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The Translation of a Savage

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Mrs. Armour took both the girl's hands in hers.

THE TRANSLATION OF A SAVAGE

by

Sir Gilbert Parker

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THE TRANSLATION OF A SAVAGE.

CHAPTER I

HIS GREAT MISTAKE

IT appeared that Armour had made the great mistake of his life. When people came to know they said that to have done it when sober had shown him possessed of a kind of maliciousness and cynicism almost paid malice but to do it when tipsy proved him merely weak and foolish. But the fact is he was less tipsy at the time than was imagined and he could have answered to more malice and cynicism than was credited to him. To those who know the world it is not singular that of the two Armour was thought to have made the mistake and had the misfortune, or that people wasted their pity and

their scorn upon him alone Apparently they did not see that the woman was to be pitied. He had married her, and she was only an Indian girl from Fort Charles of the Hudsons Bay Company with a little honest white blood in her veins Nobody not even her own people felt that she had anything at stake or was in danger of unhappiness or was other than a person who had ludicrously come to bear the name of Mrs Francis Armour If any one had said in justification that she loved the man the answer would have been that plenty of Indian women had loved white men but had not married them and yet the population of half breeds went on increasing.

Frank Armour had been a popular man in London His club might be found in the vicinity of Pall Mall his father's name was high and honourable in the Army List one of his brothers had served with Wolseley in Africa, and Frank himself having no profession but with a taste for business and investment, had gone to Canada with some such intention as Lord Selkirk's in the early part of the century

He owned large shares in the Hudsons Bay Company and when he travelled through the North West country prospecting he was received most hospitably Of an inquiring and gregarious nature he went as much among the half breeds—or metis as they are called—and Indians as among the officers of the Hudsons Bay Company and the white settlers He had ever been credited with having a philosophical turn of mind and this was accompanied by a certain strain of impulsiveness in daring He had had been accustomed all his life to make up his mind quickly and because he was well enough off to bear the consequences of momentary rashness in commercial investments he was not counted among the transgressors He had his own fortune he was not drawing upon a common purse It was a different matter when he trafficked rashly in the family name so far as to marry the daughter of Eyes of the Moon the Indian chief

He was literally happy when he went to the Hudsons Bay country for Miss Julia Sherwood was his promised wife and she at poor was

notably beautiful and of good family His people had not looked quite kindly on this engagement they had indeed tried in many ways to prevent it partly because of Miss Sherwood's poverty and also because they knew that Lady Agnes Martling had long cared for him and was most happily endowed with wealth and good looks also When he left for Canada they were inwardly glad (they imagined that something might occur to end the engagement)—all except Richard the wiseacre of the family the book man the drone who preferred living at Greyhope their Hertfordshire home the year through to spending half the time in Cavendish Square Richard was very fond of Frank admiring him immensely for his buxom strength and cleverness and not a little too for that very rashness which had brought him such havoc at last

Richard was not as Frank used to say perfectly sound on his pins —that is he was slightly lame—but he was right at heart He was an immense reader but made little use of what he read He had an abundant humour,

and remembered every anecdote he ever heard He was kind to the poor wal' d much talked to himself as he walk l and was known by the humble sort as a centric But he had a wise head and he foresaw danger to Frank s happi ness wher he went aw y While others had gossiped and mar vel and were busily idle he had w tch l th gs He saw that Frank was dear to Juli n m proportion to the distance between h n and youn Lord Haldwell whose father had don e someth g remarkable in guns or torpedoes a d wa rewarded w th a lordship and an uncon nly lar e fortune He also saw that after Frank l ft th distance between Lord Haldwell and Jul a b came distinctly less —they were both staying at Grevhope Julia Sherwood was a remarkably clever gnl Though he felt it his duty to speak t her for his brother —a liffic lt an l d licate matter—he thought it would com e l tter from his mother

But when he took action it was too late Miss Sherwood naively declared th t she had not known her own heart and that she did not care for Frank any more She wept a little

and was soothed by motherly Mrs Armour who was inwardly glad though she knew the matter would cause Frank pain and even General Armour could not help showing slight satisfaction though he was innocent of any deliberate action to separate the two Straight way Miss Sherwood dispatched a letter to the wilds of Canada and for a week was an unengaged young person But she was in doubt consolled by the fact that for some time past she had had complete control of Lord Haldwells emotions At the end of the week her perceptions were justified by Lord Haldwells proposal which with admirable tact and obvious demureness was accepted

Now Frank Armour was wandering much in the wilds so that his letters and papers went careering about after him and some that came first were last to reach him That was how he received a newspaper announcing the marriage of Lord Haldwell and Julia Sherwood at the same time that her letter written in estimable English and with admirable feeling came, begging for a release from their engage

ment, and towards its close assuming with a charming regret that all was over and that the last word had been said between them

Armour was sitting in the trader's room at Fort Charles when the carrier came with the mails. He had had some successful days hunting buffalo with Eye of the Moon and a little band of metis had had a long *pow wow* in Eye of the Moon's lodge had chatted gaily with Lah the daughter and was now prepared to enjoy heartily the arrears of correspondence and news before him He ran his hand through the letters and papers intending to classify them immediately according to such handwriting as he recognized and the dates on the envelopes But as he did so he saw a newspaper from which the wrapper was partly torn He also saw a note in the margin directing him to a certain page The note was in Richard's handwriting He opened the paper at the page indicated and saw the account of the marriage! His teeth clinched on his cigar his face turned white the paper fell from his fingers He gasped his hands spread out nervously then caught

the table and held it as though to steady him self

The trader rose You are ill he said Have you bad n ws? He glanced towards the paper

Slowly Armour folde l the paper up and then rose unsteadily Lord n he said give me a glass of brandy

He turned towards the cupboard in the room The trader opene l it took out a bottle an l put it on the table beside Armour togeth r with a glass an l som water Armour poured out a stiff draught added a very little water and drank it He drew a great sigh and stood looking at the paper

Is there anything I can do for you Mr Armour? urged the trader

Nothing thank you nothing at all Just leave the brandy here will you? I f el knocked about and I have to go through the rest of these letters

He ran his fingers through the pile turning it over hastily as if searching for someth ng The trader understood He was a cool headed Scots

man he knew that there were some things best not inquired into and that men must have their bad hours alon He glanced at the brandy debatingly but presently turned and left the room in silence In his own mind however he wished he might have taken the brandy without being discourteous Armour had discovered Mrs Sherwoods letter Before he opened it he took a little more brandy Then he sat down and read it deliberately The liquor had steadied him The fingers of one hand even drummed on the table But the face was drawn the eyes were hard and the look of him was altogether puzzled After he had finished this he looked at the others from the same hand He found Then he picked out those from his mother and father He read them grimly Once he paused as he read his mothers letter and took a gulp of plain brandy There was something very like a sneer on his face when he finished reading He read the hollowness of the sympathy extended to him he understood the far from adroit references to Lady Ann s Marling He was very bitter

He opened no more letters but took up the *Morning Post* again and read it slowly through The look of his face was not pleasant There was a small looking glass opposite him He caught sight of himself in it He drew his hand across his eyes and forehead as though he was in a miserable dream He looked again, he could not recognize himself

He then bundled the letters and papers into his dispatch box His attention was drawn to one letter He picked it up It was from Richard He started to break the seal but paused The tragedy of the event was too much for him He determined not to read it then to wait until he had recovered himself He laughed now painfully It had been better for him—it had maybe averted what people were used to term his tragedy—had he read his brothers letter at that moment For Richard Armour was a sensible man notwithstanding his peculiarities and perhaps the most sensible words he ever wrote were in that letter thrust unceremoniously into Frank Armour's pocket

Armour had received a terrible blow He

read his life backwards He had no future The liquor he had drunk had not fevered him it had not wildly excited him, it merely drew him up to a point where he could put a sudden impulse into practice without flinching He was bitter against his people he credited them with more interference than was actual He felt that happiness had gone out of his life and left him hopeless As we said he was a man of quick decisions He would have made a dashing but reckless soldier He was not without the elements of the gamester It is possible that there was in him also a strain of cruelty undeveloped but natural If so far had evolved the best in him he had been cheerful and candid Now he travelled back into new avenues of his mind and found strange abnormal passions fully adapted to the present situation Vulgar anger and reproaches were not after his nature He suddenly found sources of refined but despotic retribution He knew upon them He would do something to humiliate his people and the girl who had spoiled his life Some one thing It should be absolute and

lasting it should show how low had fallen his opinion of women of whom Julia Sherwood had once been chiefest to him In that he would show his scorn of her He would bring down the pride of his family who he believed had helped out of mere selfishness to tumble his happiness into the shambles

He was older by years than an hour ago But he was not without the faculty of humour— that was why he had not become very excited it was also why he determined upon a comedy which should have all the elements of tragedy Perhaps however he would have hesitated to carry his purposes to immediate conclusions were it not that the very gods seemed to play his game with him For while he stood there looking out into the yard of the Fort a Protestant missionary passed the window The Protestant missionary as he is found at such places as Fort Charles is not a strictly superior person A Jesuit might have been of advantage to Frank Armour at that moment The Protestant missionary is not above comfortable assurances of gold So that when Armour summoned this

one in and told him what was required of him and slipped a generous gift of the Queen's coin into his hand he smiled vaguely and was willing to do what he was bidden Had he been a Jesuit who is sworn to poverty and more often than not a man of birth and education he might have influenced Frank Armour and prevented the notable mishap and scandal As it was Armour took more brandy

Then he went down to Fly of the Moons lodge A few hours afterwards the missionary met him there The next morning Lah the daughter of Fye of the Moon and the chief taness of a portion of her fathers tribe whose grandfather had been a white man was introduced to the Hudsons Bay country as Mrs Frank Armour But that was not all Indeed as it stood it was very little He had only made his comedy possible as yet now the play itself was to come He had carried his scheme through boldly so far He would not flinch in carrying it out to the last letter He brought his wife down to the Great Lakes immediately scarcely resting night or day

There he engaged an ordinary but reliable woman, to whom he gave instructions, and sent the pair to the coast He instructed his solicitor at Montreal to procure passages for Mrs Frances Armour and maid for Liverpool Then by letters he instructed his solicitor in London to meet Mrs Frances Armour and maid at Liverpool and take them to Greyhope in Hertfordshire—that is if General Armour and Mrs Armour or some representative of the family did not meet them when they landed from the steamship

Presently he sat down and wrote to his father and mother and asked them to meet his wife and his maid when they arrived by the steamer *Atlantic* He did not explain to them in precise detail his feelings on Miss Julia Sherwood's marriage, nor did he go into full particulars as to the personality of Mrs Frank Armour but he did say that because he knew they were anxious that he should marry acceptably he had married into the aristocracy the oldest aristocracy of America and because he also knew they wished him to

marry wealth he sent them a wife rich in virtues—native, unspoiled virtues He hoped that they would take her to their hearts and cherish her He knew their firm principles of honour and that he could trust them to be kind to his wife until he returned to share the affection which he was sure would be given to her It was not his intention to return to England for some time yet He had work to do in connection with his proposed colony and a wife — a native wife —could not well be a companion in the circumstance Besides Tahiti his wife's name was Tahi —would be better occupied in learning the customs of the life in which her future would be cast It was possible that she would find herself an apt pupil Of this they could not complain that she was untravelled for she had still to learn the back half across the continent Lily could not cavil at her education for she knew several languages all regional languages of the North She had merely to learn the dialect of English society and how to carry with acceptable form the costumes of the race to which she was going

Her own costume was picturesque but it might appear unusual in London society Still they could use their own judgment about that

Then when she was gone beyond recall he chanced one day to put on the coat he wore when the letters and papers declaring his misfortune came to him He found his brother's letter he opened it and read it It was the letter of a man who knew how to appreciate at their proper value the misfortunes as the fortunes of life While Frank Armour read he came to feel for the first time that his brother Richard had suffered maybe from some such misery as had come to him through Julia Sherwood It was a dispassionate manly letter relieved by a gentle wit and humour with careful kindness that a sudden blow was better for a man than a lifelong thorn in his side Of Julia Sherwood he had nothing particularly bitter to say He delicately suggested that she had acted according to her nature and that in the seesaw of life Frank had had a sore blow, but this was to be borne The letter did not say too much it did not magnify the difficulty,

it did not depreciate it It did not even directly counsel, it was wholesomely tenderly judicial Indirectly it dwelt upon the steadiness and manliness of Lunk's character directly lightly and without rhetoric it enlarged upon their own comradeship It ran over pleasantly the days of their boyhood when they were hardly ever separated It recalled instinct yet with no obvious purpose how good were friendship and confidence—which might be the most unselfish thing in the world—between two men With the letter before him Paul Amoun saw his act in a new light

As we said it is possible if he had acted on the day when his trouble came to him he had not married Tahra sent her to England on this to him—my lunatic passion of revenge It is possible also that then on to him the first vague conception of the wrong he had done this Indian girl who undoubtedly married him because she could for him after her heathen fashion while he had married her for nothing that was commendable not even for passion which may be pardoned nor for vanity which

has its virtues He had had his hour with circumstance circumstance would have its hour with him in due course Yet there was no extraordinary revulsion He was still angry cynical and very sore He would see the play out with a consistent firmness He almost managed a smile when a letter was handed to him some weeks later bearing his solicitors assurance that Mrs Frank Armour and her maid had been safely bestowed on the *Aphrodite* for England This was the first act in his tragic comedy

CHAPTER II

A DIFFICULT SITUATION

When Mrs Frank Armour arrived at Montreal she still wore her Indian costume of clean well brodered buckskin moccasins and leggings, all surmounted by a blanket It was not a distinguished costume but it seemed suitable to its wearer Mr Armour's agent was in a quandary He had received no instructions regarding her dress He felt of course that as Mrs Frank Armour she should put off these garments and dress so far as was possible in accordance with her new position But when he spoke about it to Mackenzie the elderly maid and companion he found that Mr Armour had said that his wife was to arrive in England dressed as she was He saw something ulterior in the matter but it was not his province to interfere And

so Mrs Frank Armour was a passenger by the *Aphrodite* in her buckskin garments

What she thought of it all is not quite easy to say It is possible that at first she only considered that she was the wife of a white man—a thing to be desired and that the man she loved was hers forever—a matter of unmitigated joy to her That he was sending her to England did not fret her because it was his will and he knew what was best Busy with her contented and yet somewhat dazed thoughts of him—she was too happy to be very active mentally even if it had been the characteristic of her race—she was not at first aware how much notice she excited and how strange a figure she was in this staring city When it did dawn upon her she shrank a little but still was placid preferring to sit with her hands folded in her lap idly watching things She appeared oblivious that she was the wife of a man of family and rank she was only thinking that the man was hers—all hers He had treated her kindly enough in the days they were together but she had not been a great deal with him because they

travelled fast and his duties were many or he made them so—but the latter possibility did not occur to her

When he had hastily bidden her farewell at Port Arthur he had kissed her and said Good bye my wife She was not yet acute enough in the inflections of Saxon speech to catch the satire—almost involuntary—in the last two words She remembered the words however and the kiss and she was quit satisfied To what she was going she did not speculate He was sending her that was enough

Th woman given to her as maid had been well chosen Armour had don this carefully She was Scotch was reserved had a certain amount of shrewdness would obey instructions and do her duty carefully What she thought about the whole matter sh kept to herself even the solicitor at Montreal could not find out She had her instructions clear in her mind she was determined to carry them out to the letter for which she was already well paid and was like to be better paid because Armour had arranged but she should continue to be

with his wife after they got to England She understood well the language of Lal s tribe and because Lal s English was limited she would be indispensable in England

Mackenzie therefore had responsibility and if she was not elated over it she still knew the importance of her position and had enough practical vanity to make her an efficient servant and companion She already felt that she had got her position in life from which she was to go out no more for ever She had been brought up in the shadow of Alnwick Castle and she knew what was due to her charge by other people herself only should have liberty with her She was taking Lal to the home of General Armour and that must be kept constantly before her mind Therefore from the day they set foot on the *Lily Lee* she kept her place beside Mrs Armour sitting with her —they walked very little and scarcely ever speaking either to her or to the curious passengers Presently the passengers became more inquisitive and made many attempts at being friendly but these received little encourage-

ment It had become known who the Indian gul was and many wild tales went about as to her marriage with Francis Armour Now it was maintained she had saved his life at an outbreak of her tribe again that she had found him dying in the woods and had nursed him back to life and health yet again that she was a chieftainess a successful claimant against the Hudsons Bay Company and so on

There were several in bond who knew the Armours well by name and two who knew them personally One was Mr Edward Lambert a barrister of the Middle Temple and the other was Mrs Townley a widow a member of a well known Hertfordshire family who on a pleasant journey in Scotland had met and married a wealthy young American and had been left alone in the world by no means portionless eighteen months before Lambert knew Richard Armour well and when from Francis Armours solicitor with whom he was acquainted he heard just before they started who the Indian girl was he was greatly shocked and sorry He guessed at once the motive the madness of

this marriage But he kept his information and his opinions mostly to himself except in so fa as it seeme l only due to friendship to contradict the numberless idle stories going about After the first day it s a he came to know Mrs Townley and when h discovered that they had many common friends a l that she knew the Armours he spoke a little a re fu ely to her reading th Indian wif and told her what he l hev l was the cause of th marriage

Mrs Townl y was a w man—a gul of un common gentl ness of disposition and in spite f her trubl s inclin d t view life with a sunny eye Sh hal known of Frank Armours engag m nt with Miss Julia Sherwood but she had nev r heard th sequ l If this was the sequel—well it had to h fo l But she was almost tremulous with sympathy wh n she remembered Mrs Arm ur and Franks gay fashionable sister Manon and contemplated the arrival of this Indian gul at Greyhope She had always liked Franl Arm ur but this made her angry with him for n second thoughts she was not more sorry for him and for his

people than for Lah the wife She had the true instinct of womanhood and she supposed that a heathen like this could have feelings to be hurt and a life to be wounded as herself or another At least she saw what was possible in the future when this Indian girl came to understand her position —only to be accomplished by contact with the new life so different from her past I think Miss Lambert decided that she was very fine looking notwithstanding her costume She was slim and well built with modest bust and shapely feet and ankles Her eyes were full of meditation and intelligence her features distinguished She was a goodly product of her race being descended from a line of chiefs and chieftainesses broken only in the case of her grandfather as has been mentioned Her hands (the two kindly apostles tended) were almost her best point They were perfectly made slim yet plump the fingers tapering the wrist supple Miss Fowler then and there decided that the girl had possibilities But here she was an Indian with few signs of civilization or of that breeding which seems to

white people the only breeding fit for earth or heaven

Mrs Townley did not need Lambert's suggestion that she should try to approach the girl make friends with her and prepare her in some slight degree for the strange career before her

Mrs Townley had an infinite amount of tact She knew it was best to approach the attendant first Thus she did and to the surprise of other lady passengers received a rebuff Her advance was not however rapid Mackenzie had had her instructions When she found that Mrs Townley knew Francis Armour and his people she thawed a little more and then very hesitatingly she introduced her to the Indian wife Mrs Townley smiled her best—and there were many who knew how attractive she could be at such a moment There was a slight pause in which Lalla looked at her meditatively earnestly and then those beautiful wild fingers glided out and caught her hand and held it, but she spoke no word She only looked inquiringly seriously at her new found friend and

presently dropped the blanket away from her and sat up firmly as though she felt she was not altogether an alien now and had a right to hold herself proudly among white people as she did in her own country and with her own tribe who had greatly admired her Certainly Mrs Lowndes could find no fault with the woman as an Indian She had taste combed her clothes well and was superbly fresh in appearance though her hair still bore very slight traces of the grease which even the most aristocratic Indians use

Put Lah would not tell Mrs Lowndes was anxious that the girl should be dressed in European costume and offered to lend and rearrange dresses for her but she came in collision with Mr Ames's instructions So she had to assume a merely kind and comforting attitude She did not the slightest idea where she was going and even when Mackenzie at Mrs Lowndes's oft repeated request, explained very briefly and unpicturesquely she only looked incredulous or unconcerned Yet the ship its curious passengers

the dining saloon the music the sea and all had given her suggestions of what was to come They had expected that at table she would be awkward and ignorant to a degree But she had at times sat at the traders table at Fort Charles and had learned how to use a knife and fork She had also been a favourite with the traders wife who had taught her very many civilized things Her English though far from abundant was good Those there for who were curious and understanding to state that were pleasingly disappointed to find that she was like any Christian woman

How long would the Arnolds will leave her said Innocent to Mr Lowndes of whose judgment in short a question he had come to entertain a high opinion

Mrs Lowndes had a pretty way of putting her head to one side and speaking very piquantly She had had it as a girl she had not lost it as a woman any more than she had lost a soft little spontaneous laugh which was one of her unusual charms—for few women can laugh audibly with effect She laughed

very softly now and her sense of humour supervening for the moment she said —

Really you have asked me a conundrum I fancy I see Mrs Armours face when she gets the news—at the breakfast table of course—and gives a little shriek and says General O General But it is all very shocking you know she did look an angel Still I think they will receive her and do the best they can for her because worse there she is married and settled So here's to Armour name and as likely to make them all very unhappy and if I determines to retaliate upon them I am my angel

Yes But how to act that Mrs Townley Lambert had a strong stomach

Well for instance suppose they sent her away into seclusion with Hanks consent another serious question—and she should take the notion to fly her retirement and appear inopportunely at some social function clothed as she is now I fancy her blanket would be a wet one in such a case if you will pardon the little joke

Lambert sighed Poor Frank poor devil! he said almost beneath his breath

"And wherefore poor Frank? Do you think he or the Armours of Greyhope are the only ones at stake in this? What about this poor girl? Just think why he married her—if our suspicions are right—and then imagine her feelings when she wakes to the truth over there is some time she is sure do

Then Lambert began to see the matter in a different light and his sympathy for Frances Armour grew less as his pity for the girl increased In fact the day before they got to Liverpool he swore at Armour more than once and was anxious concerning the reception of the heathen wife by her white relatives

Had he been present at a certain scene at Greyhope a day or two before he would have been still more anxious It was the custom at breakfast for Mrs Armour to open her husbands letters and read them while he was engaged with his newspaper and hand to him afterwards those that were important This morning Marion noticed a letter from Frank

amongst the pile and without a word pounced upon it She was curious as any woman would be—to see how h took Miss Sherwood s action Her father was deep in his paper at the time Her m th r was reading other letters Marion r ad th *fir t* few lines with a f eling of almost painful w k d th w rds wer so curious cynical and cold

Richard sat opp site her H also was en aged with his p p r but chancing to glance up h saw that sh was becoming very pale and that th l tt r trembled in her fingers being a little short sighted l he was not near enough t see the handwriting H did not speak y t H watched Presently s en her grow m r excit d h touched h r f t under th tabl Sh looked up and caught his eye She gasped slightly She gave him a warning look and turned away from her m ther Then she w nt on r ading to th l tt r end Presently a little cry escaped her against her will At that h r moth r l ked up but she only saw her daughters back as sh rose hurriedly from the table saying that she w uld return in a

moment Mrs Armour however, had been startled She knew that Marion had been reading a letter and with a mothers instinct her thoughts were instantly on Frank She spoke quickly almost sharply —

Marion come here

Richard had risen He came round the table and as the girl obeyed her mother took the letter from her fingers and hastily glanced over it Mrs Armour came forward and took her daughters arm Marion she said there is something wrong—with Frank What is it?

General Armour was now looking up at them all curiously questioningly through his glasses his paper laid down his hands resting on the table

Marion could not answer She was sick with regret vexation and shame at the first flush death—for Frank—had been preferable to this She had a considerable ston of vanity she was not very philosophical Besides she was not married and what Captain Valall her devoted admirer and possible husband would think of this loathesh affaire was not a cheerful

thought to her She choked down a sob and waved her hand towards Richard to answer for her He was pale too but cool He understood the case instantly he made up his mind instantly also as to what ought to be—must be — done

Well mother he said it is about Frank But he is all right that is he is alive and well —in body But he has arranged a hateful little embarrassment for us—he is married

Married said his mother faintly Oh poor Lady Agnes

Marion sniffed a little viciously at this

Married? Married said his father Well what about it? eh? what about it?

