success of his enterprise meant so much. To crowd him out would mean an extra hundred and fifty thousand dollars for themselves.

CHAPTER III

THE LOGAN TRIAL AND WHAT CAME OF IT

What the case was in which Shiel Crozier was to give evidence is not important; what came from the giving of his testimony is all that matters; and this story would never have been written if he had not

entered the witness-box.

A court-room at any time seems a little warmer than any other spot to all except the prisoner; but on a July day it is likely to be a punishment for both innocent and guilty. A man had been killed by one of the group of toughs called locally the M'Mahon Gang, and against the charge of murder that of manslaughter had been set up in defence; and manslaughter might mean jail for a year or two or no jail at all. Any evidence which justified the charge of murder would mean not jail, but the rope in due course; for this was not Montana or Idaho, where the law's delays outlasted even the memory of the crime committed.

The court-room of Askatoon was crowded to suffocation, for the M'Mahons were detested, and the murdered man had a good reputation in the district. Besides, a widow and three children mourned their loss, and the widow was in court. Also Crozier's evidence was expected to be sensational, and to prove the swivel on which the fate of the accused man would hang. Among those on the inside it was also known that the clever but dissipated Augustus Burlingame, the counsel for the prisoner, had a grudge against Crozier,--no one quite knew why except Kitty Tynan and her mother, and that cross-examination would be pressed mercilessly when Crozier entered the witness-box. As Burlingame came into the court-room he said to the Young Doctor--he was always spoken of as the Young Doctor in Askatoon, though he had been there a good many years and he was no longer as young as he looked--who was also called as a witness, "We'll know more about Mr. J. G. Kerry when this trial is over than will suit his book." It did not occur to Augustus Burlingame that in Crozier, who knew why he had fled the house of the showy but virtuous Mrs. Tynan, he might find a witness of a mental and moral calibre with baffling qualities and some gift of riposte.

Crozier entered the witness-box at a stage when excitement was at fever height; for the M'Mahon Gang had given evidence which every one believed to be perjured; and the widow of the slain man was weeping bitterly in her seat because of noxious falsehoods sworn against her honest husband.

There was certainly something credible and prepossessing in the look of Crozier. He might be this or that, but he carried no evil or vice of character in his face. He was in his grave mood this summer afternoon. There he stood with his long face and the very heavy eyebrows, clean-shaven, hard-bitten, as though by wind and weather, composed and forceful, the mole on his chin a kind of challenge to the vertical dimple in his cheek, his high forehead more benevolent than intellectual, his brown hair faintly sprinkled with grey and a bit unmanageable, his fathomless eyes shining. "No man ought to have such eyes," remarked a woman present to the Young Doctor, who abstractedly nodded assent, for, like Malachi Deely and John Sibley, he himself had a theory about Crozier; and he had a fear of what the savage enmity of the morally diseased Burlingame might do. He had made up his mind that so intense a scrupulousness as Crozier had shown since coming to Askatoon had behind it not only character, but the rigidity of a set purpose; and that view was supported by the stern economy of Crozier's daily life, broken only by sudden bursts of generosity for those in need.

In the box Crozier kept his eye on the crown attorney, who prosecuted, and on the judge. He appeared not to see any one in the court-room, though Kitty Tynan had so placed herself that he must see her if he looked at the audience at all. Kitty thought him magnificent as he told his story with a simple parsimony but a careful choice of words which

made every syllable poignant with effect. She liked him in his grave mood even better than when he was aflame with an internal fire of his own creation, when he was almost wildly vivid with life.

"He's two men," she had often said to herself; and she said it now as she looked at him in the witness-box, measuring out his words and measuring off at the same time the span of a murderer's life; for when the crown attorney said to the judge that he had concluded his examination there was no one in the room--not even the graceless Burlingame--who did not think the prisoner guilty.

"That is all," the crown attorney said to Crozier as he sank into his chair, greatly pleased with one of the best witnesses who had ever been through his hands--lucid, concentrated, exact, knowing just where he was going and reaching his goal without meandering. Crozier was about to step down when Burlingame rose.

"I wish to ask a few questions," he said.

Crozier bowed and turned, again grasping the rail of the witness-box with one hand, while with an air of cogitation and suspense he stroked his chin with the long fingers of the other hand.

"What is your name?" asked Burlingame in a tone a little louder than he had used hitherto in the trial, indeed even louder than lawyers generally use when they want to bully a witness. In this case it was as though he wished to summon the attention of the court.

