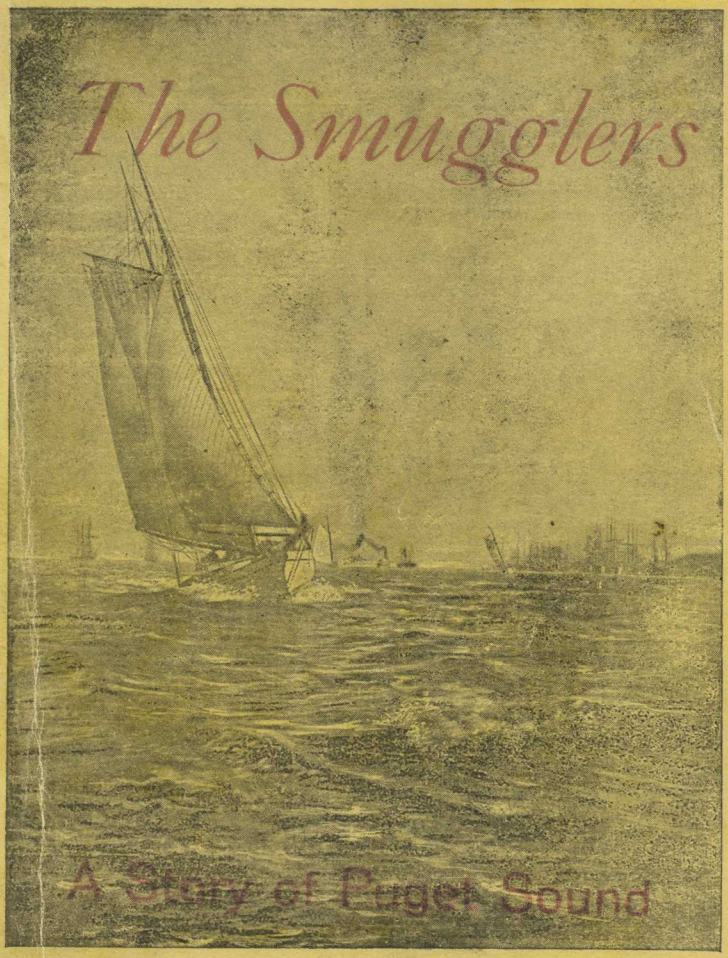
The Smugglers
A Story of Puget Sound

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PREFACE.

"In a country where every hamlet is a town, every town a city, every creek a river, every hill a mountain and every man a liar."

This little *bon mot* concerning Western Washington made the rounds of the Eastern newspapers some time ago, and created not a little merriment. But nowhere did it cause more laughter than on the shores of Puget Sound. There was a great deal more exaggeration than truth in the statement, but the little touch of nature it did contain was sufficent to cause it to be heartily appreciated by the good-natured inhabitants in the valley of the American Mediterranean.

The Puget Sounder is peculiar. He is the most generous, liberal, free-minded, whole-souled product of American amalgamation found any where in the United States, and he is also a schemer. There seems to be something in the aura of this country of crimson and gold, silver-crowned mountains, crystaline waters and tropical flora conducive to "little jobs." The farmer schemes to sell his grain, the merchant schemes to dispose of his goods, the lawyer schemes to gain his clientage, the physician schemes to increase his practice and the preacher schemes to enlarge his congregation. Scheming has almost come to be regarded as a sort of irregular business method of the country. While it is by no means to be commended, yet it is not any more reprehensible than many of the older and longer es-

tablished practices of trade. The Eastern merchant laboriously reaffirms that he is selling below cost, while the Puget Sounder will lead you to believe that his goods have been smuggled into the country, and that you are purchasing a uery superior article at a greatly reduced valuation.

In the person of Paul Hamilton I have endeavored to portray a few of the leading general features of the Puget Sound character. Hamiton, like the majority of the inhabitants of the State, is not a product of the country, but he is a fairly good representative of a class of persons that is naturally attracted to the newer and more fertile fields of the West.

Posessing unusual capabilities of intellect, untrammelled by conventional scruples of conscience, extravagant, bold, adventurous, this class of fellows, without a dollar in their pockets, flock to a new country, as soon as it is fairly discovered, and boom it for all it is worth. In a single decade these knights-errant of commerce do the work that would ordinarily and naturally require more than a century to consummate. And this was done by scheming.

Less than ten years ago the State of Washington was in an almost primeval condition of civilization, but in so marvelously a short time, it has eclipsed many o the older commonwealths of the Eastern States. In the velopment of natural resources, the facilities for commercial intercourse, the progress of education, social amenities and general enlightenment, the inhabitants of Puget Sound present a higher average than any other country or locality in the world. But still there is room for improvement.

The courts of justice of the Pacific Northwest are notoriously corrupt, but I am glad to record the fact that a powerful reaction has already set in, and I am

sanguine that in the course of a few years that it will no longer be necessary for a litigant to make appropriations of money for the purpose of bribing the jurors.

The operations of the smugglers, however, are unchanged. For so long a time has this great monopoly of law breakers enjoyed the protection of the federal authorities, that it has become a menace to the legislative power of the Union and a reproach to the civilization of the West. That there has been collusion between the officers of the customs service and this infamous trust is a fact that has been recently established, and that these same relations still exist is a matter of considerable more than conjecture. The smuggling Ring has obtained so strong a hold of the Pacific coast states, that nothing save the most radical amendments of the laws restricting the emigration of Chinese coolies into the country and a heavy reduction of the import duties on manufactured opium will ever loosen the strands of this disgraceful bond.

During a residence of five years in Washington, I was employed as the private secretary of one of the leading federal officials of the State. My facilities for making a study of the commercial, political and official character of the State, considered as a whole, were exceptionally good. Should anyone care to find fault with any of the statements contained in this production, I do not think I would have any difficulty in bringing a large array of real facts and personages in support of the imaginary ones.

The "Smugglers" was written in the hope that the story would have a good moral effect upon the people of Puget Sound. I trust my efforts will not have been wasted.

THE AUTHOR.

THE SMUGGLERS.

BY EDITH NEVILLE.

CHAPTER I.

"In some respects he is a daisy."

So answered Mr. Alfred Wilton, attorney at law, to his partner, Mr. Fred Hallam, in response to the latter person's inquiry concerning a visitor who had at that moment left the office.

"How's that?" pursued Hallam, with lazy laconism.

"Hamilton is a strange case," Wilton replied. "He is one of the best read fellows I ever knew, well educated, brainy, refined, and all that, but there is something lacking in his make-up."

"Unbalanced, perhaps," suggested the listener.

"No, not exactly that," returned the other in a con-

templative sort of way, "his judgment is fairly good in most things. He is one of those kind of fellows who can push another man to the front, but who can't get there himself. Why, he has actually made a half dozen congressmen, governors, supreme judges and other high public officials, some of 'em out of very humble material, too, but so far, he has failed to make anything substantial or permanent out of himself. Intellectually, he is one of the strongest men I know, but wholly deficient in character. If the fellow had a more equal distribution of those two qualities, I believe he could consistently aspire to any political office that he might be ambitious to fill. A lack of moral integrity is, perhaps, his greatest weakness, and the primary cause of his making a failure of life."

"In other words," interrupted the senior, "he is so constituted that he would rather gain his ends by dishonest means than by honorable methods, even though it were to his advantage to take the straight-forward course."

"No, I wouldn't say that," Wilton replied. "He is by no means depraved. At least I believe him, entitled to the credit of a good rogue's sense of honor. I never knew him to betray a confidence or to be guilty of any

other act of treachery, and should he give his word, you can come pretty nearly depending upon his keeping it. He is of a sympathetic nature, inclined to be generous, likes to do a person a favor and will divide his last cent with a friend. His habits are about as good as those of the average unmarried man of thirty years of age. He is a moderate drinker, smokes only the best cigars, never gambles, but I guess women are his greatest weakness. Ever since I have known him, he has always had some unfortunate woman dragging around with him, and he has a mean little habit of occasionally breaking the angel's wings."

"Umph-huh!" ejaculated Hallam, a sardonic grin overspreading his face, "How else is your curiosity distinguished? What's his business, profession? Has he any other excuse for living aside from the practice of high class philanthrophy?"

"Oh, he's a kind of a schemer," replied Wilton, reflectively, "newspaper man principally, something of a lawyer, politician, does lobby work, a sort of a 'third house' character."

"Where did you run across him?" Hallam asked, "and what is the source of your affection for the gentleman?" he continued quizzically alluding to a loan of two hun-

dred dollars which the interesting stranger had procured from Wilton and which he had carried away with him.

"I first met him back in Illinois, six or eight years ago," Wilton replied. "I had just got my sheepskin and was about as raw a product of the Blackstonian mill as was ever ground out. Hamilton was running a newspaper in Aurora at that time, and more for the oddity of the thing than for any reasonable motive, he picked me up and boomed me for the legislature. He wrote all my speeches and made the canvass with me, and, notwithstanding we had big Republican odds to contend with, I was elected by a very good majority."

"How did you manage it?"

"D—d if I hardly know. I never thoroughly understood any part of the process. Made some kind of play for the Greenback vote, I believe, and got it. There's one thing that I afterwards found out, I was solemnly pledged to revolutionize our financial system and force governmental adoption of the fiat money scheme. History will support the statement that I failed to do this, and consequently couldn't be re-elected.

"I went through two sessions of the State legislature without making either a speech or a motion, and without even an intelligent comprehension of what was going

on about me. I just had sense enough to keep my mouth shut and vote with my party, except, of course, when Hamilton would instruct otherwise."

"He worked you, then?"

"Oh, yes. he had some bill to lobby through for the Bloomington Central railroad and, of course, I felt in duty bound to be complacent. I helped him through with his little steal, and done pretty much as he directed. My docility combined with the circumstances attending my election gained me the sobriquet of Hamilton's Freak' among my colleagues in the House. The opposition newspapers seldom mentioned me without some facetious reference to my pseudonym until it became positively unbearable, and my sole object in leaving Illinois and coming West was to get rid of that miserable name."

"But it seems that Hamilton does not intend that you shall entirely rid yourself of *him*," said Hallam in an insinuating tone of voice.

" That's all right," returned the other with some resentment, "I never lost anything through Hamilton and you bet I never will. Of course, my legislative experience did not do me any good financially, nor was it of any great assistance to me in the way of building up

a reputation for myself, but it gave me an insight into men and things that has proved simply invaluable to me. It really advanced me at least ten years in worldly experience and I consider myself very much indebted to my wandering friend as you chose to call him.

"Besides, Hamilton did not come here especially to look me up," Wilton continued, "he got 'broke' back East and simply came out to the Sound country to better his condition."

"Think you will ever get your two hundred back?"

"Yes, I do; but I don't care whether I do or not. I am mighty glad Hamilton is here, and I tell you, we will find him pretty handy in the next fall elections, and especially so if you succeed in capturing the democratic nomination for Superior judge."

CHAPTER II.

In the meantime the subject of the conversation between the two lawyers was traversing the main street of the town, to which fate had brought him less than three hours previous, with rapid steps. He had left his home in the East without much preparation, but with the intention of going just as far west as the limits of Uncle Sam's domain would permit him to. His sole object in making the long journey was to leave a place where his surroundings and associations had become extreme-distasteful to him, and his choice of a westward course had its foundation in a desire to get just as far away from the scenes of his discontentment as was possible to do so. The Union Pacific railroad and steamship line of transportation had brought him to the little city of Kuhnville, a port of entry on the strait of Juan de Fuca. Upon leaving home Hamilton had provided himself with funds, doubly sufficient, as he supposed, for the

necessary traveling expenses of himself and companion; but he afterwards found that he had reckoned without his host. The Union Pacific railroad is, perhaps, the only transportation line extending to the far west which has neglected to do away with that system of insolent brigandage which seemed an almost indispensable adjunct to railroad traffic twenty years ago. Competition has long since taught the greater portion of railway managers that civility and fair dealing is fully as necessary to the success of a transportation business as to any other enterprise, but the Union Pacific has firmly closed its eyes to this important commercial truth and still maintains a horde of galloots who, under the guise of employes of that corporation, practice without molestation many of the various arts and tricks common to confidence operators, seldom failing to rob, in some manner and to some extent, nearly every individual unfortunate enough to fall into their hands. So after our traveller had been "held-up" by the conductors, swindled by the baggage masters, blackmailed by the porters, forced to pay tribute to the brakemen he reached his destination with very little money remaining. It was not his privilege to enjoy that remaining little any great length of time. By some means the fact that

he had actually succeeded in escaping from the Union Pacific people with a few dollars, became known to the wharfinger of the Union Wharf Co., a miscreant by the name of Peapody, justly celebrated as the most shameless transportation thief on Puget Sound, who imdiately proceeded, according to long established practice, to fleece him out of every penny he had. Unfortunately the private baggage of our traveller, which had been checked at the outset of his journey, had to pass into the hands of the wharfinger and, though it remained in his possession only about half an hour, its owner learned, upon demanding his trunks, that he would be compelled, not only to deliver up all the money he had, but to pawn his watch and articles of jewelry in order to regain his property. This he did under strong protest, using some very vigorous language in denouncing the swindle, even threatening to employ police assistance to prevent being made the victim of such a high-handed species of robbery, but the complacent wharfmaster was evidently too well accustomed to such scenes to be troubled by them. He simply laughed at Hamilton's tirade of abuse, bade him seek any redress that he considered expedient, good-naturedly observing that in course of time, if he remained in Kuhnville

very long, he would learn that the business principles prevailing in that city were far different from those of any other place in the world.

In looking over a copy of the Kuhnville directory, Hamilton chanced to find a familiar name among the six thousand inhabitants of that city. It was that of Mr. Alfred Wilton, who was catalogued as an attorney at law, occupying rooms in the Hastings building, in the best business portion of the town.

These facts certainly invested Mr. Wilton with the appearance of prosperity, and Hamilton resolved to look-up his whilom friend, and if possible borrow money from him sufficient to relieve his present necessities and aid him to develop some plan for gaining a livelihood.

Paul Hamilton was a fine looking fellow, tall, well formed, dressed with scrupulous taste and exactness of fashion and possessing a remarkably handsome face. He had more of the appearance of a student, thoughtful and gentle, rather than what he was, a man of the world, quick to see an opportunity and not over scrupulous as to the methods he employed in taking advantage of it.

Though a well matured man, his daily life was full of contradictions. He was naturally of generous impulses,

and had he been reared under the influences of a good home training, he would unquestionably have developed into a most model citizen of this great Republic, but the circumstances of his early life were such, that in the bitter struggle for existence, he had fallen into a habit of using foul means to accomplish his ends when fair means failed to serve his purposes. He lived by his wits, and, like all other persons of that kind, he was guided by no social or moral principles. In business competition he not unfrequently made near approaches to the boundaries of absolute crime, and occasionally stepped over the line, when he felt certain he could do so without detection. Periodically he had what he termed his "repentant spells," and at such times his better nature would exert itself, and he would resolve to reform his ways of life and cultivate character. These experiments usually lasted from ten days to six weeks, their duration being largely dependent upon the character of the temptations which beset the quandom moralist, but there was very little permanent good resulting from them; a hard swim against the current, a moment's relaxation, and then a drifting with the tide in the same old way.

This infirmity of purpose was the real cause of his

failure to make a success of life, the cause of his inability to make for himself a permanent place in the business and social world. Had he systematically followed a life of scheming, he could have, in ten years time, become wealthy; or, on the other hand, had he worked in the lines of earnest, honest endeavor, he would, not only have gained riches, but fame and high social standing would be his reward for a very few years of effort. Honesty is the best policy but effort of any kind will tell.

A walk of ten minutes brought Hamilton to the business limits of Water street and to the Adams House, a very uninviting looking hostelry, at which place he had engaged temporary entertainment.

Upon entering the rookery he was joined by a young man who stood idling near apparently waiting for him.

"Well, Paul," said this individual, "how did you make it?"

"All right, Billy," Hamilton responded cheerily; and he then proceeded to give his companion a detailed account of his visit to the lawyer and the success of his mission.

Billy was Paul's half brother, and as Wilton explained, the only human being for whom Hamilton had ever shown any real, earnest feeling of affection.

Paul's mother died when her only child was ten years of age, and his father, as it ofttimes happens, and for reasons best known to himself, married the round-faced, red-cheeked servant girl within a year. Billy was the result of this union almost miracuously soon after it had taken place; but before he had had fairly time to become well acquainted with his sire, that recalcitrant individual had sold out his business and gone the Lord knows where, leaving his interesting little family penniless. Paul was turned into the street to earn his living as best he could; Billy was consigned to the first convenient orphan asylum, and the servant-girl wife went "on the town"—a not unusual sequel to romances of that nature.

Before the breaking-up of the family had taken place, however, Paul had formed a genuine attachment for his baby brother, and, in all of his after life, no matter to what extent his nature became hardened and wharped by too close contact with a selfish, unkind world, his love for Billy remained unchanged and undiminished. It was about the only reliable and redeeming possession of a pretty world-worn nature.

When Paul had arrived at the age of fifteen years, he was in possession of a fairly good income from a news-

stand business, which by his own industry, he had gradually built up from a very small beginning. At this period in his career he had himself appointed Billy's guardian and removed the little fellow from the orphanage to a home of his own providing.

For five years thereafter he had managed to support himself and brother very well. Being naturally of a studious disposition he gradually, by attending night school and with close application to his books, acquired a good knowledge of the educational rudiments. Then he became ambitious. The news-stand business was soon abandoned, being too humble an occupation for his developing aspirations, and the young man managed to attach himself to one of the daily newspapers in the capacity of a reporter. From this first step into journaism he, in good time, drifted into the proprietorship of several successive newspapers which he published with varied success. At the age of twenty-four he decided to give up newspaper work and adopt the legal profession as his life's work. With this object in view he sold his newspaper and entered college, where he remained until he graduated.

But college life was not altogether for good in Hamilton's case. He had an unusually generous heritage of

moral obliquity, and all the evil tendencies of his nature would crop out and seemed to strive to keep pace with the expanding forces of his intellect. Though he had no trouble in obtaining admission to the bar, yet he so completely lost interest in his legal studies that he could not endure the idea of engaging in the practice of his profession. Necessity compelled him to return to newspaper work, but he had lost all liking for journalism In fact he rapidly became indifferent to most every thing, including his own welfare.

Billy had very few educational advantages, but he succeeded in acquiring a good trade, that of a mechanical engineer. His mental endowments were not of a very high order but physically and morally he possessed a wonderful fund of health and vigor.

Billy returned Paul's affection with compound interest. He followed him about like a faithful dog, ever on the alert to serve him in every possible way, and should occasion demand he would have been perfectly willing to sacrifice life itself in his brother's behalf

CHAPTER III.

The brothers spent the next three days following their advent into Kuhnville, looking over the town, searching for some employmeut or business in which they could earn their respective livings. Billy visited the several small manufactories as well as the shipping and steamboat offices in an effort to find work at his trade. Paul, whose sphere of usefullness had never contemplated employment under the direction of any person other than himself, wandered about aimlessly trying to think out some scheme that would prove a source of much needed revenue. Neither, however, met with success. There was absolutely no demand for engineers, in fact, no demand for any kind of labor, and Paul was also greatly discouraged by the outlook presented to his view. The place was already full of stranded buncoe men and victims were very scarce. All of the available raw material for any kind of confidence operation had long since been "worked" many times over, or been frightened out of the city by the multitudinous snares set for its unwary feet.

The young men finally decided to abandon the town, retrace their steps to Seattle and there renew their efforts to establish a home in the far West.

This plan they would have put into execution as soon as practical but for an event, in itself extremely ridiculous, which made an entire change in their program, and which included their making Kuhnville their place of residence for many months.

Paul had wandered about the streets of the village until he was tired out and thoroughly disgusted, when the determination reached him to leave the city on the midnight boat

"Well, Landlord, I believe I will settle and leave you" he said to the gruff and grim old proprietor of the Adams House.

David Poor, the person addressed, was something of a character in his own peculiar way.

"Humph," he assented; "goin' to quit the town air ye?"

"Yes", Hamilton replied. "I can see no use of my staying here; nice looking place, pretty scenery, some fine buildings, but no business. I don't believe you have the right kind of people here."

"D—d poor kind of people," the old man grunted."

"What is the predominating element?" Paul asked, intending to inquire as to the character of the Kuhnville denizens in respect to the more eastern states, sections, or localities from which they sprung.

"Sailors, siwashes and sons-of-bitches," the old man replied with characteristic brevity.

"What is the population of the city?" was the next query.

"Oh, 'bout thirty-five hundred."

"How do all these people manage to live? Aside from the public offices, there seems to be very few sources of revenue."

"Fishin' and smugglin'," was the sententious reply.

"Smuggling;" the word aroused feelings of renewed interest in Kuhnville within Hamilton's breast; suggesting to his mind an entirely new field of enterprise, and according to all newspaper and book accounts, a not unprofitable industry. Smuggling was a crime to be sure, but one involving no moral turpitude, and even detection brought very little disgrace so long as the criminal escaped the penalties provided by law.

"Is there any money in smuggling?" Hamilton continued.

"Don't know much about it lately," the old man re-

plied; and suddenly growing as garrulous as he had heretofore been reticent, continued. "A few years ago a man could make a living at it. I have a couple of nephews who made their start in the business, but last fall one of them was elected to the legislature, and not long ago the other got a custom house appointment, and they both quit it. Since then I stopped keeping cases on the game."

Paul settled his bill and walked down to the N. P. wharf where he met his brother.

"Billy" he said, "I believe I have caught on to something that is worth looking into. At least, we won't leave this place for a while any way, but we mustn't be seen together after tonight. I have left the Adams House, and am going to look up some place to board on the hill. Here is some money," he continued, handing him a roll of bills, "I want you to go back to the Adams House and stay there. Don't even let anyone know that we are in any way related. If there are inquiries say that you do not know me very well---that I am only a chance acquaintance. Some time I'll tell you all about it, but not now. I will write to you every day or so and occasionally we can arrange a meeting, but for the present it must be good-bye. By the way," he added, turn-

ing back "I wish you would change your name for awhile. Take that of your mother, Wilson."

Billy was too well acquainted with Paul's irregular habits to feel any surprise at this turn of affairs, and being of a happy, trustful disposition did not feel sufficient curiosity to trouble himself to make any inquiries. He knew that Paul would most likely succeed in whatever enterprise he undertook, and he felt perfectly willing to let his elder brother take the entire direction of affairs, being well satisfied to obey all orders given him.

By consulting a copy of the *Evening Call*, Hamilton learned that Mrs. Jane Huntington would be pleased to accommodate one or two gentlemen with private board and lodging. "None but gentlemen need apply." The name "Huntington" had a very aristocratic sound, and the advertisement soliciting the patronage of gentlemen only seemed to indicate that women and persons who were otherwise objectionable were not privileged to participate in the comforts of Mrs. Huntington's home. The young man was somewhat of an epicure in his tastes, but not what is usually termed of a social disposition. He loved elegance, but because of his early life, in which he was practically alone for so many years, he cared nothing for the companionship of his fellow men, and in the

whole of his existence he had never come in social contact with a single well-bred woman.

Mrs. Huntington's advertisement seemed to promise every thing in accord with the peculiarities of his nature, and he soon presented himself as an applicant for admission to that admirable retreat.

CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. Jane Huntington received Mr. Hamilton cordially, and after conducting him into her elegantly furnished sitting room, proceeded to carefully consider his application for admission to her family circle.

She had never yet, she explained taken a gentleman without some acquaintance, either personally or by reputation, or upon his ability to present the very best of credentials, "but," the lady concluded, "I flatter myself that I am something of a judge of human nature, and I

shall be very glad to have you come to us, and I will not require you to furnish references, as you being a stranger in the city it might take considerable time and trouble to obtain them." Mrs. Huntington was an excellent woman—genial, generous, kindhearted, and possessed of fairly good practical sense. Her greatest weakness was her belief in herself as a "judge of human nature," which term is commonly applied to persons who profess to have an unusual knowledge of human character, especially the weaknessess thereof. Her motto was to trust nobody, but she usually wound up by trusting everybody who solicited her confidence. She made a pretense of being a pronounced pessimist, yet a babe in its mother's arms could not have been of a more trusting disposition.

Three years previous to the opening of our story, during the height of the boom, and before she was so well versed in human nature, Mrs. Huntington had come from the East to Kuhnville, a widow with one child, her household effects and about eight thousand dollars in money. By some means the fact of her possessing so large an amount of wealth became known and the modest little widow suddenly found herself highly popular. Callers at her home were constant and almost innumerable, she was invited everywhere and her many friends

actually seemed to contend with one another for the favor of her companionship. One little thing she noticed, however, it invariably happened that at all entertainments, private or public, whenever she was engaged in conversation with any one of her newly-made acquaintances, especially among the gentlemen, despite her efforts to prevent it, the talk would inadvertently drift around into money matters, and by this means she became the recipient of a great deal of good advice as to the best investments for her little fortune.

Finally she got caught. Messrs. Prune and Shonehausen, dealers in real estate, sold her their last platted addition to Kuhnville, upon which, they assured her, blocks of brick buildings would certainly spring within the next ninety days. She handed over to them all of her money, but when she attempted to pay her first visit to her purchase she found that very desirable property located about four miles out at sea, and some two hundred fathoms beneath the surface of the mighty Pacific.

After this little episode she was dropped by society, and she took to keeping boarders for a living, and to studying "human nature" for recreation. In this latter pursuit she was greatly assisted by her dearest friend, Mrs. Arabella Smith, who was also a good "judge of

human nature." Poor Mrs. Smith had obtained a divorce from her husband for the scriptural cause, and the short-comings of her discarded lord had caused her to lose all faith in the chastity of womankind. The crimes of adultery and sexual promiscuity were the only phases of "human nature" the unfortunate lady knew anything about, but she had made an exhaustive study of those specialties and was always generously disposed to give her friends and acquaintances the full benefits of her researches.

Mrs. Huntington was very favorably impressed with Mr. Hamilton, and had no hesitancy in saying so, even to him. So also was her daughter Ida, but the young lady was not so ingenuous as her mother, and discreetly refrained from expressing any opinion whatsoever concerning the young man.

Ida Huntington was a beautiful girl, of the golden-haired type, with her mother's sunny disposition. She was by no means an intellectual person and laid no claim to a "knowledge of human nature," but she was only eighteen years old and had never experienced any very serious disappointment in life.

She had greatly enjoyed the social distinction conferred upon herself and mother by the Kuhnville elite during

the era of their prosperity, and was much chagrined at its abrupt termination. She had never fully understood what had brought about the sudden social downfall of her family, and had never ceased to regret it. Ida knew that money matters in some way interferred with the interchange of the social civilities of their old friends, but could not quite comprehend why many of the young men and women, who once seemed so fond of her, should have dropped her from their list of speaking acquaintances within a week after her mother's financial misfortunes became known. Even Mr. Dago, the local Ward McAllister, had long since forgotten her name and no longer troubled himself to raise his hat upon meeting her. I the first few golden days following their advent into Kuhnville, this enterprising young jeweler had manifested such an unusual interest in the young lady as to create a little "talk." He even went so far as to say a few soft things to her when he chanced to find her alone, and would pose in the conventional attitude of a stage lover whenever an opportunity presented itself. But she was too young to readily interpret the meaning of his antics, and supposed that his love maunderings resulted from a feeble mind. Her mother however, had noticed the young man's amatory manifestations and under

stood his motives. She did not know to what extent her daughter's fancy had been engaged, but she believed the young lady was far more seriously impressed than was either prudent or sensible. When their social reign came to an end, and with it the sudden cessation of the young man's attentions, she felt called upon to console the girl with a few words of sympathy and commiseration. She did so by proceeding to explain to Ida that not only silly Mr. Dago, but all men were bad and unworthy a thought, much less a tear.

Mrs. Arabella Smith was an enthusiastic second to this expression of condemnation of mankind, and even offered an amendment to the declaration by including the female sex in the same indictment. She advised Ida to stay closely at home, to drop her old acquaintances, and to make no new ones; that she didn't believe there were more than half a dozen virtuous, chaste women in the town. She had come to this conclusion through the confessions of her divorced husband, who boasted of criminal relations with nearly every young woman in the town, married and single. She said it was her misfortune to seldom enter the home of any of her neighbors without detecting the lady of the house in a compromising position.

The wickedness of the world had a very wearing effect upon this interesting widow, but she delighted to talk about it, and did so volubly.

Mrs. Huntington had two other boarders besides the latest accession the principle character of this story, Mr. Robert Churchill, prosecuting officer for the county of Kuhnville, and ex-Judge Rowland, two young attorneys at law composing the firm of Rowland and Churchill. They were bright, ambitious, studious fellows, and proved very agreeable companions to Hamilton.

CHAPTER VI.

The morning following his installation as a member of Mrs. Huntington's boarding house, Hamilton dropped in upon his friend Wilton at the latter's office.

"Wilton, what do you know about smuggling?" he abruptly inquired after the preliminary greetings had been exchanged.