The mother wrung her hands Oh I know it is something dreadful—dreadful He has married some horrible wild person or something

Richard unshakable as he was remained calm Well said he I don't know about her being horrible Frank is silent on that point, but she is wild enough— a wild Indian in fact

Indian? Indian? Good God i ıcd nggcı cried General Armour harshly starting to his feet

An Indian? a wild Indian? Mrs Armour whispered faintly as she dr pj d nto ı chn

And sh ll be her m two ı thr e dys fluttered Mar n hysterically

Meanwhil Richard had hastily pick l up the l es Sl is lu ' e t l lv ıter to morrow h sud l ll rately I nk s as l esiv s l s ı esh W ll ıt s ı n lanchely tıf f ı tıt

Wl at d v ı mean by tıt f ı tıt cried his fath ı ıı_nly

Oh I n ın that that we tıcd t hasten Juha s n anag —with th then f ll w ın l h s_wm_ is on m return ınd y u will ll agree th ıt it s ı pı tty j rnament n

Th old s ldı ı recovcıd himself ınd was l sıde his wif m an instant He t ok her hand D n t fı alent it wife he sa d it s an u_ly l usin ss l ut w must put up with it Ihc boy was out (f his head We are old now my dear but there was a time

when we should have resented such a thing as much as Frank—though not in the same fashion perhaps—not in the same fashion! He would man press his lips hard to keep down his emotion

"Oh how could he how could he said his mother We meant everything for the best

It is always dangerous business meddling with lovers that is a time-honoured law Lovers take themselves very seriously indeed and well here the thing is Now who will go and fetch her from Liverpool I should say that if they are any father and any mother ought to

Thus Richard took it for granted that they would receive Frank's Indian wife into their home He omitted that so far as he was concerned there should be no fault upon the question from the beginning

Never! She shall never come here said Marion with flashing eyes A common squaw with greasy hair and blankets and big mouth and black teeth who eats with her fingers and

grunts! If she does—if she is brought to Greyhope—I will never show my face in the world again Frank married the animal why does he ship her home to us? Why didn't he come with her? Why does he not take her to a home of his own? Why should he send her here to turn our house into a menagerie

Marion drew her skirt back as if the common squaw with her blankets and grease was at that moment near her

Well you see continued Richard that is just it As I said Frank arranged this little complication with a certain amount of malice no doubt he didn't come with her because he wished to test the family loyalty and hospitality but a postscript to this letter says that his solicitor has instructions to meet his wife at Liverpool and bring her on here in case we fail to show her proper courtesy

General Armitage here spoke He has carried the war of retaliation very far indeed but men do mad things when their blood is up as I have seen often That doesn't alter our clear duty in

the matter If the woman were bad or shame ful it would be a different thing If——

Marion interrupted She has ridden bare back across the continent like a jockey—like a common jockey—and she wears a blanket and she doesn't know a word of English and she will sit on the floor

Well said her father all these things are not sins and she must be taught better

Joseph how can you said Mrs Armour indignantly She cannot she shall not come here Think Marion Think of our position

She hid her troubled tear stained face behind her handkerchief At the same time she grasped her husbands hand She knew that he was right She honoured him in her heart for the position he had taken but she could not resist the natural impulse of a woman whose her taste and convention were shocked

The old man was very pale but there was no mistaking his determination He had been more indignant than any of them at first but he had an unusual sense of justice when he got face to face with it as Richard had here helped

him to do We do not know that the woman has done any wrong he said As for our name and position they —thank God —are where a mad mania cannot unseat them We have had much prosperity in the world my wife we have had neither death nor disgrace we— —

If this is not disgrace father what is Marion flashed out

He answered calmly My daughter it is a great misfortune —it will probably be a lifelong trial—but it is not necessarily disgrace

You never can tell about social loss by trying to Bill it said Richard Langham's father It is all pretty awful but I dare say we shall get some amusement out of it in the end

Richard said bitterly that is what hurts you most flippant and unfeeling

Indeed no there was his reply I never was more serious in my life When I spoke of amusement I meant only that eventually out of the thing that looks like tragedy and has a happy ending that is what I mean nothing more

You are always so very deep Richard remarked Marion ironically and cares very little how the rest of us feel about things You have no family pride If you had married a squaw we shouldn't have been surprised You could have camped in the grounds with your wild woman and never have been missed by the world she hastened to add for she saw a sudden pain in his face

He turned from them and walked slowly and limped out into the lines where he and Frank had played when boys He put his tongue up his unhandsome finger and caught away some moisture from his eyes He did not dare to let them see his face now that pride Marion had cut deeper than she knew and would carry the wound for many a day before it healed

But his sister felt instantly how cruel she had been as she saw him limp away and caught sight of the bowed shoulders and the prematurely gray hair His heart smote him She ran over and impulsively put her hands on his

shoulder O Dick! she said forgive me Dick I didn t mean it I was angry and foolish and hateful

He took one of her hands as it rested on his shoulder she standing partly behind him and raised it to his lips but he did not turn to her he could not

It is all right—all right he said it doesn t make any difference Let us think of Frank and what we have got to do Let us stand together Marion that is best

But her tears were dr pping on his shoulder as her forehead rested on her hand He knew now that whatever Frank s wife was she would not have an absolute enemy here for when Marion cried her heart was soft She was clay in the hands of the p tt r whom we call Mercy —more often a stranger to the hearts of women than of men At th other side of the room also the father and mother tearless now watched these two and the mother saw h r duty better and with less rebelliousness She h d felt it from the first but she could n t bring her mind to do it They held each others hands

in silence Presently General Armour said Richard your mother and I will go to Liverpool to meet our son's wife

Marion shuddered a little and her hands closed on Richard's shoulder but she said nothing

CHAPTER III

OUT OF THE NORTH

It was a beautiful day—a day which was so much in favour of Mrs Hamil Armour in relation to her husband's people. General Armour and his wife had come down from London by the latest train possible that their suspense at Inverness might be short. They said little to each other but when they did speak it was of things very different from the skeleton which they expected to put into the family cupboard presently. Each was trying to spare the other. It was very touching. They naturally looked upon the matter in its most unpromising light because an Indian was an Indian and this unknown savage from Fort Charles was in violent contrast to such desirable persons as Lady Agnes Martling. Not that the Armours were zealous

for mere money and title but the thing itself was altogether *propos* as Mrs Armour had more naively than correctly put it The General whose knowledge of character and the circumstances of life was considerable had worked out the thing with much accuracy He had declared at Richard on the night just talk up n the subject that Frank must have been anything but sober when he had it He had previously called it a policy of retaliation so that now he was very near the truth When they arrived at the lock at Inverpool the *Hyde* was just a blaze to the harbour

Edward said General Armour to himself as last pol was easier than this fighting I know all about Egyptians I know by Jews Greeks infidels and heretics But to take a savage to my arms and love for what her godfather and Admiral is never did is worse than the devils Once at Delhi

What Mrs Armour who was not quite so definite as her husband thought it would be hard to tell But probably grief for unforgiven tion at her son were uppermost in her mind

She had qute determined upon her course None could better carry that high neutral look of sccial superiority than she

Please Heaven she said to heiself no one should see that her equanimity was shaken They had brought one servant with them who had been gravely and yet conventionally in formed that his young master s wife an Indian chieftainess was expected There are few family troubles but find their way to servants hall with an uncomfortable speed, for whether or not stone walls have ears certainly men servants and mai l servants have ey s that serve for ears, and ears that do more than their bounden duty Boulter the footman knew his business When informed of the coming of Mrs Francis Armoun the Indian chieftainess his face was absolutely expressionless his Yessir was as me hanical as usual On the dock he was mu ble indif ferent When the passengers began to land he showed no excitement He was decorously alert When the crucial moment came he was imperturbabl Boulter was an excellent servant So said Edward Lambert to himself

after the event so likewise said Mrs Townley to herself when the thing was over, so declared General Armour many a time after and once very emphatically just before he raised Boulter's wages

As the boat neared Liverpool Lambert and Mrs Townley grew nervous The truth regarding the Indian wife had become known among the passengers and most were very curious some in a well bred fashion some intrusively vulgarly Mackenzie Lal's companion like Boulter was expressionless in face She had her duty to perform and performed it liberally and she would do it Lal might have had a more presentable and dignified attendant but not one more worthy It was remarkable that the captain of the ship and all the officers had been markedly courteous to Mrs Armstrong throughout the voyage but to their credit not ostentatiously so When the vessel was brought to anchor and the passengers were being put upon the tender the captain came and made his respectful adieus as though Lal were a lady of title in her own right and a girl named

to a man acting under the influence of brandy and malice General Armour and Mrs Armour were always grateful to Lambert and Mrs Townley for the part they played in this desperate little comedy They stood still and watchful as the passengers came ashore in by in They saw that they were the centre of unusual interest but General Armour was used to holding himself with some hauteur in little once in public and his wife was calm and somewhat disappointed those who probably expected the ill humour and his wit to be distressed Frank Armour's chest was also then but with good taste he held loof The two held all their courage however when they saw a big man blackthorn and blunderstep upon the lecturette accidentally a very clumsy austere and shabbily dressed Scotsman But immediately behind them were Edward Lambert and Mrs Townley and these with their simple tact naturalness and freedom from any sort of embarrassment acted as foils and relieved the situation

General Armour advanced hat in hand You

are my son's wife? he said courteously to this being in a blanket

She looked up and shook her head slightly for she did not quite understand but she recognized his likeness to her husband and presently she smiled up raisingly Mackenzie repeated to her what General Armour had said She nodded now a flash of pleasure lighting up her face and she shook out her beautiful hand to him The General took it and pressed it mechanically his lips twitching lightly He pressed it far harder than he meant for his feelings were at tension She winced slightly and involuntarily thrust out her other hand as if to relieve his pressure As she did so the blanket fell away from her head and shoulders Junket with excellent intuition caught it and threw it across his arm Then gaily and without embarrassment he and Mrs Inglewaite greeted General Armour who returned the greetings gravely but in a singular confidential tone which showed his gratitude Then he raised his hat again to Lali and said Come and let me introduce you —to your husband's mother

The falling back of that blanket had saved the situation for when the girl stood without it in her buckskin garments there was a dignity in her bearing which carried off the bizarre event There was timidity in her face and yet a kind of pride too though she was only a savage The case even at this critical moment did not seem quite hopeless When they came to Mrs Armour Lah shrank away timidly from the look in the mothers eyes and shivering slightly looked round for her blanket But Lambert had deftly passed it on to the fortune Presently Mrs Armour took both the girls hands in hers (perhaps she did it because the eyes of the public were on her but that is neither here nor there she did it) and kissed her on the cheek Then they moved away to a closed carriage

And that was the second act in Frank Armours comedy of errors

CHAPTER IV

IN THE NAME OF THE FAMILY

THE journey from Liverpool to Grevhope was passed in comparative silence The Armours had a compartment to themselves and they made the Indian girl as comfortable as possible without selfconsciousness or artificial politeness So far what they had done was a matter of duty not of will But they had done their duty naturally all three and it was natural to them now They had no personal feelings towards the girl one way or another as yet It was trying to them that people stared into the compartment at different stations It presently dawned upon General Armour that it might also be trying for the girl Neither he nor his wife had taken into account the possibility of the girl having feelings to be hurt

But he had noticed Lali shrink visibly and flush slightly when some one stared harder than usual and this troubled him It opened up a possibility He began indefinitely to see that they were not the only factors in the equation He was probably a little vexed that he had not seen it before for he wished to be a just man He was wont to quote with more or less austerity—chiefly the result of his professional life—this —

"For justice all place a temple and all season summer

And man of war as he was he had another saying which was much in his mouth and he lived up to it with considerable sincerity

"Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace
To silence envious tongues

He whispered to his wife It would have been hard to tell from her look what she thought of the matter But presently she changed seats with her husband that he might by holding his newspaper at a certain angle shield the girl from intrusive gazers

At every station the same scene was enacted And inquisitive people must have been surprised to see how monotonously ordinary was the manner of the three white people in the compartment Suddenly at a station near London General Armour gave a start and used a strong expression under his breath Glancing at the Marriage column he saw a notice to the effect that on a certain day of a certain month Francis Gilbert the son of General Joseph Armour CB of Graybep Hertfordshire and Cavendish Square was married to Lali the daughter of Eye of the Moon chief of the Bloods at her fathers lodge on the Saskatchewan Valley This had been inserted by Frank Armours solicitor according to his instructions on the day that the *Aphrodite* was due at Liverpool General Armour did not at first intend to show this to his wife but on second thought he did because he knew she would eventually come to know of it and also because she saw that something had moved him She silently reached out her hand for the paper He handed it to her pointing to the notice

Mrs Armour was unhappy but her self pos session was admirable and she said nothing She turned her face to the window and sat for a long time looking out She did not turn to the others for her eyes were full of tears and she did not dare to wipe them away nor yet to let them be seen She let them dry there She was thinking of her son her favourite son for whom she had been so ambitious and for whom so far as she could and retain her self respect she had delicately intrigued that he might hap pily and befittingly marry She knew that in the matter of his engagement she had not done what was best for him but how could she have guessed that this would be the result? She also was sure that when the first flush of his anger and disappointment had passed and he came to view this thing with cooler mind he would repent deeply—for a whole lifetime She was convinced that he had not married this savage for anything which could make marriage endurable Under the weight of the thought she was likely to forget that the young alien wife might have lost terribly in the event also

The arrival at Euston and the departure from St Pancras were rather painful all round for though there was no waiting at either place the appearance of an Indian girl in native costume was uncommon enough even in cosmopolitan London to draw much attention Besides the placards of the evening papers were blazoned with announcements as this —

A RED INDIAN GIRL
MARRIED INTO
AN ENGLISH COUNTY FAMILY

Some one had telegraphed particulars distorted particulars—over from Liverpool and all the evening sheets had their portion of extravagance and sensation General Armour became a little more erect and austere as he caught sight of these placards and Mrs Armour groaned inwardly but their faces were inscrutable and they quietly conducted their charge *minus* her blanket to the train which was to take them to St Albans and were soon wheeling homeward

At Euston they parted with Lambert and Mrs Townley who quite simply and conventionally bade good bye to them and their Indian daughter in law Lalah had grown to like Mrs Townley and when they parted she spoke a few words quickly in her own tongue and then immediately was embarrassed because she remembered that she could not be understood But presently she said in halting English that the face of her white friend was familiar and she hoped that she would come one time and visit her wigwam for she would like said the Lord husband travelled to hear

Mrs Townley made some polite reply in simple English praising the girls beautiful simplicity and then walked away After she departed from Mr Lambert however she said with a pretty touch of cynicism I think I see Marion Armour listening to her sister in law issue invitations to her wigwam I am afraid I should be rather depressed myself if I had to visit regularly to a wigwam lady

But I say Mrs Townley rejoined Lambert seriously as he looked at the steps of her car

riage I shouldn't be surprised if my lady Wig
wam—a rather apt and striking title by the
way—turned out better than we think She
curled herself snugly without the blanket
and I never saw a more beautiful hand in my
life—but one shuddered as his fingers at that
moment closed upon hers and held them tightly
in spite of the indignant little effort at with
drawal She may yet be able to give them
all points in dignity and that kind of thing and
by Master Frank but in his own com I do
not see after all that he is the martyr

Lambert's voice got softer for he still held
Mrs Townley's fingers—the gentleman not having
any the matter in his eye—and then he spoke
still more seriously on sentimental affairs of his
own in which he evidently hoped she would
take some interest I feel it is hard to tell
how far the end might have been pushed if she
had not suddenly looked a little forbidding
and imperious For even people of no notable
height with soft features dull brown eyes and
a delightful little laugh may appear rather
regal at times Lambert did not quite under

stand why she should take this attitude If he had been as keen regarding his own affairs of the affections as in the case of Frank Armour and his Indian bride he had known that every woman has in her mind the occasion when she should and when she should not be wooed and nothing disappoints her more than a declaration at a time which is not *the* time If it does not fall out as she wishes in retrospect a dear thing to a woman is spoiled Many a man has been sent to the right about because he has ventured his proposal at the wrong time What would have occurred at Lambert it is hard to tell but he saw that something was wrong and stopped in time

When General Armytage and his party reached Greyhope it was late in the evening The girl seemed tired and confused by the events of the day and hid as she was directed indifferently limply But when they entered the gates of Greyhope and travelled up the long avenue of limes she looked round her somewhat eagerly, and drew a long sigh maybe of relief or pleasure She presently stretched out a hand

almost caressingly to the thick trees and the grass and said aloud Oh the beautiful trees and the long grass There was a whir of birds wings among the branches and then presently there rose from a distance the sweet gurgling whistle of the nightingale A smile as of reminiscence crossed her face Then she said as if to herself It is the same I shall not die I hear the birds wings and one is singing It is pleasant to sleep in the long grass when the nights are summer and to hang your cradle in the trees

She had asked for her own blanket refusing a rug when they left St Albans and it had been given to her She drew it about her now with a feeling of comfort and seemed to lose the horrible sense of strangeness which had almost convulsed her when she was put into the carriage at the railway station Her reserve had hidden much of what she really felt but the drive though the limes had shown General Armour and his wife that they had to do with a nature having capacities for sensitive feeling which it is sometimes thought is

only the prerogative of certain well bred civilizations

But it was impossible that they should yet or for many a day feel any sense of kinship with this aboriginal girl Presently the carriage drew up to the doorway which was instantly open to them A broad belt of light streamed out upon the stone steps Far back in the hall stood Munro one hand upon the balustrade of the staircase the other tightly held at his side as if to nerve herself for the meeting The eyes of the Indian girl peered the light and as if by a strange instinct found those of Munro even before she left the carriage Lalah felt vaguely that here was her possible enemy As she stepped out of the carriage General Armours hand under her elbow to assist her she drew her blanket something more closely about her and so proceeded up the steps The composure of the servants was in the circumstances, remarkable It needed to have been for the courage displayed by Lalas two new guardians during the day almost faltered at the threshold of their own home Any sign of surprise or

amusement on the part of the domestics would have given them some painful moments subsequently But all was perfectly decorous Marion still stood motionless almost dazed The group advanced into the hall and there paused as if waiting further

At that moment Richard Cumberland out of the study at the end of the hall appeared and said quickly Constance Marion let us be as brave as our father and mother then

She gave a little gasp and seemed to await assistance from Madame She quickly glided forward and encircled Isobel in her mother and father had abruptly then turned the young wife with a searching eye

Marion said her father this is your sister

Marion stood hesitating confused

Marion Isobel repeated her mother enormously this is your brother's wife —Lah this is your husband's sister Marion

Mackenzie translated the words swiftly to the girl and her eyes flashed wide Then in a low voice she said in English Yes Marion *How!*

It is probable that neither Marion nor any one

present knew quite the meaning of *How* save Richard and he could not suppress a smile it sounded so absurd and aboriginal But at the exclamation Marion once more came to herself She could not possibly go so far as her mother did at the dock and kiss this savage But with a rather sudden grasp of the hand she said a little hysterically—for her brain was going round like a wheel Wo wont you let me take your blanket and forthwith laid hold of it with tremulous politeness

The question sounded for the instant so ludicrous to Richard that in spite of the distressing situation he had to choke back a laugh Years afterwards if he wished for any momentary revenge upon Marion (and he had a keen sense of womanly retaliation) he simply said Wo wont you let me take your blanket?

Of course the Indian girl did not understand but she submitted to the removal of this uncommon mantle and stood forth a less trying sight to Marions eyes for as we said before her buckskin costume set off softly the good outlines of her form

The Indian girl's eyes wandered from Marion to Richard They wandered from anxiety doubt and a bitter kind of reserve to cordiality sympathy and a grave kind of humour In stantly the girl knew that she had in eccentric Richard Armour a frank friend Unlike as he was to his brother there was still in their eyes the same friendliness and humanity That is it was the same look that Frank carried when he first came to her father's lodge

Richard held out his hand with a cordial little laugh and said Ah ah very glad very glad Just in time for supper Come along How is Frank eh? how is Frank? Just so just so Pleasant journey I suppose? He shook her hand warmly three or four times and as he held it placed his left hand over it and patted it patriarchally as was his custom with all the children and all the old ladies that he knew

Richard said his mother in a studiously neutral voice you might see about the wine

Then Richard appeared to recover himself and did as he was requested but not until his

brother's wife had said to him in English as they courteously drew her towards the staircase

Oh my brother Richard *How!*

But the first strain and suspense were now over for the family and it is probable that never had they felt such relief as when they sat down behind closed doors in their own rooms for a short respite while the Indian girl was closeted alone with Madenza and a trusted Iroquois whom all knew as Wigwam

CHAPTER V

AN AWKWARD HALF HOUR

It was just as well perhaps that the matter had become notorious. Otherwise the Armours had lived in that unpleasant condition of being constantly discovered. It was simply a case of aiming at absolute secrecy which had been frustrated by Brand himself on bold and unembarrassed acknowledgment and an attempt to carry things off with a high hand. The latter course was the only one possible. It had originally been Richard's plan approbated by General Armour and accepted by Mrs Armour and Marion with what grace was possible. The publication of the event prepared their friends and precluded the necessity for reserve. What the friends did not know was whether they ought or ought not to commiserate the Armours

It was a difficult position A death an accident a lost reputation would have been easy to them concerning these there could be no doubt But an Indian daughter in law a person in moccasins was scarcely a thing to be congratulated upon and yet sympathy and consolation might be much misplaced No one could tell how the Armours would take it For even then closest acquaintances knew what kind of delicate humour was possible to them Even the centric Richard who visited the cottages of the poor carrying soup and luxuries of many kinds accompanying them with the most wholesome advice a single man ever gave to families and the heads of families whose laugh was so cheery and spontaneous and face so uncommonly grave and sad at times—had a faculty for manner With astonishing suddenness he could raise insurmountable barriers and people, not of his order who occasionally presumed on his simplicity of life and habits found themselves put distinctly ill at ease by a quiet curious look in his eye No man was ever more the recluse and at the same time the man of the world

He had had his bitter little comedy of life but it was different from that of his brother Frank It was kind very deep not one of his family knew of it Edward Lambert and one or two others who had good reason never to speak of it were the only persons possessing his secret

But all England knew of Frank's *exploit* And the question was What would people do? They very properly did nothing at first They waited to see how the Armours would act they did not congratulate they did not console that was left to the papers which clanced to resent General Armour's politics and those others which were emotional and sensational on every subject—particularly so where women were concerned

It was the beginning of the season but the Armours had decided that they would not go to town That is the General and his wife were not going They felt that they ought to be at Greyhope with their daughter in law — which was to their credit Regarding Marion they had nothing to say Mrs Armour inclined to her

going to town for the season to visit Mrs Townley who had thoughtfully written to her saying that she was very lonely and begging Mrs Armour to let her come if she would She said that of course Marion would see much of her people in town just the same Mrs Townley was a very clever and tactful woman She guessed that General Armour and his wife were not likely to come to town but that must not appear and the invitation should be on a different basis as it was

It is probable that Marion saw through the delicate plot but that did not make her like Mrs Townley less These little pieces of art make life possible these tender fictions!

Marion was however in good humour she was nervous and a little petulant She had a high strung temperament a sensitive perception of the fitness of things and a horror of what was *gauche* and she would in brief make a rather austere person if the lines of life did not run in her favour She had something of Frank's impulsiveness and temper it would have been a great blessing to her if she had

had a portion of Richard's philosophical humour also She was at a point of tension—her mother and Richard could see that Sh was anxious—though for the world she would not have had it thought so—regarding Captain Vidall She had never cared for anybody but him it was possibl she never would But h had not known this and she was n t absolutely sure that his evident but as yet informal love would stand this strain —which shows how people very honourable and perfect minded in themselves may allow a large margin to other people who are presumably honourable and perfect minded also There was no engagement between them and he was not bound in any way and could therefore without slashing the hem of the code retu without any apology but they had had that unspoken understanding which most people who love each other show even before a word of declaration has passed their lips If he withdrew because of this scandal that might be some awkward hours for Frank Armour's wife at Greyhope but, more than that there would be a very hard hearted young lady to play her part in the

deceitful would she would be as merciless as she could be Naturally being young she exaggerated the importance of the event and brooded on it It was different with her father and mother They were shocked and indignant at first but when the first scene had been faced they began to make the best of things all round That is they proceeded at once to turn the North American Indian into a European—a matter of no little difficulty A governess was discussed but General Armour did not like the idea and Richard opposed it heatily She must be taught English and educated and made possible in Christian clothing as Mrs Armour put it Of the luxuries they almost despaired —all save Richard true instruction vanity and a dressmaker might do much as to the other

The evening of her arrival Lah would not with any urging put on clothes of Marions which had been sent in to her And the next morning it was still the same She came into the breakfast room dressed still in buckskin and moccasins and though the grease had been

taken out of her hair it was still combed flat Mrs Armour had tried to influence her through Mackenzie but to no purpose She was placidly stubborn

It had been unwisely told her by Mackenzie that they were Marions this She scarcely took in the fact that the girl had pride that she was the daughter of a chief and a chieftainess herself and that it was far from happy to offer her Marions clothes to wear

Now Richard when he was a lad had been on a journey to the South Seas and had learned some of the peculiarities of the native mind and he did not suppose that American Indians differed very much from certain well bred Polynesians in little matters of form and good taste When his mother told him what had occurred before Lah entered the breakfast room he went directly to what he believed was the cause and advised tact with conciliation He also pointed out that Lah was something taller than Marion and that he might be possessed of that general trait of humanity vanity Mrs Armour had not yet got used to thinking of the

girl in another manner than an intrusive being of a lower order who was there to try their patience but also to do their bidding She had yet to grasp the fact that being her sons wife she must have therefore a position in the house exercising a certain authority over the servants who to Mrs Armour at first seemed if suppose stuff But Richard said to her Mother I fancy you dont quite grasp the situation The girl is the daughter of a chief and the descendant of a family of chiefs perhaps through many generations In her own land she has been used to respect and has been led up to pretty generally Her garments are I fancy considered very smart in this Hudsons Bay country and a finely located blanket like hers is expensive up there You see we have to take things by comparison so please give the girl a chance

And Mrs Armour answered wearily I suppose you are right Richard— you generally are in the end though why you should be I do not know for you never see anything of the world any more and you moon about

among the cottagers I suppose it's your native sense and the books you've read

Richard laughed softly but there was a queer ring in the laugh and he came over stumblingly and put his arm about his mother's shoulders

Never mind how I got such sense as I have mother I have so much time to think it would be a wonder if I hadn't some But I think we had better try to study her and be on her along and not fob her off as a new species of person or we shall have our hands full in earnest My opinion is she has got that which will save her and us — a very high spirit which only needs opportunity to develop into a remarkable thing and take on worth in it mother if we treat her as a child fondness or princess or what ever she is and not simply as a dusky person we shall come off better and she will come off better than the Lord knows She is not darker than a Spaniard anyhow

At this point Marion entered the room and her mother rehearsed briefly to her what their talk had been Marion had little sleep and she only lifted her eyebrows at them at first

She was in little mood for conciliation She remembered all at once that at supper the evening before her sister in law had said *How* to the butler and had eaten the mayonnaise with a dessert spoon But presently because she saw the waiter for her to speak she said with a little flutter of maliciousness Wouldn't it be well for Richard—he has plenty of time and we are also likely to have it now to put us all through a course of instruction for the training of chieftainesses And when do you think she will be ready for a drawing room—Her Majesty Queen Victorias orders?