For a second Crozier's fingers caught his chin almost spasmodically. The real meaning of the question, what lay behind it, flashed to his mind. He saw in lightning illumination the course Burlingame meant to pursue. For a moment his heart seemed to stand still, and he turned slightly pale, but the blue of his eyes took on a new steely look--a look also of striking watchfulness, as of an animal conscious of its danger, yet conscious too of its power when at bay.

"What is your name?" Burlingame asked again in a somewhat louder tone, and turned to look at the jury, as if bidding them note the hesitation of the witness; though, indeed, the waiting was so slight that none but a trickster like Burlingame would have taken advantage of it, and only then when there was much behind.

For a moment longer Crozier remained silent, getting strength, as it were, and saying to himself, "What does he know?" and then, with a composed look of inquiry at the judge, who appeared to take no notice, he said: "I have already, in evidence, given my name to the court."

"Witness, what is your name?" again almost shouted the lawyer, with a note of indignation in his voice, as though here was a dangerous fellow committing a misdemeanour in their very presence. He spread out his hands to the jury, as though bidding them observe, if they would, this witness hesitating in answer to a simple, primary question--a witness who had just sworn a man's life away!

"What is your name?"

"James Gathorne Kerry, as I have already given it to the court," was the calm reply.

"Where do you live?"

"In Askatoon, as I have already said in evidence; and if it is necessary to give my domicile, I live at the house of Mrs. Tyndall Tynan, Pearl Street--as you know so well."

The tone in which he uttered the last few words was such that even the judge pricked up his ears.

A look of hatred came into the decadent but able lawyer's face.

"Where do you live when you are at home?"

"Mrs. Tynan's house is the only home I have at present."

He was outwitting the pursuer so far, but it only gained him time, as he knew; and he knew also that no suggestive hint concerning the episode at Mrs. Tynan's, when Burlingame was asked to leave her house, would be of any avail now.

"Where were you born?"

"In Ireland."

"What part of Ireland?"

"County Kerry."

"What place--what town or city or village in County Kerry?"

"In neither."

"What house, then--what estate?" Burlingame was more than nettled; and he sharpened his sword.

"The estate of Castlegarry."

"What was your name in Ireland?"

In the short silence that followed, the quick-drawn breath of many excited and some agitated people could be heard. Among the latter were Mrs. Tynan and her daughter and Malachi Deely; among those who held their breath in suspense were John Sibley, Studd Bradley the financier, and the Young Doctor. The swish of a skirt seemed ridiculously loud in the hush, and the scratching of the judge's quill pen was noisily irritating.

"My name in Ireland was James Shiel Gathorne Crozier, commonly called Shiel Crozier," came the even reply from the witness-box.

"James Shiel Gathorne Crozier in Ireland, but James Gathorne Kerry here!" Burlingame turned to the jury significantly. "What other name have you been known by in or out of Ireland?" he added sharply to Crozier. "No other name so far as I know."

"No other name so far as you know," repeated the lawyer in a sarcastic tone intended to impress the court.

"Who was your father?"

"John Gathorne Crozier."

"Any title?"

"He was a baronet."

"What was his business?"

"He had no profession, though he had business, of course."

"Ah, he lived by his wits?"

"No, he was not a lawyer! I have said he had no profession. He lived on his money on his estate."

The judge waved down the laughter at Burlingame's expense.

"In official documents what was his description?" snarled Burlingame.

"'Gentleman' was his designation in official documents."

"You, then, were the son of a gentleman?" There was a hateful suggestion in the tone.

"I was."

"A legitimate son?"

Nothing in Crozier's face showed what he felt, except his eyes, and they had a look in them which might well have made his questioner shrink. He turned calmly to the judge.

"Your honour, does this bear upon the case? Must I answer this legal libertine?"

At the word libertine, the judge, the whole court, and the audience started; but it was presently clear the witness meant that the questioner was abusing his legal privileges, though the people present interpreted it another way, and quite rightly.

The reply of the judge was in favour of the lawyer. "I do not quite see the full significance of the line of defence, but I think I must allow the question," was the judge's gentle and reluctant reply, for he was greatly impressed by this witness, by his transparent honesty and straightforwardness.

"Were you a legitimate son of John Gathorne Crozier and his wife?" asked Burlingame.

"Yes, a legitimate son," answered Crozier in an even voice.

"Is John Gathorne Crozier still living?"

"I said that gentleman was his designation in official documents. I supposed that would convey the fact that he was not living, but I see you do not quickly grasp a point."

Burlingame was stung by the laughter in the court and ventured a riposte.

"But is once a gentleman always a gentleman an infallible rule?"

"I suppose not; I did not mean to convey that; but once a rogue always a bad lawyer holds good in every country," was Crozier's comment in a low, quiet voice which stirred and amused the audience again.