"Smuggling," Wilton reiterated, with a quick, curious glance at the other's face, "I really haven't any positive information concerning it, never having been engaged in the business, but I can give you some general ideas of the enterprise. Most of the smuggling here on the Sound consists of illegally transporting prepared opium and Chinese coolies from British Columbia ports into the United States. It is very extensively carried on and is the sole industry of a large number of our citizens—"

"What I mean to ask,"interrupted the other, "is there any money in it?"

"Yes," Wilton replied, "at present, I think it is quite a profitable business, but the market fluctuates. Just after the change in the last presidential administration,

and before the present collector of customs had been appointed, the competition in smuggling was so great that a person with less than ten thousand dollars capital could barely realize living wages. Opium which costs seven dollars and a half a pound in Victoria could be bought for eight dollars a pound in any of the Puget Sound cities on the American side, and Chinese coolies were being ferried over at ten dollars each, but there has been a large number of seizures since Collector Sandeel has been in office, and opium has gone up to about fourteen dollars a pound, and forty-five dollars is readily paid for bringing a Chinese laborer into this country,"

"What kind of vessels are usually employed in smuggling?" Paul asked.

"All kinds," responded the other. "All kinds and all sizes from a five-ton sloop to an ocean steamer. In fact there are a great many Sound boats and ships which are in some way, or to some extent, connected with the business."

"What are the penalties attached to conviction of the crime of smuggling?"

"It depends pretty much who you are, and the class of smugglers to which you belong. If you are doing busi-

ness on your own hook, and in a small way, you would be pretty apt, if caught, to serve a two years sentence in the United States penitentiary at McNeills Island, besides having your opium and vessel confiscated, but if you were acting in conjunction with the Puget Sound Smuggling ring, and doing a wholesale business, you would, most likely never be detected, but even if such a misfortune should overtake you, you could rest assured nothing would be done."

"How is that?" Hamilton inquired.

"Of course I don't really know," Wilton returned, "but the supposition is that the Puget Sound Smuggling ring is such a gigantic affair, and so far reaching in its influences as to defy the federal authorities. It is well known that for years these smugglers have carried on their business almost openly, and no effort is made to capture them or put an end to the traffic. There is scarcely a steamboat company on the Sound but what is glad to handle their opium, or bring over Chinese, knowing that the protection of this monopoly is fully as great as that of the United States government itself.

"Occasionally some new customs inspector will foolishly interfere with the ring's manipulations, and it has happened, a half dozen times or more, that a large amount

of opium, or a few hundred Chinese have been seized, and sometimes a steamer is libeled through such awkardness, but a trial of such cases in the United States courts seldom results in the conviction of the person or person implicated in the crime, nor is the company's opium or vessels ever confiscated.

"At the lowest estimate there are fully four hundred Chinese coolies illegally imported into the United States through the Puget Sound customs district monthly. Why it's a well known fact that the China steamer Mandarin brings in a cargo of Chinese coolies, numbering all the way from seventy-five to three hundred, on every trip she makes between the Orient and this country. Of course the customs officials board her and make a pretense of examining the cargo, usually receiving about sixty per cent. of the Chinese on the score of their being other than laborers or bona fide residents of this country, and order the balance deported. But it is also a notorious fact that the steamer Mandarin never leaves the United States with a single one of the deported Chinese. She lands them at the different stations on Puget Sounds coast, and even little Kuhnville has the misfortune of coming in for a large share of the consignments."

"These fellows must have their system of operations pretty well perfected, so that a change of customs administration will not, at least temporarily, interfere with their business," observed Hamilton.

"Yes;" assented the lawyer. "It must be an admirable arrangement, and it looks very much as if the ring selected the man whenever a new collector is to be appointed. At any rate, t'is known that one steamship company of the Pacific Coast which has, time and time again, been detected in smuggling, though never convicted, has been the means of causing the removal of three collectors of customs in the past ten or twelve years. If by some chance, a man should be appointed who proves obstreperous or inclined to meddle, he loses his head in very short order."

"How about Collector Sandeel?" the visitor asked. "I understand he is religiously inclined. Do you believe there is any collusion between him and this ring of smugglers?"

"Well that is the general supposition, and I believe it to be the correct one. Sandeel and his predecessor, Watkins, were business partners before the change of administration took place. Watkins became notorious as a smuggler during his brief term of office, and barely es-

caped indictment and arrest. So far as Sandeel's religious pretences are concerned that is simply his little way of deceiving the public regarding his character. Religious hypocrisy is a despicably mean species of fraud,and it is only a very poor specimen of a man who will practice it."

"But,"expostulated Hamilton, "I see there are seizures of opium and contraband Chinese every few days. How do you account for that?"

"Oh that's only the small fellows, men who operate independent of the ring. They make a great deal of trouble by cutting down prices. Yes, Sandeel has done considerable towards suppressing small smugglers, or pocket smuggling, as it is known out here, but one of the understood duties of the customs officers is to protect the smuggling ring in its monopoly. But why do you ask so many questions concerning our chief industry?" the lawyer asked. "Do you contemplate engaging in the business?"

"Yes," Paul confessed. "I have been thinking something of it. How much cash capital do you imagine it will take to give me a fair start?"

"Knowing so little of the business it would be difficult for me to say with any degree of accuracy" the lawyer

returned, "but it will depend somewhat upon the kind of smuggling you think of attempting. You will need a boat of some kind for either opium or coolies, and that will cost you from three hundred to one thousand dollars. If you try the opium business you will have to have enough to buy yonr first consignment, say fifty pounds, and that will require an investment of three hundred and twenty-five dollars at least. I suppose it will take no less than about eight hundred dollars to fit you out for the business."

"Can you lend me that amount of money?" the visitor nonchantly inquired.

"Umph, I don't know about that," replied Wilton, not a little put out by the modest request. "I'm not so sanguine that that would be a profitable investment for me, and I'll tell you, Hamilton, it would be just a little repugnant to my finer sensibilities to be *particeps criminis* in any such business. I am too far along in life to fancy learning the shoemaker's trade, especially under the government instructors over at McNeills Island, and I believe if you will think it over, you'll feel the same way about it. You had better give up your smuggling plan, but come in tomorrow, and we'll talk further on the subject. I have a business appointment for this hour that will oblige me to leave you."

"All right," Hamilton agreed, "I'll see you tomorrow, but my head is set on the smuggling scheme, and I'll not be satisfied till I've given it a trial."

CHAPTER VII.

The following day, according to agreement, Hamilton presented himself at Wilton's office. Wilton, at the time of his entrance, was busy with a client and could not see him for a period of half an hour or more, but Hamilton made himself comfortable in the office easy chair, his feet resting upon the lawyer's handsomely covered desk and while waiting perused the daily *Morning Light*. The paper was soon finished, and its digest did not seem to create a very favorable impression in the reader's mind, as he tossed the limp sheet impatiently aside, first, however, clipping an inch nonpariel advertisement from the "want" column, which he slipped into his vest pocket.

"Well," said Wilton, who had just bade his client good day, "what do you think of that shoemaking scheme by this time? Any new suggestions in the way of the leather business?"

"Nothing specially new," Paul rejoined, "except that I am more determined to try the scheme, that is, if you will lend me the money—which of course you will do."

"Now, see here, Hamilton," said the lawyer turning sharply upon his guest, "I have only about four hundred dollars on hand, but I will lend that to you if you insist upon it; but mind you, if you go into that miserable business you do so contrary to my advice and wishes. Why don't you try something else first, something less risky?"

"The risk involved in the business," Paul responded, "is its principal attraction to me. I feel in an adventurous mood, besides I must and will have money.

"In the past few years I have grown out of the habit of being 'broke,' and I cannot submit to that condition gracefully. But what other business can you recommend for me in this country?"

"Why, if I were you I would get hold of a printing plant and start a newspaper; I believe you could make a success of a paper out here."

"This town seems to be pretty well supplied with

newspapers now," Hamilton observed, "two dailies and two weeklies and less than four thousand population."

"But, start another one and kill 'em off," the lawyer urged. "Do that and become a public benefactor. Now just look at that thing," he continued, taking up the *Morning Light*. "It's a disgrace to the journalistic profession; nothing in it except a few columns of reprint, some plate matter and the remainder home-produced blackguardism and personal abuse, yet it is supposed to be on a paying basis. It has quite a large list of subscribers, and its advertising patronage is fairly good. But it would certainly receive fully double its present support if the public had any confidence in its publishers. If some good newspaper man would launch a reputable, live paper in this town, he could gain the entire newspaper field in a very short time."

"Who are the publishers?" Hamilton inquired, "and what seems to be the objections to them? anything more than the common complaints urged against newspaper men as a rule?"

"Yes; they are blackmailing artists of the most pronounced type, besides being men of criminal records. The managing editor is now under bonds awaiting trial for forgery, the editor-in-chief served a sentence in the

Ohio penitentiary for theft, and the city editor is respected in Southern California as an unusually expert confidence operator of the cheap jewelry species."

"Truly an exceptionally strong combination of talent," remarked the listener; "but I really can't see my way clear to entering into competition with these gentlemen, or ever again engaging in the newspaper business. I'm going to try smuggling, and—"

"Perhaps shoemaking later on," said the lawyer finishing the sentence for him.

"That may be," Paul quickly returned, "but life in a penitentiary could not prove more irksome to me than my newspaper existence has been, and a government shoemaker is certainly as well respected an individual as the average moulder of public opinion.' Now the sooner you draw me that four-hundred dollar check, the quicker you will be relieved of my presence."

"Here you are," said the lawyer, handing him a check, "but remember, Hamilton, I am not lending you this for any specific purpose, nor do I wish to share the profits or losses of any enterprise in which you propose to invest this money. If you intend to turn criminal, I do not wish to know anything about it. Whatever progress you make in law-breaking please keep it to yourself. I only

hope you will come to your senses before going too far."

This homily had no apparent effect whatever on the imperturable Hamilton, but he coolly folded the check, placed it in his vest pocket, rebuttoned his coat, nodded good-bye to his friend and descended the stairs into the street.

After a visit to the bank at which place the check was cashed, Hamilton went to the office of the Pacific Postal messenger service and hastily dispatched a note to his brother at the Adams House. The note requested a meeting with that individual on the Commercial street wharf as soon as convenient. A few moments later the brothers met, and after seeking the seclusion of a rickety old warehouse, Paul drew from his pocket the advertisement which he had clipped from the *Morning Light* and which ran as follows:

FOR SALE—A twenty-ton schooner in good condition. Inquire of I. Felinsky.

"Billy," said the elder brother, handing the person addressed the clipping, "I wish you would look up Mr. What's-his-name and enter into negotiations with him for the purchase of this schooner he advertises. Find a sailor

and take him with you to examine the boat, and then learn the smallest amount of money that will buy her, and the best terms upon which she can be bought."

Billy spent the next two days executing the orders of his brother. He first called upon Mr. Felinsky, who proved to be a wealthy Hebrew of the 'sheeney' variety, one of the largest merchants of the town, the possessor of a handsome wife, who, if rumor was correct he used to very good advantage in soliciting the trade of visiting warships,

"Vat for you vant mid dat boad?" the Jew sharply inquired, when Billy made known his errand.

"Perhaps I'll tell you if I decide to buy her" the young man returned with equal asperity, and with a rapidly growing inclination to pull the little Israelite's ears.

"I sell her for seben hundert tollars gash," snapped the Jew, "not a zend less. You go loog ad her, iv you vant to, but you pud the lines back vhere you get dem from."

Billy crossed the street to the office of the Coast Seaman's Union, where he found half a dozen old sailors sitting in the sun, spinning yarns, smoking strong tobacco and growling about their protracted stay on land. He had no difficulty in persuading these gentry to accompany him to a convenient lager beer saloon, and over

their mixtures of rum and molasses he apprised them of his schooner negotiations and solicited their advice as to the probable value and condition of the vessel.

The men good-naturedly followed him aboard the craft and examined her from stem to stern. There was a unaninmity of opinion among them that the boat was a good one and worth every dollar of the price asked for it.

After the inspection was finished, Billy again return- to Felinsky and requested him to name the best terms upon which he would part with the schooner.

"I dolt you I sell for spot gash only," the irritable little creature vehemently declared.

"I don't care what you 'dolt' me," Billy mockingly responded; "but I'll tell you what I will do with you, I'll give you your price for the boat, two hundred dollars down and the balance in installments of one hundred dollars a month until paid."

"Vat you do mid dat boad?" demanded the Jew, a look of cunning suspicion lighting up his face.

"Use her for trading purposes, Billy responded at a venture.

"Drate in opium and Chinamens?" said the Jew interrogatively.

"No," asserted the other with indignant emphasis; "I shall do a straight business."

"I not know you," said Felinsky, after a moment's reflection; "you ged some responsiple barty to identhify you den I sell you der boad for dem two hundert tollars and your note for five hundert tollars at one per cend. per mound inderest."

Billy returned to his brother and reported the progress of his negotiations.

Paul gladly advanced the money with which to consummate the trade, and he had no trouble in securing very flattering credentials for Billy from Hallam and Wilton. Mr. Felinsky was satisfied that all was well, and the following day the schooner "Mermaid", was redocumented at the custom house with William Wilson as master and owner.

CHAPTER VIII.

Under Paul's directions, Billy actually engaged in trade with his schooner. He first secured the services of a skillful sailor to instruct him in the art of seamanship and assist him in managing the vessel, and together they made periodical visits to the island and river towns and villages from which they purchased country produce; finding a market for their supplies in Seattle and Tacoma.

This traffic was carried on for about three weeks at a pecuniary loss, but acting in accordance with his brother's instructions he took pains to conceal his losses and made it a practice to boast of being successful in his business operations whenever an opportunity presented itself. By so doing he succeeded in diverting whatever suspicion might have been aroused concerning the real purposes for which the schooner was to be employed.

One morning, upon going aboard his vessel, he was somewhat surprised to find his brother in the cabin with a small mariner's compass and a chart of the waters of Puget Sound on the table before him.

"I'll go with you to-day, Billy," Paul quietly remarked. You have been losing more money lately than we can stand, and we must look up something more profitable to trade in than spuds and ruta bagas."

"I am looking for Olsen every minute," Billy replied, "and as soon as he comes aboard we'll hoist anchor."

"I don't think we'll need Mr. Olsen to-day," the elder returned. "I'll help you with the ship, and let's get under way as soon as possible; we have work to do."

With ten minutes work the brothers succeeded in getting up the anchor, spreading the sails, and soon the graceful, little craft was scudding out of Kuhnville bay before a stiff southeaster.

It was a beautiful day; the air was light and exhilarating, the wind was just strong enough to white-cap the swells as they rolled and sparkled in the sunlight. It is not often that the sun pierces the dense clouds that hover over Puget Sound in the winter time, but when it does it reveals the most lovely scene of all the bright places of earth. On every side the towering mountains

with their crests of snow, the gigantic forests of fir and cedar, making the air redolent with perfume, the silver-lined waters of the mighty Pacific, dotted with innumerable islands of gray rock and glistening sand, all combined to give the place an appearance of a veritable fairy-land.

While leaving the harbor, Billy had noticed that his brother endeavored to conceal himself by standing to the leeward side of the big mainsail, but now that the town was left far behind, Paul came out from his hiding-place and took the wheel, sending Billy forward to coil up the halyards and clear up the deck.

Billy was so accustomed to his brother's leadership in all affairs that he neglected to inquire into Paul's ability as a seaman, or to notice the course the vessel had taken.

When his attention was called to this last mentioned matter, however, he observed that the vessel was headed almost due north and was then well out in the straits of Juan de Fuca. The wind had freshened up considerably and the schooner, running wing-and-wing was plunging along through the rising swells at a high rate of speed.

"Which way are you steering?" the younger brother

asked. The question was asked not for the purpose of gaining information, he knew the vessel's course almost perfectly, but to ascertain if the helmsman knew where he was heading.

"I am going to Victoria or vicinity," Paul answered, giving his wheel a turn to starboard.

Billy thought he understood it all now. At the time the Mermaid was purchased he suspected that she was to be used for some illegitimate purpose, and he now believed his suspicions were about to be confirmed. He did not fully approve of what he supposed were his brother's plans, but he knew from many past experiences that Paul would brook no interference with any of his undertakings, so he remained silent, trusting that something would occur in time to prevent the commission of a crime. But in this he was disappointed.

In just two hours and fifty minutes from the time of leaving Kuhnville bay they arrived at the southern extremity of Vancouver island. Instead of entering the Victoria harbor, however, the Mermaid was put about just before reaching that point and sailed up the east side of the coast some two miles. Here the sails were furled, the anchor cast and the vessel lay quietly riding the waves a hundred yards or more from the shore.

After securing the schooner, the master left the wheel and retreating to the cabin he drew a bundle of papers and magazines from the pocket of his great-coat and threw himself into a bunk to read.

Though Billy asked no questions, he could easily imagine that his brother's actions were the preliminaries to making a long stay where they lay at anchor, so he took advantage of the opportunity to prepare dinner, which he had ready to serve in the course of an hour.

The long ride and fresh air had given the young men excellent appetites and they heartily enjoyed Billy's somwhat novel cuisine.

After the meal Paul returned to the cabin and his books while Billy took his fishing tackle from its locker and threw the line over the side for the purpose of trying his luck in British waters. In an hour or so he had succeeded a fine string of black bass.

Finally the sun disappeared behind the western horizon and darkness began to gather upon the water. Billy put away his line and the elder brother had come on deck and had stood for the past half hour intently watching the shore.

"By George, there they come at last," Paul suddenly ejaculated, his voice betraying unusual excitement.

Billy glanced in the direction his brother had indicated by a wave of his hand and beheld a long dusky line of queer looking objects which appeared to be moving towards the water, preceeded by a dingy lantern. Presently the light came to a halt and sounds proceeded from the shore indicating that a small boat was being dragged from the underbrush over the stones on the beach and launched into the sea. A few strokes of a pair of oars and a boat filled with Chinese coolies, in charge of an intelligent-looking, well-dressed Chinese of the merchant type, was made fast to the Mermaid's shrouds. Then came a general scramble among the occupants of the skiff, and after considerable rolling and tumbling about, ten pilgrims of the land of the rising sun, with their entire household effects on their backs, were piled in a confused heap upon the deck of the vessel, and from there were quickly assigned to the forecastle, their progress through the hatchway being greatly accelerated by the application of vigorous kicks and blows from the business-like leader. This latter individual then returned to the shore and soon the balance of the cargo, consisting of ten more celestials, were stowed away under the decks and securely fastened with a strong padlock.

It was plainly manifest to the younger brother that Paul had made some preliminary arrangements to transport the cargo of coolies to the United States. His conjecture was correct. Paul had been gradually accumulating a knowledge of the minutia and routine of the smuggling business every since the the purchase of the Mermaid had been made. His first move had been to gather through common gossip the names of quite a large number of persons supposed to be smugglers, and by means peculiar to himself, as well as liberal dispensation of various kinds of liquid refreshments, he had insinuated himself into the confidence of these individuals and by so doing learned many particulars concerning the operations of the traffic.

In the course of a few weeks study he became satisfied that he had advanced as far as possible in a theoretical knowledge of the business and now only practical experiment was all that was required to complete his education in that line. According to this conclusion, he had made a trip to Victoria, and through his insight into smuggling he succeeded in obtaining a commission from the Victoria agent of the six companies to smuggle Chinese across the border at the rate of fifty dollars per head. The stipulations entered into under the contract

were to the effect that the smuggler was to receive consignments of coolies, whenever available, at a point on the strait about two miles north of Victoria, each consignment to be delivered to him by the Chinese emigration agent in person. He was to engage to transport these consignments as he received them to the American side, landing them at a certain smuggling station located on Whidby island about seven miles south of the town of Coupville, where he would meet the American agent of the six companies, and to whom he was insrtucted to deliver his cargo. It was also arranged that the American agent was to pay him for his services according to the following plan and terms: Upon receiving his cargo from the British agent he was to be given an order on the American agent for the amount due him. These orders, always written in the Chinese characters, include the number of coolies of the consignment and a discription of the individuals of which it is composed. When the order is presented the American agent proceeds to verify it by counting and examining the immigrants and if it was found correct he would pay it. But if it transpires that the smuggler had been so unfortunate as to lose a portion of his cargo, either through accident or capture by the revenue authorities, an amount commeasurate with the loss is deducted from the total.

CHAPTER IX.

"Now then, Billy, let's get out of here," cried Paul, as the Chinese agent disappeared over the side of the vessel and pulled for the shore.

Billy responded by hastening to secure the wheel with the loose end of the mainsheet, and then sprang to assist his brother at the halyards. A few moments of vigorous hauling and the huge canvass was drawn into position, and a like service performed for the foresail. Then the anchor was weighed, and by the time this great mass of iron was safely secured to the bits, the Mermaid was fairly flying before the wind. Paul ran to the wheel and with a few rapid turns put his helm hard to lee.

"Let go the jib sheet," he shouted to Billy, "and stand by the foresail, at the same drawing in on the main-

sheet with all his strength. The schooner responded quickly to the helm, the big sails jibing with such force as to nearly capsize the craft. She soon righted again, however, and then began her long series of tacks on the home trip.

The wind was dead ahead and rising every moment. While near the British shore they had been partially sheltered by the proximity of a group of small islands, which rose up out of the sea just off the eastern shore of the southern extremity of the isle of Vancouver, and which marked the dividing line between the waters of Juan de Fuca and those of Haro straits. But as they neared the open water they could hear the dismal boom, boom of the surf upon the rocky headlands and they knew that a heavy sea was running on Fuca strait.

Billy suggested that they reef their sails before going outside, but the consciousness of the nature of the cargo beneath the decks of the schooner, had a greater effect upon the elder brother's nervous system than the fear of wind and sea.

"We'll try her first, Billy," he shouted, so great was the storm that his voice could scarce be heard above it, "but if it gets any worse we'll reef her down."

Outside the sea ran even heavier than they had antici-

pated, the swells being so great that they piled upon the decks of the little craft, sometimes burying her three feet beneath the water. The first deluge of the sea came nearly sweeping the two young men overboard, but after that they took precautions to secure themselves. Billy lost his head, and begged his brother to hold the vessel to the wind while they reefed, but Paul was in favor of utilizing every inch of canvass; so they plunged along through the foaming sea. It was terribly dark, but the young men had familiarized themselves with the several government lights of that portion of Puget Sound, and managed to keep their course. They made but little headway, though they had the advantage of a fair tide, and it took them four long hours to reach the light house on Smith's Island, a distance of about fifteen miles from Victoria.

The smugglers were just preparing to put their boat about on another long tack when Paul fancied he distinguished sounds in the distance dissimilar to those produced by the wind and surf. By listening intently he recognized the peculiar noise caused by a screw propeller being forced through the water. It certainly was a steamer and she was bearing right down upon them; but where were her lights? The sounds came nearer and

nearer, and the boatmen fairly strained their eyes peering into the darkness. By some physical phenomenon the darkness lifted for a moment, and in that second of time it revealed to the eager watchers the white hull o the government cutter, Oliver Wolcott.

A realization of the predicament flashed through Paul's brain in an instant. They were being pursued, and in imminent danger of being overtaken. He put his helm about as rapidly as possible, at the same time calling Billy's attention to their danger and apprising him of the plan of making for the nearest shore, beaching the boat, and taking to the land. The Mermaid was headed for a distant light on Whidby Island. The change in her course caused the wind to bear upon her quarter beam, greatly accelarating her speed. The Wolcott could be plainly heard a few hundred yards to the starboard side of the schooner, wheezing and blowing, but there seemed to be no question but that she was determined to keep the little craft in view. By thus increasing the speed of the Mermaid, she was able to hold her own against the cutter, but for how long was an unsolved problem to the anxious smugglers. Every thing depended upon the wind. Should it change its course, or its velocity diminish even very slightly they would be quickly overhauled,

or perhaps be run down by the ugly old tub. The schooner's course lay almost directly north, and just off the west coast of Whidby Island. Paul headed gradually for the Whidby Island shore, but ere the land line could be more than barely discerned, the roar of the sea breaking upon a rocky shore, warned him of the danger that lay before them. The proximity of the schooner to the island however, it being on the windward side of the land, had the effect of breaking the force of the wind, and it soon became painfully apparent to the brothers that the Wolcott was slowly, but surely, gaining upon them. They must make a landing, or in half an hour longer they would be in the clutches of the Federal authorities; "and then the shoemaker's trade," Paul remarked with facetious reference to serving a sentence in the government penitentiary.

The smugglers felt that it was an impossibility to beach the boat at any point they had yet found on the island without causing a total wreck of the little schooner, and the certain death of the twenty human beings they had in the hold, and, perhaps taking even chances of their own lives. To be captured as smugglers meant two years imprisonment at least, but the manslaughter of twenty human beings, even though the dispised Chinese, was a

more serious infraction of the law, and would surely involve much more severe penalties. The smugglers determined to steer for the light directly ahead of them, and if there was any possibility to effect a landing to do so. It was their only chance of escape, but had they known the treacherous foundation on which they based their prospects of freedom, they would have realized that it was a forlorn hope. The light that gleamed so fitfully in the darkness, high up on the rocky headland, was located directly at the entrance of the dreaded Deception Pass. The two vessels were now running side by side, scarcely a hundred yards of space intervening between them. The cutter was gradually closing in upon the schooner with the evident intention of heading her off, and thus effecting a capture without being obliged to get out her small boats, which would be an exceedingly hazardous undertaking during the prevailing storm. As the distance between the two vessels was gradually decreasing so the approach to the Pass became nearer and nearer. So intently were the smugglers watching the Wolcott that they, at first, failed to hear the roar of the rushing waters, or to notice the murky outlines of the two huge mountains standing like grim sentinels on either side of this boiling, seething maelstrom that

rolled between them. The revenue cutter had signalled the Mermaid to heave to, and upon her failure to obey, had trained its guns upon her and tried the effect of a couple of shots. The first ball went across the bow of the schooner and the second through her canvass, but the smuggler showed no disposition to halt. The people on board the Wolcott had a far better realization of the dangers of Deception Pass than the Hamiltons, and as soon as it became apparent that the schooner was headed directly for the rocks, and that her skipper had no intention of changing his course, or laying to, the Wolcott laid aside its belligerent attitude and made every effort to warn the Mermaid of her impending danger.

The tide was at about half flood, and any mariner familiar with the waters of Puget Sound would indeed be in desperate circumstances to dare the dangers of the Pass at that stage of the water.

But all the warnings of the world would have been perfectly useless now. The Mermaid was already caught in the mighty torrent and whirled towards the rocks. The brothers had barely time to cast one glance at the black chasm towards which they were being so rapidly borne, then instinctively closing their eyes they

awaited the shock, which seemed inevitable and which certainly meant instant death. But they were not to die. Just as the little craft reached the entrance of the Pass, and seemed almost within reaching distance of the jagged side of the mountain to the left, she was caught in an eddy and whirled round and round to the middle of the stream where she contined her wild evolutions until she was carried clear through this great sea gate into the waters of Skagit Bay.

The Wolcott dared not follow; and the brothers, recovering from their fright, put their vessel into the wind and sailed away, leaving the dangers of sea, storm, rocks and revenue officers behind them.

CHAPTER X.

Ida Huntington, the landlady's charming daughter, was in love. She herself was not aware that such was the case, but her most familiar friends, especially those of mature years and of experience in such matters, recognized her malady from the never changing symptoms manifested. She had lost her interest in the ordinary and trivial affairs of life, and became dreamy. She no longer enjoyed exchanging calls with her few lady friends, nor did fashion or dress appeal as formerly to her fancy. She gradually gave up her sketching excursions and even neglected her piano practice, except to occasionally accompany some little sentimental song. Her principal occupation now consisted of reading novels, borrowed novels chiefly, and selected by the new

boarder. Ida had never before been in love, though like most young ladies of her bringing up—the products of shoddy gentility—she had thought of little else since she could walk. She had had an ideal lover ever since she was old enough to imagine one, but now chance had thrown the right material in the way and she was rapidly clothing that material with the fabrics of her fancied hero. Since her mother had become a student of "human nature" the young lady had no confidants, so Ida told no one of her dreams and fancies. But that would have been wholly unnecessary, as her mother knew all about it, as well as did Mrs. Arabella Smith. This latter person had taken a most extreme view of the situation. She imagined that Ida had been seduced and the good lady had performed several weeks of faithful labor going from house to house retailing the full particulars of her supposed discovery.

Mr. Paul Hamilton was the object of the young lady's adoration, and he was fully aware of the high esteem in which he was held, but he was far from feeling the same degree of affection for her. She was handsome, innocent and possessed considerable surface brightness. He liked to play with her, and when he discovered her regard for him it pleased him to encourage and develope it just from pure idleness.

Hamilton belonged to that class of persons usually described as kind-hearted. He would not wantonly cause any considerable amount of suffering to his fellow-man, but how savagely merciless are so many of the so-called kind-hearted men when it comes to dealings with women.

A man in the heat of passion will take the life of another man and ever after he will indulge in feelings of morbid remorse, the law takes him in hand and he is compelled to pay the penalty of his temporary madness, "an eye for an eye and a tooth," but that same man will destroy a woman body and soul, deliberately, premeditately, and it causes him no feelings of regret. He has committed no crime and there is no punishment inflicted. She is his legitimate game just as much so as the wild bird he brings to earth with his fowling piece.