Marion said Mrs Armour severely but Richard came round to her and with his fresh childlike humour put his arm round her waist and all I Marion Id be willing to bet (if I were in the habit of betting) my shaky old pins here against a lock of your hair that you may present her at any drawing room—ours or Queen Victorias—in two years if we go at it right and it would serve Master Frank very well if we turned her out something after all

Mrs Armour said almost eagerly I wish it

were only possible Richard And what you say is true I suppose that she is of rank in her own country whatever value that may have

Richard saw his advantage Well mother he said a chieftainess is a chieftainess and I don t know but to announce her as such and——

And be proud of it as it were put in Marion and pose her and make her a prize —a Pocahontas wasn t it?—and go on pretending world without end Marions voice was still slightly grating but there was in it too a faint sound of hope Perhaps she said to herself Richard is right

At this point the door opened and Lah entered shown in by Ellen her newly appointed maid and followed by Mackenzie and as we said dressed still in her heathenish garments She had a strong sense of dignity for she stood still and waited Perhaps nothing could have impressed Marion more Had Lah been subservient simply an entirely passive unintelligent creature she would probably have tyrannized over her in a soft persistent fashion

and despised her generally But Mrs Armour and Marion saw that this stranger might become very troublesome indeed if her temper were to have play They were aware of capacities for passion in those dark eyes so musing yet so active in expression which moved swiftly from one object to another and then suddenly became resolute

Both mother and daughter came forward and held out their hands wishing her a pleasant good morning and were followed by Richard and immediately by General Armour who had entered soon after her She had been keen enough to read (if a little vaguely) behind the scenes and her mind was wandering slowly to the peculiarity of the position she occupied The place awed her and had broken her rest by perplexing her mind and she sat down to the breakfast table with a strange hunted look in her face But opposite to her was a window opening to the ground and beyond it were the limes and beeches and a wide perfect sward and far away a little lake on which swans and wild fowl fluttered Pres

ently as she sat silent, eating little, her eyes lifted to the window They flashed instantly her face lighted up with a weird kind of charm and suddenly she got to her feet with Indian exclamations on her lips and as if unconscious of them all went swiftly to the window and out of it waving her hands up and down once or twice to the trees and the sunlight

What did she say? said Mrs Armour rising with the others

She said replied Mackenzie as she hurried towards the window that they were her beautiful woods and there were wild birds flying and swimming in the water as in her own country

By this time all were at the window Richard arriving last and the Indian girl turned on them her body all quivering with excitement laughed a low birdlike laugh and then clapping her hands above her head she swung round and ran like a deer towards the lake shaking her head back as an animal does when fleeing from his pursuers She would scarcely have

been recognized as the same placid speechless woman in a blanket who sat with folded hands day after day on the *hurdle*

The watchers turned and looked at each other in wonder Truly their task of civilizing a savage would not lack in interest The old General was better pleased however at this display of activity and excitement than at yesterday's taciturnity He loved spirit even if it had to be subdued and he thought on the instant that he might possibly come to look upon the fair savage as an actual and not a nominal daughter in law He had a keen appreciation of courage and he thought he saw in her face as she turned upon them a look of defiance or daring and nothing could have got at his nature quicker If the case had not been so near to his own hearthstone he would have chuckled As it was he said good humouredly that Mackenzie and Marion should go and bring her back But Mackenzie was already at that duty Mrs Armour had had the presence of mind to send for Evan but presently when the General spoke she thought

it better that Marion should go and counsellel returning to breikfast and not making the matter of too much importance This they did Richard very reluctantly while Marion rather pleased than not at the spirit shown by the strange girl ran away over the grass towards the lake where Tum had now stopped There was a little bridge at one point where the lake narrowed and Ida evidently seeing it all at once went towards it and ran up on it standing poised above the water about the middle of it For an instant an unpleasant possibility came into Marions mind suppose the excitable girl intended suicide She shivered as she thought of it and yet—— She put *that* horribly cruel and selfish thought away from her with an indignant word itself She had passed Mudmarsh and came first to the lake Here she slackened and waved her hand playfully to the girl so as not to frighten her and then with a forced laugh came up panting on the bridge and was presently by Lalis side Lali eyed her a little furtively but seeing that Mari was much inclined to

be pleasant she nodded to her said some Indian words hastily and spread out her hands towards the water As she did so Marion noticed again the beauty of those hands and the graceful character of the gesture so much so that she forgot the flat hair and the unstayed body and the rather broad feet and the delicate duskiness which had so worked upon her imagination and in fact the evening before She put her hand limply on that long slim hand stretched out beside her and because she knew not what else to speak and because the tongue is very perverse at times —saying the opposite of what is expected— she herself blundered out *Ah! Ah!* Ah

Perhaps Ahwa was as much surprised at the remark as Marion herself and certainly very much more delighted The sound of those familiar words spoken by accident as they were opened the way to a better understanding as nothing else could possibly have done Marion was annoyed with herself and yet amused too If her mind had been perfectly assured regarding Captain Vidall it is probable that then and

there a peculiar a genial comradeship would have been found As it was Marion found this little event more embarrassing than she expected She also found that Lah when she laughed in pleasant acknowledgment of that *Hee!* had a manifestly white and regular set of Indeed Marion Armour's gentle disposition stumbled points in the appearance of her savage sister in law Marion resolved to herself that Lah might be a rather striking person if she were dressed as her mother said in Christian garments could speak the English language well —and was small by reason of her sister in law

At this point Mackenzie came breathlessly to the hunting call at a little slight Lah rebuking her In this Mackenzie made a mistake for a moment only he left Lah to draw herself up with considerable hauteur But Marion noticing the wistful nature of the time instantly said Mackenzie you must remember that you are speaking to Mrs Francis Armour and that her position in Colonial Armour's house is the same as mine I hope it is not necessary to say anything more Mackenzie

Mackenzie flushed She was a sensible woman, she knew that she had done wrong and she said very promptly I am very sorry miss, I was flustered and I expect I haven't got used to speaking to—to Mrs Armour as I'll be sure to do in the future

As she spoke two or three deer came trotting out of the beeches down to the lake side It Lali was pleased and excited before she was overwhelmed now Her breath came in quick little gasps she laughed she tossed her hands she seemed to become dizzy with delight and presently as if this new link with and reminder of her past had moved her as a little expects a savage heart to be moved two tears gathered in her eyes then slid down her cheek unheeded and hung there in the sunlight as she still gazed at the deer Marion at first surprised was now touched as she could not have thought it possible concerning this wild creature and her hand went out and caught Lali's gently At this genuine act of sympathy instinctively felt by Lali the stranger in a strange land husbanded and yet a widow—there came a

flood of tears and dropping on her knees she leaned against the low railing of the bridge and wept silently So passionless was her grief it seemed the more pathetic and Marian dropped on her knees beside her put her arm round her shoulder and said Poor girl! Poor girl

At that Indian caught her hand and held it repeating after her the words Poor girl Poor girl

She did not quite understand them but she remembered that once just before she parted from her husband at the Great Lakes he had said those very words If the fates had apparently given things into Frank Armours hands when he sacrificed this girl to his revenge they were evidently inclined to play a game which would eventually defeat his purpose wicked as it had been in effect if not in absolute motive What the end of this attempt to engraft the Indian girl upon the strictest convention of English social life would have been had her introduction not been at Greyhope where faint likenesses to her past surrounded her it is hard to conjecture But

from present appearances it would seem that Richard Armour was not wholly a false prophet for the savage had shown herself that morning to possess in their crudeness some striking qualities of character Given character many things are possible even to those who are not of the elect

This was the beginning of better things Lali seemed to the Armours not quite so impossible now Had she been of the very common order of Indian pure and simple the task had resolved itself into making a common savage into a very common European But whatever Lali was it was abundantly evident that she must be reckoned with at all points and that she was more likely to become a very startling figure in the Armour household than a mere encumbrance to be hushed away whose eternal absence were preferable to her company

Years after that first morning Marion caught herself shuddering at the thought that came to her when she saw Lali hovering on the bridge Whatever Marions faults were she had a fine dislike of anything that seemed unfair She

had not ridden to hounds for nothing She had at heart the sportsman s instinct It was upon this basis and c l that Richard appealed to her in the first trying days of Lal s life among them To oppos you will to Marion on the basis of superior knowledge w s only to turn her into a rebel And a very effective rebel she made for she had a pr tty _ift at th retort courteous and she c uld take as much and as well as she gave She rebelled at first at assisting in Lal s education though by f ts and starts she would teach her Fn_lish words and help her to form lon_ sentences and was on the whole quite patient Put Lal s real instructors were Mrs Armour and Richard her l st Richard

The first f w days she made but little pr _ress for everything was strange to her and things mad h r _ddly—th servant the formal routine the handsome furnishings Marion s music the great house the many precise personal duties set for her to be got through at stated times and Mrs Armours rather grand manner But there was the relief to this else the girl had pined terribly for her native woods

and prunes this was the park the deer the lake the hares and birds While she sat saying over after Mrs Armour words and phrases in English or was being shown how she must put on and wear the clothes which a dressmaker from Regent Street had been brought to make her eyes would wander dreamily to the trees and the lake and the grass They soon discovered that she would pay no attention and was straightway difficult to teach if she was not placed where she could look out on the park They had no choice for though her resistance was never active it was nevertheless effective

Presently she got on very swiftly with Richard For he with instinct worthy of a woman turned their lessons upon her own country and Frank This cost him something but it had its reward There was no more listlessness Previously Franks name had scarcely been spoken to her Mrs Armour would have hours of hesitation and impotent regret before she brought herself to speak of her son to his Indian wife Marion tried to do it a few times and failed the General did it with rather a forced voice and manner

because he saw that his wife was very tender upon the point But Richard was never knew self consciousness so fiercely for Irani when he spoke at all and it was seen Lilias brightened and looked gaily first on him when he declared that partly Irani sense that determined him on his own methods of instruction It had its dangers but he had calculated them all The girl must be educated at all costs The sooner that seemed the soon it would she see her own position and try to adapt herself to her responsibilities and for the real state of her husband's attitude would she

He succeeded admirably Strange to tell him about himself Irani's talk and lessly about his husband of his goodness in the hunt for his strength all unconsciously he was so strive to find English words for the purpose and Richard supplied them with the minor willingness He humoured him for a time and then Irani in my Indian words and phrases but he was chary of his use of them and tried hard to make his appreciative flow with Irani's method He watched how with Irani under

standin_ of the life and of all that it involved It _ave him a kind of fea t o beeause sh was sensitive and there was the p ssible lun_e f her gr wing lisheartened e desperate and dom_ some mad thing in the hou that she wakened to the s eret l hind h r mana_e

His pprehnsi ns w r n t with ut cause I r slwly there eame nt I this mnd the el nt f e mparison She l e e nseans f t ne ly when som neighbuning p ple ell l at Gr vh I Mrs Armour in h r sense f luty whel sl l d n_ally set l f re her ntr luc l l ah nt th drwing r m Ihe vsit rs v il l their e n sity and sul s me pl asant esual thin_s t tl y ung wife l ut she saw th half eun us half furtiv _lane s she eau_l t a sidel ng glance and sml and when th y wer _ n she t ok t le l u_ at l rself in a mirror a thin_ she could scarc ly l e persuaded to do before Sh saw th litt r ne between h r carriage and thens her mum t of wearing her el thes and thens her e mplexi n und theirs She exa_gerated the diff rene She l rooded on it Now she sat downcast and timl and

hunted in face as on the first evening she came now she appeared restless and excited

If Mrs Armour was not exactly sympathetic with her she was quiet and forbearing and General Armour like Richard tried to draw her out but not on the same subjects He dwelt upon what she did the walks she took in the park the hours in the afternoon when with Mackenzie to drive she vanished into the beeches making friends with the hinds and deer and swans but most of all she loved to go to the stables She was however reticent to Angus with Richard to General Armour was with Ian She did not say and these were a world that Ian she did not know anything but the wild unreal happy world which she had still in memory from which only very little country Mr Armour sometimes smiled master and had nothing customs small fashion It was intended that she should and every day as soon as she seemed sufficiently presentable This did not appear to be very far off for she improved daily in appearance Her hair was growing finer and was made up in the neatest

prevailing fashion her skin no longer exposed to an inclement climate and subject to the utmost care was smoother and fairer her feet encased in fine well made boots looked much smaller her waist was shaped to fashion and she was very straight and lissom So many things she had learned on her relatives that they were not fully aware of the great improvement in her appearance Even Richard admitted her trying at times

Marian went up to town to stay with Mrs Townley and there had to face a good deal of curiosity People looked at her sometimes as if it was she and not Lalla that was an Indian But she carried things off bravely enough and answered those embarrassing inquiries which one's friends make when we are in embarrassing situations with answers so calm and pleasant that people did not know what to think

Yes she said in reply to Lady Balwood her sister in law might be in town later in the year perhaps before the season was over she could not tell She was tired after her long voyage and she preferred the quiet of Grey

hope she was fond of riding and country life but still she would come to town for a time And so on

Ah dear me how charming And doesn't she resent her husband's absence during the honeymoon? Or did the honeymoon occur before she came over to England And Lady Balwood tried to say it all playfully and certainly said something loudly She had daughters

But Mrs Arnott was perfectly prepared Her face did not change expression Yes they had had their honeymoon in the Pyrenees Frank was so fascinated with the life and the people He had not come home at once because he was making—did not know how—a fortune over there in investments and Mrs Arnott came on first from Paris and from Lausanne would follow—late

And though Mrs Arnott was not a little hurt that Frank could have shunned Lady Balwood in Paris Lady Balwood then nodded a little patronizingly and babbled that she hoped so much to see Mrs James Arnott

She must be so very interesting the papers said so much about her

Now while this conversation was going on some one stood not far behind Marion who seemed much interested in her and what she said But Marion did not see this person She was startled presently however to hear a strong voice say softly over her shoulder What a charming woman Lady Balwood is And so ingenuous

She was grateful tremulous proud Why had he —Captain Vidall—kept out of the way all these weeks just when she needed him most just when I should have played the part of a man? Then she was feeling twinges at the heart too She had seen Lady Agnes Marling that afternoon and had noticed how the news had worn on her She felt how much better it had been had Frank come quietly home and married her instead of living the wild scandalous thing that was making so many heart burnings A few minutes ago she had longed for a chance to say something bluntly and to Lady Haldwell once Julia Sherwood who

was there Now there was a chance to give her bitter spirit tongue She was glad—she dared not think how glad—to hear that voice again but she was angry too and he should suffer for it the more so because she recognized in the tone and afterwards in his face that he was still absurdly interested in her There was a little burst of thanksgiving in her heart and then she prepared a very natural communistic service in her mind

This morning had hardly arranged by Mrs Lowndes with the help of Edward Lambert who now had her fingers with a kind of fierce possessiveness which had startled another Captain Nicholl had in fact sent out of the country had only just returned and had only heard of Diana Mannerings presence from Lambert at the Hall forty eight hours before Mrs Lowndes guessed what was really at the bottom of Mannerings occasional bitterness and pronged that many little things dropped casually by her friend had come to the conclusion that the happiness of two people was at stake

When Marion shook hands with Captain Vidall she had herself exceedingly well under control She looked at him in slight surprise and casually remarked that they had not chanced to meet lately in the run of small and earlies She appeared to be unconscious that he had been out of the country and also that she had been till very recently indeed at Grey hope He hastened to assure her that he had been away and to lay siege to this unexpected barrier He knew all about Franks affair and though it troubled him he did not see why it should make any difference in his regard for Franks sister Fastidious as he was in all things he was fastidiously deferential Not an exquisite he had all that vanity as to appear ance so usual with the military man himself of the most perfect temper and sweetness of manner and conduct the unusual disturbed him Not possessed of a vivid imagination he could scarcely conjure up this Indian bride at Greyhope

But face to face with Marion Armour he saw what troubled him and he determined that

he would not meet her irony with irony her assumed indifference with indifference He had learned one of the most important lessons of life—never to quarrel with a woman Who ever has so far erred has been foolish indeed It s the worst of policy to say nothing of its being the worst of art and life should never be without art It is absurd to be perfectly natural anything anybody can be that Well Captain Hume Vidall was something of an artist more however in principle than by temperament He refused to recognize the rather malicious adroitness with which Marion turned his remarks again upon himself twisted out of all semblance He was very patient He inquired quietly and as if honestly interested about Frank and said—because he thought it safest as well as most reasonable that naturally they must have been surprised at his marrying a native but let him if had seen some such marriages turn out very well— n Japan India the South Sea Islands and Canada He assumed that Marion's sister in law was beautiful and then disarmed Marion by saying that he

thought of going down to Greyhope immediately to call on General Armour and Mrs Armour and wondered if she was going back before the end of the season

Quick as Marion was this was said so jurtly that she did not quite see the drift of it She had intended staying in London to the end of the season not because she enjoyed it but because she was determined to face Franks marriage at every point and have it over once for all so far as herself was concerned But now taken slightly aback she said almost without thinking that she would probably go back soon—she was not quite sure but certainly her father and mother would be glad to see Captain Vidall at any time

Then without any apparent relevancy he asked her if Mrs Frank Armour still wore her Indian costume In any one else the question had seemed impertinent in him it had a touch of confidence of the privilege of close friendship when he said with a meditative look and a very calm retrospective voice that he was once very much in love with a native girl in India and

might have become permanently devoted to her, were it not for the accident of his being ordered back to England summarily

This was a piece of news which cut two ways In the first place it lessened the extraordinary character of Frank s marriage and it roused in her an immediate curiosity—which a woman always feels in the past affairs of her lover or possible lover Vidall did not take pains to impress her with the fact that the matter oc curred when he was almost a boy and it was when her earnest inquisition had drawn from him bit by bit the circumstances of the case and she had forgotten many parts of her com mination service and to preserve an effective neutrality in tone that she became aware he was speaking ancient history Then it was too late to draw back

They had threaded their way through the crowd into the conservatory where they were quite alone and there with only a little pyramid of hydrangeas between them which she could not help but notice chimed w ll with the colour of her dress he dropped his voice a little lower

and then suddenly said his eyes hard on her

I want your permission to go to Greyhope.

The tone drew her eyes hastily to his and seeing she dropped them again Vidall had a strong will and what is of more consequence a peculiarly attractive voice It had a vibration which made some of his words organ like in sound She felt the influence of t She said a little faintly he fingers toying with a hydrangea I am afraid I do not understand There is no reason why you should not go to Greyhope without my permission

I cannot go without it he persisted I am waiting for my commission from you

She dropped her hand from the flower with a little impatient motion She was tired her head ached she wanted to be alone Why are you enigmatical? she said Then quickly I wish I knew what is in your mind You play with words so

She scarcely knew what she said A woman who loves a man very much is not quick to take in the absolute declaration of that man's love on the instant it is too wonderful for her He

felt his cheek flush with hers he drew her loc again to his Marion Marion he said Th was all

Oh hush some one is coming was h quick throbbing reply When they parted a half hour later he said to her Will you give me my commission to go to Greyhope?"

Oh no I cannot she said very gravely but come to Greyhope—when I go back

And when will that be? he said smiling yet a little ruefully too

Oh ask Mrs Townley she replied she is coming also

Marion knew what that commission to go to Greyhope meant But she determined that he should see Lali first before anything irrevocable was done She still looked upon Franks marriage as a scandal Well Captain Vidall should face it in all its crudeness So in a week or less Marion and Mrs Townley were in Greyhope.

Two months had gone since Lali arrived in England and yet no letter had come to her or to any of them from Frank Franks solicitor

in London had written him fully of her arrival and he had had a reply with further instructions regarding money to be placed to General Armours credit for the benefit of his wife Lali as she became Europeanized also awoke to the forms and ceremonies of her new life She had overheard Franks father and mother wondering and fretting as they wondered why they had not received any word from him General Armour had even called him a scoundrel which sent Franks mother into tears Then Lali had questioned Mackenzie and Colvin for she had increasing shrewdness and she began to feel her actual position She resented General Armours imputation but in her heart she began to pine and wonder At times too she was fitful and was not to be drawn out But she went on improving in personal appearance and manner and in learning the English language Mrs Townleys appearance marked a change in her When they met she suddenly stood still and trembled When Mrs Townley came to her and took her hand and kissed her she shivered and then caught her about the shoulders

lightly but was silent. After a little she said

Come—come to my wigwam and talk with me

She said it with a strange little smile for now she recognized that the word *wigwam* was not to be used in her new life But Mrs. Townley whispered Ask Marion to come too

Lali hesitated and then said a little maliciously Marion will you come to my wigwam?

Marion ran to her caught her about the waist and replied gaily Yes we will have a *pow wow* —is that right? is *pow wow* right?

The Indian girl shook her head with a pretty vagueness and vanished with them General Armour walked up and down the room briskly then turned on his wife and said Wife it was a brutal thing Frank doesn't deserve to be—the father of her child

But Lali had moods—singular moods She indulged in one three days after the arrival of Marion and Mrs Townley She had learned to ride with the side saddle and wore her riding dress admirably Nowhere did she show to better advantage She had taken to riding now

with General Armour on the country roads. On this day Captain Vidall was expected he having written to ask that he might come What trouble Lali had with one of the servants that morning was never thoroughly explained but certain it is she came to have a crude notion of why Frank Armour married her The servant was dismissed duly but that was after the *contre temps*

It was late afternoon Everybody had been busy because one or two other guests were expected besides Captain Vidall Lali had kept to herself sending word through Richard that she would not be English as she vaguely put it that day She had sent Mackenzie on some mission She sat on the floor of her room as she used to sit on the ground in her father's lodge Her head was bowed in her hands and her arms rested on her knees Her body swayed to and fro Presently all motion ceased She became perfectly still She looked before her as if studying something

Her eyes immediately flashed She rose quickly to her feet went to her wardrobe and

took out her Indian costume and blanket with which she could never be induced to part Almost feverishly she tool off the clothes she wore and hastily threw them from her Then she put on the buckskin clothes in which she had journeyed to England drew down her hair as she used to wear it fastened round her waist a long red sash which had been given her by a governor of the Hudson's Bay Company when he had visited her fathers country threw her blanket round her shoulders and then eyed herself in the great mirror in the room What she saw evidently did not please her perfectly for she stretched out her hands and looked at them she shook her head at herself and put her hand to her cheeks and pinched them—they were not so brown as they once were then she thrust out her foot She drew it back quickly in disdain Immediately she caught the fashionable slippers from her feet and threw them among the discarded garments She looked at herself again Still she was not satisfied but she threw up her arms as with a sense of pleasure and freedom and laughed at

herself She pushed out her unoccasined foot tapped the floor with it nodded towards it and said a word or two in her own language She heard some one in the next room possibly Mackenzie She stepped to the door leading into the hall opened it went out travelled its length ran down a back hallway out into the park towards the stables her blanket as her hair flying behind her

She entered the stables made for a horse that she had ridden much put a bridle on him led him out before any one had seen her and catching him by the mane suddenly threw herself on him at a bound and giving him a tap with a short whip she had caught up in the stable headed him for the main avenue and the open road Then a stableman saw her and ran after but he might as well have tried to follow the wind He forthwith proceeded to saddle another horse Boulter also saw her as she passed the house and running in told Mrs Armour and the General They both ran to the window and saw dashing down the avenue—a picture out of Fenimore Cooper a saddleless

horse with a rider whose fingers merely touched the bridle riding as on a journey of life and death

My God its Lal She s mad she s mad! She is striking that horse! It will bolt It will kill her said the General

Then he rushed for a horse to follow her Mrs Armour s hands clasped painfully For an instant she had almost the same thought as had Marion on the first morning of Lali s coming but that passed and left her gazing helplessly after the horsewoman The flying blanket had frightened the blooded horse and he made desperate efforts to fulfil the General s predictions

Lali soon found that she had miscalculated She was not riding an Indian pony but a crazed high strung horse As they flew she sitting superbly and tugging at the bridle the party coming from the railway station entered the great gate accompanied by Richard and Marion In a moment they sighted this wild pair bearing down upon them with a terrible swiftness

As Marion recognized Lali she turned pale and cried out rising in her seat Instinctively Captain Vidall knew who it was though he could not guess the cause of the singular circumstance He saw that the horse had bolted but also that the rider seemed entirely fearless

Why in Heaven s name he said between his teeth does she not let go that blanket?