"I must ask counsel to put questions which have some relevance even to his own line of defence," remarked the judge sternly. "This is not a corner grocery."

Burlingame bowed. He had had a facer, but he had also shown the witness to have been living under an assumed name. That was a good start. He hoped to add to the discredit. He had absolutely no knowledge of Crozier's origin and past; but he was in a position to find it out if Crozier told the truth on oath, and he was sure he would.

"Where was your domicile in the old country?" Burlingame asked.

"In County Kerry--with a flat in London."

"An estate in County Kerry?"

"A house and two thousand acres."

"Is it your property still?"

"It is not."

"You sold it?"

"No."

"If you did not sell, how is it that you do not own it?"

"It was sold for me--in spite of me."

The judge smiled, the people smiled, the jury smiled. Truly, though a life-history was being exposed with incredible slowness--"like pulling teeth," as the Young Doctor said--it was being touched off with laughter.

"You were in debt?"

"Quite."

"How did you get into debt?"

"By spending more than my income."

If Askatoon had been proud of its legal talent in the past it had now reason for revising its opinion. Burlingame was frittering away the effect of his inquiry by elaboration of details. What he gained by the main startling fact he lost in the details by which the witness scored. He asked another main question.

"Why did you leave Ireland?"

"To make money."

"You couldn't do it there?"

"They were too many for me over there, so I thought I'd come here," slyly answered Crozier, and with a grave face; at which the solemn scene of a prisoner being tried for his life was shaken by a broad smiling, which in some cases became laughter haughtily suppressed by the court attendant.

"Have you made money here?"

"A little--with expectations."

"What was your income in Ireland?"

"It began with three thousand pounds--"

"Fifteen thousand dollars about?"

"About that--about a lawyer's fee for one whisper to a client less than that. It began with that and ended with nothing."

"Then you escaped?"

"From creditors, lawyers, and other such? No, I found you here."

The judge intervened again almost harshly on the laughter of the court, with the remark that a man was being tried for his life; that ribaldry was out of place; and that, unless the course pursued by the counsel was to discredit the reliability of the character of the witness, the examination was in excess of the privilege of counsel.

"Your honour has rightly apprehended what my purpose is," Burlingame said deprecatingly. He then turned to Crozier again, and his voice rose as it did when he began the examination. It was as though he was starting all over again.

"What was it compelled" (he was boldly venturing) "you to leave Ireland at last? What was the incident which drove you out from the land where you were born--from being the owner of two thousand acres"--

"Partly bog," interposed Crozier.

"--From being the owner of two thousand acres to becoming a kind of head-groom on a ranch? What was the cause of your flight?"

"Flight! I came in one of the steamers of the Company for which your firm are the agents. Eleven days it took to come from Glasgow to Quebec."

Again the court rippled, again the attendant intervened.

Burlingame was nonplussed this time, but he gathered himself together.

"What was the process of law which forced you to leave your own land?"

"None at all."

"What were your debts when you left?"

"None at all."

"How much was the last debt you paid?"

"Two thousand five hundred pounds."

"What was its nature?"

"It was a debt of honour--do you understand?" The subtle challenge of the voice, the sarcasm, was not lost. Again there was a struggle on the part of the audience not to laugh outright, and so be driven from the court as had been threatened.

The judge interposed again with the remark, not very severe in tone, that the witness was not in the box to ask questions, but to answer them. At the same time he must remind counsel that the examination must discontinue unless something more relevant immediately appeared in the evidence.

There was silence again for a moment, and even Crozier himself seemed to steel himself for a question he felt was coming.

"Are you married or single?" asked Burlingame, and he did not need to raise his voice to summon the interest of the court.

"I was married."

One person in the audience nearly cried out. It was Kitty Tynan. She had never allowed herself to think of that, but even if she had, what difference could it make whether he was married or single, since he was out of her star?

"Are you not married now?"

"I do not know."

"You mean you do not know if you have been divorced?"

"No."

"You mean your wife is dead?"

"No."

"What do you mean? That you do not know whether your wife is living or dead?"

"Quite so."

"Have you heard from her since you saw her last?"

"I had one letter."

Kitty Tynan thought of the unopened letter in a woman's handwriting in the green baize desk in her mother's house.

"No more?"

"No more."

"Are we to understand that you do not know whether your wife is living or

dead?"

"I have no information that she is dead."

"Why did you leave her?"

"I have not said that I left her. Primarily I left Ireland."

"Assuming that she is alive, your wife will not live with you?"