Hamilton was a selfish fellow, and like most men of fine intellect and blunt morals was very egotistical. The preference that Ida plainly manifested for him gratified his vanity, and it became a source of never failing amusement to him to add fuel to the fire. He had never yet talked love to her, but stolen glances, hand pressures, and a thousand other little attentions shown her, served to encourage her with the idea that her regard was fully

reciprocated. He was fond of presenting her with books of poetry, novels and other light literature, but much to her surprise, and to use a mild term, distaste, she found these selections to be invariably tainted with a thread of immorality—tarnished heroes, fallen angels, etc.

She at first tried to plan some way of correcting his tastes in this respect, but her efforts signally failed. Then as her infatuation for the man grew stronger she thought her failure to like the books he gave her was due to ignorance, or lack of mind development. She determined to accept his criterion of literary excellence, and tried to cultivate the proper appreciation of the unwholesome sentiments contained in his literary gifts.

One evening Paul and Ida were the last of a number of persons to leave Mrs. Huntington's parlors at the breaking up of an impromptu singing party, consisting of several young ladies and gentlemen. At Hamilton's request Ida had sung "Love's Old Sweet Song," and had rendered it so sweetly, and with such depth of expression as to almost startle her auditors with the vivid conception which inspired the author of that pleasing melody.

"I believe I can guess whom you were thinking of when you sang, Miss Huntington," Hamilton lightly said

in his full rich tones, bending over her and laying his hand on her arm.

They had passed through the parlor door into the darkened hallway. The girl stopped abruptly, glancing up into his face with a charming expression of appeal.

"Please don't try, Mr. Hamilton," she pleaded, her voice trembling so she could scarcely speak.

She had only confessed what he already knew and, cowardly as it was, a feeling of guilty triumph pervaded him for a moment.

"We'll talk of this another time, Ida," Hamilton said, after a few moments of silence, in which the young girl vainly endeavored to control her agitation.

"Will you cross the Lawrence street bridge with me for a moonlight walk tomorrow evening?" he asked.

"Yes," she managed to articulate.

They parted for the night. He went to his room, smoked a cigar, drank a glass of sherry, turned out his light, went to bed and slept soundly till awakened by the breakfast bell, the following morning.

Ida bathed her burning face in cologne water, before retiring, and then restlessly tossed with throbbing heart during the entire night.

CHAPTER XI.

In the preceeding chapter but one, we left the schooner Mermaid, with her frightened amateur smugglers and cargo of terrified coolies, safely speeding up Skagit bay. The wind had now changed slightly, so as to bear on the quarter beam, and the boat could make a very fair rate of speed up sound. Just at the break of day the Mermaid reached the oppointed rendezvous, and soon the consignment of Chinese were landed and herded in a log cabin in an isolated part of Whidby Island. The smuggler's American agent was waiting for the Mermaid, in fact, had waited all night, but then he was used to that. He received the Hamiltons, examined the coolies, cashed the order, amounting to eight hundred dollars, with absolute indiference. So far as the Hamiltons were con-

cerned, their part of the contract was completed, so nodding farewell to their fellow voyagers they repaired again to the beach where they held a conference.

"There is no question in my mind," the elder brother observed, "but what the officers of the Wolcott knew the boat they were chasing last night, and as soon as we get back to Kuhnville they will take pains to look up her owner. I'll tell you what is the matter, old man, we can look for a sensation upon our return, but there is nothing we can do but go back and face the music. Of course the Wolcott people cannot swear possitively to the identity of the schooner, and certainly there will be no arrests or seizures, but you can rest assured that they will keep pretty close watch of the vessel, and all of those seen aboard of her, for a time, at least, and our only play is to keep dark for a month or two. Now, Billy," Paul continued, in a hesitating, embarrassed sort of way, "as I have never yet been identified with you and the Mermaid in the public mind. do you not think it would be just as well for you to take the boat back alone and I will walk up the island and catch some passing steamer? I believe it would be a good scheme for you to run down to Coupeville or over to Stanwood and buy a load of grain or vegetables or something of that kind, get back to Kuhnville before dark and offer them for sale."

Billy cheerfully assented to this plan. In his intense admiration and affection for his brother he never opposed him in anything, so after Paul had given Billy a very small portion of the fruits of their crime, the two separated, both well pleased with their night's work.

The elder brother had no difficulty in boarding a steamer and he managed to reach home before ten o'clock of the same morning. Though worn out and suffering from loss of sleep, he was so anxious concerning the night's escapade that he could not rest. What action the customs officials would take in regard to the suspicious movements of the schooner was a problem that must be solved before he could sleep. After partaking of a hasty meal at a convenient restaurant, he went to his room, which was situated on the hill so as to command a view of the bay, and in such position that any vessel approaching could be seen long before entering the harbor.

He kept a careful lookout for several hours, and was greatly relieved when about four o'clock that afternoon he discovered the Mermaid putting into port under full sail and running before a spanking breeze.

Putting on his hat and coat he walked down to the wharf to learn what kind of reception, if any, the Mer-

maid would receive at the hands of either the officers of the revenue cutter or the customs officials. He reached the dock just as the schooner gracefully swung up to her accustomed place of anchorage, which was not more than one hundred yards from where the old Wolcott lay. It was with considerable amusement that he saw the intrepid Billy let the schooner drop down a length or two so as to be quite close to her gallant old running mate in the last night's adventure.

After dropping the anchor and taking in the sails, Billy lowered the tender and drew it alongside the bow then threw in eight or ten sacks of spuds and pulled to the wharf. This he repeated half a dozen times or more until something like forty sacks of potatoes, of about one hundred pounds each, were pulled to the wharf ready for market.

Quite a number of idlers about the water front were somewhat disposed to question the wisdom of the young skipper's method of discharging his cargo, and wondered why he had not tied the schooner to the wharf and unloaded with much less trouble.

Billy afterwards explained to his brother, that his seemingly erratic conduct was due to a desire on his part to satisfy the officers of the Wolcott as to the na-

ture of his cargo, several of the revenue sailors having been highly interested spectators of the unloading operation.

By the time the potatoes were all landed upon the wharf and awaiting an expressman to truck them away, quite a large crowd of people had gatherd on the dock and stood regarding the skipper and his craft with looks of evident amusement and suspicion. Among them Billy recognized Israel Felinsky's head clerk. He was a tall, strongly built well dressed young man, but a person who could not be easily well mistaken for a gentleman, and he was certainly very far from being one.

"The boss wants to see you as soon as you can get up to the store," said the clerk in a tone of insolent command. His manner and conduct were such as usually affected by person who are accustomed to being bullied and occasionally kicked by their superiors, and who gradually come to believe that that is the only proper method of communicating with their fellow-men.

"All right, Israel," Billy responded, who not knowing the man's name used the master's cognomen as a matter of convenience.

A few moments later Billy presented himself at Felinsky's private office.

"Vare you bin mid mine boad," demanded the little son of Judah, pointing his finger at his visitor and trembling all over with excitement.

"When?" the skipper asked with looks of innocent astonishment.

"Vhy, yesterday and last night. You know vot I wos drivin ad. You not need say dot," was the rejoinder.

"Now, see here, Felinsky, just let me explain to you that it is none of your business where I have been, and so far as that boat being yours, I can further assure you that she happens to be my property and will continue to be until I fail to make the payments on her and you have taken her into your possession by due process of law."

"Not my pisness! not my pisness!" almost screamed the little Shylock shaking his finger in the young man's face; "I tell you it is my pisness, un' anuder ting I tell you, mine frendt, I can dake bosession ov dot broperty midoudt any due brocess ov law. You buy mine boad on gredit un gif no zecurity. Den you dake her un go indo dem smuggling pisness. I know all aboudt it. Dot gollector of gustoms gome to me two hours ago und he swear he tzeice dot boad whereffer he fint him. Now,

dot gollector he ben a goot frendt ov mine, un saf me some money. He tell me to get my money or a pill of sale of dot boad or he tzeice him in twency-four hours. Und I tell you again, you pay me my money right away guick or gif me my boad beck.

In repeating the conversation with the collector, the Jew had been guilty of a breach of confidence, but Felinsky was by no means supersensitive about such matters, and in fact would have betrayed his own brother rather than chance the loss of so large an amount of money as that involved in the fate of the Mermaid.

"And in the event I give you a bill of sale of the boat I suppose you will return the money I advanced on her," Billy suggested.

"Return de money! Return de money!" Felinsky vehemently repeated. I return no money. I not do pisness dot vay. You haf dot schooner one mondt un make ofer a tousand tollars mid him. Vat yon vant anyvay, de airdt? Now, I tell you vat, mind frendt, you bay me my money or gif me a pill of sale ov dot boad py dis time tomorrow efining or I libel your boadt and but you in de hands ov der marshall for smuggling. You too d—d smardt anyvay."

This seemed to be Felinsky's ultimatum, and Billy

agreeing to think over the proposition and talk with him again the following day, left the store.

"It seems like a case of Indian's turkey and the buzzard," Billy soliloquized as he wended his way down the street. "If I rightly understood the drift of the honorable collector's intentions, I don't see that I have much choice in the course to pursue. If I pay off the mortgage on the boat, she will be seized by the government as a smuggler, and if I don't pay it the Jew takes the boat into his possession. It looks as though I was out of a boat in either event."

Hastening down to the wharf, where he had left his cargo, Billy found his brother awaiting his return. Watching his opportunity while giving instruction to the truckman concerning the disposition of the potatoes, Billy managed to communicate to Paul the necessity of an immediate conference, and suggested that they meet in the course of the next hour at the far end of the Commercial street wharf, which because of its being usually unfrequented, was a favorite place of rendezvous for the young men.

"Twenty-four hours" Paul mused, after Billy had finished his recital of the interview with the Jew. "Twenty-four hours," he again repeated, 'that is a very long time

and a great many things can happen in that time."

The elder sat looking down into the water, buried in thought.

"I have it" he finally exclaimed, springing to his feet.

"We'll fool them all yet. Now I'll tell you what you do," he continued, addressing the younger. "You go and get your Dutch sailor," referring to Oleson, the Norwegian helper on the Mermaid, "and take a run over to Lopez island. With the wind that is now blowing you can make it in about four hours. Anchor just off that little cove where we had our picnic dinner several weeks ago, and we'll see if we can't straighten this matter out. In the mean time, pour all the whisky into the Dutchman that you can made him take. While you are gone you will find the half gallon demijohn filled and in the locker near the wheel, but be sure and don't drink any of it yourself. Now I'm going aboard, take a bunk down in the forecastle, and go to sleep. When you come on board lock me in, and don't let your man know that you have a passenger. As soon as Oleson gets dead drunk, call me and I'll come on deck."

Oleson was really Felinsky's man, though he was not an employee of that individual. When the transfer of the Mermaid had been effected it was agreed between

the buyer and seller that in lieu of a bond given for the proper care and the legal conduct of the boat, Oleson should be employed as the guardian of Felinsky's interest. One of his duties was to keep Mr. Felinsky informed concerning the boat's movements. This he did with due faithfulness, and the Jew usually rewarded him with sundry presents of unsalable articles of clothing, and occasionally a flask of liquor from his cellar supply. Oleson had heard of the rumors regarding the late suspicious actions of the Mermaid and her master, and when he was approached by Billy he hesitated to accompany him as requested, but Billy explained that he only wanted to have a little talk with him, thus arousing the Norwegian's curiosity, and finally inducing him to go aboard the boat, using the demijohn of liquor as a bait to his whisky-guzzling friend. After getting the sailor aboard the schooner and plying him well with the drugged liquor, which he found as agreed on, the smuggler proceeded, very adroitly to take his companion into his confidence. He related his troubles with Felinsky, and complained very bitterly of that individual. He explained that the Jew would do him a double wrong in carrying out his intention of taking possession of the Mermaid, but it would cause him an even greater loss

from the fact that he had purchased a large quantity of vegetables the preceding day, at Lopez island, and unless he could get them over that night it would involve a loss of several hundred dollars, as he had no other way of transporting them. Billy concluded by offering the Norwegian a sum of money all out of proportion to the services to be rendered, if he would accompany him, and assist in securing the cargo. At first the man demurred, the night was dark and a storm was imminent; though they could run over to the island in a very few hours, yet it would be no easy task to return with the hard southeast wind blowing. Finally cupidity, enhanced perhaps by the too frequent draughts from the demijohn, overcame the sailor's objections, and in a trice the anchor was weighed, the sails set and the little vessel was bounding over the water.

Billy had prearranged that Oleson should take the wheel, so as to be near the liquor, while he went forward to keep a lookout to avoid running down any one of the small smuggling boats with which that portion of the strait usually abound on nights like the present, so favorable for the prosecution of that calling.

As Oleson had predicted, and as could have been reasonably anticipated at that season of the year, before the

Mermaid had been an hour on her journey, the wind had freshened into a perfect gale, and the waters of the strait became very rough. So much so that occasionally an immense swell would climb over the side of the boat, washing the decks and drenching the occupants from head to foot. Oleson, in the meantime, began to feel an unaccountable drowsiness. He fully realized the responsibility resting upon him as helmsman of the boat, especially at that time, and the necessity for him to keep a cool, steady head. He vainly struggled to shake off the heavy lethargy that seemed to be gradually stealing over him, benumbing his faculties and almost paralyzing every member of his body; and took even more frequent drinks from the bottle to assist him. About the last thing he could distinctly remember was being violently hurled against the wheel by an unusually large swell, and then lifted clear off his feet by the rush of waters and borne gently outward, then all was blank.

Towards noon of the following day, Oleson awoke to find himself high, but not dry, on the beach of Lopez Island, covered by a small dingey and surrounded by the whreckage of some unfortunate vessel which had gone to pieces in the storm of the preceeding night. There were old bottles, a large number of empty tin

eans, a few boxes and barrels and the fragments of a staysail half buried in the sand. This debris the sailor had no difficulty in recognizing as having lately been aboard the Mermaid, and he had no doubt but that that gallant craft had gone down somewhere off the coast of the island. Billy must certainly have been drowned, but this was not nearly so much a matter of regret to the old Scandinavian as the fact that fully a quart of good whisky had been lost and perhaps now was mingled with the waters of the sea. He arose from his recumbent position, and walked about the beach as well as his trembling and stiffened legs could carry him, surveying the situation and searching among the wreckage in hopes of finding something to eat and drink. His hunt proved successful. Not far from where he lay he found a spring of fresh water and a box containing bread and other edibles, near which was the demijohn of liquor which he had mourned as lost. Being perfectly familiar with the island, and after eating a hearty meal, and otherwise refreshing himself with the contents of the bottle, Oleson walked through the heavy growth of timber and underbrush, a distance of nine miles to the town of Lopez. Arriving there in time to take a regular steamer plying between the isl-

and points and Seattle. Late at night of the same day he landed at Kuhnville, and soon after the news of the wreck was circulated over the town, the morning newspaper devoting two columns of its space to the details of its occurrence.

Mr. Oleson, though a Scandinavian fisherman, was just a trifle fanciful. He believed that the Mermaid and her skipper had gone to the bottom of the sea, so he exercised his imagination to a considerable extent, representing himself as the heroic and only survivor of a most terrible sea adventure. The strength and fury of the storm were greatly exaggerated by the sensational sailor, and he even went so far as to malign poor Billy by attributing the loss of the vessel to the cowardice of the master, whom he declared had ran the schooner on the rocks in an endeavor to beach her, and that she had gone to pieces in a very few minutes after striking. The skipper had gone down with the boat, and was unquestionably drowned, while he, Oleson, had managed to escape with his life after the most frightful struggle in human experience.

Felinsky was nearly crazed by the loss of the Mermaid and for a time refused to credit the Norwegian's story of the wreck, and was strongly disposed to sus-

pect the young skipper of trying to buncoe him out of his equity in the schooner.

Before he would be convinced of the loss, he visited the scene of the wreck in company with the sailor. The testimony of the wreckage-strewn beach confirmed even the most salient portion of the Norwegian's tale, so after exhausting all the Hebraic formulas in pronouncing anathemas over the supposed grave of the doubly unfortunate Billy, he gave up the matter and returned home.

CHAPTER XII.

Doubtlessly the reader has already lifted the veil of mystery enveloping the disappearance of the Mermaid. The schooner did not go ashore in the storm as described by Oleson, but she was at the bottom of the sea with

fully ten fathoms of water rolling over her. The brothers did not go down with the vessel. It might, perhaps, have sounded more gallant and romantic if the young men had stuck to the ship and shared a watery grave with her, but they were not made of the right material for such a prominent part in a tragedy of real life. The twentieth century heroics does not demand self-sacrifice to the same extent and for the same purposes that were in vogue forty years ago, at least not in the United States. Suicide is no longer a commendable thing to do, even if a person has the inestimable privilege of going to the bottom of the sea in an old boat. The inhabitants of the Puget Sound country are fully abreast of the times in this respect. Despite the magnificent scenery and beautiful surroundings they are strictly practical. The climate of the great Pacific Northwest is not such as to evolve or foster a leader of a forlorn hope, nor that spirit of martial pride that actuated the Grecian, or some other kind of soldier, to cast himself upon the spears of the opposing army in order to check its charge. The heavy, damp air and even temperature of Puget Sound is far from being conducive to the development of heroes or martyrs.

The Hamilton brothers did not go down with the

Mermaid, and they were not even tempted to do so. The drugging of the Norwegian sailor and the sinking of the schooner was simply a part of a preconcerted plan to defeat Felinsky's intention to regain posession of the craft, and avoid the payment of the indebtedness to their Israelitish creditor.

They had first made preparations for facilitating the raising of the craft, and selecting a good place, let go the anchor and deliberately scuttled her. Oleson had been very carefully carried ashore, and placed in the position in which he found himself, instead of being washed in by an angry sea, as he had represented to his friends of Kuhnville. The two young men had made their way to Lopez the same night of the supposed wreck, and were fortunate enough to catch an up-Sound steamer within an hour of their arrival. Paul returned to Kuhnville, but Billy for obvious reasons, continued on to Seattle, where it was planned, he should remain for a period of a few days.

A week or so after the sinking of the Mermaid, Paul paid a visit to Felinsky's place of business, and requested an interview with the proprietor. Though he had been a resident of Kuhnville for several months, and knew the Jew well by sight, yet he had never met

him as an acquaintance, and Felinsky had never before seen the handsome stranger. Paul presented his card which bore the following legend:

Paul Hamilton,

Expert Diver and Submarine Engineer,

San Francisco, California.

Waiting until the Hebrew had sufficient time to study well the characters on the card before him, and thoroughly comprehend their meaning, Paul explained that the object of his visit to Mr. Felinsky was to solicit a contract from that individual for the raising of the schooner, Mermaid.

"I don't tink she vordt raising," the Jew replied after a few minutes close scrutiny of his visitor. "Vat you scharge?"

"I will do the job for five hundred dollars; the vessel

surely must be worth fully that amount," said the submarine engineer, boldly guessing at the value of such contracts.

"Naw," Felinsky exclaimed with decided emphasis, "I vouldn't gif you hundert tollars. Dot boadt struck on dem rocks and wendt to pieces. She is not verdt a cendt."

"But her anchors and chains, tackle, sails, furniture, etc.," Paul expostulated; "they certainly must represent the value of raising the craft, besides the prospect of repairing her and making her serviceable again."

"I vish I had a schance to sell dem anchors, schains, dakles, furnishure un brospects for haf dot money you scarge to raise de boadt," the Jew returned. "Yes," he added, "I vould sell oudt for a hundert tollars, gash, un tink I make a d—d goot bargain."

"I have never seen your boat and do not know where she went down," the expert engineer said, "but I will give you a hundred dollars for her and take my chances of getting my money back.

Felinsky then explained to Hamilton that he did not own the vessel, but held a mortgage on her. However, he solemnly assured the diver that he was perfectly safe in buying the wreck as the nominal owner of the

property was at the bottom of the sea and could never return to dispute his title to the Mermaid.

"I will give you a hundred dollars for your mortgage," Paul declared, "unless you prefer to have her raised. Of course I would rather raise her for you than to buy her, as I really have no use for a boat; but after coming all the way from San Francisco I want to make some kind of a trade with you," he added with an air of recklessness.

"Oh, I sell to you," protested the sheeny, believing that the diver's offer was simply a bait to induce him to give a contract to have the vessel raised. He made haste to summon his head clerk, who, by the way was engaged in a little flirtation with the proprietor's young wife, and had an assignment of the mortgage made to Hamilton, and received the final payment of one hundred dollars instead of eighteen hundred dollars, for the schooner.

Hamilton left Felinsky's store the absolute owner of the Mermaid. She was unincumbered by debt, but the weight of sixty feet of cold sea water lay between the owner and immediate possession of his property.

How to raise the Mermaid, and to do it soon was the next problem that confronted the adventurer. He knew

if she lay under the water even but a few months that the teredo would render her perfectly worthless. She must must be brought to the surface immediately, and he must begin active preparations for the consumation of that plan.

Before sending the Mermaid to the bottom, Paul had taken the precaution of reading up on hydrostatics, and laid his plans so far as those involving the resurrection of the boat was concerned, on strictly scientific principles. The Mermaid usually carried about two and one half tons of ballast, but by a mathematical demonstration, Paul calculated that it would not require over a ton of weight to sink the craft and hold her stationary on the bottom, so after he had bored the hole in the vessel, and while she was filling, he and his brother had busied themselves discharging the larger portion of the ballast overboard. It had been calculated, taking into account the specific gravity, pressure of the water from above, and the displacement of the vessel, that it would require lifting force necessary to overcome about thirty hundred pounds of dead weight to bring the Mermaid to the surface. In preparing for this emergency Paul had had a system of ropes and tackles in different parts of the boat so fastened and arranged that a large number of air-tight

tanks or cylinders could be forced from the surface down to the sunken vessel.

After having had the transfer of the schooner's mortgage placed on record at the custom house, Hamilton took the next steamer for Seattle, in order to complete the preliminary arrangements for his submarine undertaking.

Upon his arrival he first looked up his brother, and together they proceeded to charter a five-ton, seaworthy sloop and loaded her with thirty empty coal-oil barrels. Not feeling disposed to wait for a fair wind, they engaged a small steamer to tow them over to Lopez. The trip was made in about eight hours, and the smugglers reached the vicinity of the sunken vessel without incident early the following morning.

The young men set to work without loss of time to raise the wreck. A couple of hours were spent in grappling for the several lines to which the blocks and tackle were attached. When they had them secured they fastened slings of rope around the barrels to which the tackles were attached and twenty-four of the barrels were successively drawn down to the sunken schooner and tied with a slip knot. As the twenty-fourth barrel was being lowered to its place the young men were al-

most startled at the sudden appearance of the masts slowly pushing their way upward through the clear water. As they approached nearer the surface they rose more rapidly, till suddenly the huge timbers popped into the air nearly striking and overturning the sloop in its upward flight. The decks of the vessel could now be plainly seen about seven feet under the water, where the increased weight of the masts in the air held the vessel suspended and prevented her from rising any farther. Then the remaining six barrels were forced down to the vessel, thus bringing the decks on a level with the surface of the sea. The barrels were now half out of the water and though they prevented the boat from sinking yet in that position they could not force her any higher. In order to clear the vessel of the water, the decks of the boat must be several inches above the surface, or the water would run in as fast as it could be pumped out. So the barrels were unslung one at a time and sunk below the bilge of the schooner, and their united power served to raise the vessel fully half a foot above the sea. Pumps and siphons were then set in motion and the immense volume of water was slowly but surely emptied into the sea. The smugglers worked hard all night to get the boat bailed out,

and it was with feelings of considerable satisfaction that they beheld the Mermaid the following morning riding the waves, little the worse for her short visit to the bottom of the sea.

CHAPTER XIII

The infatuation for the handsome smuggler which had taken posession of Ida Huntington increased in intensity as the acquaintanceship of the couple progressed. She actually worshiped him, and many the long sleepless, feverish nights she passed thinking of him, and planning ways and means by which she hoped to gain a firm hold upon his affections.

But what of his regard for her? He certainly liked her, and, in a measure, she had the power of exciting his amorous passions. He was an intensely vain individual, and the adulation she manifested towards him was highly gratifying to him. He enjoyed her companion-

ship and sought every opportunity to be with her, escorting her to the various places of amusement, and once or twice accompanied her to church, but it cannot be said that he was in love with her. His plans for the future contemplated marriage and the rearing of a family, but the landlady's daughter did not possess the necessary requisites that he intended his future wife to have. The lady upon whom he would confer the honor of a matrimonial alliance must not only be handsome, intelligent and refined, but must be wealthy. He had been seeking an affinity of that description for the past five years, and never lost hope of some day being able to find her. He could not afford to sacrifice himself by a marriage with Ida, but still his regard for her was such that he disliked to give her up. He would not marry her, but he resolved to possess her confidence to that unlimited extent that only the bonds of matrimony would give him the right to enjoy. In plain words he intended to decieve and ruin the beautiful girl.

She had crossed the Lawrence street bridge with him in compliance with his invitation, and he had made the preliminary advances towards accomplishing his cowardly purpose. He had pretended to be madly in love with her, but explained that there was some mys-

terious obstacle that stood in the way of their union. This, he said, might never be removed, and, knowing how impossible such a course would be to her, he had suggested that they separate, advising her with fatherly solicitude to dismiss him from her thoughts.

She, in return, pleaded with him for a solution of the enigma, confessing her all-absorbing affection for him, and fairly begged him not to contemplate separation from her.

She was young, innocent, and her nerves were in an overwrought, hysterical condition from the new experience to her nature, the result of awakening passions.

He was a scoundrel. It did not accord with his plans to make her any explanation at that time, but promising to do so sometime in the future, they slowly wended their way home. She was miserably unhappy; he was exultant, perhaps.

A few days after this episode, an occurrence took place which caused Hamilton to seriously regret his entanglement with the landlady's foolish daughter.

Through the courtesy of his friend, Mr. Wilton, Hamilton was invited to attend an evening social reception at the home of Miss Gertrude Allen, and in the person of his fair hostess he found the lady of his dreams.

Miss Gertrude Allen was a magnificent woman, handsome, intellectual, refined and wealthy. She had passed the period of time usually allotted to girlhood, being in her thirtieth year, and was no longer in that condition of female ignorance, which society erroneously considers necessary to innocence and chastity. She knew the world fairly well, at least well enough to be a safe guardian of the large property of which she was the possessor, representing nearly a half million. She also knew the hearts of men, and though she was naturally of a sanguine, trustful disposition, yet she had learned by some pretty rough experiences, that humanity is far more apt to be actuated by motives of real selfishness than by any vague altruistic principles. Hers was an inherited wealth, and her refined character and well developed intellect was not of the mushroom growth or boom-town variety, but the result of cultivated breeding. Recogizing the fact that only about ten years of child-bearing period remained to her life, she was eager to marry, yet among the applicants for her hand and fortune, she had as yet found no one whom she could love and trust sufficiently to accept in the capacity of a husband. She had a truthful, earnest nature, and it was her sole ambition to live an earnest, real life. To

her, morbid sentimentality was equally as detestable as any other species of sham. To enter into all the spheres of usefulness, for which she was supposed to have been created or evolved, she knew that she must make the experiment of motheroood. In order to do this in a way of which the world and her own sense of propriety would approve, she must select a husband, and, to use the homely language of Mrs. Arabella Smith, she was on the look-out for the right man.

The evening entertainment she had accorded her friends was a fine success and a highly enjoyable affair. The fair hostess was very favorably impressed with the elegant Mr. Hamilton. He was a wonderfully good conversationalist—witty, sage, or humorous as the occasion might require, and on this night he seemed inspired. He was what is known as a magnetic person, and when in the proper mood could exercise this subtile power to a dangerous extent.

Ida Huntington was not invited to the soiree. She did not belong to the same social circle in which Miss Allen moved. A few months previous, Miss Huntington had been a very much honored and sought-after member of the local four hundred, but Messrs Prune and Schoenhausen had cruelly robbed her of the open sesame

and the guilded entrance to that earthly paradise had been closed very firmly upon her.

Though perhaps a sad commentary on the character of Mr. Hamilton, yet it must be confessed that the gentleman felt no regret at Ida's absence, in fact, he was fully compensated for the loss of her society by the interest manifested in him by Miss Allen. She readily recognised him to be greatly superior, with perhaps two or three exceptions, to any person she had yet met in Kuhnville, yet she knew almost instinctively that there was a broken cog some where in the mechanism of his make-up. His dress and manners were certainly all that good taste and even elegance demanded, yet in unguarded moments his self-consciousness and egotism would betray his lack of breeding. As a conversationalist he was not far from being brilliant, yet despite the many advantages of his intellect, education, graceful conduct and handsome personality, it was apparent to Miss Allen that there was a lack of genuiness about him, though he was a wonderfully good imitation. His fine entellect was an excellent safe-guard, but it could not intirely conceal the imperfections of his character, his lack of breeding or the ineffaceable stains by which the human form divine is marred and discolored by a wayward life.