At that moment Lali did let it go and the horse dashed by them making hard for the gate. Turn the horses round and follow her said Vidall to the driver While this was doing Marion caught sight of her father riding hard down the avenue He passed them and called to them to hurry on after him

Lali had not the slightest sense of fear but she knew that the horse had gone mad When they passed through the gate and swerved into the road a less practised rider would have been thrown She sat like wax The pace was incredible for a mile and though General Armour rode well he was far behind

Suddenly a trap appeared in the road in front of them and the driver seeing the run

away set his horses at right angles to the road It served the purpose only to provide another danger Not far from where the trap was drawn and between it and the runaway was a lane which ended at a farmyard in a *cul de sac* The horse swerved into it not slacking its pace and in the fraction of a minute came to the farmyard

But now the fever was in Lal's blood She did not care whether she lived or died A high hedge formed the *cul de sac* When she saw the horse slacking she cut it savagely across the head twice with a whip and drove him at the green wall He was of too good make to refuse it stiff as it was He rose to it magnificently and cleared it but almost as he struck the ground squarely he staggered and fell—the girl beneath him He had burst a blood vessel The ground was soft and wet the weight of the horse prevented her from getting free She felt its hoof striking in its death struggles and once her shoulder was struck Instinctively she buried her face in the mud and her arms covered her head

And then she knew no more

When she came to she was in the carriage within the gates of Greyhope and Marion was bending over her She suddenly tried to lift herself but could not Presently she saw another face — that of General Armour It was stern and yet his eyes were swimming as he looked at her

How she said to him — *How!* and fainted again

CHAPTER VI

THE PASSING OF THE YEARS

Lalis recovery was not rapid A change had come upon her With that strange ride had gone the last strong flicker of the desire for savage life in her She knew now the position she held towards her husband that he had never loved her that she was only an instrument for unworthy retaliation So soon as she could speak after her accident she told them that they must not write to him and tell him of it She also made them promise that they would give him no news of her at all save that she was well They could not refuse to promise they felt that she had the right to demand much more than that They had begun to care for her for herself and when the months went by and one day there was a hush about her room

and anxiety and then relief in the faces of all they came to care for her still more for the sake of her child

As the weeks passed the fair haired child grew more and more like his father but if Lali thought of her husband they never knew it by anything she said for she would not speak of him She also made them promise that they would not write to him of the child's birth Richard with his sense of justice and knowing how much the woman had been wronged said that in all this she had done quite right that Frank if he had done his duty after marrying her should have come with her And because they all felt that Richard had been her best friend as well as their own they called the child after him This also was Lali's wish Coincident with her motherhood there came to Lali a new purpose She had not lived with the Armours without absorbing some of their fine social sense and dignity This added to the native instinct of pride in her gave her a new ambition As hour by hour her child grew dear to her so hour by hour her

husband grew away from her She schooled herself against him At times she thought she hated him She felt she could never forgive him but she would prove to him that it was she who had made the mistake of her life in marrying him that she had been wronged not he and that his sin would face him with reproach and punishment ne lay Richard's prophecy was likely to come true she would defeat very perfectly indeed Frank's intentions After the child was born so soon as she was able she renewed her studies with Richard and Mrs Armour She read every morning for hours she rode she practised all those graceful arts of the toilet which belong to the social convention she showed an unexpected faculty for singing and practised it faithfully and she begged Mrs Armour and Mavrin to correct her at every point where correction seemed necessary When the child was two years old they all went to London something against Lal's personal feelings but quite in accord with what she felt her luty

Richard was left behind at Greyhope For

the first time in eighteen months he was alone with his old quiet duties and recreations Dur ing that time he had not neglected his pen sioners—his poor sick halt and blind—but a deeper larger interest had come into his life in the person of Lali During all that time she had seldom been out of his sight never out of his influence and tutelage His days had been full his every hour had been given a keen responsible interest As if by tacit consent every incident or development of Lali s life was influenced by his judgment and decision He had been more to her than General Armour Mrs Armour or Marion Schooled as he was in all the ways of the world he had at the same time a mind as sensitive as a woman s an indescribable gentleness a persuasive tempera ment Since years before he had withdrawn from the social world and become a recluse many of his finer qualities had gone into an indulgent seclusion He had once loved the world and the gay life of London but some untoward event coupled with a radical love of retirement had sent him into years of isolation at Greyhope

His tutelar relations with Lali had reopened many an old spring of sensation and experi ence Her shy dependency her innocent in quisitiveness had searched out his remotest sympathies In teaching her he had himself been re taught Before she came he had been satisfied with the quiet usefulness and studious ease of his life But in her presence something of his old youthfulness came back some reflec tion of the ardent hopes of his young manhood He did not notice the change in himself He only knew that his life was very full He read later at nights he rose earlier in the morning But unconsciously to himself he was under going a change The more a man s sympathies and emotions are active the less is he the philosopher It is only when one has with drawn from the more personal influence of the emotions that one s philosophy may be trusted One may be interested in mankind and still be philosophical—may be as it were the priest and confessor to all comers But let one be touched in some vital corner in one s nature and the high faultless impartiality is gone In

proportion as Richard's interest in Lali had grown the universal quality of his sympathy had declined Man is only man Not that his benefactions as lord bountiful in the parish had grown perfunctory but the calm detail of his interest was not so definite He was the same yet not the same

He was not aware of any difference in himself He did not know that he looked younger by ten years Such is the effect of mere personal sympathy upon a man's look and bearing When therefore one bright May morning the family at Greyhope himself excluded was ready to start for London he had no thought but that he would drop back into his old silent life as it was before Lali came and his brother's child was born He was not conscious that he was very restless that morning he scarcely was aware that he had got up two hours earlier than usual At the breakfast table he was cheerful and alert After breakfast he amused himself in playing with the child till the carriage was brought round It was such a morning as does not come a dozen times a year in England

The sweet moist air blew from the meadows and up through the lime trees with a warm insinuating gladness The lawn sloped delightfully away to the flowered embrasures of the park and a fragrant abundance of flowers met the eye and cheered the senses While Richard loitered on the steps with the child and its nurse more excited than he knew Lali came out and stood beside him At the moment Richard was looking into the distance He did not hear her when she came She stood near him for a moment and did not speak Her eyes followed the direction of his look and idled tenderly with the prospect before her She did not even notice the child The same thought was in the mind of both—with a difference Richard was wondering how any one could choose to change the sweet dignity of that rural life for the flaring hurried delights of London and the season He had thought this a thousand times and yet though he would have been little willing to acknowledge it his conviction was not so impregnable as it had been

Mrs Francis Armour was stepping from the

known to the unknown She was leaving the precincts of a life in which socially she had been born again Its sweetness and benign quietness had all worked upon her nature and origin to change her In that it was an out door life full of freshness and open air vigour it was not antagonistic to her past Upon this sympathetic basis had been imposed the conditions of a fine social decorum The conditions must still exist But how would it be when she was withdrawn from this peaceful activity of nature and set down among those garish lights in Cavendish Square and Piccadilly? She hardly knew to what she was going as yet. There had been a few social functions at Greyhope since she had come but that could give her after all but little idea of the swing and pressure of London life

At this moment she was lingering over the scene before her She was wondering with the naive wonder of an awakened mind She had intended many times of late saying to Richard all the native gratitude she felt yet somehow she had never been able to say it The moment of parting had come.

What are you thinking of Richard? she said now

He started and turned towards her

I hardly know he answered My thoughts were drifting

"Richard she said abruptly "I want to thank you

"Thank me for what Lali? he questioned

"To thank you Richard for everything—since I came over three years ago

He broke out into a soft little laugh then with his old good natured manner caught her hand as he did the first night she came to Grey hope patted it in a fatherly fashion and said—

It is the wrong way about Lal I ought to be thanking you not you me Why look what a stupid old fogy I was then toddling about the place with too much time on my hands reading a lot and forgetting everything and here you came in gave me something to do made the little I know of any use and ran a pretty gold wire down the rusty fiddle of life If there are any speeches of gratitude to be made they are mine they are mine

Richard she said very quietly and gravely I owe you more than I can ever say—in English You have taught me to speak in your tongue enough for all the usual things of life but *one can only speak from the depths of one's* heart in one's native tongue And see she added with a painful little smile how strange it would sound if I were to tell you all I thought in the language of my people—of my people whom I shall never see again Richard can you understand what it must be to have a father whom one is never likely to see again?—whom if one did see again something painful would happen? We grow away from people against our will we feel the same towards them but they cannot feel the same towards us for then would is in another hemisphere We want to love them and we love remember and are glad to meet them again but they feel that we are unfamiliar and because we have grown different outwardly *they seem to miss some chord that* used to ring Richard I—I She paused

'Yes Lali he assented— yes I understand you so far but speak out

I am not happy she said I never shall be happy I have my child and that is all I have I cannot go back to the life in which I was born I must go on as I am a stranger among a strange people pitied suffered cared for a little—and that is all

The nurse had drawn away a little distance with the child The rest of the family were making their preparations inside the house There was no one near to watch the singular little drama

You should not say that he added we all feel you to be one of us

But all your world does not feel me to be one of them she rejoined

We shall see about that when you go up to town You are a bit morbid Lali I don't wonder at your feeling a little shy but then you will simply carry things before you—now you take my word for it For I know London pretty well

She held out her ungloved hands

Do they compare with the white hands of the ladies you know? she said

"They are about the finest hands I have ever seen he replied You can t see yourself sister of mine

I do not care very much to see myself she said If I had not a maid I expect I should look very shiftless for I don t care to look in a mirror My only mirror used to be a stream of water in summer she added and a corner of a looking glass got from the II ds s Bay fort in the winter

Well you are missing a lot of enjoyment he said if you do not use your mirror much The rest of us can appreciate what you would see there

She reached out and touched his arm

Do you like to look at me? she questioned with a strange simple candour

For the first time in many a year Richard Armour blushed like a girl fresh from school The question had come so suddenly it had gone so quickly into a sensitive corner of his nature that he lost command of himself for the instant yet had little idea why the command was lost He touched the fingers on his arm affectionately

Like to look at you ?—like to look at you ? Why of course we all like to look at you You are very fine and handsome—and interesting

Richard she said drawing her hands away is that why you like to look at me ?

He had recovered himself He laughed in his old hearty way and said —

Yes yes why of course Come let us go and see the boy he added taking her arm and hurrying her down the steps Come and let us see Richard Joseph the pride of all the Armours."

She moved beside him in a kind of dream She had learned much since she came to Grey hope and yet she could not at that moment have told exactly why she asked Richard the question that had confused him nor did she know quite what lay behind the question But every problem which has life works itself out to its appointed end if fumbling human fingers do not meddle with it Half the miseries of this world are caused by forcing issues in every problem of the affections the emotions and the soul There is a law working with which there

should be no tampering lest in foolish interruption come only confusion and disaster Against every such question there should be written the one word Wait

Richard Armour stooped over the child A beauty he said a perfect little gentleman Like Richard Joseph Armour there is none he added

Whom do you think he looks like Richard? she asked This was a question she had never asked before since the child was born Whom the child looked like every one knew but within the past year and a half Francis Armour's name had seldom been mentioned and never in connection with the child The child's mother asked the question with a strange quietness. Richard answered it without hesitation

The child looks like Frank he said As like him as can be

I am glad she said for all your sakes

You are very deep this morning Lali Richard said with a kind of helplessness.

Frank will be pretty proud of the youngster

when he comes back But he won t be prouder of him than I am

I know that she said Won t you be lonely without the boy—and me Richard ?

Again the question went home Lonely ? I should think I would he said— I should think I would But then you see sch ol is over and the master stays behind and makes up the marks You will find London a jollier master than I am Lah There ll be lots of shows and plenty to do and smart frocks and no end of feeds an l frolics an l that is more amusing than studying three hours a day with a dry old stick like me I tell you what when Frank comes——

She interrupted him Do not speak of that she said Then with a sudden burst of feeling though her words were scarcely audible I owe you everything Richard—everything that is good I owe him nothing Richard—nothing but what is bitter

Hush hush he said you must not speak that way Lah I want to say to you——

At that moment General Armour Mrs Armour and Marion appeared on the doorstep and the carriage came wheeling up the drive. What Richard intended to say was left unsaid The chances were it never would be said

Well well said General Armour calling down at them escort his imperial highness to the chariot which awaits him and then ho! for London town Come along my daughter he said to Lali come up here and take the last whiff of Greylope that you will have for six months Dear dear what lunatics we all are to be sure Why we're as happy as little birds in their nests out in the decent country and yet we scamper off to a smoky old city by the Thames to rush along with the world instead of sitting high and far away from it and watching it go by God bless my soul I'm old enough to know better Well let me help you in my dear he added to his wife and in you go Marion and in you go your imperial highness —he passed the child awkwardly in to Marion and in you go my daughter he added as he handed Lali in pressing her hand

with a brusque fatherlin s as he did so He then got in after them

Richard came to the side of the carriage and bade them all good bye one by one Lali gave him her hand but did not speak a word He called a cheerful adieu the horses were whipped up and in a n on ent Richard was left alone on the steps of the house He stood foi a time looking then he turned to go into the house but changed his mind sat down lit a cigar and did not move from his seat until he was summoned to his lonely luncheon.

Nobody thought much of leavin g Richard behind at Greyhope. It seemed the natural thing to do But still he had not been left alone—entirely alone—for three years or more

The days and weeks went on If Richard had been accounted eccentric before there was far greater cause for the term now Life dragged Too much had been taken out of his life all at once for in the first place the family had been drawn together more during the trouble which Lali s advent had brought then the child and its mother his pupil were gone also He wan

dered about in a kind of vague unrest The hardest thing in this world to get used to is the absence of a familiar footstep and the cheerful greeting of a familiar eye And the man with no chick or child feels even the absence of his dog from the hearthrug when he returns from a journey or his days work It gives him a sense of strangeness and loss But when it is the voice of a woman and the hand of a child that is missed you can back no speculation upon that mans mood or mind or conduct There is no influence like the influence of habit and that is how when the minds of people are at one physical distances and diff rences no matter how great are invisible or at least not obvious

Richard Armour was a sensible man but when one morning he suddenly packed a portmanteau and went up to town to Cavendish Square the act might be considered from two sides of the equation If he came back to enter again into the social life which for so many years he had abjured it was not very sensible because the world never welcomes its deserters,

it might if men and women grew younger in stead of older If he came to see his family or because he hungered for his godchild or because—but we are hurrying the situation It were wiser not to state the problem yet The afternoon that he arrived at Cavendish Square all his family were out except his brother s wife Lali was in the drawing room receiving a visitor who had asked for Mrs Armour and Mrs Francis Armour The visitor was received by Mrs Francis Armour The visitor knew that Mrs Armour was not at home She had by chance seen her and Marion in Bond Street and was not seen by them She straightway got into her carriage and drove up to Cavendish Square hoping to find Mrs Francis Armour at home There had been house parties at Creyhope since Lali had come there to live but this visitor though once an intimate friend of the family had never been a guest

The visitor was Lady Haldwell nce Miss Julia Sherwood who had made possible what was called Francis Armours tragedy Since Lali had come to town Lady Haldwell had seen

her but had never met her She was not at heart wicked but there are few women who can resist an opportunity of anatomizing and reckoning up the merits and demerits of a woman who has married an old lover When that woman is in the position of Mrs Francis Armour the situation has an unusual piquancy and interest Hence Lady Haldwell's journey of inquisition to Cavendish Square

As Richard passed the drawing room door to ascend the stairs he recognized the voices

Once a sort of heathen as Mrs Francis Armour had been she still could grasp the situation with considerable clearness There is nothing keener than one woman's instinct regarding another woman where a man is concerned Mrs Francis Armour received Lady Haldwell with a quiet *stateliness* which if it did not astonish her gave her sufficient warning that matters were not in this little comedy to be all her own way

Thrown upon the mere resources of wit and language Mrs Francis Armour must have been at a disadvantage For Lady Haldwell had a

good gift of speech a pretty talent for epithet and no unnecessary tenderness She bore Lali no malice She was too decorous and high for that In her mind the wife of the man she had discarded was a mere commonplace catastrophe to be viewed without horror maybe with pity She had heard the alien spoken well of by some people others had seemed indignant that the Armours should try to push a red woman into English society Truth is the Armours did not try at all to push her For over three years they had let society talk They had not entertained largely in Cavendish Square since Lali came and those invited to Greyhope had a chance to refuse the invitations if they chose Most people did not choose to decline them But Lady Haldwell was not of that number She had never been invited But now in town when entertainment must be more general she and the Armours were prepared for social interchange

Behind Lady Haldwell's visits curiosity chiefly ran. She was in a way sorry for Frank Armour for she had been fond of him after a fashion

always fonder of him than of Lord Haldwell She had married with her fingers holding the scales of advantage and Lord Haldwell dressed well was immensely rich and the title had a charm

When Mrs Francis Armour met her with her strange impressive dignity she was the slightest bit confused but not outwardly She had not expected it At first Lali did not know who her visitor was She had not caught the name distinctly from the servant

Presently Lady Haldwell said as Lali gave her hand —

I am Lady Haldwell As Miss Sherwood I was an old friend of your husband

A scornful glitter came into Mrs Armour s eyes—a peculiar touch of burnished gold an effect of the light at a certain angle of the lens It gave for the instant an uncanny look to the face almost something malicious She guessed why this woman had come She knew the whole history of the past and it touched her in a tender spot She knew she was had at an advantage Before her was a woman

perfectly trained in the fine social life to which she was born whose equanimity was as regular as her features Herself was by nature a creature of impulse of the woods and streams and open life The social convention had been engrafted As yet she was used to thinking and speaking with all candour She was to have her training in the charms of superficiality but that was to come and when it came she would not be an unskilful apprentice Perhaps the latent subtlety of her race came to help her natural candour at the moment For she said at once in a slow quiet tone —

I never heard my husband speak of you Will you sit down?

And Mrs Armour and Marion are not in?

No I suppose your husband did not speak much of his old friends

The attack was studied and cruel But Lady Haldwell had been stung by Mrs Armour's remark and it piqued her that this was possible

Oh yes he spoke of some of his friends but not of you

Indeed That is strange

There was no necessity said Mrs Armour quietly

Of discussing me? I suppose not But by some chance——

It was just as well perhaps not to anticipate the pleasure of our meeting

Lady Haldwell was surprised She had not expected this cleverness They talked casually for a little time the visitor trying in vain to delicately give the conversation a personal turn At last a little foolishly she grew bolder with a needless selfishness

So old a friend of your husband as I am I am hopeful you and I may be friends also

Mrs Armour saw the move

You are very kind she said conventionally and offered a cup of tea.

Lady Haldwell now ventured unwisely She was nettled at the other's self possession

But then in a way I have been your friend for a long time Mrs Armour

The point was veiled in a vague tone but Mrs Armour understood Her reply was not wanting

Any one who has been a friend to my hus band has naturally claims upon me

Lady Haldwell in spite of herself chafed There was a subtlety in the woman before her not to be reckoned with lightly

And if an enemy? she said smiling

A strange smile also flickered across Mrs Armour s face as she said —

If an enemy of my husband called and was penitent I should—offer her tea no doubt

That is in this country but in your own country which I believe is different what would you do?

Mrs Armour looked steadily and coldly into her visitor s eyes

In my country enemies do not compel us to be polite

By calling on you? Lady Haldwell was growing a little reckless But then that is a savage country We are different here I suppose however your husband told you of these things so that you were not surprised And when does he come? His stay is pro

tracted Let me see how long is it? Ah yes near four years Here she became altogether reckless which she regretted afterwards for she knew after all what was due herself He *will* come back I suppose?

Lady Haldwell was no coward else she had hesitated before speaking in that way before this woman in whose blood was the wildness of the heroical North Perhaps she guessed the passion in Lalis breast perhaps not In any case she would have said what she listed at the moment

Wild as were the passions in Lalis breast she thought on the instant of her child of what Richard Armour would say for he had often talked to her about not showing her emotions and passions had told her that violence of all kinds was not wise or proper Her fingers ached to grasp this beautiful exasperating woman by the throat But after an effort at calmness she remained still and silent looking at her visitor with a scornful dignity Lady Haldwell presently rose—she could not endure the furnace of that look—and said good bye

She turned towards the door Mrs Armour remained immovable At that instant however some one stepped from behind a large screen just inside the door It was Richard Armour He was pale and on his face was a sternness the like of which this and perhaps only one other woman had ever seen on him He interrupted her

Lady Haldwell has a fine talent for irony he said but she does not always use it wisely In a man it would bear another name and from a man it would be differently received He came close to her You are a brave woman he said or you would have been more careful Of course you knew that my mother and sister were not at home?

She smiled languidly And why of course?

I do not know that only I know that I think so and I also think that my brother Frank's worst misfortune did not occur when Miss Julia Sherwood trafficked without compunction in his happiness

Don't be oracular my dear Richard Armour she said you are trying really This seems

almost melodramatic and melodrama is bad enough at Drury Lane

You are not a good friend even to yourself he answered

What a discoverer you are And how much in earnest Do come back to the world Mr Armour you would be a relief a new sensation

I fancy I shall come back if only to see the engineer hoist with his own —torpedo

He paused before the last word to give it point for her husband s father had made his money out of torpedoes She felt the sting in spite of herself and she saw the po nt

And then we will talk it over at the end of the season he added and compare notes Good afternoon

You stake much on your hazard she said glancing back at Lali who still stood immov able *Au revoir !*

She left the room Richard heard the door close after her and the servant retire Then he turned to Lali

As he did so she ran forward to him with a

cry O Richard Richard she said with a sob threw her arms over his shoulder and let her forehead drop on his breast Then came a sudden impulse in his blood Long after he shuddered when he remembered what he thought at that instant what he wished to do what rich madness possessed him He knew now why he had come to town he also knew why he must not stay or if staying what must be his course

He took her gently by the arm and led her to a chair speaking cheerily to her Then he sat down beside her and all at once again her face wet and burning she flung herself forward on her knees beside him and clung to him

O Richard I am glad you have come she said I would have killed her if I had not thought of you I want you to stay I am always better when you are with me I have missed you and I know that baby misses you too

He had his cue He rose trembling a little Come come he said heartily its all right its all right—my sister Let us go and see the

youngster There dry your eyes and forget all about that woman She is only envious of you. Come for his imperial highness

She was in a tumult of feeling It was seldom that she had shown emotion in the past two years and it was the more ample when it did break forth But she dried her eyes and together they went to the nursery She dismissed the nurse and they were left alone by the sleeping child She knelt at the head of the little cot and touched the child's forehead with her lips He stooped down also beside it

He's a grand little fellow he said Lali he continued presently it is time Frank came home I am going to write for him If he does not come at once I shall go and fetch him

Never never Her eyes flashed angrily Promise that you will not Let him come when he is ready He does not care She shuddered a little

But he will care when he comes and you—you care for him Lali?