"Ah, what information have you to that effect?" The judge informed Crozier that he must not ask questions of counsel.

"Why is she not with you here?"

"As you said, I am only picking up a living here, and even the passage by your own second-class steamship line is expensive."

The judge suppressed a smile. He greatly liked the witness.

"Do you deny that you parted from your wife in anger?"

"When I am asked that question I will try to answer it. Meanwhile, I do not deny what has not been put before me in the usual way."

Here the judge sternly rebuked the counsel, who ventured upon one last question.

"Have you any children?"

"None."

"Has your brother, who inherited, any children?"

"None that I know of."

"Are you the heir-presumptive to the baronetcy?"

"I am."

"Yet your wife will not live with you?"

"Call Mrs. Crozier as a witness and see. Meanwhile, I am not upon my trial."

He turned to the judge, who promptly called upon Burlingame to conclude his examination.

Burlingame asked two questions more.

"Why did you change your name when you came here?"

"I wanted to obliterate myself."

"I put it to you, that what you want is to avoid the outraged law of your own country."

"No--I want to avoid the outrageous lawyers of yours."

Again there was a pause in the proceedings, and on a protest from the crown attorney the judge put an end to the cross-examination with the solemn reminder that a man was being tried for his life, and that the present proceedings were a lamentable reflection on the levity of human nature--in Askatoon. Turning with friendly scrutiny to Crozier, he said:

"In the early stage of his examination the witness informed the court that he had made a heavy loss through a debt of honour immediately before leaving England. Will he say in what way he incurred the obligation? Are we to assume that it was through gambling-card-playing, or other games of chance?"

"Through backing the wrong horse," was Crozier's instant reply.

"That phrase is often applied to mining or other unreal flights for fortune," said the judge, with a dry smile.

"This was a real horse on a real flight to the winning-post," added Crozier, with a quirk at the corner of his mouth.

"Honest contest with man or horse is no crime, but it is tragedy to stake all on the contest and lose," was the judge's grave and pedagogic comment. "We shall now hear from the counsel for defence his reason for conducting his cross-examination on such unusual lines. Latitude of this kind is only permissible if it opens up any weakness in the case against the prisoner."

The judge thus did Burlingame a good turn as well as Crozier, by creating an atmosphere of gravity, even of tragedy, in which Burlingame could make his speech in defence of the prisoner.

Burlingame started hesitatingly, got into his stride, assembled the points of his defence with the skill of which he really was capable. He made a strong appeal for acquittal, but if not acquittal, then a verdict of manslaughter. He showed that the only real evidence which could convict his man of murder was that of the witness Crozier. If he had been content to discredit evidence of the witness by an adroit but guarded misuse of the facts he had brought out regarding Crozier's past, to emphasise the fact that he was living under an assumed name and that his bona fides was doubtful, he might have impressed the jury to some slight degree. He could not, however, control the malice he felt, and he was smarting from Crozier's retorts. He had a vanity easily lacerated, and he was now too savage to abate the ferocity of his forensic attack. He sat down, however, with a sure sense of failure. Every orator knows when he is beating the air, even when his audience is quiet and apparently attentive.

The crown attorney was a man of the serenest method and of cold, un forensic logic. He had a deadly precision of speech, a very remarkable memory, and a great power of organising and assembling his facts. There was little left of Burlingame's appeal when he sat down. He declared that to discredit Crozier's evidence because he chose to use another name than his own, because he was parted from his wife, because he left England practically penniless to earn an honest living--no one had shown it was not--was the last resort of legal desperation. It was an indefensible thing to endeavour to create prejudice against a man because of his own evidence given with great frankness. Not one single word of evidence had the defence brought to discredit Crozier, save by Crozier's own word of mouth; and if Crozier had cared to commit perjury, the

defence could not have proved him guilty of it. Even if Crozier had not told the truth as it was, counsel for the defence would have found it impossible to convict him of falsehood. But even if Crozier was a perjurer, justice demanded that his evidence should be weighed as truth from its own inherent probability and supported by surrounding facts. In a long experience he had never seen animus against a witness so recklessly exhibited as by counsel in this case.

The judge was not quite so severe in his summing up, but he did say of Crozier that his direct replies to Burlingame's questions, intended to prejudice him in the eyes of the community into which he had come a stranger, bore undoubted evidence of truth; for if he had chosen to say what might have saved him from the suspicions, ill or well founded, of his present fellow-citizens, he might have done so with impunity, save for the reproach of his own conscience. On the whole, the judge summed up powerfully against the prisoner Logan, with the result that the jury were not out for more than a half-hour. Their verdict was, guilty of murder.