Nevertheless, Hamilton was the lion of the evening, and, though the hostess was too well-bred to slight or neglect her other guests, she paid him marked attention. Her kindness to the attractive stranger was observed by the other guests and they all followed her lead in doing him honor—all except Mr. Jonathan Mather, who did not approve of Mr. Hamilton personally, or of Miss Allen's seeming preference for that individual

Mr. Jonathan Mather was the principal of the Kuhnville school, and, though but a resident of the city a few months, yet he had been there long enough to become very much in love with Miss Allen. She liked him fairly well, and he certainly merited her regard. He was a large, handsome, somewhat awkwardly-formed young man, of twenty-four years old, a graduate of Harvard college and an honorable, well-bred gentleman. Mr. Mather was of a retiring disposition. In fact lack of self-confidence was his greatest weakness. He came from a long line of writers, educators, and scientists and it was only his natural habit of thought to consider himself a very small atom of a mighty universe.

Miss Allen knew of Mr. Mather's high regard for her, yet she had never encouraged him. The disparity of

their ages, she thought too great for a satisfactory union. She enjoyed his companionship greatly, and felt that she could easily love him if she would permit herself to think of him in the relations of a husband. His scholarly attainments, fine literary tastes and artistic temperment made him an highly interesting and entertaining visitor at her home when she received him alone, but as a factotum of society he was decidely a failure. His sensitive nature and bashfulness prevented him from appearing graceful or easy in public, and though he regularly attended Miss Allen's evening receptions, he never enjoyed them. He had experienced a tinge of envy upon contrasting his own awkwardness with the graceful manners and perfect ease of Mr. Hamilton, and he found it impossible to feel well-disposed towards that individual. Neither was Hamilton prepossessd in Mather's favor. He readily divined the schoolmaster's standing with Miss Allen, and having already made up his mind to make a conquest of that lady's hand and fortune, he regarded the gentle Jonathan as a probable rival in that enterprise. Even before the ceremony of an introduction had been performed between them, they felt a mutual dislike and distrust of each other.

At the close of the entertainment Mather heard the good-nights exchanged between Miss Allen and Mr. Hamilton and his jealousy was aroused to a white heat. Miss Allen expressed a desire to have Mr. Hamilton become a frequent visitor at her home, and that person had responded in such a tone and manner that plainly indicated his intention of availing himself of the invitation.

Love and jealousy awoke all the latent antagonism that the young man inherited from his Indian-fighting Puritan ancestry, and he determined to know his fate at once. Quite a number of times in his life he had been in positions of peril, and had faced death without a tremor of fear, but the execution of the purpose he had before him needed all the courage he could summon to his command. His face was quite pale but his eyes were bright and sparkling with suppressed excitement. Perhaps if he were to have been hung he would look just as he did; he certainly could not have felt greater misgivings. By a hard struggle he managed to control his agitation and approaching the charming hostess, he said:

"Miss Allen, may I remain a few moments after your other guests go? I wish to speak with you."

"Yes," she answered, glancing into his face and easily anticipating the nature of the interview he sought.

"Miss Allen," began Mather advancing towards her as the the door closed upon the last of the visitors, "I do not think it necessary to tell you how passionately, how dearly I love you, for I feel that you must have known of it from the earliest moment of our acquaintance."

"Yes," the lady replied in answer to the second clause of his proposition, looking into his face without displaying any greater surprise or agitation than if the most ordinary topic of conversation had been broached. "Well, she said interrogatively, as he hesitated, somewhat confused by her coolness.

"The doubt and uncertainty that I am in is simply unbearable," he proceeded, with an evidently hard struggle to master his emotions; "and I must know tonight, if I can hope that sometime in the future you will become my wife?"

"Come into the drawing-room a moment, Mr. Mather, where we can talk more comfortably," Gertrude interrupted, leading the way into the parlor.

"I will confess to you," she said, after they were seated, "that I have already given the subject you have just advanced considerable thought, and I am glad of

this opportunity to discuss it with you, but it must be done from a plain, practical standpoint. You have offered me your hand in marriage, but aside from your affections you have nothing else to give me. Now, if I should accept your offer, I should be prepared to give you in return as great a measure of love as with which you would endow me, and also a large fortune and a nice home. Do you think the bargain would be equal or fair?"

"Perhaps not," he returned, feeling that all was lost, "but if we could reverse our positions, Gertrude Allen," he added with some bitterness, "I would love you and want to marry you, even if you were penniless and I were the possessor of wealth and an elegant home."

"That may be, Jonathan Mather," the lady returned laughingly, though perfectly serious, "but I am not so generous as you are.

"In the phraseology of commerce," continued Miss Allen after a moment's reflection, "I shall insist upon better terms on your part before entering into the proposed partnership agreement."

"Then, I suppose, I may as well accept my conge," Mather said with some bitterness. "I know no way to equalize matters. I am not a money-maker, and it

would simply be an impossibility for me to ever accumulate so large a fortune as yours."

"Oh, as for that," Miss Allen returned, "I have enough money for both. There would be no need of more, but I shall expect a name and social standing from my future husband. Now, I believe that you have capabilities that would make you famous, if you only would apply them in the right direction, and before I will consent to marry you, you must distinguish yourself in a different sphere of usefulness than as the master of a country school. I think you could make a name and place for yourself as a writer if you would devote your energies to that pursuit."

"Then, you do love me," Mather said interrogatively.

"You have no right to ask me that question now," Miss Allen replied, "and I must decline to answer it. But I will say this: I will never marry a man that I do not love, and I will never marry a man for love only."

It was with a light step and lighter heart that Mather returned to his home that evening. She would not engage herself to him but he regarded the understanding established between them as equivalent to an engagement. He did not know exactly the way in which he was going to comply with the conditions she

had named, but he felt that the most difficult part of the matter was settled. It never occured to him that possibly he might encounter difficulties in gaining fame and honors in the short, intervening period of time before he could hope to consummate a marriage with Miss Allen, but he felt as confident as if the battle were already won. His lineal ancestors had nearly all been men of note for ten generations back, many of whom having been closely identified with the history of the progress of the nation's civilization from the earliest period. Nothing had occurred in Jonathan's breeding, birth or bringing-up to interrupt the natural course of things. Distinguishment was his by right of heritage, and he knew it. There was everything in him conducive to the conquest of fame, but like Alladin's wonderful lamp, he needed burnishing in order to bring it out. He would set to work at once to enforce the appearance of his good genii.

CHAPTER XIV.

After leaving the island, and reaching the open strait, Hamilton changed his plans concerning his immediate destination. He felt some hesitancy about appearing at any American port with the Mermaid in apparently good condition, so soon after the purchase had been made. The whole affair certainly had a very suspicious look, and it was feared by the young men that the Jew might suspect collusion between the diver and the late mortgagor of the schooner, and cause an investigation to be made by the customs authorities. Besides the city of Victoria could easily be discerned at no great distance away, suggesting the feasibility of killing two birds with one stone.

Hamilton was inclined to be extravagant, and after

returning the money he had borrowed from Wilton and settling numerous small accounts, he found himself somewhat short of funds. Some thing must be done soon, and why would it not be a good plan to secure another cargo of coolies, and bring them over that very night. He could reach Victoria before dark, and make all arrangements for a consignment, and apprise the American agent at Seattle by telegraph, so that person could meet him at the appointed place the following morning. Putting the Mermaid about they sailed for Victoria, reaching their former place of anchorage about four o'clock in the evening.

Leaving Billy in charge of the boats, Paul, after changing his dress, walked over the intervening neck of land, from where they lay at anchor to the city, a distance of about four miles. Upon his arrival, being quite hungry and tired, he first went to the Driard hotel where he dined sumptuously and then repaired to the office of the Chinese immigration agent, Lee Yung. Yung was engaged for the present, so he was informed by the porter who let him in, but would be at leisure in the course of half an hour. The porter then proceeded to show the smuggler to a private room, and greatly to the astonishment of the latter, who had no sooner seated

himself, the door was closed upon him and locked from the outside, while the servant hurried away before the prisoner had recovered sufficiently to utter the earnest protests against such a proceeding that he certainly felt.

To say that the smuggler was uncomfortable would hardly describe his sensations. He did not really believe that there was any personal injury intended him, there certainly would be no advantage in such a course, but all together the procedure presented a very suspicious appearance. Hamilton was thoroughly angry and perhaps a little alarmed by the incivility shown him, and he determined to make his escape as soon as possible. The door was secured only by a common lock, and he could have easily broken it by a single wrench with his hand, but this he knew would make considerable noise and he did not wish to create any greater disturbance than necessary. Taking his knife from his pocket he quickly removed the screws from the lock, and the door swung back upon its hinges.

He was now at liberty to leave the place if he chose, but he was not sure that he wished to go. He had business to transact with the Mongolian proprietor of the house and the low condition of his finances made it

seem imperative that he should remain. So he resolved to chance whatever danger menaced him and stay, but not as a prisoner.

Glancing up and down the hall, he saw that no one was in sight, then returning to the room, he replaced the lock in its former position and relocked the door, with himself on the outside. He stood in the hall a moment or two undecided whether to call out for the porter or go to the office in search of that individual.

The low murmer of voices, one of which he recognized as belonging to Lee Yung, reached him from the far end of the hall and put an end to his hesitancy. He resolved to seek the diplomatic heathen, inform him of the treatment he had been subjected to, and demand an explanation.

As he neared the locality from which the sounds proceeded, he recognized another voice beside that of Yung's as belonging to an European. The tones of the white man were sharp, inclined to be contentious, indicating that the speaker was laboring under considerable excitement. Not caring to become an intruder, Hamilton halted before reaching the door that stood between him and the conversationalists, intending to beat a retreat; but as he did so, he noticed another little recep-

tion room with its door slightly ajar, adjoining that occupied by the agent and his visitor. The room would do as well in which to wait the movement of Yung as any other, besides he saw a good opportunity to learn the nature of the conversation which was being carried on between the agent and his friend, and which grew more and more animated every moment. Passing into the open door, he closed it behind him, and prepared to listen. The first comprehensive sentence that reached him emanated from the European.

"I tell you, Lee," said that individual, "it can't be done. People are becoming suspicious about the Mandarin, and the newspapers are commenting upon the number of Chinese that she has already brought into the country. A hundred and fifty more so soon after the last consignment is spreading it on pretty thick."

"Must come allee samee," was the reply to the peroration in the unmistakable Chinese jargon. "Can depo't Chinaman allee same like last time. Mandalin captain he do the lest."

"Yes," interrupted the other, "that may be well enough, but the people of Puget Sound are beginning to understand that sometimes when a Chinaman is

ordered deported he don't go, and especially those brought in by the China steamers, and besides," continued the other, after a moments reflection "I don't feel like doing you very many favors just now."

"Why not?" Lee demanded.

"Because you havn't kept your word with me. You promised not to send over any coolies except on the regular steamers, and you have broken your word."

"Not bloke my wold," protested the Mongol; "I send no coolie for slix a week."

"How about the Mermaid?" inquired the stranger in a tone of conviction.

"Melmed, Melmed," Lee repeated, as if trying to remember, but really endeavoring to frame some sort of plausible denial to the accusation. "Oh, yes," he added suddenly, as if the matter was just becoming clear, "Melmed schoonel. She take twenty, no waitee for steambloat, losee yob on yelyoad."

"You mean you could send them through on the schooner for less than half it would cost by the regular channel. You paid the Mermaid forty dollars a head, while it would cost you an hundred a head on the steamer."

"Yes," assented the imperturbable Chinaman, virtu-

ally acknowledging himself beaten "flotty dollas a one Chinaman. Thats all."

"Now, I'll tell you what I'll do with you, Lee," said the white man, modifying his tone so that it became difficult for Hamilton to hear his proposal, "I will let the Mandarin's consignment in, provided you will put up a job on the Mermaid so that I can catch her on her next trip. Make her try an opium deal next time."

"Melmed," said the agent hesitatingly, "Melmed at bottom of the sea. She dwond."

"She was there a few days ago, but now she is reported as having been raised and on her way to Seattle."

"All ylight," Lee agreed. "I tell you when Melmed, comes. You catchee bloat next time."

With the stranger's assent to the final proposition the conference ended, and the listener could hear the the agent making preparations for leaving the room.

Despite the almost inaudible conversation, the smuggler had no difficulty in fully understanding and realizing the nature of the compact between the agent and his European visitor. He knew that the white man was a member of the regular smuggling ring, and that he had agreed to land one hundred and fifty Chinese coolies upon American soil, at an established price per

head, and it was further stipulated that Yung was to inform on the Mermaid, and in some mysterious way place her cargo and crew into the hands of the United States revenue officers, on the next trip of that vessel to the island. He also understood that it was a part of the scheme for the agent to prevail on him to try opium smuggling, and that he was to be captured with that commodity in his posession.

It was a fine scheme, and, but for a stroke of good fortune, one which would have landed the owners and masters of the schooner in the penitentiary for a term of years. While these pleasant reflections were occupying his thoughts, the two individuals who had just completed plans to dispose of him, had left their apartment and were proceeding through the hall towards the office. Hamilton was curious to see the stranger who taken such an interest in his welfare, so at the moment the conspirators passed the room he occupied, he cautiously opened the door just far enough to permit a hurried glance at the enterprising couple. That glance, however, was sufficient to add another and still greater shock of surprise to the already intensely excited man. There was no mistaking the forbidding features and awkward form of W. Scott Bovine, special deputy col-

lector for the district of Puget Sound, and one of the most unprincipled rascals that has ever thrived in the fostering atmosphere of the great Pacific Northwest.

The smuggler stood watching the two rogues until they had reached the office, then leaving his place he hastily ran back to the room to which he had first been assigned, and into which he entered, closing the door behind him, making an effort to regain his customary composure, preparatory to an interview with his oriental host. He did not have to wait long. In a very few moments Yung himself appeared on the threshhold, extending his hand and giving him a most cordial welcome.

Before permitting the smuggler to state his business the Chinaman insisted upon offering his visitor refreshments, according to the custom which prevails among the Chinese merchants in their dealings with favorite customers. By means of an electric bell, Yung summoned his porter and requested that person to serve them with wine and cigars. Both of these articles of luxury were of the very best brands, and after partaking very liberally of the liquors, and lighting a cigar, the white man opened the conversation by asking the Mongol if he had any fellow-countrymen on hand who

were ambitious to become citizens of the great and glorious republic just across the line.

Young replied that he had none, and then he proceeded in a very diplomatic way to persuade his visitor to give up the Chinese traffic and try his hand at opium smuggling. He pleaded the many dangers attending the bringing of Chinese coolies into the United States by means of a sailing vessel, and highly commending the safety and profits of the opium business.

Hamilton pretended to be willing to accept his advice, and made a great many inquiries concerning the first cost of prepared opium, the best and safest method of smuggling it across the line, and as to where he could dispose of it to the best advantage.

Yung gave him all the information required, perhaps adding a little coloring matter here and there, agreeing to supply his visitor with a first-class article of the drug at seven dollars a pound, which was somewhat less than the regular price. Hamilton expressed himeager and anxious to go into the business, but explained that very much to his regret he had not the necessary capital to invest in order to make it a paying venture. Yung suggested small beginnings and urged the smuggler to purchase a consignment of ten pounds, and if he

succeeded in safely disposing of that quantity, to try a larger amount. Hamilton did not take kindly to this plan, arguing that nothing less than fifty pounds would justify him in making so long a trip and taking the chances of detection.

But this quantity he contended was impossible to purchase as he had less than forty dollars in his possession and knew no one to whom he could apply for a loan. Fifty pounds of opium was worth three hundred and fifty dollars in Victoria, according to Yung's valuation, and would bring seven hundred and fifty dollars in Seattle. The Chinese agent was in a quandary. He earnestly wished to fulfill his agreement with the deputy collector by bringing about the seizure of the Mermaid and her master, but from his negotiations with the smuggler he apprehended that to carry his plans into effect would involve a greater expense to himself than he was willing to entail. Several times he was on the point of dismissing his visitor and waiting for a more opportune time in which to put his plan into execution, but he argued to himself that it was actually imperative that his promise to Bovine should be carried out, and he also reflected that if the fifty pounds of opium were captured by the custom authorities, he would be entitled to one half of

the value of the seizure after it had been sold at public auction, and the expense to himself might not be such a great amount after all.

Finally he agreed to sell Hamilton the opium on credit, after first receiving the smuggler's assurance that the account would be paid as soon as the drug was disposed of. The wiley celestial made some effort to induce the smuggler to give him his personal note as security for the payment of the opium, but to this proposition, for obvious reasons, Mr. Hamilton urged some very strong objections, and Yung good-naturedly waived his claim. As another condition to the compact, Hamilton insisted upon having the opium delivered to him on board the vessel, and, as a measure of safety to himself, he declared that Yung must deliver the consignment personally, as he would not receive it from any other hands. Yung demurred at first, arguing that his porter was the proper person for such service, but finally conceded the point, promising to be on hand at ten o'clock that night. The smuggler then bade adieu to his Chinese host, and, after wandering about the streets of Victoria an hour or so, he returned to the schooner.

Scarcely had he gained the decks of the Mermaid and secured his tender by hauling it over the side,

when glancing ashore he saw what appeared to be a man signalling the schooner with a lantern. He had no doubt but what Lee Yung was the active principal of the maneuvers; and he conjectured that the indolent Chinaman preferred to have a boat sent ashore to him rather than the labor of rowing out to the schooner, but for reasons of his own, Hamilton wished Yung to come aboard the Mermaid, and accordingly paid no attention to his signals; nor to the half suppressed shouts which Yung interjected at intervals, in his efforts to attract the notice of the sailors. He gave it up at last, and again the young men heard him dragging the dingey on the stones, and soon he came scrambling over the rail of the vessel, carrying the end of a rope in his hand, to which was attached a bamboo covered case containing the opium. This he drew after him, and landed it upon the deck, and after recovering his breath, he made his way to the hatchway, calling down into the cabin for Hamilton.

In response the smuggler hurried on deck, appearing very much surprised that the Chinaman should come aboard the schooner without the knowledge of either himself or partner, and extended a cordial invitation to Yung to enter the cabin and partake of refreshments.

Yung felt somewhat irritated and was disposed to grumble because of the unexpected trouble it had caused him to deliver the opium, but a few glasses of sherry restored him to his customary equanimity of temper, and seating himself at the cabin table, he proceeded to give Hamilton further details concerning the disposal of the contraband drug. Suddenly the sound of a heavy chain dragging over the boat's timbers, caught his ear, and caused an abrupt termination to the recital of his confidences.

"Whas sat?" he ejaculated, turning his almond shaped eyes upon his companion.

"Oh, nothing," responded the person addressed, "except my partner hoisting the anchors."

"Me go now," said Yung quickly rising from his chair, with a look of alarm upon his countenance.

"No hurry; no hurry," Hamilton returned, endeavoring to reassure him, at the same time placing a restraining hand upon the agent's shoulder.

"No, no," Yung exclaimed, his suspicions now thoroughly aroused, "me not go to Melica. What you hol me for?" he vociferated, as the white man's grasp grew firmer and stronger the more the Chinaman struggled to escape.

"Because you are a d—d rascal," Hamilton replied, "and I am going to take you to Seattle and hand you over to the United States authorities."

Lee recognized the fact that resistance was useless, and the rushing of the schooner through the sea made that truth even more plain, so he resumed his seat, and with smiling face attempted by diplomacy to induce his captor to return to the island and permit him to go ashore.

CHAPTER XV.

What progress was Ida Huntington making in her love affair?

She had often asked herself that question, and as often tried to think out some reasonable answer to it, but never with any very satisfactory or definite results. Her love for Hamilton had not abated or diminished a particle, and she believed that his affection for her was fully as intense. He had said so, and she had schooled herself into regarding him as the soul of honor. She knew that Miss Gertrude Allen possessed some very strong attractions for her hero, but her woman's vanity would not permit her feeling any great degree of alarm because of that fact. She also knew that he was in the habit of visiting Miss Allen, having been so informed by Mrs. Arabella Smith; that good lady volunteering the

further intelligence, under pledges of secrecy, that it was her (Mrs. Smith's) private opinion that if Miss Allen had not been already seduced, that sad fate would surely befall the young lady very soon.

Yet, despite his assurances of love, Ida knew that she had very little right to expect that Hamilton would some day marry her. He had told her with a dramatic exhibition of manly honor, even before speaking those burning words of love, that it was best that they should separate then, and see as little as possible of each other in the future, as there were certain obstacles which would most likely intervene to prevent their marriage.

Suspense made her almost mad, and she had often importuned him to relieve her by explaining what those obstacles were. Indeed, it must be some very serious cause that would keep asunder those two hearts that beat as one, Iron bars, stone walls, or even the great rolling ocean, could not keep her apart from him if he but said come. What, then, could be so terrible, as to keep their panting, love-starved souls from each other?

For a long time Paul, positively refused to make the desired explanation, but as she became more urgent, he tried temporizing, promising to tell her all some day.

It was a long story, the subject of which always awakened the most painful memories whenever he thought of it. He would sacrifice himself, however, and tell her all she wished to know regardless of the suffering and anguish it would cause him—but not now.

A long period of waiting followed this heroic declaration, and Ida was again beginning to despair, when the moment for telling the much longed-for story arrived.

One evening he had returned home early from an evening call on Miss Allen, and finding Ida alone in the parlor, he made warmer demonstrations of affection toward her than perhaps ever before. Ida with charming feminine tact resisted these advances, and struggled to avoid his caresses, declaring that as no marriage engagement existed between them, and as there was so little probability of their ever becoming husband and wife, she did not regard their habits of familiarity consistent with maidenly modesty, and would no longer permit them.

At these words Hamilton broke through her not too strong guard, and clasping her tightly in his arms, solemnly, and with almost savage earnestness, declared that if they were not married, and married soon, it would be her fault and not his.

She glanced up into his face with a look of such intense surprise and delight that her face, with its freshness and innocence, resembled that of a beautiful child.

"Why do you say that, Paul," she murmured, "when you know how dearly I love you."

"Because it is true," he replied. "If we are not married, and married soon," he repeated, in the same impassioned manner, "it will be your fault and not mine."

She stood silently waiting for him to go on, but he, with his hand resting lightly upon her shoulder, gazed down into her face with a look of great earnestness. Then, as if he regretted having committed himself, he almost rudely pushed her from him, and turning abruptly away he crossed the room, threw back the curtain of a window and stood moodily looking out into the night.

It was a very fine piece of acting, and did not fail to have its intended effect upon the simple minded girl. She felt rather than thought, that his declaration had revived some memory of past years, and that the attending emotions had nearly overcome his noble nature. Perhaps the ghost of some dead love had suddenly appeared to him.

Crossing the room she laid her hand gently though

firmly upon his, and pleaded with him to solve the riddle contained in his words to her, and also to disclose to her now the whole mystery of his life, especially that which had so often prompted him to declare that he loved her, but that marriage with her was only a remote possibility.

Leading her to chair and seating himself beside her Hamilton proceeded to impose upon her childish credulity the carefully elaborated seducer's device contained in the following narative:

"Five years ago," began Hamilton, "I was a student in a small Eastern college town attending the Frasier University, preparing myself for the legal profession. I was ambitious; studied hard, indulging in little pleasure, except that derived from dreaming of the time when I should leave school and become an active worker in the field I had chosen for myself, making easy conquest of fame and fortune.

So steadily did I apply myself to my studies that I made very few acquaintances in the villiage, but among those few was a young lady with whom I fell desperately in love.

Ray Farwell was almost inconceivably beautiful. She was a most charming girl, of fine form and graceful

movements, and seemed to me at that time the personification of purity. She made a pretence of reciprocating my passion, and after a short courtship we made a marriage engagement. It was arranged between us that our nuptials were to be celebrated at the expiration of my college term, in about four months.

"When I first began paying my addresses to Miss Farwell I noticed that she had other admirers than myself, but she seemed indifferent to their attentions alike, with one exception. This was a young man of the name of Wilson, who seemed to be a great friend of hers, and who caused me more than one severe pang of jealously.

"He was a coarse, boorish creature, a horse breeder by occupation, and whose ambitions, instincts and social ideals were not in anyway superior to the animals with which he associated.

"My fiance explained that Mr. Wilson was an old friend of her father,and one to whom her family owed a debt of gratitude. That while she was perfectly aware of his inferiority, and was often annoyed by his coarseness, yet she could not do otherwise than receive him at her home and accord him the same treatment that she did her more agreeable and better behaved visitors.

"Of course, I was obliged to acquiesce in her dictum

concerning the young man, but I reserved the right to cordially hate him, and did so, taking no pains to conceal my feelings, not even from him.

"That he thoroughly appreciated my regard for him, I was never permitted even for a moment to doubt. He never omitted an opportunity to indulge in little jokes and jibes at my expense whenever we chanced to be thrown into each others company. After a time his insolence became unbearable. We had been meeting oftener at Miss Farwell's home than was agreeable to me, and so far had our antipathy towards each other advanced that I felt obliged to decline all invitations to further visits to the Farwell family unless assured that I could do so without meeting Wilson and being exposed to his merciless insults. After this ultimatum we never met at the Farwell home again, but I supposed then, and think now, that he continued his visits there.

"One evening, just ten days before the date appointed for our marriage, I escorted my sweetheart to the theater, where we greatly enjoyed one of Shakespere's comedies. While returning home, discussing the merits of the play and that of the several actors as we walked, we were suddenly confronted by Wilson, who stepped out from the entrance of a store building just as we ap-

proached it, and placed himself in such a position as to block our way, compelling us to halt.

"With a show of mock courtesy the ruffian removed his hat, bowing very low, apologized for his action, and requested a private interview with Miss Farwell.

"Before I could interpose a word, Miss Farwell ordered him to stand aside, declaring that both the time and place were inopportune, and begged him not to make a scene on the public street.

"Taking no heed of her remarks or appeals, he, with an insolent laugh, strode up to her with the apparent intention of taking her by the arm.

"Before he succeeded in closing his hand upon her, I struck him squarely over the temple. I was an athelete in those days, and my blow was well-directed and hard, knocking him senseless to the ground.

"Miss Farwell screamed, and would have gone to the assistance of the prostrate man had I not prevented her from doing so by force, and then greatly to my surprise, she turned upon me like an enraged tigress, denouncing me as a brute for making a cowardly and unprovoked assault upon an unsuspecting man.

"The man lying at my feet was much larger than myself, and one who prided himself upon his prowess as a

fighter, and her plainly expressed disapproval of my conduct sunk deeply into my heart. I was so young and green, so blinded by my self-conceit, that I could not see the matter in its proper light, though I became very angry. I released my hold upon her and turned away, intending to leave her then and there, but before I could carry out my intentions, she laid a restraining hand upon my arm, begged to be forgiven for her words, declaring that the excitement was responsible for her utterances, and that she scarcely knew what she had said. I was only half convinced of the tenability of her position, and had some strong doubts concerning the truth of her explanation, yet I obeyed her and remained. In the meantime, Wilson, who had been lying where he had fallen, now partially regained consciousness. He rolled over, struggled to his feet, looked about him, in a confused sort of way, then pressing a handkerchief against his bleeding temple, he reeled away muttering curses of vengeance, and disappeared within the portals of a friendly grog-shop conveniently near.

"For several blocks, Miss Farwell and I continued our walk homeward in silence.

"I felt deeply chagrined at her disapproval of my act in striking Wilson, and I was far from being satisfied

with the way she conducted herself throughout the whole affair. Though, of course, she could not be held accountable for his insolent act in halting us on the street, yet it seemed to me that the relations existing between them must be of an extraordinary character or he would not have jeopardized her friendship or invited her contempt by such a rude performance, even though he were absolutely indifferent to the good opinion of myself. What bond of sympathy could there possibly exist between this beautiful, accomplished, refined lady and such a coarse, stupid brute. As we walked along I endeavored to solve the mysterious problem, but not succeeding I turned to my companion and said:

"'Ray, in a few more days we intend to be married, and, though I am far from wishing to interrupt or change any of our plans, yet in the past few minutes, I have fully made up my mind to proceed no farther in the matter unless you truthfully tell me the nature of the strong feeling of friendship which you so plainly manifest for that miserable cur who insulted us to-night?'

"'Please don't ask me now, Paul,' she pleaded. 'Wait a few days and I will tell you everything you want to know. I am so nervous and frightened now.'

"'But, Ray,' I insisted kindly yet firmly, 'this is the

only opportunity I shall ever give you to make me the explanation which I now demand. You must tell me this mystery now, or our engagement must end immediately.'

"Then with considerable pouting and petulancy, she told me a romantic story, which may or may not have been true. It was to the effect that Wilson had once loaned her father money to save him from disgrace and perhaps imprisonment. Out of gratitude she promised her father, on his death-bed, that she would marry his deliverer as soon as she became of age. When the time arrived for her to keep the promise, she discovered that it was impossible for her to love her intended husband, so she asked him to release her from the engagement. This he did reluctantly, being greatly disappointed as he had conceived a strong passion for her.

"To sum up the whole matter, she thought that he still loved her, and that disappointment and jealousy had induced some species of temporary insanity and that he was not wholly responsible for his mad conduct.

"The story was told with such charming ingenuity and I was so blinded by my love for her that I believed her every word, though I did not feel entirely satisfied. I considered the young man, at least, dangerous and lia-

ble at any moment to involve both Miss Farwell and myself into some vulgar *mespris*; and accordingly I insisted that hereafter she should decline to receive his visits, and avoid as far as possible, meeting or holding any intercourse whatever with him.