Again she shuddered and a whiteness ran under the hot excitement of her cheeks She

said nothing but looked up at him then dropped her face in her hands

You do care for him Lali he said earnestly almost solemnly his lips twitching slightly

You must care for him it is his right and he will—I swear to you I know he will—care for you

In his own mind there was another thought a hard strange thought and it had to do with the possibility of his brother not caring for this wife

Still she did not speak

To a good woman with a good husband he continued there is no one—there should be no one—like the father of her child And no woman ever loved her child more than you do yours He knew that this was special pleading

She trembled and then dropped her cheek beside the child s I want Frank to be happy he went on there is no one I care more for than for Frank

She lifted her face to him now in it a strange light Then her look ran to confusion and she

seemed to read all that he meant to convey He knew she did He touched her shoulder

You must do the best you can every way for Franks sake for all our sakes I will help you—God knows I will—all I can

Oh yes yes she said from the childs pillow He could see the flame in her cheek I understand She put out her hand to him but did not look up Leave me alone with my baby Richard she pleaded

He took her hand and pressed it again and again in his old unconscious way Then he let it go and went slowly to the door There he turned and looked back at her He mastered the hot thought in him

God help me! she murmured from the cot

The next morning Richard went back to Greyhope

CHAPTER VII

A COURT MARTIAL

It was hard to tell save for a certain deliberate ness of speech and a colour a little more pro nounced than that of a Spanish woman that Mrs Frank Armour had not been brought up in England She had a kind of grave sweetness and distant charm which made her notable at any table or in any ballroom Indeed it soon became apparent that she was to be the pleas ant talk the interest of the season This was tolerably comforting to the Armours. Again Richard s prophecy had been fulfilled and as he sat alone at Greyhope and read the *Morning Post* noticing Lali s name at distinguished gatherings or picking up the *World* saw how the lion hunters talked extravagantly of her he took some satisfaction to himself that he had

foreseen her triumph where others looked for her downfall Lali herself was not elated it gratified her but she had been an angel and a very unsatisfactory one if it had not done so As her confidence grew (though outwardly she had never appeared to lack it greatly) she did not hesitate to speak of herself as an Indian her country as a good country and her people as a noble if dispossessed race all the more so if she thought reference to her nationality and past was being rather conspicuously avoided She had asked General Armour for an interview with her husband's solicitor This was granted When she met the solicitor she asked him to send no newspaper to her husband containing any reference to herself nor yet to mention her in his letters

She had never directly received a line from him but once and that was after she had come to know the truth about his marriage with her She could read in the conventional sentences made simple as for a child the strained politeness and his absolute silence as to whether or not a child had been born to them the utter

absence of affection for her She had also in duced General Armour and his wife to give her husband s solicitor no information regard ing the birth of the child There was thus apparently no more inducement for him to hurry back to England than there was when he had sent her off on his mission of retaliation which had been such an ignominious failure For the humiliation of his family had been short lived the affront to Lady Haldwell nothing at all The Armours had not been human if they had failed to enjoy their daughter in law s success Although they never perhaps would quite recover the disappointment concerning Lady Agnes Martling the result was so much better than they in their cheerfullest moments dared hope for that they appeared genuinely content.

To their grandchild they were devotedly attached Marion was his faithful slave and admirer so much so that Captain Vidall who now and then was permitted to see the child declared himself jealous he and Marion were to be married soon The wedding had been

delayed owing to his enforced absence abroad. Mrs Edward Lambert once Mrs Townley shyly regretted in Lalı s presence that the child or one as sweet was not heis. Her husband evi dently shared her opinion from the extraordi nary notice he took of it when his w fe was not present Not that Richard Joseph Armour jun was always *en évidence* but when asked for by his faithful friends and admirers hc was amiably produced

Meanwhile Frank Armour across the sea was engaged with many things His business con cerns had not prospered prodigiously chiefly be cause his judgment like his temper had grown somewhat uncertain His popularity in the Hudson s Bay Company had been at some ten sion since he had shipped his wife away to England Even the ordinary savage mind saw something unusual and undomestic in it and the general hospitality declined a little Armour did not immediately guess the cause but one day about a year after his wife had gone he found occasion to reprove a half breed by name Jacques Pontiac and Jacques with more

honesty than politeness said some hard words and asked how much he paid for his English hired devils to kill his wife Strange to say he did not resent this startling remark It set him thinking He began to blame himself for not having written oftener to his people—and to his wife He wondered how far his revenge had succeeded He was most ashamed of it now He knew that he had done a dishonourable thing The more he thought upon it the more angry with himself he became Yet he dreaded to go back to England and face it all the reproach of his people the amusement of society his wife herself He never attempted to picture her as a civilized being He scarcely knew her when he married her She knew him much better for primitive people are quicker in the play of their passions and she had come to love him before he had begun to notice her at all

Presently he ate his heart out with mortification To be yoked for ever to—a savage It was horrible And their children? It was strange he had not thought of that before

Children? He shrugged his shoulders. There might possibly be a child but children—never But he doubted even regarding a child for no word had come to him concerning that possibility He was even most puzzled at the tone and substance of their letters From the beginning there had been no reproaches no excitement no railing but studied kindness and conventional statements through which Mrs Armour's solicitous affection scarcely ever peeped He had shot his bolt and got—consideration almost imperturbability They appeared to treat the matter as though he were a wild youth who would not yet mend his ways He read over their infrequent letters to him his to them had been still more infrequent In one there was the statement that she was progressing favourably with her English in another that she was riding a good deal again that she appeared anxious to adapt herself to her new life

At all these he whistled a little to himself and smiled bitterly Then all at once he got up and straightway burned them all He again

tried to put the matter behind him for the present knowing that he must face it one day, and staving off its reality as long as possible. He did his utmost to be philosophical and say his *quid refert* but it was easier tried than done for Jacques Pontiac's words kept rankling in his mind and he found himself carrying round a vague load which made him abstracted occasionally and often a little reckless in action and speech In hunting bear and moose he had proved himself more daring than the oldest hunter and proportionately successful He paid his servants well but was sharp with them

He made long hard expeditions defying the weather as the hardiest of prairie and mountain men mostly hesitate to defy it he bought up much land then dissatisfied sold it again at a loss but subsequently made final arrangements for establishing a very large farm When he once became actually interested in this he shook off something of his moodiness and settled himself to develop the thing He had good talent for initiative and administration and at last in the time when his wife was a feature of the

London season he found his scheme in work ing order and the necess ty of going to England was forced upon him

Actually he wished that the absolute necessity had presented itself before. There was always the moral necessity of course—but then Here now was a business need and he must go Yet he did not fix a day or make definite arrangements He could hardly have believed himself such a coward With liberal emphasis he called himself a sneak and one day at Fort Charles sat down to write to his solicitor in Montreal to say that he would come on at once Still he hesitated As he sat there thinking Eye of the Moon his father in law opened the door quietly and entered He had avoided the chief ever since he had come back to Fort Charles and practically had not spoken to him for a year Armour flushed sl ghtly with annoy ance But presently with a touch of his old humour he rose held out l s hand and said ironically Well father in law it s about time we had a big talk isn t it? We are not very intimate for such close relativ es

The old Indian did not fully understand the meaning or the tone of Armour's speech but he said *How!* and reaching out his hand for the pipe offered him lighted it and sat down smoking in silence Armour waited but seeing that the other was not yet moved to talk he turned to his letter again After a time Eye-of the-Moon said gravely getting to his feet Brother

Armour looked up then rose also The Indian bowed to him courteously then sat down again Armour threw a leg over a corner of the table and waited

Brother said the Indian presently you are of the great race that conquers us You come and take our land and our game and we at last have to beg of you for food and shelter Then you take our daughters and we know not where they go They are gone like the down from the thistle We see them not but you remain. And men say evil things There are bad words abroad Brother what have you done with my daughter?

Had the Indian come and stormed begged money of him sponged on him or abused him

he had taken it very calmly—he in fact had been superior But there was dignity in the chief's manner there was solemnity in his speech his voice conveyed resoluteness and earnestness which the stoic calm of his face might not have suggested and Armour felt that he had no advantage at all Besides Armour had a conscience though he had played some rare tricks with it of late and it needed more hardihood than he possessed to face this old man down And why face him down? Lali was his daughter blood of his blood the chieftainess of one branch of his people honoured at least among these poor savages and the old man had a right to ask as asked another more famous Where is my daughter?

His hands in his pockets Armour sat silent for a minute eyeing his boot as he swung his leg to and fro Presently he said Eye of the Moon I don't think I can talk as poetically as you even in my own language and I shall not try But I should like to ask you this Do you believe *any harm has come to your daughter*—to my wife?

The old Indian forgot to blow the tobacco smoke from his mouth and as he sat lebating lips slightly apart it came leaking out in little trailing clouds and gave a strange appearance to his iron featured face He looked steadily at Armour and said You are of those who rule in your land —here Armour protested— you have much gold to buy and sell I am a chief —he drew himself up— I am poor we speak with the straight tongue it is cowards who lie Speak deep as from the heart my brother and tell me where my daughter is

Armour could not but respect the chief for the way this request was put but still it galled him to think that he was under suspicion of having done any bodily injury to his wife so he quietly persisted Do you think I have done Lali any harm?

The thing is strange replied the other You are of those who are great among your people You married a daughter of a red man Then she was yours for less than one moon and you sent her far away and you stayed Her father was as a dog in your sight Do men

whose hearts are clear act so? They have said strange things of you I have not believed but it is good I know all that I may say to the tale bearers You have crooked tongues

Armour sat for a moment longer his face turned to the open window He was perfectly still but he had become grave He was about to reply to the chief when the trader entered the room hurriedly with a newspaper in his hand He paused abruptly when he saw Eye of the Moon Armour felt that the trader had something important to communicate He guessed it was in the paper He mutely held out his hand for t The trader handed it to him hesitatingly at the same time pointing to a paragraph and saying It is nearly two years old as you see I chanced upon it by accident to day

It was a copy of a London evening paper containing a somewhat sensational account of Lali s accident It said that she was in a critical condition This time Armour did not ask for brandy but the trader put it out beside him He shook his head Gordon he said

presently I shall leave here in the morning Please send my men to me

The trader whispered to him She was all right of course long ago Mr Armour or you would have heard

Armour looked at the date of the paper He had several letters from England of a later date and these said nothing of her illness It bewildered him made him uneasy Perhaps the first real sense of his duty as a husband came home to him there For the first time he was anxious about the woman for her own sake The trader left the room

What a scoundrel I ve been said Armour between his teeth oblivious for the moment of Eye of the Moon s presence Presently be thinking himself he turned to the Indian I ve been debating he said Eye of the Moon my wife is in England at my fathers home I am going to her Men have lied in thinking I would do her any injury but—but—never mind the harm was of another kind It isn t wise for a white man and an Indian to marry but when they are married—well they must

live as man and wife should live and as I said I am going to my wife—your daughter

To say all this to a common Indian whose only property was a half dozen ponies and a couple of tepees required something very like moral courage but then Armour had not been exercising moral courage during the last year or so and its exercise was profitable to him The next morning he was on his way to Montreal and Eye-of the Moon was the richest chief in British North America at that moment by five thousand dollars or so

CHAPTER VIII

TO EVERY MAN HIS HOUR

It was the close of the season many people had left town but festivities were still on To a stranger the season might have seemed at its height The Armours were giving a large party in Cavendish Square before going back again to Greyhope where for the sake of Lah and her child they intended t remain during the rest of the summer in preference to going on the Continent or to Scotland The only unsatisfactory feature of Lah s season was the absence of her husband Naturally there were those who said strange things regarding Frank Armour s stay in America but it was pretty generally known that he was engaged in land speculations and his club friends who perhaps took the pleasantest view of the matter said

that he was very wise indeed if a little cowardly in staying abroad until his wife was educated and ready to take her position in society There was one th ng on which they were all agreed Mrs Frank Armour either had a mind superior to the charms of their sex, or was incapable of that vanity which hath many suitors and says 'So far shalt thou go and—— The fact is Mrs Frank Armour's mind was superior She had only one object —to triumph over her husband grandly as a woman righteously might She had vanity of course but it was not ignoble She kept one thing in view she lived for it Her transla tion had been successful There were times when she remembered her father the wild days on the prairies the buffalo hunt tracking the deer tribal battles the long silent hours of the winter and the warm summer nights when she slept in the prairie grass or camped with her people in the trough of a great land wave Sometimes the hunger for its freedom and its idleness and its sport came to her greatly but she thought of her child, and she put it from

her She was ambitious for him she was keen to prove her worth as a wife against her husband s unworthiness This perhaps saved her She might have lost had her life been without this motive

The very morning of this notable reception General Armour had received a note from Frank Armour s solicitor saying that his son was likely to arrive in London from America that day or the next Frank had written to his people no word of his coming to his wife as we have said he had not written for months and before he started back he would not write because he wished to make what amends he could in person He expected to find her improved of course but still he could only think of her as an Indian showing her common prairie origin His knowledge of her before their marriage had been particularly brief she was little more in his eyes than a thousand other Indian women save that she was better looking was whiter than most and had finer features He could not very clearly remember the tones of her voice because after marriage

and before he had sent her to England he had seen little or nothing of her

When General Armour received the news of Frank's return he told his wife and Marion and they consulted together whether it were good to let Lali know at once He might arrive that evening If so the position would be awkward because it was impossible to tell how it might affect her If they did tell her and Frank happened not to arrive it might unnerve her so as to make her appearance in the evening doubtful Richard the wiseacre the inexhaustible Richard was caring for his cottagers and cutting the leaves of new books —his chiefest pleasure—at Greyhope They felt it was a matter they ought to be able to decide for themselves but still it was the last evening of Lali's stay in town and they did not care to take any risk Strange to say they had come to take pride in their son's wife for even General and Mrs Armour high minded and of serene social status as they were seemed not quite insensible to the pleasure of being an axle on which a system of social notoriety revolved

At the opportune moment Captain Vidall was announced and because he and Marion were soon to carry but one name between them he was called into family consultation It is somewhat singular that in this case the women were quite wrong and the men were quite right For General Armour and Captain Vidall were for silence until Frank came if he came that day or for telling her the following morning when the function was over And the men prevailed

Marion was much excited all day she had given orders that Frank's room should be made ready but for whom she gave no information While Lali was dressing for the evening something excited and nervous she entered her room They were now the best of friends The years had seen many shifting scenes in their companionship they had been as often at war as at peace but they had respected each other each after her own fashion and now they had a real and mutual regard Lal s was a slim lithe figure wearing its fashionable robes with an air of possession and the face above it if

not entirely beautiful had a strange warm fascination The girl had not been a chieftainess for nothing A look of quiet command was there but also a far away expression which gave a faint look of sadness e en when a smile was at the lips The smile itself did not come quickly—it grew but above it all was hair of perfect brown—most rare—setting off her face as a plume does a helmet She showed no surprise when Marion entered She welcomed her with a smile and outstretched hand but said nothing

Lali said Marion somewhat abruptly—she scarcely knew why she said it— are you happy ?

It was strange how the Indian girl had taken on those little manners of society which convey so much by inflection She lifted her eyebrows at Marion and said presently in a soft deliberate voice Come Marion we will go and see little Richard then I shall be happy

She linked her arm through Marion s Marion drummed her fingers lightly on the beautiful

arm and then fell to wondering what she should say next They passed into the room where the child lay sleeping they went to his little bed and Lali stretched out her hand gently touching the curls of the ch ld Running a finger through one delicately she said with a still softer tone than before Why should not one be happy ?

Marion looked up slowly into her eyes let a hand fall on her shoulder gently and replied

Lali do you never wish Frank to come ?

Lali s fingers came from the child the colour mounted slowly to l er forehead and she drew the girl away again into the other room Then she turned and faced Marion a deep fire in her eyes and said in a whisper almost hoarse in its intensity Yes I w sh he would come to night.

She looked harder yet at Marion then with a flash of pride and her hands clasping before her she drew herself up and added Am I not worthy to be his wife now ? An I not beautiful —for a savage ?

There was no common vanity in the action

It had a noble kind of wistfulness and a serenity that entirely redeemed it Marion dated her own happiness from th time when Lah met her accident for in the evening of that disastrous day she issued to Captain Hume Vidall a commission which he could never—wished never—to resign Since then she had been at her best we are all more or less selfish creatures and had grown gentler curbing the delicate imperiousness of her nature and frankly and without the least pique taken a secondary position of interest in the household occasioned by Lahs popularity She looked Lah up and down with a glance in which many feelings met and then catching her hands wanly she lifted them put them on her own shoulders and said

My dear beautiful savage you are fit and worthy to be Queen of England and Frank when he comes——

Hush said the other dreamily and put a finger on Marions lips I know what you are going to say but I don t wish to hear it He did not love me then He used me — She shuddered put her hands to her eyes with a

pained trembling motion then threw her head back with a quick sigh But I will not speak of it Come we are for the lance Marion It is the last to night to morrow — She paused looking straight before her lost in thought

Yes to morrow Lah

I do not know about to morrow was the reply Strange things come to pass

Marion longed to tell her then and there the great news but she was afraid to do so and was moreover withheld by the remembrance that it had been agreed she should not be told She said nothing

At eleven o'clock the rooms were filled For the fag end of the season people seemed unusually brilliant The evening itself was not so hot as common and there was an extra array of distinguished guests Marion was nervous all the evening though she showed little of it being most prettily employed in making people pleased with themselves Mrs Armour also was not free from apprehension In reply to inquiries concerning her son she said as she had often said during the season that he might be

back at any time now Lali had answered always in the same fashion and had shown no sign that his continued absence was singular As the evening wore on the probability of Frank s appearance seemed less and the Ar mours began to breathe more freely

Frank had however arrived He had driven straight from Euston to Cavendish Square but seeing the house lighted up and guests arriving he had a sudden feeling of uncertainty He ordered the cabman to take him to his club There he put himself in evening dress and drove back again to the house He entered quietly At the moment the hall was almost deserted people were mostly in the ballroom and supper room He paused a moment biting his mous tache as if in perplexity A strange timidity came on him All his old dash and self posses sion seemed to have forsaken him Presently seeing a number of people entering the hall he made for the staircase and went hastily up Mechanically he went to his own room and found it lighted Flowers were set about and everything was made ready as for a guest He

sat down not thinking but dazed Glancing up he saw his face in a mirror It was bronzed but it looked rather old and care worn He shrugged a shoulder at that Then in the mirror he saw also something else It startled him so that he sat perfectly still for a moment looking at it It was some one laughing at him over his shoulder—a child He got to his feet and turned round On the table was a very large photograph of a smiling child—with *his* eyes *his* face He caught the chair arm and stood looking at it a little wildly Then he laughed a strange laugh and the tears leaped to his eyes He caught the picture in his hands and kissed it—very foolishly men not fathers might think—and read the name beneath Richard Joseph Armour and again beneath that the date of birth He then put it back on the table and sat looking at it—looking and forgetting and remembering

Presently the door opened and some one entered It was Marion She had seen him pass through the hall she had then gone and told her father and mother to prepare them

and had followed him upstairs He did not hear her She stepped softly forward Frank she said— Frank and laid a hand on his shoulder He started up and turned his face on her Then he caught her hands and kissed her Marion he said and he could say no more But presently he pointed towards the photograph

She nodded her head Yes it is your child Frank Though of course you don t deserve t Frank dear she added I am glad— we shall all be glad—to have you back but you are a wicked man She felt she must say that

Now he only nodded and still looked at the portrait Where is—my wife? he added presently

She s in the ballroom Marion was wondering what was best to do

He caught his thumb nail in his teeth He winced in spite of himself I will go to her he said and then—the baby

I am glad she replied that you have so much sense of justice left Frank the wife

first the baby afterwards But do you think you deserve either?

He became moody and made an impatient gesture Lady Agnes Marthng is here and also Lady Haldwell she persisted cruelly She did not mind because she knew he would have enough to compensate him afterwards

Marion he said say it all and let me have it over Say what you like and I'll not whimper I'll face it But I want to see my child

She was sorry for him She had really wanted to see how much he was capable of feeling in the matter Wait here Frank she said That will be best and I will bring your wife to you

He said nothing but assented with a motion of the hand and she left him where he was He braced himself for the interview Assuredly a man loses something of natural courage and self-confidence when he has done a thing of which he should be and is ashamed

It seemed a long time (it was in reality but a couple of minutes) before the door opened

again and Marion said Frank your wife! and then retreated

The door closed leaving a stately figure standing just inside it The figure did not move forward but stood there full of life and fine excitement but very still also

Frank Armour was confounded He came forward slowly looking hard Was this distinguished handsome reproachful woman his wife —Lali the Indian girl whom he had married in a fit of pique and brandy? He could hardly believe his eyes and yet l ers looked out at him with something that he remembered too together with something which he did not remember making him uneasy Clearly his great mistake had turned from ashes into fruit Lali, my wife he said and held out his hand

She reached out hers courteously but her fingers gave him no response

We have many things to say to each other she said but they cannot be said now I shall be missed from the ballroom

Miss A from the ballroom? He almost laughed to think how strange this sounded in

his ears As if interpreting his thought she added You see it is our last affair of the season and we are all anxious to do our duty perfectly Will you go down with me? We can talk afterwards

Her continued self possession utterly confused him She had utterly confused Marion also when told that her husband was in the house She had had presentiments and besides she had been schooling herself for this hour for a long time She turned towards the door

But he asked like a supplicant our child! I want to see our child

She lifted her eyebrows then seeing the photograph of the baby on the table understood how he knew Come with me then she said with a little more feeling

She led the way along the landing and paused at her door Remember that we have to appear amongst the guests directly she said as though to warn him against any demonstration Then they entered She went over to the cot and drew back the fleecy curtain from over the sleeping boy's head His fingers

hungered to take his child to his arms He is magnificent magnificent he said with a great pride Why did you never let me know of it?

How could I tell what you would do? she calmly replied You married me—wickedly and used me wickedly afterwards and I loved the child.

You loved the child? he repeated after her

Lal he said I don t deserve it but forgive me if you can—for the child s sake

We had better go below she calmly replied we have both duties to do You will of course —appear with me—before them?

The slight irony in the tone cut him horribly He offered his arm in silence They passed on to the staircase

It s necessary she said to appear cheerful before one s guests

She had him at an advantage at every point

We will be cheerful then was his reply spoken with a grim kind of humour You have learned it all haven t you? he added

They were just entering the ballroom Yes with your kind help—and absence she replied

The surprise of the guests was somewhat diminished by the fact that Marion telling General Armour and his wife first of Franks return industriously sent the news buzzing about the room

The two went straight to Franks father and mother Their parts were all excellently played Then Frank mingled among the guests being very heartily greeted and heard congratulations on all sides Old club friends rallied him as a deserter and new acquaintances flocked about him and presently he awakened to the fact that his Indian wife had been an interest of the season was not the least admired person present It was altogether too good luck for him but he had an uncomfortable conviction that he had a long path of penance to walk before he could hope to enjoy it

All at once he met Lady Hallwell who in spite of all still accepted invitations to General Armours house—the strange scene between Lali and herself never having been disclosed to the family He had nothing but bitterness in his heart for her but he spoke a few smooth words

and she languidly congratulated him on his bronzed appearance He asked for a dance but she had not one to give him As she was leaving she suddenly turned as though she had forgotten something and looking at him said

I forgot to congratulate you on your marriage I hope it is not too late ?

He bowed Your congratulations are so sincere he said that they would be *a propos* late or early

When he stood with his wife whilst the guests were leaving and saw with what manner she carried it all off as though she had been born in the good land of good breeding he was moved alternately with wonder and shame—shame that he had intended this noble creature as a sacrifice to his ugly temper and spite

When all the guests were gon and the family stood alone in the drawing room a silence suddenly fell amongst them Presently Marion said to her mother in a half whisper I wish Richard were here

They all felt the extreme awkwardness of the

Armour Mrs Armour and Marion good night and then turning to her husband said Good night She did not even speak his name.