In the scene which followed, Crozier dropped his head into his hand and sat immovable as the judge put on the black cap and delivered sentence. When the prisoner left the dock, and the crowd began to disperse, satisfied that justice had been done--save in that small circle where the M'Mahons were supreme--Crozier rose with other witnesses to leave. As he looked ahead of him the first face he saw was that of Kitty Tynan, and something in it startled him. Where had he seen that look before? Yes, he remembered. It was when he was twenty-one and had been sent away to Algiers because he was falling in love with a farmer's daughter. As he drove down a lane with his father towards the railway station, those long years ago, he had seen the girl's face looking at him from the window of a labourer's cottage at the crossroads; and its stupefied desolation haunted him for many years, even after the girl had married and gone to live in Scotland--that place of torment for an Irish soul.

The look in Kitty Tynan's face reminded him of that farmer's lass in his boyhood's history. He was to blame then--was he to blame now? Certainly not consciously, not by any intended word or act. Now he met her eyes and smiled at her, not gaily, not gravely, but with a kind of whimsical helplessness; for she was the first to remind him that he was leaving the court-room in a different position (if not a different man) from that in which he entered it. He had entered the court-room as James Gathorne Kerry, and he was leaving it as Shiel Crozier; and somehow James Gathorne Kerry had always been to himself a different man from Shiel Crozier, with different views, different feelings, if not different characteristics.

He saw faces turned to him, a few with intense curiosity, fewer still with a little furtiveness, some with amusement, and many with unmistakable approval; for one thing was clear, if his own evidence was correct: he was the son of a baronet, he was heir-presumptive to a baronetcy, and he had scored off Augustus Burlingame in a way which delighted a naturally humorous people. He noted, however, that the nod which Studd Bradley, the financier, gave him had in it an enigmatic something which puzzled him. Surely Bradley could not be prejudiced against him because of the evidence he had given. There was nothing criminal in living under an assumed name, which, anyhow, was his own name in three-fourths of it, and in the other part was the name of the county where he was born.

"Divils me own, I told you he was up among the dukes," said Malachi Deely

to John Sibley as they came out. "And he's from me own county, and I know the name well enough; an' a damn good name it is. The bulls of Castlegarry was famous in the south of Ireland."

"I've a warm spot for him. I was right, you see. Backing horses ruined him," said Sibley in reply; and he looked at Crozier admiringly.

There is the communion of saints, but nearer and dearer is the communion of sinners; for a common danger is their bond, and that is even more than a common hope.

CHAPTER IV

"STRENGTH SHALL BE GIVEN THEE"

On the evening of the day of the trial, Mrs. Tynan, having fixed the new blind to the window of Shiel Crozier's room, which was on the ground-floor front, was lowering and raising it to see if it worked properly, when out in the moonlit street she saw a wagon approaching her house surrounded and followed by obviously excited men. Once before she had seen just such a group nearing her door. That was when her husband was brought home to die in her arms. She had a sudden conviction, as, holding the blind in her hand, she looked out into the night, that again tragedy was to cross her threshold. Standing for an instant under the fascination of terror, she recovered herself with a shiver, and, stepping down from the chair where she had been fixing the blind, with the instinct of real woman, she ran to the bed of the room where she was, and made it ready. Why did she feel that it was Shiel Crozier's bed which should be made ready? Or did she not feel it? Was it only a dazed, automatic act, not connected with the person who was to lie in the bed? Was she then a fatalist? Were trouble and sorrow so much her portion that to her mind this tragedy, whatever it was, must touch the man nearest to her--and certainly Shiel Crozier was far nearer than Jesse Bulrush. Quite apart from wealth or position, personality plays a part more powerful than all else in the eyes of every woman who has a soul which has substance enough to exist at all. Such men as Crozier have compensations for "whate'er they lack." It never occurred to Mrs. Tynan to go to Jesse Bulrush's room or the room of middle-aged, comely Nurse Egan. She did the instinctive thing, as did the woman who sent a man a rope as a gift, on the ground that the fortune in his hand said that he was born not to be drowned.

Mrs. Tynan's instinct was right. By the time she had put the bed into shape, got a bowl of water ready, lighted a lamp, and drawn the bed out from the wall, there was a knocking at the door. In a moment she had opened it, and was faced by John Sibley, whose hat was off as though he were in the presence of death. This gave her a shock, and her eyes strove painfully to see the figure which was being borne feet foremost over her threshold.

"It's Mr. Crozier?" she asked.

"He was shot coming home here--by the M'Mahon mob, I guess," returned Sibley huskily.