"At first the young lady positively refused to make me any promises concerning her future treatment of Mr. Wilson, challenging my right to dictate her course of conduct towards her social acquaintances. But I was obdurate, and gave her the option to either renounce her friendship for Wilson or give up her marriage with me. This threat had the desired effect. She chose the former alternative, but did so with a show of considerable reluctance.

"After reaching my room that night I lay in my bed awake nearly all night in a state of perplexity and dissatisfaction. Though my fiance had told a very plausible story of her relations with Wilson, yet I could not quiet some lingering doubts that would haunt me, despite my efforts to drive them away. Before morning I had mapped out a course of action in reference to Miss Farwell. The plan was repugnant to me from its very nature, but one which I believed myself justified in adopting. I resolved to play the spy upon her, and if

I discovered that she was deceiving me in regard to Wilson, I would understand that she was false, and in that event I was determined to end our engagement, but if her conduct was such as to satisfy me that she would respect her promise concerning that individual, I would gladly welcome our wedding day.

"The evening following this determination, I began a systematic watch upon the house occupied by the Farwell family, and for four successive nights I made it a practice to go to my sweetheart's residence as soon as it became dark and conceal myself behind some shrubbery near the house. From this point of vantage I could command full view of the entrance to the premises and I could readily distinguish any individual the moment he entered the gate. Here I would remain about two and a half hours, or until I became satisfied that there was no likelihood of visitors coming so late at night.

"The fourth night of my vigil was quite dark, and I had barely reached my place of concealment when my rival passed rapidly through the gate and up the graveled walk, entering the door without knocking. Before I could decide what next to do, Wilson reappeared, followed by a lady, who, as soon as they had gained the walk, took his arm and together they proceeded up the street. That lady was Ray Farwell.

"It would be a difficult task to describe my feelings. I was angry and intensely mortified. I knew that Miss Farwell had deliberately made preparations for a walk with Wilson, as she had taken the precaution to provide against my recognizing her, in the event of a chance meeting, by wearing a drawn veil and other apparel not familiar to me.

"But I was not be deceived. I knew her the moment I saw her. I had too long contemplated her lovely form and admired her graceful movements not to recognize her now.

"As soon as they passed out of hearing, I left my hiding place and hurried after them. A few minutes rapid walking brought me within half a square behind them, and accommodating my gait to their rate of speed, I followed them with the stealth of an Indian.

"Thus far I had not settled upon any definite plan of action, and I felt very undecided just what to do. I knew that the lady ahead of me was Ray Farwell, but still I had no absolute proof of that fact I had fully made up my mind to break my marriage engagement with her, but in order to justify my conduct to my friends, it would be necessary to have a final meeting, tell her my reasons for breaking off with her, thus

giving an opportunity to countermand the invitations to our wedding, and stop other preparations for that event, which was already announced to take place early in the following week. Of course, if I left them to themselves now, and sought an interview with her the following day, I believed she would simply deny having been with Wilson, and it would be impossible for me to substantiate my position and convince my friends that I was not a jealous fool. I must confront her now, or all my labor would be lost. In my desperation I evolved a plan to make a flank movement, circumambulate the couple, meet them face to face, use the same tactics employed by my rival, by requesting an interview with the lady and then trust to future developments.

"Before I could execute this plan, however, I observed the objects of my nocturnal hunt quickly turn down an unfrequented street, and then suddenly disappear by climbing an unlighted stairway to the second story of a deserted store building.

"I halted at the foot of the stairs a moment in order to give them time to enter a room above, and, then with as little noise as possible, followed them. Passing over a flight of rickety stairs, I found myself in a long hallway that was dark as the grave. The only evi-

dence that the place contained human inhabitants was the straggling rays of a light and the glow of a fire reflecting through the closed door of one of a row of office rooms.

"I felt that my affiance and her more favored lover were in that room. Why they went there, and what they were doing there, I did not trust myself to even conjecture.

"What to do next was another unsolved problem. I did not feel disposed to present myself at the door and demand admittance. I knew that the request would certainly be denied. Neither did I care to violate the law by breaking in the door. My only plan was to quietly wait until they should come out.

"While busy with these reflections the door of the room suddenly opened, a man passed out; closing the door after him, he descended the stairs into the street. He remained away about ten minutes, and returned with a basket of wine, at least I judged so from the tinkling sound of bottles in contact with each other. As soon as he re-entered his room I pressed close to the door to listen. The musical clink of wine glasses was soon followed by merry laughter, and their conversation soon became audible. I frequently heard my name

mentioned, and its utterance invariably called forth a peal of mocking laughter from the lady and a succession of low, deep growls from the man.

"All this served to increase my anger and indignation until I found myself almost foaming with fury. I could scarcely restrain myself from kicking open the door and assaulting them both, but better judgment prevailed, as I became more accustomed to the jeers and taunts that my name elicited. The incident of the wine and my changing humor had suggested another plan to my mind, which I concluded to put into operation. Descending to the street I first went to a conveniently near hardware establishment and purchased a small though heavy dark lantern. Then I went to the office of the Mississippi Messenger Co., and engaged the services of a small boy.

"I instructed the messenger to go to Mr. Wilson's room and tell him that his stallion, 'Young Brigham,' was dangerously ill, and ask him to come to the stable immediately. Then returning to the scene of my vigil, I awaited the result of my stratagem.

"It worked like a charm. A few seconds after the boy had delivered his message, Wilson came tearing down the stairs, three at a time and disappeared in the direction of the barn.

"I mounted the stairs almost as rapidly as he had descended, realizing that I had very little time to lose.

"The door of the room opened readily in response to a turn of the knob, and I stepped inside.

"The lamp had been extinguished, but by the bright glow of the fire in the stove, I discovered a richly furnished apartment, a table containing the remnants of a supper, an elegant bed and beautiful woman lying dishabille upon it.

"Owing to the wine, I suppose, she did not recognize me when I entered the room; but as I approached the side of the bed, she sprang into a sitting position, uttered my name with a shriek of dismay, and then sank back upon the pillows, covering her face with her hands.

"This latter action revealed to me my mother's wedding ring upon her graceful but false finger. The sight maddened me, and I grasped her hand, intending to wrench the ring from her.

"She, perhaps not divining my purpose, and being badly frightened, screamed, and fought with all her strength.

"I dragged her to the floor, and had just succeeded in securing the ring, when Wilson dashed into the room.

"The end of this singular adventure will always remain a confused jumble of incidents to my memory. About all I recall of the affair was a bullseye lantern coming in swift and repeated contact with a ghastly, blood-stained face, the heavy fall of a man to the floor, a woman jerked into the air and dashed downward, the overturned table, chairs and stove, and the appearance of a policeman.

"When I regained my senses, I found myself running through the street with a ring, crushed and broken in my clenched hand. The farther I went in the cool night air, the calmer I became, and before I reached my room, I had so far recovered my composure, and being under the influence of the reaction of the terrible excitement I had suffered, the whole of my love affair and its tragic ending, seemed like a long-past and nearly-forgotten dream.

"I had no need to make any explanations concerning the abandonment of my marriage project; the newspapers did that the morning after the adventure. This agency also prompted me to leave the town on the first train.

"Before I left, however, I registered a vow by all that I held sacred and dear that I would never marry

any woman simply upon appearances; that before I should take upon myself the solemn obligations to love, protect, defend, cherish and support any woman, I must *know* absolutely that that woman's previous life had been pure and chaste."

Hamilton's intersting little story was finished. There was not a word of truth in it, but it was one he had used quite a number of times, and he seldom failed to win by it. It was not original with him, and it is not unlikely that it has been employed to bring as many young women to the gutter as any one of the thousand deceptions by which fresh supplies of innocent victims are obtained for the sacrifice of lust.

After ending the narative, the self-made hero ceased talking, and cast his eyes to the ceiling, his face assuming a dreamy expression, as if busy with memories of the fading past. In reality he was listening for a question he knew was certain to come from his charmed listener.

"But, Paul," Ida said after a few moments of thought, "you say you would never marry a woman unless you knew she was chaste. We are all liable to be deceived. Now, how are you to know whether the conduct of your proposed wife had always been what it should be, unless

you had lived in the same house with her all your life?"

In reply the villian took up the Hebrew Bible from its place on the center-table, and turning back to the several Books of Moses, he pointed out to her the laws respecting the chastity of women. One of them was to the effect "that if a man take unto himself a wife and the tokens of virginity be not found, then shall the men of the city stone her with stones that she may die." This paragraph he insisted upon her reading with special care, so that she would understand its full meaning.

"Now," he argued, "my proposition to the woman who would become my wife, is, that instead of decreeing her to the fate proscribed by Holy Writ for women convicted of treachery after marriage, I would insist upon her proving her virginity before marriage, by the way in which these laws imply that it can be be done."

She saw his meaning now, and the discovery crushed her.

"Oh, Paul," she protested, "you surely could not expect any pure-minded woman to submit to the test you propose?"

"No," he answered with assumed frankness; not "unless she loved me with all the devotion and trustfullness that I shall demand from the woman whom I shall make my wife."

"When we first knew that we loved each other," he continued; "I warned you that perhaps we could never be married, and that we had better avoid each other. In the last hour I said to you that if we were not married soon, it would be your fault, not mine. You fully understand the situation. I shall not attempt to persuade you or influence your decision in the matter. You must think it over, and use your own judgment."

It had grown quite late, and Hamilton arose from his chair with an affectionate good-night. Then he left her to sleep the sleep of the self-satisfied, knowing well that she had drank deeply of the subtile poison he had prepared for her.

CHAPTER XVI.

The schooner Mermaid sped on through the briny waters of Juan de Fuca, the wind freshening every moment as she bore away from shore.

The smugglers were highly pleased with their day's work. But not so the Chinese prisoner.

"Why you boy-kid mle?" that individual asked, somewhat mixed in his use of the occidental language.

Hamilton then charged him with his duplicity, and repeated almost verbatim the terms of his treacherous compact with Special Deputy Bovine.

"How you know sat?" Yung demanded, his self-complacency utterly vanished, and astonishment and chagrin prevailing.

By some very artful prevarication, Hamilton made Yung believe that the special deputy himself was his source of information, and that that same person had or-

iginated the plan to kidnap him, and had commissioned the smuggler to perform that office. He further explained that the customs authorities had become suspicious of Yung, and it was the intention to secure him and have him tried by a United States tribunal, convicted and confined in the government prison, in order to get him out of the way. Lee's anger at this supposed contumacions treatment was to the full limit of Eastern indignation.

"E damme lascal," he vociferated. "Me pay he heap mloney evly mont; he play me delty tlick; me have him flied," (discharged.) Then seemingly recognizing the disadvantage of his present condition of mind, he, by a sudden effort, regained his composure, and attempted by free offerings of money to bribe Hamilton into returning with him to Victoria, but the smuggler was steadfast in declining all advances of this nature, repeatedly declaring that nothing would satisfy him except to follow out his original plan, to place his prisoner in the hands of the United States authorities, and to expose the United States custom officials. Lee practiced every art and wile of which he was master, made a great many extravagant offers, promised, threatened, begged and implored, but to no purpose. The Mermaid kept on her way; but instead of going to Seattle she was headed into Kuhn-

ville bay, and just as the day began to break, dropped anchor within half a mile of the Kuhnville Customs House. Then with closed cabin the two brothers had a long, confidential talk with their prisoner, in which they promised him liberty and free return passage to his home, providing he would render them the most implicit obedience during the next few hours.

The Chinaman was overwhelmed with joy at the prospect of getting out of the impending trouble, and willingly agreed to do their bidding, then and at all other times, provided they would keep their word and take him back to Victoria. Leaving Yung under Billy's charge, Paul took a tender and rowed ashore. Making his boat fast to the wharf, he climbed the old rickety, slippery stairs and gained the dock. A ten minutes rapid walk through the streets of the city, brought him to the home of his friend, Attorney Wilton.

Wilton had not yet arisen, and did not respond to the door bell for some moments after the smuggler's ring; but upon his appearance in dressing gown and slippers, he displayed considerable surprise on learning the identity of his visitor, but nevertheless gave him his customary cordial greeting. He invited Hamilton into the sitting room, where a recently lighted fire was just begin-

ning to dispel the accumulation of cold, damp atmosphere which prevails during the winter season. Paul first apologized for his untimely call, and then proceeded to relate the whole of his adventures to his friend, soliciting his assistance and advice in executing a little plan which he had formulated concerning the disposal of the Chinese agent, and the future dealings with the customs officials. Wilton listened attentively to the story, greatly interested and amused by its recital, though he could not help but see that there was a prospect of some serious trouble ahead for his friend. He was perfectly willing to advise with Hamilton respecting the best course to pursue; but to his proposal to assist him in carrying out his some-what questionable scheme, he felt a little hesitancy.

"Take breakfast with me old man," he said, "and then we'll look up Hallam and talk the thing over with him."

Hallam was soon found, and the three men repaired to the office of the attorneys, where they discussed the matter from every standpoint that suggested itself. Finally they agreed that the plan of operation which the smuggler had unfolded to them was a practical one, and the two attorneys consented to assist Hamilton and his brother in their capacity as lawyers.

The furtherance of Hamilton's plans now required an adjournment to the cabin of the Mermaid, which move was accomplished in short order. Upon their arrival, they found Billy and the Chinese prsioner deeply interested in a game of poker, and from the quantity of gold stacked on Billy's side of the table, it was plain that the American was the gainer by considerable odds, and it was not difficult to conjecture that Yung purposely permitted him to win.

Calling the Chinaman aside, the lawyers subjected that individual to an hour's, or more, questioning and cross-questioning which resulted very satisfactorily to the interrogators. Lee gave them a list of the members of the Puget Sound smuggling ring, which included many prominent characters and wealthy persons of Western Washington and Northern Oregon. Conspicuous among them was the collector of customs and his special deputy. The collector, Yung explained, really owed his appointment to the smuggling ring, the influence of that corporation being so powerful and far-reaching that it could make or unmake a collector of customs at will. The agent further stated that the ring always required a pledge from the proposed candidate for the collectorship, that he would in nowise interfere with the operations of

their business, giving him the option of taking an active interest in the traffic himself, and of becoming one of them. The present collector had very readily invested in the business, as had his predecessors for years before.

This confession Wilton had reduced to writing, and made into the form of an affidavit. He also took the precaution to have Yung copy it in his own handwriting, (he being able to write English in an humble sort of way) and to swear him to the truth of its contents, affixing his seal as notary public. Yung was then requested to write a note to the special deputy collector representing himself as being in dire distress, and half imploring and half commanding that official to come to his assistance as soon as possible. The note was given to Billy, who, in turn, delivered it in person to Mr. Bovine.

The special deputy in response soon appeared on the deck of the schooner, accompanied by no less a person than the collector himself. The introduction of this last named individual into the play was wholly unexpected, somewhat disconcerting the smuggler and his friends, and involving a few changes in the program, prearranged for receiving their visitor. In the latter plan it was deemed advisable that the two attorneys should not be present during the interview with the officials, so it was

decided that they should be stowed away behind the thin partition which separated the cabin from the forecastle, but which did not prevent them from hearing any conversation that might be carried on in an ordinary tone of voice, by the inmates of the cabin.

The collector and his deputy presented themselves at the door of the cabin with a very assertive rap, and entered with all the swagger and arrogance, commonly affected by a person of small intellect, or the recipient of accidental authority. Especially were the antics of the collector ludicrous in the extreme. He was a small, undersized, slender fellow of perhaps less than one hundred and twenty pounds weight; yet, despite these disadvantages, he made some very heroic efforts to imitate the ponderous manners and speech of an ex-president of the United States.

The two officials were greatly surprised to be received by Hamilton in his capacity as master of the vessel, as they had, previously, some slight acquaintance with him, but they were too fearful of compromising the digity of their official positions to betray such a vulgar thing as astonishment.

From the same cause, perhaps, they failed to see Hamilton's hand extended to welcome them. They

could unbend sufficiently, however, to be seated and did so, and then proceeded to survey the cabin and its contents with a display of the most offensive insolence.

In reply to the smuggler's somewhat brusque inquiry as to the nature of their visit, the collector first spread himself over the seat with great care and deliberation, as if apprehensive that the chair would fall to pieces under him, and placing his arms in such a position as if covering an immense abdomen, said:

"From the nature of the communication received by my special deputy, Mr. Bovine, this morning, I understand that this vessel has been used for the purpose of illegally transporting a Chinese person named Lee Yung unto the United States of America. I am also informed by the same medium that Lee Yung, the Chinese person, claims to have been abducted. He says that he was enticed aboard this vessel while she lay in British waters, and he was brought into this country against his will. Your attitude would indicate that you are the master of this vessel, and, I suppose, the perpetrator of this, at least, strange species of conduct, and I now demand that you make me a satisfactory explanation of the matter or surrender yourself a prisoner to the United States Government, charged with the crime of smuggling.

"I shall also be obliged, under the law, to seize your vessel," continued the great man, "and upon conviction of the crime charged, she will be confiscated to the United States."

"I am the master and owner of this vessel," Hamilton replied. "She has been used for the purpose of transporting a Chinese person named Lee Yung, also fifty pounds of contraband opium into the United States, in violation of law. I make you this explanation because it serves my purpose to do so, but I do not think you will arrest me or seize my vessel. I will further advise you to drop your nonsense and talk business on business principles, or I shall insist upon being arrested and tried for smuggling."

"This is certainly an extraordinary confession," the collector remarked, slowly shaking a pair of imaginary fat jowls, and making a pretense of a struggle to open wide a pair of piggish eyes, as if they were customarily held in a half closed position by the surrounding adipose tissue. "It must be that you have some good reasons for making it. Most smugglers are satisfied to wait very patiently for arrest and conviction of their peculiar crimes, rather than invite and take pains to facilitate such process."

"You have rightly conjectured," Paul returned. "I am a smuggler, and I have good reasons for confessing myself one. I do so for the purpose of establishing a bond of sympathy between you and myself, as a preliminary to arranging matters with you in which I can carry on my business under more favorable circumstances than heretofore. I know that you are engaged in smuggling, and that you are in receipt of a very large revenue from the proceeds of such business. I also know that it is impossible for you to supply the demand for contraband opium in this country, and I am informed by Lee Yung that your passenger service is so incomplete that you are unable to transport the Chinese coolies who arrive in British Columbia ports without subjecting the emigrant agent to some vexatious delays. Now my object in bringing Lee Yung over with me last night was for the purpose of facilitating a plan which I have in view, and by which I can pay you a certain per cent. of my earnings, and in exchange be permitted to carry on my business with immunity from arrest by the United States authorities, and free from interference by the custom officials."

The effect of this peroration upon the collector was indeed startling. All the pomposity of manner and ar-

rogance of tone completely vanished, leaving nothing but a feeble-looking, little manikin with a weak voice and watery eyes.

"Captain Hamilton," began this now really pitiable object, you accuse me of being a smuggler, what available evidence have you to prove your assertions?"

"The affidavit of your agent, Lee Yung, and the testimony of three reputable citizens, who overheard your deputy, Mr. Bovine, negotiating in your name for a commission to smuggle a large consignment of Chinese; at the same time the conversation carried on plainly conveyed by implication, and even by positive assertion, that you had a long standing agreement with Yung to bring coolies into the United States, and that you had frequently done so under the stipulations of the contract, and that these several transactions had been satisfactory to all parties concerned."

"How did you and your friends chance to overhear this alleged conversation?" the collector next asked.

Paul then related his adventures in Yung's establishment using sufficient exaggeration and coloring matter to strengthen the case all that was possible.

Instead of telling the true circumstances of his visit to the Chinese immigration agent, he declared that he

and two friends, Kuhnville attorneys of high standing, were walking through the Chinese district in Victoria, and chanced to see the deputy collector enter Yung's place. The attorneys were friends of Mr. Bovine, and this fact prompted them to follow him for the purpose of inviting him to join them in their walk. He then described, with more or less accuracy, the locking-up process, the escape and refuge in the room adjoining the one occupied by Yung and the deputy, representing that his legal friends, as well as himself, were participants in the adventure.

The conversation which took place between Bovine and Yung, and which the smuggler declared that himself and companions overheard, was repeated almost verbatim, special stress being placed upon the details concerning the proposed capture of the Mermaid, very much to the chagrin of the special deputy, who sat during the whole of the recital with a look of savage disgust upon his bull-dog face.

"Mr. Hamilton," said the now thoroughly subdued collector of customs, "I must acknowledge that this most remarkable story you have just told, would tend to the belief that you had accidentally discovered an important secret of the Puget Sound customs service;

but I wish you to thoroughly understand that I make no confession to that effect. Now, if I accede to your request to carry on your business without interference by the revenue officers, what assurance have I that you and your friends will respect the confidence imposed in you, and keep inviolate this great secret, you consider so damaging to me?

"By the way," he added with careful politeness, "will you tell me the names of those Kuhnville attorneys, who, you say, shared this remarkable adventure with you?"

"As for myself," the smuggler replied, "it would be contrary to my own interests to violate your confidence in any respect, and I have the pledges of my friends that they will also keep the secret.

"As you wish to know the gentlemen, I will invite them here to meet you and request them to repeat their promises in your presence; also," the smuggler added, "it would be convenient to have them here as witnesses to our compact."

Before the astonished collector could interpose his expostulations, Hamilton had thrown open the door leading into the forecastle, and revealed the two enterprising lawyers, sitting with note books in hand, appar-

ently having made a written report of the entire conversation.

Upon being discovered Hallam and Wilton both came forward and cordially greeted the collector and his subordinate; and then the entire party seemed to simultaneously recognize the ludicrousness of the whole affair, they of one accord burst into hearty laughter.

This had the effect of promptly restoring the drooping spirits of the two officers and they consented to join the others in a bottle of wine, which Hamilton produced from the depths of his private locker.

Under the genial influence of frequent libations, the deferred compact between the smugglers and collector was agreed upon in the presence of the whole party, and duly ratified with appropriate ceremonies.

CHAPTER XVII.

For several weeks after the conversation with Gertrude Allen, Jonathan Mather gave the whole of his spare time trying to formulate some plan by which he would gain the name and standing for himself that the lady exacted as a condition of his marriage with her.

He realized that literature was the only available field in which he could hope to make anything like an approach to success, but it was quite difficult to determine in what branch of that profession he could direct his efforts in order to gain the best results.

He wished to consult with Miss Allen in regard to the matter, but she positively declined to make any suggestions, whatsoever. Using every precaution to conceal the intense interest he felt, he would nonchantly solicit the advice of his most intimate friends as to the best course to pursue, but met with very little encouragement.

At last he decided to make a beginning by writing a series of magazine articles, treating of the Indian tribes of the Northwest. The facts that he possessed a strongly developed taste for ethnological studies, and the state of Washington being especially rich in undiscovered material for a work of that character, were potent factors in his decision.

The very day he had settled the matter with himself, he set to work with all the earnestness and energy at his command to accomplish his object. He made daily visits to the outlying Indian camps, no matter what weather confronted him, making friends with the savages, learning their language, studying their habits and making every endeavor to form a proper conception of their natural instincts, ambitions, ethical and social conditions, and their intellectual status as compared with the mind-development of the white race.

His evenings were spent putting those acquired impressions into manuscript form, and consulting books and pamphlets so as to know the opinions of other writers upon this subject.

The longer he worked and the harder he strove the more interest he developed in his labors.

He knew that the secret of literary success was to

portray nothing but the truth, and to do so in such a way that it would interest every class of readers. He labored to follow this precedent, and even astonished himself with the progress made and the results obtained.

In three months his great work was finished. He had written an exhaustive treatise of the Pacific Coast Indians, including a full set of drawings of their various and many kinds of dwellings, pottery, implements and weapons used in hunting, fishing and warfare, to be used to illustrate his article.

It was with considerable satisfaction that he submitted his article to Miss Allen, and asked her to criticize it. This she emphatically declined to do. She read it carefully, but without expressing either approval or condemnation, though Mather noticed with a great deal of satisfaction that the perusal of his writings seemed to afford her considerable pleasure.

With trembling and misgivings, the young author inclosed his manuscript to the *Present Age*, with the request that it be accepted at whatever value the publisher might place upon it. He took the precaution to inclose stamps for the return of his paper in case it was rejected.

Without waiting to learn the fate of his treatise, he

immediately set to work compiling the legends, traditions and songs of the Indians, and preparing this material for another magazine article or book contribution.

He was compelled to wait fully a month before the publisher of the *Present Age* replied to his request for space in the periodical, but one day the answer came, bringing with it a flood of happiness for Mather. The editor of the magazine had written a short note, accepting Mr. Mather's contribution, and complimenting him upon the excellence of his article, his felicitous selection of that subject for his literary efforts, as very little scientific knowledge of the Indians of the Northwest had as yet been obtained. He also inclosed a check for one hundred dollars, expressing a desire that the young man would continue to contribute to the magazine, intimating that in course of time he would find such employment much more remunerative than at present.

A few weeks after the letter had been received, the first installment of the paper appeared in the *Present Age*, and, though the interest that the citizens of Kuhnville felt for the natives seldom extended to a greater degree than that engendered by an occassional exchage of worn clothing for supplies of clams, yet the frequent references to the city of Kuhnville contained in the ar-

ticle created a large demand for those numbers of the magazine containing its publication. Nearly everybody in town purchased a copy of the magazine, and the local newspapers kindly gave it several colums of favorable criticism.

But little did Jonathan Mather care for the comments, private or public, that his literary success had elicited, except those of one individual. That one individual had been the source of inspiration which had made the success possible, and her congratulations only could now afford him genuine pleasure.

The evening of the day in which that special edition of the *Present Age* had been circulated in Kuhnville, Miss Allen sent for him, requesting him to dine with her, and spend the evening.

She met him at the door, and though she made no mention of his suddenly acquired fame, yet he knew by her manner that she felt even a greater degree of pride in his achievement than he did himself. He spent the evening with her alone, she having denied herself to all other callers, and his enjoyment of this occasion will always remain one of the most pleasant memories of his life.

Very little was said about the magazine article, or the

editor's proposition. Miss Allen, beyond a few words of formal compliment, made no mention of the great success of his experiment.

He, too, from feelings of modesty, would have refrained from talking of it, but Gertrude encouraged him to tell her the whole story of his labors.

He began his narative with his customary diffidence and awkwardness, but he soon became so thoroughly absorbed in his own story, that he became fairly eloquent Seeing her manifest so much interest in his talk, encouraged him to speak of his future, and several times he detected himself inadvertently, and only by inference, including her in some of his plans. She did not interrupt him as formerly, or even show that she either heard or understood the drift of his argument, but let him tell the whole of his dream.

Mather did not permit his triumph and prospects of making a wealthy marriage, however, to interfere with his literary work. In fact, so intensely interested had he become in his work that every thing else had become a secondary consideration. Though he still held his position as principal of the school, yet it was plainly apparent to himself as well as all others interested, that he was neglecting his educational duties,

and that he was but little more than a useless adjunct to the school. Not wishing to invoke the displeasure of the public, he offered his resignation to the school board, but because of the fact that it was only a few weeks till vacation, when his term of service would expire, the directors refused to accept the withdrawal. So he continued to toil on in the literary field and to draw his salary.

Mather's lack of self-appreciation, and the total absence of vanity in his composition, had, at first, prevened him from experiencing the full enjoyment of his literary triumph. In the past few weeks he had advanced very high in popular esteem. The doors of the best houses in the village were open to him, and the few thinking, progressive people, were eager to include his name in their lists of visitors.

Though he enjoyed the companionship of persons of similar tastes and habits of thought as himself, yet he could not be called socially inclined.

At first he declined many of the invitations extended to him, on the plea that he wished to devote his spare time to his literary work, but Miss Allen very adroitly brought him to see the matter in a difierent light.

She knew the immense advantages that good social

standing would be to him, and she urged him to devote a portion of his time to the study of his neighbors of European descent, so as to know something of them as well as of the more interesting natives.

So he entered society, attending all the private and public entertainments, and soon became quite a social lion. Everywhere he went he was treated as the chief personage, though greatly against his will.

The deference shown him, and the attention paid to him was extremely distasteful because he did not feel that he had done anything to merit such distinction.

Miss Allen often accompainied him to these places of amusement, and her companionship was really the only enjoyable feature to him of this new departure.

But during all this time the ground was being stealthfully excavated from under the young man's feet, and a deep pit prepared into which he was fated to experience a heavy and disastrous fall.

One Sunday morning he arose from his bed feeling unusually cheerful and happy. The day before had been spent gathering material for a long article, which was almost completed.

He had met with wonderfully good success, stumbling upon some valuable facts, for which some of the more

advanced ethnologists had been searching for years.

It was now in his power to establish the proofs that would convert a long contended theory into a scientific fact. By dint of hard work he could finish the article today, and tomorrow the eyes of the scientific world would be upon him.

So absorbed was he with work before him that upon taking his place at the breakfast table he did not see the curious glances that the other inmates of the house bestowed upon him, nor the feeling of constraint his presence seemed to engender.