Perhaps you would care to ride to morrow morning? I always go to the Park at ten and this will be my last ride of the season

Had she written out an elaborate proclamation of her intended attitude towards her husband it could not have more clearly conveyed her mind than this little speech delivered as to a most friendly acquaintance General Armour pulled his moustache fiercely and it is possible enjoyed the situation despite its peril Mrs Armour turned to the mantel and seemed tremulously engaged in arranging some bric a brac Marion however with a fine instinct slid her arm through that of Lah and gently said Yes of course Frank will be glad of a ride in the Park He used to ride with me every morning But let us go us three and kiss the baby good night — good night till we meet in the morning

She linked her arm now through Frank s and as she did so he replied to I ah I shall be glad to ride in the morning but——

But we can arrange it at breakfast said his wife hurriedly At the same time she allowed herself to be drawn away to the hall with her husband

He was very angry but he knew he had no right to be so He choked back his wrath and moved on amiably enough and suddenly the fashion in which the tables had been turned on him struck him with its tragic comedy and he involuntarily smiled His sense of humour saved him from words and acts which might possibly have made the matter a pure tragedy after all He loosed his arm from Marion s

I must bid our father and mother good night Then I will join you both— in the court of the king And he turned and went back and said to his father as he kissed his mother I am had at an advantage General

And serves you right my boy You had the odds with you she has captured them like a born soldier

His mother said to him gently Frank you blamed us but remember that we wished only your good Take my advice dear and

try to love your wife and win her confidence

Love her—*try* to love her? he said I shall easily do that But the other—— He shook his head a little though what he meant perhaps he did not know quite himself and then followed Marion and Lah upstairs Marion had tried to escape from Lah but was told that she must stay and the three met at the child's cot Marion stooped down and kissed its forehead Frank stooped also and kissed its cheek Then the wife kissed the other cheek The child slept peacefully on

You can always see the baby here before breakfast if you choose said Lah and she held out her hand again in good night At this point Marion stole away in spite of Lah's quick little cry of Wait Marion! and the two were left alone again

I am very tired she said I would rather not talk to night The dismissal was evident

He took her hand held it an instant and presently said I will not detain you but I

would ask you Lali to remember that you are my wife Nothing can alter that

Still we are only strangers as you know she quietly rejoined

You forget the days we were together—after we were married he cautiously urged

I am not the same girl you killed her We have to start again I know all

You know that in my wretched anger and madness I——

Oh pleas do not speak of it she said it is so bad even in thought

But will you never forgive me and care for me? We have to live our lives together

Pray let us not speak of it now she said in a weary voice then breathlessly It is of much more conse quence that you should love me —and the child

He drew himself up with a choking sigh and spread out his arms to her O my wife he said

No no she cried this is unreasonable we know so little of each other Good night again.

He turned at the door came back and stoop ing kissed the child on the lips Then he said You are right I deserve to suffer Good night

But when he was gone she dropped on he knees and kissed the child many times on th lips also

CHAPTER IX

THE FAITH OF COMRADES

WHEN Francis Armour left his wife's room he did not go to his own but quietly descended the stairs went to the library and sat down The loneliest thing in the world is to be *tête a tête* with one's conscience A man may have a bad hour with an enemy a sad hour with a friend a peaceful hour with himself but when the little dwarf conscience perches upon every hillock of remembrance and makes slow signs —those strange symbols of the language of the soul—to him no slave upon the treadmill suffers more

The butler came in to see if anything was required but Armour only greeted him silently and waved him away His brain was painfully alert his memory singularly awake It seemed

that the incident of this hour had so opened up every channel of his intelligence that all his life ran past him in fantastic panorama as by that illumination which comes to the drowning man. He seemed under some strange spell Once or twice he rose rubbed his eyes and looked round the room—the room where as a boy he had spent idle hours where as a student he had been in the hands of his tutor and as a young man had found recreations such as belong to ambitious and ardent youth Every corner was familiar Nothing was changed The books upon the shelves were as they were placed twenty years ago And yet he did not seem a part of it It did not seem natural to him He was in an atmosphere of strangeness—that atmosphere which surrounds a man as by a cloud when some crisis comes upon him and his life seems to stand still whirling upon its narrow base while the world appears at an interminable distance even as to a deaf man who sees yet cannot hear

There came home to him at that moment with a force indescribable the shamelessness of

the act he committed four years ago He had thought to come back to miserable humiliation For four years he had refused to do his duty as a man towards an innocent woman—a woman though in part a savage—now transformed into a gentle noble creature of delight and goodness How had he deserved it? He had sown the storm—it was but just that he should reap the whirlwind he had scattered thistles—could he expect to gather grapes? He knew that the sympathy of all his father s house was not with him but with the woman he had wronged He was glad it was so Looking back now it seemed so poor and paltry a thing that he a man should stoop to revenge himself upon those who had given him b rth as a kind of insult to the woman who had lightly set him aside and should use for that purpose a helpless confiding girl To revenge one s self for wrong to one s self is but a common passion which has little dignity to avenge some one whom one has loved man or woman—and before all woman—has some touch of nobility is redeemed by loyalty For his act there was not one word of

defence to be made and he was not prepared to make it.

The cigars and liquors were beside him but he did not touch them He seemed very far away from the ordinary details of his life he knew he had before him hard travel and he was not confident of the end He could not tell how long he sat there After a time the ticking of the clock seemed painfully loud to him Now and again he heard a cab rattling through the Square and the foolish song of some drunken loiterer in the night caused him to start painfully Everything jarred on him Once he got up went to the window and looked out The moon was shining full on the Square He wondered if it would be well for him to go out and find some quiet to his nerves in walking He did so Out in the Square he looked up to his wife s window It was lighted Long time he walked up and down his eyes on the window It held him like a charm Once he leaned against the iron railings of the garden and looked up not moving for a time Presently he saw the curtain of the window raised and

against the dim light of the room was outlined the figure of his wife He knew it She stood for a moment looking out into the night She could not see him nor could he see her features at all plainly but he knew that she like him was alone with the catastrophe which his wickedness had sent upon her Soon the curtain was drawn down again and then he went once more to the house and took his old seat beside the table He fell to brooding and at last exhausted dropped to a troubled sleep

He woke with a start Some one was in the room He heard a step behind him He came to his feet quickly a wild light in his eyes He faced his brother Richard

Late in the afternoon Marion had telegraphed to Richard that Frank was coming He had been away visiting some poor and sick people and when he came back to Greyhope it was too late to catch the train But the horses were harnessed straightway and he was driven into town a three hours drive He had left the horses at the stables and having a latch key had come in quietly He had seen the light

in the study and guessed who was there He entered and saw his brother asleep He watched him for a moment and studied him Then he moved away to take off his hat and as he did so stumbled slightly Then it was Frank waked and for the first time in five years they looked each other in the eyes They both stood immovable for a moment and then Richard caught Frank s hand in both of his and said God bless you my boy I am glad you are back

Dick Dick was the reply and Frank s other hand clutched Richard s shoulder in his strong emotion They stood s lent for a moment longer and then Richard recovered himself He wave l his hand to the chairs The strain of the situation was a little painful for them both Men are shy with each other where their emotions are in play

Why my boy he said waving a hand to the wine and liquors full bottles ar d unopened boxes? Tut tut here s a pretty how d ye do Is this the way you toast the home quarters? You re a fine soldier for an old mess!

So saying he poured out some whisky then

opened the box of cigars and pushed them to- wards his brother He did not care particularly to drink or smoke himself but a man—an Englishman—is a strange creature He is most natural and at ease when he is engaged in eat ing and drinking He relieves every trying situa tion by some frivolous and selfish occupation as of dismembering a partridge or mixing a punch

Well Frank said his brother now what have you to say for yourself? Why didn t you come long ago? You have played the adventurer for five years and what have you *to show for it? Have you a fortune?* Frank shook his head and twisted a shoulder What have you done that is worth the doing then?

Nothing that I intended to do Dick was the grave reply

Yes I imagined that You have seen *them* have you Frank? he added in a softer voice

Frank blew a great cloud of smoke about his face and through it he said Yes Dick I have seen a damned sight more than I deserved to see

Oh of course I know that my boy but so far as I can see in another direction you are

getting quite what you deserve your wife and child are upstairs you are here

He paused was silent for a moment then leaned over caught his brother's arm and said in a low strenuous voice Frank Armour you laid a hateful little plot for us It wasn't manly but we forgave it and did the best we could But see here Frank take my word for it you have had a lot of luck there isn't one woman out of ten thousand that would have stood the test as your wife has stood it—injured at the start constant neglect temptation——— He paused My boy did you ever think of that —*of the temptation to a woman neglected by her* husband? The temptation to men? Yes you have had a lot of luck There has been a special providence for you my boy but not for your sake God doesn't love neglectful husbands but I think He is pretty sorry for neglected wives

Frank was very still His head drooped the cigar hung unheeded in his fingers for a moment and he said at last Dick old comrade I've thought it all over tonight since I came back—everything that you've said I have not

a word of defence to make but by Heaven I'm going to win my wife's love if I can and when I do it I'll make up for all my cursed foolishness —see if I don't

That sounds well Frank was the quiet reply I like to hear you talk that way You would be very foolish if you did not What do you think of the child?

Can you ask me what I think? He is a splendid little fellow

Take care of him then—take good care of him you may never have another was the grim rejoinder

Frank winced His brother rose took his arm and said Let us go to our room Frank There will be time enough to talk later and I am not so young as I once was

Truth to say Richard Arthur was not so young as he seemed a few months before His shoulders were a little stooped he was greyer about the temples The little bit of cynicism which had appeared in that remark about the care of the child showed also in the lines of his mouth yet his eyes had the same old true

honest look But a man cannot be hit in mortal places once or twice in his life without its being etched on his face or dropped like a pinch of aloe from his tongue

Still they sat and talked much longer Frank showing better than when his brother came Richard gone grey and tired At last Richard rose and motioned towards the window See Frank he said it is morning Then he went and lifted the blind The grey unpurged air oozed on the glass The light was breaking over the tops of the houses A crossing sweeper early to his task or holding the key of the street went pattering by and a policeman glanced up at them as he passed Richard drew down the curtain again

Dick said Frank suddenly you look old I wonder if I have changed as much?

Six months before Frank Armour would have said that his brother looked young

Oh you look young enough Frank was the reply But I am a good deal older than I was five years ago Come let us go to bed

CHAPTER X

THOU KNOWEST THE SECRETS OF OUR HEARTS

AND Lali How had the night gone for her? When she rose from the child s cot where her lips had caught the warmth that her husband had left on them she stood for a moment bewildered in the middle of the room She looked at the door out of which he had gone her bosom beating hard her heart throbbing so that it hurt her that she could have cried out from mere physical pain The wifedom in her was plundering the wild stores of her generous soul for the man for—as Richard had said *that day that memorable day—the father* of her child But the woman the pure translated woman who was born anew when this frail life in its pink and white glory crept out into

the dazzling world shrank back as any girl might shrink that had not known marriage This child had come — from what? She shuddered now How many times had she done so since she first waked to the vulgar sacrilege of her marriage? She knew now that every good mother when her first child is born takes it in her arms and all her agony gone and the ineffable peace of delivered motherhood come speaks the name of its father and calls it his child But (she remembered it now) when her child was born—this little waif the fruit of a man's hot malicious hour—she wrapped it in her arms pressed its delicate flesh to the silken folds of her bosom and weeping whispered only

My child my little little child

She had never as many a wife far from her husband has done talked to her child of its father told it of his beauty and his virtues arrayed it day by day in sweet linen and pretty adornments as if he were just then knocking at her door she had never imagined what he would say when he did come What could such a father think of his child born of a woman

whose very life he had intended as an insult? No she had loved it for father and mother also She had tried to be g od a good mother living a life unutterably lonely hard in all that it involved of study new duty translation and burial of primitive emotions And with all the care and tearful watchfulness that had been needed she had grown so proud so exacting—exacting for her child proud for herself

How could she know now that this hasty declaration of affection was anything more than the mere man in him? Years ago she had not been able to judge between love and insult What guarantee had she here Did he think that she could believe in him She was not the woman he had married he was not the man she had married He had deceived her basely she had been a common chattel She had been miserable enough Could she give herself over to his flying emotions again so suddenly?

She paced the room her face now in her hands her hands now clasping and wringing before her Her wifely duty She straightened

to that Duty She was first and before all a good unpolluted woman No no it could not be Love him? Again she shrank Then came flooding on her that afternoon when she had flung herself on Richards breast and all those hundred days of happiness in Richards company—Richard the considerate the strong who had stood so by his honour in an hour of peril

Now as she thought of it a hot wave shivered through all her body and tingled to her hair Her face again dropped in her hands and as on that other day she knelt beside the cot and bursting into tears said through her sobs My baby! my own dear baby Oh that we could go away—away—and never come back again!

She did not know how intense her sobs were They waked the child from its delicate sleep its blue eyes opened wide and wise all on the instant its round soft arm ran up to its mothers neck and it said Dont cry I want to seep wif you I s so seepy

She caught the child to her wet face smiled at it through her tears went with it to her own

bed put it away in the deep whiteness kissed it and fondled it away again into the heaven of sleep When this was done she felt calmer How she hungered over it This—this could not be denied her This at least was all hers without clause or reservation—a absolute love and an absolute right

She disrobed and drew in beside the child and its little dewy cheek touching her breast seemed to ease the ache in her soul

But sleep would not come All the past four years trooped by with their thousand incidents magnified in the sharp throbbing light of her mind and at last she knew and saw clearly what was before her what trials what duty and what honour demanded—her honour

Richard? Once for all she gently put him away from her into that infinite distance of fine respect which a good woman can feel who has known what she and Richard had known—and set aside But he had made for her so high a standard that for one to be measured thereby was a severe challenge

Could Frank come even to that measure?

She dared not try to answer the question She feared she shrank she grew sick at heart She did not reckon with that other thing that powerful infinite influence which ties a woman she knows not how or why to the man who led her to the world of motherhood Through all the wrongs which she may suffer by him there runs this cable of unhappy attraction testified to by how many sorrowful lives!

But Lali was trying to think it out not only to feel and she did not count that subterranean force which must play its part in this new situation in her drama of life Could she love him? She crept away out of the haven where her child was put on her dressing gown went to the window and looked out upon the night all unconscious that her husband was looking at her from the Square below Love him?—Love him?—Love him?—Love him? Could she? Did he love her? Her eyes wandered over the Square Nowhere else was there a light but a chimney flue was creaking somewhere It jarred on her so that she shrank Then all at once she smiled to think how she had changed Four years ago

she could have slept amid the hammers of a foundry The noise ceased Her eyes passed from the cloud of trees in the Square to the sky—all stars and restful deep blue That—that was the same How she knew it —Orion and Ashtaroth and Mars and the Pleiades and the long trail of the Milky Way As a little child hanging in the trees or sprawled beside a tepee she had made friends with them all even as she learned and loved all the signs of the earth beneath—the twist of a blade of grass the portent in the cry of a river hen the colour of a star the smell of a wind She had known Nature then now she knew men And knowing them and having suffered and sick at heart as she was standing by this window in the dead of night the cry that shook her softly was not of her new life but of the old primitive childlike

Pasajithe oarli lethose kollan vorgantha pestorondikat Onn

A speir lath pierced me and the smirt of the nettle is in my wound Vales of the soft night binl my wounds with sleep lest I cry out and be a cowurd and unworthy

Again and again unconsciously the words passed from her lips—

Vorganthe peston on likat Onn

At last she let down the blind came to the bed and once more gathered her child in her arms with an infinite hunger Thus love was hers rich untrammelled and so sacred No matter what came—and she did not know what would come—she had the child There was a kind of ecstasy in it and she lay and trembled with the feeling but at last fell into a troubled sleep

She waked suddenly to hear footsteps passing her door She listened One footstep was heavier than the other—heavier and a little stumbling she recognized them Frank and Richard In that moment her heart hardened Frank Armour must tread a difficult road

CHAPTER XI

UPON THE HIGHWAY

FRANK visited the child in the morning and was received with a casual interest Richard Joseph Armour was fastidious was not to be won at the grand gallop Besides he had just had a visit from his uncle and the good taste of that gay time was yet in his mouth He did not resent the embraces but he did not respond to them and he straightened himself with relief when the assault was over Some one was paying homage to him that was all he knew but for his own satisfaction and pleasure he preferred as yet his old comrades Edward Lambert Captain Vidall General Armour and above all Richard He only showed real interest at the last when he asked as it were in compromise of his father would give him a sword No one

had ever talked to him of his father and he had no instinct for him so far as could be seen The sword was therefore after the manner of a concession Frank rashly promised it and was promptly told by Marion that it couldn't be and she was backed by Captain Vidall who said it had already been tabooed and Frank wasn't to come in and ask for favours or expect them

The husband and wife met at breakfast He was down first When his wife entered he came to her and they touched hands and she presently took a seat beside him More than once he paused suddenly in his eating when he thought of his inexplicable case He was now face to face with a reversed situation He had once picked up a pebble from the brown dirt of a prairie that he might toss it into the pool of this home life and had tossed it and from the sweet bath there had come out a precious stone which he longed to wear and knew that he could not—not yet He could have coerced a lower being but for his manhood's sake—he had risen to that now it is

curious how the dignity of fatherhood helps to make a man—he could not coerce here and if he did he knew that the product would be disaster

He listened to her talk with Marion and Captain Vidall Her voice was musical bal anced her language breathed it had manner and an indescribable cadence of intelligence joined to a deliberation which touched her off with distinction When she spoke to him—and she seemed to do that as by studied intention and with tact at certain intervals—her manner was composed and kind She had resolved on her part She asked him about his journey over about his plans for the day and if he had decided to ride with her in the Park—he could have the General s mount she was sure for the General was not going that day and would he mind doing a little errand for her afterwards in Regent Street for the child—she feared she herself would not have time?

Just then General Armour entered and pass ing behind her kissed her on the cheek dropping his hand on Frank s shoulder at the same

time with a hearty greeting Of course Frank could have his mount he said Mrs Armour did not come down but she sent word by Richard who entered last that she would be glad to see Frank for a moment before he left for the Park As of old Richard took both Lal's hands in his patted them and cleanly said —

Well well Lal we've got the wild man home again safe and sound haven't we?—the same old vagabond Well have to turn him into a Christian again— for while the lamp holds out to burn ——

He did not give her time to reply but their eyes met honestly kindly and from the look they both passed into life and time again with a fresh courage She did not know nor did he how near they had been to an abyss and neither ever knew One furtive glance at the moment one hesitating pressure of the hand one movement of the head from each other's gaze and there had been unhappiness for them all But they were safe

In the Park Frank and his wife talked little

They met many who greeted them cordially and numbers of Frank s old club friends summoned him to the sacred fires at his earliest *opportunity* The two talked chiefly of the people they met and Frank thrilled with admiration at his wife s gentle judgment of everybody

The true thing absolutely the true thing he said and he was conscious too that her instincts were right and searching for once or twice he saw her face chill a little when they met one or two men whose reputations as *cheruses* and *dan es* were pronounced These men had had one or two confusing minutes with Lali in their time

How splendidly you r de he said as he came up swiftly to her after having chatted for a moment with Edward Lambert You sit like wax and so entirely easy

Thank you she said I suppos I really like it too well to ride badly and then I began young on horses not so good as Musket here— bareback too she added with a little soft irony

He thought– she did not however—that she was referring to that first letter he sent home to his people when he consigned her like any other awkward freight to their care He flushed to his eyes It cut him deep but her eyes only had a distant dreamy look which conveyed nothing of the sting in her words Like most men he had a touch of vanity too and he might have resented the words vaguely had he not remembered his talk with his mother an hour before

She had begged him to have patience she had made him promise that he would not in any circumstance say an ungentle or bitter thing that he would bide the effort of constant devotion and his love of the child Especially must he try to reach her through love of the child

By which it will be seen that Mrs Armour had come to some wisdom by reason of her love for Frank's wife and child

My son she had said through the child *is the surest way believe me for only a mother* can understand what that means how much

and how far it goes You are a father but until last night you never had the flush of that love in your veins You stand yet only at the door of that life which has done more to guide, save instruct and deepen your wife s life than anything else though your brother Richard—to whom you owe a debt that you can never repay—has done much indeed Be wise my dear as I have learned a little to be since first your wife came All might easily have gone wrong it has all gone well and we my son have tried to do our duty lovingly consistently to dear Lali and the child

She made him promise that he would wait that he would not try to hurry his wife s affection for him by any spoken or insistent claim

For Frank dear she said you are only legally married not morally not as God can bless—not yet But I pray that what will sanctify all may come soon very soon to the joy of us all But again—and I cannot say it too prayerfully—do not force one little claim that your marriage gave you but prove yourself to her who has cause to distrust you so much

Will you forgive your mother my dear for speaking to you?

He had told her then that what she had asked he had intended as his own course yet what she had said would keep it in his mind always for he was sure it was right Mrs Armour had then embraced him and they parted Dealing with Lali had taught them all much of the human heart that they had never known before and the result thereof was wisdom

They talked casually enough for the rest of the ride and before they parted at the door Frank received his commission for Regent Street and accepted it with delight as a schoolboy might a gift He was absurdly grateful for any favours from her any sign of her companionship They met at luncheon then because Lali had to keep an engagement in Eaton Square they parted again and Frank and Richard took a walk after a long hour with the child who still so hungered for his sword that Frank disobeyed orders and dragged Richard off to Oxford Street to get one He was reduced to

a beatific attitude of submission for he knew that he had few odds with him now and that he must live by virtue of new virtues He was no longer proud of himself in any way and he knew that no one else was—or rather he felt so and that was just the same

He talked of the boy he talked of his wife he laid plans he tore them down he built them up again he asked advice he did not wait to hear it but rambled on excited eager Truth is there had suddenly been lifted from his mind the dread and shadow of four years Wherever he had gone whatever he had been or done that dread shadow had followed him and now to know that instead of having to endure a hell he had to win a heaven and to feel as if his brain had been opened and a mass of vapours and naughty little manmkins of remorse had been let out was a trifle intoxicating even to a man of his usual vigour and early acquaint ance with exciting things

Dick Dick he said enthusiastically you ve been royal You always were better than any chap I ever knew You re always doing for

others Hang it Lick where does your fun come in? Nobody seems ever to do anything for you

Richard gave his arm a squeeze Never mind about me boy I've had all the fun I want and all I'm likely to get and so long as you're all willing to have me around I'm satisfied There's always a lot to do among the people in the village one way and another and I've a heap of reading on and what more does a fellow want?

You didn't always feel that way Dick?"

No You see at different times in life you want different kinds of pleasures I've had a good many kinds and the present kind is about as satisfactory as any

But Dick you ought to get married You've got coin you've got sense you're a bit distinguished looking and I'll back your heart against a thousand bishops You've never been in danger of making a fool of yourself as I have Why didn't you—why don't you—get married?

Richard patted his brother's shoulder

Married boy? Married? I've got too much on my hands I've got to bring you up yet And when that's done I shall have to write a book called How to Bring up a Parent Then I've got to help bring your boy up as I've done these last three years and more I've got to think of that boy for a long while yet for I know him better than you do — and I shall need some of my coin to carry out my plans

God bless you Dick! Bring me up as you will only bring *her* along too and as for the boy you're far more his father than I am And my mother says that it's you that's given me the wife I've got now so what can I say?—what can I say?

It was the middle of the Green Park and Richard turned and clasped Frank by both shoulders

Say? Say that you'll stand by the thing you swore to one mad day in the West as well as any man that ever lived— to have and to hold to love and to cherish from this day forth till death us do part Amen

Richard s voice was low and full of a strange searching something

Frank wondering at this great affection and fondness of his brother looked him in the eyes warmly solemnly and replied For richer or for poorer for better or for worse in sickness and in health—so help me God and her kind ness and forgiveness

CHAPTER XII

"THE CHASE OF THE YELLOW SWAN

FRANK and Lali did not meet until dinner was announced The conversation at dinner was mainly upon the return to Greylope which was fixed for the following morning and it was deftly kept gay and superficial by Marion and Richard and Captain Vidall until General Armour became reminiscent and held the interest of the table through a dozen little incidents of camp and barrack life until the ladies rose There had been an engagement for late in the evening but it had been given up because of Frank's home coming and there was to be a family gathering merely—for Captain Hume Vidall was now as much one of the family as Frank or Richard by virtue of his approaching marriage with Marion The men left alone,

General Armour questioned Frank freely about life in the Hudson's Bay country and the conversation ran on idly till it was time to join the ladies

When they reached the drawing room Marion was seated at the piano playing a rhapsody of Raff's and Mrs Armour and Lali were seated side by side Frank thrilled at seeing his wife's hand in his mother's Marion nodded over the piano at the men and presently played a snatch of *Carneval* then wandered off into the barbaric strength of *Tannhäuser* and as suddenly again into the ballet music of *Faust*

Why so wilful my girl? said her father who had a keen taste for music Why this tangle? Let us have something definite

Marion sprang up from the piano I can't I'm not definite myself to night Then turning to Lali Lali dear sing something—do sing my favourite The Chase of the Yellow Swan

This was a song which in the later days at Greyhope Lali had sung for Marion first in her own language with the few notes of an Indian chant and afterwards by the help of the cele

brated musician who had taught her both music and singing both of which she had learned but slowly it was translated and set to music Lali looked Marion steadily in the eyes for a moment and then rose It cost her something to do this thing for while she had often talked much and long with Richard about that old life it now seemed as if she were to sing it to one who would not quite understand why she should sing it at all or what was her real attitude towards her past—that she looked upon it from the infinite distance of affectionate pity knowledge and indescribable change and yet loved the inspiring atmosphere and mystery of that lonely North which once in the veins never leaves it—never Would *he* understand that she was feeling not the common detail of the lodge and the camp fire and the Company's post but the deep spirit of Nature filtering through the senses in a thousand ways—the wild ducks flight the sweet smell of the balsam the exquisite gallop of the deer the powder of the frost the sun and snow and blue plains of water the thrilling eternity of plain and the splendid steps of the hills which

led away by stair and entresol to the Kimash Hills the Hills of the Mighty Men ?