"Is--is he dead?" she asked tremblingly. "No. Hurt bad."

"The kindest man--it'd break Kitty's heart--and mine," she added hastily, for she might be misunderstood; and John Sibley had shown signs of interest in her daughter.

"Where's the Young Doctor?" she asked, catching sight of Crozier's face as they laid him on the bed. "He's done the first aid, and he's off getting what's needed for the operation. He'll be here in a minute or so," said a banker who, a few days before, had refused Crozier credit.

"Gently, gently--don't do it that way," said Mrs. Tynan in sharp reproof as they began to take off Crozier's clothes.

"Are you going to stay while we do it?" asked a maker of mineral waters, who whined at the prayer meetings of a soul saved and roared at his employees like a soul damned.

"Oh, don't be a fool!" was the impatient reply. "I've a grown-up girl and I've had a husband. Don't pull at his vest like that. Go away. You don't know how. I've had experience--my husband . . . There, wait till I cut it away with the scissors. Cover him with the quilt. Now, then, catch hold of his trousers under the quilt, and draw them off slowly. . . . There you are--and nothing to shock the modesty of a grown-up woman or any other when a life's at stake. What does the Young Doctor say?"

"Hush! He's coming to," interposed the banker. It was as though the quiet that followed the removal of his clothes and the touch of Mrs. Tynan's hand on his head had called Crozier back from unconsciousness.

The first face he saw was that of the banker. In spite of the loss of blood and his pitiable condition, a whimsical expression came to his eyes. "Lucky for you you didn't lend me the money," he said feebly.

The banker shook his head. "I'm not thinking of that, Mr. Crozier. God knows, I'm not!"

Crozier caught sight of Mrs. Tynan. "It's hard on you to have me brought here," he murmured as she took his hand.

"Not so hard as if they hadn't," she replied. "That's what a home's for--not just a place for eating and drinking and sleeping."

"It wasn't part of the bargain," he said weakly.

"It was my part of the bargain."

"Here's Kitty," said the maker of mineral waters, as there was the swish of a skirt at the door.

"Who are you calling 'Kitty'?" asked the girl indignantly, as they motioned her back from the bedside. "There's too many people here," she added abruptly to her mother. "We can take care of him"--she nodded towards the bed. "We don't want any help except--except from John Sibley, if he will stay, and you too," she added to the banker.

She had not yet looked at the figure on the bed. She felt she could not do so while all these people were in the room. She needed time to adjust herself to the situation. It was as though she was the authority in the

household and took control even of her mother. Mrs. Tynan understood. She had a great belief in her daughter and admired her cleverness, and she was always ready to be ruled by her; it was like being "bossed" by the man she had lost.

"Yes, you'd all better go," Mrs. Tynan said. "He wants all the air he can get, and I can't make things ready with all of you in the room. Go outdoors for a while, anyway. It's summer and you'll not take cold! The Young Doctor has work to do, and my girl and I and these two will help him plenty." She motioned towards the banker and the gambling farmer.

In a moment the room was cleared of all save the four and Crozier, who knew that upon the coming operation depended his life. He had been conscious when the Young Doctor said this was so, and he was thinking, as he lay there watching these two women out of his nearly closed eyes, that he would like to be back in Ireland at Castlegarry with the girl he had married and had left without a good-bye near five years gone. If he had to die he would like to die at home; and that could not be.

Kitty had the courage to turn towards him now. As she caught sight of his face for the first time--she had so far kept her head turned away--she became very pale. Then, suddenly, she gathered herself together. Going over to the bed, she took the limp hand lying on the coverlet.

"Courage, soldier," she said in the colloquialism her father often used, and she smiled at Crozier a great-hearted, helpful smile.

"You are a brick of bricks, Kitty Tynan," he whispered, and smiled.

"Here comes the Young Doctor," said Mrs. Tynan as the door opened unceremoniously.

"Well, I have to make an excursion," Crozier said, "and I mayn't come back. If I don't, au revoir, Kitty."

"You are coming back all right," she answered firmly. "It'll take more than a horse-thief's bullet to kill you. You've got to come back. You're as tough as nails. And I'll hold your hand all through it--yes, I will!" she added to the Young Doctor, who had patted her shoulder and told her to go to another room.

"I'm going to help you, doctor-man, if you please," she said, as he turned to the box of instruments which his assistant held.

"There's another--one of my colleagues--coming I hope," the Young Doctor replied.

"That's all right, but I am staying to see Mr. Crozier through. I said I'd hold his hand, and I'm going to do it," she added firmly.

"Very well; put on a big apron, and see that you go through with us if you start. No nonsense."