Upon returning to his room he noticed that some one had been there during his absence and kindly placed a copy of the *Morning Light* in a conspicuous position upon his writing desk This attention puzzled him for a moment, as it was well known that he had such a strong feeling of aversion for that newspaper and its publishers that he never read it, prefering to depend upon the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* for the news happenings of the town.

Mather tossed the journal aside without reading it. It was well that he did so. Had he perused the leading article in its columns then, he would have never given to the world the benefits of his great sientific dis-

covery, and the whole tenor and trend of his life would have been changed.

As it was he applied himself to the work before him with all the energy at his command, scarcely stopping a moment during the day, except for meals, and as twilight approached he had the satisfaction of seeing his great task completed and ready for the mail.

Lately he had made it his habit to visit Miss Allen every Sunday evening, and as he did not intend to make this one an exception, he made a hasty toilet and set forth with a light, happy heart. Before leaving the room, he thrust his bundle into his pocket, intending to again look over it with his lady friend, and deposit it in the mail box on his return

Miss Allen received him at the door with a look of surprise plainly depicted upon her face, and he could not help noticing that her invitation to him to enter was not given with her customary cordiality.

Her tone made him hesitate while in the act of removing his great coat, and turning to her he inquired:

"Did you not expect me this evening, Gertrude?"

"No, Mr. Mather," she replied, "I did not expect you to-night, but I am glad you came."

Neither her voice nor her manner indicated any great

pleasure his presence afforded her, but being assured by her words, he followed her into the reception room.

His intellect was, according to Kant's system of philosophy, a subjective one. He belonged to the feeling kind of person rather then the observing. If Miss Allen was displeased with him, it would require some little time for him to absorb enough of the contagion of her anger to realize that fact.

"I have just finished the article I have told you of so often, and," he said laughingly, "I wish you would look it over and make any friendly suggestions and criticisms that might occur to you."

He handed her the manuscript, which she took without comment, but the look of surprise which she had worn since his arrival became deeper.

She looked him steadily in the face for a few moments and said:

"I am surprised that you have the ambition to continue your literary labors after the discouraging comments published in this morning's *Light*."

"Discouraging comments?" echoed Mather, "was there anything in the paper discouraging to me? I was so busy I did not read the *Light* this morning."

"I think then you had better read it now," Miss

Allen quietly said, bringing him a copy of that journal from an adjoining room.

Mather scanned the contents of the sheet until his eyes rested upon the following caption and sensational article:

"An Enterprising Plagiarist."

"Kuhnville has a genius who is a genius.

"Two years ago the local board of school directors conceived the idea that old Professor James, who had previously served the Kuhnville schools as principal for twelve years, was no longer equal to the task of further instructing the youth of this rapidly-growing, rapidly-civilizing city. So the faithful old pedagogue was fired out, and the services of a young man, who could read Greek without having to spell a single word, who was as familiar with all the wonders of earth, air and sea, as Jimmie McFadden is with the furnishings of the city jail, and who was so intellectual that he didn't believe in God, was secured at an advanced salary.

"Jonathan Mather first illuminated our shores by the light of his countenance September 10th, 18—, and engaged at once in an attempt to astonish the natives. The simple-minded citizens of this village, however, did not exactly understand what was the matter with him. His Boston air, Harvard clothes, Grecian frown, and eyebrow elevations only elicited commiseration. It was the popular opinion that the unfortunate youth was farm-bred, and suffered from diffidence. Recent events

have shown how badly mistaken were these same good people in the youth's character, and proved Brother Jonathan one of the smoothest adventurers and confidence men that has penetrated west of the Rockies. About four months ago Kuhnville's social contingent was greatly excited upon learning that it had been entertaining an angel unawares. A literary lion, fangs, teeth and tail, had suddenly sprung into our midst with a mighty bound, and the awe-stricken inhabitants sank to the earth upon their trembling knees.

"Jonathan Mather had written a scientific article on the Washington Indians and published in the *Present Age*, and for which he was paid a large sum of money by that publication.

"*It transpires that he stole every word of that famous production.* The whole of the article, with the exception of a few slight changes in diction, was written by a man of the name of Jules Laporte, and published it in serial numbers in the Salem *Constitution* twenty years ago.

"The supposition is that Mather had, by some means, obtained the newspaper containing the article and recognizing its merits, rewrote it and sold it, believing he could appropriate it without detection because of its having been puplished so long ago.

"His aim was certainly good, but his bullet fell short. The present editor of the *Constitution*, Mr. Baldwin, chanced to be looking over the old files of his paper a few days ago and discovered the original Laporte contribution. He had also read the same thing in a late copy of the *Present Age*.

"He suspected something wrong.

"By inquiry he learned that Laporte died ten years

ago, and could not have resold the article, and according to the biographical sketch of Mather, printed in the magazine, that young man must have been less than five years of age when the article was first published.

"It was a plain case of literary piracy.

"Editor Baldwin was justly indignant at the fraud that had been perpetrated upon the publisher of the magazine as well as on the public generally. Having several copies of the paper containing the Laporte contribution, he forwarded one of them to the *Present Age*, at the same time sending a note of explanation to its editor. He also printed an exposure of the whole affair, including the reply received from the publishers of the periodical, who threaten to prosecute Mr. Mather for obtaining money under false pretences.

"Following is a scathing editorial on the subject reproduced from the *Constitution:*

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"Now comes a still more interesting sequel to this highly sensational story:

"A well authenticated rumor reaches us, to the effect that the literary success Mather hoped to achieve by his fraudulent methods was a condition to his contracting a wealthy matrimonial alliance.

"During his residence in this city, the young man has succeeded in insinuating himself into the good graces of one of the wealthiest heiresses of the Pacific Coast. Though the lady is very intelligent, this shrewd scoundrel deceived her into regarding him as a profound scholar, and a person with a brilliant future before him. It is said that Mather repeatedly proposed marriage to

his intended victim, but she being somewhat of a practical nature, invariably refused the honor, until lately when she agreed to a kind of understanding with him, to the effect that if he would prove himself to possess the great ability, of which he has so often boasted, she would marry him.

"The meanest part of the whole business is that this fascinating school-master made his relations with the unfortunate lady a matter of public gossip; making it a practice to saddle his story on to anybody and everybody who had the patience to listen to it.

"The MORNING LIGHT extends its congratulations to the young lady for her providential escape from such an entanglement, and will advise her, as well as its many other readers to always patronize home industry.

"It would be well if some of our people would get rid of the idea that all excellence and virtue are the exclusive properties of the inhabitants of the Eastern states. The wild and woolly West may be a little behind in the newest fad in aesthetic transcendentalism, and, perhaps, the latest colors for the topmost stripe of a lady's stocking may not as yet have reached us, but in the essentials of true manhood and gentle womanhood the Pacific Coast civilization is equal to any on God's green footstool."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ida Huntington had thought it all over, as her lover advised. In fact for ten days the poor child had thought of nothing else.

At first she had resolved that it was impossible for her to comply with the conditions Hamilton exacted to her marriage with him. She could not surrender her purity, not even for him, but she hadn't the courage to tell him of her decision, and dismiss him forever. She began making experiments by banishing him from her thoughts and trying to wean herself of her love for him. But it was no use. Try as hard as she would, his handsome face and gallant form haunted her like a familiar spirit.

She could not give him up, and it was equally hard to humble herself by submitting to his infamous proposal.

What should she do?

Hamilton, in the meanwhile, was biding his time, patiently waiting for her to come to him, and lay at his feet the most sacred treasure of woman's life, her chastity. He never doubted a moment but what she would come the moment he bade her to; but it would seem the greater victory if she came unsolicited. So he kept aloof from her, making a pretense of avoiding her, thinking by such tactics to sooner wear out her heart.

One day the sun shone brightly and all indications seemed to promise clear weather, Ida went out for a long walk. She wished to get away from the house for a while, and think over her trouble alone.

Taking the street that led towards the sea shore, she walked mechanically along for several miles past the city limits, until she reached the beach.

Ever busy with her thoughts and dreams, she did not realize how far she had gone, but kept on. She walked on the sand, the tide being about on the turn, for an hour or two.

At last she reached a point that jutted out into the sea, which was formed of rocks, too rough and slippery for her tender feet.

Here she halted and turned back, intending to retrace her steps homeward, but to her dismay, she found her-

self nearly surrounded by the flooding tide. The path along the beach she had just traversed was now covered by several feet of water; it was impossible to continue on, and the shore line, at the point where she was standing, arose almost perpendicular, forming a cliff an hundred feet high or more.

The water was rapidly rising, and she knew that some thing must be done immediately.

Gathering up her skirts she ran to the cliff, but it being to preciptitous to climb, she followed along the sea, over the stones, for a quarter of a mile farther, to a place less steep. Here she found a well beaten path running obliquely over the hill, and which connected with a wagon road at the top.

Feeling that she was now safe, and being almost overcome from fright and fatigue, she sank down upon a huge rock to rest a while, before climbing the hill.

She soon recovered herself and was preparing to resume her journey, when she noticed a man coming over the brow of the hill, and down the path by which she intended to ascend.

The path was too narrow for two persons to pass each other with any degree of safety, so she waited for the traveller to descend before starting.

As he approached she almost screamed with surprise upon recognizing her lover, the urbane Mr. Hamilton. She had scarcely spoken to him for the past week, though she had thought of nothing else, and meeting him at the present time, so unexpectedly, filled her with delight.

He, too, seemed quite pleased to meet her, and stood gazing at her in silent admiration, while she related the story of her morning adventure.

He explained his presence there by saying that he was looking for the tender to his schooner, which had been washed overboard in a storm several nights before, and which he thought might have drifted ashore somewhere in the vicinity of the bluff.

He had sent his friend, Mr. Wilson, on ahead of him, to search the shore at a point several miles beyond. He was now waiting for that individual to return.

But with Ida's permission he would walk home with her instead, and let Billy find his way alone.

Before starting, however, he asked her if she had ever seen the Coldspring cave, and upon her replying in the negative, suggested that they visit that place which was only a short distance away.

They walked slowly and lovingly, arm in, arm along the shore a quarter of a mile, and then by a short,

sharp struggle up the bluff, an hundred yards or more, they stood in the mouth of the cave.

It was a beautiful place. About seven feet high, twelve feet wide, and extending back under the hill, no one knew how far. The walls and roof of the cavern were covered with rich velvet-like mosses, which in turn were studded with sparkling stones of crystalline formation, and long, grim looking stalactites descended downward to meet the hugh stalagmites pointing upward, looking like the jaws of a mythical dragon. In the middle of the floor, thirty or forty feet from the entrance, was a spring, bubbling and pouring its clear, cool stream, into the narrow channel over the rocky floor, carrying the water out and on to the sea.

"Oh, Paul," Ida exclaimed, "what a lovely place! but," she added, turning her pretty head first on one side and then on the other, "don't you smell a pipe?"

"Why, I don't believe I do," returned the other. "I had just finished a cigar before I met you, and perhaps it is the scent of tobacco on my clothes that seems so offensive."

"No," said the girl. "It isn't cigar smoke. I guess it is something burning on the beach. "Oh, dear," she continued, "I am so glad I met you. I have wanted to

have a good, long talk with you for almost a week."

"Yes," he said, "I am glad we happened to meet to-day. I, too, wanted to talk with you. At least," he added, his tones assuming a slightly sad inflection, "I want to say good-bye; I am going away tomorrow."

"Not to stay?" Ida asked quickly, with a look of alarm over-spreading her sweet face.

"Yes," he again answered, "I am going away to stay. I think it is best," he continued after a moment's pause, "best for you and best for me."

"Oh, Paul," she said, the brightness leaving her face and the old troubled expressson taking its place, "why must we be separated? We love each other; why can't we be married and live together like other people?"

"You know why." he answered with increasing sadness. The responsibility rests with you and not with me."

"You can't know how unhappy I am," cried the poor girl, "or you wouldn't treat me so. Must I do that dreadful thing before you will be satisfied about me?"

"Yes," he replied with stern earnestness. But, I'll tell you, Ida, I am sorry that I have gone so far in this matter. I'd much rather go away than urge you to do anything against your will, and especially when it causes

you such great suffering. I will go away tomorrow, and in a few years we can outgrow our love and forget each other."

"Oh, I can't bear the thought," Ida sobbed. It will nearly kill me. I suppose I must give up. Could we not make all our preparations for our wedding first, and then, just the day before the ceremony, do what you want to?"

"I don't know but that would answer as well as anything," he returned with Machiavelian diplomacy. "No," he continued after a second's pause, "you would fail to keep your promise at the last moment, or something would occur to interrupt us, and then I would be obliged to run away. No, Ida; we must give up our foolish dream of love, and not even talk of it any more. I shall go away tomorrow and that will end the whole matter. Come, dear," he continued, affectionately taking her hand in his, as if to lead her away; "let us go home. It's not far from dinner-time, and your mamma might feel uneasy about you."

She did not move, but stood with downcast eyes, and an irresolute expression on her face.

"Then, for God's sake, Paul," she cried, "what must I do to keep you with me?"

"Leave the door of your bed chamber unlocked, and expect me in there about eleven o'clock tonight."

Her head drooped still lower, hiding a white, haggard face, which a moment's suffering had interlaced with deep-drawn lines. She was so agitated that she could hardly stand, but he supported her swaying form in his arms and held her until she regained strength.

He had won, but what a victory!

The walk home was almost in silence. He made several ineffectual attempts to calm the girl by diverting her attention with a few common-place remarks, but she gave little heed to him.

She was too excited for intelligent, coherent thought, but the processes of her mind had never been more active.

Instinct was laboring to warn her of impending ruin; trying to impress upon her the fact that she had pledged herself to violate a social law that was zealously guarded by a most vengeful Nemesis. To commit the act that she contemplated was to defeat all the purposes of her womanhood. It would humble her pride, destroy her natural ambition for motherhood, rob her of the power to form any earnest conception of human life and its environment—the awful mysteries of past, pres-

ent and future, and condemn her to the existence of a mere plaything. Beautiful plaything to be sure, and one which required untold and incomprehensible ages to construct; and all for a plaything.

Reason, on the other hand, was contending that the act was a natural one, simply a response to the second great law of nature, the preliminary to reproduction and an attendant to that divine passion, love of offspring. Sexual surrender would not make so very much difference, if only a few day before marriage. It was invariably one of the concomitants of, and usually took place immediately after marriage. What would it matter if it took place only a few days before? He would certainly keep his promise and marry her after such a sacrifice; he certainly would never do her the irreparable, eternal wrong to desert her after she had done his bidding. He seemed so honorable, truthful and heroic. He loved her, and she would go to the full limit of human confidence to prove her love for him. When they reached home she went to her room and sank upon her knees beside the bed, bowed her face in the clothing and prayed.

She had been reared in the Methodist religion, and to her undeveloped mind the ethical and spiritual fancies

of that sect represented the acme of soul progress. She mechanically repeated the several formulas used in petitions to the Wesleyian conceived deity for help and guidance in this hour of her greatest need and trouble, and in her simple faith, she actually believed that if she were about to take a false step providence would interpose in her behalf.

Deliverance did come, but from an entirely natural source. It was through Billy.

Upon descending to the sitting room to attend some light household duties, she found that person waiting for her. He was one of her mother's boarders now, and had been ever since it had become possible for the Mermaid to smuggle openly.

Ida had shown Billy quite a number of little kindnesses, since he became a member of the household, and he was quite fond of her. She liked him too. He was always good-natured and obliging, and besides he was in some way connected with Paul.

She had reached the center of the room before she noticed Billy's presence there.

"Why, Mr. Wilson," she exclaimed, "I didn't see you when I came in. How do you do?"

"Quite well, thank you, Miss Ida," he replied, displaying unusual bashfullness.

Ida did not feel like staying to talk to him, so after the greetings were exchanged, she started to leave the room. But he had some thing to say to her, and interposed himself between her and the door, preventing her retreat.

He seemed to be greatly embarrassed, though struggling to regain his composure.

"Did--did you have a pleasant walk this morning, Miss Ida?" he asked.

"Yes, quite pleasant, the weather was nice and warm," she answered, again starting toward the door.

"I saw you" Billy resumed, again stepping before her, "out on the beach."

"Did you!" she exclaimed, "why I didn't see you, Mr. Wilson."

"No," returned the young man, his embarrassment causing him to stammer painfully, "but did you smell a a-p-pipe?" he asked, the perspiration breaking out upon his forehead.

The color flew to her face in an instant, and a hunted look came into her eyes.

"Did you hear me ask that question, this morning?" she said, in an appealing tone of voice.

"Yes. It was my pipe."

"Where were you?"

"Standing about four feet from you, to one side of the cave."

"Then you heard all the talk between Mr. Hamilton and me?"

"Yes, every word of it," he replied, suddenly becoming firm and courageous.

She again tried to pass him, and he again stopped her. Then sinking into a convenient chair she covered her face with her hands in abject dispair.

"I heard every word that was said, Miss Huntington," Billy repeated, now perfectly self-possessed, "and I came here to talk to you about it. I know Paul Hamilton better than anybody else in the world, and I think I care more for him. In fact he is my half brother, but in many ways he is not a good man. He is the last man in the world that I would injure, but he does not intend to treat you well. I have often heard him say that he would never marry a woman whom he could seduce, because he believes that if he can treat a woman that way before he marries her, any other man can do the same thing after he marries her, and he's right. Now I believe my brother loves you, and he will marry you some day if you just wait, but not if you give up to

him. He's just been trying you to see if you're virtuous."

"Oh, Mr. Wilson," sobbed the girl, "what shall I do? what shall I do?"

"Do!" said Billy heartily, "why, I tell you, little sister, just go to your room and write him a spunky letter; short and right to the point, and tell him that you think too much of yourself to be disgraced, and that you wish he would leave town and never show himself to you again. That will bring him to Limerick in thirty days. If he loves you, he will propose honorable marriage; if he doesn't, you don't want him any way. Go, now," he continued, taking her by the hand and leading her to the door; "go and write that letter, just as I tell you, and keep your door locked tonight."

An hour or two later the brothers were together in the sitting room, when a Chinese servant approached and handed the elder a sealed letter.

"Some bad news?" asked Billy, as he noticed an expression of angry disappointment come into Paul's face while perusing the letter.

"I got one on you that time, old man," Billy said to himself, as the smuggler impatiently strode out of the room without replying to the question.

"Done you up for once."

CHAPTER XIX.

The reader will not be surprised to learn that Jonathan Mather was a trifle warm after reading the "roast" given him in the Morning *Light*. He was simply paralyzed. Laying aside the newspaper he leaned back in his chair a moment to recover himself before attempting to speak.

His face was quite pale, and bore an expression that Gertrude had never seen before. It made her think of the proverb which recommends serious reflection before inviting a patient man's anger.

Apparently he was calm, terribly so. Hastening to break the silence which was becoming oppressive, she asked:

"Well, what do you think of it?"

"It is the work of some miserable scoundrel, some hound who wishes to injure me," he answered. "What do you think of it?"

"I don't know," she slowly replied. "If it is the work

of a mischief-maker it was certainly a well-planend and well-executed plot. Have you an enemy who you think is capable of going to so much trouble, and apparent expense, for the sake of gratifying a spirit of revenge?"

"No. If I have an enemy in the world I don't know it. I don't think I ever in my life gave anyone cause to do me such a contemptible meanness. I suppose some one has pursuaded the *Light* people to publish the thing. From what I have heard of them, I am led to believe that they could be hired to do most anything."

"Yes, they are considered very unscrupulous in many ways; but how do you account for the connection that the Salem *Constitution* had with it?"

"Do you believe that it is true that it had anything to do with it?"

"I have no reason to doubt it. I received one of the copies containing the Laporte article. I will get it for you, if you wish."

She got the paper and together they went over it carefully, trying to detect some evidence of fraud, but to all appearance it was genuine.

The paper was yellow with age; the type seemed of old-fashioned design, and its entire make-up, including date lines, pronounced it a specimen of country journal-

ism of twenty years ago.

Their inspection took fully an hour's time, but nothing encouraging came of it.

"It certainly seems all right," acknowledged Mather. "I suppose my article must have been first written by Mr. Laporte. Do you suppose that this is an example of coincidence?"

"No, hardly," Gertrude replied, "the wording and phraseology are too nearly identical for that."

He sat in a brown study for several moments.

"Gertrude, do you believe in suggestion?" he asked.

"I don't quite understand."

"Oh, its a sort of a phychological theory, some way related to telepathy, hypnotism, etc. I believe it is used principally by Theosophists and Spiritualists to support their beliefs concerning the future life. I think it is applied as the method of receiving communications from the dead."

"There may be something in it, but I don't believe it will serve to clear up the mystery of this miserable affair. If the spirit of Mr. Laporte had had the power to suggest the reproduction of his ideas to you and prevail upon you to rewrite his articles, he certainly would have foreseen the outcome of the affair. "No, sir;

either the *Light* has given the proper solution to the problem, or there has been a conspiracy to do you a great wrong."

"Can you believe me guilty of the cowardly cconduct of which the *Light* accuses me, Gertrude?" the young man exclaimed, springing from his seat.

"No, I do not, Jonathan," she returned, also rising and placing both of her hands in his. "I have been in doubt all day, and almost up to the present time, but now I know you are incapable of anything so small."

He thanked her earnestly for her confidence, and resumed his seat; every shadow of his vexation having been dispelled by the magic of her faith in him.

"You said, Gertrude," Mather began, after a short period of reflection, "that you have felt doubtful of me all day; in any of that time did you feel convinced that I was really guilty?"

"Yes," she answered, "but you must not feel hurt about it. When I first read the paper this morning, I believed that you had been foolish and weak, just as the article represented you, but," she quickly added, "I never for a moment believed that you had gossiped about me in the way it was reported."

"Did you try to account for that portion it? The per-

son who wrote that contribution certainly has some knowledge of our affairs, or he has made a very close guess.''

"Yes, I thought, perhaps, you had made a confidant of some one individual, and that one individual had betrayed you to the editor of the *Light*, and the editor, with his customary disregard for truth, had embellished it to suit his own taste."

She stopped and looked up, expecting some denial or protestation to her theory, but he remained silent.

"Do you think my suspicions unworthy or strange, everything considered?" she asked.

"No, I suppose not," he replied, "especially when I was not present to deny the allegations."

"You haven't denied anything yet," the lady rejoined.

"Do you wish me to?" he asked with a displeased intonation.

"Yes, at least that part of it that concerns me individually."

"Why?" he abruptly asked.

"Because with your assurance that you have devulged no part of the existing understanding between us, I shall take steps to make the publishers of the *Light* produce their authority for the malicious statements,

or compel them to print an unqualified retraction of that portion of the article relating to me."

"I will most solemnly declare, Miss Allen, that I have never mentioned your name, or referred to you, directly or indirectly, to any person in this town or in any other place," Mather replied.

"But," he continued, after a moment's reflection, "do you think you will help matters by making demands for justice at the hands of such unprincipled men as the publishers of the *Light*? As they did not hesitate to make an unprovoked attack upon me, also implicating yourself in a public scandal, you could hardly expect them to show you greater respect after having committed themselves. You really could obtain no legal redress, as they have made no mention of your name, and it would be impossible to prove that you are the person whom they intended to describe, or that you are in any manner injured by their attentions."

"Oh!" the lady replied, "I do not intend to expose myself to further publicity, nor permit them to make use of my name, but they shall simply acknowledge that the romantic part of their contemptible diatribe was imaginary, and without truthful foundation. I do not intend to prosecute them by legal proceedings, but I

have business relations with one of the stockholders of the *Light* company, and through him I do not think I would have a particle of difficulty in arranging a change of management of the newspaper whenever it suited me to do so. I shall place the matter into the hands of my business manager tomorrow, and I think he will be able to arrange things satisfactorily for me. But what will you do?"

"I haven't really decided yet. A few hours ago I half intended to commit murder, but since you still believe in me I am beginning to feel indifferent to the whole affair."

"That will never do," she said emphatically, you must search this thing out and clear your name at once. As it now is your employment is gone, and your future jeopardized. In fact if you permit this matter to rest, you lose every advantage you have gained. You must do something about it immediately. If you are not disposed to do it for your own sake, then do it for mine. Remember I am involved in the scandal, as well as yourself. Now as much as I care for you, my position is such that I must ask you to discontinue your visits here, and permit the affairs common between us to rest

in abeyance until you are exhonorated in the eyes of the public."

He knew that she was in earnest, and that she did not wish to see him again until he had fully proven that the charges against him were unfounded.

Borrowing the copies of the two newspapers containing the scandalous arraignment, he bade her good night and returned home.

He could not sleep, so he sat until day-break thinking out some course to pursue. Before morning he had completed his plans and begun preparations for their execution.

The first move to be made was to go to Salem and confront the publishers of the *Constitution*, and demand their explanation of the matter. The *Constitution's* exposure of the great literary steal accused Mather of purloining the whole of the article published over his signature in the magazine, but the copy of the newspaper containing the original Laporte contribution contained less than one-sixth of the magazine contribution. It would require seven numbers of the *Constitution* to contain the magazine article.

If the editor of the Salem paper actually had the whole of the article among his files, printed under a

date line twenty years old, Mather would be obliged to give up, but if the remaining six of that edition were not produced, he intended to immediately bring suit against the *Constitution* upon the charge of criminal libel.

Before leaving home, however, he must first obtain permission from the board of school directors, as there was still four days of his school term remaining. He had no difficulty in securing a release from his contract, the Board being so eager to grant it that they neglected to make a deduction from his salary for the unexpired portion of his term of service, but instructed Clerk Jawsmith to draw him a warrant for the full amount.

The order was obeyed, but as the schoolmaster failed to call for the check, the enterprising clerk promptly endorsed Mather's name to the paper, drew the money and put it in his pocket, according to the official custom of the country.

Everything now being in readiness, Mather took passage on a Northern Pacific steamship for Salem. Just as he boarded the boat a messenger handed him a package containing a kind letter from Gertrude and a copy of the *Light*. Upon removing the wrapper from the newspaper, he found a two-column article reviewing the great scandal, and in which the most humiliating

apologies were made to the luckless teacher for the misrepresentations in regard to his love affair. Also, the journal went so far as to ask the public to suspend judgment in regard to the charges of plagiarism against Mr. Mather, until that gentleman had time to explain, as recent developments seemed to indicate that a grievous mistake had been made.

Though he felt quite thankful to the gentle woman, who, he knew, furnished the inspiration by which the article was produced, yet it was with a heavy heart that he started on his journey. He was leaving what, he had begun to look upon as his home, under a cloud; to remain he knew not how long, perhaps forever. At least he resolved never to return until he had cleared his name of every shadow of the smirch that had been rubbed so thickly upon it.

A day and a night by sea and land and our hero arrived at the capital of the state of Oregon.

Were it not for the transaction of the state business and the biennial meetings of the legislature, Salem would be little more than a country trading place. As it is, the few thousand inhabitants of the old town possess the freshness and verdancy of the field and forest in a very generous measure.

The morning after his arrival, Jonathan paid a visit to the office of the *Constitution*. It was a weekly, and like all other country papers, dealt almost exclusively in small gossip, lurid scandal, and "roasts." The office and sanctum of the newspaper were silent and deserted, but in the composing room Mather found a printer hard at work.

"Not in," said that individual in response to the visitor's request to see the editor.

"When will he be in?"

"Dunno; maybe tonight; maybe tomorrow; maybe next week. I 'tend to the business when he's out."

For several days thereafter Mather returned regularly to the office of the *Constitution* every morning, and made the same inquiries; invariably receiving the same answer.

He was beginning to dispair of ever meeting the editor, when the landlord of the hotel where he was staying helped him out of the difficulty.

This person had been making ineffectual attempts to learn all about his guest ever since the latter arrived.

"You're from the Sound country, ain't you?" the landlord asked, one morning.

"Yes," was the response.

"Kinder after the editor, ain't ye?"

"Yes; I should like very much to see him."

"You're the feller he roasted 'bout that Siwash business, ain't ye?"

"Yes, he did print some very unkind things about me."

"You'll have to do some livelier rustlin' than you've been doin' if you catch Baldwin this spring. He's on to you."

"How is that."

"Oh, he knows you're after his scalp, and he's dodging you. He was 'round here the night you came, and has been keepin' out of your way."

"Do you mean that Baldwin is in town, and has been ever since I came here?"

"Hell! yes. I see him most every day. Don't you mind that red-headed bastard with the white hat that came in here last night?"

"Yes, I noticed a person of that description."

"That's him."

"Where will I be apt to find him?"

"When?"

"Now."

"Down to the "Wanderer." He's always there 'tween meals."

The "Wanderer" proved to be the most high-tonned, popular saloon of the city, to which place Mather directed his steps. Upon entering the place he discovered the red-headed man of the white hat and doubtful parentage engaged in a game of pool. Approaching him the schoolmaster asked:

"Are you Mr. Baldwin?" at the same time extending his card.

"Yes," replied the person addressed, glancing at the card without taking it. "What can I do for you?" he drawled, without looking at his visitor, and preparing to make a cushion carrom, which apparently required great skill and nice calculation.

"I wish to see you privately," Mather answered.

"Busy now," said he of the sun-kissed locks, making the shot and watching its effect with great deliberation.

"When will you be at leisure?"

"Don't know, tomorrow, next day. Oh, I'll tell you, drop into the office the latter part of next week; I'll have more time to talk then."