She did not know what he would think and again on second thought she determined to make him by this song contrast her as she was when he married her and now—how she herself could look upon that past unabashed speak of it with out blushing sing of it with pride having reached a point where she could look down and say ' This was the way by which I came

She rose and was accompanied to the piano by General Armour Frank admiring her soft springing steps her figure so girlish and lissom She paused for a little before she began Her eyes showed for a moment over the piano deep burning inlooking then they veiled her fingers touched the keys wandered over them in a few strange soft chords paused wandered again more firmly and very intimately and then she sang Her voice was a good contralto well balanced true of no great range but within its compass melodious and having some inexpressible charm of temperament Frank did not need to strain his ears to hear the words

every one came clear searcl ng delicately valued—

In the flasl of the s ng ng dawn,
At the door of tl e Great O e
The joy of l s lod_e kı elt do vn,
Knelt down aı d her l a r tl e sun
Shone l ke hower ng dust
And l er eyes ere a. eyes of the faw n.
And she cr e l to l er lord
O mv lord O y l fe
From the le ert I on e
From tl e l lls of tl e Daw
And l e l fted tl e curta n a d sa d
Hast thou seen It the Ɣellow Swan?

And she l fted l r l ead an l her eyes
W re as l gl ts r tl e dark
And her l ands folded slo o her breast
An l her fa e w s as one vho l as see
The gods and the l lace w l ere tl ey l ll
A d she sa d I t me t that I kne l
Tl at l k eel as I sl eak to r y l rd?
And l e answered l er Nay but t ta d
And to s t by my s le
But speak thou hast followed the tra l
Ha t thou found It the Yellow Swa ?

And shc stood as a queen and l er vo ce
W as as one who hatl seen the H lls
Tl e Hills of tl e M ghty Men
And ıath heard them cry ın the nıgl t

Hath heard them call in the dawn
Hath seen It, the Yellow Swan
And she said, It is not for my lord
And she murmured ' I cannot tell
But my lord must go as I went
And my lord must come as I came,
And my lord shall be wise

And he cried in his wrath
" What is thine it is mine
And thine eyes are my eyes
Thou shalt speak of the Yellow Swan
But she answered him Nay though I die
I have lain in the nest of the Swan
I have heard I have known
When thine eyes to have seen
When thine ears to have heard
Thou shalt do with me then as thou wilt

And he lifted his hand to strike
And he straightened his spear to slay
But a great light struck on his eyes
And he heard the rushing of wings
And his long spear fell from his hand
And a terrible stillness came
And when the spell passed from his eyes
He stood in his doorway alone
And gone was the queen of his soul
And gone was the Yellow Swan

Frank Armour listened as in a dream The song had the wild swing of savage life the

deep sweetness of a monotone but it had also the fine intelligence the subtle allusiveness of romance He could read between the lines The allegory touched him where his nerves were sensitive Where she had gone he could not go until his eyes had seen and known what hers had seen and known he could not grasp his happiness all in a moment she was no longer at his feet but equal with him and wiser than he She had not meant the song to be allusive when she began but to speak to him through it by singing the heathen song as his own sister might sing it As the song went on however she felt the inherent suggestion in it so that when she had finished it required all her strength to get up calmly come among them again and listen to their praises and thanks She had no particular wish to be alone with Frank just yet but the others soon ar ranged themselves so that the husband and wife were left in a cosy corner of the room

Lal's heart fluttered a little at first for the day had been trying and she was not as strong as she could wish Admirably as she had gone

through the season it had worn on her and her constitution had become sensitive and delicate while yet strong The life had almost refined her too much Always on the watch that she should do exactly as Marion or Mrs Armour always so sensitive as to what was required of her always preparing for this very time now that it had come and her heart and mind were strong her body seemed to weaken Once or twice during the day she had felt a little faint but it had passed off and she had scolded herself She did not wish a serious talk with her husband to night but she saw now that it was inevitable

He said to her as he sat down beside her "You sing very well indeed The song is full of meaning and you bring it all out

I am glad you like it she responded conventionally of course it's an unusual song for an English drawing room

As you sing it it would be beautiful and acceptable anywhere Lali

Thank you again she answered closing and unclosing her fan her eyes wandering to where Mrs Armour was She wished she could

escape for she did not feel like talking and yet though the man was her husband she could not say that she was too tired to talk—she must be polite Then with a little dainty malice It is more interesting though in the vernacular—and costume!

Not unless you sang it so he answered gallantly and with a kind of earnestness

You have not forgotten the way of London men she rejoined

Perhaps that is well for I do not know the way of women he said with a faint bitterness Yet I did not speak unadvisedly in this —here he meant to be a little bold and bring the talk to the past for I heard you sing that song once before

She turned on him half puzzled a little nervous Where did you hear me sing it?

He had made up his mind wisely enough to speak with much openness and some tact also if possible

It was on the Glow Worm River at the Clip Claw Hills I came into your fathers camp one evening in the autumn hungry and tired

and knocked about I was given the next tent to yours It was night and just before I turned in I heard y ur voice singing I couldn t understand much of th e language but I had the sense of it and I l now it when I l ear it again

Yes I remember singing it that night she said Next day was the Feast of the Yellow Swan

Her eyes presently becam e dreamy and h r face took n a distant rapt look Sh e sat looking straight before her for a moment

He did not speak for he interpreted the look aright and h e was going to be patient to wait

Tell me of my father she said You have been kind to him?

He winced a little When I l ft F rt Charles he was very well h ad and a d l e asl d m e to tell you to c me some day He also has sent *you a half dozen silver fox skins a sa h and* moccasins made by l is own l ands Th e things are not yet unp ck ed

Moccasins? She remem l ere l when l ast she had moccasins on her feet—the day she rode the horse at the quick set hedge and nearly

lost her life How very distant that all was and yet how near too Suddenly she remembered also why she took that mad ride and her heart hardened a little

You have been kind to my father since I left? she asked

He met her eyes steadily No not always not more than I have been kind to you But at the last yes Suddenly his voice became intensely direct and honest Lah he continued there is much that I want to say to you She waved her hand in a wearied fashion I want to tell you that I would do the hardest penance if I could wipe out these last four years

Penance? she said dreamily — penance? What guarantee of happiness would that be? One would not wish another to do penance if—— She paused

I understand he said— if one cared—if one loved Yes I understand But that does not alter the force or meaning of the wish I swear to you that I repent with all my heart— the first wrong to you the long absence—the neglect—everything

She turned slowly to him Everything?—Everything?" she repeated after him Do you understand what that means? Do you know a woman s heart? No Do you know what a shameful neglect is at the most pitiful time in your life? No How can a man know? He has a thousand things the woman has nothing—nothing at all except the refuge of home that for which she gave up everything

Presently she broke off and something sprang up and caught her in the throat Years of indignation were at work in her I have had a home she said in a low thrilling voice— a good home but what did that cost you? Not one honest sentiment of pity kindness or solici tude You clothed me fed me abandoned me as—how can one say it? Do I not know if coming back you had found me as you expected to find me what the result would have been? Do I not know? You would have endured me if I did not thrust myself upon you for you have after all a sense of legal duty a kind of stubborn honour But you would have made my life such that some day one or both of

us would have died suddenly For— she looked him with a hot clearness in the eyes— for there is just so much that a woman can bear I wish this talk had not come now but since it has come it is better to speak plainly You see you misunderstand A heathen has a heart as another—has a life to be spoiled or made happy as another Had there been one honest passion in your treatment of me —in your marrying me —there would be something on which to base mutual respect which is more or less necessary when one is expected to love But—but I will not speak more of it for it chokes me the insult to me not as I was but as I am Then it would probably have driven me mad if I had known now it eats into my life like rust

He made a motion as if to take her hands but lifting them away quietly she said You forget that there are others present as well as the fact that we can talk better without demonstrations

He was about to speak but she stopped him No wait she said for I want to say a little more I was only an Indian girl but you must

remember that I had also in my veins good white blood Scotch blood Perhaps it was that which drew me to you then— for Lali the Indian girl loved you Life had been to me pleasant enough—without care without misery open strong and free, our people were not as those others which had learned the white man s vices We loved the hunt the camp fires the sacred feasts, the legends of the Mighty Men and the earth was a good friend whom we knew as the child knows its mother

She paused Something seemed to arrest her attention Frank followed her eyes She was watching Captain Vidall and Marion He guessed what she was thinking—how different her own wooing had been from theirs how concerning her courtship she had not one sweet memory the thing that keeps alive more love and loyalty in this world than anything else Presently General Armour joined them and Frank s opportunity was over for the present

Captain Vidall and Marion were engaged in a very earnest conversation though it might not appear so to observers

Come now Marion he said protestingly don t be impossible Please give the day a name Don t you think we ve waited about long enough ?

There was a man in the Bible who served seven years

' I ve served over three in India since I met you at the well and that counts double Why so particular to a day ?—it s a bit Jewish Any how that seven years was rough on Rachel

How Hume ? Because she got *passee ?* '

Well that counted but do you suppose that Jew was going to put in those seven years without interest ? Don t you believe it Rachel paid capital and interest back or Jacob was no Jew Tell me Marion when shall it be ?

Hume for a man who has trifled away years in India you are strangely impatient

Mrs Lambert says that I have the sweetest disposition

My *dear* sir !

Don t look at me like that at this distance or I shall have to wear goggles as the man did who went courting the Sun.

How supremely ridiculous you are! And I thought you such a sensible serious man

Mrs Lambert put that in your head We used to meet at the annual dinners of the Bible Society

Why do you tell me such stuff?

Its a fact Her father and my aunt were in that swim and we were sympathizers

Mercenary people

It worked very well in her case not so well in mine But we conceived a profound respect for each other then But tell me Marion when is it to be? Why put off the inevitable?

It isn t inevitable—and I m only twenty three

Only twenty three
And as good fish in the sea —

he responded laughing Yes but you ve set the precedent for a courtship of four years and a bit and what man could face it?

You did

Yes but I wasn t advertised of the fact beforehand. Suppose I had seen the notice at

the start This mortgage cannot be raised in side of four years—and a bit! There s a limit to human endurance

Why shouldn t I hold to the number but alter the years to days?

You wouldn t dare A woman must live up to her reputation

Indeed? What an ambition

And a man to his manners

An unknown quantity

And a lover to his pron ises

A book of jokes Marion l ad developed a taste for satire

Which reminds me of Lady Halwood and Mrs Lambert Lady Halwood was more im pertinent than usual the other day at the Sinclairs show and had a little fling at Mrs Lambert The talk turned on gowns Lady Halwood was much interested at once She has a weakness that way Why said she I like these fashions this year but I m not sure that they suit me They re the same as when the Queen came to the throne 'Well said Mrs Lambert sweetly if they suited you

then—— There was an audible titter and Mrs Lambert had an enemy for life

I don t see the point of your story in this connection

No ? Well it was merely to suggest that if you had to live up to this scheme of four years probation other peopl besides lovers would make up bo ks of jokes and——

That s like a man—to threaten

Yes I threat n—on my knees

Hume low long do you thi k Frank will have to wait

They were sitting where th y ha l a good view of the husban l and wife and Vidall after a moment said —

I don t know She has waited four years too now it looks as if like Jacob she was going to gather in her shekels of interest com pounded

It isn t going to be a bit pleasant to watch

But you won t be here to see

Marion ignored the suggestion She seems to have hardened since he came yesterday I

hardly know her and yet she looks awfully worn to night don t you think ?

Yes as if she had to keep a hand on herself But it ll come out all right in the end you ll see

Yes of course but she might be sensible and fall in love with Frank at once That s what she did when——

When she didn t know man

Yes b it where would you all be if we women acted on w l at w e know of you ?

On our knees ch efly as I am Remember this M rion that half a sinner is better than no ma

Y o i n ea that no man is better than half a saint

How you must a lmire me

Why

As y o i are abo it to name the day I assume that I m a whole saint in your eyes

St Augustine

Who was he ?

A man that r formed

Before or after marriage ?

Before I suppose

I don t think he died happy

Why not ?

I ve a faint recollection that he was boiled

Don t be horrid What has that to do with it ? '

Nothing perhaps But he probably broke out again after marriage and sank at last into that cauldron Thats what it means by being —steeped in crime

How utterly nonsensical you are

I feel light headed You ve been at sea on a yacht becalmed haven t you ? when along comes a ground swell and as you rock in the sun there comes trouble and your head goes round like a top ? Now thats my case I ve been becalmed four years and while I pray for a little wind to take me—home you rock me in the trough of uncertainty Suspense is very gall and wormwood You know what the jailer said to the criminal who was hanging on a reprieve Rope deferred maketh the heart sick Marion give me the hour or give me the rope

" The rope enough to hang yourself

She suddenly reached up and pulled a hair from her head She laid it in his hand—a long brown silken thread Hume she said airily yet gently there is the rope Can you love me for a month of Sun lays?

Yes for ever and a day

I will cancel the day and take your bond for the rest I will be generous I will marry you in two m nths—and a day

My dearest girl —he drew her hand into both of his— I can t have you more generous than myself I ll throw off the month But his eyes were shining very seriously though his mouth smiled

Two months and a day she repeated

We must all bundle off to Greyhope to morrow came General Ar ours voice across the room down comes the baby cradle and all

Lali rose I am very tired she said I think I will say good night

I ll go and see the boy with you Frank said rising also

Lali turned towards Marion Marion s face

was flushed and had a sweet happy confusion With a low trembling good night to Captain Vidall a hurried kiss on her moth r s cheek and a tiptoed caress on l cr father s head she ran and linked her arm in J ali s and together they proceeded to the child s room P chard was there when they arrived n ending a broken toy Two h ours l ater the brotl ers parted at Frank s door

Reaping the whirlwind Dick? Frank said dropping his han l on his brother s arm

Richard pointed to the child s roon

Nonsense Do you want all the world at once? You are reaping the forgiveness of your suns

Somehow Richard s voice was a little stern

I was thinking of my devilry Dick—that s the whirlwind—here His hand dropped on his breast

That s where it ought to be Good night.

Good night

CHAPTER XIII

A LIVING POEM

PART of Frank's most trying interview next to the meeting with his wife was that with Mackenzie who had been his special commissioner in the movement of his masquerade Mackenzie also had learned a great deal since she had brought Lali—home She like others had come to care truly for the sweet barbarian and served her with a grim kind of reverence Just in proportion as this had increased her respect for Frank had decreased No man can keep a front of dignity in the face of an unbecoming action However Mackenzie had her moment and when it was over the new life began at no general disadvantage to Frank To all save the immediate family Frank and Lali were a companionable husband and wife

She rode with him occasionally walked with him now and again sang to him and they appeared in the streets of St Albans and at the Abbey together and oftener still in the village church near where the Armours of many generations were proclaimed of much account in the solid virtues of tomb and tablet

The day had gone by when Lali attracted any especial notice among the villagers and she enjoyed the quiet beauty and earnestness of the service But she received a shock one Sunday She had been nervous all the week she could not tell why and others remarked how her face had taken on a new sensitiveness a delicate anxiety and that her strength was not what it had been As for instance after riding she required to rest a thing before unknown and she often lay down for an hour before dinner Then too at table once she grew suddenly pale and swayed against Edward Lambert who was sitting next to her She would not however leave the table but sat the dinner out to Frank's apprehension He was devoted but it was clear to Marion and her mother at least

that his attentions were trying to her They seemed to put her under an obligation which to meet was a trial There is nothing more wearing to a woman than affectionate attention from a man who has claims upon her but whom she does not love These same attentions from one who has no claims give her a thrill of pleasure It is useless to ask for justice in such a matter These things are governed by no law and rightly so else the world would be in good time a loveless multitude held together only by the hungering ties of parent and child

But this Sunday wherein Lali received a shock She did not know that the banns for Marions and Captain Vidalls marriage were to be announced and at the time her thoughts were far away She was recalled to herself by the clergymans voice pronouncing their names and saying *If any of you do know cause or just impediment why these two people should not be joined together in the bonds of holy matrimony ye are to declare it* All at once there came back to her her own marriage when the

Protestant missionary in his nasal monotone mumbled these very words not as if he expected that any human being would or could offer objection

She almost sprang from her seat now Her nerves all at once came to such a tension that she could have cried out Why had there been no one there at her marriage to say I forbid it ? How shameful it had all been And the first kiss her husband had given her had the flavour of brandy If she could but turn back the hands upon the clock of Time ! Under the influence of the music and the excited condition of her nerves the event became magnified distorted it burned into her brain It was not made less poignant by the sermon from the text *Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin* When the words were first announced in the original it sounded like her own language save that it was softer and her heart throbbed fast Then came the interpretation *Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting*

Then suddenly swept over her a new feeling one she had never felt before Up to this point

a determination to justify her child to reverse the verdict of the world to turn her husband s sin upon himself had made her defiant even bitter in all things ea_er to live up to her new life to the standard that Richard had by manner and suggestion rather than by words laid down for her But now there came in upon her a flood of despa r At best she was only of this race through one third of her parentage and ed ication and refinen ent and all things could do no r ore than make her possible There must always be n the record

She wa of a strange people She was born in a wigwam She did not know that failing health was really the cause of this lapse of self confidence this growing self depreciation this languor for which sl e could not account She found that she cou d not toss the child and frolic with it as she had done she was conscious that within a month there had stolen upon her the desire to be much alone to avoid noises and bustle—it irritated her She fou d herself thinking more an d more of her father her father to whom she had never written one line

since she had left the North She had had good reasons for not writing—writing could do no good whatever particularly to a man who could not read and who would not have understood her new life if he had read Yet now she seemed not to know why she had not written and to blame herself for neglect and forgetfulness It weighed on her Why had she ever been taken from the place of tamarack trees and the sweeping prairie grass? No no she was not after all fit for this life She had been mistaken and Richard had been mistaken—Richard who was so wise The London season? Ah! that was because people had found a novelty and herself of better manners than had been expected

The house was now full of preparations for the wedding—it stared her in the face every day almost every hour—dressmakers milliners tailors and all those other necessary people Did the others think what all this meant to her? It was impossible that they should When Marion came back from town at night and told of her trials among the dressmakers when she

asked the general opinion and sometimes indi vidual judgment she could not know that it was at the expense of Lali s nerves

Lali when she married had changed her moccasins combed her hair and put on a fine red belt and that was all She was not envious now not at all But somehow it all was a deadly kind of evidence against herself and her marriage Her reproach was public the world knew it and no woman can forgive a public shame even was it brought about by a man she loved or loves Her dearest property in life is her self esteem and her name before the world Rob her of these and her heaven has fallen and if a man has shifted the foundations of her peace there is no forgiveness for him till her Paradise has been reconquered So busy were all the others that they did not see how her strength was failing There were three weeks between the day the banns were announced and the day of the wedding which was to be in the village church not in town for as Marion said she had seen too many marriages for one day s triumph and criticism she wanted

hers where there would be neither triumph nor criticism but among people who had known her from her childhood up A happy romance had raised Marion s point of view

Meanwhile Frank was winning the confidence of his own child who however ranked Richard higher always and became to a degree his father s tyrant But Frank s nature was undergoing a change His point of view also had enlarged The suffering bitterness and humiliation of his life in the North had done him good He was being disciplined to take his position as a husband and father but he sometimes grew heavy hearted when he saw how his attentions oppressed his wife and had it not been for Richard he might probably have brought on disaster for the position was trying to all concerned A few days before the wedding Edward Lambert and his wife arrived and he Captain Vidall and Frank Armour took rides and walks together or set the world right in the billiard room Richard seldom joined them though their efforts to induce him to do so were many He had his pensioners his books his

pipe and the boy and he had returned in all respects in so far as could be seen to his old life save for the new and larger interest of his nephew

One evening the three men with General Armour were all gathered in the billiard room Conversation had been general and without particular force as it always is when merely civic or political matters are under view But some one gave a social twist to the talk and presently they were launched upon that sea where every man prodes his own chart or he is a very worm and no man Each man had been differently trained each viewed life from a different standpoint and yet each had been brought up in the same social atmosphere in the same social sets had imbibed the same traditions been moved generally by the same public considerations

But there s little to be said for a man who doesn t outwardly at least live up to the social necessity said Lambert

"And keep the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue rejoined Vidall

I've lived seventy odd years and I've knocked about a good deal in my time said the General but I've never found that you could make a breach of social necessity as you call it *without paying for it one way or another* The trouble with us when we're young is that we want to get more out of life than there really is in it There is not much in it after all You can stand just so much fighting just so much work just so much emotion—and you can stand less emotion than anything else I'm sure more men and women break up from a hydrostatic pressure of emotion than from anything else Upon my soul that's so

You are right General said Lambert The steady way is the best way The world is a passable place if a fellow has a decent income by inheritance or can earn a big one but to be really contented to earn money it must be a big one otherwise he is far better pleased to take the small inherited income It has a lot of dignity which the other can only bring when it is large

That's only true in this country it's not

true in America said Frank for there the man who doesn't earn money is looked upon as a muff and is treated as such A small inherited income is thought to be a trifle enervating But there is a country of emotions if you like The American heart is worn upon the American sleeve and the American mind is the most active thing in this world That's why they grow old so young

I met a woman a year or so ago at dinner said Vidall who looked forty She looked it and she acted it She was younger than any woman present but she seemed older There was a kind of hopeless languor about her which struck me as pathetic Yet she had been beautiful and might even have been so when I saw her if it hadn't been for that look It was the look of a person who had no interest in things And the person who has no interest in things is the person who once had a great deal of interest in things who had too passionate an interest The revulsion is always terrible Too much romance is deadly It is as false a stimulant as opium or alcohol and leaves a

corresponding mark Well I heard her history She was married at fifteen—ran away to be married and in spite of the fact that a railway accident nearly took her husband from her on the night of her marriage—one would have thought that would make a strong bond—she was soon alive to the attentions that are given a pretty and—considerate woman At a ball at Naples her husband having in vain tried to induce her to go home picked her up under his arm and carried her out of the ballroom Then came a couple of years of opium eating fierce social excitement divorce new marriage and so on until her husband agreeably decided to live in Nice while she lived somewhere else Four days after I had met her at the dinner I saw her again I could scarcely believe my eyes The woman had changed completely She was young again—twenty five in face and carriage in the eye and hand in step and voice

'Who was the man?' suggested Frank Armour

A man about her own age or a little more

but who was an infant beside her in knowledge of the world

She was in love with the fellow? It was a *grande passion?* asked Lambert

In love with him? No not at all It was a momentary revival of an old—possibility

You mean that such women never really love?

Perhaps once Frank but only after a fashion The rest was mere imitation of their first impulses

And this woman?

Well the end came sooner than I expected I tell you I was shocked at the look in her face when I saw it again That light had flickered out the sensitive alertness of hard eye voice and carriage had died away lines had settled in the face and the face itself had gone cold with that hard cold passiveness which comes from exhausted emotions and a closed heart The jewels she wore might have been put upon a statue with equal effect

It seems to me that we might pitch into men in these things and not make women the

dreadful examples said a voice from the corner It was the voice of Richard who had but just entered

My dear Dick said his father men don t make such frightful examples because these *things mean less to men than they do to* women Romance is an incident to a man he can even come through an *affaire* with no ideals gone with his mental fineness unimpaired but it is different with a woman She has more emotion than mind else there were no cradles in the land Her standards are set by the rules of the heart and when she has broken these rules she has lost her standard too But to come back it is true I think as I said that man or woman must not expect too much out of life but be satisfied with what they can get within the normal courses of society and convention and home and the end thereof is peace —yes upon my soul it s peace

There was something very fine in the blunt honest words of the old man whose name had ever been sweet with honour

And the chief thing is that a man live up to

his own standard said Lambert Isn t that so Dick? You re the wise man

Every man should have laws of his own I should think—commandments of his own—for every man has a different set of circumstances wherein to work or worry

The wisest man I ever knew said Frank dropping his cigar was a little French Canadian trapper up in the Saskatchewan country A priest asked him one day what was the best thing in life and he answered For a young man s mind to be old and an old man s heart to be young The priest asked him how that could be And he said Good f od a good woman to teach him when he is young and a child to teach him when he is old Then the priest said What about the Church and the love of God? The little man thought a little and then said Well it is the same the love of man and woman came first in the world then the child then God in the garden Afterwards he made a little speech of good bye to us for we were going to the south while he remained in a fork of the Far Off River It was like some

ancient blessing that we should always have a safe tent and no sorrow as we travelled that we should always have a *cache* for our food and food for our *cache* that we should never find a tree that would not give sap, nor a field that would not grow grain that our bees should not freeze in winter and that the honey should be thick and the comb break like snow in the teeth that we keep hearts like the morning and that we come slow to the Four Corners where man says Good night

Each of the other men present wondered at that instant if Frank Armour would or could have said this with the same feelings two months before He seemed almost transformed

It reminds me said the General of an inscription from an Egyptian monument which an officer of the First put into English verse for me years ago —

> Fair be the garden where their loves shall dwell
> Safe be the highway where their feet may go
> Rich be the fields wherein their hands may toil
> The fountains many where their good wines flow
> Full be their harvest-bins with corn and oil
> To sorrow may their humour be a foil

Quick be their hearts all wise delights to know,
Tardy their footsteps to the gate Farewell

There was a moments silence after he had finished and then there was noise without a sound of pattering feet the door flew open and in ran a little figure in white—young Richard in his bedgown who had broken away from his nurse and had made his way to the billiard room where he knew his uncle had gone

The child's face was flashing with mischief and adventure He ran in among the group and stretched out his hands with a little fighting air His uncle Richard made a step toward him but he ran back his father made as if to take him in his arms but he evaded him Presently the door opened the nurse entered the child sprang from among the group and ran with a laughing defiance to the farthest end of the room and leaning his chin on the billiard table flashed a look of defiant humour at his pursuer Presently the door opened again and the figure of the mother appeared All at once the child's face altered he stood perfectly still and waited for his mother to come to him.