"There'll be no nonsense from me," she answered quietly.

"I want the bed in the middle of the room," the Young Doctor said, and the others gently moved it.

CHAPTER V

A STORY TO BE TOLD

A great surgeon said a few years ago that he was never nervous when performing an operation, though there was sometimes a moment when every resource of character, skill, and brain came into play. That was when, having diagnosed correctly and operated, a new and unexpected seat of trouble and peril was exposed, and instant action had to be taken. The great man naturally rose to the situation and dealt with it coolly; but he paid the price afterwards in his sleep when, night after night, he performed the operation over and over again with the same strain on his subconscious self.

So it was with Kitty Tynan in her small way. She had insisted on being allowed to help at the operation, and the Young Doctor, who had a good knowledge of life and knew the stuff in her, consented; and so far as the operation was concerned she justified his faith in her. When the banker had to leave the room at the sight of the carnage, she remained, and she and John Sibley were as cool as the Young Doctor and his fellow-anatomist, till it was all over, and Shiel Crozier was started again on a safe journey back to health. Then a thing, which would have been amusing if it had not been so deeply human, happened. She and John Sibley went out of the house together into the moonlit night, and the reaction seized them both at the same moment. She gave a gulp and burst into tears, and he, though as tall as Crozier, also broke down, and they sat on the stump of a tree together, her hand in his, and cried like two children.

"Never since I was a little runt--did I--never cried in thirty years--and here I am--leaking like a pail!" Thus spoke John Sibley in gasps and squeezing Kitty's hand all the time unconsciously, but spontaneously, and as part of what he felt. He would not, however, have dared to hold her hand on any other occasion, while always wanting to hold it, and wanting her also to share his not wholly reputed, though far from precarious, existence. He had never got so far as to tell her that; but if she had understanding she would realise after to-night what he had in his mind. She, feeling her arm thrill with the magnetism of his very vital palm, had her turn at explanation. "I wouldn't have broke down myself--it was all your fault," she said. "I saw it--yes--in your face as we left the house. I'm so glad it's over safe--no one belonging to him here, and not knowing if he'd wake up alive or not--I just was swamped."

He took up the misty excuse and explanation. "I had a feeling for him from the start; and then that Logan Trial to-day, and the way he talked out straight, and told the truth to shame the devil--it's what does a man good! And going bung over a horserace--that's what got me too, where I was young and tender. Swatted that Burlingame every time--one eye, two eyes all black, teeth out, nose flattened--called him an 'outrageous lawyer'--my, that last clip was a good one! You bet he's a sport--Crozier."

Kitty nodded eagerly while still wiping her red eyes. "He made the judge smile--I saw it, not ten minutes before his honour put on the black cap. You couldn't have believed it, if you hadn't seen it--

"Here, let go my hand," she added, suddenly conscious of the enormity

John Sibley was committing by squeezing it now.

It is perfectly true that she did not quite realise that he had taken her hand--that he had taken her hand. She was conscious in a nice, sympathetic way that her hand had been taken, but it was lost in the abstraction of her emotion.

"Oh, here, let it go quick!" she added--"and not because mother's coming, either," she added as the door opened and her mother came out--not to spy, not to reproach her daughter for sitting with a man in the moonlight at ten o'clock at night, but--good, practical soul--to bring them each a cup of beef-tea.

"Here, you two," she said as she hurried to them. "You need something after that business in there, and there isn't time to get supper ready. It's as good for you as supper, anyway. I don't believe in underfeeding. Nothing's too good to swallow."

She watched them sip the tea slowly like two schoolchildren.

"And when you've drunk it you must go right to bed, Kitty," she added presently. "You've had your own way, and you saw the thing through; but there's always a reaction, and you'll pay for it. It wasn't fit work for a girl of your age; but I'm proud of your nerve, and I'm glad you showed the Young Doctor what you can do. You've got your father's brains and my grit," she added with a sigh of satisfaction. "Come along--bed now, Kitty. If you get too tired you'll have bad dreams."

Perhaps she was too tired. In any case she had dreams. Just as the great surgeon performed his operation over and over in his sleep, so Kitty Tynan, through long hours that night, and for many nights afterwards, saw the swift knives, helped to staunch the blood, held the basin, disinfected the instruments which had made an attack on the man of men in her eyes, and saw the wound stitched up--the last act of the business before the Young Doctor turned to her and said, "You'll do wherever you're put in life, Miss Kitty Tynan. You're a great girl. And now get some fresh air and forget all about it."