"Mr. Baldwin," Mather said, with an angry gleam lighting up his eyes, at the same time stepping between the player and the billiard table, "you know why I want to see you. I understand that you have been

dodging me ever since I came to Salem four days ago. Now I insist upon an interview with you, and if you have a particle of manhood, you will grant my request now, today."

The editor, who was not of warlike build or proportions stood sizing up the stalwart young man before him for several seconds. Those long arms, huge fists and broad shoulders were not to be matched by his puny frame in a personal encounter. It would be more satisfactory to him, he thought, to make it a contest of brains rather than one of muscle.

"Well," said Mather, becoming impatient under the editor's inspection.

A crowd began to gather around the two men, expecting a fight.

"All right, then," said the editor. "If you're in a hurry, come up to the office about five o'clock this evening. We'll be there, and guess we can arrange to make thing pleasant for you."

"The office" meant the office of the *Constitution*, and at the appointed time, Mather presented himself at the door of the sanctum. Baldwin was there seated at his desk making "copy."

"Hullo!" said that person, with an effort to simulate

surprise, "I had nearly forgotten you. Come in. Come in."

The visitor entered, and on the invitation of the other, seated himself.

"Now, what can I do for you?" continued the editor after bending over his desk a moment, as if completing an unfinished paragraph.

"Mr. Baldwin," Mather hesitatingly began, "last week you published a very abusive article about me, accusing me of a very contemptible act. My object in coming here is to make a thorough investigation of this matter. I wish to ask you a few questions."

"We're always willing to oblige," the editor replied with cool insolence. "Proceed with your quiz."

"In your paper, last week," Mather resumed, "you stated that I had stolen the whole of an article written by Mr. Laporte, and printed in the *Constitution* twenty years ago, and sold it to the *Present Age* magazine. Now that copy of the paper supposed to contain the original Laporte article, which you took such pains to circulate, contains less than one-sixth of the contribution I sold to the magazine. Have you the remainder of the article among your files?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is it?"

"In the next room, where I keep my files."

"Can I see it?"

"No, sir. We don't consider it good business policy to keep our files for the use of the public. The files of a newspaper are the private property of its publishers and owners."

"You surely can make an exception in my favor and let me see those papers."

"No, sir; couldn't make an exception in anybody's favor. This is not that kind of an office."

"Mr. Baldwin, I don't believe you have the remainder of that contribution, or ever had any portion of it. You and some other scoundrel or scoundrels, have, for some purposes unknown to me, entered into a conspiracy to injure me. Now if you wish to save yourself further trouble let me see your files."

"Oh, ho! If that's the way you are going to talk, the sooner you get out of my office the better it will suit me. There, sir, is the door."

"I want to see those papers, and I won't get out of your office till I get ready to."

"You wont, hey! We'll see about that. I was expecting something of this sort," the editor added, open-

ing the door of an adjoining room, "Mr. Hickman, will you come here a moment?"

About as vile a looking specimen of humanity as ever mocked the image of the Almighty, respond- to this appeal, and entered the room.

"Mr. Hickman," said the editor this man came into my office and insulted me; I have ordered him out, but he refuses to go. Will you kindly see him outside and down the stairs?"

Hickman was the town constable. A big, strong-looking man, upon whose face and form were the scars of many a hard fought battle—with whisky and venereal disease. He approach within a few feet of Mather, and said:

"Now, then, young feller, you want to get out of this pretty d—d quick. Come, now, get a move on, or I'll run you in."

"I want to see those paper," Mather said, without so much as looking at the constable.

"Do you hear?" said the officer laying his hand upon the young man's arm.

That long arm shot out, not in a blow, but with a push of extraordinary vigor, catching the constable under the chin, throwing him against the door, which

flew open causing the officer to fall into a sitting position on the threshold.

"Will you let me see those papers?"

"No. Hickman, put this man out or shoot him," screamed the editor.

With a wrathful ejaculation the constable drew his baton and revolver, and with a weapon in either hand, again strode up to the schoolmaster.

"Sir, I arrest you for disturbing the peace and resisting an officer."

"Well, why don't you do it?" Mather asked with a smile, as the officer hesitated. "Will you give me those papers or not?" he continued, turning away from the constable and walking up to Baldwin.

"I haven't got 'em. For Godsake, if you don't believe it go and look for yourself, replied the editor, retreating as Mather advanced, and throwing the door to room, which, he had declared a few moments before, contained the coveted papers.

The files of the paper were searched carefully, but no papers of later date than two years back were found among them, except a bundle of twenty or more copies of that identical paper in which was printed the first installment of the Laporte article. Placing the bundle

under his arm, Jonathan returned to the sanctum, where he found the editor alone, the constable having gone out to procure a warrant for the teacher's arrest and the assistance of an additional officer or two to serve the process.

"Well, did you get what you want?" the editor sarcastically inquired.

"I did't find what I was looking for, but I have some papers here that I'd like to borrow a few days."

"Oh, certainly, just help yourself. Take anything you want. If you want something you don't see, just ask for it. Say the word and I'll clear out and give you possession of the place, presses, types, furniture and good-will of the business; but don't go off and say we didn't treat you well."

The morning after this adventure, Mather presented himself at the law office of J. C. Wood & Co., leading attorneys of the city, and engaged the services of the senior member of the firm to represent him in the action for criminal libel, which he had resolved to bring against Editor Baldwin immediately.

"What do you expect to gain by this suit?" the lawyer asked, after Mather had stated his case. "There's no hope of getting damages out of Baldwin. He hasn't a cent to his name."

"I don't really care for damages," Mather responded, "nor do I care to punish or inconvenience Mr. Baldwin. My only object in bringing the suit is to vindicate my character and reestablish my standing with my late employers, the publishers of the *Present Age*."

"I suppose you know that it will cost you something whether you lose or win?"

"Yes. What is your estimate of the probable cost?"

"Six hundred dollars to lose and four hundred to win. Justice comes pretty d—d high in this country."

"So it seems," answerd the schoolmaster with a feeling of bitterness, as he thought of the purposes to which he must apply the savings of a year's labor.

"A portion of this amount will have to be advanced," the lawyer continued. "Court doesn't meet for two weeks, but we had better get the case on the docket as soon as possible so that you can have an early hearing, in the meantime we can round-up our witnesses and make all other preparations."

"How much money will it require to start with?" Mather asked.

"Let me see," Mr. Wood responded, "the costs of the court will have to be advanced when the case is docketed; the jury must be paid before we go to trial; my

fees can wait until the work's done."

"I was under the impression that the costs of the court included the jury fees," Mather said.

"No, no; not in this county," the lawyer replied with a puzzled look at his client. "At least, only a small portion of them."

"What will these court and jury costs amount to?"

"Well, you will have to put up about one hundred and fifty dollars for the court, and two hundred for the jury. But we may get it a little cheaper. I'll see what can be done."

"Two hundred dollars to the jury," the young man exclaimed. "I never heard of such a thing."

"A custom peculiar to the Pacific Coast states—that is, in a great many places. Though I believe some very vigorous reforms have been inaugurated in a number of our more progressive cities and towns, and some of the old methods employed in conducting a suit at law are being dispensed with."

"I suppose the act of paying this money to jurors constitutes the crime of bribery, doesn't it?"

"Well, yes, if you wish to apply so harsh a term. At least, it would be so considered back East. You see, out here it's this way: Every lawyer is simply obliged

to keep half a dozen or more professional jury-workers on hand all the time, or he gets no practice. Its an time-honored custom among the older inhabitants of the land, and it is something that litigants expect and provide for. Its a practice that I don't approve of, and never did: but the bread-and-butter question with me is too serious a matter to attempt the introduction of any startling innovations, but, then, the system is not to be entirely condemned, it has some advantages."

"What are they?"

"It saves a lawyer lots of work. About all he has to do is to 'prime his fixer' and he'll do the work. Touch the button and the other fellow does the rest. Very convenient way, do ye see?"

"Yes, I see, but I should think this condition of affairs would cause such confusion of court matters as to place the administration of justice on the same plane with a lottery. In the event the plaintiff should bribe one portion of the jury and the defendant another, I can't see how a suit could ever be settled."

"The law's delay is proverbial; hung juries, rehearings, appeals etc.; just like roulette, the best stayer and the longest purse has the best show to win."

"I don't believe I care to commit bribery," said

Mather. I prefer to take my chances in a square, open fight, or not at all."

"All right, then you will lose your suit in the lower court sure as God made the diminutive pippin, but I think we can make a winning in the Supreme court. I'll do the best I can for you."

"The trial came on, was fought, and, as the lawyer predicted ,was lost.

Though the plaintiff succeeding in proving by witnesses of approved credibility, that the *Constitution* was not born until five years after the time in which Jules Laporte was represented to have contributed the disputed article to its columns; that Laporte was a French Canadian, who could scarcely speak English, much less write it with the most finished diction; and that many of the technical words used in the composition of the production had been recently coined and were unknown twenty years ago, yet the intelligent jury returned a verdict of not guilty.

It was intimated by some of the more honorable citizens,—those on the "off side" of the political fence—that the acquittal of Baldwin was a foregone conclusion. The sheriff, who impanelled the jury, the judge, who instructed that body, and the county attorney, who

prosecuted the defendant, were candidates for reelection, and they would need the support of the *Constitution* in the coming fall campaign.

Besides the editor had a dozen or more witnesses who testified that they distinctly remember Jules Laporte and his Indian contributions to the newspaper. Three of the most zealous of this number, two of whom, it was afterwards shown, were subjects of Great Britian, having been in the United States less than five years, and the other, a half-breed Indian, who could neither read nor write, swore that they had positive recollections of each and every one of those six numbers of the *Constitution* in which the Laporte article was printed.

One old perjurer declared that he had assisted Laporte in writing the article, and consequently every word of it was fresh in his memory. Cross-examination elicited the fact that the venerable liar must still have been serving a term in the Arkansas State penitentiary while engaged in his literary labors.

"Never mind," said Attorney Wood, as he and the schoolmaster met to adjust the account between them, "we are sure to make it in the Supreme court."

I am not going to the Supreme court," Mather returned. I have had all I can stand."

"Not going!" the lawyer exclaimed, turning sharply upon his client.

"No."

"What's the matter?"

"Out of money."

"Oh, that's it. Well, I'm sorry. Better luck next time."

"Hope so. Good-bye."

"So-long."

CHAPTER XX.

As the reader, perhaps, already suspects, Paul Hamilton was really the active principal of the terrible scandal, the cause of so much confusion to Gertrude Allen and Jonathan Mather, and which was so highly enjoyable to the sensational citizens of Kuhnville. Hamilton, despite his protestations to Ida Huntington, was determined to marry Miss Allen. She was wealthy. A marriage with her meant independence, ease and luxury the remainder of his life. He was far from being in love with her. What little affection he felt for any one, other than himself, he expended on Ida. In fact a matrimonial alliance with this last named individual would have been more to his fancy than with Miss Allen, had the lady possessed the same worldly advantages as Miss Allen.

Of late he had quite frequently called upon the heiress

and she always seemed to enjoy his visits. However, some species of intuition told him that she would not tolerate any attention from him of a more ardent nature than that of a casual visitor.

From the same source he divined that she had a great regard for Mather, though he did not think that as yet he was her accepted lover. That their relations with each other were something unusual, he felt quite certain and he had spent several hours of hard thinking, trying to define the character of the bond of sympathy existing between them. He felt that if he knew exactly their standing to one another, he could, by some subtile scheme, disrupt their friendship. The accomplishment of this purpose he considered essentially important to the progress of his own plans concerning the disposal of the lady's hand and fortune.

On several occasions, while visiting Miss Allen, he endeavored to get her to express an opinion of Mather by pretending to be a great admirer of that gentleman, but he failed ingloriously. She was non-commital, and she parried his little strokes of diplomacy with such skill that he soon realized the futility of learning anything from her.

Chance finally threw into his hands the end of the yarn

from which he proceeded to unwind the tangle.

One evening while paying a visit to Miss Allen, he noticed that some one was concealed behind the curtains of an alcove off the room in which they sat. He said nothing to his hostess about the circumstance, but waiting until Miss Allen left the room a moment to attend a ring of the door bell, he threw back the curtains and discovered Mary, the pretty chamber-maid, who had been surreptitiously listening to the conversation between the lady of the house and her visitor. The girl implored Hamilton not to expose her, and he good-naturedly promised to say nothing of the matter.

A week or more after this episode, he met the young woman on the street, and after some pretty close questioning, accompanied by a few threats, she gave him the information that he was so eager to obtain. She had heard the whole conversation between Mather and Gertrude the night of the party, and repeated all of it that she could remember.

He set to work at once to plan some way to circumvent his victorious rival. The result of his scheming was the great newspaper scandal related in a preceding chapter.

When it occurred to him that he needed a newspaper to

assist in executing his schemes, he remembered Baldwin. Baldwin had been an employee in his newspaper office in Illinois three years before the time represented as the present in this story. He was fully as unscrupulous as Hamilton, being capable of doing nearly anything for the sake of money. His aptititude in this respect—a little matter of fraud of some kind—had been the cause of his leaving the East and making himself a new home nearer the setting sun. Hamilton, from a strong fellow feeling, had lent Baldwin the money to make the first payment on the *Constitution*, without ever expecting its return—and he never got it—but now he intended to use his friend to advance his matrimonial project.

Hamilton went to Salem, and withthe assistance of five twenty-dollar gold pieces, he had no difficulty in obtaining the editor's help.

He had conceived the idea of bringing discredit upon Mather by printing charges accusing him of purloining his famous paper on the Washington Indians. Upon communicating his idea to Baldwin it was, at first, considered impractical, because of the fact that the files of the *Constitution* had not been preserved farther back than two years, though that journal had been in existence

much longer. Chance, however, placed the conspirators in posession of a very old copy of the Oregon *Safe Guard*, in the columns of which was printed a short account of the adventures of Jules Laporte with the Flathead Indians.

From this paper they made up their bogus copy of the *Constitution*, wetting the paper in water in which some flowers and green leaves had been steeped, thus making it yellow and brittle as if by age and decay.

The young men felt that they could anvantageously and safely use the Laporte incident. To boldly use a name that some of the older in habitants were familiar with would give the story an appearance of authenticity, besides there was no one to dispute it. Laporte had no intimates while living and left no heirs at his death.

It was an easy matter to secure the cooperation of the Kuhnville *Light*. Indeed that enterprising journal was very thankful for the opportunity to print such an important sensation, as well as for the small cash premium accompanying it.

Mr. Hamilton now had plenty of ready money, and he was a firm believer in the free use of gold, especially to accomplish some dishonest purpose.

Mather's legal investigation of the plot had cost Hamilton a good, round sum of money. He had to furnish the money to bribe judge, jury and witnesses, but he felt that the six or eight hundred dollars he had spent would be a good investment if his project proved a success. Mather now having been disposed of, he decided to bring matters to a climax at once. He would go to Miss Allen that very evening and learn his fate. That the lady cared for him, or had ever thought of him in the light of a lover, he had no reason to believe, but he had confidence in himself, now that Mather was out of the way, to make such an appeal to her that she could not resist him.

Hamilton knew men of all classes, but his knowledge of women was limited to a study of the shop girl and waiting-maid.

He took extra pains with his toilet that evening, and it was with great satisfaction that he took a final survey of himself in the mirror.

Surely no woman under forty years of age could look with indifference upon so handsome and elegant a person as he saw reflected there.

Miss Allen was at home, and expressed herself pleased to see Mr. Hamilton. She led the way into the draw-

ing room, invited him to be seated, and then took a chair a short distance from him. Not too far for easy conversation, but hardly close enough for him to repeat the little speech which he had so carefully constructed and rehearsed to himself so many times. The room, too, was so conventional, and the surroundings seemed unpropitious to the business he had on hand. He knew that he could not effectively propose to the lady, situated as they were at present. He must be in a position where he could look squarely into her eyes, tell her his story, and exert all his will force and hypnotic power into an effort to awaken in her some response to his passion.

With his customary skill he began to maneuver for the desired position.

If he could only induce her to show him her flowers in the bay window of the sitting room, there would be his chance. He remembered that she had a very rare plant—a fragrant exotic. He began talking about this specie of plant though not of that specimen, declaring that he had seen one at the rooms of a bachelor friend, and expressing great admiration for it. Miss Allen had that same flower, and if Mr. Hamilton wished, she would like to have him see hers.

Certainly, it would afford him the greatest pleasure.

She preceded him to the window and threw back the curtains and they both stood within the very small area that was unoccupied by the flowers.

She leaned forward and lifted the pot from its place near the glass and placed it on a small stand just before him. When she turned to him again she met his steady gaze and found both of her hands imprisoned in his grasp.

"Mr. Hamilton, what are you trying to do? Please let go of my hands."

He did not comply with her request or take his eyes from her face.

"I suppose I seem very presumptious, Miss Allen;" he said, "but I must speak to you. Ever since I first met you, I have loved you with the most intense passion. My thoughts are of you by day, and I dream of you by night. I know no rest. I am hardly a conscious, sensiate being. Indifferent to every thing, my daily vocation, the companionship of my fellow men, the beautiful and bright things of nature, aye, even to life itself. I am so filled with your beautiful face and glorious form that I can think of nothing else; I know of nothing else, live for nothing else, yet doubt and uncertainty has

made me miserably unhappy. I beg of you to release me from this enchantment, which like a subtile drug has benumbed my faculties and turned me into dream substance. Tell me, Gertrude, can you bid me hope?"

"Let go of my hand. Now go back to the parlor like a rational creature, this is such an uncomfortably small place. I don't think you care to see the plant," she added, calmly replacing the pot back in its accustomed place.

Hamilton followed Miss Allen back to the parlor, feeling that his *coup de maitre*, which he had elaborated with so much thought and care had proved a fiasco. He was crestfallen and vexed beyond measure. For the first time in his life he had met a woman who was proof against his blandishments. He was greatly discouraged, but he thought of the large sum of money he had already invested in the enterprise, and he determined not to give up until he had made another and a supreme effort.

"If I am to understand what you have just said to me to constitute a proposal of marriage," Miss Allen began, as they resumed their seats in the parlor, "I beg you to dismiss the idea at once. I cannot accept your offer under any circumstances."

"May I ask you, Miss Allen, if your affections or the promise of your hand are already engaged?" he asked.

"I do not consider our relations to each other of a character to warrant such an exchange of confidence," the lady returned with firm though gentle insistence. "Under other circumstances, Mr. Hamilton, your question would hardly seem polite."

"Dodged the issue," thought Hamilton. "D—d if she isn't a slick one."

"Miss Allen," he said, his voice assuming a tone of sadness, "I know I am presumptious, I know I deserve your rebuke, but I feel confident that if you knew me better, if you knew me as I am, you would look at the matter in a different light. I know that I am at a great disadvantage in your eyes, and perhaps seem like a mere adventurer, but I assure you that that is a mistaken impression. A few months ago my social and business standing were unexcelled any where in the East. I had built myself up by my own efforts to that position, and I can again assume the same place in the world's industry the moment I demand it."

"I am sure I have never wronged you, Mr. Hamilton," Gertrude replied. "I have always regarded you as a man of extraordinary capabilities, and I have some-

times thought it strange that you should have voluntarily chosen to live in such an unattractive place as our little village. But that is a matter that has no bearing whatever upon your offer of marriage and my decision in regard to it. Under no circumstances—"

"Wait just a moment, Miss Allen," Hamilton interrupted; "You think it strange that I should have left my home in the East, where I was surrounded by so many advantages, and take up my residence in this comparative wilderness, where I am looked upon as an adventurer. Let me explain the matter to you:

"My early life," he began, "was a hard struggle. The only primary advantage I had was that of being well born; I am of one of the oldest and best families in America. But before I was ten years old, I had the misfortune to lose both of my parents and to be thrown upon my own resources. I am not a person, however, to float along with the tide of circumstances. I fought the battle with poverty and won while I was a mere child. There seemed to be an ever-present consciousness within me which defied the circumstances that would make a slave of a person of my birth. I succeeded in educating myself, and then I steadily rose from one position of subordination to the next higher until I

had conquered each successive step in the industrial gamut, and occupied a position of honor and trust. Every ambition I ever had I gratified, and I did so with such ease that nothing seemed to exceed the range of my possibilities. So great was my confidence in myself that I believed that I could consistently aspire to any position under the Republic.

"But after a time, when I felt that my future was assured, and the struggle for position no longer necessary, a spirit of reaction took possession of me. My ambition was gone, and, as I looked back upon my life I reflected that my accomplishments were hardly worth the effort expended. I became impatient of my routine duties and became a confirmed misanthropist.

"It was at this stage of my career that I decided to come West, and try the effect of a change of climate. I knew that I was afflicted with some species of disease and needed treatment.

"You know now, why I left the East."

"My selection of this place as the objective point of my journey West was from a desire to visit my friend, Wilton. At the conclusion of my visit, and when I was on the point of returning East, I met you. You are responsible for my eight-month's stay here.

"And, Miss Allen, the young man continued with earnest eloquence, "your responsibility does not end there. It is in your power to make a man of me—aye one of the foremost men of the nation—or condemn me to a continuance of this life of semi-vagabondage that I am at present leading. I know now the nature of the illness which prompted me to come West, and I, also, know the remedy for my malady. The love and sympathy of a beautiful woman is my soul's need, and they are indispensible to my future progress.

"Can you give me that love and sympathy, or will you bid me good-bye forever?"

She said good-bye.

He had lost.

CHAPTER XXI.

Messrs. Hallam and Wilton were sitting in their law office, engaged in earnest conversation. Election time was drawing near, and the two men were discussing the senior partner's chances for the Superior judgeship.

"I'll tell you what, Hallam," Wilton said, "something has got to be done. It's a ground hog case with us. Times are hard and growing harder, and money is devilish tight. Thirty-five hundred a year is worth trying for just now."

"Yes; I know," returned the other, "but it will take a barrel of money to do the trying, and then, the chances of success are hardly even. The Democrats are in the minority in this county, and are by no means well united. Besides, I don't know where I can raise

the money to make the race."

"Yes," Wilton, responded, "the money question is something of a consideration, but as it is a business speculation affecting both of us, I am willing to stand my half of the expense. If you lose, we both lose; if you win, there will be plenty of chances for you to even-up with me. You know a judge is sometimes a mighty convenient arrangement to have in the family. I think you can make a go of it. There's only one thing that makes me feel a little shaky, and that's that Presbyterian church business."

At this juncture a knock was heard at the door, interrupting the conversation, while Wilton opened the door.

"Hello, Hamilton, old man, just the fellow we want to see. Come in," Wilton exclaimed, grasping his visitor's hand and motioning to a seat.

"Hallam and I were talking politics."

"Pleasant entertainment for this kind of weather," Hamilton rejoined wiping the perspiration from his face. "I suppose you haven't reached the religious line yet?"

"Ours are practical politics; but, by the way, we had just got into religion when you knocked."

"Seem to have sort of an affinity for each other;

somehow they will get mixed up, like the revivalistic preachers and the good sisters at camp-meeting," Hamilton interjected. "Are you fellows going to take a hand in politics?"

"Yes to a limited extent. I am trying to get Hallam to run for Superior judge. He hesitates—afraid he'll get beat."

"Umph-huh! But where does the religion come in on such a propositon as that?"

"Why, you see, its this way; when Hallam first came out to this coast, he didn't quite kumtux the social condition of the country, so he went and joined the Presbyterian church, thinking he would make a ten-strike in a business way."

"The hell; a Democrat, too!"

"Does sound rather paradoxical, but he did it, and—

"Oh, I don't know about that, interrupted Hallam. "Democrats are just as apt to be church members as Republicans."

"Yes, Catholics," suggested Hamilton, "but I suppose they don't count."

"Don't count," vociferated the junior partner. "If you think Catholics don't count, that's all you know about it. That's where the trouble comes in. You see,

there's sort of an hereditary feud between the Catholics and Presbyterians. A century or so ago they were making little bon-fires of each other on every cross-road, and there's just as much hate between them now as then. Catholics, as a rule, vote as a unit against Presbyterian candidates."

"Who's the Republican candidate," asked Paul.

"Don't know yet, but it's generally supposed that Thompson will be the man."

"What's his religion?"

"Infidel. Why?"

"Then I guess we can fix the thing all right."

"How?"

"Oh, quote Mr. Thompson as saying that the Pope or the Virgin Mary isn't decent, or something of that sort. It'll work every pop."

"I don't know about that," observed Wilton. "Catholics on this coast represent a fairly intelligent class of people. I believe you would have some trouble fooling them."

"No danger. It doesn't make a particle of difference how intelligent a Catholic is you can always work him. He's so used to being humbugged in religious matters that he likes it. I played the same caper in the same

city for six consecutive years, and it worked every time. If Hallam's chances of election depend on the Catholic vote, he's just as good as elected. I can fix that for him all right."

"You're counting your chickens before they're hatched," Hallam expostulated. "I haven't got the nomination yet."

"Pretty sure of it, though, aren't you?" Wilton asked.

"Why, yes. Several of the party leaders have asked me to run, and they seem to think I could make it, but so far the Ninnycums have kept mum on the subject. You can't always tell what those fellows will do."

"Who are the Ninnycums?" Hamilton demamded.

"A Democratic club; a sort of a political octopus, with its head in Tacoma and its arms extending into every county in the State."

"What are the purposes of the organization?"

"Oh, about the same as the Tammany ring, machine politics. Ostensibly for the purpose of controlling federal appointments and the State nominations and elections of the Democratic party, but there's also a pretty active business end to the concern."

"Business! What kind of business?"

"Assessing candidates. You see, if a person wants

any kind of political office, federal, state, or county, he must first 'put-up' for the Ninnycums' support, or rather consent. It usually costs him all the way from ten per cent. to forty per cent. of the income of the office he expects to win, to even have the privilege of trying for it."

"What do they do with the money obtained in this way, use it for campaign purposes?"

"Some of it, I suppose, but the lion's share of the swag goes into the pockets of the leaders."

"Why, that's simply robbery."

"Of course its robbery. What're we here for?"

"What class of men, as a rule, are represented in this Ninnycum club?"

"Swell mob; a lot of well dressed thieves; men who bear the same relation to politics that a strumpet does to commerce. A self-respecting burglar would be ashamed to associate with such a body of blackguards."

"Why don't you and some of the more respectable element of the Democratic party conbine against the ring by forming an anti-machine organization."

"The truth of the matter is that the party is still so weak in this State, that it won't do to stir up factions. The Democrats are just begining to get a hold in the

State and if they get to fighting among themselves they would soon lose it. Of course, I know it is a terrible thing for the party that all the offices at the disposal of the Democratic voters should be filled by the tools of this corrupt machine. Now, I suppose you think I am a little extravagant in some of my statements, but just look the State over and draw your own conclusions. In nearly every place where the Democratic party has obtained control, embezzlement, fraud, malfeasance, misfeasance, and public theft have followed. And if you look a little further, you will see that a large proportion of these crimes is indirectly attributable to the Ninnycum club."

"Well, do you proposed to submit to this rascally imposition?"

"Oh, yes; I will have to pay the regulation amount of blackmail. I hate like hell to be skinned by these bloodsuckers, but I don't think they will hold me up for more than a thousand."

"Are there many Ninnycums in this town?"

"Yes; enough for all practical purposes. Sandeel and Bovine are the principal ones. Churchill and some of the other boys did belong, but it got too dirty for them, and they pulled out."

"It seems to me," Hamilton said after a few moments reflection, "that if Sandeel is one, the principal toad, or rather eel, in the Ninnycum puddle, it would hardly be necessary for you to submit to the Ninnycuming process, considering our confidential relations with him."

"Oh, well, I would much rather he would blackmail me, than to blackmail him. Besides you can't trust him. He one of the slickest little sons-of-b—s you ever saw. He'll promise anything and everything, and then lie out of it. I haven't a doubt that if I plead poverty with him, he would agree to support me in the convention without a cent, but after that body had adjourned and I found that I lacked a few votes of receiving the nomination, I would understand just where the trouble lay, and I wouldn't be in a position to make much of a kick either. Sandeel is up to all kinds of tricks. He looks like a snake, and he really ought to have been one. You had better keep an eye on him. Some of these times he might do you up."

CHAPTER XXII.

Paul Hamilton was a firm believer in luck. He was not a particle superstitious, or even religious; but he had gambled a great deal, and had come to regard luck as something real, something worthy to be taken into account in every transaction of life.

His conception of luck was not the prevailing vulgar idea concerning it. He looked upon it as the operation of some unknown natural law, which had a powerful influence upon the affairs of mankind. A law which could be applied for good or evil, if it was only properly understood. But the human intellect was of too limited capacity to compass its full cognition or analysis in the present stage of mind developement. Providential interposition, fate and luck were, perhaps, identical.

Lately Mr. Hamilton was out of luck. That was the

only way to account for the miscarriage of his plans.

His failure to seduce Ida was simply beyond all reasonable comprehension; and any other woman in the world except Gertrude Allen would have been touched by his eloquent appeal, but she had remained wholly unmoved.

He had been trusted with the delicate task of "working" the delegates to the county convention for Hallam's nomination for Superior judge.