Lali had not spoken and she did not speak until lifting the child she came the length of the billiard table and faced them

I beg your pardon she said for intrud ing but Richard has led us a dance and I suppose the mother may go where her child goes.

The mother and the child are always wel come wherever they go said General Armour quietly

All the men had risen to their feet and they made a kind of semicircle before her The white robed child had clasped its arms about her neck and nestled its face against hers as if with perfect satisfaction it had got to the end of its adventure but the look of humour was still in the eyes as they ran from Richard to his father and back again

Frank Armour stepped forward and took the child s hand as it rested on the mother s shoulder Lali s face underwent a slight change as her husband s fingers touched her neck

I must go she said I hope I have not broken up a serious conversation—or were you

not so serious after all? she said glancing archly at General Armour

We were talking of women said Lambert

The subject is wide replied Lali and the speakers many One would think some wisdom might be got in such a case

Believe me we were not trying to understand the subject said Captain Vidall the most that a mere man can do is to appreciate it

There are some things that are hidden from the struggling mind of man and are revealed unto babes and the mothers of babes said General Armour gravely as reaching out his hands he took the child from the mother's arms kissed it full upon the lips and added Men do not understand women because men's minds have not been trained in the same school When once a man has mastered the very alphabet of motherhood then he shall have mastered the mind of woman but I at least refuse to say that I do not understand from the standpoint of modern cynicism

Ah General General said Lambert we

have lost the chivalric way of saying things which belongs to your generation

By this time the wife had reached the door she turned and held out her arms for the child General Armour came and placed the boy where he had found it and with eyes suddenly filling laid both his hands upon Lalis and they clasped the child and said It is worth while to have lived so long and to have seen so much Her eyes met his in a wistful anxious expression shifted to those of her husband dropped to the cheeks of the child and with the whispered word which no one not even the General heard she passed from the room the nurse following her

Perhaps some of the most striking contrasts are achieved in the least melodramatic way The sudden incursion of the child and its mother into the group the effect of their presence and their soft departure leaving behind them as it were a trail of light changed the whole atmos phere of the room as though some new life had been breathed into it charged each mind with new sensations and gave each figure new attu

tude Not a man present but had had his full swing with the world none worse than most men none better than most save that each had latent in him a good sense of honour concern ing all civic and domestic virtues They were not men of sentimentality they were not ac customed to exposing their hearts upon their sleeve but each as the door closed recognized that something for one instant had come in among them had made their past conversation to appear meagre crude and lacking in both height and depth. Somehow they seemed to feel although no words expressed the thought that for an instant they were in the presence of a wisdom greater than any wisdom of a mans smoking room

It is wonderful wonderful said the General slowly and no man asked him why he said it or what was wonderful But Richard sitting apart watched Frank s face acutely himself wondering when the hour would come that the fe would forgive her husband and this situa n so fraught with danger would be relieved

CHAPTER XIV

ON THE EDGE OF A FUTURE

At last the day of the wedding came a beautiful September day which may be more beautiful in uncertain England than anywhere else Ian had been strangely quiet all the day before and she had also seemed strangely delicate Perhaps or perhaps not she felt the crisis was approaching It is probable that when the mind has been strained for a long time and the heart and body suffered much one sees a calamity vaguely and cannot de fine it appreciates it and does not know it She came to Marion s room about a half hour before they were to start for the church Marion was already dressed and ready save for the few final touches which though they have been given a dozen times must still again

be given just before the bride starts for the church Such is the anxious mind of women on these occasions The two stood and looked at each other a moment each wondering what were the thoughts of the other Lali was struck by that high proud look over which lay a glamour of infinite satisfaction of sweetness which comes to every good woman's face when she goes to the altar in a marriage which is not contingent on the rise or fall in stocks or a satisfactory settlement Marion looking saw as if it had been revealed to her all at once the intense and miraculous change which had come over the young wife even within the past two months Indeed she had changed as much within that time as within all the previous four years—*that is she had been brought to a certain* point in her education and experience where without a newer and deeper influence she could go no further That newer and deeper influence had come and the result thereof was a woman standing upon the verge of the real tragedy to her life which was not in having married the man but in facing that marriage with her new

intelligence and a transformed soul. Men can face that sort of thing with a kind of philos ophy not because men are better or wiser but because it really means less to them They have resources of life they can bury themselves in their ambitions good or bad but a woman can only bury herself in her affections unless her heart has been closed and in that case she herself has lost much of what made her adorable And while she may go on with the closed heart and become a saint even saintship is hardly sufficient to compensate any man or woman for a half lived life The only thing worth doing in this world is to live life according to ones convictions—and ones heart He or she who sells that fine independence for a mess of pottage no matter if the mess be spiced sells as the Master said the immortal part of him

And so Lali just here on the edge of Marions future looking into that mirror was catching the reflection of her own life When two women come so near that like the lovers in the *Tempest* they have changed eyes in so far as

to read each other s hearts even indifferently—which is much where two women are concerned—there is only one resource and that is to fall into each other s arms and to weep if it be convenient or to hold their tears for a more fitting occasion and most people will admit that tears need not add to a bride s beauty Marion might therefore be pardoned if she had her tears in her throat and not in her eyes and Lali if they arose for a moment no higher than her heart But they did fall into each other s arms despite veils and orange blossoms and somehow Marion had the feeling for Lali that she had on that first day at Greyhope four years ago when standing on the bridge the girl looked down into the water tears dropping on her hands and Marion said to her Poor girl poor girl The situations were the same because Lali had come to a new phase of her life, and what that phase would be who could tell—happiness or despair ?

The usual person might think that Lali was placing herself and her wifely affection at a rather high price but then it is about the only

thing that a woman can place high even though she be one third a white woman and two thirds an Indian Here was a beautiful woman who had run the gamut of a London season who had played a pretty social part admirably trained therefor by one of the best and most cultured fam lies of England Besides why should any womar sell he aff ctions even to her husband bargain away her love the one thing that sanctifies what God hath joined let no man put asunder ? Lali was prim tive she was unlike so many in a triv al world but she was rigl t She might suffer she might die but aft r all there are many things worse than that Man is born in a day and he d es in a day and the thing is easily over but to have a sick heart for three fourths of one s lifetime is simply to hav death renew d every morning and life at that price is not worth livin. In this sensitive age we are desperately anxious to save life as if it was tl e really great thing in the world but in the good strong times of the earth—and in these times indeed when necessity knows its hour—men held their lives

as lightly as a bird upon the housetop which any chance stone might drop

It is possible that at this moment the two women understood each other better than they had ever done and respected each other more Lali recovering herself spoke a few soft words of congratulation and then appeared to busy herself in putting little touches to Marion s dress—that soft persuasion of fingers which does so much to coax mere cloth into a sort of living harmony w th the body

They had no more words of c fidence but in the porch of the church Mar on as she passed Lali caught the slender fingers in her ow n and pressed them tenderly Marion was giving comfort and yet if she had been asked why she could not have told She d d not try to define it further than to say to herself that she herself was having almost too much happiness The village was *en fête* and peasants lined the street leading to the church ready with their hearty God bless you s Lali sat between her husband and Mrs Armour apparently impassive until there came the question *Who giveth this*

voman to be married to tl is man ? and General Armour s voice came clear and strong I do Then a soft little cry broke from her and she hivered slightly Mrs Arm our did n t notice but Frank and Mrs Lambert heard and saw nd both were afterv ards watchful and solicitous Frank caught Mrs Lambert eye and it said o a little motion of tl e l ead Do not appear o notice

Lah was as if in a dream She never took ier eyes from the gr p at tl e altai until the nd and the two now m n ar l w fe turned to go into the v stry Fl e l e appeared to sink away into herself for a mom n t before she fell nto conversation with the otl er as they moved towards the vestry

It was bea utiful wasn t it ? ventured Edward Lambert

"The most b autif al wedd ng I ever saw she answered with a little shadow of mean ing and Lambert guesse l that it was the only one she had seen s nce she came to Eng land

How well Vidall looked said Frank and

as proud as a sultan Did you hear what he said as Marion came up the aisle?

No *responded* Lambert

He said By Jove isn t she fine He didn t seem conscious that other people were present

Well if a man hasn t some inspirations on his wedding day when s he to have them' said Mrs Lambert For my part I think that the woman always does that sort of thing better than a man It is her really great occasion and she masters it the comedy is all hers

They were just then entering the vestry

Or the tragedy as the case may be said Lali quietly smiling at Marion She had as it were recovered herself and her words had come with that airy impersonal tone which permits nothing of what is said in it to be taken seriously Something said by the others had recalled her to herself and she was now returned very suddenly to the old position of alertness and social *finesse* Something icy seemed to pass over her and she immediately lost all self consciousness and began to speak to her

husband with less reserve than she had shown since he had come But he was not deceived He saw that at that very instant she was further away from him than she had ever been He sighed in spite of himself as Lali with well-turned words said some loving greetings to Marin and then talked a moment with Captain Vidall.

Who can understand a woman? said Lambert to his wife meaningly

Whoever will she answered

How do you know

Whoever will wait like the saint upon the pillar will suffer like the traveller in the desert serve like a slave and demand like a king have patience greater than Job love ceaseless as a fountain in the hills, who sees in the darkness and is not afraid of light, who distrusts not neither believes but stands ready to be taught who is prepared for a kiss this hour and a reproach the next who turneth neither to right nor left at her words but hath an unswerving eye — these shall understand a woman

I never knew you so philosophical Where id you get this deliverance on the subject ?

May not even a woman have a moment of inspiration ?

I should expect that of my wife

And I should expect *that* of my husband It is trite to say that men are vain I shall remark that they sit so much in their own light that they are surprised if another being crosses their disc

You always were clever my dear and you always were twice t go d for me

Well every woman—worth the knowing—is a missionary

Where does Lali come in ?

Can you ask ? To justify the claims of womanhood in spite of race and all

To bring one man to a sense of the duty of sex to sex eh ?

Truly And is she *not doing* it *well* ? See her now

They were now just leaving the church and Lali had taken General Armour's arm while Richard led his mother to the carriage

Lali was moving with a little touch of grandeur in her manner and a more than ordinary deliberation She had had a moment of great weal ness and then there had come the reaction—carried almost too far by tl e force of the will She w as indeed straining herself too far Four years f tension were culminating

See her now Edward repeated Mrs Lam bert

Yes but if I m not mistaken my dear she is doing so well that shes going to pieces Shes overstrung to day If it were you youd be in hysterics

I believe you are r ght w as *the grave reply*

There will l an end to this comedy one way or another very soon

A mon ent afterwards they were in a carriage rolling away to Greyhope

CHAPTER XV

THE END OF THE TRAIL

WHEN Marion was about starting away with her husband for the railway station she came to Lali who was standing half hidden by the curtains of a window looking out at little Richard who was parading his pony up and down before the house An unutterable sweetness looked out of Marion's eyes She had found as it seemed to her and as so many have believed until their lives end the secret of life Lali saw the glistening joy and responded to it just as it was in her being to respond to every change of nature that sensitiveness was in her as deep as life itself

You are very happy dear? she said to Marion

"You cannot think how happy Lali And I

want to say that I know I feel sure that you will be as happy even happier than I Oh it will come—it will come And you have the boy now—so fine so good

Lali looked out to where little Richard disported himself her eyes shone and she turned with a responsive but still sad smile to Marion

Marion dear she said gently the *other* should have come before I came

Frank loves you dear

Who knows? And then oh I cannot tell! How can one force one's heart? No no One has to wait and wait even if the heart grows harder and one gets hopeless

Marion kissed her on the cheek and smiled

Some day soon the heart will open up and then such a flood will pour out See dear I am going now and our lives won't run together so much again ever perhaps But I want to tell you how that your coming to us has done me a world of good—helped me to be a wiser girl and I ought to be a better woman for it Good bye

They were calling to her and with a hurried

embrace they parted and in a few moments the bride and bridegroom were on their way to the new life As the carriage disappeared in a turn of the lanes Lali vanished also to her room She was not seen at dinner Mackenzie came to say that she was not very well and that she would keep to her room Frank sent several times during the evening to inquire after her and was told that she was resting comfortably He did not try to see her and in this was wise He had now fallen into a habit of delicate consideration which brought its own reward He had given up hope of winning her heart or confidence by storm and had followed his finer and better instincts—had come to the point where he made no claims and even in his own mind stood upon no rights His mother brought him word from Lali before he retired to say that she was sorry she could not see him but giving him a message and a commission into town the following morning for their son Her tact had grown as her strength had declined There is something in failing health—ill health without disease—which sharpens and refines the faculties and

makes the temper exquisitely sensitive—that is with people of a certain good sort The *aplomb* and spirited manner in which Lah had borne herself at the wedding and after was the last flicker of her old strength and of the second phase in her married life The end of the first phase came with the ride at the quick set hedge—this with a less intent but as active a temper

The next morning she did not appear at breakfast but sent a message to Frank to say that she was better and adding another commission for town All day save for an hour on the balcony she kept to her room and lay down for the greater part of the afternoon In the evening when Frank returned his mother sent for him and frankly told him that she thought it would be better for him to go away for a few weeks or so that Lah was in a languid nervous state and she thought that by the time he got back—if he would go—she would be better and that better things would come for him

Frank was no longer the vain selfish man who had married Lah something of the best in him was at work He understood and sug

gested a couple of weeks with Richard at their little place in Scotland Frank saw his wife for a little while that evening She had been lying down but she disposed herself in a deep chair before he entered He was a little shocked to see as it were all at once how delicate she looked He came and sat down near her and after a few moments of friendly talk in which he spoke solicitously of her health he told her that he thought of going up to Scotland with Richard for a few weeks if she saw no objection.

She did not quite understand why he was going She thought that perhaps he felt the strain of the situation and that a little absence would be good for both This pleased her She did not shrink as she had so often done since his return when he laid his hand on hers for an instant as he asked her if she were willing that he should go Sometimes in the past few weeks she had almost hated him Now she was a little sorry for him but she said that of course he must go that no doubt it was good that he should go and so on in gentle allusive phrases The next evening she

came down to dinner and was more like herself as she was before Frank came back but she ate little and before the men came into the drawing room she had excused herself and retired at which Mrs. Lambert shook her head apprehen sively at herself and made up her mind to stay at Greyhope longer than she intended

Which was good for all concerned for two nights after Frank and Richard had gone Mac kenzie hurried down to the drawing room with the news that Lali had been found in a faint on her chamber floor That was the beginning of weeks of anxiety in which Mrs Lambert was to Mrs Armour what Marion would have been and more and both to Lali all that mother and sister could be

Their patient was unlike any other that they had known Feverish she had no fever with a gentle hacking cough she had no lung trouble nervous she still was oblivious to very much that went on around her hungering often for her child she would not let him remain long with her when he came Her sleep was broken and she sometimes talked to herself—whether

consciously or unconsciously they did not know The doctor had no remedies but tonics he did not understand the case but he gently ventured the opinion that it was mostly a matter of race that she was pining because civilization had been infused into her veins—the old insufficient theory

Stuff and nonsense said General Armour when his wife told him The girl bloomed till Frank came back God bless my soul she's falling in love and doesn't know what it is

He was only partly right perhaps but he was nearer the truth than the dealer in quinine and a cheap philosophy of life She'll come around all right you'll see Decline'—decline be hanged The girl shall live—damn it she shall he blurted out as his wife's eyes filled with tears

Mrs Lambert was much of the same mind as the General But went further She said to Mrs Armour that in all her life she had never seen so sweet a character so sensitive a mind—a mind whose sorrow was imagination And

therein the little lady showed herself a person of wisdom For none of them had yet reckoned with that one great element in Lalu's character that thing which is the birthright of all who own the North for a mother the awe of imagination the awe and the pain which in its finest expression comes near very near to the supernatural Lalu's mind was all pictures she never thought of things in words—she saw them and everything in her life arrayed itself in a scene before her made vivid by her sensitive soul so much more sensitive now with health failing the spirit weaning out the body There was her malady the sick heart and mind

A new sickness wore upon her It had not touched her from the day she left the North until she sang The Chase of the Yellow Swan that first evening after Frank's return Ever since then her father was much in her mind—the memory of her childhood and its sweet inspiring friendship with Nature All the roughness and coarseness of the life was refined in her memory by the exquisite atmosphere of the

North the good sweet earth the strong bracing wind the *camaraderie* of trees and streams and grass and animals And in it all stood her father whom she had left alone in that interminable interval between the old life and the new Had she done right? She had cut him off as if he had never been—her people her country also and for what For this—for this sinking sense this failing body this wear and tear of mind and heart this constant study to be possible where she had once been declared by the world to be impossible

One night she lay sleeping after a rather feverish day when it was thought best to keep the child from her Suddenly she waked and sat up Looking straight before her she said —

I will arise and will go to my Father and will say unto Him Father I have sinned against heaven and before Thee and am no more worthy to be called Thy son

She said nothing more than this and presently lay back with eyes wide open gazing before her Like this she lay all night long a

strange aching look in her face There had come upon her the sudden impulse to leave it all, and go back to her father But the child—that gave her pause Towards morning she fell asleep and slept far on into the day a thing that had not occurred for a long time

At noon a letter arrived for her It came into General Armour's hands and he seeing that it bore the stamp of the Hudson's Bay Company with the legend *From Fort St Charles* concluded that it was news of Lali's father Then came the question whether the letter should be given to her The General was for doing so and he prevailed If it were bad news he said it might raise her out of her present apathy and by changing the play of her emotions do her good in the end

The letter was given to her in the afternoon She took it apathetically but presently seeing where it was from she opened it hurriedly with a little cry which was very like a moan too There were two letters inside—one from the factor at Fort Charles in English and one from her father in the Indian language She read

her father s letter first the other fluttered to her feet from her lap General Armour looking down saw a sentence in it which he felt warranted him in picking it up reading it and retaining it his face settling into painful lines as he did so Days afterwards Lan read her father s letter to Mrs Armour It ran —

My daughter

Lal the sweet noise of th Spring

Thy father speaks

I have seen more than half a hundred moons come like the sickle and go like the eye of a running buck swelling with fire but I hear not thy voice at my tent door since the first one came and went

Thou art gone

Thy face was like the sun on running water thy hand hung on thy wrists like the ear of a young deer thy foot was as soft on the grass as the rain on a child s cheek thy words were like snow in summer which melts in richness on the hot earth Thy bow and arrow hang

lonely upon the wall and thy empty cup is beside the pot

Thou art gone

Thou hast become great with a great race and that is well Our race is not great and shall not be until the hour when the Mighty Men of the Kimash Hills arise from their sleep and possess the land again

Thou art g c

But thou hast seen many worlds and thou hast learned great things and thou and I shall meet no more for how shall the wise kneel at the feet of the foolish as thou didst kneel once at thy fathers feet?

Thou art pre

High on the Clip Claw Hills the trees are green in the Plain of the Rolling Stars the wings of the wild fowl are many and fine is the mist upon Goldfly Lake and the heart of Eye of the Moon is strong

Thou art here

The trail is open to the White Valley and the Scarlet Hunter hath saved me when my feet strayed in the plains and my eyes were blinded

Thou art here

I have friends on the Far Off River who show me the yards where the musk ox gather I have found the gardens of the young sable and my tents are full of all manner of store

Thou art here

In the morning my spirit is light and I have harvest where I would gather and the stubble is for my foes In the evening my limbs are heavy and I am at rest in my blanket The hunt is mine and sleep is mine and my soul is cheerful when I remember thee

Thou art here

I have built for thee a place where thy spirit comes I hear thee when thou callest to me, and I go and kneel outside the door for thou art wise and thou speakest to me But thee as thou art in a far land I shall see no more This is my word to thee that thou mayest know that I am not alone Thou shalt not come again as thou once went it is not meet But by these other ways I will speak to thee

Thou art here

Farewell I have spoken

Lali finished reading and then slowly folded up the letter The writing was that of the wife of the factor at Fort Charles—she knew it She sat for a minute looking straight before her She read her father s allegory Barbarian in so much as her father was he had beaten this thing out with the hammer of wisdom He missed her but she must not come back she had outgrown the old life—he knew it and she was with him in spirit in his memory she understood his pictur que pl rases borrowed from the large affluent v o ld about h n Some thing of the righteousness a d magnanim ty of this letter passed into her g ving her for an instant a sort of peace She l ad needed it—needed it to justify herself and sl e had been justified To return was impossible—she had known that all along tl ou l sl e l ad not admitted it the struggle ha l been b t a kind of remorse after all That her father should come to her was also imp ssible it was neither for her happiness nor his She had been two different persons in her life and the first was only a memory to the second. The father had

solved the problem for her He too was now a memory that she could think on with pleasure as associated with the girl she once was He had been well provided for by her husband and——

General Armoun put his hand on hers gently and said —

Lali without your permission I have read this other letter

She did not appear curious She was thinking still of her fathers letter to her She nodded abstractedly

Lali he continued this says that your father wished that letter to be written to you just as he spoke it at the Fort on the day of the Feast of the Yellow Swan He stood up —*the factor writes so here*—and said that he had been thinking much for years and that the time had come when he must speak to his daughter over the seas——

General Armour paused Lali inclined her head smiled wistfully and held up the letter for him to see The General continued —

So he spoke as has been written to you and

then they had the Feast of the Yellow Swan and that night—— He paused again but presently his voice a little husky he went on

That night he set out on a long journey — he lifted the letter and looked at it then met the serious eyes of his daughter in law — on a long journey to the Hills of the Mighty Men and my dear he never came back for as he said there was peace in the White Valley and he would rest till the world should come to its Spring again and the noise of its coming should be in his ears Those Lalh are his very words

His hand closed on hers he reached out and took the other hand from which the paper fluttered and clasped both tight in his own firm grasp

My daughter he said you have another father

With a low cry like that of a fawn struck in the throat she slid forward on her knees beside him and buried her face on his arm. She understood Her father was dead Mrs Armour come forward and kneeling also drew the dark

head to her bosom Then that flood came which sweeps away the rust that gathers in the eyes and breaks through the closed dikes of the heart.

Hours after when she had fallen into a deep sleep General Armour and his wife met outside her bedroom door

I shall not leave her Mrs Armour said. "Send for Frank. His time has almost come"

But it would not have come so soon had not something else occurred The day that he came back from Scotland he entered his wifes room prepared for a change in her yet he did not find so much to make him happy as he had hoped She received him with a gentleness which touched him she let her hand rest in his she seemed glad to have him with her All bars had been cast down between them but he knew that she had not given him all and she knew it also But she hoped he did not know and she dreaded the hour when he would speak out of his now full heart He did not yet urge his affection on her he was simply devoted and watchful and tender and delightedly hopeful

But one night she came tapping at his door When he opened it she said Oh come come! Our Richard is ill! I have sent for the doctor

Henceforth she was her old self again with a transformed spirit her motherhood spending itself in a thousand ways She who was weak bodily now became much stronger the light of new vigour came to her eyes she and her husband in the common peril worked together thinking little of themselves and all of the child. The last stage of the journey to happiness was being passed and if it was not obvious to themselves the others Marion and Captain Vidall included saw it

One anxious day after the family doctor had left the sick child's room Marion turning to the father and mother said Greyhope will be itself again. I will go and tell Richard that the danger is over

As she turned to do so Richard entered the room. I have seen the doctor he began "and the little chap is going to pull along like a house afire

Tapping Frank affectionately on the arm he

was about to continue but he saw what stopped him. He saw the last move in Frank Armour's tragic comedy. He and Marion left the room as quickly as was possible to him for as he said himself he was "slow at a quick march" and a moment after varies the wife heard without le nur her husband's tale of love for he

Yet as if to remind him of the wrong he had done Heaven never granted Frank Armour another child

THE END

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