Forget all about it! So, the Young Doctor knew what happened after a terrific experience like that! In truth, he knew only too well. Great surgeons do surgery only and have innumerable operations to give them skill; but a country physician and surgeon must be a sane being to keep his nerve when called on to use the knife, and he must have a more than usual gift for such business. That is what the Young Doctor had; but he knew it was not easy to forget those scenes in which man carved the body of fellow-man, laying bare the very vitals of existence, seeing "the wheels go round."

It haunted Kitty Tynan in the night-time, and perhaps it was that which toned down a little the colour of her face--the kind of difference of colouring there is between natural gold and 14-carat. But in the daytime she was quite happy, and though there was haunting, it was Shiel Crozier who, first helpless, then convalescent, was haunted by her presence. It gave him pleasure, but it was a pleasure which brought pain. He was not so blind that he had not caught at her romance, in which he was the central figure--a romance which had not vanished since the day he declared in the court-room that he was married, or had been married. Kitty's eyes told their own story, and it made him uneasy and remorseful. Yet he could not remember when, even for an instant, he had played with

her. She had always seemed part of a simple family life for which he and Jesse Bulrush and her mother and the nurse-Nurse Egan-were responsible. What a blessing Nurse Egan had been! Otherwise, all the nursing would have been performed by Kitty and her mother, and it might well have broken them down, for they were determined to nurse him themselves.

When, however, Nurse Egan came back, two days after the operation was performed, they included her in the responsibility, as one of the family; and as she had no other important case on at the time, fortunately she could give Crozier almost undivided attention. She had been at first disposed to keep Kitty out of the sick-chamber, as no place for a girl, but she soon abandoned that position, for Kitty was not the girl ever to think of impropriety. She was primitive and she had rather a before-the-flood nature, but she had not the faintest vulgar strain in her. Her mind was essentially pure; nothing material in her had been awakened. Her greatest joy was to do the many things for the patient which a nurse must do--prepare his food, give him drink, adjust his pillows, bathe his face and hands, take his temperature; and on his part he tried hard to disguise from her the apprehension he felt, and to avoid any hint by word or look that he saw anything save the actions of a kind heart. True, her views as to what was proper and improper might possibly be on a different plane from his own. For instance, he had seen girls of her station in the West kiss young men freely--men whom they had no thought of marrying; and that was not the custom of his own class in his home-country.

As he got well slowly, and life opened out before him again, he felt he had to pursue a new course, and in that course he must take account of Kitty Tynan, though he could not decide how. He had a deep confidence in the Young Doctor, in his judgment and his character; and it was almost inevitable that he should tell his life-story to the man whose skill had saved him from death in a strange land, with all undone he wanted to do ere he returned to a land which was not strange.

The thing happened, as such things do happen, in a quite natural way one day when he and the Young Doctor were discussing the probable verdict against the man who had shot him--the trial was to come on soon, and once again Augustus Burlingame was to be counsel for the defence, and once again Crozier would have to appear in a witness-box.

"I think you ought to know, Crozier, that, in view of the trial, Burlingame has written to a firm of lawyers in Kerry to get full information about your past," the Young Doctor said.

Crozier gave one of those little jerks of the head characteristic of him and said: "Why, of course; I knew he would do that after I gave my evidence in the Logan Trial." He raised himself on his elbow. "I owe you a great deal," he added feelingly, "and I can't repay you in cash or kindness for what you have done; but it is due you to tell you my whole story, and that is what I propose to do now."

"If you think--"

"I do think; and also I want both Mrs. Tynan and her daughter to hear my story. Better, truer friends a man could not have; and I want them to know the worst and the best there is, if there is any best. They and you have trusted me, been too good to me, and what I said at the trial is not enough. I want to do what I've never done before. I want to tell everything. It will do me good; and perhaps as I tell it I'll see myself and everything else in a truer light than I've yet seen it all."

"You are sure you want Mrs. Tynan and her daughter to hear?"

"Absolutely sure."

"They are not in your rank in life, you know."

"They are my friends, and I owe them more than I can say. There is nothing they cannot or should not hear. I can say that at least."

"Shall I ask them to come?"

"Yes. Give me a swig of water first. It won't be easy, but--"

He held out his hand, and the Young Doctor grasped it.

Suddenly the latter said: "You are sure you will not be sorry? That it is not a mood of the moment due to physical weakness?"

"Quite sure. I determined on it the day I was shot--and before I was shot."

"All right." The Young Doctor disappeared.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Anny man as is a man has to have one vice
Her moral standard had not a multitude of delicate punctilios
Law's delays outlasted even the memory of the crime committed
She looked too gay to be good
They had seen the world through the bottom of a tumbler

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