Though not a legal elector of the state he, with the assistance of some of the ward heelers, managed to get himself elected a delegate to the Democratic county convention, now but two weeks off. Everything promised well. He canvassed every precinct in both city and county, and saw all the delegates, securing the promises of at least two-thirds of the whole number to cast their votes for Hallam. Sandeel would hardly wait for him to ask for the support of the Ninnycum club; he seemed glad of an opportunity to accommodate Mr. Hamilton. The wily collector accepted the "little assessment" under protest—after he got his hands on it—and declared on his *word of honor* that Hallam should have his undivided support for the office he aspired to fill.

The convention met, transacted its business, and adjourned. Hallam was defeated by eight votes. The Ninnycums voted for him according to promise, but it was afterwards learned that they made a little trade, by which they secured enough votes without their own to defeat him.

Hamilton was certainly out of luck. His luck was even worse than he suspected. Lately he and Billy had been doing a wholesale business in opium. Collector Sandeel and Deputy Bovine were now plotting to sever the connecting link that bound them to the bold smuggler. Hamilton was a dangerous fellow, and they hated him. He had wounded their vanity and humiliated them, and they thirsted for revenge.

They could get even with him, and they would do it. To use the chaste language of Deputy Scott Bovine, "Hamilton was something of a son-of-b—h himself, but he'll learn that there are sons-of-b—s in this western country who could give him cards and spades and then do him."

Another reason why it was almost imperative that the smuggler should be disposed of was that the smuggling ring demanded it. Hamilton had been, not only supplying several of the most important cities on the

coast with the drug, but cutting prices as well. His business operations had affected the entire trade of the district.

The ring called a special meeting of its officers and stockholders, and summoned the collector before them. They insisted upon knowing why this interloper was permitted to carry on his illegal traffic in competition with their monopoly without any attempt being made to put a check upon him. The gentlemen of the ring believed Sandeel had broken faith with them, and accused him of remission in the performance of his sworn duty to his country.

The collector told the whole story, explaining how he had been cruelly tricked by the unscrupulous master of the Mermaid, and how that same infamous person had gained a knowledge of the entire workings of the Puget Sound Smuggling Ring, as well as of the personnel of the investors in that enterprise. The reputations of many of the most prominent men in the State were in the keeping of this man.

Notwithstanding this array of damaging facts, resolutions were adopted to the effect that Sandeel should be instructed to put a stop to Hamilton's operations at once.

It was contended that if the collector would capture the smuggler, imprison and prosecute him vigorously, that any disclosures that Hamilton might make would have no effect. Under such circumstances the public would not believe a single statement made against the members of the ring individually or collectively. Should he say anything tending to reflect upon the character of any member of their fraternity, it would be generally thought that vindictiveness or a desire to do mischief prompted him to do so.

Sandeel, however, was not so sanguine that the course mapped out for him to follow, would result satisfactorily. He objected to executing the plan on the grounds that there were witnesses to the agreement that had been made with the smuggler who might make trouble if called upon to testify. They were persons of good standing, friends of Hamilton, and men who could not be bought up, at least it would require a very large sum of money to do it.

The gentlemen of the ring, however, refused to be convinced. They argued that the smuggling association had nothing whatever to do with Mr. Sandeel's transaction with Captain Hamilton. It was a private matter, and in entering in such understanding with Hamil-

ton, the collector had violated his pledges to them. The ring had secured the office of collector for Mr. Sandeel, with the distinct understanding that he would protect its monopoly. Unless he was willing and able to comply with the conditions of his appointment, he would be removed from his official position, even if they had to dead-lock the tariff legislation in order to accomplish that purpose.

There was nothing else for Sandeel to do except to accede to their demand, but he prevailed upon the committee to grant him ten days in which to place Hamilton in prison or drive him from the country.

That Hamilton must be disposed of was quite evident, but just how that was to be done was a matter of more conjecture. The master of the Mermaid was a bold fellow. It would be impossible to frighten him out of the country, and if he was captured he would make a hard fight; involving the collector in a very unsavory scandal.

He called his deputy into consultation with him. Mr. Bovine suggested dynamite. He could hire a man from the Coast Seaman's Union for a couple of hundred dollars to construct an infernal machine and conceal it aboard the Mermaid just before the schooner sailed for

Victoria some night. The machine could be regulated so that it would permit the vessel to get an hour or so out to sea, and then "blow them so high they'd never come down again."

But the collector did not approve of such violent measures. He would have enjoyed a pyrotechnic display of that description, but he was afraid that the sailor might get drunk some time and give the whole thing away.

Then the feasibility of detailing the revenue cutter, Wollcott, to follow the schooner about the Sound during the ten days of grace, and by so doing frighten the smugglers into leaving the country, was next discussed. But this idea was abandoned as impractical. Possibly the schooner might attempt to do a little smuggling in spite of this surveillance, and in the event the Wollcott discovered such intention, she would overhaul the vessel and arrest the sailors without waiting for custom-house orders. Collusion with the officers of the cutter was simply out of the question. Many of the officers of the revenue marine service are ex-naval men, and the "officer and gentlemen" idea prevails among them to the same extent that it does in military and naval circles.

To hold a position in the military or naval service of the United States government, a person must be a gentleman of the highest integrity. Criminal capabilities are the principal requirements of the civil service incumbent.

At last the plotters evolved a scheme that they felt confident would answer the purpose. They planned to prevail on Hamilton to make a trip to Alaska with a cargo of opium; and while he was on the way there they could notify the collector at Sitka to be on the lookout for the Mermaid and seize both vessel and crew the moment they reached the northern port.

Hamilton certainly could not hold Sandeel responsible should he become involved in trouble with the custom officials other than those of the Puget Sound district. To pursuade the smuggler to make the Alaskan trip was the next, and most delicate undertaking of the scheme. It would never do to have Hamilton suspect that either the collector or his deputy were interested in the project. The plot must be worked independent of them. Lee Yung, the Victorian agent of the six companies, they decided, was just the man to do it. He owed Hamilton a grudge for kidnapping him, and they believed that the agent was only waiting to "play even"

with him. Hamilton trusted Yung to a certain extent, and this fact, the collector thought, would facilitate the work of sending the smuggler to his ruin.

Deputy Bovine was detailed to go to Victoria and make all arrangements with Yung, first being cautioned not to permit any conversation between himself and the Chinese agent to be overheard.

The conditions were ripe for the successful execution of the plot. Hamilton was still smarting from his defeat in the Democratic convention. It was a hard blow to his vanity that a lot of clam-eating, fish-catching denizens of an out-of-the-world, sea-coast village should beat him at politics—a game in which he had prided himself as being almost invincible.

Ida was another source of restlessness and discontent. She was a beautiful girl, and his passion for her had lately developed into genuine love, superinduced, perhaps, by the fact that she seemed to be growing indifferent to him. He could not make up his mind to marry her, as he still regarded her as his intellectual and social inferior, but he greatly disliked to give her up. She systematically avoided him, never permitting herself to remain alone with him even for a moment, In the past few months he noticed that she was receiving "regular

attentions" from another young man. This aroused his jealousy, and on several occasions he attempted to remonstrate with her, but she always succeeded in eluding him and keeping out of his way. A few days before, he had trapped her in an unoccupied chamber on the second floor of her mother's house. He had seen her enter the room, and his feet being incased in slippers, he followed her noiselessly, surprising her so by his sudden entrance, that he succeeded in locking the door and putting the key in his pocket before she recovered herself. When she did regain her senses she turned upon him in a perfect blaze of anger, calling him a coward and demanding instant release, at the same time expressing the wish that he would leave her mother's house forever. He opened the door and she passed out of the room and down the stairs, her face reflecting no inconsiderable degree of scorn and contempt.

The fact that it was generally rumored about Kuhnville, that he was engaged in smuggling, was also another cause of perturbation and discomfiture.

It was by no means prejudicial to his social standing, but the notoriety was extremely distasteful to him. He had not as yet lived long enough in the Sound country to become wholly indifferent to this peculiar

violation of law. Many of the most respected, leading citizens of Kuhnville were smugglers, and the trafic was looked upon by the community as quite an arristocratic calling, but Hamilton could not entirely disassociate the crime with petit larceny and similar misdemeanors. He had no scrupules of pride in committing the crime, but it greatly compromised his vanity to have it known.

One day Paul and Billy went over to Victoria in the schooner for the purpose of purchasing an unusually large supply of opium, as the price of that drug had advanced over one dollar per pound in the past week.

Lee Young seemed quite pleased to see Hamilton, and as was his custom, led the way to a private room and ordered refreshments.

Hamilton had paid Yung for his first consignment of opium, greatly to the Chinese' surprise, and despite their little passage at arms he had continued to deal with him. Yung pretended to feel well disposed towards the smuggler, and apparently they were on the best of terms.

"How much you sell you schoonel?" Lee asked, as if struck with a sudden idea, while they were drinking their wine.

"She's not for sale," Hamilton replied. "Why?" he

asked, after a moment's reflection. "Do you want to buy her?"

"No," the agent responded. "Melican man. He pay heap big for Melmed."

"What does he want with a schooner?"

"Go tel Laska."

"Sealing?"

"No. Take a dope."

"Why don't he get a steamer?"

"Steamel no good. Big steamel too much money; lilly steamel not too much coalee."

"A small steamer couldn't take enough fuel along to last the trip, is that it?"

"Yes," the agent rejoined. "Laska long tlip"

"Much sale for dope in Alaska?"

"Yes, heap, big money. If a man buy a schoonel, me sell thlee thousand pounds."

"What's it worth in Alaska?"

"Twenty-two dollas pound."

"Chances for getting in there without being caught pretty good?"

"Yes, good. Custom-house man he buy a dope. Wlite me lettel."

"Oh, ho! The collector himself deals in the stuff, does

he? Let's see your letter."

The Chinaman unlocked a desk, and after a search of fully ten minutes among his papers, he brought forth a letter post-marked Alaska, written on a government letter-head, and signed by the collector of customs for the district of Alaska. The letter contained an order for six thousand pounds of number one opium, to be sent to the writer immediately. It also agreed that the sum of twenty-five dollars per pound should be paid for the whole amount or for any smaller quantity, if delivered in the next seven weeks.

The letter was a forgery, but the smuggler had no suspicion that such was the case.

"Lee," said Paul, "how would it do for me to make a run up to Sitka with about a thousand pounds of the stuff?"

"Dun-know," Lee responded. "Long way el Laska. Heap wind blow."

"I'm not afraid of the wind. How about the revenue officers, are they all right?"

"Alle same like a Puget Sound."

"You think I could get in there without being picked up, do you?"

"Yes, no catchee me give you a ticket. How much

you give me?"

"Why, it seems to me, that if I buy the dope from you, you might give me the ticket free of charge."

"How much you buy?"

"I'll take a thousand pounds."

"Not a muchee. You take two thousand pounds, I give you ticket.

"Haven't the money. You had better sell me the thousand. Seventy-five hundred dollars is a large sum of money these hard times."

"You pay me eight thousand dollas, I sell you thousand pounds dope, and give you ticket."

"No; I won't give a you cent more than the regular price, seven dollars and a half a pound. Will you take it or not? I must get back to the ship."

"All light; me take him. When you want a dope?"

"To-night. On board the schooner, same time, same place."

Hamilton left the agent's office and hurried to the bank. Since he had begun to accumulate, he deposited in the bank of British Colombia, that institution being more convenient than the Kuhnville banks for making payments on opium. He presented his check for eight thousand dollars, which was paid without a moment's hesitation.

"It's either make or break," the smuggler said to himself, as he examined his bank book, while returning to the schooner. "When I have paid for the opium and made a few purchases necessary for the trip, I will have less than seven hundred dollars to my name."

At ten o'clock that night, Yung delivered a thousand pounds of opium aboard the Mermaid and received payment for it. Shortly afterwards the white sails of the vessel could have been discerned in the white moonlight, speeding before a good beam wind on her long northern voyage.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Mermaid held her course all night through Haro strait. At daybreak the following morning she rounded the last of the San Juan group of islands, and entered the Gulf of Georgia. It was in the early fall, the most beautiful time of the year on the Pacific coast. The days were warm and pleasant, and the nights just cool enough to induce sound, healthful sleep. The air is always heavy in all portions of the globe affected by the Japan current, but in the fall, just before the rainy season begins, it seems lighter than at any other period of the year.

A trip to the southern portion of Alaska from Puget Sound is not so great an undertaking as might be supposed by those who have never made it. It can hardly be called an ocean voyage if the inside passage is taken.

Nearly the whole of the way can be made through a series of straits, channels and sounds, formed by coastwise islands within sight of the main land. There was only one place on the entire route where vessels are exposed to the swells of the ocean. This was Queen Charlotte Sound, which was not over thirty or forty miles wide.

The Mermaid was certainly a rather small craft for a sea voyage of a thousand miles, and in a season of the year when the weather was so uncertain, but she was staunch and strongly built. Her crew had become skillful sailors and were bold and tireless.

The program the brothers had arranged for the voyage was to follow the regular steamer route clear through to Sitka. One thing that embarrassed them not a little was the fact that they had neglected to procure the proper ship papers before leaving their home port. In the past few months, Hamilton had grown out of the habit of observing the custom house rules and regulations when making his little business trips to Victoria and return, and in this instance he was wholly unprovided with any of the necessary customs' documents. Because of this, they would be obliged to avoid the Mary Island custom house, as well as any stray revenue

cutter that might be cruising in the northern waters. Yung had assured the smugglers that they would not be subjected to governmental inspection at Sitka, but he would not be responsible for the action of the Mary Island authorities. The collector for the port of Alaska usually made his headquarters at Sitka, leaving a deputy in charge of Mary Island station. Yung's letter of introduction was all the passport needed with the chief official, but it might not command so much respect from the subordinates.

It was Hamilton's intention to sail night and day so as to reach Sitka with as little delay as possible. Under ordinarily good circumstances, they could make the trip in about twelve days. During good weather it would only require one man on deck at a time, so the days and nights were divided up into "watches" of four hours each. Under this arrangement they both would have ample time for sleep, rest and the preparation of food, etc.

The passage of the Gulf of Georgia, and Johnson Strait, a distance of two hundred and fifty miles, was made without incident. A fair, steady wind prevailed during the whole of the fifty hours' run, and the young men were beginning to feel like congratulating them-

selves on the prospect of a safe and quick passage through the open sea, across Queen Charlotte Sound, when they would again find shelter. But in this they were to be disappointed. Just as they entered the sound and were within a few miles of the ocean, the wind died down, and a heavy fog settled over the water, obscuring the land and leaving them drifting aimlessly with the tide on an unknown sea.

To make the situation even more interesting, the compass had been removed from its repository and could not be found. Some miscreant had in all probability stolen it.

The wind now, was all that they could depend upon to keep them on their course, and if that should die out entirely, or change they would certainly be in desperate circumstances. For twenty-four hours things remained unchanged. Just enough air was stirring, the smuggler thought, to barely stem the flood tide, and they could count on about three miles an hour when the current ebbed. That they were gradually approaching the ocean, they felt convinced, as the swells grew higher and longer as the hours passed. At one time they thought they could distinguish the sound of the surf beating upon a rocky shore, and they spent several

hours sounding the water in the hopes of finding an anchorage, but "no bottom" was invariably the result of each throw of the deep-sea line. At about midnight of the second day of the fog, the wind began to freshen up, and in the course of couple hours to come in strong gusts accompanied by a pelting rain.

The mist and fog disappeared as if by magic, but the sailors realized that their condition was in nowise bettered. A storm was upon them, and they had not the remotest idea where they were or the direction in which the vessel was heading. They must wait until morning before they could get their bearing. In the meantime nothing could be done but make all preparations for weathering the storm. The mainsail and staysail were furled and firmly secured, while the jib and foresail were doubly reefed. The hatches were closed and the decks cleared of everything that was apt to be washed away in the event that the vessel was boarded by heavy seas.

It came. The Mermaid bent before the first blast of the gale till her starboard rail dipped several feet beneath the water, at the same time a great sea broke over the stern completely submerging the vessel, and nearly drowning the seamen. As soon as he partially recover-

ed from the shock, Paul luffed the helm, intending to keep as close to the wind as possible. But he had not calculated the fury of the storm. Another blast hurled the craft in the trough of the sea, and another great wave buried her ten feet below the surface. It was impossible to face it, so the helm was put about, the foresheet slacked off, and the little vessel flew before the shrieking tempest like some terror-stricken animal.

All night the Mermaid ploughed on through the foaming water, her mast bent nearly double before the fierce gale. Day light came at last, disclosing the fact to the weary, disheartened sailors that they had passed out of sight of land. As the sun rose and dispelled the mists and clouds, they knew that they were headed almost due west, and they calculated that they must be fully a hundred miles from the British Columbia coast.

In the few hours of the morning the storm lulled somewhat, and the sailors pulled up closer to the wind in hopes of again finding their course by running in a northeasterly direction. But as the day wore on the wind again began to rise, and before evening the gale was even worse than on the preceeding night. Though every effort was made to keep the schooner head-on the sea and to make some way toward land, yet the sailors

knew that their efforts were almost futile. The storm-driven vessel was surely being carried along by the gale far away from land.

For hours the brothers, exhausted, drenched and chilled to the bone, crouched down beside the wheel and waited for what seemed inevitable death.

A report like the discharge of a cannon startled them from their semi-comatose condition. The schooner reeled as if from a shock, and the smugglers thought the supreme moment had come. But the Mermaid suddenly broached to windward, refusing to answer her helm and lay helplessly rolling in the trough of the sea. The sails had blown away and she was indeed a wreck.

The sea now began to break over the doomed craft with every billow, but she was too heavily ballasted to upset, and her decks too strong to be crushed by the force of the water. Now that the helm was of no use, it was abandoned, and the sailors crawled over the deck to a better sheltered position on the windward side of the craft and lashed themselves to the rail. In this position they lay, regardless of the passage of time until daybreak.

As soon as it was fairly light, Paul dragged himself into an upright position, and took a view of the scene

about him. His heart fairly bounded with joy. Right before him, scarcely three miles to leeward, lay a long stretch of land, extending as far to the north and south as the eye could reach. His exultation, however, did not last but a moment. A closer examination of the coast disclosed a new and even greater danger than had as yet been experienced.

The shore line of the land rose perpendicularly in a rocky cliff of several hundred feet high, while thousands of huge boulders poked their ugly heads above the surface of the sea, threatening instant death to any craft attempting to invade their territory.

Nearer and nearer the storm swept them toward the rocks, and more awful the scene appeared. They never in the world could reach the shore alive. It was simply impossible for the wreck to drift through those grim sentinels, and in that storm. Inevitable death stared the brothers hard in the face.

A loud crash, the vessel seemed to give a spasmodic leap upward, alighting on her beam ends; then followed a series of short, hard bumps, accompanied by a rasping, grating sensation, lasting half a minutes, and the craft became completely submerged in the water. She had struck on a hidden reef, but the heavy sea had

swept her clear over it. When she again rose to the surface, Paul saw that the foremast had been carried away, and his brother had gone with it.

All hope died out of him, as well as all fear. He could feel the vessel filling and sinking beneath him. His hopelessness seemed to inspire him. Despite the numbness and exhaustion from hunger and cold, the bruises and soreness of forty hours constant battering about the deck, he now sprang proudly to his feet. Supporting himself by twisting an arm through the ratlines of a shroud, he stood defiantly awaiting the end. He never felt better in his life than at that moment. Free from care, indifferent to everything, he looked out upon the horrible scene with the exultation of a victor.

Scarcely four hundred feet away was the cliff-like shore, but the vessel was being driven along it in an oblique direction. Two hundred feet ahead of him lay an immense rock, covered with long, jagged, pointed spires, which were being alternately buried and then exposed by the waves as they dashed against the cliff and rebounded back again. In five minutes more the schooner will be upon that rock; in five and one-half minutes, she and her master will have entered the great domain of the Past.

A shout attracted Paul's attention, and glancing to the shore, almost directly overhead, he saw the cliff lined with human beings, some of whom were carrying a huge kayak upon their shoulders and all were hurrying toward a ravine some distance ahead of them, and which led down in a gradual slope to the sea. He saw that the people were savages by their grotesque dress and strangely tattooed faces, and that they were being led by an European, who was much taller, and of larger pro portions than the Indians. The white man appeared to be urging the canoe bearers to make haste, as they rushed like a troup of strange animals down to the water.

Hamilton understood that an attempt was to be made to rescue him, but he had no faith that the effort would meet with success. The moment the schooner struck the rock, nothing could save him; and besides he did not believe the canoe could live five seconds in the sea, even should they succeed in launching it.

He saw the leader place himself in the canoe, and his savage attendants push him as far out from the shore as possible. The next instant the boat rose up end-ways upon a great wave and was hurled back bottom upward on the shore. Strong arms righted her again, then fol-

lowed a few words of sharp command, and again she shot into the sea, A few strokes of the paddle brought the canoe and its bold occupant almost under the stern of the now nearly drowned schooner. "Catch that line," shouted the canoist, swinging a plummet attached to a rope over the side of the wreck. "Now jump."

Paul instinctively obeyed the commands, quickly wrapping the line around his waist, he sprang out into the sea as far as he could.

He had barely reached the water when his ears were filled with the sound of crashing timbers as the schooner struck; and at the same instant he saw the kayak rise on the crest of a wave and then turn clear over. He had just time enough to see that the over-turned boat was secured by a line reaching to the shore and into the hands of the Indians, when a hard jerk tightened the rope around his chest and he felt himself drawn rapidly through the water. First on the surface and then beneath it, rolling and tumbling in the surf, until he was finally caught by a great wave and hurled senseless on the beach.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Upon coming to his senses, fourteen hours after the events in which the preceeding chapter closed, Hamilton found himself in a small log hut, lying in a seal skin dressed bed. Near him, before a blazing fire-place of stone and clay construction, sat the large individual who had dragged him ashore from the wreck. He seemed to be busy with his own thoughts as he gazed steadily in the fire. Paul aroused him from his preoccupation by an attempt to speak.

"Well, Mr. Hamilton," the man said in a strong, hearty voice, rising and approaching the bed; "how do you feel?"

Hamilton examined the other's features as closely as

the light from the fire-place would permit. It was the man whom he had so cruelly wronged, Jonathan Mather.

"Pretty weak and sore, Mr. Mather," he managed to articulate, after making several ineffectual efforts. "But I'll be all right again in time."

"Just keep quiet," Mather said, "and I will bring you something to eat and drink. I suppose you feel a little hungry and thirsty by this time," he added with dry humor.

Without waiting for a reply, he left the cabin, returning half an hour later with a large bowl of soup, made from wild fowl, and a cup of tea.

The food greatly refreshed the storm-tossed man, and after partaking, he began to question his entertainer as to his whereabouts, the nature of the inhabitant of the country to which fate had brought him, the particulars of the wreck, and if the sea had yet thrown up the body of his brother, Billy. Beyond telling him he was on one of the smaller of the Queen Charlotte Islands; that the natives were savages of the Hiadas tribe; and that the body of poor Billy had been recovered and buried, he refused to answer his questions or permit him to talk.

As time passed the patient grew stronger, and before

a week had passed, the bruises had been healed, and the swellings so reduced that he was able to hobble around a little on crutches. By the time he arrived at this stage of recovery, however, he and Mather had exchanged confidences in all matters of mutual interest.

Mather explained that after he had been forced to abandon his attempt to vindicate himself, he had come to the island, and lived there ever since. During his ethnological studies while in Kuhnville, he had met a a chief of the Hiadas Indians, and a strong friendship had been established between them. The Indian was a sealer, the owner of a sealing schooner, and after the the disgrace which had befallen the schoolmaster, he had no difficulty in persuading his friend to accompany him to the Queen Charlotte Islands, and engage in sealing and whale fishing.

Mather had found his new occupation not only well suited to his present condition of mind, but highly profitable. His share of the dividends derived from the sale of oil and skins already exceeded two thousands dollars and the sealing season was not yet over. He intended some day to return to the United States, but he felt no inclination to do so at present, perhaps not for years hence.

In return Paul told him the whole of his career in Kuhnville, including a confession of his complicity in the great newspaper conspiracy, which had so cruelly blasted the schoolmaster's reputation and future prospects. For fully an hour after this disclosure the two men sat without speaking, each buried in thought. The schoolmaster broke the silence.

"So, you did that?" he said, referring to the Laporte-plagiarist conspiracy.

"Yes," the other answered. "I did it."

Another long silence followed this exchange of words, which Mather again interrupted.

"What prompted you to tell me of the matter now," he asked, "a spirit of repentance?"

These two men represented in themselves one of the most important transition in the evolution of the Anglo-Saxon mind. Mather belonged to the single-minded class of individuals, and was a representative of the most highly cultivated product of that type. Instinctively he was perfectly honorable, and whenever temptation or the sophistries of reason led him into committing an act of duplicity, it was done in violation of his nature. He understood wrong-doing as something unnatural, as a manifestation of inherent weakness or depravity, and he

had very little sympathy with wrong-doers.

Hamilton was a multi-minded person. His inheritance was of a more extended character than that of his companion. He was of a superior organization, but a much poorer specimen of his kind than Mather. His capabilities were greater than those of the schoolmaster, but his development as an individual was less perfect. It was just as easy and natural for him to transgress social and civil law as to observe it so far as his conscience was concerned. Yet, on the whole, the good in him predominated. He fully appreciated his lack of development, and always intended some day to give his attention to the cultivation of character.

"No," he returned to Mather's question. "I don't think my action can be attributed to any such motive. I don't feel repentant according to the general acceptation of the meaning of that term. You took the chances of what seemed to be certain death to save my life. I have enough honor in my composition to make something of an approach to an appreciation of your self-sacrificing conduct. I owe you a debt of justice. I can make you a partial payment of that debt, but it is only from a feeling of self gratification that I do so. Since lying here I have thought the matter over carefully, and

have considered all the consequences that my confession would entail, humiliation, loss of friends, disgrace, but I also analyzed the probable effect that it would have upon my self-respect to remain quiet. I concluded that I could not afford to leave the matter unadjusted."

"It seems to me," Mather observed, "that if you will voluntarily invite the humiliation and disgrace that such an exposure will surely cause, there must be something uncommonly heroic in your nature—something worth saving. Now that you have made a beginning in the right direction, why could you not entirely abandon your life of trickery and deceit, and occupy yourself in something more compatible with human dignity and intellectual pride. I am hopeful that you will reform your habits of thought and manner of life."

"Yes," Paul responded; "I see how necessary it is that I should live in a way that would be conducive to the cultivation of an earnest idea of life. But I am not an heroic person. It is you who is the exceptional character. I am only an average individual. Moral integrity is by no means a component of intellect. It belongs rather to the domain of character. It is not an uncommon thing for a person to possess an almost God-like

intellect and prostitute it for the accomplishment of the most devilish purposes. I have intellect enough, but my moral nature is inherently weak. During all the years of my aimless, idle existence, I have carried with me the consciousness that the whole superstructure of my life was built upon false plans. The foundation was wrongly laid, and each succeeding story was poorly constructed, flimsy and ever on the point of collapse. I knew this, yet I did not have the strength of character to level the whole thing to the earth and rebuild The processes of my intellect kept the weaknesses of my moral nature constantly before me, yet I did not fully realize my condition until in the last ten days. Those three long days and nights of suffering, the cold, hunger, exhaustion, those great rolling waves, and constant dread of death, and—then my brother—"

"Yes, yes," hastily interrupted Mather. "A truly awful experience, but it may have been all for the best. There certainly ought to be some good result from it.

For several hours the two men did not again speak. They sat looking into the fire while the night wore on.

"You say you wish to do me the justice of straightening that newspaper matter up?" Mather said at last.

"Yes," Hamilton replied.

"How do you propose to do it?"

"Make a written confession of the whole miserable affair, and have it printed in the newspapers of Kuhnville and Salem, and send a certified copy to the *Present Age*."

"Could you not think of a plan that would vindicate me and still be less severe on you?"

"No. No more scheming for me. I mean straight business now."

"When do you think of doing this?"

"The moment I can get back to Kuhnville. The sooner the better it would suit me."

Mather arose from his seat and left the shack. In a half hour he again returned.

"Hamilton," he said, "we can leave here at seven o'clock tomorrow morning for Puget Sound. I have given orders that the sails should be bent to our sealing schooner and all other preparations made for the trip."

"All right then. We'll go."

A week after this conversation the Hiadas sealing vessel dropped anchor in Kuhnville Bay. Paul Hamilton and Jonathan Mather went ashore together. After a visit to the office of a notary public they shook hands and separated. Hamilton went to his boarding-house

home and Mather went to the home of Gertrude Allen.

He found Gertrude at home, and he found her more human than he had ever before known her, and much more so than he had ever expected to find her.

Without waiting for an explanation or to see Hamilton's written confession, which lay in her lover's pocket, she twined two beautiful arms around his neck and bade him welcome to her home and his—his just as soon as he could make the necessary arrangements to claim his own.

Several days later the happy couple learned that Paul Hamllton and Ida Huntington had been quietly married and had gone East.

"Yes," said Mr. Hallam to his partner Mr. Wilton, while discussing Mr. Hamilton; "in some respects he certainly is a daisy."

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